



# AIA Minnesota

A Society of The American Institute of Architects

**For Immediate Release**

**March 2, 2006**

## **AIA Minnesota Announces Three Elevated to the College of Fellows**

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*Minneapolis, Minnesota* - - AIA Minnesota is pleased to announce that **David Eijadi**, FAIA, The Weidt Group, Minneapolis, MN; **Thomas Meyer**, FAIA, of Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle, Minneapolis, MN; and **Richard Varda**, FAIA, Target Corporation, Minneapolis, MN, have been elevated into the American Institute of Architects' College of Fellows.

### **Eijadi**

Through invention and innovation and as a forerunner, pacesetter and educator for sustainable design practices, Eijadi designed and implemented his practice to assist fellow architects in their pursuit of environmentally appropriate design. Focused on research at the start of his career, he first published his work with beamed sunlighting in the *AIA Journal* in an article titled "Solar Optics: Projecting Light into Buildings," and began lecturing to international audiences. Throughout the eighties, Eijadi designed several award-winning projects including the City of Phoenix's first passively cooled recreational facility, Sky Harbor Center.

He joined The Weidt Group in 1992 and since then has led many successful ventures involving innovation in materials, daylighting technologies and consulting to pioneer sustainable design practices. The 2002 Pharmacia Building Q in Skokie, Illinois, the first LEED® Gold Certified laboratory building, is one of his notable collaborations. Over the past decade, his vision of change—as much about redefining design practice as technical engineering—has shaped utility sponsored Energy Design Assistance (EDA) into a service that offers real-time design improvements to design team professionals, their clients and suppliers.

Upon learning of his fellowship Eijadi said, "This is actually humbling. I am thinking of my role models in the profession, those in my firm, those in our community, and the many inspiring and enabling clients with whom I have had a chance to work. I want to thank them and my colleagues for helping me find my way to this place of honor in the profession."

### **Meyer**

Meyer's consistent excellence in project design, community leadership, and teaching has advanced the profession's understanding of the relationship between old and new architecture. His work, including six AIA Minnesota Honor Awards for preservation, adaptive reuse, and additions; brings the past and present together with uncommon grace and authenticity.

Dating back to his thesis in 1971 to design a history museum on the banks of the then nearly abandoned Saint Anthony Falls District on the Mississippi River, Meyer's interest in preservation was apparent. During the thirty-four following years, he consulted with the Minnesota Historical Society, the Minneapolis

Community Development Agency, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and private developers, culminating in the Mill City Museum, winning a 2005 National AIA Honor Award and a 2004 National Trust for Historic Preservation Honor Award.

"As a student and young architect, I thought of the AIA Fellows with respect as America's leaders of this great profession," said Meyer. "I think it continues to have meaning to younger architects as a touchstone to (unconsciously) measure their careers against, to see what the profession values, and to set a standard. I see the ideal of Fellowship as represented by the whole of the group rather than by any individual's accomplishments. I am deeply honored to be in the company of this significant group."

#### **Varda**

In 28 years, Varda has designed 35 building and planning projects, totaling \$1.8 billion of completed construction value, winning 21 industry design awards. Since 2001, he has transformed Target Corporation's building program – 200 projects totaling \$3.5 billion annually – to provide exemplary design and planning on retail and mixed-use projects nationwide.

Varda's degrees in both architecture and landscape architecture led to work in planning and urban design. This included over 20 master plan studies that have had significant impact on cities, communities and campuses around the nation. While at Target, he has created new Target store prototypes, and has assisted in developing design strategies for all of Target's products and facilities.

Varda notes, "It was gratifying to be recognized by my peers for the accomplishments of my career. It was also a pleasant surprise that they recognized the importance of what our team at Target has been doing - improving retail planning and design across the nation. I must recognize and thank the many talented architects that have contributed to the projects I have worked on at Target, RSP Architects and Ellerbe Becket."

The AIA Minnesota members are three of 82 elevated to AIA National's prestigious College of Fellows, an honor awarded to members who have made significant contributions in the following areas: the aesthetic, scientific, and practical efficiency of the profession; the standards of architectural education, training, and practice; the building industry through leadership in the AIA and other related professional organizations; advancement of living standards of people through an improved environment; and to society through significant public service.

The recently elevated fellows, who are entitled to use the designation "FAIA" following their names, will be inducted into the College of Fellows on June 9 during the 2006 AIA National Convention and Design Exposition in Los Angeles, California. Out of a total AIA membership of nearly 75,000, there are fewer than 2,500 distinguished with the honor of fellowship. In Minnesota, 57 architects bear the Fellowship designation. The elevation to fellowship is conferred on architects with at least 10 years of membership in the AIA who have made significant contributions to the profession.

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*The American Institute of Architects Minnesota, founded in 1892, is dedicated to strengthening our communities, improving our built environment, and providing exceptional design. For more information on the organization and Minnesota architectural firms, reference our web site at [www.aia-mn.org](http://www.aia-mn.org) and pick up a copy of Architecture Minnesota, the award-winning architectural magazine of the Midwest.*