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For Immediate Release

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AIA Minnesota Announces 2005 Young Architects Award Recipients

Minneapolis, Minnesota -- The American Institute of Architects (AIA) Minnesota Awards Committee has selected three recipients to receive the 2005 Young Architects Award: James Dayton, AIA, James Dayton Design, Ltd., Minneapolis; Mark Larson, AIA, Rehkamp Larson Architects, Inc., Minneapolis; and Paul Mellblom, AIA, Meyer Scherer & Rockcastle, Ltd., Minneapolis. The award is given to architects who are members of AIA Minnesota, have been licensed for less than 10 years, and have shown exceptional leadership in service to the profession, the community, design, planning and/or education.

The submissions included letters of recommendation from AIA Minnesota member architects and the candidates' clients; project summaries highlighting the architects' particular contributions; photos and drawings; and documentation of other achievements. The jury consisted of Awards Committee Chair E. Tim Carl, AIA; Award Committee Members: Nancy Blankfard, AIA, Francis Bulbulian, AIA, Raymond Dehn, Assoc. AIA, David Dimond, AIA, Nathan Knutson, AIA, Ed Kodet, FAIA, Paul Neuhaus, AIA, Tom Sopoci, AIA, and Ligeia Uker.

James Dayton, AIA

James' work is bold and forward-thinking, utilizing innovative forms, industrial materials, and integral use of daylight and a collaboration with fine art in such projects as the Minnetonka Center for the Arts and The Blake School. The jury noted a fearless approach to building and production echoed by Frank Gehry, FAIA, who wrote, "I am encouraged to see that the focus of James' work is innovative and pushes the concepts of design ahead. He has always shown a commitment to producing architecture of a very high quality." James' fifteen-year friendship with Gehry began while working at Gehry Partners LLP, Los Angeles, from 1991-1996 and upon starting his own firm, James Dayton Design, Ltd., he became the first architectural firm in Minneapolis to use Gehry Technologies' *Digital Project*, the Catia-based software designed by Gehry's office.

James has built a significant portfolio of work and received national recognition, notably in January 2003's *Architectural Record* coverage of the Headhouse/Sackhouse Competition, an international competition sponsored by the St. Paul Riverfront Corporation. Locally, James has resonated with the artistic community and is viewed by many as an important emerging leader. A recent client highly respects James' architectural practice commenting, "He's sensitive to the client's needs and the demands of the site, inventive and analytical, creative and budget-conscious." She continues, "While his work is electric with ideas about form and function, the final result is never self-conscious but, rather, is sustained by a strong sense of mission." One juror summarized the excitement around James' practice, "He's the future of the profession. Watch this firm. Watch this architect."

Mark Larson, AIA

Mark's passion for collaboration and an enthusiasm for architecture make him well-deserving of this award. One nominator stated, "Mark has a growing dedication to building the quality of the profession, a passion for pursuing the best of design, and an intensity for enlightening those around him about the discipline and delight of architecture." Mark's rich résumé includes a wide range of project types with award-winning local architectural firms, before beginning his own collaborative residential practice in 2000. Rehkamp Larson Architects, Inc., now a firm of eight, impressed the jury in the sheer amount of work being done while sustaining a strong educational component and community outreach to the practice.

Mark has a fascination with connections between architecture and psychology as witnessed in his involvement as lecturer at the symposium "Architecture & the Psyche" at the Weisman Art Museum and additional speaking engagements focused on this topic at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts and the Jungian Congress in Barcelona, Spain. His eagerness to listen to clients and contractors and value their input in the design process comes intuitively to Mark and in the jury's opinion it has "given him the ability to work so well in a variety of styles from 60's modernism to contemporary design." According to the jury, Mark is a leader for the profession, "He's a talented designer and detailer, a well-rounded architect out in the community making architecture accessible to the average person and learning from those experiences."

Paul Mellblom, AIA

Paul connects his life vision through architecture. His work as a designer, currently at Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle, Ltd., and involvement in teaching and community in and out of architecture stems from his belief that "we are each morally responsible to make the world a better place for friends, family and especially those in need." The jury observed a focused approach to his design in the consistent way he has worked with organizations like Clare Housing and YouthCARE and successfully "raised the profession of architecture in the eyes of all the organizations he comes in contact with."

As a senior associate and project manager at MS&R, Paul has lead numerous office projects including the rehabilitation of the 801 Washington Avenue warehouse building, Minneapolis, into multi-family housing and the River Park Lofts in downtown St. Paul. The jury witnessed his ability on projects to attend to tough details on complex adaptive re-use and high-rise projects and maintain a high degree of sensitivity. One firm principal attested, "Whether in the office, at the university or with the many public interest initiatives he is involved in, Paul is a reliable, supportive, and conscientious agent for doing the right thing in the right way for the right reasons, and is able to bring everyone involved along in the process."

This year's Young Architects Award winners will be recognized at the annual AIA Minnesota Awards Celebration on Friday, December 2, 2005.

AIA Minnesota Young Architects Award winners are encouraged to submit their work for the national award, as well. Since the AIA Young Architect Award's inception in 1993, AIA Minnesota architects have dominated the winners at a national level. The eight AIA Minnesota architects who have received an AIA National Young Architect Awards include: Joan M. Soranno, AIA, 1993; Vicki L. Hooper, AIA, 1993; William A. Blanski, AIA, 1995; Michael Fischer, AIA, 1996; Robert Rothman, AIA, 1996; Jeffrey Kagermeier, AIA, 2001; Mohammed Lawal, AIA, 2002; Paul Neuhaus, AIA, 2003; and Janis LaDouceur, AIA, 2004.

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 and pick up a copy of Architecture Minnesota, the award-winning architectural magazine of the Midwest.

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