

## AIA Minnesota Announces **2016 Gold Medal Award Recipient** **Robert C. Mack, FAIA**

The American Institute of Architects

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**MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA** – Robert C. Mack, FAIA, principal at MacDonald & Mack Architects, is the AIA Minnesota 2016 Gold Medal recipient. The AIA Minnesota Gold Medal Award is one of the highest honors bestowed by the association, recognizing individuals whose work has had a lasting influence on the theory and practice of architecture in Minnesota, and significant, positive impact on the Minnesota architecture community and culture.

The 2016 Gold Medal jury was composed of 2016 AIA Minnesota President Michelle Mongeon-Allen, AIA, JLG Architects; AIA Minnesota Committee on Design co-chair Bob Ganser, AIA, MSR; Nathan Johnson, AIA, 4RM+ULA; Rebecca Lewis, FAIA, DSGW Architects; Linda McCracken-Hunt, FAIA, JLG Architects; and former AIA Minnesota Gold Medal recipient Craig Rafferty, FAIA.

The jury evaluated Gold Medal candidates on how well their contributions demonstrated great depth and breadth, having a cumulative effect on the profession of architecture in Minnesota; addressed the future of architecture while honoring its tradition; transcended or united specific areas of expertise; and became widely known—by architects, designers, educators, and the public—for their quality.

Robert C. Mack exemplifies the spirit of the award and is a notable choice given his broad impact and advocacy efforts as an historic preservation architect. “Bob Mack is one of the founders of the historic preservation movement in Minnesota,” says 2016 AIA Minnesota President Michelle Mongeon-Allen. “He is the reason why many of Minnesota’s most iconic landmarks are not only standing today but remain vital, relevant spaces for the future.” These buildings include the Minneapolis Municipal Building, the Minneapolis Grain Exchange, Christ Church Lutheran, the Minnesota Governor’s Residence, the St. Paul Public Library, and Split Rock Lighthouse.

Outside of Minnesota, Mack has worked on more than 500 National Register properties and more than a dozen National Historic Landmarks throughout the country. “Anyone who has touched a preservation project in Minnesota has heard of Bob Mack,” the Gold Medal jury noted. “He is *the* expert in Minnesota, and the reach of his work extends far beyond our state. He has furthered the profession of architecture and our communities through his tremendous contributions to the Secretary of the Interior’s standards and process related to preservation of historic structures.”

Mack's career began at the National Park Service in Washington, D.C., where he influenced the writing of the aforementioned standards and authored the Preservation Briefs #1 and #2. His work solidified the founding documents for preservation in the U.S., which remain in widespread use.

In 1976, he returned to Minnesota and founded MacDonald & Mack Architects with Stuart MacDonald, AIA. The firm's approach to historic preservation blends art and science to ensure that the prior designer's work shines and endures. "Bob investigates buildings with CSI-level precision to understand not just surface symptoms but the true root problems," his nomination noted. For example, Mack's thoughtful design solution for Redeemer Missionary Baptist Church in Minneapolis—the first Minnesota project to receive a National Trust for Historic Preservation Honor Award—allowed adults to be baptized without impacting the sanctuary's historic architecture.

Collaboration is an essential skill in historic preservation. Mack enjoys playing an out-of-the-spotlight role and focusing on the end result for a building or project. This approach, along with his long resumé of preservation success stories, has attracted many prominent partners, one of which brought Mack and his team into a massive restoration project at Glacier National Park's Going-to-the-Sun Road.

Throughout his career, Mack has also maintained a strong presence in education, both as an adjunct professor at the University of Minnesota School of Architecture and as a mentor to preservationists. At the University, he helped establish the M.S. in Architecture—Heritage Conservation & Preservation program.

Mack was elevated to Fellowship in the American Institute of Architects in 1990. More recently, he was inducted into the College of Fellows of the Association for Preservation Technology and received the career achievement award from the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota.

"Bob's humility and quiet personality stand in contrast to the magnitude of his impact—as an architect, firm principal, educator, and community leader," the Gold Medal jury concluded. "It is time for Bob to be recognized for all he has done to mentor this profession, to grow our industry's expertise in preservation and sustainability, and to ensure that our nation's historic structures are enjoyed for generations to come."

Robert C. Mack, FAIA, will receive his Gold Medal award at the annual AIA Minnesota Awards Dinner on December 2, 2016, at International Market Square in Minneapolis. Find more information at <http://www.aia-mn.org/get-involved/aia-minnesota-awards/gold-medal/>

*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). Pick up a copy of Architecture Minnesota, the award-winning architectural magazine of the Midwest.*