HISTORY

“I think what really sets us apart is not the projects, not the work, but the idea that you can grow and evolve and survive by tackling the difficult and the impossible. We’re saying, ‘Let’s go where it’s harder, where the answers haven’t been found yet.’”

- Grant Jones

Jones & Jones was founded by Grant Jones and Ilze Jones in December 1969 to practice landscape architecture, environmental planning, architecture and urban design as a fully integrated collaborative. Their mentors had been Victor Steinbrueck, Ibsen Nelson, Richard Haag, Hideo Sasaki, Ian McHarg, Garrett Eckbo, Ed Williams, Richard Moore, and Theodore Roethke.

Grant and Ilze were classmates in the Department of Architecture at the University of Washington, during the last half of the fifties. Although there was no department of landscape architecture at that time, Richard Haag had joined the faculty in 1958 as a critic in the architectural studio. Haag influenced several of the top architectural students during this period, including Grant and Ilze, Jerry Diethelm, Frank James, Laurie Olin, Bob Hanna, and Gary Oakerlund, all of whom went on to become landscape architects and to practice and teach in the top schools in the East and West. Grant worked for Haag and Ilze worked for William Teufel before leaving for Boston in 1965, where Grant entered the Harvard Graduate School of Design and Ilze worked for Sasaki, Dawson and DeMay. After fellowship travel in South America and Europe between 1966-68 and work in Hawaii with Eckbo, Dean, Austin, and Williams, they returned to Seattle in 1969.

The world was under siege. Changes triggered by population growth were choking the cities and threatening to consume nature itself. We believed what our mentors told us: that we could change the world. We were determined to be advocates for change and considered ourselves rebels with a positive attitude. Adaptation to change was evolutionary and fundamental to our role as designers and planners. We knew that we would always have to defy definition. So, we looked for problems with no history of successful solutions, where there were no experts. We decided to always work for the natural systems and the communities they support.

The earth is our client. We can give her a voice, making a marriage with the land, to help us all reach our potential. We give leadership at the landscape scale by standing inside the spirit of the place, hearing it in our hearts. The landscape is a continuum – of water, air, birds, pollen and coyotes, and voices, stories and songs, and it holds the answer to the future if we take responsibility for the landscape. Evolution doesn’t just happen – it happens because individuals take risks and define their future by creating their future.

We have been so fortunate. By seeking out the impossible, we have become accustomed to risk as a natural state of affairs and have learned to be both financially successful and consistent, while we’ve continued to grow, not only in size but in capacity. It is not over yet. Jones & Jones is still constantly charting new ground, trying to broaden the field of landscape architecture.
"The work of Jones & Jones cannot be categorized stylistically. Their work is rooted in a profound respect for and a celebration of place. Their designs interpret place as biophysical processes, and as intertwined acts of cultural will and transformation... Ever since its inception, this firm has established new standards of excellence in analysis and creative design... One can describe the methods used to create... these projects, many of which have profoundly altered the practice of landscape architecture, but to do so misses the poetry and artistry of the created experience... These rich simultaneous sensory experiences connect the individual to the processes of nature and to the traditions of culture. This is the essence of the regionalist approach to landscape design adopted by Jones & Jones. It is not an imposed art but one that grows out of a deep understanding of place... This is the strength of their designs as Art. Each design is unpredictable. It reveals the processes of the past, and in doing so involves the participant-user in a continuum simultaneously reaching backward and forward."

- David C. Streatfield, FASLA
Preface, Process Architecture

Benchmarks

1970s
Nooksack River Plan, Whatcom County, Washington
Pioneer Square Historic District, Seattle, Washington
Union Bay Teaching and Research Arboretum/Center for Urban Horticulture, Seattle, Washington
Susitna River Intrinsic Resource Plan, Mt. McKinley, Alaska
Woodland Park Zoo, Seattle, Washington

1980s
Gene Coulon Beach Park, Seattle, Washington
Portland International Airport Parkway, Portland, Oregon
San Diego Zoo, San Diego, California
Singapore Botanic Gardens, Singapore
North Carolina Botanic Garden, Chapel Hill, North Carolina
Jerusalem Zoo, Jerusalem, Israel

1990s
Mountains to Sound Greenway, Cascade Mountains to Puget Sound, Washington
Disney's Wild Kingdom, Orlando, Florida
Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, Tucson, Arizona
Paris Pike Historic Highway, Lexington, Kentucky
DMZ Biosphere Peace Corridor, Northern Kyunggi Province, DMZ, Korea
Tepoztlan: Mexico City Green Lung Plan, Mexico, DF
Sleeping Lady Ecological Retreat Center, Leavenworth, Washington

2000s
US Highway 93: America's Wildlife Highway, Flathead Reservation, Montana
Madison Central Park, Madison, Wisconsin
Desert Claim Wind Power, Ellensburg, Washington
The Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, DC
Ice Age Floods National Geologic Trail, Missoula, Montana to the Pacific, Oregon
Commons Park, Denver, Colorado, with Civitas, Inc.
ACHIEVEMENTS

“To visit a place is to start a dialogue, to formulate an inquiry, to leaf through a new volume of imagery, to sharpen my eye, to see on the fly, to take in the myriad textures, colors and sounds that go into the making of place. To experience one place is to open the door to another and to discover that there are windows everywhere. As designers, we are continually interacting with places, both natural and man-made, for design itself is a continuing reinvention and reaffirmation of place. When design speaks from the heart and communicates to the soul, the results are magic.”

— Ilze Jones

Jones & Jones has received over one hundred awards for its work — including over forty from ASLA and LAF alone — including 1 President’s Award of Excellence, 1 Design Award of Excellence, 10 Honor Awards, and 21 Merit Awards. Recognition for achievement comes from a broad spectrum of society, commensurate with the firm’s contributions to the urban and rural landscape, at both the community and regional scale, including: The Environmental Excellence Award from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Environmental Excellence Award from the Federal Highway Administration, the President’s Transportation Award for the Environment from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, fourteen awards from the American Institute of Architects, eleven awards from the American Planning Association, six Honor Awards from the Waterfront Center, as well as numerous landscape and urban design awards from the American Society of Civil Engineers, the Downtown Denver Association, the International Downtown Association, the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, and the Architectural League of New York.

Jones & Jones was given the first award for river planning and the first for zoo design. The firm was among the first to receive awards for landscape aesthetics, greenway planning, highway design, and cultural landscape restoration. Each decade, recognition of the firm’s contribution to the profession grows. Recent awards highlight Jones & Jones’s continued leadership in pioneering and opening up new practice areas, such as context-sensitive highway design, regenerative partnership corridors, watershed landscape planning, center-city ecological commons, and geologic heritage planning. Excitement builds as the evolving leadership of the firm stakes out new ground for landscape advocacy.

Selected Recent Awards

2003
Jones & Jones, Seattle, Washington
Sustainable Community Outstanding Leadership — Built Environment
Sustainable Seattle

2002
National Amphibian Conservation Center, Detroit, Michigan
Significant Achievement Award
American Zoological Association

2001
Ice Age Floods Master Plan, Columbia Cascades Region of the National Parks Service
Honor Award — Communication
American Society of Landscape Architects, Washington, DC

2002
Paris Pike, US 27/68 Paris-Lexington Road, Kentucky
Honor Award — Design
American Society of Landscape Architects, Kentucky Chapter

2002
Commons Park, Denver, Colorado
with Civitas, Inc., Design Partner
Annual Achievement Award
Downtown Denver Partnership

2000
Mountains to Sound Greenway, Seattle, Washington
Merit Award
American Society of Landscape Architects, Washington, DC
“Here is a simplified synopsis of the Jones & Jones strategy for success. Begin the study for each commission within the largest and earliest context. It is not uncommon for them to think about plate tectonics, volcanism, earth history, especially post-Pleistocene flora/fauna progression, cultural successions. In this way, by tapping into the energy of the anima mundi, the mysteries of the primordial rhythms of nature, the spirit of life-force is exalted in their work.”

- Richard Haag, FASLA
Forward, Process Architecture

Jones & Jones was founded as a “teaching practice,” and its Principals and Associates have been sought out by schools of landscape architecture for thirty years. Grant Jones has lectured students of landscape architecture at thirty universities, and taught workshops and design studios at UC Berkeley, Harvard, the University of Virginia, Texas A&M, the University of Washington, and the University of Oregon. The firm continues to fill requests to give keynotes at LaBash conferences and other workshops, most recently those organized by students at the University of Kentucky, the University of Wisconsin, Temple University, Texas A&M, and Colorado State University. The firm has consistently delivered groundbreaking educational presentations at annual ASLA meetings on such subjects as river planning, aesthetics and visual resource planning, community participation, greenway planning, historic preservation and cultural landscape planning, zoo design, interpretive planning, place-based design, eco-tourism, and context-sensitive design. The firm consistently strives to share its explorations with diverse professional and academic audiences.

Selected Recent Publications (by Jones & Jones except where noted)


“Roads which Sustain Intrinsic Qualities of Place,” Transportation Research Record, No. 1549 Transportation Aesthetics, Transportation Research Board, National Research Council, 1996.


PRINCIPALS

“The term they most often apply to themselves is ‘tribe.’ The Jones & Jones culture is viewed by all who are a part of it as collegial, familial, tribal. The partnership and the tribe continue, and—all agree—the leadership within this tribe is provided by three elders: Grant, Ilze and John paul Jones—who offer guidance and instill inspiration.”

— Anne Elizabeth Powell, “Breaking the Mold”

Grant Jones, FASLA
Founding Principal
Grant Jones, landscape architect, poet and a founder of Jones & Jones, has practiced ecological design for thirty years, pioneering in river and greenway planning, scenic highway design, zoo design, and landscape aesthetics. He received his BArch from the University of Washington, his MLA from Harvard University and won the Frederick Sheldon Traveling Fellowship to research environmental determinism in South America and Western Europe.

He has held academic positions at UC Berkeley, Harvard, the University of Oregon, the University of Virginia, Texas A&M, and the University of Washington and has lectured at thirty-five Departments of Landscape Architecture in the U.S., Canada and Asia.

Ilze Jones, FASLA, AIA
Founding Principal
Ilze Jones, founding principal of Jones & Jones, embodies in her talent and expertise an interdisciplinary creativity in which her architecture and landscape environments are one, inseparable but each with its own clarity and spirit. Designing and leading a collaboration of environmental disciplines at Jones & Jones, she has produced a body of work and ideas that show the way to achieve honorable environmental stewardship.

Ilze has devoted her career to both city and nature, to the quality of life of our urban communities, and to the conservation of nature beyond the city. In her love for the city’s built legacy of buildings and public domain, Ilze has applied her artistry as a designer as well as her analytic skills and leadership to develop innovative strategies for streets, squares, open space, and infrastructure, as well as the architecture of parks and cultural-educational centers.
“What makes our firm different is that it doesn’t channel people into specific roles; it combines them all together. The key is a continuing learning process. When we take on any project we try to learn as much as we can about what we’re doing and the place where we’re working, in all areas—architecture, landscape architecture, the land, the people, the animals—just everything we can. It all influences what we’re doing. The combination—and I like to think of it as that learning thing—is ongoing in our office. Our office is a place where learning flourishes.”

— Johnpaul Jones

Johnpaul Jones, FAIA
Senior Principal
One of the first designers to join Grant and Ilze, Johnpaul has over 30 years of design experience. A Native American Indian (Cherokee/Choctaw) born in Okmulgee, Oklahoma, his designs have won recognition for heightening human sensitivity to cultural and environmental issues. Mr. Jones has worked closely with a number of Native American tribes throughout the United States, including Hawaii and Alaska, incorporating their architectural and cultural heritage into the structures designed specifically to honor each Native American tribe.

Johnpaul has planned and designed a number of educational and nature centers that interpret for the visitor a respect and stewardship of the natural world. As Principal-in-Charge of many of the Jones & Jones award-winning design projects, he brings an integrated approach to built environments and the conservation of natural resources, creating projects of public significance and celebration.

Keith Larson, AIA, ASLA
Principal
Keith Larson specializes in multi-disciplinary projects that require more than a traditional architectural approach. Keith devotes much of his work to park and recreation comprehensive planning, and design for zoological parks, where natural resource concerns must be sensitively reconciled with varying public uses. His comprehensive design and technical expertise enables him to meet complex and multi-faceted challenges, finding unity as well as greater ecological integrity and economic efficiency.

Mario Campos, AIA, ASLA
Principal
Mario’s approach to planning and architecture emerges from strong regional, cultural, and traditional sources, closely rooted to the land, the environment, and the economy. He excels at participatory design, creating cooperative situations that lead to successful resolution of complex issues through a consensus-reaching public participation process and has the ability to communicate with diverse groups and organizations and ethnic groups. His professional experience includes planning and design of cultural and public facilities including museums, public places, parks, cultural centers, zoos and botanic gardens.
The Nooksack Plan, Whatcom County, Washington

The groundbreaking methodology applied in this study – the reading of the landscape to determine natural process and form – was the first of its kind, in both scope and influence, in the history of regional landscape planning and continues to serve as a model.

- Anne Elizabeth Powell, “Breaking the Mold”

“The architecture of rivers is like the architecture of trees: each branch has its own energy to transport its vital fluids and to perpetuate its life-cycle, and to evoke a response in us.”

- Grant Jones
Seattle’s soul is in its public markets and squares. Pioneer Square’s distinctive pergolas are icons of Seattle, equal to the Space Needle or Mount Rainier. Jones & Jones’s 1971 master-plan project for Seattle’s Historic District established the open-space framework, set forth restoration and renovation objectives, and outlined capital-improvement costs for the newly created Pioneer Square Historic District. Their designs for Pioneer Square Park and Occidental Square Park immediately followed.
Beyond the open door, shadows bend...
Whose ears hear water, near that tree
Who grew a stream.
Birds appear and disappear
My waterface makes friends
Whose eyes see clouds of wind in my hair.
What's that hole?
Deepness doesn't move.
Who are those beyond the leaves?
Take my hand.

— Grant Jones
Union Bay Teaching and Research Arboretum/Center for Urban Horticulture, Seattle, Washington

“When the project came to us it was a garbage dump, and they wanted to know whether it would be viable to make an arboretum on this garbage dump – on this landfill. The answer was yes, but by studying the landfill we decided that the landfill was itself so interesting as a living thing that we proposed a sort of laboratory on it – and that led to the university’s decision to create a whole new curriculum around it.

It took five or six years for the university to write a new curriculum, and then go out and hire the faculty for it, bring together the synthesis of scientists capable of dealing with a laboratory on a landfill and then teaching back to the community. So suddenly it wasn’t just a university thing either, it was a whole community education for the whole city.”

– Grant Jones
Sleeping Lady Ecological Retreat Center, Leavenworth, Washington

“Sleeping Lady Ecological Retreat Center seeks to preserve and enhance the health-giving properties of the landscape, foster a sense of contact with nature, and provide an atmosphere of solitude, quiet, and slow tempo.”

- Harriett Bullitt, owner, Process Architecture
Mountains to Sound Greenway, Puget Sound Lowlands to High Deserts of the Columbia, Washington

"The Mountains to Sound Greenway is currently the most important environmental legacy that we can bequeath to the future citizens of our metropolitan area."

— James R. Ellis, Process Architecture
Paris Pike, Inner Bluegrass, Kentucky

Some of us in Kentucky are accustomed to boasting about this or that in Kentucky life being "World Class," and are quick to nominate for "World Class Status" the Kentucky Derby among horse races, and the Kentucky Bluegrass among scenic landscapes. As for me, here and now...I want to nominate a somewhat -- but not internationally -- well known highway as in the very top echelon of the continent's assets. I'm speaking of the Lexington-Paris Highway, better known in these parts as the "The Paris Pike."

-- Grady Clay, Morning Edition, National Public Radio
Cedar River Watershed Education Center, Rattlesnake Lake, Seattle, Washington

"Jones & Jones developed an educational village that pushes the boundaries of ecologically sustainable design and essentially creates a new evolutionary arc in the field of multi-disciplinary architecture and landscape architecture. Rich mosses, native grasses, and half a dozen types of fern accept the run-off. A breeze rustles the broad leaves of the Big Leaf Maples trees. ... visitors connect with the future. They learn from the buildings that teach the unspoken stories that whisper from this place on Rattlesnake Lake."

— Tom Jamieson, "Buildings that Teach"
Cedar Lake Park and Trail, Minneapolis, Minnesota with Rich Haag Associates, design partner

Aldo Leopold lamented in A Sand Country Almanac that "no living man will see the longgrass prairie, where a sea of prairie flowers lapped at the stirrups of the pioneer." Possibly, the Cedar Lake Park & Trail prairie can be a step toward keeping that fate from occurring, stimulating a move toward saving more remote native prairies by providing a small sample, a "taste" in Minneapolis.
Commons Park,
Denver, Colorado
with Civitas, Inc., design partner

The focus of this project was to bring downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods together at the river. Civitas and Jones & Jones created a place where people and wildlife can coexist in the heart of the city.

"Denver's Commons Park proves it is possible for a park to be beautiful and ecosystem-friendly."

— Amy Souers, Open Space Quarterly
DEPARTMENTS

LETTERS • 52
RIPRAP • 58
A slightly irregular look at the new and noteworthy. Edited by Paul Bennett

DESIGN • 64
Hide and Seek
In the suburbs of Washington, D.C., a "naturalized play area" sets the stage for playtime fantasy. By Paul Bennett

PLANNING • 74
Remembering Albany
By linking the city to its history a new master plan renues the venue of a historic civil-rights protest. By Michael Leccese

TECHNOLOGY • 82
Mapping for the Masses
Without spending a fortune most landscape architects can have access to GIS, thanks to new software and databases. By James L. Sipes

PRACTICE • 92
A Tale of Two Campuses
Two West Coast universities stumble into a continuing conundrum: When does landscape architecture become art? By Vernon Mays

ECOLOGY • 100
Making Money Out of Water
A wetland-mitigation project in New Albany, Ohio, emerges in the very center of suburban development. By Paul Bennett

THIS MONTH • 109
TWO DEGREES OF DIFFERENCE • 138
Roger Wells & Ignacio F. Bunster-Ossa
BOOKS • 140 Reviewed by Laughlin Fawcett
THE NATIONAL OBSERVER • 216 Grady Clay

ON THE COVER: The site scene in a Vermont garden rises above a sea of moss.
Photograph by Steve Vanவill
ich Haag puts it like this: "There are a lot of lucky things going on there." And indeed there are. Kindred spirits cast from a mold that apparently produced just the two of them, they found each other and have embraced their affinity through four decades. Their intellects, individually powerful, assume a force when combined that is extraordinary in resonance and sweep. Their visions, while aligned in some respects, differ in ways that enable them to continuously extend the horizons of their thinking. Their personalities remain engaged in the rhythms of a yin and yang sustained by a rare vitality. And their spirits, which know no bounds, perceive no limits.

Haag has known them from the beginning—from the days when Grant Jones and Ilze Grinbergs were classmates in the College of Architecture and Urban Planning at the University of Washington in Seattle. Most would agree that his take on the source of their synergy—that it derives from a fortuitous combination of qualities—is an accurate one. Most would also agree that it is precisely this synergy—the remarkable complement of their beings—that nourishes the synthesis that distinguishes their work.

They grew up in the years just before and after World War II—Grant a native son of Seattle and the son of a prominent architect, Ilze coming to Seattle as a young girl from Riga, Latvia, the daughter of a prominent engineer. They studied architecture together in the late fifties, members of the last class to be trained in the Beaux-Arts tradition.

Richard Haag, FASLA, came to Seattle from the San Francisco Bay Area in 1957, joined the University of Washington's architecture faculty a year later, and established the university’s Department of Landscape Architecture and Building Construction in 1960. (In 1963 this department became two departments: the...
punos of South America and the squares and public gardens of Europe. Then in May of 1968 we were back. Laurie [Olin] met us at the dock on the Lower West Side, and we drove up to Amagansett to spend a week before heading west, each of us to take jobs in Hawaii—Ilze as an urban designer on the Mililani New Town under Dick Moore and Jack Sidener, and me as an environmental planner to do the conservation district component of the Hawaii State Land Use Plan Update under Ed Williams of Eckbo, Dean, Austin, & Williams. When these jobs ended in the summer of 1969 we moved back to Seattle. I landed a big commission [the site planning and design of a 650-unit development on a 250-acre site in the Tsyron Creek Valley west of Portland, Oregon], and I asked Ilze if she would work with me. She said she would try it for a year.

Through their lenses the earth is held in sharp focus as a living organism, alive.

When the year was up I suggested we call the office Jones and Jones, and we opened for business a few days before Christmas. And thus was born one of the most singular practices to emerge on the landscape of American design.

Grant Jones, FASLA, and Ilze Jones, AIA, FASLA, see the world as few others see it. Through their lenses the earth is held in sharp focus as a living organism, alive, the product of natural forms and processes at work. The earth is their client, and their designs place nature first, seek to discern the heart and the soul of the land—to find the signature in each landscape—and to celebrate this intrinsic beauty.

There are others, of course, whose approach to the land is one of stewardship, but what sets the work of Jones & Jones apart is the clarity of the vision of planet Earth as alive, the depth of the analysis applied to the discovery of each landscape’s signature, and the continual search to find answers where none have before been found. These are trailblazers of the highest order, pioneers who continue to elevate—in fact, who continue to redefine in significant ways—the practices of landscape architecture and architecture.

Their work is also exceptional in terms of the synthesis by which it is effected—a synthesis of ideas, of visions, of talents, of skills, of personalities, of spirits, of hearts, of souls, of nature, of places, of cultures, of landscapes, of structures, of poetry, of art, of present and past. It is Haag’s dictum of the importance of amalgam writ large.

The story of Grant Jones and Ilze Jones is a story about two people with a deep respect for the earth, its natural processes, and its inhabitants and a deep understanding of the meaning of place. It is a story about two people who share a passion for innovation, a gift for inspiration, an appetite for diversity, a zest for the increasingly difficult challenge, a determination to make a difference, and the ability to see that a difference is made. It is a story about boundless spirit, unfettered thinking, limitless possibility. And it is a story about really breaking the mold.

Essex Marsh, 1966, I decided to read the landscape like music, like discourse—took structural linguistics and broke it down into paragraphs, sentences, phrases, words, phonemes, and morphemes.

—Grant Jones

Something to understand about Grant Jones is that he is a poet. He has said that one of the great strokes of luck in his life was being accepted into the writing class of the late Theodore Roethke, the resident poet at the University of Washington at the time. Grant absorbed deep into his soul both the text and subtext of
International Treasures
by Richard Haag
国際的に貴重な人々 リチャード・ヘイグ

1958, Seattle, Washington, University of Washington, College of Architecture and Urban Planning...

Grant Jones and Ilze Grinbergs were classmates and had discovered a special synergy, complementary in style and syntax. Grant’s father was an architect, Ilze’s father a machine design engineer, both prominent.

Seattle was isolated from the main stream of architectural ideology. In the 1950’s, the College was embroiled in controversy, the winds of change were blowing and swirling around the bastion of the Beaux Arts Academy - the Greco/Roman rules of the game were under siege by the tenets of Modern Architecture... was less (really) more? Grant and Ilze were in the last class disciplined by laying “sumi” washes of Doric, Ionic and Corinthian columns on stretched German water color paper.

Perhaps because they were caught on this cusp of changing fashions of building architecture, their inward confidence and concentration slipped and turned outward to become larger, more inclusive, to embrace landscape architecture and ultimately Nature. In any event, their education proved to be a secure basecamp for ascents into apprenticeships, higher education, traveling (the Galapagos Islands, etc.) scholarships and independent practice. Together, Grant and Ilze combined and recombined several extraordinary directions and talent. Roots of European Cosmopolitan Culture flourished as an exotic pioneer species in the Pacific Northwest ethos. Other invaluable attributes include photographic – i.e. total recall – memories of everything that they have shared. And more importantly, their command of the language and understanding of its power, spoken or written, in poem or text is unexcelled in our profession. The thirsty reader will return to this wellspring many times.

Here is a simplified synopsis of the Jones and Jones strategy for success. Begin the study for each commission within the largest and earliest context. It is not uncommon for them to think plate tectonics, volcanism, earth history, especially post Pleistocene flora/fauna progression, cultural successions. In this way, by tapping into the energy of the anima mundi, the mysteries of the primordial rhythms of nature, the spirit of life-force is exalted in their work. In short, Ilze Jones gives form to universal city formlessness while Grant is less interested in form-giving and is more driven toward form-getting.

Since every commission begins on the solid bedrock of early natural history, that confidence can then be expended on ensuring the longevity of the program into the future. Grant often asks, “Can our vision grow and nurture the whole project habitat for seven generations?” Who among us consistently thinks this way? Where are the eco-utopians of this century...

Ilze Jones, Grant Jones, and Johnpaul Jones have taken four other partners with distinct backgrounds - Tom Atkins, Keith Larson, Nik Worden and Mario Campos - all adding to the diversity and richness of the office.

They are all in these pages. Find them!

April 19, 1994
Richard Haag
Koichi: Then how is it structured? Let’s get to the organizational aspect.
Ilze: There are seven Principals. We are a corporation, that gives us maximum flexibility to practice jointly as architects and landscape architects throughout the U.S. And in that we need to have a President. There is one President in the office, me, and I do enlist everyone’s help in running a profitable show.
Grant: The “corporation” is not the organic structure that suits us.
Ilze: It is a business structure that is required in order to do business. From a practical point of view, we’re a bunch of partners.
Grant: It is like a society.
Nik: There is a communication culture that goes on that is really crucial to making it work. It is on a personal level; it is not structured.
Keith: Also, much depends on the relationships we have established with a trusted group of consultants who provide their special expertise. We have a remarkably open management system. There are no secrets, financial or otherwise, in the office. Everyone knows how projects are going financially and what is expected.
Grant: We share our plans for the year’s marketing strategy with the Senior Associates. We have a lunch once a month for the Senior Associates which is open to all.
Koichi: So how does project management work?
Ilze: We have a remarkably open management system. There are no secrets, financial or otherwise, in the office. Everyone knows how projects are going financially and what is expected.
Grant: We share our plans for the year’s marketing strategy with the Senior Associates. We have a lunch once a month for the Senior Associates which is open to all.
Mario: To go back to one thing you had asked, we spend a lot of time talking about what our direction and vision is as a group; we have spent a lot of time considering it. We are constantly challenging ourselves and questioning: “What are we doing?”; “Where are we going?”; “What is our direction?” That has been a very healthy exercise. If anything, it just reinforces the group vision.
Ilze: Our staff, particularly the long term staff, understands the very casual or open communication system in the office. They will frequently offer up their ideas or suggest that we ought to pursue this or that, either directly to us, or to others in the office. There are lots of ways to coalesce good thoughts and get them into the system.

Koichi: Do you usually appoint the project manager from the Principal or Senior Associate level or do you get it from the Associate level?
Grant: All three. Sometimes the Project Manager is a Principal, sometimes Senior Associate, sometimes Associate. Often the biggest, most complicated jobs are more likely to have both a Principal-in-Charge and a Principal as Project Manager. The less complicated ones likely won’t.
Koichi: That means growing, we’ll grow.
Ilze: Our staff, particularly the long term staff, understands the very casual or open communication system in the office. They will frequently offer up their ideas or suggest that we ought to pursue this or that, either directly to us, or to others in the office. There are lots of ways to coalesce good thoughts and get them into the system.

Ilze: We seem to be stuck on it. Either we’re doing something wrong or we’re doing something right. We generally try to let our projects drive us. We try to figure out, on an annual basis, a detailed plan in terms of staff growth. But we’ve consistently been in the mid-30 to mid-40 range.
Koichi: Do you want to double it?
Ilze: With the current management systems, we have the ability to double it - slowly, of course. We were on a much steeper growth curve in the late-eighties, early-nineties, but then the recession clipped our wings, no doubt about it.
Tom: Our efforts in bringing our computer systems into our projects has resulted in efficient project development.
Margo: We have also learned to do more work with less people. From a management point of view, we have grown up.
Koichi: My question is, do you want to grow?
Ilze: Not for the sake of growth. We don’t want to pass up really fascinating projects. If that means growing, we’ll grow.
Koichi: In the business world, is there any project you can’t do because you’re too small?
Ilze: Sure. We don’t have the production capabilities to do a high-rise building, for example. We define a project size in terms of complexity and some offices define it in terms of dollar volume.
Grant: We’re a tribe that has a sort of traveling distance or subsistence distance. We’ve found that in order to maintain the 8 or 10 things we really want to do, our diet being so diverse, we have to forage widely. 10% of our work we think we can always find in botanical gardens somewhere - probably not more than that. We can find 15% in zoos, and maybe 20% in regional parks. There isn’t that much work around the country, so we keep adding new niches. After all, we want new challenges.
Tom: We select particular projects or clients because they are interesting and provide the opportunity for a breakthrough of some kind or are just plain enjoyable.
Montana’s new Highway 93 promises a new era of harmony between people, habitat, and road

“The road is no longer like a pair of scissors—it’s a vital thread.”
—Grant Jones, Jones & Jones

For decades, state DOTs and highway engineers designed roads based on the criteria set out by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). In most cases, that meant straighter, flatter, and wider, with little consideration given to the impact on the surrounding landscape or the cultural context. Fortunately, a growing number of forward-thinking highway engineers are promoting a new way of thinking.

In January 2001, the Montana Department of Transportation (MDOT), the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes (the CSKT), and the Federal Highway Commission approved guidelines for rebuilding U.S. Highway 93 across the Flathead Indian Reservation in western Montana. These guidelines represent an unprecedented level of environmental protection in road design, and strike a critical balance between the interests of state and tribal authorities.

A New Way to Design an Old Road

The MDOT goals for the redesign of Highway 93 included safety and a higher “level of service” to accommodate an increased volume of traffic. The original plan, to widen the entire roadway to four lanes, threatened to bring more suburban settlement from the urban areas to the south and to damage ecosystems forever.

But tribal authorities wanted to protect their threatened culture, their sensitive environment, and their breathtaking scenery. For several years, the tribes and the state could not agree on redesign guidelines, and federal funding for the project was in jeopardy.

Getting all parties to agree required the review of some basic assumptions about road building: alignments, safety standards and the relationship of the roadway to the surrounding land. A staff attorney for the CSKT contacted Jones & Jones, a Seattle-based architecture and landscape architecture firm, to work with the consultants to find new solutions to the impasse on the project.

When Jones & Jones began research for the redesign project, special places—Mission Valley, Mission and Salish Mountains, Jocko Valley, and Rattlesnake Divide—became part of the highway design process. Mapping the patterns of waters, glaciers, winds, plants, animals and native peoples in space and time added new dimensions, and provided a strong foundation for subsequent discussions and decisions.

Instead of cutting across the scenic landscape in a straight line, the 56-mile stretch of highway between Evaro and Polson, Montana will be shaped to respect the distinctive scenery and precious natural habitat of this area.

Subtle, slow curves in the roadway will acknowledge the many features of the land and enhance scenic panoramas. Wildlife crossings are not just marked with signs to slow traffic, but will include multi-faceted strategies to funnel migrating wildlife to safe crossings under and over the roadbed.

Tools to Protect the Scenic Landscape of Western Montana

Corridor overlay zoning, acquisition and transfer of development rights by the tribe, conservation easements, and open space protection measures are tools the tribe will use to control use of the land adjacent to the right-of-way. With the highway improvements, market pressures for roadside advertising are expected to increase. To avoid the threat of visual pollution, the guidelines include a list of institutional and regulatory controls on signage.

By coming together to look beyond the traditional questions and answers of road design, the tribes of the Flathead Reservation and the state of Montana were able to envision a road that not only improves the level of service, but leads to greater quality of life for those who live there and those who visit. Construction on Highway 93 is expected to begin in 2003.

Thanks to context-sensitive road design by firms like Jones & Jones, scenic roads like Highway 93, shown here in Montana’s Jocko River Valley, can be safe as well as beautiful and environmentally responsible.