

Classmates at Utah State, Joe Porter and Don Ensign often spoke of forming a landscape design firm together. After graduate school at Illinois and Michigan respectively, they became professors at North Carolina State in 1969. With founding partners, Dick Wilkinson and Vince Foote, they created Design Workshop as an effort to give real-world experience to landscape architecture students. Wilkinson and Foote thought of the workshop's value as purely educational, while the other two wanted to effect change from within the powerful development industry. There was an amicable parting, and Joe Porter and Don Ensign created Design Workshop, Inc. naming it for the process of collaboration they wished to foster.

Through the firm's initial work with The Rouse Company in Columbia, Maryland, the partners learned to design new communities and manage the complexity of such undertakings. A 1972 plan for Pine Island in North Carolina, gave the partners a rigorous introduction to public policy, the complexity of integrating different scales of design, and the challenges of reconciling the environment with economics. The island's ecosystem became the framework for preserving the decades-old hunting club, a plan that has succeeded in keeping 6,000 acres of Pine Island preserved and protected as an Audubon sanctuary.

Pine Island attracted the attention of visionary George Mitchell, developer of The Woodlands in Houston, Texas. Mitchell hired Design Workshop in 1974 to design the ski area and base village of Owl Creek near Aspen, Colorado. Highly influenced by Ian McHarg's *Design With Nature*, an understanding of the site's ecology supported the design of an auto-free village on a very small portion of the site between Aspen and Snowmass. Wildlife corridors were preserved and the design introduced ideas that were innovative for the time, including a transit system and a central parking strategy. While defeated politically, the plan's careful balance of growth and environment became a model for future development in Pitkin County, significantly influencing the land-use regulations later adopted in Aspen. Later ski resort work benefited from the growing firm's continuing emphasis on holistic thinking, including projects in Europe and the original planning in Canada for Blackcomb, one of the world's most popular and sustainable ski resorts.

Seeing great potential in the West, the partners relocated to Aspen in 1974. The inter-mountain West was the great "empty quarter" of America with twenty-five percent of the land area and five percent of the country's population. Here was a vast landscape which had very few examples of landscape architecture outside of the impressive efforts of the National Park Service and Forest Service, and even fewer landscape architecture firms. It is a region possessed by all Americans and dominated by great public landscapes. As a result projects in the West are often played out on both a national stage and in an extraordinarily complex local context where traditional economies of agriculture, timber harvesting, and mining, give way to new economies. With one project in hand, Joe and Don, founded a firm which in 35 years has grown to nearly 200 employees.

The firm earned an impressive reputation for its ski-area projects. The lessons from that period, however, went far beyond developing in a sustainable manner in the mountains. The firm's staff also began to see that in order to carry their values through a project they would need to go beyond ideas, plans and designs, adding to their skills the ability to take the work through implementation. In 1978, they got their chance, with a project where everything they had learned came together, in the Kananaskis Valley of the Canadian Rockies. Led by Richard Shaw, another Utah State graduate who joined the firm in 1976 after attending Harvard's GSD, the creation of this resort village was a 10-year-long landmark project for Design Workshop. Here it became clear the firm's ideals would work at a large scale, on a complex project, if the processes were carefully managed through design development, public process, and construction.

Kananaskis laid the foundation for many of the firm's most successful projects to come, including a series of new communities during the 1980s. These began at The Meadows, south of Denver. Plans for that development included village clusters and innovative infrastructure, including riparian drainage spines. The same developer hired the firm to work on Estrella, near Phoenix, which led to creating the original master plan for the 20,000 acre development of Summerlin along the western edge of Las Vegas.

In early 1979, LSU graduate, Kurt Culbertson, joined the firm. In 1985, Bill Kane, former Pitkin County Planning Director, and one of the world's great mountain planners became a partner. He greatly influenced the firm's resort design, but also brought a strong emphasis on smart growth. That year, Becky Zimmermann also joined the firm, serving first as Director of Marketing and then, building Design Workshop's capabilities in market research and financial analysis. More importantly, she built upon a foundation of resort design to expand the firm's capabilities in tourism planning, another of the West's great economies. Plans for the 10,000 acre Pikes Peak Watershed, the Clark County Wetlands Master Plans, and the entire north shore of Lake Tahoe were notable examples of this work. A Phoenix office was opened in 1987.

In 1989, Kurt Culbertson became President of the firm with Porter as Chairman. In response to recessions, Design Workshop began to expand its focus beyond its core business of resort design. An emphasis was placed upon building upon the traditional economies of the West - mining, railroads, and public lands. A year later Culbertson and Porter, joined with Sergio Santana to prepare the master plan for Aguas Claras, the restoration and redevelopment of a massive iron ore mine near Belo Horizonte, Brasil. In response to this work, a Sao Paulo office opened in 1992. The regional plan for the 100,000 acre, Minas Gerais mining district continued the firm's substantial commitment to both mined land reclamation projects and brownfield redevelopment, which translated well to the great mining regions of the American West. Offices in Bolivia and Chile followed.

The firm also focused on regional planning at a vast scale. Winning competition entries for the vast Tama region surrounding Tokyo and the Sorochi tourism district of Hokaido expanded the firm's experience at this scale. The Bow Canmore visual assessment study created a management strategy for the forty mile corridor from Calgary to Banff. The national award-winning Flathead County master plan addressed growth pressures and natural resource preservation issues in a 3.2 million acre landscape. A plan for Canyon Forest Village and the High Desert new community in New Mexico, in 1990 launched the firm's significant commitment to sustainable development, creating some of the first green building standards in America. The implementation of High Desert led to the opening of offices in Albuquerque and Santa Fe in 1995. Offices were opened in Vail, Colorado in 1995, and Jackson, Wyoming and Lake Tahoe, California in 1997.

In 1996, Todd Johnson, joined Design Workshop. Todd's influence was immediate, particularly in the area of urban design. Todd created the award winning master plan for Riverfront Park, the redevelopment of the old Denver railyards. Master plans for the redevelopment of the railyards in Phoenix and Calgary were followed by Union Park, a sixty-acre transformation of the Las Vegas Union Pacific yard.

In 2000, the firm returned to its roots with the opening of an office in Salt Lake City, Utah. Led by Terrall Budge, a graduate of Utah State and Harvard GSD, the firm has been responsible for downtown redevelopment plans for the city, as well as the Daybreak new community, a 30,000 acre master planned community carved from the brownfields of the Kennecott Copper Mine. Daybreak makes extensive use of bioswale stormwater management and green building systems.

A board retreat in Santa Fe in 2000 was a watershed moment for the firm. It was at this meeting that Design Workshop conceived and committed to a concept called Legacy Design<sup>SM</sup>. Legacy Design<sup>SM</sup> is an effort to re-integrate the various specializations within the profession into a unified whole. Under this concept successful projects must succeed environmentally, economically, artistically, and socially - a commitment to a synthetic approach to the profession and knowledge as a whole. To support this effort, Design Workshop has moved beyond the environmentally based metrics of LEED to include similar standards for economic, community, and artistic influence.

In recent years the firm has worked to realize the Legacy principles. Major projects currently include Valle San Pedro in Baja, California, a 30,000 acre master planned community of affordable housing for Mexico's burgeoning middle class. Kendall Yards is a 78 acre brownfield redevelopment in Spokane, Washington, which returns the city to its historic waterfront. The Gates Redevelopment in Denver transforms an abandoned rubber factory into 6 million square feet of LEED certified development. The design guidelines for the 2,200 miles of roadways of the Nevada Department of Transportation are another significant work.

Mary Fox joined the firm in 1996 as Human Resource Director, a reflection of the firm's commitment to personal development and well-being. Education is a cornerstone of the practice with a corporate university, Design U, established in 2001 to encourage a culture of ongoing learning. The firm continues to explore ways to engage the academy, such as its Faculty-in-Residence and Design Week programs.

In 2003, Design Workshop made a commitment to becoming a truly national firm, opening its first office outside of the west in Asheville, North Carolina. Master plans for the 8,000 acre Virginia Hot Springs and Callaway Gardens in Atlanta highlight the work of the Asheville office. The firm now operates from offices in Aspen, Denver, Salt Lake, Phoenix, Lake Tahoe, Santa Fe, and Asheville.

In 2006, the firm created an employee stock ownership plan (ESOP). By sharing risk and reward broadly, Design Workshop believes that the concept of collaboration envisioned by its founders thirty-eight years ago has been realized. This fifth generation of stockholders represent Design Workshop's greatest legacy.

From its founding Design Workshop has exemplified the spirit of collaboration, with the goal of leaving a legacy for future generations. The ethos of the firm is to value diversity and continual personal development. Each individual is encouraged to pursue their own personal interests in the context of Legacy Design. This philosophy is reflected in Toward Legacy, the firm's monograph. As a result of this philosophical construct and in part as a product of its geographic environment, the firm has produced an enormously diverse body of work. Yet with these varied perspectives, common threads run through the firm's practice:

- A profound respect and appreciation for the land.
- A belief that the most successful projects are successful environmentally, artistically, economically, and from a community perspective.
- A commitment to both "talking the talk" and "walking the walk." As a result while the firm seeks to create artful and environmentally responsible solutions it also manages its operations according to a "quadruple bottom line:" as an environmentally and socially responsible enterprise, economically successful for both the firm and its members, and operationally elegant – artful in execution.
- A desire to leave a legacy for future generations both in terms of its built work but also in the development of future generations of landscape architect/citizens.
- A relentless commitment to continual improvement.

As a result of this approach to practice much has been accomplished. The firm has completed projects ranging from residential gardens to regional plans encompassing millions of acres. Its clients have included major cities, non-profit organizations, environment groups, and real estate professionals. The following are a few examples:

### **Achievements in Regional Planning and Natural Systems**

These award-winning master plans have made significant contributions to their communities and regions:

- The Flathead County master plan provides vision for natural systems preservation and smart growth for 3.2 million acres of land including Flathead Lake and the Bob Marshall Wilderness.
- The North Lake Tahoe Tourism Master Plan provides a physical framework and management strategy for the redevelopment of communities in one of the world's most beautiful landscapes.
- The Las Vegas Wash transforms a wetland polluted by waste from the city into a vast urban wildlife and recreation area.
- The Rocky Mountain Arsenal Master Plan offers strategies for conversion of a nuclear weapons plant into a great urban wildlife refuge.
- The Pikes Peak Land Use Management Plan provides for recreational opportunities in a 10,000 acre area while protecting the watershed of Colorado Springs.
- Verde River Greenway helped to preserve a sixty mile stretch of an environmentally sensitive Arizona landscape.
- The Maricopa Association of Governments Desert Spaces Plan provided a land preservation framework for six million acres of land in the greater Phoenix region.
- The San Luis Valley Trails and Open Space Plan offers a vision for recreation, connectivity, and land preservation in a 2.8 million area region of Colorado.
- The I-25 Conservation Corridor led to the preservation of 100,000 acres of land between Denver and Colorado Springs.
- The Nevada Department of Transportation Highway Master Plan established site planning and landscape improvement standards for 2200 miles of highways through the state.

### **Achievements in Creating, Parks, Gardens and Public Spaces**

- As evidenced in New Gardens of the America West, the firm has created a significant body of work in residential gardens throughout the region, building a reputation for finely crafted native landscapes.
- Through projects such as the Kananaskis, Banff Downtown Enhancement, and Park Avenue, Design Workshop has helped to evolve a regional vernacular for the intermountain West, a rugged and harsh environment of vast dimension.
- Design Workshop has received ULI Awards of Excellence for the Little Nell Hotel, Blackcomb, and with Martha Schwartz for the Mesa Arts Center.

## **Achievements in Community Planning**

- The Santa Fe College District Plan and the Rancho Viejo Master Plan provided a smart growth framework for 30,000 acres at the edge of this historic city. The plans' emphasis is on water conservation are a model for developments throughout America.

## **Achievements in Urban Redevelopment, Renewal, and Brownfields**

- Brownfield redevelopments including Riverfront Park, Fitzsimmons, and Gates are transforming the city of Denver and offering exceptional examples of green building to the nation.
- Union Park in Las Vegas returns the city's attention from the Strip to downtown aiding in the transformation of America's Playground into a vibrant, diverse, culturally rich global city.
- The redevelopment of the Bellingham Harbor offers a vision of the city's return to the waterfront, creating a vibrant mixed-use district with significant open space along the shore.
- The Aguas Claras Master Plan and Minas Gerais Mining District Plan provide a framework for responsible mineral extraction and remediation within a 100,000 acre district of Brasil.
- The Arborela de Vida master plan in Albuquerque provided for the remediation of a contaminated lumber mill site and its conversion into affordable housing.

## **Contributions to the Profession**

Grateful for the success it has found, Design Workshop has also assumed a leadership role within the profession, seeking to give back to a field that has been so good to its members.

- As President of the Landscape Architecture Foundation, Joe Porter was a leader of LAF Centennial Campaign that raised over \$2,000,000 for LAF. Richard Shaw followed Joe as a board member.
- Kurt Culbertson has chaired the CEO Roundtable.
- Culbertson now serves as co-chair of the Cultural Landscape Foundation and is a member of the ASLA Disaster Response Task Force.
- Todd Johnson has served as chair of the national ASLA awards and serves this year as chair of the student awards jury. Porter, Culbertson, and Shaw have also served a jury members.
- Design Workshop principals have been adjunct faculty and guest lecturers at over fifty schools of landscape architecture in the United States.

## **Contributions to the Community**

In the spirit of Legacy, Design Workshop believes that the spirit of community should be manifest in its projects, within the office itself, and in the firms' contributions to the larger community in which it lives and works:

- The firm's summer internship program which draws students from around the world is in its seventeenth year, providing pro bono work efforts in selected communities.
- The Charles Fountain Internship seeks to increase the diversity of the profession by providing opportunities for minority students.
- The Design Workshop Foundation has been created to provide a vehicle for volunteerism for the firm's employees, alumni, and friends. A member of Business for Social Responsibility, the firm has instituted a volunteerism policy in recognition of its role as a responsible corporate citizen. In addition to group projects, staff members volunteer for a wide variety of organizations including Habitat for Humanity, BOLD (Blind Outdoor Leadership Development) and Special Olympics.
- The firm is a participant in the Denver chapter of ACE and is working to create new chapters in Salt Lake, Phoenix, and the other cities in which it is located.
- Design Workshop has also created a program called Design Week which provides one week of pro bono teaching in a vertical studio format. Design Week engages 100-200 students in a collective community effort. Thus far events have been held at LSU, Texas, Clemson, Illinois, Penn State, North Carolina A and T, Ball State, Cal Poly, and Mississippi State with future sessions slated for Iowa State and Georgia.

In recognition of these achievements and for its contribution to both the profession and greater society, your consideration for 2008 ASLA Firm of the Year is greatly appreciated.

## **THE FOUNDERS**

Joe Porter, FASLA, helped found Design Workshop in 1969. Porter earned his bachelor's degree in landscape architecture from Utah State University and his master's from the University of Illinois. He served as an assistant professor in both the Department of Landscape Architecture at Louisiana State University and in the School of Design at North Carolina State University. More recently, he has served as an adjunct professor in the Department of Architecture and Planning at the University of Colorado at Denver. Porter, who is a registered landscape architect in Montana and North Carolina, is a full member of the Urban Land Institute and received a fellowship from the American Society of Landscape Architects in 1988. He has served as a board member and past president of the Landscape Architecture Foundation and The Center for Design Innovation.

Don Ensign, FASLA, helped found Design Workshop in 1969. Ensign holds a bachelor's degree in landscape architecture from Utah State University and a master's from the University of Michigan. He was an assistant professor in the School of Design at North Carolina State University and an instructor in the Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning at Utah State University. He is a registered landscape architect in Michigan and North Carolina.

## **THE SHAREHOLDERS**

Kurt Culbertson, FASLA, is the chairman and chief executive officer of Design Workshop, and the president of Design Workshop/South America. A graduate of Louisiana State University, Culbertson holds a master's degree in business administration in real estate from Southern Methodist University. Kurt joined Design Workshop in 1979. He is a full member of the Urban Land Institute, participating in the Recreation Development Council, and served as chapter chair of the Rocky Mountain chapter of the Young Presidents Organization. He has served as a fellow of Dumbarton Oaks, the American Society of Landscape Architects and the Institute of Urban Design and received a Fulbright Scholarship to the Wirtschaft Universitat in Vienna, Austria. He currently serves as co-chair of the Cultural Landscape Foundation. He is a registered landscape architect in Arizona, Florida, Idaho, Louisiana, Nevada, New Mexico, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, Virginia and Wyoming.

Rebecca Zimmermann serves as president of Design Workshop. She specializes in real estate advisory services, market and economic analysis, and tourism planning. She joined Design Workshop in 1985 after graduating from Trinity University. In 1992, she received a master's degree of business administration from the University of Colorado at Denver. She is a full member of the Urban Land Institute, chair of the Recreation Development Council and instructor of the ULI Real Estate School. She is also a member of the Travel and Tourism Research Association. Becky has received numerous awards for her work in tourism planning and resort redevelopment, including being named to the Denver Business Journal's 2004 Who's Who in Construction, Architecture and Engineering and its 1999 Top 40 Under 40 Business Leaders and one of the Top 100 Business Women in Arizona by Today's Arizona Woman in 2000.

Richard W. Shaw, FASLA, joined Design Workshop in 1976. He graduated with honors from Utah State University and earned his master's from the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University, where he was awarded the Jacob Weidenman Traveling Fellowship. Shaw is a full member of the Urban Land Institute and has held council memberships in the Retail Development Council and the Recreation Development Council. He has taught Resort Design through Harvard University's School of Design Professional Development Series and his work in both small-scale residential garden design and large-scale resort redevelopment, planning and design has garnered many awards and commendations. Richard is a fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects and a board member of the Landscape Architecture Foundation. He is a registered landscape architect in Arizona, Nevada and Wyoming.

Todd Johnson, FASLA, joined Design Workshop in 1996. A founding partner and principal with Civitas, Inc., in Denver, Johnson holds a bachelor of landscape architecture from Utah State University and a master's from the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University. Under a Harvard Jerusalem Fellowship, he produced an urban design master plan for the Damascus Gate area that won first prize for urban design in Progressive Architecture's annual awards programs. He is a member of the Urban Land Institute and the American Society of Landscape Architects and serves as an associate adjunct professor with the Department of Architecture and Planning at the University of Colorado at Denver. He is past chair of the ASLA Awards jury and serves in 2007 as chair of the ASLA Student Awards program.

Mary Fox, serves as Director of Human Resources. Mary Fox came to the Design Workshop, Inc. in 1995, and became a Principal in early 2000. She is responsible for all areas of human resources including professional development, total compensation, recruiting and hiring. She has led the expansion of strategic efforts in recruitment, internships, learning programs, compensation and benefits and firm-wide planning.

Mary has a master's of business administration from the University of Denver and a bachelor's degree in education from Penn State University. She earned her Senior Professional Human Resources certification in 1995 and is experienced or certified to administer and interpret individual and team assessments, provide personal and professional coaching services, develop compensation programs and conduct group facilitation. Currently, Mary is co-facilitating the alignment sessions in every office to foster individual support of firm-wide Legacy Design objectives. She came to the firm with eight years' experience in human resource management with private, not-for-profit and government organizations.

Terrall Budge, ASLA, is the principal of Design Workshop's Salt Lake City office, joining the firm in 2000. He earned a bachelor's degree in landscape architecture from Utah State University and a master's with distinction from Harvard University's Graduate School of Design. At Harvard, he was awarded the Jacob Weidenman Prize for outstanding design talent. He is LEED-accredited, is a member of the Urban Land Institute and the American Society of Landscape Architects and is a registered landscape architect in Utah. Terrall is leading the effort to form a chapter of ACE in Utah.

Glenn Walters, ASLA, joined the firm in 2000 and is principal of Design Workshop's Asheville office. He earned his bachelor's degree in landscape architecture from the University of Georgia in 1988, and a master's from Pennsylvania State University in 2006. He is recipient of the Penn State School of Landscape Architecture Creative Achievement Award. Glenn has been responsible for a broad range of design and planning projects located throughout the Western United States and Hawaii. Prior to joining Design Workshop, Glenn managed development projects in Maui, Hawaii and La Quinta, California for AMFAC and Pacific Land Management.

In 2007, the firm created an employee stock ownership plan (ESOP) and transferred fifteen percent of the company's shares to the approximately 200 employees of the corporation. These individuals who represent 136 university programs come from 18 countries including North and South America, Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia. These landscape architects and administrative staff members represent the future of the firm and a significant part of Design Workshop's Legacy.