

Women in Architecture: Learning from the Past to Change the Future

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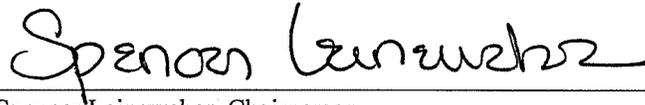
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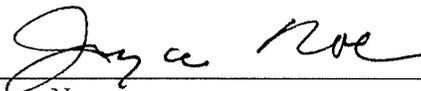
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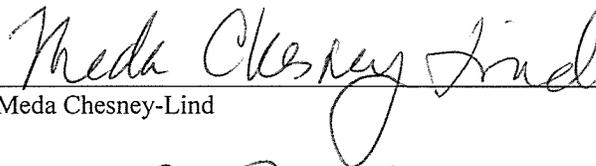
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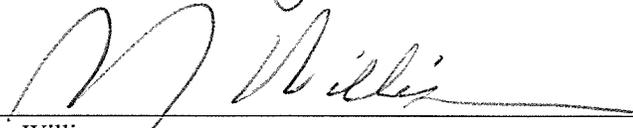
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Abstract:

Women in Architecture: Learning from the Past to Change the Future

Until recently the inclusion of women in the history of architecture in America was non-existent. The current pedagogy of architectural programs, internship training, and practice is gender biased, focusing on the male stars of architecture thus creating a male biased narrow definition of success in the profession. This one-sided view of the profession's history and vision of success is not only inaccurate, but is detrimental to women in the field. Many women, after entering practice and obtaining their licenses, leave the profession as a result.

This study reflects on the progression of the profession and summarizes the lives and careers of five historically significant women pioneers in the profession beginning in 1880 through 1980 who were outstanding, not only because they were exceptional women but because they were competent architects. Louise Blanchard Bethune, Marion Mahony, Julia Morgan, Denise Scott Brown, and Beverly Willis were talented, multi-faceted architects who created notable architectural projects, established successful self-defined practices, and have interesting personal stories of their road to success.

Women currently in practice have benefitted from the achievements of these historical role models. Architects like Jeanne Gang, Anna Franz, Maya Lin, Monica Ponce de Leon are some of the women in practice today who, like their predecessors, have created their own career paths and do not let obstacles stop them from pursuing their attainment of success.

If women in school, training, and practice were exposed to the history of these pioneers, they would realize that they, these pioneers have faced numerous obstacles in their careers and lives and did not let anyone or anything deter them from pursuing their dreams and defining their careers and lives in their own way.

The entire architectural profession including education, training, and practice, along with architectural organizations, needs to change and work collaboratively to embrace and promote the true history of the profession that includes both men and women. The profession must progress to best service the twenty-first century society.

Introduction

The number of women practicing in the field of architecture has continued to decline despite the 50:50 ratio of female to male students in architectural schools.¹ Although the reasons for them leaving the field varies, their departure has been unaddressed by the educational and professional fields.

A lack of understanding of the historical significance of women in the profession and the traditional male biased definition of success taught in schools and practice leaves some women feeling unfulfilled thus causing them to leave architecture. Historically women in the profession of architecture have made significant achievements that have until recently been overlooked and ignored. This ignorance has promoted the distorted, one-sided, male biased definition of architecture that excludes women. It is critical to acknowledge that women play a significant role in the development of architecture not only socially but as talented and competent designers.

Without a strong understanding of themselves and the knowledge of other women in the past both historically and in current practice who have gone through similar experiences and have faced significant challenges throughout their careers, women feel alone and like they are failures because they have been trained to understand success as only the attainment of star status. Women leave the field because success seems unobtainable, not realizing that the reason for their frustration is because they are trying to fulfill someone else's definition of success. If each woman had a stronger identity and

¹American Institute of Architects, "The Best of Architecture," 2006 AIA Firm Survey, Washington, D.C.: The AIA, www.aia.org, 23.

was educated about the lives and practices of her predecessors, she could better address her personal situations and define her own path to success in the field.

Women need to play a critical role to redefine the profession that includes and highlights their achievements not as “women architects” but as competent and talented architects regardless of gender. If the profession does not change to embrace its true history, and pedagogy and practice do not progress to meet the needs of the changing world, the significance of the profession in the future is questionable. Gender bias must be discarded so that architecture may embark on a brighter future.

Chapter 1: Overview of the History of Women in America 1880-1980

In order to thoroughly understand the progression of women in architecture in America, it is critical to understand the history of women in the United States. The women's movement for equality has directly affected the development of opportunities for women in the work force. Starting with the right to vote and the right to obtain a higher education degree then subsequently progressing to women's rights for equal pay has affected the development for women in the field of architecture.

Prior to Civil War, women had limited higher education opportunities. The only options for women were in all female institutions like Columbia Female Academy or Mount Holyoke Female Seminary. The lack of a formal education, however, did not deter determined women like Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Coffin Mott and Mary Ann McClintock from finding a way to further their knowledge, educate themselves, and share their opinions with others. In 1848, the Seneca Falls Convention was held to discuss with the public the resolutions needed to change the current laws and grievances that its organizers Cady Stanton, Coffin Mott and McClintock felt hindered women in American society. Approximately three hundred people showed up, mostly women, to attend lectures and workshops focusing on the oppressive conditions of women in

America. They created a Declaration of Sentiments that documented their concerns thus starting the organized women's movement.²

“The Civil War (1861-1865) had a powerful effect on the fortunes of women. Having acquired some practical experience and some education outside the home, they were able for the first time to participate actively in a national enterprise.”³ During this time the Union formed the Sanitary Commission in which thousands of women served as nurses and some even became spies. Other women, like Susan B. Anthony and Cady Stanton, organized the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) in 1869, fighting for women's right to vote. “The war enhanced women's self-confidence, and to some extent it stimulated them organizationally, but the mobilization of women on a national scale did not begin until the 1880's.”⁴

Concurrent to this were changes resulting from the passage of the Morrill Act of 1862. The Morrill Act or Land-Grant Act gave every state in the Union thirty thousand acres of public land for each congressional delegate it had. These states could then sell the land and used the proceeds from the sale to enhance existing colleges or create new colleges to support agricultural and mechanical trades. Agricultural trades referenced farming and included the growing, harvesting, selling and distribution of its products.

² Smithsonian Institute, “The Seneca Falls Convention July 19-20, 1948,” National Portrait Gallery Smithsonian Institution, <http://npg.si.edu/coyseneca/senfalls1.htm>.

³ Nancy Woloch, *Women and the American Experience, Second Addition*, New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1994, 16.

⁴ Ibid.

Mechanical trades included machine development, engineering, architecture, construction, and transportation design.⁵ The purpose of the act was to broaden the educational opportunities to all social classes as well as to strengthen the country's agricultural and mechanical economies. This act created more architectural and engineering schools.

The Morrill Act and also the ideological support of co-education resulted in more educational opportunities opening for women. "Between 1870 and 1890 the number of colleges admitting women almost doubled, and the number of female college students increased fivefold."⁶ In 1870, only 1% of Americans went to college. Of the 1%, 21% were women. By 1910, 5% of Americans went to college of which 40% were women.⁷ Although the doors to higher education had been opened for women, it was mainly in liberal arts. "Each June saw the graduation of larger bands of sisters who had been through four years of communal life pitched at the highest moral, mental, and emotional levels."⁸ After graduation, these women found themselves alone and alienated by the professional world. "Their liberal education did not prepare them to do anything in particular, except teach, and the stylized, carefully edited view of life it gave them bore

⁵ Henry C. Dethloff, "Texas A&M University," *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/kct08>.

⁶ William L. O'Neill, *Everyone was Brave*, Chicago: Quadrangle Books, Inc., 1969, 148.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 79.

⁸ *Ibid.*

little relation to the actual world.”⁹ Life after graduation was difficult for most of these women because society seemed to have no use for an educated woman. Some women went on pursue careers in social work and teaching. The lack of opportunity after graduation inspired one graduate, Marion Talbot, to create the Association of Collegiate Alumnae (ACA) in 1870. The ACA’s mission was to help further “raise the standards of female education.”¹⁰

Associations like the ACA began to form to give educated women a sense of belonging and comradery during their time of alienation during and after college. Initially, these groups were social organizations but like their predecessors who banded together to fight for suffrage and the opportunity to receive a higher education, the women’s groups of this time fought for the right to further educational options for women.

Between the years of 1830 to 1920, the Victorian and Progressive Eras, many middle class women took part in volunteer organizations and led social reform movements. Women were viewed by society as the authority of matters relating to family and some women used this to their advantage to make changes.¹¹

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹Judity Stadtman Tucker, “Another Mothers’ Movement, 1890-1920,” *The Mothers Movement Online*, March 2004, www.mothersmovement.org, 2.

“Clubwomen, either through marriage or in their own right, were influential members of their communities. They had access to the power structure and while they did not vote, they had male friends and relatives who did.”¹² Clubwomen fought for concerns they collectively had as mothers, sisters, and home makers.¹³

There was another group of women reformers who were connected to the settlement house movement. Consisting of mostly single women, they created residential centers staffed by educated middle class men and women, to provide social services to the poorer communities. The Hull House in Chicago (1889) was one of the most successful settlement houses in the United States. Many prominent woman suffrage leaders like Florence Kelley and Jane Addams were trained there and went on to pursue other social reform challenges in the country.¹⁴

Chartered by Jane Addams and Josephine Lowell in 1899, the National Consumers League (NCL) “was one of the most effective social reform agencies in the Progressive era and an especially good example of the way bright, altruistic women found a social use for their talents.”¹⁵ Under the lead of Florence Kelley, the NCL was a

¹² Nancy Woloch, *Women and the American Experience, Second Addition*, New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1994, 88-89.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Judy Stadtman Tucker, “Another Mothers’ Movement, 1890-1920,” *The Mothers Movement Online*, March 2004, www.mothersmovement.org, 2.

¹⁵ William L. O’Neill, *Everyone was Brave*, Chicago: Quadrangle Books, Inc., 1969,95.

reflection of the Progressive mentality of the time. These women believed they could change society by bringing to light the injustices to change public policy.¹⁶ By educating consumers, it aimed to put an end to unfair working conditions for people, specifically women and children.

By 1900, women had fought against many injustices to women and children like prostitution, suffrage, child labor, and pay inequity. They fought to create public kindergartens, free public libraries, school reform to better the lives of their children.¹⁷ Kelley stated, “Taken together, these organizations fairly represent the range of social feminist activity during the women movement’s golden age which coincided with the Progressive Era....All of them answered to some degree the need of emergency womanhood for fellowship and constructive enterprise.”¹⁸

The 19th Amendment was passed in 1920 and women received the right to vote. Although women did not expect drastic social reform to result from their ability to vote, they did expect to be recognized as members of society who deserved respect and had a

¹⁶ Ibid., 98.

¹⁷ Judith Stadtman Tucker, “Another Mothers’ Movement, 1890-1920,” *The Mothers Movement Online*, March 2004, www.mothersmovement.org, 2.

¹⁸ Nancy Woloch, *Women and the American Experience, Second Addition*, New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1994, 102.

voice in the community.¹⁹ However, once the right to vote was obtained, the unifying element was gone, little changed for the recognition of women, and the feminist movement lost its mission.

“The new women of the Progressive Era, who had carved out a space in public life, devoted herself to causes, reform and collective action.”²⁰ In the 1920’s the younger generation of women “were more involved in private life than in public affairs, more attuned to competition than cooperation, more interested in self-fulfillment than in social service.”²¹ They did not experience the fight for the feminism gains and took it for granted.²² William O’Neill, author of *Everyone was Brave*, quoted Psychologist Phyllis Blanchard stating that “the youngest women, those growing in the 1920’s equated feminism with being lonely and unmarried.”²³

Society was changing and becoming “urban, technological, commercial and constructive.”²⁴ People lived in cities with telephone, radio, phonograph, movies, large circulation magazines, and world advertising. Awareness of the world outside their community increased. Mass communication - promoted more awareness of fashion,

¹⁹ William L. O’Neill, *Everyone was Brave*, Chicago: Quandrangle Books, Inc., 1969,68.

²⁰ Ibid., 382.

²¹ Ibid., 382.

²² Ibid., 388.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., 382.

behavior and products.”²⁵ Birth control was developed and gave women more control over their individuality and sexual relations. Individualism was growing and the sense of self had become more important than the good of the many. The Sheppard –Towner Act 1921 required that federal funds be provided for maternal and child care. It helped to build local health care clinics with the mother and child in mind.

After WWI (circa 1918) employment opportunities for women increased as administrative assistants, secretaries, vocational jobs such as hairdressers became options. The number of professional women increased to 50%. Women in the medical fields declined – 1910 (6%) then further declined to 5% in 1920, then 4.4% in 1930. This decline was possibly due to the other opportunities opening up for women to pursue. There was an increase in women participating in behavioral science fields.²⁶

Feminism moved from politics to professional goals from which the middle class benefitted the most. The issue of work opportunity equality became the focus of women in the workplace.

More middle class women worked and more white-collar job opportunities were made available. The number of women obtaining higher education degrees

²⁵ Ibid., 403.

²⁶ Nancy Woloch, *Women and the American Experience, Second Addition*, New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1994, 392.

continued to rise and women attempted to have a balance of career and marriage in their lives.²⁷

Married women wage earners rose 25%.²⁸ Some professions were closed to women and when opportunities were open to women, there were pay disparities between men and women.

State college/university attendance was now an option for the middle class female, not only the elite. Coed situations made for more informal interaction, dating and sororities started. With higher education providing opportunities for both men and women “there was the campus coed”²⁹ which gave men and women college students the ability to interact and live together more freely than ever before.

The informal social interaction between the sexes also changed views on marriage. The “[n]ew idea of marriage...was a romantic-sexual union, with the primary focus on the relation between husband and wife rather than on the family unit.”³⁰ Women enjoyed femininity and was looked at as the purchaser for the household.

In the late 1930’s, economic recession had hit America and The Great Depression had affected all of its citizens. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt stated that this was the time

²⁷ Ibid., 389.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 383.

³⁰ Ibid., 408.

to “rebuild moral fiber and to unite families, community and nation in a common cause.”³¹ During this time of crisis, feminism lost its priority and women entered the blue collar work force with Rosie the Riveter as their inspirational image. Over six million women entered the work force in defense, government, manufacturing and other professions during World War II. A major blow came at the onset when the Great Depression and “gave new currency to the dogma that women’s place was at home.”³² A more stable family life became the priority after the years of instability during the war.³³ “After fifteen years of hardship and denial, during which people were compelled to put off getting married and having children for one reason or another, it was natural that when conditions permitted they would make up for lost time.”³⁴

Any forward movement stopped for feminism and women’s rights. However, there were internal conflicts beginning to fester in many middle class women. Economically, the need for a second income was growing but socially, the expectation was for women to stay in the home and not work.

³¹ Ibid., 428.

³² Ibid., 440.

³³ William L. O’Neill, *Everyone was Brave*, Chicago: Quandrangle Books, Inc., 1969, 70.

³⁴ Ibid., 382.

Woman began to feel the “conflict between the traditional roles and outside involvement was the ‘American dilemma’”³⁵ said Life magazine in 1947 as quoted by Nancy Woloch in *Women and the American Experience*. The issue became more psychological. Woloch also quoted psychoanalyst Marynia Farnham who in 1947 generalized that a women had two conflicting motivations within them. The desire for a career to gain prestige created qualities of self-determination, aggression, and competitiveness but the desire to be a mother created a passive, nurturing, and compassionate side. These contrasting desires within a woman caused conflict and stress in daily life.³⁶

In the 1950’s-1960’s, racial tensions were running high throughout the country and the Civil Rights Movement was in full swing. In 1955, Rosa Parks, a woman of color, refused to give up her seat at the front of the bus and move to the back for a white man. She was arrested for violating Alabama’s segregation laws. This incident caused the black community to boycott the bus system for three hundred eighty-two days. Dr. Martin Luther King, who at this time was pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, was elected to be the president of the Montgomery Improvement Association which led the Montgomery Bus Boycott. This boycott brought national attention to racial injustice and the Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation on public transportation was illegal in 1956. Led by Dr. King, the Southern Christian Leadership

³⁵ Nancy Woloch, *Women and the American Experience, Second Addition*, New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1994, 471.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 472.

Conference was formed in 1957 and the use of civil disobedience was utilized in lieu of violence to protest the prejudice and segregation faced by people of color. By using peaceful measures, influenced by Ghandi, Dr. King led by example, and urged people to stand up against discrimination in all facets of their lives. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was the result and made it illegal to discriminate against people of color.

The 1960's was a time of change for those oppressed in America. Oppression of equal opportunity was openly protested and fought against. When John F. Kennedy became president, the United States saw "a resurgence of idealism and active involvement in social change."³⁷ This led to the development of civil rights movements and the establishment of groups like the Peace Corps. "The child-mother no longer fit the times. She was too static, too passive, maybe too safe."³⁸ As more women entered the work force, there appeared to be more public acceptance of the working woman. The mass media targeted the "trapped housewife"³⁹ with television specials, magazine articles and newspapers focusing on "women's problems of boredom, restlessness, isolation, over-education, and low esteem."⁴⁰ The government implemented changes that involved women. In 1962 President Kennedy created the President's Commission on the Status of

³⁷ Sara Evans, "The Rebirth of the Women's Movement in the 1960's," in *Women and Power in American History*, ed. Kathryn Kish Sular and Thomas Dublin, (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1991), 239.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 240.

Women, chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt, examined women's rights and roles in American society. Esther Peterson, Woman's Bureau and Assistant Secretary of Labor, fought for equal pay legislation and urged women into the labor force. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act was passed "which prohibited discrimination by private employers, employment agencies, and unions on the basis of sex as well as race, color, religion, and national origin."⁴¹ More women entered professional fields as careers of choice rather than necessity. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 was to ensure women got equal pay with men when performing the same job.

Woloch quoted Betty Friedan, a woman's rights activist who authored *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963. Friedan stated that "[t]he feminine mystique has succeeded in burying millions of women alive... 'it is easier to live through husband and child than to make a road of her own in the world' ... Education and employment would liberate the house wife from the suburban home and enable her to 'find herself, to know herself as a person by creating work of her own.'"⁴² She felt that women should be given the same professional opportunities as men and "urged women to do it all – to be superwomen – by assuming the dual roles of housewife and professional."⁴³ The educational system, mass media and popular psychologist's theories were criticized by Friedan. Along with

⁴¹ Ibid., 241.

⁴² Nancy Woloch, *Women and the American Experience, Second Addition*, New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1994, 483.

⁴³ Sara Evans, "The Rebirth of the Women's Movement in the 1960's," in *Women and Power in American History*, ed. Kathryn Kish Sylar and Thomas Dublin, (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1991), 242.

Friedan, activists Representative Martha Griffiths, and lawyers Mary Eastwood and Pauli Murray continued to pressure government to make changes. They formed the National Organization for Women (NOW) in 1966 which focused on the issues in the public realm. “[W]omens involvement in the civil rights movement, the publication of *The Feminine Mystique*, and the creation of President’s Commission on the Status of Women were disparate responses to different situation – a century of racial segregation, several decades of feminist stagnation, and a need to retain the ‘women’s vote.’”⁴⁴ The conservative and passive culture of the 1950’s was changing into a new era of activism, reform, and the resurrection of the feminist movement.

The 1960’s was the time for the feminist revival. The middle class women were now educated, somewhat liberated, and actively included in some political endeavors. “Feminist revival in the mid-1960s began in the wake of freedom rides, voter registration drives, campus upheavals, teach-ins, sit-ins, and anti-draft demonstrations. But it was the civil rights movement, above all, that paved the way for feminist resurgence.”⁴⁵

In the 1970’s women were present in most occupations. There was an increase in the number of female managers from 19-31% and females in technical occupations grew from 34-44%.⁴⁶ Now educated, women wanted to work and could command higher

⁴⁴ Nancy Woloch, *Women and the American Experience, Second Addition*, New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1994, 492.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 509.

⁴⁶ Suzanne Bianchi and Daphne Spain, “Women in the Labor force 1950-1980,” *Women and Power in American History*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1991, 270-271.

salaries. Women were aware of other alternatives to marriage, delaying having children, and were taking more control over their lives. They were beginning to focus on work rather than on having a family.⁴⁷ In the higher educational system, Women Studies grew and “feminism legitimized female wage earning in a way that family had not. As the new woman’s movement gained momentum, significant changes in employment became visible, most marked in prestigious professions.”⁴⁸ According to Woloch, the Department of Labor women statistics in professions grew between 1971 through 1981 - Lawyers/Judges – 4%-14%, Doctors – 9%-22%, Engineers 1%-4%. 1971-1974 – Congress past equity laws which helped women attain equal opportunities in the workplace.⁴⁹

After 1970, however, there were many other injustices that women were beginning to fight for which began to divide their focus. Many new activist groups began to form with ideals in radical feminism, politics, and sexual preference, “[b]ut no single organization was able to capture the energy and enthusiasm aroused by the women’s revolt and convert it into a sustained power base from which women could demand political and social.”⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Ibid., 472.

⁴⁸ Nancy Woloch, *Women and the American Experience, Second Addition*, New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1994, 528.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 529.

Wage differentials between men and women at the end of the 1980's narrowed to women earning 70% of male wages. As summarized by Woloch, Felice Schwartz, stated in her Harvard Business Review 1989 article "Management Women and the New Facts of Life", that corporations have two tracks created by employers to prevent high turnover – "career-primary" women managers or "career-and-family" women managers. "Career-primary" were women who chose to not have children and therefore had 100% focus on work. "Career-and-family" were women who had children and needed a different career path.⁵¹

In the 1990's, 60% of mothers with children under age 6 had jobs.⁵² National organizations like the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission were formed to provide equal opportunities to all people in America. Women, however, faced other challenges like the "glass ceiling"⁵³ that based advancement beyond middle management.

The new women of this generation faced both professional and personal challenges that affected her life. Women chose to delay marriage, cohabitate, and become single parents. Feminism changed to reflect the shift in domestic life.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Nancy Woloch, *Women and the American Experience, Second Addition*, New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1994, 560-563.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 558.

⁵³ Alice Eagly and Linda Carli, *Through the Labyrinth*, Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2007, 4-5.

⁵⁴ Nancy Woloch, *Women and the American Experience, Second Addition*, New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1994, 564.

The post feminist generation of the 1990's takes the achievements of the century of women's movements for granted. "Changing attitudes about women's place and about equality between the sexes have no doubt influenced women's propensity to earn higher degrees and subsequently embark on a career track. Additionally, legislative initiatives may have opened doors previously closed to women."⁵⁵ Women are staying in the workforce for their own self reliance and out of necessity in a time when the standards of living were on the rise and the desire for material consumer goods are drivers in survival.⁵⁶ "The perceived pressure to work outside the home is another way in which women's work motivations have become similar to those of men."⁵⁷ For a woman to be successful, however, the need for a strong self-image is critical. "Confidence in personal judgment is essential in order to evaluate the merits of possible approaches and solutions."⁵⁸ This directly relates to the field of architecture for women in both history and present day.

⁵⁵ Suzanne Bianchi and Daphne Spain, "Women in the Labor force 1950-1980," *Women and Power in American History*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1991, 273.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 274.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Anne Vytlačil, "The Studio Experience," in *Architecture – A Place for Women*, ed. Ellen Perry Berkeley and associate editor Matilda McQuaid, 1989, 262.

Chapter 2: Overview of the History of Women in Architecture 1880-1980

The history of women architects in the United States provides women architects today with inspirational and empowering knowledge. Although women's involvement in the profession can be traced back to the 1850's with people like Mother Joseph and Louisa Tuthill, their formal presence in the field started in the 1880's. Due to the efforts of women in the profession like Louise Blanchard Bethune, Marion Mahony Griffin, Julia Morgan, Denise Scott Brown, and Beverly Willis, the progression of women in architecture parallels that of women in American history up until the 1980's but has since then ceased in progressing adequately to meet the needs of the profession. Other professions like law and medicine have continued to progress while women in architecture has stagnated. The women architects of the twenty-first century need to do their part, as their predecessors did during their place in history, to change architecture to progress with other professional fields.

“In colonial America, women who earned their own living usually became seamstresses or kept boarding houses...Some women saw parallels between the position of women and that of slaves. In their view, both were expected to be obedient to their master husbands.”⁵⁹ By the end of the Civil War, there was a need for men to enter the fields related to business instead of pursuing degrees in liberal arts. Many colleges saw a

⁵⁹ “Women's History in America,” in Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia, Compton's NewMedia, Inc., 1994, <http://www.wic.org/misc/history.htm>.

significant decrease in enrollment in their liberal arts programs and women took advantage of this higher educational opportunity and entered college.⁶⁰

In 1850, a formal education in architecture was not an option and women interested in pursuing a career in the field found ways to get the necessary training. Through apprenticeship, women were able to learn to draft and construct the designs they envisioned, initially mainly in domestic architecture, and eventually into public/industrial architecture. In 1870, 1% of Americans attended college of which 21% were women.⁶¹ “...[S]ingle middle-class woman of the late nineteenth century had improved options – for higher education, for professional employment, and for establishing supportive relationships with women outside the family....an educated women had to choose between marriage and a career; many chose the latter.”⁶²

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology became the first school of architecture in 1868, with Cornell and Syracuse University shortly thereafter. The American Institute of Architects (AIA) officially formed in 1857 but only accepted men. As demand grew, however, social awareness of women’s growing presence in the field also grew and universities began to accept women into their programs. Cornell became the first program to accept and graduate a woman architect in 1878. Parallel with this was the induction of the first female AIA member, Jennie Louise Blanchard Bethune, in 1888

⁶⁰ Nancy Woloch, *Women and the American Experience, Second Addition*, New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1994, 276.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 276.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 275.

who later became the first female FAIA inductee in 1889. Women like Blanchard were able to lead by example for all other aspiring female architects. Blanchard was exceptional in running a practice, designing and constructing large projects, was a mother, and fought for formal licensing of women architects. "...[S]he demanded respect for her abilities and equal pay for her work...no special treatment."⁶³ Blanchard stated in her speech to the Women's Educational and Industrial Union in 1891 that "the objective of the business woman is quite distinct from those of the professional agitator. Her aims are conservative rather than aggressive; her strength lies in adaptability, not in reform, and her desire to conciliate rather than to antagonize" and "the future of women in the architectural profession is what she herself sees fit to make it."⁶⁴

In the 1910's, women started to seek formal educational training in architecture. "[B]y 1910, when about 5% of college-age Americans attended college, 40% were women....The vast upsurge of women college students was in part a result of the rapid growth and feminization of secondary schooling."⁶⁵ World War 1 brought about the labor movement. People began to form unions and fought for equal rights and equal pay. The women who were in architecture at this time were of the upper – middle class and were not included in the labor movement. This brought, however, about awareness in women of the power of numbers and motivated them to organize themselves to fight for

⁶³ Sarah Allaback, *The First American Women Architects*, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008, 48.

⁶⁴ Louise Bethune, "Women and Architecture," *The Inland Architect and News Record* (Buffalo, NY), March 1891.

⁶⁵ Nancy Woloch, *Women and the American Experience, Second Addition*, New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1994, 276.

their rights. The Cambridge School formed in 1917 and accepted only women into their architectural/drafting program. It taught women hands on construction experience and drafting techniques and “its women graduates seem to have developed a consciousness of themselves as architects and as women.”⁶⁶ Their graduates can be “credited as a group breaking the long-established precedent that a woman must choose between marriage and a career. Their successful life histories dispelled that notion, showing that far from being natural to women, it was just another of society’s taboos that kept women in the home.”⁶⁷ More husband and wife partnerships began to form in the United States. Women like Sarah Pillsbury Harkness and Jean Bodman Fletcher were Cambridge graduates who partnered and opened their own firm along with their husbands, called The Architects Collaborative. This firm was unique in that the two partner women alternated working half days and shared a babysitter.

Between the 1920’s-1960’s women grew stronger in many professional fields and began attaining positions of power and notoriety. Some women gained success by not changing “the system but simply by joining it and playing by its rules to make it to the top...To be singled out as gifted...into dutiful followers, the trait serving them well in their climb up the office ladder.”⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Mary Otis Stevens, “Struggle for Place: Women in Architecture: 1920-1960,” in *Women in American Architecture: A Historic and Contemporary Perspective*, ed. Susana Torre, (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1977), 91.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 100.

The formation of women only organizations began to form on university campuses and within the business community. In 1922, the national organization Alpha Alpha Gamma formed solely for women in architecture school at Washington University. The organization quickly spread throughout the country and allowed women to network with the peers. These contacts formed relationships which would prove to be priceless both professionally and personally. Slowly, women were being allowed to sit for the state licensing exams. Their “refusal to accept narrow stereotypes of what their work should be forced a broader definition of their architectural abilities....their work established a solid foundation on which the next generation of women could, and did, develop innovative ideas and designs that continue to enrich American architecture.”⁶⁹

Julia Morgan and Marion Mahony are examples of women during this time who obtained formal architectural educations, architectural licenses and successful practices. Morgan grew up with a happy and lavish childhood filled with travel, fun with siblings and a strong education. These experiences were something she carried with her throughout her architectural education and practice. She formed relationships with her clients and took care of her staff members. She was notable for having “sensitive relationships with her clients and employees.”⁷⁰ Morgan was single and dedicated her life to her practice, staff and brother. Mahony was the first woman to graduate with a

⁶⁹ Judith Paine, “Sophia Hayden and the Woman’s Building Competition,” in *Women in American Architecture: A Historic and Contemporary Perspective*, ed. Susana Torre, (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1977), 69.

⁷⁰ *Architecture A Plan for Women*, ed. Ellen Berkeley, (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institute, 1989), 115.

Bachelors of Science in Architecture from MIT and was the first woman licensed in Illinois. Mahony was an outstanding architect and delineator but was also the key associate with a male architect. She worked for Frank Lloyd Wright and later her husband, Walter Griffin, bringing to fruition their collaborative design visions and dreams but she also had many successful projects of her own that she designed under their public credit. Her personal drive and ambition became the fuel to follow through on the designs and projects with her male counterparts. “Her allegiance to her husband’s professional reputation rather than her own hindered her professional advancement.”⁷¹

In the 1960’s – 1980’s the women’s feminism movement was prevalent throughout the United States. “The sixties was a time when the concepts of public place and private realm were challenged and redefined”⁷² and many were determined to “reoccupy the public sphere and return it to the people.”⁷³ Concurrent to this were two key pieces of legislation after World War II that was also enacted that affected architects and the built environment. The Housing Act of 1949 and the Highway Trust Act of 1956 affected community development and growth. The Housing Act was to create a “decent house and suitable living environment for the American family.”⁷⁴ Many in poor rural

⁷¹ Sara Boutelle, “Julia Morgan,” in *Women in American Architecture: A Historic and Contemporary Perspective*, ed. Susana Torre, (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1977), 79.

⁷² Jane McGroarty and Susana Torre, “New Professional Identities: Four Women in the Sixties,” in *Women in American Architecture: A Historic and Contemporary Perspective*, ed. by Susana Torre, (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1977), 117.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

areas were displaced so that their housing could be renovated and refurbished. Most, however, were relocated to living conditions that were worse than their existing quarters. The Highway Trust Act gave 90% subsidy to state and local governments to build the highway system. Private and public residential areas were disrupted and replaced with major highways and construction. Society, growing frustrated with the way their communities were developing began to question and protest against the government. People began to reevaluate themselves and their lifestyles thus creating new communities based on a town center or hub with recreational, social, dining facilities. The Housing Act, Highway Trust Act, and reevaluation of community needs caused the need for architects and engineers to design the built environment.

As a parallel to the changes occurring in society, architecture was also seeing a growth in the number of women in the field of architecture. Due in part to the Morrill Act, women were accepted into architectural programs, were able to sit for the licenses and were more evident in architectural firms and academic programs. However, women were also prevalent as architectural critics and lead designers in high profile firms and projects. Women began to explore and voice their opinions on how architecture and the female sense of themselves both complemented and conflicted within each woman. More woman organizations were formed creating a source of support promoting independence within each female in the field.

Woman organizations provided women with the support network they needed to not only find moral support but to also make collective changes required to fulfill their needs as professionals. The West Coast Women's Design Conference held in April 1974

was one example of an organized woman's forum for women architects to organize themselves.

Denise Scott Brown, educated as a planner and architect, is world renown for her role as an architectural educator, critic of architectural design and principal in private practice. Scott Brown, throughout her career, has vocalized the discrimination and overshadowing she has experienced as a woman despite her vast and diverse career accomplishments in the field. Her role as a critic and designer who pushes the envelope has made her subject to public criticism and negativity. Throughout her career, however, she has maintained her focus and has held on tight to her opinions and continues to move forward with her practice which she shares with her husband. Although often overshadowed by her husband, Scott Brown is strong in her independent stance and vision of architecture. Despite her well established career, she stated in her essay *Room at the Top?* “[T]he discrimination continues at the rate of about one incident a day.”⁷⁵

Beverly Willis is another example of a well established woman in the field of architecture who flourished during this time period. Willis was educated as artist and is licensed as an architect. Her professional and social network has provided and continues to provide her with the means and support to flourish in the career choices she has made throughout her life. Upon reflection of her career she has rarely faced gender prejudice and has consistently challenged herself and succeeded in different paths. As an artist,

⁷⁵ Denise Scott Brown, “Room at the Top? Sexism and the Star System in Architecture,” in *Architecture a Place for Women*, ed. Ellen Perry Berkeley (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), 244.

interior designer, architect, farmer, and now historian, Willis has always pushed the envelope and been one step ahead of her peers.

The late 1980's – present has seen an increase in the number of women in the field of architecture. Architecture schools are 50% women on average.⁷⁶ However, the number of women in the profession is still not equal to that of men. “If women are to be free they must engage in the kind of radical and profound analysis of themselves, their social context and their possibilities which has been so conspicuously absent up to this point.”⁷⁷

“The star system has obscured the major roles that women have played in the architectural stage – as clients, preservationists, designers, and critics of the built environment.”⁷⁸ The women pioneers selected provide evidence of the diversity of women architects and their careers spanning 1880-1980. The proceeding biographies of the selected woman architects provide insight into their professional and personal lives not only as prominent architects but also as pioneering women. Their background experiences helped to shape their ability and approach to their careers and lives. Their individual lives and professional paths set the precedent for women in the field today.

⁷⁶ American Institute of Architects, “The Best of Architecture,” 2006 AIA Firm Survey, Washington, D.C.: The AIA, www.aia.org, 23.

⁷⁷ William L. O'Neill, *Everyone was Brave*, Chicago: Quadrangle Books, Inc., 1969, 358.

⁷⁸ Kathryn Anthony, *Designing for Diversity*, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001, 36.

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Jennie Louise Blanchard Bethune (1856-1913)



Figure 1: Source: Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society, <http://bechs.org>.

Jennie Louise Blanchard 1856-1913

Jennie Louise Blanchard Bethune is the first recognized woman architect in American architectural history. Her training and ability defied any gender lines that limited women and their professional pursuits in the late 1800's. While training and practicing, she had very little female peers and no female mentors. Although she worked with her husband, she did not try to conceal her gender or allow her husband to take credit for her work. She was independent, smart, and talented. There seemed to be no obstacles to prevent her from running a successful practice throughout her career. Blanchard's work ethic, technical competence, and diverse portfolio made her a significant architect of her time. As a true pioneer for women architects, Blanchard

created her own path for future generations to follow and helped to define architecture as a profession.

Born on July 21, 1856 in Waterloo, New York, Blanchard was the only child of Dalson Wallace Blanchard and Emma Melona Blanchard. Louise, as she has been referred to, was fortunate in her early years to have both her father and mother educate her until she was eleven. Both parents were educators – her father was a school principal and math teacher and her mother was a teacher – therefore she received a quality education and developed good study habits which she utilized throughout her life and career. She was said to have strong math skills and would work independently. In 1866, her family moved to Buffalo and Louise entered Buffalo High School until 1874.

During this time architects could gain their training either by going to college or apprenticing in an architectural firm. Although very few colleges accepted women into their architectural programs, Blanchard knew she wanted to be an architect and was preparing to enter Cornell University. In 1876, however, she decided to forgo the college and chose the apprentice route for her training.

Blanchard was hired by Richard Waite who had an established a successful architectural practice in Buffalo. She worked very hard during her apprenticeship, working six days a week as a drafter. Due to her diligence and work ethic she learned as a child from her parents, Blanchard was quickly moved up to observing construction and handling project designs. Soon after she was promoted to be Waite's assistant.

Between 1880 and the turn of the century, Buffalo was a growing city. Businesses and the community were developing rapidly and the population was on the rise. Community services were growing and there was a lot of work for architects to help design and construct the offices and centers needed to house these services. Blanchard benefitted from this growth and was exposed to many different project types during her training.

In 1881, at the young age of twenty-five, she left the company and opened her own firm. Blanchard “received a man’s education and had proven her ability in a man’s profession.”⁷⁹ She is recognized as the first woman architect professional in the United States. Later that year she added a partner to her practice, fellow drafter at Waite’s office, Robert Bethune. The two married and the company name became Bethune and Bethune. In 1883 Blanchard had her only child, son Charles. “Charles was born while Bethune was running one of the busiest architectural firms in Buffalo, which she continued to do until her son graduated from medical school.”⁸⁰ In 1884 William Fuch’s joined the firm as her apprentice and Blanchard trained him with the same high standards she received at Waite’s office. In 1890 he became a partner and the firm became Bethune and Fuchs.

⁷⁹ Adrian Barbasch, “Louise Blanchard Bethune The AIA Accepts Its First Woman Member,” in *Architecture a Place for Women*, ed. Ellen Perry Berkeley, (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), 16.

⁸⁰ Johanna Hays, “Louise Blanchard Bethune: Architect Extraordinaire and First American Woman Architect, Practiced in Buffalo, New York (1885-1905)” (doctoral thesis, Auburn University, 2007), 12.

Blanchard was described as a “woman of strong professional principals...[s]he had been a pioneer and a highly principled professional.”⁸¹ Historians state that having a child did not seem to alter Blanchard’s practice as an architect and principal in charge of the firm. She was able to balance her professional and private life throughout her career. Blanchard “apparently had a strong business sense and was meticulous about the legal and accounting paperwork”⁸² which helped her company to have continued work throughout the changing economy.

During this time, New York City was flourishing and Buffalo benefited from this growth. Blanchard’s apprenticeship training made her qualified to work on various project types, and due to her experience, the firm acquired many different project types ranging from industrial, educational, various commercial. The firm did limited residential work because Blanchard felt that this type of work was not profitable.

The late 1800’s saw a growing awareness of the need for sanitation and life safety was changing the design and construction industries. Utilization of proper ventilation, indoor plumbing to include running hot and cold water, toilets, along with fireproofing methods and materials made the qualifications for architects more critical than ever before. As life safety issues came to the forefront, the need for architectural expertise became essential. Proper training and licensing were needed for architects to separate

⁸¹ Adrian Barbasch, “Louise Blanchard Bethune The AIA Accepts Its First Woman Member,” in *Architecture a Place for Women*, ed. Ellen Perry Berkeley (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), 21-22.

⁸² Johanna Hays, “Louise Blanchard Bethune: Architect Extraordinaire and First American Woman Architect, Practiced in Buffalo, New York (1885-1905)” (doctoral thesis, Auburn University, 2007), 79.

them from self proclaimed architects who had no formal education, training or apprenticeship. Liability with life safety made it necessary for formal contracts to be established. Major changes were happening in the field of architecture in America and Blanchard was an integral part of this.

Throughout the nation, women were demanding equal rights and Blanchard was one of the forerunners for equality for women architects. She was an advocate for women being allowed to obtain architectural licenses but was not able to see it to its fruition because it took twenty-five years to get passed thanks to the tireless, career long dedication of women like Blanchard. By hard work, notable projects, and being able to run a successful firm, she gained respect and a good reputation in the architectural community which was predominantly male. In 1885, she was unanimously accepted by her male peers into the Western Association of Architects. She was the first woman to attain this honor. Blanchard was not accepted into the association because she was a woman but because she was a competent architect and professional. Her keen business sense made her a key organizer of the Architects Association of Buffalo called the Buffalo Society of Architects. In 1888 Blanchard was accepted into the American Institute of Architects (AIA) as the first woman elected into the organization and the Buffalo Society of Architects officially became the Buffalo Chapter of the AIA. She was then elected in 1889 to be a Fellow, the first woman to attain this honor. Johanna Hays, an Auburn University doctoral candidate who wrote her doctoral thesis on Blanchard summarized her election into the male dominated organizations, "She constructed an architectural practice more financially sound and varied in its output than almost any

other in Buffalo. What Bethune accomplished was not the result of the WAA or AIA accepting her into the brotherhood. Rather, what she accomplished made it possible for those professional associations to accept her.”⁸³ Through her work with these professional organizations, Blanchard was an integral part of establishing licensing standards and regulation of the field.

Throughout her career, Blanchard had a diverse portfolio of project types ranging from schools, armories, police stations, hospitals, settlement houses, and hotels. She utilized state of the art technology in plumbing, communications, engineering, materials, and design theory to create her projects. One notable project was the Lafayette Hotel in Buffalo (in figure 2) built in 1904. This was one of the first hotels in the country to have running hot and cold water and a telephone in each guest room. It was also one of the first projects in America to utilize steel framing with a concrete foundation.



Figure 2: Source: Mary Ann Sullivan, www.bluffton.edu.

Lafayette Hotel 2009

⁸³ Ibid., 80.

Another series of notable projects was her work in the public school system in the late 1800s. She has been credited for designing nine public schools in the area that utilized a new educational setting that was a departure from the traditional one room school house. During this time, due to women led reforms in public policy, more children were attending school and there was an enforcement of truancy. Schools were now designed with smaller, age separated uniform classrooms within a context of a larger structure. Health and safety were also addressed with fireproof materials such as heavy timber, indoor plumbing and utilization of natural ventilation and lighting. Blanchard also utilized the theory of having two exits from the interior for safety and used minimal extraneous ornamentation to keep the projects within budget.⁸⁴

Blanchard was well respected as a professional and as a woman in the community. She was a speaker at the Women's Educational and Industrial Union in 1891 which was published in *The Inland Architect and News Record*. She stated in her speech, "Women have entered the architectural profession at a much earlier stage of existence even before it has received legislative recognition. They meet no serious opposition from the profession nor the public. Neither are they warmly welcomed. They minister no special needs of women, and receive no special favors from them."⁸⁵

Blanchard truly believed that women architects were no different than men if they pursued their career diligently. Her opinion as to why there were so few woman

⁸⁴ Ibid., 136-164.

⁸⁵ Louise Bethune, "Women and Architecture," *The Inland Architect and News Record* (Buffalo, NY), March 1891.

architects is clear in her statement taken from her speech, "...the only respect in which they fall below their brothers is in the actual construction. They shirk the brick-and-mortar-rubber-boot-and-ladder-climbing period of investigation, and as a consequence remain at the tracing stage of draftsmanship."⁸⁶ She worked hard and provided her clients with sound designs within budget and in a timely manner. Her gender played no role in her ability or inability as an architect. "The future of woman in the architectural profession is what she herself sees fit to make it."⁸⁷ She elaborated in stating, "[t]he objective of the business woman are quite distinct from those of the professional agitator. Her aims are conservative rather than aggressive; her strength lies in adaptability, not in reform, and her desire is to conciliate rather than to antagonize."⁸⁸

Being a person of strong principles, Blanchard refused to enter the women only competition for the Woman's Building at the Columbian Exposition. She vocally stated her opposition to the competition because of her belief in "Equal Remuneration for Equal Service."⁸⁹ Blanchard believed that gender should not alter the compensation amount or discriminate on who can compete. She felt the competition should be based on competence. Hays feels that, "[i]f she had been prone to self-promotion or entering

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

national architectural competitions, her work most certainly would have been better known.”⁹⁰

Blanchard continued to practice until 1905 and had an estimated one hundred projects during her twenty-nine year career when she moved out of Buffalo to be closer to her son who had become a doctor. She suffered from kidney disease and needed frequent care. Her official retirement from the firm is recorded as 1908 at which time she transferred her company stake to her remaining two partners. Her husband continued to practice until 1911. Blanchard died on December 1913 at the age of fifty-seven of kidney trouble.⁹¹

As one of the first recognized women pioneers in architecture, Blanchard is an example of a woman determined to attain success. She pursued her career and practiced as if no obstacles existed in her way.

In the 1880’s there were no well known, documented, or publicized women architects or role models for Blanchard to reference. Her hands on apprenticeship training under a male architect seem to have influenced her approach to practice. Blanchard practiced as a man would and encouraged other women to do the same. She led by example and was active in both the design and construction phases of projects.

⁹⁰ Johanna Hays, “Louise Blanchard Bethune: Architect Extraordinaire and First American Woman Architect, Practiced in Buffalo, New York (1885-1905)” (doctoral thesis, Auburn University, 2007), 135.

⁹¹ Adrian Barbasch, “Louise Blanchard Bethune The AIA Accepts Its First Woman Member,” in *Architecture a Place for Women*, ed. Ellen Perry Berkeley, (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), 21.

Throughout her career, Blanchard successfully able to live a balanced life by running a small firm, raising a child, was an active member in architectural organizations, and was a woman activist, fighting for equal rights for women in architecture.

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Marion Mahony Griffin (1871-1961)



Figure 3: Source: *Places*, <http://places.designobserver.com>.

Marion Mahony after graduating from MIT 1894

Marion Lucy Mahony was the first registered woman architect in America. Her talent as an architect and delineator was exceptional. For Mahony, however, she defined her career with a male partner and has historically been overlooked as a significant architect. Whether it was Frank Lloyd Wright or her husband, Walter Burley Griffin, Mahony was publicly did not take credit for any collaborative work but privately she was very passionate, vocal, and intricately involved in the success of their projects. She was arguably the reason for her male counterpart's ability to achieve star status in the field. During her career, architecture was a becoming a more defined profession with formal

schooling or training and licensing requirements to practice. There were more women in the profession during her career and Mahony was a pioneer not because of her gender, but in her ability as both a designer and illustrator.

Mahony was born in Chicago, Illinois in 1871. Mahony was the second of five children of Jeremiah, a school teacher and journalist, and Clara Hamilton, a school teacher and later administrator. Soon after her birth, her family moved to Winnetka to escape the chaos of the Great Chicago Fire. Her cousin, Dwight Perkins, a future architect as well, lived nearby and they grew up together exploring Hubbard Woods. A home fire caused both her family and the Perkins family to move back to Chicago. Her father died of an overdose in 1883 and in 1886, her mother became a school administrator and exposed her daughter to “intellectual and artistic milieu”⁹² and was raised with much freedom to explore nature. “As a young woman, she took up the challenge staked out by her mother and her mother’s circle of independently minded democratic women to play a constructive role and provide an example of womanly fulfillment in community life, family life and professional work.”⁹³ This base would shape her as a professional and

⁹² Alice T. Friedman, “Girl Talk: Marion Mahony Griffin, Frank Lloyd Wright and the Oak Park Studio,” *Places*, June 6, 2011, <http://places.designobserver.com/feature/girl-talk-marion-mahony-griffin/27888/>.

⁹³ “Marion Mahony Griffin 1871-1961,” *Australian Women’s History Forum*, *Democritysaisy*, February 15, 2012, <http://womenshistory.net.au/2012/02/15/marion-mahony-griffin/>.

woman. She was described as “outspoken, dramatic,”⁹⁴ intelligent, with liberal and strong values.

Mahony was the second woman to graduate from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1894 with a degree in architecture. After graduation she moved back to Chicago and went to work for her cousin, Dwight Perkins, who had also become an architect and had his own firm. In 1898 she went on to be the first female registered architect in the United States. At Perkins office, Mahony worked on Steinway Hall, a twelve story building in Chicago and many other projects giving her an understanding of the design process and construction practices. While working there she met Frank Lloyd Wright who was a colleague of her cousin and Walter Burley Griffin who would be her future husband. Working with Perkins in the Steinway Hall, she has only recently been included as one of the pioneers of the Prairie School of design.

In 1895, her cousin’s firm’s work load began to slow and she went to work for Wright. During that time, Wright, who would later become world reknown for this Prairie Style of architecture and numerous designs in American and abroad, was developing his studio in Oak Park. Working for Wright, Mahony developed her rendering and drafting skills and was the architect for projects like the All Souls Church (in figure 4). The Oak Park studio was described by many past employees and Wright himself as a learning setting in which many ideas relating to architecture and society were shared by all including Mahony. Historian Allen Brooks in his book *The Prairie School: Frank Lloyd Wright and His Midwest Contemporaries*, quotes Barry Byrne, a former co-

⁹⁴ “Marion Mahony,” *PBS*, 1999, <http://www.pbs.org/wbgriffin/marion>.

worker at Wright's office, qualified Mahony as "the most talented member of Frank Lloyd Wright's staff"⁹⁵ with unique and detailed renderings and designs. She was responsible for the majority of the renderings in Wright's Wasmuth Portfolio for which he gained much notoriety. Many felt her renderings were a key in the success of Wright's works and as Lynn Becker, architectural writer, stated in her article "Frank Lloyd Wright's Right-Hand Woman" that "[i]t could be speculated that Wright's work, itself, was influenced by Mahony's role in the spirited exchanges of ideas that went on in his studio, yet she is one a series of pioneering women architects and designers who have disappeared into the deep shadow of their male associates."⁹⁶ She designed furniture, windows, interior ornamentation many now identify as the Prairie Style.



Figure 4: Source: Prairie Style, www.prairiestyles.com.

Church of All Souls, Evanston, Illinois

⁹⁵ Lynn Becker, "Frank Lloyd Wright's Right-Hand Woman," *Repeat*, 2005, <http://www.lynnbecker.com/repeat/Mahony/mahony.htm>.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

In 1909, Wright decided to leave Chicago with his mistress and move to Europe. His confidence in Mahony's ability to both finish his projects and his firm was reaffirmed in his desire to have her run his projects and firm in his absence. However, she declined. Mahony was described as having "a very strong personal relationship with her employer and his wife"⁹⁷ and dedicated herself to Wright for fourteen years. When he chose to leave his wife and his practice, it is speculated that Mahony also felt abandoned. Ultimately, Herman Von Holst agreed to take over Wright's projects and staff and Mahony agreed to work for him on the condition that she would have full authority over all projects created by the firm. While running all the projects for Von Holst, she recommended he hire Walter Burley Griffin in 1910, her former co-worker who was a landscape designer. Griffin joined the firm and together their connection of the built environment and nature flourished.

In 1911 she and Walter married. Five years his senior, friends were surprised at their union because Mahony was described as "fiery"⁹⁸ and Walter was described as "mild mannered."⁹⁹ Their differences, however, seemed to provide the balance needed for a successful partnership both privately and professionally (in figure 5). Their practice appears to have been a true collaboration between husband and wife as architectural partners. As Dr. Jeffrey Turnbull, author of the City of Dreams, summarized in Judy

⁹⁷ "Marion Mahony," *PBS*, 1999, <http://www.pbs.org/wbgriffin/marion>.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

Wells' article "The Collaboration of Marion Mahony Griffin and Walter Burley Griffin," "certain things that she brings to that collaboration from her enthusiasm and knowledge. And of course he has his own experiences and ideals, and they combine wonderfully to produce Griffin architecture."¹⁰⁰



Figure 5: Source: National Library of Australia
Photograph of Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin

After their marriage, Mahony and her husband left Van Holst's office and the two formed their own practice. Walter was the principal in charge of the office and Mahony was historically viewed as his chief draftsman. However, after more recent in depth research by many historians and architects, her role as his professional and life partner is evident. "She began to use her pen to breathe life"¹⁰¹ into all of his designs. Mahony

¹⁰⁰ Judy Wells, "The Collaboration of Marion Mahony Griffin and Walter Burley Griffin," *Walter Burley Griffin Society*, 2006, [http://www.griffingsociety.org/Introducing the Griffins/wbg.html](http://www.griffingsociety.org/Introducing%20the%20Griffins/wbg.html).

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

devoted “the bulk of her efforts toward furthering his career”¹⁰² and name as architect. In her memoir, “The Magic of America” she reflects on herself when first working with Griffin as “[t]ruly I lost myself in him and found it completely satisfying.”¹⁰³

In late 1911, they entered a competition to design the Federal Capital of Australia in Canberra, Australia. Again her renderings were thought to be the key to her husband’s winning of the competition. At this time Lloyd Wright publicly disclaimed any past design contributions from both Griffin and Mahony and claimed they were plagiarists of his designs thus severing any ties between them. Griffin and Mahony together designed over one hundred thirty projects in the United States. One example of their collaborative efforts is the Melson house (in figure 6). It’s utilization of the landscaping and terrain combined with the functionality of the home were evidence of the dynamic design partnership Griffin and Mahony had together.

¹⁰² Fred Bernstein, "Rediscovering a Heroine of Chicago Architecture," *The New York Times*, January 1, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/01/arts/design/01maho.html>.

¹⁰³ Marion Mahony Griffin, “The Magic of America,” *The Art Institute of Chicago*, 2007, <http://www.artic.edu/magicofamerica/>.

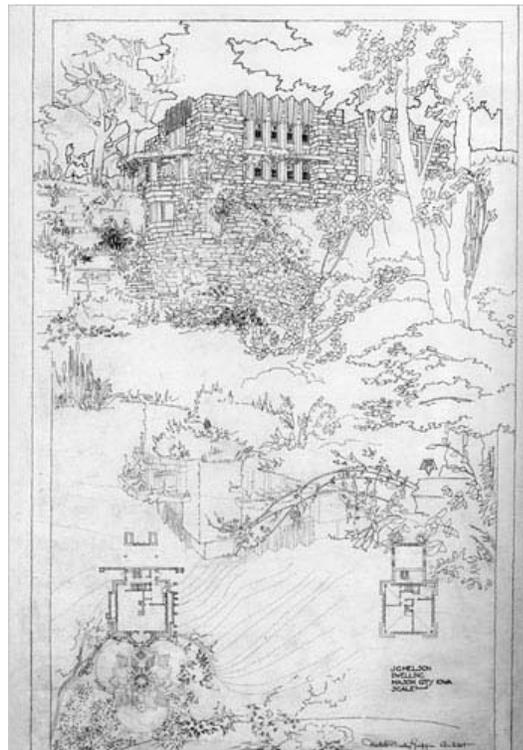


Figure 6: Source: Avery Library, Columbia University
 Mahony's rendering of the Melson house in Mason City, Iowa 1912

For the Canberra project, Griffin visited Australia and fell in love with the landscape. They moved to Australia in 1914 and their Chicago office was left in the hand of employee Barry Byrne and eventually closed in 1917. Griffin was appointed the Federal Capital Director of Design and Construction in Canberra and Mahony oversaw his projects in Melbourne. In her memoir, she includes correspondence she and her husband wrote to one another while separated. These letters depict Marion's charge to defend her husband's visions and the fight she led to give women an equal voice in Sydney's Town Planning Association as evident in a quotation from Mahony's memoir,

“[t]he three chief enemies later spent much time vilifying Griffin”¹⁰⁴ and her strong conviction for equal rights as describing herself and women supporters as “not being willing to lie down and be walked over.”¹⁰⁵ World War I stopped all construction in Canberra and the project was never built, Griffin was forced to resign his position.

In 1919 Mahony and Griffin moved to Middle Harbor and founded the Greater Sydney Development Association and later purchased six hundred fifty acres of land the area now known as Castlecrag. The goal of the Association was to develop a community in which the suburban development respected “the native Australian landscape which the Griffins had come to understand and admire.”¹⁰⁶ Their designs were credited in bringing “organic architecture to Australia...The houses were technically innovative and are of significant research value for understanding the progressive nature of inter-war domestic architecture in Australia.”¹⁰⁷ Strict covenants were imposed on each homeowner to preserve and upkeep the natural environment in which they lived. This development combined the couple’s love of the landscape of the land and respect for the natural environment (in figure 7). Through this experience she and her husband were introduced

¹⁰⁴ Marion Mahony Griffin, “The Magic of America,” *The Art Institute of Chicago*, 2007, <http://www.artic.edu/magicofamerica/>.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 68

¹⁰⁶ “Castlecrag, Sydney,” *Walter Burley Griffin Society*, 2006, <http://esvc000127.wic044u.server-web.com/Lives and Works/a castlecrag.html>.

¹⁰⁷ “Walter Burley Griffin Housing Precinct”, *Australian Institute of Architects Nationally Significant 20th-Century Architecture*, April 28, 2010, <http://www.architecture.com.au/emailnews/national/Heritage/NSW-Walter-Burley-Griffin-Housing-Precinct.pdf>.

to the anthroposophical society which influenced their way of life. As developed by Rudolph Steiner, the philosophy of anthroposophy is “a source of spiritual knowledge and a practice of inner development”¹⁰⁸ in which individuals seek to understand human connection with the spiritual world through self reflection. Through this self reflection, each person is able to “solve the riddles of existence and to transform both self and society.”¹⁰⁹ Mahony has credited anthroposophy as an influence in their future project designs like the Castlecrag and Lucknow master plan projects.



Figure 7: Source: Deirdre and Ivor Morton, Walter Burley Griffin Society.
Wilson House in bushland setting of The Barbette, Castlecrag, 1930's

Mahony eventually managed their projects in Sydney, separated from her husband once again. They lived in Australia for fourteen years and although some commissions, like Castlecrag, were not as successful as they had hoped with only fifteen houses built,

¹⁰⁸ “The Anthroposophical Society of America,” Anthroposophical Society in America, <http://www.anthroposophy.org>.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

they had many other projects that were very successful due to the work of both Griffin and Mahony like the Café Australia described in a Melbourne newspaper at its opening as “[u]ndoubtedly, the handsomest café in Australia.”¹¹⁰ Despite projects like the Café Australia and Capitol Theatre, they had to seek out work elsewhere.

In 1935, her husband was invited, through contacts from their anthroposophical associations, to design a library in Lucknow India for Lucknow University and once again moved without her. There, Griffin’s commissions greatly increased and he needed her assistance. In 1936 she moved to Lucknow and assisted him with his projects there, trained support staff and together they completed numerous projects which included residential, educational and industrial buildings.

In 1937, her husband died suddenly of peritonitis. Mahony stayed in India to complete his work then left Eric Milton Nicholls in charge and returned to Chicago in 1938. Marion reflected on her return to the United States as an adventure in which she said, “was born to put my shoulder to the wheel of molding the destiny of my country, to break down its boundaries in Economic thinking, to transform it...”¹¹¹ Mahony returned to the United States during the Great Depression. She lived another twenty-four years in Chicago, working on commissions of her own which unfortunately fell through due to the economy, studying anthroposophy, helping to raise her favorite niece Clarmyra, and wrote her memoir, “The Magic of America”, of her life and career with her husband. In

¹¹⁰ Marion Mahony Griffin, “The Magic of America,” *The Art Institute of Chicago*, 2007, <http://www.artic.edu/magicofamerica/>.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 208

her memoir she reflects on her career and personal life with her husband and describes herself as “indissolubly fused with her husband.”¹¹²

Her memoirs also discredit a lot of what has been written about her professionally and her relationship with her husband in many publications. They reflect the passionate side of Mahony and are filled with loving correspondences with her husband and those she held close like her mother and niece. Her letters consistently reflect her appreciation of nature, passion for equal rights, loyalty to her husband, and feisty spirit. It also delineates her key role in every project she and her husband worked on. She was much more than his assistant, she was his partner.

Throughout her career and life, Mahony approached architecture as a “collaborator in a field of individualists, a builder of communities and connections in an increasingly fragmented and competitive professional world.”¹¹³ Her career after her marriage was dedicated to support the reputation and career of her husband, while independently challenging social and political injustices namely to women and her work with her husband. Reflecting upon her architectural career, it appears that society’s male biased need to claim ownership of significant architectural projects has created a focus on her male counterpart thus creating a male star in the profession. In Alice Friedman’s

¹¹² Fred Bernstein, “Rediscovering a Heroine of Chicago Architecture,” *The New York Times*, January 1, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/01/arts/design/01maho.html>.

¹¹³ Alice T. Friedman, “Girl Talk: Marion Mahony Griffin, Frank Lloyd Wright and the Oak Park Studio,” *Places*, June 6, 2011, <http://places.designobserver.com/feature/girl-talk-marion-mahony-griffin/27888/>.

essay, “Girl Talk: Marion Mahony Griffin, Frank Lloyd Wright and the Oak Park Studio” she concludes that Mahony’s upbringing as one in which was “fostered with gender equality and collaboration...being an architect and collaborator were not mutually exclusive conditions. On the contrary, they were building blocks of her identity as a professional, as a social reformer, and as a woman.”¹¹⁴ She carried this identity throughout her career with Wright and her husband. Her value system, which may have also been influenced by anthroposophy,¹¹⁵ appears to have been complete acceptance to be viewed as the support for her male superiors like Wright and Griffin. This does not reflect her individual talent and strong personal views which she did not seem to suppress but are in fact reflective of her selflessness and commitment to those she loved and believed in.

Her predecessors in architecture had fought for women to have the opportunity to enter the profession through a formal education and having the opportunity to obtain their license. Mahony took advantage of these opportunities and was a pioneer in being one of the first women to obtain her formal architectural degree from MIT, was the first woman licensed in America, and was one of the founding architects of the Prairie School style. Although there were some advances for women in the field, there were still many obstacles to overcome. Architecture was significantly male dominated and there were many prejudices against women being accepted as architects. However, Mahony did not

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Judy Wells, “The Collaboration of Marion Mahony Griffin and Walter Burley Griffin,” *Walter Burley Griffin Society*, 2006, [http://www.griffingsociety.org/Introducing the Griffins/wbg.html](http://www.griffingsociety.org/Introducing%20the%20Griffins/wbg.html).

let these obstacles stop her from progressing in the field. Described as having a “fierce commitment to equality”¹¹⁶ she made her own career choices and created her career path. Sadly, due to a gender biased architectural history, Mahony’s many individual accomplishments seemed to have been erased until recently. In respect to her working relationship with her husband, she chose to be the driving support to further his career - he did not choose this role for her. By the traditionally gender biased architectural history, the timeframe in which she practiced, and by her chosen role with her male counterpart, Mahony has not until recently, received deserved recognition for her work. Much of her accomplishments were directed to the male star in part due to her preference and in part due to the patriarchal architectural history and perspective of the field in the late 1800’s-early 1900’s. Elizabeth Birmingham, an associate professor of English at the North Dakota State University and is quoted in Bernstein’s article in *The New York Times* “Rediscovering a Heroine of Chicago Architecture” stated that, “The specifics of Mahony’s life fell victim to the primary scholarly effort to establish and fix the canon of ‘great men’ whose genius-personalities, buildings and texts would become central to the story of architecture.”¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Alice T. Friedman, “Girl Talk: Marion Mahony Griffin, Frank Lloyd Wright and the Oak Park Studio,” *Places*, June 6, 2011, <http://places.designobserver.com/feature/girl-talk-marion-mahony-griffin/27888/>.

¹¹⁷ Fred Bernstein, “Rediscovering a Heroine of Chicago Architecture,” *The New York Times*, January 1, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/01/arts/design/01maho.html>.

In 1961, Marion passed away. Her remains were interred in Graceland Cemetery in Chicago, known as “Chicago’s architect’s cemetery”¹¹⁸ with architects like Sullivan and Mies van der Rohe buried there, with custom grave markers reflective of their architectural style. Originally, she was placed in an “inexpensive foot-square niche”¹¹⁹ but in 1997, led by the efforts of John K. Notz, a specialist in Griffin’s history and Paul Kruty of the University of Illinois at Urbana, and as the architectural community’s awareness of the true history of her practice surfaced, she was given a formal memorial and was moved into a granite columbarium with one of her floral designs embossed on her marker. “A renewed awareness and respect for Marion Mahony’s legacy was signaled by the unexpected large turnout, which included, according to one observer, a who’s-who of the city’s women architects.”¹²⁰ Without her husband, whose grave is in Lucknow, Mahony lies interred along with other notable architects of Chicago.

The Australian Women’s Register states in their review of her career, “Marion Mahony Griffin’s creative force has hesitantly received richer recognition as her prowess as an architect and an artist have continued to be seen in a more independent light.”¹²¹ However, for Mahony, her career as an architect was equally as important to her as her role as the key support of her male star counterpart, namely her husband, appears to have

¹¹⁸ Lynn Becker, “Marion Mahony Griffin – in Australia and Beyond,” *Repeat*, 2005, www.lynnbecker.com/repeat/Mahony/mahonyaussie.htm.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ Roslyn Russell, “Mahony Griffin, Marion Lucy (1871-1961),” *The Australian Women’s Register*, 2010, <http://www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/AWE2103b.htm>.

been fulfilling as it was her definition of success. As Judy Wells, lecturer at the University of Newcastle, who did her PhD on Marion Mahony, summarized her perspective of Mahony's professional ambition as, "Marion Mahony knew the value of her contribution, and the enthusiasm with which she subsumed her own creative forces to, as she says in *The Magic of America*, 'make me a slave to my husband in his creative work', was her way of being a wife within the conventions of early twentieth century life. But perhaps more than that, it was Marion Mahony's way of celebrating and supporting what she believed was Walter Griffin's genius."¹²²

¹²² Judy Wells, "The Collaboration of Marion Mahony Griffin and Walter Burley Griffin," *Walter Burley Griffin Society*, 2006, [http://www.griffingsociety.org/Introducing the Griffins/wbg.html](http://www.griffingsociety.org/Introducing%20the%20Griffins/wbg.html).

Chapter 3: Case Study

Julia Morgan (1872-1955)



Figure 8: Source: Sara Boutelle Collection

Julia Morgan, Ecole des Beaux-Arts identification card, 1899

Julia Morgan is the most historically recognized woman architect in American history thus far. Her prolific practice spanned over forty years and produced over eight hundred projects ranging in project types. From the start of her professional path to become an architect, Morgan was notable. As the first woman to graduate from the exclusive Ecole des Beaux Arts, Morgan did not let gender barriers stop her from achieving her goals. Throughout her practice gender did not seem to be a factor and no prejudicial treatment against her has been documented. Morgan is notable for her vast range of architectural styles but also because of technical competence and due diligence

throughout design and construction. Her professional path is significant not only as a pioneering woman architect but is also significant because of her exceptional competence, work ethic, and professional success.

Born on January 20, 1872 to Charles and Eliza Parmelee Morgan, Julia was the second of five children. Morgan was described by her mother as “the most determined and the most emotionally intense of the children.”¹²³ They lived an upper middle class lifestyle in Oakland, filled with trips to New England to visit the Parmelee grandparents; piano, violin, and dance lessons; and many options to travel and experience the world than many other young girls of her time. Here close, nurturing family gave Morgan the solid foundation she needed through school and practice.

In 1890 Architecture school was not an option for women at Berkeley so Morgan entered the University of California, Berkeley and earned a degree in engineering. She was the only woman in her class and joined the sorority Kappa Alpha Theta for women students. This sorority proved to be of great benefit to Morgan both as a student, providing her with female comrades and later as a professional, providing her with a network of woman business contacts and clients. Her engineering degree provided her with a solid foundation in building structural design, which would be a necessary base for her future architectural career. It also introduced her to a critical mentor, Bernard Maybeck. Maybeck was her geometry teacher and had recently returned from the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. He had a small architectural firm and would invite top students

¹²³ Sara Boutelle, *Julia Morgan Architect*, New York: Abbeville Press Publishers, 1988, 21.

to intern in his practice after graduation. Morgan, being one of the best students in her class was invited to intern in his office.

After her graduation in 1894, Morgan briefly studied art at the Hopkins School of Art Instruction while interning at Maybeck's office. Both of these experiences would prove to be beneficial for the next challenge in her life. Maybeck encouraged Morgan to apply to the Ecole des Beaux Arts School although it still did not accept women into their architectural program because of the potential he saw in her as an architect.

In 1896 her parents paid for her to cross the United States to New England, to visit family, visit the Polytechnic Institute (future MIT), and visit the office of her cousin's husband who had an architectural practice in New York – Napoleon LeBrun and Sons. On this trip, Morgan was to decide her next step in her life. She wavered between interning at an architectural firm in New England, entering Polytechnic Institute or following the encouragement of her mentor and moving to Paris in hopes of being accepted into the Ecole des Beaux Arts school eventually. “[H]er confidence, her diligence, and her ambition made the Ecole des Beaux Arts the inevitable next challenge.”¹²⁴

Morgan entered a private atelier of Marcel de Monclos, a friend of Maybeck. While practicing architecture in the atelier, the French government decided to allow women to compete to enter the painting and sculptors school. Morgan's training in art had benefited her and in 1898, after three tries, she was accepted into the program and

¹²⁴ Ibid., 25.

entered the atelier of Benjamin Chaussemiche, a very prominent atelier during that time. Although determined and focused on school, Morgan was homesick and missed her family. Her younger brother Avery moved to Paris and lived with Morgan for the next two years. This companionship seemed to help Morgan find her way. She began to flourish in the school, enjoyed the city of Paris, and in February 1902, she earned her “first mention” and successfully received her certificate.

After earning her certificate, Morgan continued to work in the Chaussemiche atelier but returned to the United States later that year. Due to her academic success, talent and reputation for being competent, Morgan had many different employment options. She could work in LeBrun’s office in New York or teach at UC Berkeley under John Galen Howard, however, Morgan chose to follow her dream of opening her own practice. She worked from her parent’s home for one and a half years and assisted Howard with various projects, then took her architectural licensing exam in 1904 and opened her office shortly thereafter. The earthquake of April 1906 destroyed her office but brought about many new opportunities for Morgan. The earthquake and subsequent fire destroyed much of San Francisco and left the city in need of architects. In the summer of 1907, Morgan opened her new office in the Merchants Exchange Building naming it “Julia Morgan, Architect”, a name she would keep for her firm throughout her long career.

Morgan was able to use her diverse background to solidify her architectural proficiency. Her engineering background provided the structural soundness of her designs; her art background allowed her to finely detail her projects she designed; her

compassion and caring nature allowed her to connect and form a working relationship with her clients and staff; and her architectural background allowed her to tie these features together to create a competent and sound professional practice.

Throughout her career, Morgan opened her doors to both women and men, aware of the balance needed to keep her firm running smoothly. “Wherever she was, she was boss”¹²⁵ said one of her former employees Dorothy Woumser Coblertz. She also “insisted on being called Miss Morgan and gave her staff sketches of her design intent for projects and worked closely with her designers/draftspeople to ensure her intent was understood and followed through. No one was allowed shortcuts or any but the finest materials.”¹²⁶ She maintained control over the projects, by being the only one to meet with the clients. Morgan, however, showed her compassionate side to her employees by taking good care of them financially when times were good and holding on to them during the hard times. She assisted her employees with their children’s education, bought them toys and books, and was even godmother for some of their children. In more than one instance, Morgan took in to her home her employee’s children. One example of this is her treatment of employee Bjarne Dahl. He was in Hawaii, working on the YWCA in Honolulu starting in 1937 and eventually left Morgan’s firm to work in government and Army Corps in Hawaii. In 1941 Pearl Harbor was attacked. Dahl’s wife was a nurse and was in the military. Morgan insisted that Dahl send his twelve year old son to live with her. She provided him with schooling, culture and fun. Morgan believed that similar to

¹²⁵ Ibid., 45.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 44.

her childhood, children should have fun while being disciplined and educated. Morgan was also a mentor for the woman architects and draftspeople in her office throughout their careers. Women like C. Julian Mesic, Charlotte Knapp, and Elizabeth Boyter were former employees of Morgan's with whom she kept in touch with an encouraged to continue practicing even with employment in other firms throughout their careers.¹²⁷

While her practice flourished, Morgan also had the companionship of her brother Avery and a close relationship with her sister Emma.¹²⁸ Throughout her life she took care of her brother by allowing him to live with her in Paris and travel with her but "his favorite role was as chauffeur of her Hudson automobile. Julia served as his companion and protector until his death in 1940."¹²⁹

Morgan's compassion and caring was also given to her clients and contacts. She had a very successful career with many repeat clientele. Agnes and George Wilson commissioned her for the YWCA, bank and store renovations, and their own home; Dunning Rideout commissioned her to design various schools, clubhouses, banks, and his own residence; Susan Mills commissioned her for various projects on the Mills College campus; Phoebe Hearst and later her son William Randolph Hearst commissioned her for various projects on their estates. Her contacts from her sorority, joint ventures with Maybeck and references opened many doors to projects but her competence is what had them return with more commissions.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 85-86.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 22.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

Her professional timing was exceptional. Women were entering professional fields in the United States. Since the early 1900's, more women were in positions of professional power and looked towards their network of woman to work with. Fortunately for Morgan, she was a part of that network and greatly succeeded because of her contacts that opened doors for her and she was able to back it up with competence and good service.

Throughout her career, Morgan was heavily involved in every project, nurturing it from beginning to end. She was the in the field with the artisans and construction workers, observing and exploring construction first hand. Her reputation in the construction field was also exceptional, "she soon gained a reputation for careful work, for on-site supervision, and every step of construction and for her ability to convert to positive effect any problems she encountered."¹³⁰ Morgan had the ability to fulfill the needs of her diverse clients and fulfill their needs. She put her ego and her own personal aspirations for each project on the side to meet the needs of her clients. However, when clients needed guidance, she would lead them with great competence and inspiration to keep the project moving until it was completed.

An example of Morgan's major project in her career is the Hearst estate in San Simeon in 1919 (in figure 9). For over twenty-five years, Morgan worked closely with William Randolph Hearst (in figure 10) fulfilling his every architectural whim even though his finances did not always back up his ideas. Together they designed multiple

¹³⁰ Ibid., 129.

properties which included living quarters, lavish pools, a zoo, wine cellar, and numerous other amenities. There are letters from Morgan to Hearst concerned about the lack of and timeliness of payment. However, through the years, they continued their partnership which included lavish projects. “It is indeed uncommon for a client and architect to forge a bond as close as theirs was over twenty-five years.”¹³¹ Morgan stood by Hearst through the good and bad of the project as his architect, confidant and friend.



Figure 9: Source: Hearst Castle

The Enchanted Hill

¹³¹ Ibid., 239.



Figure 10: Source: Bison Archives

W.R. Hearts and Julia Morgan, San Simeon 1921

Any issue with her gender proved to be overshadowed by her competence. In 1929, she was awarded with an honorary doctorate from the University of California, Berkeley for her great artistic and engineering achievements in her projects. “Morgan was known as an accomplished architect, and...had gained a reputation as a hardworking gifted supervisor.”¹³²

In 1951, after forty-seven years of successful practice, Morgan decided to close her office. There was no one on her staff to take over and she had no children of her own. She requested that her building superintendent, Otto Haake, burn most of her project files. She left her library and other memorabilia to her only remaining heirs, her nephew and niece. Sadly, after her office closed, Morgan saw a decline in her health and her social interaction was limited thus leaving her lonely. She seemed to have sunk into a

¹³² Sarah Allaback, *The First American Women Architects*, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008, 141.

depression. Her past employees worked for other firms; her favorite brother and dependant Avery her companion throughout her entire life had passed died in 1940; many of her friends and colleagues had passed away; her friend and teacher Maybeck was gone; her favorite client Hearst had died; her memory was fading; and her love of travel was hindered by her physical limitations. With no one for her to care for or to need her guidance, Morgan did not leave her home and the only allowed visitors were her secretary and her tenants for the last four years of her life. She died alone with only her nurse companion who she had hired in her last few years of life.¹³³

Morgan has been called the most “prolific pioneer woman architect”¹³⁴ of the twentieth century. Her diverse and established list of over eight hundred projects and diverse project types, her dedication to clients in giving them the best service, her high standards in practice, combined with her standard of quality and intricacy is evidence of her professionalism and ability. Thankfully, her heirs later donated her collection to CalPoly in 1980. Architectural historian Sara Boutelle, and a number of her clients also donated their collections of her work to preserve her legacy in the field. Although very reserved and somewhat shy, Morgan was very determined and hard working to pursue her goals. As one of the pioneering women of the twentieth century, she broke gender barriers by being the first woman to enter the Ecole des Beaux Arts. Without any hesitation she pursued her dream of opening her own practice not as a sole practitioner

¹³³ Sara Boutelle, *Julia Morgan Architect*, New York: Abbeville Press Publishers, 1988, 241.

¹³⁴ Sara Boutelle, “Julia Morgan,” *Women in American Architecture: A Historic and Contemporary Perspective*, ed. Susana Torre, New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1977, 79.

which was fairly common for the few women architects at that time, but as the principal of a full service staff which was somewhat unprecedented. There was no obstacle that prevented her from achieving her personal goals and success for her practice. Always avoiding the limelight, Morgan quietly and with little recognition continued to successfully approach each project uniquely, connecting with the client's needs and personal taste.

The contributions she made to the built environment and for women in the profession were humbly viewed by Morgan. In a rare interview, Morgan gave her views of women in architecture to Marcia Mead in the November 27, 1931 *Christian Science Monitor*. As quoted in Boutelle's biography of Julia Morgan, she acknowledged that although women as architectural clients had made significant progress, as architects, women had "contributed little or nothing to the profession – no great artist, no revolutionary ideas, no outstanding ideas."¹³⁵ Humbly commenting on the work of women in architecture including herself and looking towards the future she stated, "They have, however, done sincere good work along with the tide, and as the years go on, undoubtedly some greater than other architects will be developed, and in fair proportion to the number of outstanding men to the number in the rank and file."¹³⁶

Her achievements in her career are inspirational to the women practicing in the field today. Her diverse portfolio, independence in pursuing her dreams and continued

¹³⁵ Sara Boutelle, *Julia Morgan Architect*, New York: Abbeville Press Publishers, 1988, 87.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

effort to do good work is an example of a woman somewhat unaffected by her gender throughout her life and career. By her example, women of the twenty-first century should be inspired to pursue their goals and create their own path to success.

Chapter 3: Case Study

Denise Scott Brown (1931-)



Figure 11: Source: Harvard Gazette Archives, www.news.harvard.edu/gazette.

Denise Scott Brown in 2005

Throughout her career, Denise Scott Brown has been recognized as the famous architect, Robert Venturi's wife or as a critic of the built environment, who was not afraid to openly speak of discrimination she has faced throughout her career because she is a woman. However, Scott Brown is much more than an architect's wife or architectural critic. She has collaborated on hundreds of planning and architectural projects; collaboratively and individually authored many critiques (books, essays, speeches) of the built environment and design; and has been an educator in various campuses throughout the United States. Her work has not only created a better built environment but has also challenged designers and planners to approach the profession with more critical thinking.

Scott Brown, whose maiden name was Denise Lakofsky, was born in Nkana, Zambia on October 3, 1931. Her parents, Simon and Phyllis Lakofski provided a middle class lifestyle for their family. Her mother had attended architecture school in Johannesburg but had to drop out after two years due to financial hardship. When Scott Brown was four, the family moved to Johannesburg, South Africa, into their custom designed home that her mother's former architecture school classmates had designed. She knew she wanted to be an architect at the early age of four or five because of her mother's interest in architecture. At the young age of ten, a teacher she had inspired her to look around at her surroundings and take interest in society. Being English in South Africa, her awareness of her environment, community, and social inequities between races arose many questions in her about culture and defining where she culturally fit within the world. Scott Brown was well aware of the sharp contrast between her community and the dire conditions of others. She also credits the style of schooling she had in which she had to learn by doing as the habit she carries throughout her career.

Scott Brown attended the University of Witwatersrand between 1948 and 1952. This is where she met Robert Scott Brown, her first husband. She continued her education at the Architectural Association School of Architecture in London in 1952. Both she and Robert obtained architectural degrees and married in 1955. During this time, WWII was over, the world was changing and Scott Brown absorbed all that she could from the society and environment around her. They worked in various places in Europe then moved to the United States in 1958. They studied planning at the University of Pennsylvania together but in 1959, Robert was killed in an auto accident. In 1960,

Scott Brown went on to earn her masters in city planning then her masters in architecture in 1965 and became a faculty member. A fellow faculty member was Robert Venturi. The two collaborated on projects and taught together.

In 1965, Scott Brown moved to the University of Berkeley and taught urban planning. She then became co-chair of the Urban Design Program at the University of California, Los Angeles. Scott Brown then moved on to Yale's School of Architecture and Planning and was a guest lecturer at Harvard. There, she and Robert Venturi crossed paths again. Scott Brown invited Venturi to visit Las Vegas with her class. This is where they eventually collaborated on one of their most famous published critique of the city in *Learning from Las Vegas* for which they have both been highly praised and criticized. They were married in 1967 and she moved to Philadelphia to work in her husband's firm, Venturi and Rauch. Scott Brown became a principal in 1969. During this time, women in American and specifically women architects became more vocal in concerning their rights, fought against discrimination, and organized themselves to challenge their sexist oppressors. Denise stood out as a vocal critic and as an independent thinker.

In 1972, Scott Brown gave birth to their only child, John. When asked about how she and her husband are able to balance their personal and business lives, her husband Venturi stated, "[l]iterally, we work seven days a week...we don't have much life outside

our office. When we were parents we felt very guilty for not spending enough time with our child.”¹³⁷

Together, Scott Brown and her husband (in figure 12) have collaborated on many design and planning projects, as well as authored many books, articles, and lectures. Venturi has stated that he and his wife are equal partners although many times she has been overshadowed by him. She has also been given attention because she is a woman architect and that has frustrated her due to the lack of focus on her professional work and talent. In a study by Erin Arnold of the University of Cincinnati, Scott Brown stated that her “largest issue I’ve had to overcome as a woman is having to fight for recognition of my work.”¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Vladimir Paperny, “An Interview with Denise Scott Brown and Robert Venturi,” reprint from *Architectural Digest Russia*, 2005, www.paperny.com/venturi.html.

¹³⁸ Erin Arnold, “Denise Scott Brown, Sisters, Brothers, & Others – Case Studies of Diversity in the Profession of Architecture, University of Cincinnati,” (<http://www.daap.space.daap.uc.edu/~petrasjs/PDF%10Projects/Denise%20Scott%20Brown%20PDF.pdf>, date unknown), 7.



Figure 12: Source: Frank Hanswijk, as included in Andrea Tamas Interview:
Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown

Denise Scott Brown and husband Robert Venturi

Scott Brown's portfolio is proof of her talent and hard work in the profession. Individually and with her husband has a very diverse palette of work. They have authored over fifteen books and planned and designed over four hundred projects.¹³⁹ An author both with and without her husband she has written over ten books on planning and design. Some are world renown titles which have shaped our built environment and changed the profession like *Learning From Las Vegas* which criticizes architects to be

¹³⁹ Vladimir Paperny, "An Interview with Denise Scott Brown and Robert Venturi," reprint from *Architectural Digest Russia*, 2005, www.paperny.com/venturi.html.

more receptive to the average person instead of commercial monuments, *Venturi Scott Brown and Associates* which reviews the firm's past collaborative works throughout the world; and *Urban Concepts* which elaborates on Scott Brown's role as a collaborator of urbanism and design. As an architect and planner, she has collaborated with others in her firm and specialists to produce various planning and design projects like the University of Michigan Campus Plan (in figure 13) which included three thousand plus acres for over thirty-eight thousand students; preservationist efforts like the relocation of the Lieb House which saved a 1969 "ordinary little house with conventional elements"¹⁴⁰ from demolition and was relocated across the East River to a new location next to another house designed by Venturi; and the Sainsbury Wing addition to the National Gallery in London, England which had to complement the historical architectural language and history of Trafalgar Square while incorporating new materials and technology. Scott Brown stated "So, although I'm proud we reintroduced symbolism as an element of architecture, we've done more than that – we've tried to heal the rift between architecture and urbanism and outlined new and useful ways to approach functionalism."¹⁴¹ Scott Brown's functionalism is on a city scale in which understanding how the individual building or project will affect its larger context and community.

¹⁴⁰ "VSBA Project List A-Z," VSBA, accessed March 20, 2012, www.vsba.com/projects/atozlist/index.html.

¹⁴¹ Andrea Tamas, "Interview: Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown," *Arch Daily Mobile*, April 25, 2011, <http://www.archdaily.com/130389/interview-robert-venturi-denise-scott-brown-by-andrea-tamas/>.

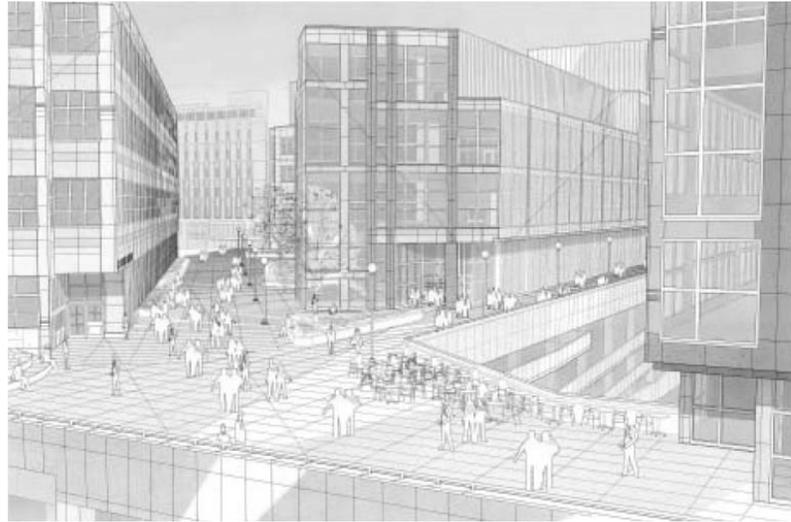


Figure 13: Source: VSBA web site
University of Michigan Campus Plan

When Scott Brown was in architecture school, the ratio of women in architecture was approximately 1:12. Architecture schools now are about 50:50.¹⁴² In her essay *Room at the Top? Sexism and Star System in Architecture*, Scott Brown, although a successful architect, planner, theorist, author and critic still faces discrimination and has stated that in 1989, “the discrimination continues at the rate of about one incident a day.”¹⁴³

Her outspoken nature and critique of the built environment has both benefitted and hurt her practice. However, despite the controversy and sometimes bad press, she

¹⁴² American Institute of Architects, “The Best of Architecture,” 2006 AIA Firm Survey, Washington, D.C.: The AIA, www.aia.org, 23.

¹⁴³ Denise Scott Brown, “Room at the Top? Sexism and the Star System in Architecture,” in *Architecture a Place for Women*, ed. Ellen Perry Berkeley (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), 244.

still believes women must hold on to their solidarity and not blend into the profession unnoticed. “To the extent that gurus are unavoidable and sexism is rampant in the architecture profession, my personal problem of submersion through the star system is insoluble.”¹⁴⁴

Scott Brown on commenting on her personal status as an educator, principal and mother stated, “Combining professional practice, an academic career, and a private life makes me walk a tightrope. First there was the double guilt of spending insufficient time on both the office and our child.”¹⁴⁵ In reflection of her career working with her spouse and their deep connection with each other, Scott Brown summarized that, “Our careers are an integral part of our lives, just like our relationship.... Since our work is such a dominant part of our lives, our relationship has to support that. Knowing each other and how we think in such a deep way is a real asset in design.”¹⁴⁶

Scott Brown moved to America in a time when the oppressed society, like women and people of color, were beginning to openly speak against discrimination. In the late 1950’s, equal opportunity for those of color, gender and religion was a goal and many who were not afraid to speak out against the norms of society. In the 1960’s, Scott

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 243.

¹⁴⁵ *Architecture: A Woman’s Perspective*, ed. Tanja Kullack (Berlin: Jovis Verlag GmbH, 2011), 126.

¹⁴⁶ Erin Arnold, “Denise Scott Brown, Sisters, Brothers, & Others – Case Studies of Diversity in the Profession of Architecture, University of Cincinnati,” (<http://www.daap.space.daap.uc.edu/~petrasjs/PDF%10Projects/Denise%20Scott%20Brown%20PDF.pdf>, date unknown), 8.

Brown and her outspoken nature challenged sexism in the profession of architecture and the process of design. Due to the pioneers before her in architecture, Scott Brown was able to obtain degrees in architecture and planning and was able to teach in well established universities but she also serves as a pioneer for the current and future generations of architects by continuing to fight her uphill battle against sexism and trying to change the way design is approached. She was able to get through and past barriers with regards to being a female architectural critic and author. Scott Brown has publicly questioned the educational system, symbolism, and star system as she experienced it throughout her career. Her work in planning and critical thinking approach to projects dismisses the individual need for recognition but examines the project as a whole, in its context of the built environment. “[L]earning –from-what’s-around-you”¹⁴⁷ is a theory in which she has based her life on. Her experience as a woman in the profession makes her fight for equal treatment not to gain recognition or star notoriety but equal treatment for an unbiased evaluation of good work.

Reflecting on Scott Brown’s career, the collaboration she has with husband Venturi has both helped and hindered both their professional careers. Kathryn Anthony, in her book, *Designing for Diversity* labels the overshadowing women that Scott Brown has encountered, in husband-wife partnerships as “misattribution.”¹⁴⁸ She states, “They

¹⁴⁷ Denise Scott Brown, “Activities and Patterns: Lessons about Architecture from Planning,” *Metropolismag*, September 2001, www.metropolismag.com/html/vsba/index.com.

¹⁴⁸ Kathryn Anthony, *Designing for Diversity*, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001, 56-57.

do not receive credit where credit is due, and their achievements are attributed to another person....misattribution is only part of a broader phenomenon: the star system, which routinely credits only a single individual with the accomplishments of many.”¹⁴⁹

Often times the party unrecognized is the female partner as is the case with Scott Brown and Venturi. However, as Scott Brown has persevered in oppressive situations and she continues to fight for change. Looking forward, Scott Brown foresees the challenges ahead for the profession of architecture. She feels a “fourth reappraisal is needed to suit ‘the shifting paradigm’ as changing times are now called.”¹⁵⁰ The new generation of architects needs to examine the profession and “work out the lessons to be learned and find their own enquiry models, using new technologies, which they understand.”¹⁵¹

Optimistically looking towards the future for women she stated on her My Space blog, “On the larger scale, not all is lost. Not all architects belong to the men’s club; more architects than before are women; some critics are learning; the AIA actively wants to help, and most architects, in theory at least, would rather not practice

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Silvia Micheli, “Interview to Denise Scott Brown,” *GIZMOWEB*, June 24, 2010 www.gizmoweb.org/tag/silvia-micheli/page/7/.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

discrimination.”¹⁵² As a pioneer to women architects, Scott Brown has continued to not give up her pursuit of her career despite numerous gender obstacles, discrimination, and challenges to her approach to planning and design. Leading by example, she continues to inspire women and men in the field of architecture to think of the bigger picture and context of the project, push the norm to give credit where it is due, and fight for change to better the profession and our built environment.

¹⁵² Denise Scott Brown, “Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown,” MySpace (blog), December 21, 2005 (9:47p.m.), <http://myspace.com/bobanddenise/blog/208258270> (March 2012).

Chapter 3: Case Study

Beverly Willis (1928-)



Figure 14: Source: Higher Pictures, the Regional Oral History Office
Beverly Willis

Beverly Willis is a notable architect for her career not only as an exceptional designer but also as the voice calling for change in practice and history. She actively challenges the stigma that women are significant only in the social history of architecture and brings to the public their significance in design history as well. Willis has dedicated the last ten years of her life to changing the culture of architecture to include an accurate history of the profession which includes both women and men. To change the culture is to change the perspective that women's work has not contributed to the story of architecture.

Willis was born in Oklahoma in February 1928. Her mother Margaret Porter was a nurse and her father Ralph Willis owned an oil tool company. Growing up in the oil fields, Willis was a tomboy and would challenge boys to race to the top of the derrick and would win.¹⁵³ She accompanied her father in the fields and got her hands dirty along with the men.¹⁵⁴ The “culture of the machine”¹⁵⁵ and “images of struggle against adversity”¹⁵⁶ inspired Willis to want to change the environment in which she lived. In 1934 at the age of six, Willis’s parents divorced and her mother felt unable to provide for Willis and her younger brother and sent them to live in an orphanage and later to a catholic boarding school as workers. This displacement from her family structure and into an orphanage was a rigid and controlled environment in which children were not encouraged to use their imaginations and dream. The nuns at the orphanage, however, gave her a good education, very regimented and organized. The manmade landscape she lived in as a child was rigid and sometimes dark but she made the most of the situation she was in. Willis reflects on this harsh environment in a positive light, teaching her independence, baiting her natural curiosity and deepening her creative outlook. Growing up she loved to read and research which would prove to be valuable to her throughout her career. Willis was reunited with her mother in Portland, Oregon when she was thirteen

¹⁵³ Beverly Willis, “Beverly Willis: A Life in Architecture,” conducted by Victor W. Geraci, PhD, in 2008, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 2008, 01-00:05:22.

¹⁵⁴ Nicolai Ouroussof, “An Image of Beverly Willis,” *Invisible Images The Silent Language of Architecture*, Washington D.C.: National Building Museum, 1997, 99-104.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

but her curiosity and desire to strive for a better life was engrained in her soul and spurred her to continue to challenge herself throughout her career and life.

Her transition into womanhood was during the changing economic and social landscape of America during World War II when a lack of men on the home front and forced women to seek employment outside the then typical woman-type of roles. Rosie the Riveter and the “You can do it!” propaganda were prevalent and encouraged women to enter into industrial and blue color jobs as well as administrative ones. Women were required to enter night school to learn practical trades. By the young age of thirteen, Willis was a part of this movement and learned how to operate machinery and other trade skills.¹⁵⁷

Willis entered Oregon State University’s engineering program at the encouragement of her math teacher. After two years in the program, she left school and went to work for a lithographer. A year later, she moved to San Francisco and she entered the San Francisco Art Institute and focused her energies on art and discovered a close connection with her creations and Asian art. This Asian connection led Willis to the University of Hawaii – the closest connection she could make to Asia within the United States.

¹⁵⁷ Beverly Willis, “Beverly Willis: A Life in Architecture,” conducted by Victor W. Geraci, PhD, in 2008, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 2008, 01-00:12:24.

Willis accounts her experience in Hawaii as life transforming.¹⁵⁸ Its physical contrast to the bleak oil fields and rigid orphanage was eye opening for her. Willis blossomed both academically and socially. She studied under Jean Charlot, a world renown fresco painter, and Dr. Gustav Ecke, who taught Asian history and was a world renown Chinese furniture authority, who were very influential in her career. She also made two important female contacts, Louise Dillingham, member of the very wealthy and powerful Hawaii based Dillingham family, and Nesta Obermer, daughter of an English diplomat, were auditors in Jean Charlot's class. These women invited Willis into their social network of influential power players in Hawaii while also teaching her the social etiquette she was not exposed to while growing up.

She graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in 1954. Willis opened the Willis Atelier upon graduation and Charlot would later refer commissions to Willis, notably the United Chinese Society mural and sculptures for United Airlines. Through her new social network and mentors, Willis met and befriended many powerful and wealthy people who became her clients. One example of her newly formed social network was Henry Kaiser. He was a developer in Hawaii and contracted Willis to design the back bar, bar and furniture for the Shell Bar a restaurant for him at the first Waikiki hotel to be built after World War II, now the Hilton Hawaiian Village hotel. She had no formal training as an architect or designer but her competent hands on approach to projects made her many people's choice as a designer. She continued to be pursued by clients for their art and interior design projects. If required, she would hire an architect or engineer to assist her

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 01-00:23:11

and did not hesitate to get her hands dirty to show contractors what her design vision was and how to achieve it in the field , as she did for the interior renovations of the military officer's club in Honolulu. At the young age of twenty-five she was contracted by the 5 star Admiral Stump and the 4 star Generals of the Army and Air Force to design renovations for offices and officer clubs by passing the Corps of Engineers. She directed the architect and engineer, selected the furniture and artwork, and oversaw construction and painted and sculpted the murals and artwork. This experience led Willis to decide to become an architect.

She commuted between Honolulu and San Francisco for two years and eventually moved to San Francisco permanently. In 1960, America was developing significantly in science, technology and economy. Through another female friend, Maria "Mymy" Howard whose family owned the famous racehorse *Seabiscut*, Willis was able to network with key members of San Francisco's society. She returned to California at the perfect time for a designer. World War II had ended and society was adjusting to the changes as a result of the war. A focus on the home and the value of simplicity was the overriding theme in America. San Francisco's population had grown and many existing buildings needed to be renovated to service the large population within the existing city limits. Willis opened up her own design office in the city. Through her practice she was able to combine her artistic talent and architectural skills to create notable renovations. With ingenuity and creativity, Willis was able to revitalize Union Street in San Francisco into a boutique shopping complex (in figure 15). Her unprecedented and innovative idea of adaptive reuse, a concept that this project helped introduce to the US in 1963 is best

described by Willis in her book *Invisible Images*, “To preserve the historic buildings, I elevated the existing buildings and added a floor beneath....Restoring these Victorians with their gingerbread cornices and fish-scale clapboards, with the addition of found wrought-iron railings and gaslights, captured the image of San Francisco’s romantic past.”¹⁵⁹ The socio-economic success of this project caused many to follow its example.¹⁶⁰



Figure 15: Source: www.beverlywillis.com

Union Street Shops

Through her practice and community work with the Union Street Merchants Association, Willis was now able to actively transform the built environment into her communal vision. Through her numerous projects and many retail store designs like Sid’s

¹⁵⁹ Beverly Willis, *Invisible Images The Silent Language of Architecture*, Washington, D.C.: National Building Museum, 1997, 51.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

Stores in which she utilized vivid colors, lighting, and graphics to bring life and energy into the grocery chain; various wineries to create unique tasting rooms; and numerous building renovations which led to a post modern resurgence of a historically adaptive style to post-war San Francisco, she continually challenged herself to take her creativity and ideas to the next unprecedented level.

In 1966, Willis applied to take the California architectural licensing exam but was rejected because she had never worked for an architect. She had a numerous architectural projects under her belt but she had never worked for an architect. A friend in Hawaii, Daniel Inouye had recently been elected to the U.S. Senate and had asked Willis to design his house in Chevy Chase. After a meeting with the Senator, Willis had told him her problems with not being allowed to sit for the architectural licensing exam. Senator Inouye contacted the governor of California, Pat Brown, and she was allowed to take the exam and she passed the exam on her first attempt and was now a licensed architect in California.¹⁶¹ This would allow her to be in full control of her projects in all aspects.

Willis was now able to open a woman owned architectural firm which she successfully ran for over twenty years. She felt she was never treated like a woman architect but as a colleague by those she socialized and worked with. On reflection of her career and any discrimination she faced at this time, Willis stated in her interview with Victor Geraci in 2008 that, “During all the first years of my career, my being a woman

¹⁶¹ Beverly Willis, “Beverly Willis: A Life in Architecture,” conducted by Victor W. Geraci, PhD, in 2008, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 2008, 02-00:47:30.

just never came up. There was no animosity that I experienced in all of my early years.”¹⁶²

In the 1970's, suburban America was beginning to develop with large residential developments covering acres of land with little regard for the environment. Willis decided to create a niche for her company and wrote computer software in-house to address the massive size of these residential developments and took architectural site drafting to the next level by developing the CARLA (Computerized Approach to Residential Land Analysis). In 1972, this was unprecedented - there were only two other firms using the computer and none in large scale planning - and she was able to work on much larger projects than firms of comparable size and using less time to produce the work. Her firm started to grow in size and project size and developed into Willis and Associates, Inc. Architects with a staff of thirty-five men and women. Realizing her weakness was in the business aspect, she found a partner, David Coldoff to run the day to day operations of the firm. The firm worked on over seven hundred projects. The firm was unique in that they worked a very intense 8am-6pm but no weekend or limited overtime work due to David's desire to spend time with his family.

This allowed Willis to network and use her extra time to volunteer with various organizations which proved beneficial to the firm and her personal endeavors. The firm flourished for many years with a diverse portfolio of projects and project types. She was elected and selected to be on numerous boards and associations - president of the AIA,

¹⁶² Ibid., 01-00:28:59.

California Council in 1979 (first woman); Executive Committee of the Building Research Advisory Board of the National Academy of Science 1971-1979; Chairwoman of the Federal Construction Council 1976-1979 to name a few. In 1976 she was one of the founding trustees who fought to create the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C. and in 1980 she was elected a Fellow of the AIA.

A historically significant project by Willis in 1982 is the San Francisco Ballet building (in figure 16) which was the first building in the United States built exclusively for a ballet company. It was designed from the ground up and was tailored for every facet of dance. Combining the regulations by the City, utilizing state of the art technology and materials, tying in to its adjacent buildings and setting, and creative utilization of volume and design, Willis has created a building that is both exceptionally functional and complements its context. However, this high profile project was scrutinized by many. Willis elaborated on this with Geraci and stated, “As I found out so dramatically later on in my life, and particularly in architecture: the moment that you begin to do anything that brings any notice to your work, you immediately have many people who oppose that.”¹⁶³

¹⁶³ Ibid.



Figure 16: courtesy Peter Aaron, Esto Photography via Regional Oral History Office

San Francisco Ballet building

Willis faced some opposition in the field from other architects not only because she was a woman, but because she had talent and was very successful. Compounded with that, the building and construction growth had slowed in the United States in the 1980s, and Willis looked at other avenues to fulfill her need for a challenge.

Willis moved on to other ventures – in 1980 she ventured back to her familial roots of farming. She purchased land in River Run in the Napa Valley and started growing grapes and contracted them to a winery.

Ten years later, she sold the house and grape land to Nancy and Paul Pelosi and moved to New York. Willis used this time to contemplate her future. For two years she

rested and reconnected with herself. She recalls that period in her life as a time for “reflection.”¹⁶⁴

Again, she started to focus on new endeavors - writing, lecturing and founded the Beverly Willis Architecture Foundation in 2002 to “expand the knowledge about women’s contribution to architecture, because I had observed women historically speaking were invisible and had no presence in history....robbing women of a tradition and historical role models. Somebody had to start such a foundation, to counter that trend.”¹⁶⁵ The Foundation under the lead of Willis and the Executive Director, Wanda Bubriski, an architecture historian, has continued to recover “the stories of women architects that is a greater gift to future generations than the singular preservation of [her] own legacy. It’s a living legacy.”¹⁶⁶ It has also expanded to bring awareness of architectural issues to women architects and continues to better the profession.

Willis believes her background and hardships as a child helped her learn to get through challenges throughout her life. As she shared in her interview with Geraci, “[F]or a successful artist or architect, these things [early life and past experiences growing up] are very important because you have to have the courage to believe in what you believe in and to present it. It helps to know the right people. It helps dramatically,

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. 06-00:22:36

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 06-00:40:39

¹⁶⁶ Hannah McCann, “Q and A: Beverly Willis – A Pioneer in the Profession,” *Architect Magazine*, August 2007, <http://www.architectmagazine.com/Exhibitions/qa-beverly-willis.aspx>.

in terms of what you can do to enhance your work and to successfully position it so that it can move ahead.”¹⁶⁷ She has continued to make the most of her situation and to not be afraid to make changes in her life for a better future for herself and for the profession of architecture. Although she has no children or spouse, she has very close and valuable friendships and colleagues who have been prevalent in forming who she is as a person and architect. The challenging childhood sparked a desire in her to make the world a better place.

Willis has summarized her career when she stated, “In addition to the occasional monumental building, thousands of small interventions can make our cities a better place to live...if we incorporate the ideas of the many over the visions of the few, we will create...a much more equitable and humanistic environment for everyone.”¹⁶⁸

She has the ability to get past any obstacles in her way and see beyond herself by doing her part to change the patriarchal nature of the profession. She has been and continues to be a key voice to change the culture of the profession in education, training, and practice to include those talented women who have helped to define the profession. By the recognition and inclusion of women an accurate history of the profession can be preserved creating a more prosperous future for all.

¹⁶⁷ Beverly Willis, “Beverly Willis: A Life in Architecture,” conducted by Victor W. Geraci, PhD, in 2008, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 2008, 01-00:28:59.

¹⁶⁸ Hannah McCann, “Q and A: Beverly Willis – A Pioneer in the Profession,” *Architect Magazine*, August 2007, <http://www.architectmagazine.com/Exhibitions/qa-beverly-willis.aspx>.

Chapter 4: Extraordinary Women of the Past

As reflective in the extraordinary historical women case studies (1880-1980), there have been significant women architects who have shaped the profession of architecture. Due to lack of historical documentation, many of these women's accomplishments went unrecognized and unnoticed on a national and international level until recently. Women like Louise Blanchard Bethune, Marion Mahony Griffin, Julia Morgan, Denise Scott Brown, and Beverly Willis were pioneering women in the field who helped to establish the career of architecture for women. These forerunners created their own path and navigated around challenges they faced. With limited support from society and the profession, these women persevered. Their significance to women architects is not only because of their outstanding architectural projects and abilities, but because of their personal and professional stories and experiences in their place in time.

Barriers prevented many capable women from reaching their fullest potential throughout the past century. The Wall Street Journal labeled this barrier that prevented many women from professional success during the earlier half of the twentieth century as "the concrete wall."¹⁶⁹ Most women could not break through or did not know how to overcome this barrier. Like a concrete wall, this impediment was impenetrable to many. As Eagly and Carli elaborated, "The concrete wall rested on a division of labor dictating

¹⁶⁹ Alice H. Eagly and Linda L. Carli, *Through the Labyrinth*, Boston: Harvard School Press, 2007, 2.

that men should be breadwinners and women should be homemakers.”¹⁷⁰ Many women were denied opportunities to enter the professional world because they were women. “Although some individual women fought against this wall, most people simply accepted the absolute barriers that it implied.”¹⁷¹

Sadly, for many women who wanted a career in architecture, like Henrietta Dozier who was known as “cousin Harry” professionally, their gender had to be hidden by changing their names or life choices were made to not get married and/or have children, “while their male counterparts managed to have both...Over the years, the career vs. family dilemma has probably been the factor most responsible for keeping more women from becoming full-time practicing architects.”¹⁷²

The first pioneers were women like Louise Blanchard Bethune, Marion Mahony Griffin, and Julia Morgan. These women practiced “in a less than supportive atmosphere”¹⁷³ to define their “personal image and their public role as architects.”¹⁷⁴ Unique in their background, education and training, family structure, and approach to

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 2-3.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Maggie Toy, introduction to *The Architect – Women in Contemporary Architecture*, ed. Maggie Toy (New York: Watson-Guptill Publishers, 2001), 10.

¹⁷³ Judith Paine, “Pioneer Women Architects,” in *Women in American Architecture: A Historic and Contemporary Perspective*, ed. Susana Torre (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1977), 60.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

practice, “each had to struggle to make her own way, often unaware of any who came before. Those who succeeded did so on their own merit.”¹⁷⁵

In the early 1880’s, Louise Blanchard Bethune demanded “no special treatment”¹⁷⁶ for her architectural work and removed the gender from her practice. “Bethune believed that women architects would be accepted if they followed her advice and focused on their work rather than their gender. Her own success was based on such practice.”¹⁷⁷ She was determined, focused, and unwavering to achieve her goals. There appeared to be no obstacle to keep her from moving forward. Blanchard was able to show her peers that women were just as capable as men in becoming successful. Her technologically and socially advanced designs for numerous public schools and the Lafayette Hotel displayed her architectural competence and talent.

At the turn of the century, due in part to the Morrill Act of 1862 and the change in society to desire co-education for men and women, there were more higher-educational opportunities for women available. Female students began to network with one another. “Once such networks were established during the 1920’s and 30’s, progress was still tenuous; although more academic opportunities were open to women, the barriers to professional advancement remained daunting.”¹⁷⁸ Many women chose other professions

¹⁷⁵ Sarah Allaback, *The First American Women Architects*, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008, 7.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

that were more welcoming to females but those who remained in architecture did so with great pride and discipline.

Marion Mahony was one of those women and was able to enter MIT architecture school and obtain her license due in part to efforts by her female predecessors like Blanchard. In the early 1900's she was able to train with Frank Lloyd Wright which helped to develop Mahony's architectural base and style and arguably helped Wright develop his style as well. As a single, hard-working, talented young architect, she was able to establish herself in the profession in Chicago. Her desire to remain in the background was her career choice as a pattern she carried throughout her life. After her marriage, Mahony continued her role as a key support of a man and although she and her husband collaborated on all projects, it was always under his name only. She became the essential support for his career and lost any public identity for herself professionally. Mahony was a dedicated, talented and focused on supporting her male superior. The ability of her male counterpart is questionable without her unwavering support and collaboration. Today, the individual work of Mahony is being recognized and many architectural critics are unable to discern the work of her male partner from that of Mahony. Projects like the numerous Prairie Style residences in Illinois and Iowa, the development of the Castlecrag community in Australia, and the Australia Café in Melbourne reflect her great architectural talent and significance.

Julia Morgan, like Mahony, was able to take advantage of the advancements her predecessors made in the field of architecture for women, but she was also a forerunner. Morgan was the first woman to be accepted into University of California, Berkeley's

engineering school. She was mentored by Bernard Maybeck and went on to become the first woman accepted into and to graduate from the Ecole des Beaux Arts in France. Morgan was not accepted because she was a token woman but because she was competent in both engineering and art. After opening her own office, Morgan hired many women as well as men and also assisted her staff with family hardships. She ran her office on her own terms and in her own way. Her competence brought her continued work throughout her career. “Morgan commands respect and interest – both as a pioneering female in the field and as a brilliant architect.”¹⁷⁹

“From her college years, Morgan broke gender barriers seemingly without acknowledging their existence. She proved to the world that a woman could design and supervise construction of any kind of building and run a large, productive firm.”¹⁸⁰ She designed over seven hundred projects in her career. Deemed as the “most prolific pioneer woman architect”¹⁸¹ her contributions are significant and should be recognized for the impact it has had on architectural history in America.

Referencing Gwendolyn Wright, architectural historian, Nicolai Ouroussoff states in his article “Keeping Houses, Not Building Them,” that “The two major feminist

¹⁷⁹ Maggie Toy, introduction to *The Architect – Women in Contemporary Architecture*, ed. Maggie Toy (New York: Watson-Guption Publishers, 2001), 10.

¹⁸⁰ Sarah Allaback, *The First American Women Architects*, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008, 145-146.

¹⁸¹ Sara Boutelle, “Julia Morgan,” in *Women in American Architecture: A Historic and Contemporary Perspective*, ed. by Susana Torre (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1977), 79.

movements in American history – the 1910’s and the late ‘60s and early ‘70s – obviously opened a lot of opportunities for women”¹⁸² but only those who were determined enough to take advantage of these new opportunities succeeded in architecture.

The second phase of pioneering women architects were women like Denise Scott Brown and Beverly Willis. They thrived with the latter feminist movement and were able to forge their own career paths. “The combination of social, political, and cultural events directed against established institutions generated a consciousness of and a desire for change.”¹⁸³ The 1960’s was the start of their notable careers in architecture which opened opportunities for them which was unprecedented.

Scott Brown entered the profession academically in the 1960’s at the height of the second feminist movement in the twentieth century. As an instructor at multiple established institutions such as Berkeley, Yale, UCLA and Harvard, she was and continues to be vocal in her opinions on planning, design, architecture, and its effects on culture. After marrying Robert Venturi, a fellow architect, and becoming a partner in his architectural firm, Scott Brown has collaborated with Venturi on numerous projects but

¹⁸² Nicolai Ouroussof, “Keeping Houses, Not Building Them,” *The New York Times*, October 31, 2007, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/31/arts/design/31woma.html>.

¹⁸³ Jane McGroarty and Susana Torre, “New Professional Identities: Four Women in the Sixties,” In *Women in American Architecture: A Historic and Contemporary Perspective*, ed. Susana Torre (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1977), 115.

has been overlooked publicly. Only recently has she been given due credit internationally as a “theorist and writer as well as an architect.”¹⁸⁴ World renown projects like her highly controversial book *Learning from Las Vegas* has brought much criticism to her critiques of the built environment and culture; her collaborative design for the Hotel Mielparque Nikko Kirifuri in Japan which brings a pedestrian street into the hotel lobby is unprecedented; and her collaborative University of Michigan Master Plan and Palmer Drive Complex is unique in that it utilizes built structures and connects it with the social experience and the user’s perspective are examples of her talent and vision. However, she acknowledges her overshadowing and continues to fight this prejudice with forward movement and thinking. Not afraid to speak her mind, Scott Brown cautions young women architects to not be naïve and think that gender discrimination no longer exists. “[A]s a young architect you are accorded the greatest equality that you will ever know. It gets worse as you proceed, and when it does, you’ll find it is a strong problem. And sadly, because you don’t have a feminist awareness, you’ll think it’s your fault.”¹⁸⁵ Scott Brown holds strong to her beliefs and continues to fight against naivety for current and future generations of women in the field.

Beverly Willis is also an architect who was in her prime during the 1960’s. With no formal training in architecture, she was able to pass the California licensing exam and

¹⁸⁴ Catherine Croft, “Women & the Profession: 2005,” *Architect News*, February 18, 2005, <http://architect.com/news/article/14740/women-the-profession-2005>.

¹⁸⁵ Silvia Micheli, “Interview to Denise Scott Brown.” *GIZMOWEB*, June 24, 2010, www.gizmoweb.org/tag/silvia-micheli/page/7/.

received notable commissions throughout the United States. Her outstanding design work for projects like the San Francisco Ballet Building and adaptive reuse of existing buildings in San Francisco are significant architectural accomplishments. Her progressive development and utilization of the CARLA – Computerized Approach to Residential Land Analysis was unprecedented in the 1970's. She is an example of a true entrepreneur who has created her own path of success as an architect. Her ability to stay one step ahead of the field, especially for women, is something that all women in architecture will benefit from. She has created a multifaceted career for herself as an artist, architect, farmer, historian and woman leader in America. Her ability to see beyond herself drove her to form the Beverly Willis Architecture Foundation (BAAF). The BAAF not only brings women together to discuss and bring about change for women in the field of architecture, but also has created a historical database of which women architects throughout American history have been documented for current and future generations to utilize and learn from. She was able and continues to be able to change the profession of architecture for the better of all in design, technology, and history.

Willis summarized her attitude towards any type of opposition, “When a roadblock occurs, learning how to – sswt! – go around. You don't need to tear the roadblock down and make the big deal of it you just need to figure out how to move in

different direction.”¹⁸⁶ Willis’ progressive thinking and determination to create her own way in her career is inspiring.

This second phase of pioneering women strove to not only succeed for themselves but looked ahead in the profession for the future generation of architects as well as society.

Although these forerunners faced numerous oppositions like the concrete wall, familial issues, and prejudice with little or no knowledge of role models or mentor’s past experiences, these women have all defined success in their own way and on their own terms. As they progressed through their education, training and profession, they continuously move forward unfazed by the closed doors in front of them and continue to push the profession to change and grow. These women have had significant architectural projects of which many were unrecorded until very recently. Their determination, focus, and hard work allowed them to forge their own path around any obstacles in their way.

¹⁸⁶ McCann, Hannah. “Q and A: Beverly Willis – A Pioneer in the Profession.” *Architect Magazine*, August 2007. <http://www.architectmagazine.com/Exhibitions/qa-beverly-willis.aspx>.

Chapter 5: The Twenty-first Century Female Architect

The women forerunners in architecture of the late nineteenth, early twentieth century gave more to the women in architecture today than they could have ever imagined. Their desire to pursue their dreams have opened more doors for women in the profession today in educational opportunities and entry level career choices but more importantly they were able to show women how to create their own path and not let anyone or anything stop them. Architects like Jeanne Gang, Anna Franz, Maya Lin, and Monica Ponce de Leon have been able to walk through the open doors, navigate their way around new obstacles, and find their own way through their unique careers similar to their predecessors. Although they all define success in their own way, a common goal for these current women leaders is to break down the gender barrier, be judged on ability, work hard to be recognized for their talent, and not “reduced to any category, particularly if it is the product of a definition based on a random stereotype...they certainly do not want to be considered ‘women’ in architecture; they want to be seen as architects at the top of their field,”¹⁸⁷ and help future generations of women architects.

Due to the success of their predecessors, these women architects of the twenty-first century are able to pursue degrees in architecture in almost any university they chose. They are also able to climb the corporate ladder and fulfill their own personal

¹⁸⁷ Tanja Kullack ed., *Architecture: A Woman's Perspective*, Berlin: Jovis Verlag GmbH, 2011, 7.

dreams with less opposition. Most importantly, they are now the leaders of the profession and through their example can open more doors for their successors.

Although almost a century apart, the traits these current women have is similar to their predecessors. They are determined, focused, and driven. They are talented architects who navigated around any obstacles they faced and continue to face in their careers and lives. These women architects of the twenty-first century are committed to making architecture in academia, government, and practice better for future generations and society.

Jeanne Gang, founder of Studio Gang Architects and adjunct Professor of Architecture at IIT has won numerous awards for her designs, runs her studio in a collaborative style and mentors her staff and students. “I enjoy when my team can form a consensus after exploring different viewpoints. Having diversity in the office yields unexpected solutions and ideas and make the work stronger and more original.”¹⁸⁸ Gang is critical of the star system in architecture and she is actively trying to make changes in the field. She summarizes what she feels it takes to achieve success as an architect, “You need all the right ingredients, talent, passion, and drive, but I think success has a bit of luck to it as well.”¹⁸⁹

Anna Franz, Director of Planning and Project Management in the Office of the Architect of the Capitol, has been recognized by the federal government for her

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 74.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 121.

outstanding work in various public sector positions in performance excellence and oversees billion dollar architecture and engineering design, project and construction management, and in house construction services for the United States Capitol, Library of Congress, and other high profile national facilities in Washington, D.C. Franz oversees a staff of nearly five hundred people and leads with the belief that “[c]ollectively we are great, individually we are average.”¹⁹⁰ She has led numerous high profile organizations and has developed a “workforce that is passionate about customer service and facilities management excellence.”¹⁹¹ Leading by example with hard work, collaboration, and excellence in service, Franz continues to strive for excellence in everything she does.

Maya Lin, founder of Maya Lin Studio, is an architect, world renowned artist and monument designer. She blends her essence of Eastern and Western culture in her designs and brings in her love of nature to her projects. Lin continues to try and maintain the balance in her life: between art and architecture, Eastern culture and Western culture, the built environment and nature. She holds true to her upbringing when asked what her idea of the American Dream is, “To me the American Dream is probably being able to follow your own personal calling. And to be able to do what you want to do is an incredible freedom that we have...we have a responsibility to share it and to not just sort of hoard that freedom.”¹⁹² Self proclaimed as naïve while growing up, she is able to learn

¹⁹⁰ Anna Franz in correspondence with author, April 2012.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² “Interview: Maya Lin Seeing the World Differently,” *Academy of Achievement*, June 16, 2000, <http://achievement.org/autodoc/printmember/lin0int-1>.

more about herself culturally and historically through her projects. With every new commission or design, she is able to grow as an architect and as a person and is doing her part to bring awareness of societal issues through her monuments and the built environment.

Monica Ponce de Leon, founder of Monica Ponce de Leon Studio and Dean of Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning at the University of Michigan is actively working towards diversifying the architecture program to help change the profession. By utilizing an interdisciplinary approach, students are taught environmental engineering, mechanical engineering and sustainable technology. “Architecture doesn’t exist in a vacuum, but in school it often does.”¹⁹³ In her practice she promotes collaboration and defines architecture as more than a vehicle of self-expression or ego.¹⁹⁴ She is committed to change the profession for future generations. Through selfless design and collaboration she is able to show her students and staff that each creation is bigger than they are and will represent what is best for the whole and not the individual.

The following biographies outline the outstanding achievements and personal experiences of the selected exceptional women architect pioneers of the twenty-first century.

¹⁹³ William Bostwick, “Newsmaker: Monica Ponce de Leon,” *Architectural Record*, May 2009, <http://archrecord.construction.com/news/newsmakers/0905monicaponcedeleon.asp>.

¹⁹⁴ *Architecture: A Woman’s Perspective*, ed. Tanja Kullack (Berlin: Jovis Verlag GmbH, 2011), 12-13.

Chapter 6: Case Study

Jeanne Gang (1960-)



Figure 17: Source: Los Angeles Times
Jeanne Gang in front of Aqua Tower

Jeanne Gang is one of the most highly recognized architects of the decade. She is a multi-faceted professional who combines private practice, teaching, and mentoring. Her award winning projects are significant not only in their beauty but also in their utilization of materials and technology, incorporation of sustainability measures, and a collaborative design base. Gang continues to design with the user's needs at the forefront. She is a twenty-first century role model who is conscious of her ability to positively influence the future of architecture. Through her teaching and mentoring she encourages her pupils to bring their life experiences into their designs. She purposely

takes the time to be involved with the younger generation in architecture to provide them with role models and feedback to better the profession.

Gang was born and raised in Belvidere, Illinois in the 1960's. She was the third of four girls and was a self proclaimed "tomboy."¹⁹⁵ Her parents were very influential in her life and way of looking at the world. As a civil engineer her father would take her on outings to look at bridges and nurtured her interest in science and nature. On those outings, Gang recollects being fascinated with the American landscape. A memory that influenced Gang as a child was a trip she took with her family to the Mesa Verde in Colorado. The Pueblo Indian's stone dwellings built in the canyon wall's alcoves fascinated her. She was also influenced by her mother who was a librarian who loved to sew. Gang credits her mother's hobby of sewing as bringing Gang's attention to textiles, materials and the way things are made. Her maternal grandmother also loved to sew and made quilts. "She had a story about each piece of the fabric – who gave it to her, what shirt or pair of pants it came from"¹⁹⁶ which sparked her fascination of putting things together and patterns. Gang also loved animals and considered going into veterinary medicine or because of her fascination with how things are put together and love of physics, considered engineering as her career choice. In college, while attending the University of Illinois, she took a trip to Europe which she saw first-hand cathedrals, namely Gothic architecture, which inspired her to choose architecture as her field of

¹⁹⁵ Lynn Becker, "Jeanne Gang: Before Aqua – an early portrait," *Repeat*, September 21, 2011, <http://www.lynnbecker.com/repeat/studiogang/gangprofile2004.htm>.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

study. In architecture school, she received a Rotary scholarship and was able to attend Eidgenossische Technische Hochschule (ETH) in Zurich. There she met one of the most influential women architect's in her career, Homa Farjadi.¹⁹⁷ Gang and Farjadi discussed identity and femininity and how it fit within architecture, theories she carries through to her practice today. She graduated from the University of Illinois with a Bachelors of Science in Architecture in 1987 and went on to get her Masters from Harvard Graduate School of Design in 1993.

Initially, she went on to work at the Office of Metropolitan Architecture's (OMA) in Rotterdam before forming her own firm in 1997. At OMA, Gang worked for Rem Koolhaas, another influential figure in her career. His vocal criticism of the practice of architecture and desire to change the profession to include a holistic approach to design inspired her to do her part to change architecture and not accept the traditional practice and design as status quo. There were many challenges, unprecedented design projects, and disappointments throughout her career at OMA. With eighty plus hour work weeks, Gang, and co-worker Mark Schendel, produced the most projects in the history of the firm. Then Gang left OMA to work at Booth/Hansen and Associates in Chicago. There she met Kathy O'Donell, a co-worker's wife who was also an architect. Gang and O'Donell both left their respective firms to start their own individual practices. Gang formed Chicago based Studio Gang Architects in 1997. She and O'Donell partnered in hopes to get bigger projects thus creating Studio Gang/O'Donell. They entered many design competitions and like many firms during this time, suffered disappointments and

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

roadblocks. Gang and O'Donnell then decided to split up. She briefly described the breakup in Lynn Becker's article "Jeanne Gang: Before Aqua, an early portrait" as, "it was just time to go our separate ways."¹⁹⁸

In 1998, Schendel, her former co-worker at OMA, joined Gang and became a partner in the firm and later became her husband. With perseverance, hard work, and the support of her husband throughout the challenges of private practice and competition, Studio Gang has been successful in being commissioned for numerous projects in Chicago, as well as other states and abroad. She has proven time and time again that she has been able to unleash the city's potential with every project she works on.

Gang runs her practice with much collaboration but with a firm hand. While her husband manages the day to day operations of the firm in a collegiate atmosphere of sharing and collaboration, Gang leads the team in the design and vision for each project. "I enjoy it when my team can form a consensus after exploring different viewpoints. Having diversity in the office yields unexpected solutions and ideas and makes the work stronger and more original."¹⁹⁹ She researches every project and pays attention to the details and materials used. Her awareness of textiles and materials growing up is balanced with her inquisitive nature allows her to push the envelope with building materials, shapes and structures as an architect.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ *Architecture: A Woman's Perspective*, ed. Tanja Kullack (Berlin: Jovis Verlag GmbH, 2011), 74.

Studio Gang's numerous projects throughout the country and abroad, as well as art exhibits, have won Gang and her firm numerous design awards and recognition. Her utilization of building materials and artistry is evident in her award winning Marble Curtain (in figure 18) at the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C. In 2009 she became a Fellow with the AIA and received the MacArthur Foundation fellowship award in 2011 for her outstanding work in architecture.



Figure 18: Source: Studio Gang
Marble Curtain, National Building Museum, 2003

She also periodically has taught at the Illinois Institute of Technology since 1998 as an adjunct professor and has taught at other universities, including Harvard GSD, part time throughout her career. She stresses that teamwork is critical for students to learn

because she feels that architecture is created through a collaboration of ideas and life experiences, “The core of architecture is the pleasure of experiencing a wide range of life activities and designing spaces in which they’ll unfold.”²⁰⁰

Gang feels there is a positive side to the star system of architecture in that it brings about awareness of the profession and visibility of the built environment to the general public’s attention. “But when the media is so focused on images and less on ideas, I think that can hurt us”²⁰¹ as architects. In her most publicly acclaimed project, the eighty-two story high-rise the Aqua Tower in Chicago (in figure 19), she has received national and international fame for her and her firm. Gang is now recognized in the male dominated star system of architecture. Paul Goldberger, writer for *The New Yorker* classified Gang as an “anti-diva” in his article “The Wave – The Skyline Wave Effect – Jeanne Gang and Architecture’s Anti-Divas” and compares her to Zaha Hadid, the “most famous female architect around...but her buildings are nothing if not arbitrary.”²⁰² In contrast, Gang’s Aqua design is a “smart, low-budget”²⁰³ project that is “anchored in common sense.”²⁰⁴ The asymmetrically curved façade provides balconies that provide

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 11.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 72.

²⁰² Paul Goldberger, “Jeanne Gang, Aqua, and architecture’s anti-divas,” *The New Yorker*, February 1, 2010, http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/skyline/2010/01/01/100201crsk_skyline_goldberger.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

shade but also assist the buildings structural system with protection against wind force by breaking up the façade. The design is possible because of her utilization of state of the art digital fabrication and computer aided design.



Figure 19: Source: Studio Gang Architects

Aqua Tower, Chicago

Unlike the stereotypical architectural star who is designing for ego or recognition, Gang designs with depth and meaning in the project's sense of place, nature, function and user's needs. She stresses research before every project as the key to forming the design. Goldberger also wrote that, "Gang has no interest in establishing a look that makes her buildings hers...materials, technology, and on-going attempt to see it from the

perspective of the people who will use the building means much more to her.”²⁰⁵

Technically, she continues to push the use of materials farther than it has ever been used before.

Her projects are also environmentally conscious and address her love of nature and animals. Utilizing form, as with the undulating floor slabs at the Aqua Tower, to mimic forms found in nature while also utilizing it as a shading device, Gang is addressing her built form in the perspective of the environment. In her winning entry in the Ford Calumet Environmental Center Competition, Gang utilized angled glass with salvaged structural steel basket-like mesh to allow views but to prevent the migratory birds from flying into the windows and dying. Being situated in the heart of industry but near a wetland and in direct line with the native bird’s migratory path, Gang’s consciousness of the environment, function of the space, use of materials, and project setting resulted in the winning design.

Throughout her life and architectural career, Gang has taken advantage of the educational and professional opportunities that have been open to her by pioneer women architects. Attending architectural school in the 1980’s, the ratio of men to women was almost equal. Obtaining her degree and license were of her own choice with less barriers than her predecessors. Her choice to form her own company and obtain projects of various sizes and profile are inspirational in that she did so with the confidence in herself and her abilities. Although she faced roadblocks and disappointment, she continued to pursue her dreams. Now as a woman leader in the profession, like her early mentor

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

Farjadi, she expresses her concern about the number of women in the field and is trying to do her part to change the profession to enable women to succeed, “I’m interested in helping to achieve this by mentoring, encouraging and recommending women, and sitting on juries.”²⁰⁶ She believes that there are two important factors every woman needs to succeed – a supportive family life and a belief in one’s self. Gang stated, “The partner should not only demand less from the domestic side, but also be an encourager and cheerleader.”²⁰⁷ Her stable family background while growing up along with her marriage and professional partnership with her husband has given her the confidence she needed in herself to succeed. Gang approaches architecture with a feminist perspective of “looking at things from these perimeter positions, not the center of power positions...so you have a different way of looking at things. When we make form, we’re thinking about how we can make the identity fluctuate. It doesn’t have to be one thing all the time.”²⁰⁸

She approaches design, teaching and practice with collaboration. Gang stated in an interview with Asad Syrkett for “Architectural Record,” “[I]t’s really about trying to

²⁰⁶ *Architecture: A Woman’s Perspective*, ed. Tanja Kullack, (Berlin: Jovis Verlag GmbH, 2011), 131.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 122.

²⁰⁸ Lynn Becker, “Jeanne Gang: Before Aqua – an early portrait,” *Repeat*, September 21, 2011, <http://www.lynnbecker.com/repeat/studiogang/gangprofile2004.htm>.

pull expertise out of other fields and bringing that expertise together through the design process”²⁰⁹ and using the ideas of others to create a better project.

Utilizing her role as a leading pioneer woman architect of the twenty-first century, she has created outstanding architectural projects, continues to run a successful practice, and actively participates in the educational system. Gang has led by example with depth, practicality, customization, and environmental consciousness for each project and continues to nurture those in her studio and juries, in the educational system, and in society.

²⁰⁹ Asad Syrkett, “Newsmaker: Jeanne Gang,” *Architectural Record*, September 2011, http://archrecord.construction.com/news/newsmakers/1109_Jeanne-Gang.asp.

Chapter 6: Case Study

Anna Franz (1953-)



Figure 20: Source: Anna Franz

Anna Franz

Anna Franz is an example of a successful architect in the public sector of the profession. Throughout her career she has serviced the federal government with her architectural and managerial expertise on high profile, historically significant, government projects that include our nation's capitol. Her ability to multi-task and incorporate state of the art technology into historic buildings, manage a staff of approximately five hundred people, serve on numerous high profile task forces and committees, and have the drive to consistently pursue excellence in all endeavors makes her a pioneer for the twenty-first century architect.

Franz was born in England in the 1953. Her father was in the United States Airforce and was stationed in England and her mother was British. Franz grew up “in an environment where no one complained and everyone listened.”²¹⁰ She credits the strong familiar support and love she received throughout her life as the reason she has been able to live her life with confidence in herself. Franz lived between England and United States, moving several times and permanently moved to the United States at the age of twelve.

She received her BSN from Florida State University in 1975. She went on to receive her MS in Medical Surgical Nursing from Texas Woman’s University in 1977. While going to school for her masters, she worked in various hospitals and ICUs. She began teaching at the Texas Woman’s University at Temple and ran the MS Medical Surgical Nursing program in her second year there. To continue teaching Franz would have to go back to school for her PhD in nursing. She felt that the nursing profession “needed augmentation by other fields – anthropology, sociology, architecture”²¹¹ so she applied to the University of Texas architectural masters program and nursing doctoral program. Being accepted into both, she chose architecture. She worked at the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit while going through architecture school. In 1984, she was accepted into the U.S. Navy Civil Engineering Corps student program. In 1985 she graduated with her MArch and was commissioned as an Ensign.

²¹⁰ Anna Franz in correspondence with the author, April 2012.

²¹¹ Ibid.

Franz chose to pursue architecture through the Navy and upon reflection stated she chose the Navy over private practice “because it provided higher pay and better/fair opportunity for advancement. The Navy is the best career decision I ever made – my superior officers taught me executive leadership and treated me as an executive. I was mentored to lead people and the organization.”²¹² At the Civil Engineering Corps her superiors treated her fairly and gave her the necessary executive leadership training she would need throughout her career. She credits her training with the Navy in teaching her to “plan, develop, design, construct and operate/maintain a portfolio of facilities”²¹³ as well as how to professionally communicate and manage projects. While in the Navy, she met her husband John, a Navy Captain.

Her stable and nurturing upbringing as a child transcends to her happy and loving marriage and raising of three children. With a supportive partner, Franz is able to excel in every position she has held in her career and every endeavor she undertakes.

After eighteen months she was stationed in Washington, D.C., at the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery responsible for the Special Projects Program. There she managed the Special Projects Program for various teaching hospitals along with medical and dental facilities worldwide. After six years, she resigned from active duty and pursued a career as a civilian. She left active duty and went to work for the Department of Justice as an architect and simultaneously the Naval Reserve, Civil Engineering Corps as a Project Officer and Officer in Charge of Reserve Naval Construction Battalion Hospital Unit 20 .

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibid.

In 1991 she joined the Department of Justice (DOJ) as a Project Director. There, she moved up from Project Manager to Deputy Assistant Director. Reflecting on her career, Franz claims the Robert F. Kennedy Main Justice Building (in figure 21) as her proudest accomplishment. It was her first major project in which she was the lead. This \$300 million modernization project is significant not only in its history significance but had political considerations, a tight schedule constraint, budget limitations, and remained in operations throughout construction. Originally built in 1935, the seven stories high, one million two hundred thousand square foot renovation houses over two thousand DOJ employees. Franz oversaw the design team and “directed DOJ’s finance and project management goals and objectives for the personnel responsible for housing, leased swing space, space planning, design, construction, contract administration, budgeting, scheduling, estimating, and cost control.”²¹⁴ She produced a successful multi-phased project on time and within budget. During her tenure with the DOJ, she obtained her license in Virginia.

²¹⁴ Anna Franz, “Resume 2”, *Architect of the Capitol*, Washington, D.C., 2012.



Figure 21: Source: Anna Franz - <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Usdepartmentofjustice.jpg> (accessed 4/13/2012)

Robert F. Kennedy Department of Justice Building Modernization

In 2002, Franz joined the Smithsonian Institution as a Project Executive. There she oversaw the renovation of the Patent Office and Courtyard Enclosure (in figure 22 and 23). The \$216 million high profile project allowed Franz to oversee the renovation but also represented the Smithsonian to the public and other government agencies. She “had stewardship responsibility for building a world-class museum facility, overseeing all aspects of this major capital program project that include[d] housing and space management, planning, environmental assessments, design and construction activities, budgets and financial management, and contract administration.”²¹⁵

²¹⁵ Ibid.



Figure 22: Source: Anna Franz - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Patent_Office_Building (Accessed 4/13/2012)

Patent Office Modernization



Figure 23: Source: Anna Franz - <http://eyelevel.si.edu/2008/03/cond-nast-names.html> (accessed 4/13/2012)

Patent Office Courtyard Enclosure

After almost two years, Franz went on to the National Institute of Health as Director of Capital Project Management. The scope and magnitude of her responsibilities were increased. She was responsible for \$1 billion in design and \$2.2 billion in construction projects. In her tenure there she oversaw the Clinical Research

Center, John Edward Porter Neuroscience Research Center, and Biomedical Research Center, as well as numerous other prestigious projects. She also established “best practices for facilities management, capital project delivery, and asset management”²¹⁶ and received numerous awards for outstanding performance, namely the National Institutes of Health Performance Award and National Institute of Health Merit Award.

In 2006 she moved to the office of the Architect of the Capitol (AOC) where she currently serves as the Director of Planning and Project Management and leads approximately five hundred staff members. “[S]he oversees a central support organization which provides architecture and engineering design, project and construction management, and in-house construction services to the U.S. Capitol, House Office Buildings, Senate Office Buildings, Library of Congress, U.S. Botanical Garden, and other Agency jurisdictional facilities.”²¹⁷ She has helped to develop the Capitol Complex Master Plan which assesses the Capitol’s seventeen million four hundred thousand square feet of space and four hundred sixty acres of grounds. Franz oversees the \$35 million annual budget for in-house Capital Improvements Projects, major capital renewal projects like the \$750 million Cannon Renewal project, and \$150 million Energy Savings Performance Contracts.

She leads the AOC’s historic preservation program as well as energy and water conservation and sustainability programs. Franz is a Leadership in Energy and

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Anna Franz, “Anna Franz Bio,” *Architect of the Capitol*, Washington, D.C., 2012.

Environmental Design (LEED) Program Professional and Certified Facility Manager. She has been a guest speaker at the High Performance and Sustainability Solutions for Historic Federal Buildings and at the Beverly Willis Architecture Foundation. Franz serves on the President's Committee for Building Technology Research and Development and Advisory Council for Historic Preservation's Sustainability Task Force and Preservation Initiatives Committee.

Franz encourages women involvement within the federal government and was actively involved in implementing Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) programs at the AOC. To promote professional pride and transparency within her department, she has created a framework of "Competitiveness, Competency, Customer Focus, and Creativity"²¹⁸ for results based accountability for her five hundred staff members. She believes in leading "through partnering and team building, strengthening efficient business, internal controls and communication processes and increasing organizational credibility and accountability."²¹⁹

As an architectural leader she promotes mentorship and has created a partnership with local architectural firms to expose college and high school students to the facilities management, architecture and engineering professions. She has been a critic for the Catholic University of America School of Architecture and has taught at Johns Hopkins University.

²¹⁸ Anna Franz, "Resume 2", *Architect of the Capitol*, Washington, D.C., 2012.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

Upon critique of the current pedagogy of architectural schools, she feels it must be proactively and continually updated to meet the needs of a changing world. Franz believes that architecture is an art and science but also is a business. Students must learn to be leaders who “drive results, apply business acumen, and build coalitions with others.”²²⁰ On her outlook for the future of architecture Franz summarized, “The future will be very positive if you can carve out an entrepreneurial role in society that allows you to contribute to the built environment in a broader and inspiring way (architect-developer, architect-innovator, architect-researcher, architect-systems engineer, architect-fabricator/constructor, architect-product designer, etc.).”²²¹ By integrating technology and research into a holistic, sustainable and value management practice and recognizing “market realities”²²² the profession will be attuned to the twenty-first century needs.

With respect to women in the profession Franz feels that women in the profession must rise above any gender discrimination and “get to work making a difference”²²³ in their capacity. Men and women must learn from each other as well as from different trades and move forward collaboratively. She believes that “collectively we are great,

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ibid.

individually we are average.’’²²⁴ Like Franz, women should not perceive their professional role with any gender lines and should work to promote equality.

As a woman leader in the twenty-first century, Franz is leading by example with her hard work and pursuit of excellence in all endeavors, but also in her non-gendered, performance driven management style. In her current position, she oversees architectural design consultants and acts as an owner’s representative. Through her leadership and integrity, national treasures like our nation’s capitol are preserved as cultural icons. Her ability to maintain as well as modernize these historically significant structures is critical for their survival and the preservation of our nation’s history.

²²⁴ Ibid.

Chapter 6: Case Study

Maya Lin (1959-)



Figure 24: Source: Maya Lin Studio

Maya Lin

Maya Ying Lin gained national recognition at the young age of twenty-one when she won the design competition for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in 1981. Although she faced a lot of public scrutiny for her design, Lin maintained her composure and stood firm behind her design intent. Throughout her life and career as a monument designer, artist, and architect Lin has upheld this conviction, giving depth and meaning to all of her projects and not wavering from her design intent. She begins every project with extensive research of the subject and is deliberate in all subsequent design choices in selecting materials, siting the project, utilizing its setting as a part of the design to create a life experience for its users and visitors. She is a pioneer for the new generation of

architects, who is able to successfully have a multi-faceted career that combines art and architecture.

Lin was born in Athens, Ohio, on October 5, 1959. The youngest of two children born to Chinese immigrant parents, her father, Henry Huan Lin was the Dean of Fine Arts and her mother Julia Ming Lin was English professor at Ohio University. Growing up in a “close knit”²²⁵ family, Lin was a self proclaimed nerd and loved school. Lin and her brother both strived for excellence in their schooling while growing up and were very competitive. Her parents were very supportive and encouraged their children to be happy and pursue happiness throughout their lives and careers. Although her parents were Chinese immigrants, the emphasis of the family was to assimilate in the American society and her parents’ past was not talked about. While growing up, Lin was not aware of any prejudice or ill treatment to her based on her race or gender. She grew up with “no gender differentiation....The only thing that mattered was what you were to do in life, and it wasn’t about money. It was about teaching, or learning. There was a very strong emphasis on academic study within the family...”²²⁶ The home she grew up in was filled with her father’s art work, her mother’s poetry, and was surrounded by wooded areas that she loved to explore. She had very little friends and very little extra-curricular activities while growing up. Lin spent hours in the forested area that was her backyard, watching

²²⁵ “Interview: Maya Lin Seeing the World Differently,” *Academy of Achievement*, June 16, 2000, <http://www.achievement.org/autodoc/printmember/lin0int-1>.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

the wild animals and exploring the natural environment. These formidable years would influence her with all of her professional work.

Her love of animals and nature led her to initially pursue a degree in zoology in college. Lin was accepted into Yale but was persuaded by her academic advisor to not enter into their zoology program due to their utilizing vivisection. Appalled by this practice, Lin changed her career path to architecture which she felt was a combination of the subjects she enjoyed – art, math, and science.

She entered architecture school and in 1981, as a senior, she entered her studio project in a national competition to design the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Her simple polished granite design was selected by the selection committee over one thousand four hundred twenty entries. Unfortunately, Lin faced great public scrutiny and criticism not only for her design but also for her race and age. Lin credits her youth for being able to withstand such public scrutiny. “I didn’t even realize there would be prejudice against me. I was that naïve, because I grew up in academia. It’s not what you look like; it’s not the color of your hair. It took me twenty years to realize how people perceive you.”²²⁷ Regardless of the criticism faced, she did not lose sight of her vision of the memorial. “For me, what the Vietnam memorial had to be was about honesty, about dealing up front

²²⁷ “Between Art and Architecture: The Memory Works of Maya Lin,” *Museum*, July/August 2008, <http://www.aam-us.org/pubs/mn/mayalin.cfm>.

with individual loss.”²²⁸ After much controversy, a compromise was reached and the monument was finally completed in 1982.

Not sure of how to enter the professional field after the public scrutiny she faced with the Vietnam Memorial, Lin went back to Yale for graduate school, a place she felt welcomed. After graduating with a M.A. in Architecture in 1986, Lin then faced the challenge of entering the professional world. Looking back at this time in her life Lin has come to realize the two very different professional careers she has been able to synergistically pursue in a unique way. She pursues both art and architecture with equal passion. Coming in to her own as a professional and growing into a woman, Lin began to question her personal culture and history. In an interview with the Academy of Achievement, Lin reflected on her personal and professional life in her 20’s and 30’s as a time when she began to resolve her inner conflict between her two passions of art and architecture and her cultural conflicts between East and West. “I began to become aware of how so much of my art, and architecture, has decidedly Eastern character...I left science, then I went into art, but I approach things very analytically.”²²⁹ Instead of choosing between her two passions of art and architecture, Lin has pursued both separately. She has also acknowledges her dual heritage upbringing and influences as an Asian American.²³⁰

²²⁸ “Interview: Maya Lin Seeing the World Differently,” *Academy of Achievement*, June 16, 2000, <http://www.achievement.org/autodoc/printmember/lin0int-1>.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ibid.

As Lin began to develop as a professional, she found the ability to balance architecture with art, Eastern culture with Western culture.

Being more in tune with herself and having the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on her resume, Lin began to flourish as a memorial artist, designer and architect. “Memorials are a hybrid between art and architecture because they have a function. But their function isn’t like a physical function...it’s very conceptual, symbolic function...[t]here is a definite need for something.”²³¹ Seemingly by coincidence, her most high profile projects symbolize the significant historical movements within her lifetime that allowed her to flourish in her own career as a minority female.

One example of her early work that symbolizes the significant movement that directly affected Lin’s life is the Civil Rights Memorial. The Southern Poverty Law Center commissioned Lin to design a national civil right memorial shortly after her graduation. Lin quickly began to research the Civil Rights Movement. Her sheltered upbringing caused her findings to be shocking. Reflecting she stated, “I was stunned at what I began to read. I had no idea that, in 1963, which was when I was a child, that a boy was murdered for talking to a white woman...As a child, you’re not very news-conscious”²³² Although a minority, Lin was not made aware of her physical and cultural differences from her peers as a child. The idea of racial prejudice, until her experience

²³¹ Bill Moyers, “Interview with Maya Lin,” *PBS*, 2003, http://www.pbs.org/becomingamerican/ap_pjourneys_transcript5_print.html.

²³² *Ibid.*

with the Vietnam Memorial project, was not experienced or realized by Lin. Without the Civil Rights Movement, her academic and professional opportunities may not have come to fruition.

The design of the project combined her historical research and elements of nature. Upon reflecting on this project, Lin stated in her interview with PBS' Bill Moyers that each element in the Civil Rights Memorial was deliberate. "I came across Martin Luther King's quote...in his "I Have a Dream" speech, 'We are not satisfied. We shall not be satisfied until justice – rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.'...I knew right then and there...the piece was going to be about water."²³³ To connect to the history of this movement she utilized the stone table and to incorporate the future she added MLK's quote to the stone. "[A]nd then the water pulls them together symbolically."²³⁴

There is meaning in every element in her work. Each piece has a reason for being there, deliberate and exact.

Another example of her early work that symbolizes the significant movement that directly affected Lin's life is the sculpture called the Women's Table at Yale (in figure 25). Being a female Yale graduate, Lin could empathize with the historical significance and symbolism of this project. Commissioned by the University, she did research for over one year. Yale did not formally accept woman until 1968, however, but women

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Ibid.

would sit in classes as silent listeners but were not acknowledged as students or participants. Lin recalled from her own experience at Yale that all the statues and paintings throughout the campus were of men. She thought of the timeline of women enrollment at Yale and she worked with Yale Professor Tufte and his wife Inge Druckerey to develop her concept of a spiral timeline. Even the text used is based on the Yale course book font for students to recognize the text. "...it's the spiral starting with a group of zeros signifying there were no women at Yale for a very, very long time."²³⁵



Figure 25: Source: Maya Lin Studio

Women's Table at Yale

With such high profile projects in her portfolio, Lin was commissioned to create many more high profile memorials, sculptures and landscape earth works throughout the country. For each piece, she starts with a research period which has lasts for one year to

²³⁵ Ibid.

educate herself with the history of the event or entity for which she is designing. By designing on a human scale and utilizing the sense of touch, sound and vision, Lin is able to speak to people of all color, religion, and backgrounds.

Lin's architectural projects are also filled with the same depth and meaning as her art. Her designs are very connected to her Eastern and Western culture along with her use of new technology and love of nature. "One key things in architecture is that I want to always to have you feel connected to the landscape so that you don't think of architecture as this discrete isolating object, but in a way it frames your views of the landscape."²³⁶ However, upon reflection of her architectural career she feels she is very young architecturally. Some of her outstanding architectural projects that incorporate innovative use of materials with sustainability, simplicity of design, and integration with its context are the Riggio-Lynch Interfaith Chapel for the Children's Defense Fund (in figure 26) in Clinton, Tennessee; the Museum of Chinese America (MOCA) in New York City, New York, and residential projects like The Box House in Telluride, Colorado.

²³⁶ "Interview: Maya Lin Seeing the World Differently," *Academy of Achievement*, June 16, 2000, <http://www.achievement.org/autodoc/printmember/lin0int-1>.



Figure 26: Source: Tim Hursley, Artnet News

Riggio-Lynch Interfaith Chapel

The Riggio-Lynch Interfaith Chapel’s abstract boat shape made out of wood as a “quiet reminder of the motto of the Children’s Defense Fund, ‘Dear Lord be good to me/The Sea is so wide/and my boat is so small’”²³⁷ The wooden chapel symbolizes a boat or “ark carrying the world’s children to safety”²³⁸ with concrete block administrative building representing a historical shipyard storage, and a covered terrace connection which creates outdoor-indoor transition space complements its tranquil setting along the

²³⁷ “Architecture,” Maya Lin Studio, accessed March 26, 2012, <http://www.mayalin.com/>.

²³⁸ “Riggio-Lynch Interfaith Chapel,” *Children’s Defense Fund*, 2012, www.childrensdefense.org/about-us/haley-farm/riggio-lynch-interfaith-chapel.htm.

waterfront and log cabin neighbors. She worked in collaboration with Bialosky + Partners, Architects & Planners of New York.

With all of her work, Lin's upbringing and personal values are brought forth. Her love of art and architecture, Eastern and Western culture, nature and the environment are connected with her projects. "Both in my art and architecture work, I've been very committed to green design. All my works ask you to look at the land differently. Perhaps if I can get you to see it differently, you'll pay closer attention to it."²³⁹ There is deliberate use of materials, light, water, and natural forms tie in to her overall vision and purpose of the project. Every detail is thoroughly and consciously created and constructed. Lin reflected upon herself, "As an architect or as an artist, my aesthetic voice – there's a simplicity that I've always loved....My work tends to introduce all-natural materials, very much removed from the busy-ness of life. There's a quieting down...creating a sense of calm. A moment of stillness."²⁴⁰

When comparing her two passions of architecture and art Lin as stated, "Architecture, the monuments, it's a symbolic function, but it's still you're solving a problem....It's like math. It's a puzzle to me....The art work, on the other hand, is 'Go into a room and make whatever you want to make.'²⁴¹

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

In 1996, Lin married art photography dealer Daniel Wolf and has two daughters. Her being a mother has also changed her approach to life and work. She has credited her family as bringing a sense of balance to her life. Lin stated, “The biggest thing about having a child is learning to let go. That’s the joy.”²⁴²

Lin continues to try and maintain the balance of her life with every layer she unfolds within herself. Between art and architecture; Eastern culture and Western culture; the built environment and nature; and marriage and children she evolves to the challenge. She holds true to her upbringing when asked what her idea of the American Dream is she stated, “To me the American Dream is probably being able to follow your own personal calling. And to be able to do what you want to do is an incredible freedom that we have...we have a responsibility to share it and to not just sort of hoard that freedom...”²⁴³

Similar to her women peers in the field of architecture Lin was able to take advantage of the achievements of her predecessors. With an upbringing filled with equal opportunity and with the more liberal state of society at the time, she was able to go to the university of her choosing and although filled with much conflict and public scrutiny, her design for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was selected and built. Through her practice as both as an artist and architect, her hard work and depth to high profile projects

²⁴² Patricia Leigh Brown, “At Home With: Maya Lin; Making History On a Human Scale,” *The New York Times*, May 21, 1998, <http://www.nytimes.com/1998/05/21/garden/at-home-with-maya-lin-making-history-on-a-human-scale.htm>.

²⁴³ “Interview: Maya Lin Seeing the World Differently,” *Academy of Achievement*, June 16, 2000, <http://www.achievement.org/autodoc/printmember/lin0int-1>.

has made her a notable star in both fields. Her confidence in herself and her abilities as an artist and architect has allowed her to continue to move forward and progress in both fields.

As a pioneer for the next generation of architects, she attempts to educate those who visit and experience her monuments, architecture, and art work through the use of materials, scale, and setting. Lin creates not to convey a specific message but to make her observers develop their own interpretation based on their own unique background and history. “I’m very interested in history and in using history to teach us so that maybe we can learn from our history.”²⁴⁴ Throughout her life, Lin has followed her personal calling and has deliberately infused in her creations a cultural depth, historical significance, and technology to better society.

²⁴⁴ “Between Art and Architecture: The Memory Works of Maya Lin,” *Museum*, July/August 2008, <http://www.aam-us.org/pubs/mn/mayalin.cfm>.

Chapter 6: Case Study

Monica Ponce de Leon (1966-)



Figure 27: Source: AIA, aia.org

Monica Ponce de Leon

Monica Ponce de Leon has been able to successfully combine a career as an architect in both private practice and academics. As Dean of an architectural school, she is working to implement changes in the architectural educational program which she feels graduates will need to successfully practice and survive in the profession. She is taking the architectural pedagogy to new heights combining multiple disciplines in the educational process and exposing students to a collaborative approach to design. In practice she is also making great strides by utilizing technology, state of the art construction methods, and a collaborative process in her designs. Utilizing new fabrication techniques, use of materials, and collaboration with multiple disciplines,

Ponce de Leon is working to better the future of the profession holistically in both education and practice. She is a pioneer for the twenty-first century architect doing her part to change the profession to create a better built environment.

Ponce de Leon was born in 1966 in Caracas, Venezuela. Growing up in Venezuela, she was not exposed to gender limitations because both her parents worked together and owned their own business. She grew up in an environment different from that of America in which she was sheltered by gender discrimination and was never told to limit her dreams because she was a female. Ponce de Leon immigrated to Florida with her family after her high school graduation in 1984. She earned her Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Miami in 1988 which had many female professors and role models which lead to her being self proclaimed “gender blind”²⁴⁵ up to this point in her life. Only when she went to Harvard to obtain her Masters of Urban Design in 1988 did she realized the gender limitations put on women architects. “I was quite shocked...I began to understand that there is a glass ceiling and that architecture is a male-dominated profession in spite of our best attitudes towards equality.”²⁴⁶

Ponce de Leon has not let the glass ceiling or any obstacle from pursuing of her goals. In 1991, after graduating from Harvard, she joined the faculty and has maintained concurrent teaching and private practice responsibilities. During this time she co-founded Office dA with partner Nader Tehrani. In 1996 she was promoted to the position

²⁴⁵ *Architecture: A Woman's Perspective*, ed. Tanja Kullack, (Berlin: Jovis Verlag GmbH, 2011), 105.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

of Professor of Architecture, Director of the Digital Lab, then Acting Program Director at Harvard. In 2008, she was selected to be the Dean of Architecture at the Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning at the University of Michigan and was and still is devoted to change the profession and education to better the architects of the future. She has won multiple awards both as an individual and for design including an Academy Award from the Academy of Arts and Letters, AIA/LA Design Award, AIA/ALA Library Building Award, and the Coopers-Hewitt National Design Award. In 2010, Office dA closed after a highly publicized rift between its founding partners and Ponce de Leon went on to open her own practice MPdL Studio with three office locations in the northeastern United States. She has consciously worked both in academia and private practice because she feels there is a void in both related fields. By maintaining a high profile role in both fields she has been able to make changes to both curriculum and project execution.

In her position as Dean, she brings her business experience together with her teaching experience to change the pedagogy. She has openly commented that she feels that education can change the profession but that the traditional educational approach in architecture schools is antiquated. “We still operate with the Beaux Arts model of an instructor leading a studio and the students following and not understanding the relationship between architecture and the world; in other words, not understanding the relationship between architecture and other fields”²⁴⁷ and is actively working to change

²⁴⁷ Heather Livingston, “Monica Ponce de Leon,” *AIArchitect This Week*, January 16, 2009, <http://info.aia.org/aiarchitect/thisweek090116/011dp.cfm>.

the pedagogy. “[W]e have to come up with a different methodology that would prepare architects to be more viable in society in the future.”²⁴⁸ In an interview with *Architectural Record* one year after her first year as Dean she stated, “The field of architecture is stagnating – we’re at a crossroads”²⁴⁹ and proposes to change the architectural education by bringing different facets of design together to teach architectural students in an interdisciplinary program. “We’re looking at urban planning, government, social studies, environmental technology, history, theory...Architecture doesn’t exist in a vacuum, but in school it often does.”²⁵⁰ She feels this approach will bring about awareness to the individual. By connecting technology with environmentally conscious means and methods she wants to open her student’s eyes to the impact they have as architects to the environment. “We should test our boundaries – how do we address other issues besides architecture, how do we engage with society”²⁵¹ to prepare architects to approach projects holistically and within the context of its setting.

She is also concerned of the lack of minorities and women in the profession and is working to change their individual perspectives of themselves. By bringing in the expertise of different fields into the architectural pedagogy and profession, students and

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ William Bostwick, “Newsmaker: Monica Ponce de Leon,” *Architectural Record*, May 2009, <http://archrecord.construction.com/news/newsmakers/0905monicaponcedeleon.asp>.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

architects can develop a broader definition of the field that will give them more career options²⁵² within the profession.

In her private practice she approaches every design project without authorship and with a holistic concern for the environment and experience it creates. The essence of who the architect is personally plays a part in the design but it needs to be blended with the essence of the client, site, and demographics. Being able to communicate with clients, co-workers, and the public the vision and meaning of her architecture is her goal for her projects.

Ponce de Leon also strives to further her practice in its use of technology to design and physically create architecture. She uses new digital technology with computer aided design in her projects to push the boundaries of design. The renovation of a former 1920s bank, the Fleet Library (in figure 28) in Rhode Island is one example of her use of interdisciplinary approach. The project had many design constraints such as a low budget, site limitations, and historical provisions. By working with the client, government agencies, engineers, contractor, and her design team, the renovation utilized digital technology to create state of the art custom designed modules and interior spaces for its users with low cost in fabrication. She led her team to create spaces for its users with different physical abilities, with flexibility, practicality, and economy by utilizing the digital capability to control every detail and customize every element of the design.

²⁵² Heather Livingston, "Monica Ponce de Leon," *AIArchitect This Week*, January 16, 2009, <http://info.aia.org/aiarchitect/thisweek090116/011dp.cfm>.

Unlike mass production of the 19th century, computer aided design with digital fabrication allows for “mass customization...enables permutations within a single project without added cost”²⁵³ (in figure 29) and “can afford a level of detail and craftsmanship that throughout the 20th century was out of reach for most.”²⁵⁴ Digital fabrication changes the production of architecture and connects to the architect’s means of production through computer aided design “thereby appropriating craft for the discipline of architecture.”²⁵⁵



Figure 28: Source: The Province Athenaeum
Fleet Library Reading Room

²⁵³ Monica Ponce de Leon, “Comment: Monica Ponce de Leon,” *The Architect’s Newspaper*, August 24, 2011, <http://archpaper.com/news/articles.asp?id=5586>.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

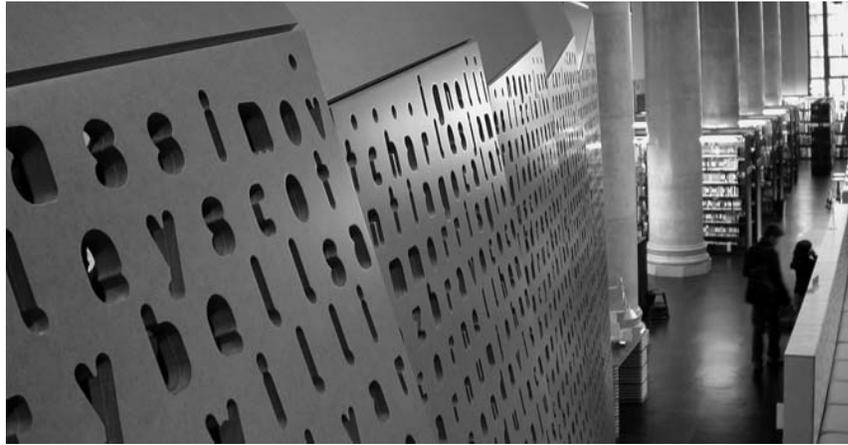


Figure 29: Source: Fleet Library
Close up of digitally cut wall panels

She feels the star system has been effective in bringing architecture to the attention of a larger society but it has also caused society to focus on specific architects and not the profession as a whole or the architect as a whole.

Looking to the future for the profession in general, Ponce de Leon believes that by utilizing cross disciplinary teaching methods that approaches architecture holistically the profession can best serve society “and in this way write a new chapter in the public mission of architecture.”²⁵⁶

In regards to what needs to be done to combat the low number of women and minorities in architecture, her view is also holistic, “I think everyone has to be engaged as it cannot be the problem of just the minority architect or just the female architect. It has

²⁵⁶ Monica Ponce de Leon, “Disciplinary Transgressions,” *The Architect’s Newspaper*, August 05, 2009, <http://archpaper.com/news/articles.asp?id=3454>.

to come from the top-down. The AIA, institutions, and the government have to become proactive, otherwise it is not going to happen.”²⁵⁷ By utilizing her high ranking position as Dean of an architectural school, she is leading by example. Her belief in change is something she is working to achieve.

Ponce de Leon has taken advantage of the opportunities historical pioneers brought forth for women architects. Her education, training, and practice have been possible due to her predecessors. Through hard work, dedication, and motivation, she has been able to pursue her academic and career goals. Throughout her career has continued to work to change the education and practice of architecture. Although there is very little documented on her personal life, we do know that she grew up without any gender barriers which gave her the strength in herself to not be hindered to pursue her dreams in a male dominated field. Coming to America in the 1980s, Ponce de Leon was able to pursue her dreams of going to architecture school and becoming an architect. Her balance of private practice and her educational role as Dean allows Ponce de Leon to bring the two roles together to raise the bar in both fields. By never accepting the status quo and working in all facets to change the profession in the way architects are taught, trained, create, and utilize technology, she is a pioneer for the next generation of architects.

²⁵⁷ *Architecture: A Woman's Perspective*, ed. Tanja Kullack, (Berlin: Jovis Verlag GmbH, 2011), 168.

Chapter 7: Conclusion:

Current Obstacles in the Profession

The current pedagogy in architecture schools, training in offices, and the architectural practice needs to change to address the new paradigm of the architectural profession of the twenty-first century. The “heroes” of the profession are typically white males. Women in the field are overlooked and are unable to relate to these types of role models. “The existing obvious disparity must be articulated and overcome; not only as a ‘woman’ in architecture but as anyone interested in making the discipline more democratic, fair, diversified and thus productive.”²⁵⁸ This disparity can be overcome, at least in part, by reflecting on the past experiences of women in architecture.

Currently, although the ratio of female and male students in architectural programs is typically equal,²⁵⁹ there is a significant lack of women in high level positions in both the academic and private realms. The National Center for Education Statistics reported in their 2010 digest that 40-44% of the architecture students in American schools of architecture Bachelors of Architecture programs were women and according to the AIA 2005 Demographic and Diversity Audit Report, 46% females versus 38% males

²⁵⁸ *Architecture: A Woman’s Perspective*, ed. Tanja Kullack, (Berlin: Jovis Verlag GmbH, 2011), 6-7.

²⁵⁹ American Institute of Architects, “The Best of Architecture,” *2006 AIA Firm Survey*, Washington, D.C.: The AIA. <http://www.aia.org>.

completed their IDP (Intern Development Program) within four to six years. However, according to the 2003 AIA Firm Survey, only 20% of the total licensed architects in America were women and according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics 2010 Household Data Annual Averages table, 29% of architects were female as compared to 35% of women in law.²⁶⁰ What causes this decline in the number of women in architecture schools and interns as compared to practicing women architects?

The AIA 2005 Demographic and Diversity Audit Report also found that 20% of respondents cited “professional dissatisfaction” which included “lack of job satisfaction” and “erosion of the architect’s role in the building industry,” then 18% cited “compensation” as their primary reason for leaving. Female respondents cited “personal/family circumstances” and “inflexible hours” as their primary reason for leaving as compared to male respondents 19% to 7% respectively.²⁶¹

In academia, there appear to be three major issues of concern for women, preventing them from being prepared for the profession academically and personally, thus resulting in many women leaving the field prematurely.

One issue is the limited exposure to and the understanding of women in architectural history. How this relates to women in American history is a crippling

²⁶⁰ “Household Data Annual Averages,” Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010. <ftp://ftp.bls.gov/pub/special.requests/lf/aat39.txt>.

²⁶¹ American Institute of Architects, “Summary and Review 2005 Demographic Diversity Audit Report,” AIA, December 2005. <http://www.aia.org>.

deficiency that many women do not realize is essential for their success until later in their careers. Another issue is their inability to understand themselves as women and that void handicaps them in achieving success later in their lives personally and professionally. The last issue is the shortage of female role models to help them realize they are not alone and what may come in their future career. "The recovery of a cultural past is crucial for any future choices made by women so that the evaluation of the conclusions drawn from this past may avoid the unconscious repetitions of traditional patterns."²⁶² By exposing female architectural students, interns, and professionals to the history of women architects, their stories and experiences will help women realize that it is possible to overcome obstacles and it is acceptable to define your career in your own way.

In schools of architecture across the United States, while the ratio of architectural male and female students is approximately 50:50,²⁶³ the education they receive is gender biased. Currently, the typical architectural education provided throughout the country is based on a white male star system. Lori A Brown, in her introduction to *Feminist Practices* stated, "As Leslie Kanés Weisman has written in her article 'Diversity by Design: Feminist Reflections on the Future of Architectural Education and Practice,' "How can an architectural education that continues to define professional expertise in relation to the history of white, heterosexual, Euro-American male consciousness prepare

²⁶² Susan Torre, introduction to *Women in American Architecture: A Historic and Contemporary Perspective*, ed. Susana Torre, (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1977), 10.

²⁶³ American Institute of Architects, "The Best of Architecture," *2006 AIA Firm Survey*, Washington, D.C.: The AIA. <http://www.aia.org>.

students to function as effective professionals in pluralistic communities...[and] be sensitized to ‘difference’ when they are encouraged to suppress their own gender, race, and class identities”²⁶⁴ on their path to becoming a professional?

This biased perspective of the profession limits the perspective of students, especially females. By focusing on the heroes or the star system, we are training future architects to think that there is a right and wrong way to design and practice. They will get an unrealistic idea of what success is in the profession. “They follow a movement instead of finding their own direction.”²⁶⁵

We also do not focus on the success stories of architects based on their practice within their place in time. “[T]here’s a cultural assumption that the players shaping the built environment are men...I think the perception that this is status quo takes hard work to shake off if you grow up as a female.”²⁶⁶ This is compounded with the traditional gender biased ways women are raised “as users of the built environment rather than producers.”²⁶⁷ By exposing women to their female predecessors they can realize that this naïve patriarchal way of thinking is wrong. By understanding the timeframe in which these historical women practiced can also help establish the setting and gain perspective

²⁶⁴ Kathryn Anthony, *Designing for Diversity*, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001, 1.

²⁶⁵ *Architecture: A Woman’s Perspective*, ed. Tanja Kullack, (Berlin: Jovis Verlag GmbH, 2011), 42-43.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 43.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 43

into the magnitude of the challenges they faced and how important they were in shaping the profession today.

The typical architectural program, like most other college programs, should provide a more diverse curriculum of historical education. Architecture has an assorted history that includes women, minorities, contractors, artists, and many others who have helped shape the profession. Looking beyond their projects to the story of their lives, career paths and choices, and the context in which they practiced is critical knowledge for architects to be exposed to and is the only way to truly understand their design. By exposing students to the rich diversity and true history of the profession will bring topics, ideas, and perspectives with which students may be able to identify. As Brown reflects on her own educational experience as a student and an educator, “women’s design practices are not equally shown or discussed in their various classes...there are still too few examples of female architects studied in architectural history and theory courses, more needs to be done to alter this gender disparity and to increase female and minority representation in the discipline.”²⁶⁸

Architectural historians like Susana Torre have addressed the documented void of women in the history of the architectural profession. As Brown summarized, “Torre’s fearless discussion about pressures on female designers and the circumstances around their educational and support networks that previously went publicly unspoken and

²⁶⁸ Kathryn Anthony, *Designing for Diversity*, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001, 3-6.

unacknowledged is critical to the rewriting of architectural history.”²⁶⁹ The new history should not focus on the star architect but should include the work of talented, competent architects “design work, and the influence their work has had on the larger architectural profession and built environment.”²⁷⁰

The architectural education also does not fully prepare its students to become well rounded professionals. “Architecture students are not trained to move seamlessly into the profession”²⁷¹ and ultimately the development of the whole person is ignored instead of nurtured. These future architects will have the ability to shape the built environment but are they prepared to do so? Being an architect is more than being able to design. You must be able to manage and communicate with people – clients, consultants, the public – and also be able to always see the big picture. Your ego must be put aside for what is best for the project. Students need not only disciplinary knowledge but also must be prepared “to experiment and judge, to ask ‘what if?’ and ‘what-if-not?’ We need to educate professionals (citizen leaders) who can shape their own questions and agenda in response to the situation they face and the situation they imagine.”²⁷²

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 3.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ *Architecture: A Woman’s Perspective*, ed. Tanja Kullack, (Berlin: Jovis Verlag GmbH, 2011), 43.

²⁷² Ronit Eisenbach and Rebecca Krefting, “The Pedagogy and Practice of ‘Placing Space: Architecture, Action, Dimension,” *Feminist Practices*, ed. Lori A. Brown (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2011), 190-191.

“Architectural education should include historical reflection of women forerunners and historical reflection of American women which will ‘encourage students to develop integrity and their own viewpoints.’”²⁷³ This exposure to successful women’s experiences, setting and context will help women become aware of themselves and the world around them which in turn will help make them better students, architects and members of society. It will help define their own identity and open their eyes to explore within themselves and find a common bond with other women both as peers and as role models. With awareness of their predecessor’s accomplishments and past struggles, peer similarities, and role models they can relate to, these women can develop an inner strength and a network of support that will carry them through the highs and lows of their architectural career.

For female students specifically, the lack of knowledge of historical female role models and their experiences, the deficiency of female faculty role models while attending school and the few female professional role models in the office, leaves a gap in their personal core. Many women, however, do not realize there is a void in their knowledge base or understand how dire it is to have a female mentor with this knowledge during school or early in their careers. Only until later in their careers and lives when they are faced with personal changes they realize that their basic understanding of architecture and the profession is gender biased. As Denise Scott Brown stated in her interview with Silvia Micheli, “[D]o you believe there is no longer a women’s problem?”

²⁷³ *Architecture: A Woman’s Perspective*, ed. Tanja Kullack, (Berlin: Jovis Verlag GmbH, 2011), 45.

You're right – but only in the sense that there never was one. It was always a men's and women's problem! And I believe it exists today as strong as ever."²⁷⁴ Only then will the women begin to try and find ways to fill the gap. Scott Brown continued, "It gets worse as you proceed, and when it does, you'll find it is a strong problem. And sadly, because you don't have a feminist awareness, you'll think it's your fault."²⁷⁵ Left unfilled, the gap can make women can feel alone or overwhelmed by the demands of the profession and personal lives. Ultimately, this is when many women leave their careers in pursuit of finding balance within their lives.

Growing up sheltered from gender bias in her family, Monica Ponce de Leon claims ignorance her youth, "I have always been gender blind. My mother and father had joint businesses, so I grew up thinking that working together was the norm...I was irritated by the idea that there are gender-specific professions."²⁷⁶ Only upon her entering Harvard did she come to realize that there is a glass ceiling barrier hindering women from success in the male dominated profession.

Forming relationships and connections with a role model in school will help students and young professionals see what may come up next for them in their careers and life.

²⁷⁴ Silvia Micheli, "Interview to Denise Scott Brown," *GIZMOWEB*, June 24, 2010, www.gizmoweb.org/tag/silvia-micheli/page/7/.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁶ *Architecture: A Woman's Perspective*, ed. Tanja Kullack, (Berlin: Jovis Verlag GmbH, 2011), 105.

Upon graduation, women face more challenges due to their gender but how they perceive and take on these challenges is of concern. Caroline Bos, partner in the firm UNStudio and visiting professor at Princeton and UCLA is quoted in *Architecture: A Woman's Perspective*, summarized an intern's inevitable challenge as, "[A] bitter pill awaits young women entering the profession. They may not be aware of it, but statistics show that their chances are more restricted."²⁷⁷ Identity of the woman needs to be formed and "readdressed in new and imaginative ways. The strategies of earlier feminist movements cannot simply be repeated when dealing with the persistent problem of gender inequality."²⁷⁸ She hopes that diversity will become valued and result in a more cohesive environment for both women and men and summarized that, "In my personal experience, difference has been a vital aspect of a sustained collaboration effort."²⁷⁹

If women students were exposed to the history of women architects and had mentors with this type of knowledge base within the school, they would be able to see that women throughout the history of the profession women like themselves, have had to deal with similar issues and those few who were written about were able to overcome and attain success.

Having a family and personal life can cause an imbalance for both men and women. The challenge has prevented and continues to prevent many women from

²⁷⁷ *Architecture: A Woman's Perspective*, ed. Tanja Kullack, (Berlin: Jovis Verlag GmbH, 2011), 162-163.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

attaining true success. “[A] young architect with serious creative ambition is routinely expected to work endless hours for little pay. Recognition and high-profile commissions, if they materialize at all, typically arrive in an architect’s fifties – well past the typical age for starting a family.”²⁸⁰ If women can get past the obstacles in their career and personal path and find a balance in their professional and personal life, and stay in the profession, like most men are able to, they may be able to reap the rewards of higher profile projects and receive recognition.

Jeanne Gang theorizes in *Architecture: A Woman’s Perspective* that, “Everyone who is successful at their professional career--man or woman -- benefits from having an environment in their personal life that is supportive of what they want to do. This has helped men succeed for decades and it’s time for women to expect the same.”²⁸¹ She also feels that this will give them self-confidence which is also critical for success and must take control of their own life and careers.²⁸²

However, the ability to do this requires knowledge. Knowing what they are missing in their lives – a mentor, peers, life-partner – is only realized through exposure to others in their field.

²⁸⁰ Nicolai Ouroussof, “Keeping Houses, Not Building Them”, *The New York Times*, October 31 2007.

²⁸¹ *Architecture: A Woman’s Perspective*, ed. Tanja Kullack, (Berlin: Jovis Verlag GmbH, 2011), 121-122.

²⁸² *Ibid.*

It is also the definition of success that is skewed to a male star system that hinders women. Architecture historically has been recorded and is perceived as a male's profession. Kathryn Anthony stated in *Designing for Diversity* that traditionally, "In assuming the role of architect, women redefine – both for themselves and for the men around them – what it means to be female. Essentially, they have to adapt to the male values of competition, aggression, and individualism to succeed."²⁸³ Only recently have women been given the attention they deserve. Women like Jeanne Gang, have been recently included in the star category for her notable architectural projects, however, her practice, methods, and goals are more than for the attainment of high profile, publicly recognizable projects. There is depth, consciousness, and awareness that are an integral part of every project she creates.

Historical women like Julia Morgan had numerous projects that could have been categorized in this same star category – the Hearst Castle and estate, the YWCA Honolulu are just a few of the over eight hundred projects she produced in her career. Due to the patriarchal profession and history, much of the accomplishments up until very recently have been unnoticed and undocumented in architectural history.

In 2004, *The Wall Street Journal* summarized the change in obstacles for women in pursuit of business careers in general which parallels the challenges women face in the field of architecture throughout the twentieth century. As summarized by psychologists Alice Eagly and Linda Carli in their book *Through the Labyrinth*, "The situation had

²⁸³ Kathryn Anthony, *Designing for Diversity*, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001, 153.

morphed from the complete exclusion of women, symbolized by the concrete wall, to the exclusion of women from the more advanced positions, symbolized by the glass ceiling.”²⁸⁴ However, as society progressed, the challenges facing women has also changed and “have become more surmountable, at least by some women some of the time. Paths to the top exist, and some women find them. The successful routes can be difficult to discover, however, and therefore we label these circuitous paths a ‘labyrinth.’”²⁸⁵

There are a multitude of barriers in the labyrinth but they “are no longer absolute.”²⁸⁶ The labyrinth has many obstacles and dead ends, similar to the career of architecture, but if you can navigate your way through the labyrinth, ultimately, you will find your way out and achieve success. But that definition of success has to be your own.

Eagly, professor of psychology at Northwestern University and Carli associate professor of psychology at Wellesley College theorize that by utilizing networks and mentors, women can see their value in their profession and demand due recognition and acknowledgement. People are now seeking new types of leaders, those who can “combine competence and warmth and to be, as one woman publisher described it, ‘smart, driven, aggressive, strong, and tough, but also fair and openhearted.’ This

²⁸⁴ Alice Eagly and Linda Carli, *Through the Labyrinth*, Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2007, 4-5.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

cultural shift eases women's paths to leadership."²⁸⁷ As a result, women have changed substantially in personality, abilities, education, career ambition, labor force participation, and job preferences. No longer are women required to take on male characteristics to become leaders. "These changes reflect women's accommodation to their new roles and opportunities."²⁸⁸ Women leaders can help to continually make improvements for others as they continue through the labyrinth.

The symbolism of a woman architect's career path as a labyrinth is applicable not only to women of the twenty-first century but of women in the past as well. Instead of being stopped by the concrete wall obstacles in their way, these women went around the wall to get to where they wanted to go. They were able to navigate their way through their own labyrinth to reach their goal. Women architects today, may take for granted the opportunities they are given but eventually in their pursuit of success, will encounter their own labyrinth filled with obstacles and detours, trying to keep them from their goals. Through perseverance, creativity and hard work, like their predecessors, they too will find their way through the labyrinth to reach their goals. However, with the knowledge of the experiences and challenges the women of the past faced and overcame, the path through the labyrinth may not be as daunting as it could possibly be.

Gwendolyn Wright, architectural historian stresses the importance of history in her book *USA Modern Architectures in History*, "history reaches far beyond names, dates, stylistic labels and decoding games. It becomes a necessary frame or foundation

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 181-182.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

for even the most audacious choices and deliberations made in the present. Whatever the field of inquiry, historical awareness liberates rather than limits creative processes.”²⁸⁹

By engaging students to understand their predecessors in architectural history, we will stimulate their critical thinking and bait their curiosity to see beyond the star project. Understanding the person behind the project and their unique path through the labyrinth can help to inspire the next generation of professionals.

Barbara Bestor, principal of Bestor Architecture and Graduate Chair at Woodbury University School of Architecture summarized, “We are no longer hindered by the traditional gender roles of the twentieth-century American business model. We are among the generation of empowered women who have not had to play the ‘act-like-a-man’ game.”²⁹⁰ By no longer allowing traditional gender models of success to define our goals, we can be empowered to expand our lives and careers as we see fit. “Life decisions based upon non-architectural concerns have fueled our creative, expansive careers. Indeed, our careers are constructed from the relationships and families we have built outside of our arhicentric worlds and are the very things that support us as architects.”²⁹¹

²⁸⁹ Gwendolyn Wright, *USA Modern Architectures in History*, London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2008, 278.

²⁹⁰ *Architecture: A Woman’s Perspective*, ed. Tanja Kullack, (Berlin: Jovis Verlag GmbH, 2011), 52.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*

Architectural practice and academia both need to bring a wider range of issues to the attention of its professionals and students for a new generation of architecture to begin.

What Needs to Change

The history of women in American architecture is a powerful tool from which women currently in the profession can utilize to make changes for the present and the future. “In order to eventually realize the possibilities for women architects worldwide, it is important to make an assessment of what kinds of changes can realistically be made now”²⁹² and what has already been done in the past. Maggie Toy, editor of *The Architect – Women in Contemporary Architecture* states in her introduction that although women are in more leadership roles than ever before, “Changes that bring about equality for women must be made, and very soon, before more time and opportunities are lost.”²⁹³ Equality for women combined with the advances in design, and technology can have an “awesome”²⁹⁴ effect on the profession.

Similar to historical women architects, the women architects today “should not wait to seek leadership until organizational and cultural changes have created a level playing field. Women who initially break into male-dominated roles face special challenges, but when they are successful, they can foster progressive organizational

²⁹² Maggie Toy, introduction to *The Architect – Women in Contemporary Architecture*, ed. Maggie Toy, (New York: Watson-Guptill Publications, 2001), 8.

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

change that creates greater fairness for the women who follow their footsteps.”²⁹⁵ For the profession of architecture to not have any gender lines, architecture as a whole has to progress from the top down in the hierarchy of academia, organizations, and practice. Women who are able to obtain high level positions in academia and practice need to utilize their position to advance the profession to embrace diversity.

The patriarchal history must be changed. Architectural schools can help combat the current bias in their programs by making updates to their curriculum and class offerings. Women architects have made significant contributions to the built environment along with the profession as a whole and must be made a part of all architectural curriculum. This knowledge of historical role models will help to develop the identity of the students through awareness. The identity of the student needs to be formed and the university is the perfect setting to bring awareness of one’s self to its students. As a student, they have access to a diverse palette of classes and clubs tailored to gender, cultural, and religious interests. Electives in gender and culture should include but not be limited to women and ethnic studies. Classes about different cultures as it relates to American society and history would create a stronger self awareness of the individual. Architectural programs should require students to take a more diverse range of electives, offer classes specific to women in architectural history, expand architectural history classes to include projects by women, and to facilitate women architect forums, which would bring about awareness to the entire student body and faculty. Architecture

²⁹⁵ Alice Eagly and Linda Carli, *Through the Labyrinth*, Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2007, 181.

schools should promote women in architecture lecture series and exhibits annually to focus on the historical and current women architects. Attention must be brought to their design projects but also their lives including their education and career paths.

Professional participants should be willing to share their personal and professional stories, give insight to select projects and their design process, and words of advice for the students specifically the female audience. This could also lead to break out groups and workshops in which smaller groups of students can interact with the professional on a more intimate setting. Local women architects should educate themselves on historical women architects and serve as historians in these workshops so both the students and architects can learn about these great women pioneers of the past. Women who participate at both the student and professional level should do so with the understanding that the lecture series or exhibit is to promote self awareness and the true history of architecture.

Students also need to be exposed to the diversity in the profession and should be encouraged to confront issues of gender and study historical models. Academia must also lead by example in promoting diversity within their faculty and staff. According to the 2005 Demographic Diversity Audit Final Report 77% of respondents had careers in traditional architecture; 10% of respondents had careers in non-traditional architecture defined as non-profit architecture organizations, associations, and facilities management; non-architecture related careers 4%; academia 4%; interior/industrial/graphic design fields defined as including interior, industrial, or graphic design 3%; and

construction/engineering 2%.²⁹⁶ Through practicum, students could gain insight into the profession and the options they have. However, instead of only focusing on the traditional private practice experience, students need to be exposed to other careers in architecture like the twenty-first pioneers referenced. Pursuing architecture in academia, history, technology, construction, government, and writing are examples of alternative challenging branches of an architectural career. An effort to regulate practicum requirements for both the student and firm/agency is necessary to ensure the maximum benefits and experiences are shared by both parties involved. Professional practicum participants should be carefully selected and paired with their student. With a commitment from the professional to expose the student to a wide range of facets to their occupation and committing to mentor the student, a beneficial relationship could be formed for both parties involved. Older experienced architects could gain insight into the perspectives of the profession through the up and coming generation. The young could learn the reality of practice and how it can affect the personal life and gain insight from those experienced architects. By the administration encouraging engagement between faculty and students in a true mentoring relationship instead of the typical advisor-student assignment both students and faculty could learn from each other on an informal level thus making a more dynamic school environment.

The Intern Development Program (IDP) required for qualifying to sit for the license exam needs to include required training in culture, history, diversity, equality, and

²⁹⁶ American Institute of Architects, "Summary and Review 2005 Demographic Diversity Audit Report." *AIA*, December 2005. <http://www.aia.org>.

gender in the Community and Service category of their required internship. According to the current 2000 IDP guidelines, there are no requirements for equal opportunity exposure or training. To fulfill culture or historical requirements, interns could be required to do a research project and report their findings to the satisfaction of an assigned mentor or their supervisor. This would engage the interns to research an architect and learn about their practice and lives. The mentor/supervisor would also learn through this process. Specific requirements to fulfill equal opportunity awareness through workshops, culture through organization participation or research, diversity and gender equity through organization participation and research would help to educate the new generation of the profession. IDP should also include a mentor or sponsor who is truly committed to help the intern. Regulations and monitoring of the mentors should also be enforced to ensure the best interest of the intern's training is being met. This relationship could lead to a lifetime mentor relationship that could provide great support to the intern throughout their careers.

As the transition between education and practice, IDP and the internship period are critical to the development of the profession of architecture. This transition should ideally be seamless and become extensions of each other. If practicing architects want to have quality interns and future architects in their firms and agencies, they need to take an active role to help properly prepare and educate them. The focus of internship has to be less on long hours with little pay and more on the training, teaching and exposure to all aspects of the profession.

Women leaders in the practice of architecture and faculty members need to take a more active role in assisting up and coming professionals who will one day be their peers and leaders. The AIA could reach out to the American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS) to establish mentor-student relationships with a focus on identity and awareness of the profession, including design and practice.

In practice, firms and agencies could establish design and practice in a true collaborative style instead of focusing only on high profile projects, trademark designs, or making money. Leaving egos behind and getting back to grassroots efforts to better the profession by creating well rounded professionals, the field of architecture will shift to fit the new millennium.

“Measured against how planning, landscape architecture, law and medicine have responded to diversity, architecture has lagged.”²⁹⁷ Key professional organizations like the AIA needs to change to address their deficiencies. In the professions of law and medicine, the American Bar Association and American Medical Associations assess their members annually and make changes to their organizations and professions in response to their findings. The AIA and architecture profession must follow their example. AIAS and architecture schools should follow a similar protocol and assess their student body and membership. This type of report is critical for tracking and evaluating the profession. Attrition rates, dissatisfaction with the profession and education, compensation are all key issues that should be examined to make changes in the field.

²⁹⁷ Kathryn Anthony, *Designing for Diversity*, Chicago: University Press of Illinois, 2001, 181.

It is critical to stress that the data collected must be utilized to advance the organizations and the profession to service the needs of its constituency. There must be a commitment to raise awareness of the women in architectural history and the present. Historically, the AIA has formed a task force on women. In 1981, an AIA Archive of Women in Architecture was started. The task force was to start archiving the women in architectural history and bring awareness of the significant female role in the profession. It was later renamed the Women in Architecture Committee. Exhibits they coordinate like the 1991 “The Exceptional One: Women in American Architecture, 1888-1988” need to be held more frequently. Committees like these must be supported both monetarily and through volunteers to create forums and workshops addressing gender concerns. In the recent past, proposals to examine gender inequities by Roberta Feldman, Professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago Architecture and Planning School and Kathryn Anthony, architectural author and Professor at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign School of Architecture have been unaddressed.²⁹⁸ Exposure of women in architecture to male and female architects is essential to raise awareness of gender inequities of the past and present. The value of women in the profession can be unveiled and a better profession for women and men can be created. The AIA could lose valuable female membership if their needs are ignored.

Categorizing the required Continuing Education (CE) credits required for the state architectural license and AIA membership would help to promote a better profession for all. Categories like gender, cultural and diversity awareness would force architects to

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 183.

attend classes and workshops focusing on these issues. Working with its members nationwide, at a local level, and with the universities, CE classes and workshops could be created to provide an avenue for such education to take place. Education must not stop with a degree or license. The field is so dynamic and its members must continue to better themselves and be aware of its changing needs and how their role must also change for the profession to survive.

As Kathryn Anthony concludes in her book *Designing for Diversity*, “[u]nless drastic changes are made, the profession will likely continue to alienate those diverse members that need it most.”²⁹⁹ A paradigm shift must occur within the profession from the educational programs to the practice. The profession must be proactive to ensure a better future. Success and change can only result if a good partnership is formed between faculty, the profession, the student, and the intern. Architecture cannot be isolated from its users, designers, and most importantly its true history that includes both talented and hard working men and women. Ultimately, a good architect will draw upon their personal experiences to create for others. To be sensitive to one’s own self will help architects be sensitive to the needs of their clients, co-workers, and society.

Architecture must progress to best serve the changing needs of society, technology, and clientele. Current women architects like Jeanne Gang, Anna Franz, Maya Lin and Monica Ponce de Leon are doing their part to make changes to the education and professional experience for both men and women. They have taken advantage of the opportunities their predecessors fought for them to have and are

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 181.

working hard to change the profession for both men and women of the future. If all educators and professionals could follow their lead, the face of the architect and architectural practice will change and can be defined by each individual.

Upon reflection of the successful careers and lives of the historical and current pioneer women architects it is obvious that these women transcend any category limiting their abilities and achievements. Their projects and life stories creates new possibilities for the next generation of architects.

Louise Blanchard Bethune, one of our first American woman pioneer architects said, in her speech in 1891 to the Women's Educational and Industrial Union, "The future of woman in the architectural profession is what she herself sees fit to make it."³⁰⁰ It is now time for women to change the profession and be recognized both for their past, present and future achievements as competent, talented, exceptional architects.

³⁰⁰ Louise Bethune, "Women and Architecture," *The Inland Architect and News Record* (Buffalo, NY), March 1891.

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