

The Minnesota
Women in Architecture
FAIA Legacy Project

Linda McCracken-Hunt Oral History Interview

Introduction

Legacy Project

The Minnesota Women in Architecture FAIA Legacy Project, is a joint effort of the Minnesota Architectural Foundation (MAF) and the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Women in Architecture Committee. In 2018, the Legacy Project began to amplify the achievements of our female fellows by documenting the stories of the women architects in the Minnesota recognized with the AIA's highest membership honor, Fellowship (FAIA).

The project's primary goals are: 1) to increase the visibility of women architects to break down stereotypes that may be instrumental in the formation of unconscious bias about the women in the profession and 2) to increase the visibility of women architects to encourage more women to seek a career in architecture and to stay productive in the profession despite adversity.

Funding from the Minnesota Historical Society supported the first eleven interviews and oral histories; with this template, the project will continue to grow.

Linda McCracken-Hunt



Elevated to Fellow in 2009, Linda McCracken-Hunt is a gifted leader expanding new areas of practice by redefining the role of the architect as an owner's representative and as a public leader advocating integrated practice delivery options.

Interview

Linda McCracken-Hunt, Interviewee

Kimberly Long Loken, Interviewer

February 19, 2019

Kimberly Long Loken: **KL**

Linda McCracken-Hunt: **LMH**

Track 1

00:00

KL Today is the 19th of February, 2018.

LMH 2019.

KL 2019—thank you [laughter]. And we are here at the offices of JLG [Architects] in the North Loop—the Warehouse District of Minneapolis. Our subject today is—

LMH Linda McCracken-Hunt.

KL And Linda, when and where were you born?

LMH I was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania March 16, 1954.

KL So let's get started with kind of a roughly chronological dive back into your career in architecture. How would you say that you first found architecture? How did architecture find you?

LMH Well, I was actually a studio arts major at the University of Minnesota. My mother was an artist, and I had had a lot of art in my life and wanted to continue with studio art painting and sculpture. And so I was a studio arts major, but I was also really good at calculus and physics. And so I was taking calculus and physics for fun. I actually tested out of the first quarter of calculus and physics from high school and was continuing with my math and physics while I was in studio arts, and I met a number of pre-arc [architecture] students that were also taking calculus and physics to get into architecture school. And they were like, "Why are you in studio arts. You're better than us in calculus and physics. Why aren't you doing architecture?" And they exposed me to the idea of architecture as an alternative. And really, I wasn't sure what I was going to do with a studio arts major. Do you become a

studio arts teacher? I didn't know where I was going with it, so it seemed to have a better career path option too. And there were two friends of mine that were in studio that I went to visit in studio to see what it was like. And it looked like so much fun. And what's funny about that is both of them never finished architecture school or became architects, but it's because of that exposure that I switched majors at the end of my freshman year and applied to architecture school at the University of Minnesota. I thought I'd try it and, if I don't like it, I'll move on. And I just kept enjoying it every year. And pretty soon I was done.

KL So, I'm sorry, you're first college was in Philadelphia?

LMH No. I actually moved from Philadelphia when I was twelve.

KL Oh, okay.

LMH So I was born in Philadelphia, and my childhood was in Philadelphia, but then I lived in Minnesota ever since.

KL Okay. What brought your family to Minnesota?

LMH My father worked for Honeywell in Pennsylvania and Honeywell's headquarters—it used to be called Minneapolis Honeywell—is headquartered in Minneapolis. So he moved up the chain, and got transferred to Minneapolis.

KL So then your mother, her work in the arts, what was her media?

LMH Painting. She did acrylics; she did oils; she did tempera; she did watercolors; and she did—that was mostly it, was painting.

KL So, looking back to your childhood and having an artistic parent, do you feel that there were moments where you did get exposed potentially to art and architecture, and when you started to realize your aptitude, your interest in this area—

LMH Yeah, my drawing skills, I think. She would have women come in for art classes once a week in our basement.

KL Oh, wow.

LMH And I think it was a coffee klatsch, you know, social thing. But they all did paintings, and it definitely exposed me to picking up a brush or sketching. They would go on outings where they would go sketch live in nature. And I would go along when—part of that was I was ten years old and I have to do something with my daughter, so I'll bring her along. But I—exposed me to it, I'm sure, at an earlier age. And she had art exhibits and shows and we always went and met her artist friends.

KL Are you an only child?

LMH No, I have a brother.

KL So when you first encountered architecture in college, what were some of the aspects of it that first appealed to you besides seeing this sort of natural fit with the curriculum?

LMH I really enjoyed everything about it, but I was really coming from a disadvantage because in those days—I graduated from high school in 1972—and, in those days, women had to take home-ec [economics]. We took the cooking and sewing, and the guys got to take the woodworking and the drafting. Women were not allowed to take drafting. It was off the table. I tried because I thought it was so cool. One of the things the guys in high school got to do was, after drafting for one year, was they got to design a house and then build the model of it. And I remember helping this one guy build his model. And he ended up becoming an architect. And so I didn't know how to draw with the pencil, to twirl it—to turn it while you were drawing—the line weights, the line—all of those things that most people in architecture school, being the guys, had drafting in high school. They came with a whole set of skills entering architecture school that I didn't have. And so, I realized early on that I had a lot of catching up to do. And so my first year studio was harder than it needed to be as a result of that. I still got a lot out of it. In the first year at Minnesota in those days wasn't a lot about designing projects and buildings. It was really about form and proportion and scale and many things that I was comfortable with with my art background but, when we did have to do drawings, I really was behind the curve. It took a long time. It took—probably the second year of studio is when I caught up and got even.

KL How many women were in your class, out of curiosity?

LMH I'm thinking there were maybe about ten of us out of a hundred, and I'm thinking maybe only three or four of us graduated and a hundred was probably fifty—I mean proportionately.

KL So close to ten percent—

LMH Right. In those days it was about ten percent.

KL [Unintelligible].

LMH And that was pretty progressive for then. You didn't see—I was in my first job out of architecture school; it was a small firm and I was the only woman. The next job, which was a bigger firm, the only women that had been in that office were secretaries. There were two of us that were architects that were—it was the first time women architects had been there, so it was new for all of them.

KL Right, and what was the name of that firm?

LMH That was Architectural Alliance, now called the Alliance. Sarah Susanka who is also a fellow and I worked there—fresh—you know, young architects. And it was new for that firm to make that transition.

KL And then, prior to that, you mentioned your first job at a small firm.

LMH John Cuningham—Cuningham Architects—there were only about five of us, which—John just got the gold medal and he has 400 employees now probably. In those days there were him and four other people—five people. It was very small.

KL So, speaking about some notable figures in your career, could you tell us about some people and or events that greatly influenced your career in architecture as that trajectory developed?

LMH One notable event that I think made a big difference for me is 1976 when we went to our study abroad program for that—it was quarters then. Spring quarter was Greece and Italy. And there were about 20 of us. It was our third year of design that went on this trip. And I ended up—we had Carl Graffunder mentoring us in the first half and Ralph Rapson in the second half. So we had great faculty with us. And, after the end of our travels, I ended up getting a job in Rome and working in Rome for an architect—Brown-Daltas [Daltas and Associates] in Rome, Italy. And it was an American firm that was headquartered in Cambridge, Massachusetts, but also had—their primary office was in Rome, Italy. And Spiro Daltas, one of the partners, was a Minnesota grad, and he actually called some of my professors from studio when I walked in to say, “I’m done with my travels. If you need help, I could work here.” And that was in part because my grandparents came over from Italy.

09:59

My mother, the artist, was 100 percent Italian. Italian was spoken in the home with the grandparents in Philadelphia. And so, there was this heritage—culture behind me of feeling comfortable to do that in Rome. And I worked there for the summer and the fall, and they wanted me to stay, but I was nervous about getting out of sequence with curriculum because I wasn’t—I still had a year left. And I was fearful that I would never graduate if I stayed too long. So I left Rome and came back. But that job has always been impressive on my resume, and there were actually connections of Minnesota architects. Dewey [Duane] Kell worked at Brown-Daltas and Associates. I ended up at Ankeny Kell some years later. And it was really the Brown-Daltas connection which ties people together. So that was a real influential—and it was kind of gutsy to live in Rome. I was 22 and learned—got better

at the language—never got good at conjugating verbs, but I could talk. The architects in the office were American. The drafters, which was all ink on mylar then, were Greek and Italian. So I was in with the Greek and Italians drawing. And I also built a model that was 1/10th life-size of what we were doing. One of the things we were working on was the Saudi Arabian monetary agency—like the federal reserve for Saudi Arabia. And these were beautiful buildings with fountains that go inside and outside and granite, and I was building models 1/10th life-size for studies. Here's this one way we could do the glass. Here's a different way we could do the glass. So it was a great experience.

KL So you were somewhat fluent when you started working there?

LMH In Italian?

KL Or more like listening fluency than speaking fluency maybe?

LMH Oh, exactly. I can understand things but was broken in my conversation. My Italian got better by hearing it all the time and my vocabulary expanded a lot. And I even dated some Italian guys that didn't know English, but they thought I was pretty quiet. Because, by the time I figured out what I wanted to say, we were on to another topic [laughter]. I could go to movies in Italian. I could go to the theater. The Baths of Caracalla have outdoor theater.

KL Oh, that's right. They do opera there often.

LMH Yes.

KL Yes.

LMH It was a little hard to follow. I remember seeing the Twelfth Night there and that's the one where the woman's impersonating a guy in Shakespeare's Twelfth Night and so it's trying to confuse you anyway [laughter].

KL So you mentioned the one project, the Saudi Arabian Reserve, but were most of the projects new construction? Were most of them commercial and cultural?

LMH They were actually mostly in Saudi Arabia in Rome's location. Spiro Daltas had a real affinity and connections with Saudi Arabia and all of the geometries—everything—and the screens to keep in the shade—it was—that's pretty much all that firm did for that period of time was work in Saudi.

KL So that was pretty early in your career.

LMH It was.

KL Not yet quite graduated. Other people or events along the way that were watershed moments?

LMH I think another big moment for me was when I left private practice and went to the University of Minnesota. I had been practicing for about nine years out of college at Cuningham Architects, the Alliance, and Ankeny Kell, and I saw an ad—I was actually recuperating from some surgery, and I had at the time a one-year-old and a three-year-old at home. And I saw an ad for a senior project manager at the University of Minnesota. And I thought this would be an interesting opportunity. I'd have the regular-hour job. My husband had been thinking about—my husband's an architect. He had worked at HGA [Hammel Green and Abrahamson] early in his career and then had worked at Carlson Mjorud Architecture [CMA Architects]. He was thinking of starting his own firm. And I thought, if I have the health insurance and the benefits, he could start his own firm and this could be good for us as a family.

And so I got the job at the University of Minnesota. And, at that time, all their project managers were registered architects. That was the decision they had made in the organization. I ended up spending 13 years at the University which was a long time. And I moved from Senior Project Manager to Assistant Director, to Director, to University Architect. And the University, like anyplace, has its pros and cons, the pros being the projects are exceptional. They're the best of anything and they commit to a hundred-year life on a building, so it's quality materials, quality systems. They appreciate good architecture; it's always the cutting edge on things from design and just what they're trying to accomplish inside of the building because of research or other initiatives. And so, it really was a wonderful opportunity to be involved in such quality work. It's a very political place as any place is, and that can get to be difficult. But I was able to navigate through that, and I was the one who was presented projects for schematic design approval to the Board of Regents. I was involved as an oversight level in the hiring of architects, in the hiring of contractors if it was a negotiated contract. I ultimately had a lot of influence on the direction of where architecture at the University was going.

And so it was a real exciting opportunity. And really, I think, I am known by a lot of people; I know a lot of people. A lot of that is from the visibility I had at the University as—if you ever wanted to do work at the University, you needed to know Linda. And so it worked both ways in that regard. I got to know a lot of firms and a lot of contractors and a lot of people in the industry as a result of that exposure. And I became more known to them as well.

KL Right. So, as an aside to this being a family decision, did your husband start his own firm then?

LMH Yes he did. And that was Studio Five Architects, which he started in 1987. I went to the University in 1985 and he had that firm until 2000 and—let's see—it's been two and a half

years, so—16 when we did a merger with JLG Architects [formerly Johnson Laffen Galloway Architects].

KL And what is your husband's name?

LMH Thomas Hunt—Tom Hunt. So I left the University after 13 years, and that was a big decision to leave because most people that go there never leave. They have a pretty nice setup that's pretty hard to walk away from. But it was a time at the University when design—people that became in power on the side of the University felt that Facilities Management and the maintenance and operations of buildings was really more important than the design of buildings. And so the philosophy changed within the organization for about a five year period of time, and it just wasn't as much fun as it used to be.

And so I'd made—I was trying to decide if I wanted to be a lifer at the University, and finish my entire career being involved in great projects for a great institution—my alma mater—or if I wanted to do something else yet again. And I thought, you know, I'm in my—let's see—I was—in '98 I was mid-40s—thought, “You know, I still have a lot of time left. Let's go back to the real world.” And so I was debating what to do, and there were a lot of choices for me because, with my higher education experience, I could have led a higher education studio in a number of quality firms around Minneapolis, but I ended up—my husband said, “Join me. I'm a sole proprietor.” He had had partners. He was at that point a sole proprietor. “I could use the help and you'd be good at it and why don't you have the firm with me.”

20:04

And that was a big decision because our kids were still—our kids were teenagers then. But to put all your eggs in one basket—what if it doesn't work? Will they go to college? All of these—it's a little—. So I said, “Let's do it. I'll join you.” And, if it doesn't work, or if we can't work together or something, I can always take a job somewhere, so let's give it a shot. And it was another one of those I'm going to try it and, if I don't like it, I'll do something else, just like when I went to architecture school. And it worked out great. We ended up setting up the firm then as a women-owned firm. And it started off at 51-49, but then in the later years it was 85-15, because we've been partners all the way along. We've basically been married and partners since 1980.

So I led—I was CEO [Chief Executive Officer]. I led the business development, the marketing. I had all these contacts that I had built over my career to that point. And Tom became CFO [Chief Financial Officer] and handled the finances within the firm and got

involved in spec[ifications]-writing and got involved in design. And he was actually quite a talented designer in his own—from the University of Minnesota. So it went well. We had a great time. We did some great work. Some of this work is Studio Five work.

We also though, because when I was at the University, I was essentially an owner's rep. I represented the University. I was never the architect. I was always the owner, and I learned from my 13 years of being the owner thinking like an owner. The owner's looking at long-term durability, maintainability, quality systems that last, quality materials. Budget is sacred. You can't just say, "Oh, but the design is beautiful, but you have to add a million dollars." You don't just find a million dollars. Schedule is paramount. You have an academic calendar or a grant for research that has to be up and running by a certain date. I learned a lot of things in the owner's shoes.

And so what I brought to Studio Five was also work as an owner's rep. And there was a period of time there where we did a lot of it because I was accustomed to thinking like an owner. And so doing owner's rep work was a natural fit. So that went outside of the normal boundaries of architecture. And then years later—it was actually in my fellow—when you're putting your fellows [Fellow of the American Institute of Architects] submittal together, you really have to think of what is the core of me that is unique to me and nobody else and what am I best at better than anybody. And my submittal was as an owner's rep. And it was successful in that I was elevated to fellowship. Think the mindset I can bring to an owner's rep is above and beyond what an architect does on a project. And so, it is project management, but it takes it from a different perspective.

KL Right. So, we've talked about some of these major milestones in the evolution of your career. Let's dive into details a little bit more. Tell us about one of your favorite projects and what made it successful?

LMH My all-in-all absolute favorite project is University of Minnesota Recreation and Wellness Center. That's that one there. First of all, I am a tomboy by nature. I played softball for the University of Minnesota before I had to commit to architecture school, so I love the whole premise of recreation and wellness and fitness and [the] lifestyle of that. And so, when you have a personal connection to a project type and you get the opportunity that we got at the University, your passion comes together from architecture and the project type. It's just the best project ever. And I think it probably influences a lot of prospective students who are looking at choices for college when they know that that is their fitness center because of just what a spectacular building it is. And how it brings in natural light and all the different experiences in the building for fitness and wellness, just the grand open stair that everyone runs up and down to get to all the floors is because you should take the stairs. But it's a beautiful stair; you want to take the stair. So that's my favorite by far.

KL And what years?

LMH That was finished 2013.

KL So at this point you were no longer at the University of Minnesota Architecture, you were involved as the owner's rep.

LMH No I wasn't at the University. It was Studio Five Architects.

KL You were the architects.

LMH I was the principal [and project manager] in charge from Studio Five Architects. And we collaborated with Cannon Design. We were the prime. They have a national repertoire in rec centers and were really responsible for the design concept. And we then shared the execution of it. Studio Five Architects were the architects of the exterior, and Cannon Design were the architects of the interior.

KL And this is a general fitness center or does it support some of the teams as well?

LMH It's just for the students—not the athletes—not the student athletes—general fitness center.

KL Right. And it was like a second student union.

LMH Right—yes. It has a café. It has a lot of multi-purpose rooms for jazz and Zumba and yoga and tai chi and whatever they want to do. It has a lot of courts. It has a lot of fitness equipment. And it has this great running track that goes through a four-story atrium for the running and walking track with a variety of views, windows placed just to look out from the running track.

KL Cool.

LMH Yeah, it's a beautiful building. And I think as far as my greatest accomplishment as an owner's rep, there are a few. Regions Hospital was a \$200 million-dollar expansion of the hospital, while keeping the existing hospital in operation, which is difficult to do.

KL [Laughter]. Yeah.

LMH And that photo is of the expansion: it's a new emergency room, it's new surgical suites, and its patient beds. They land the helicopters on top now to directly bring them into the operating rooms. There's parking below the building. It's near the state capital. It's close enough to get involved with the capitol area. It was a very complex one from an owner's rep perspective because of all the logistics. And nothing went wrong during it because you always had to be planning all the possible things that could happen. That one was good.

KL And that was with Studio Five as well?

LMH And that was Studio Five as owner's reps. And the Department of Human Services was an owner's rep project with Studio Five Architects. That's in Downtown St. Paul. What was interesting about that one was how many owners there were. The St. Paul port authority owned the land. The State of Minnesota Department of Human Services was going to do a long-term lease, build the building and a long-term lease from the Port Authority. So, you had the State Department Administration, you had the Department of Human Services, and then they put a city fire station in it. So, you had the city, two state groups, and the port authority. And it had a tight schedule. We had to preorder the steel with—what did they do—reverse bid auction or something. We did all sorts of things to get that one done on time. And that one was complex with all the players involved.

And the Coeur de Catherine Student Center at St. Catherine University was unique too in that they had three architects and two contractors. So, there was an addition for their student union, the Coeur de Catherine, and there was a renovation of their library and their student center. And so, there was a design architect, Shelpley Bulfinch, and there were two design build teams. One was McGough and HGA and one was Opus with Opus Architects that took the design concept by Shepley Bulfinch and then delivered. One did the addition and one did the renovation. And it all happened at once, so there were three architects and two contractors and a college administration. So, they all have a different story to tell.

30:07

Penfield Apartments is over there, and that was—it's also in the heart of St. Paul. There's like three of these within blocks of each other. The City of St. Paul had tried for years to get a developer to put housing on that site. None of the developers ever would get it completed. So, the city decided to take it on and be the developer and take the risk as the developer. And that was a big step for the city.

KL Oh, this is in Lowertown?

LMH No, it's up by the freeway by Minnesota and Robert or—

KL Right, so it's that farther eastern end of St. Paul.

LMH It's right on the freeway 94.

KL Yeah.

LMH Yep.

KL But getting towards CHS field. Isn't there a grocery store?

LMH Yeah there is a Lund's grocery store in it—yes. And so, the city hired us as owner's reps because they were taking the risk as a developer to work with the contractor and the architect to make that project happen.

KL That was a very interesting—that was—

LMH And then they sold it at a profit.

KL And that was when Chris Coleman was mayor—

LMH Yes.

KL And that was kind of controversial that the city was getting involved, but it was like the first grocery store in downtown.

LMH Yes, and it's a Lunds & Byerlys and there's parking to pull in and shop and pull out, and it helps everyone living and working in St. Paul with that grocery store, and it's great—how great is it to have an apartment with a grocery store downstairs. Go down—get your rotisserie chicken—go back up—dinner done. So they have a variety of unit types, and they have a great community space on top of the parking, and it turned out to be very successful for the city. It was delivered under budget, and then they were able to turn it some years later and sell it at a profit. So being a developer wasn't a bad move for them, as risky as it might have been.

KL So what were some expected or unexpected challenges that shaped your career, project-centric or otherwise?

LMH In the 70s, I was working in architecture school '76, '77, '78—I graduated in '78. There were so few women architects out there practicing that I remember going to a jobsite for a construction progress meeting on one of the projects I was working on, and the contractor basically saying, "Who are you and why are you here?" And I said, "I'm Linda, and I'm an architect, and I'm here for the meeting." And they said, "You're an architect?" And I said, "Yes." He goes, "Are you registered?" I said, "Yes."

Now, if I had been a guy and I'd come to the progress meeting and I said, "I'm here for the progress meeting, I'm on this project," he would not have been asked those questions. They would have, "Oh, here's the architect. He's here." I mean, there was so much of that then because the contractors—I think the architects were starting to realize it, but the contractors were behind them. There were many times where I wasn't taken seriously, and you have to keep—. You know, my whole mantra in those days was, you just have to keep doing good work and being consistently good and prove yourself. And I think it was probably harder then—you had to prove yourself to, not only be as good as, you actually

had to be better to be considered as good as. And you just always had to be mindful of that, that people were not aware. And I don't think it's like that now for the women architects in our office. When we go to a meeting and Ashley introduces herself as the architect on the project, no one questions it. It is quite understood.

But it wasn't—I mean, contractors on job sites would have issues. I think the architects in general—the architects you work with in your own firm know your capability, so they don't question it. But owners sometimes would, if they're a little old-fashioned, it would take them a while. But I think you just prove how good you are at what you do that they, after a month or two, they go, “Oh, this is working out great. I don't know why I was nervous.” But it was tougher then.

KL So what are some complementary skills or interests that enhance your architectural practice?

LMH Well, like I said a little bit ago that I'm kind of a tomboy at heart and I actually the sector leader for rec and wellness within JLG, and so it gets me to be more involved in all of our recreation centers, community centers, which I think fits me really well with me and my passions. I had been very active with the City of Golden Valley—was a playground leader and did 20 years on the planning commission, and I've always been involved in my community. And I think I really understand community centers and why they're important for big towns and small towns. So I really enjoy those kind of projects. It ties it all together for me. And the athletics ones too—doing some work with the University of Minnesota athletics. They love to bring up even that I was one of them, even though it was only for one year before I had to make the decision: play softball or go to architecture school. The right one won out, but I think that was a way I kind of tied it all together.

KL What does it mean to be a playground leader?

LMH Oh, you end up—for the summer programs, you are the one at the playground and then there are all these programs for the kids that spend their summers there that you help organize and you basically are a park and rec person.

KL So was this a job when you were in high school?

LMH High school—high school, college, and then I also in college was an umpire or referee, like I'd do flag football in the fall and volleyball, basketball in the winter, softball spring and summer. So my part-time job to supplement was always—

KL Active.

LMH Be an umpire or something like that [laughter].

KL It's also interesting that—I would think that that skill finds its way into being an owner's rep and running a meeting and creating an atmosphere that feels fair and equitable when you've got—

LMH All this—

KL —so many players at the table.

LMH Right. Well and team—you know, people talk about team building and, when you spend time being a part of a team, and for some of us we played together for 20 years. You know everyone is different. Everyone brings a different perspective. Everyone has different skills. But we come together as a team and that is just like the work life, really. So there's a lot of comparables between sports and work.

KL I can't cite the statistics accurately, but I know that there is a correlation between college athletes and CEOs.

LMH Oh. Well, you know, you have to get good at time management when you spend a lot—. I have a high degree of respect for all these student athletes that we have—we're currently working with the University of Minnesota on the volleyball team spaces and some work for men's hockey, and we have some other projects that have been high school or college level, and they have to be extremely good at time management. They have classes to go to, they have assignments due, but they have a core part of their day—every day where they're performing athletics. And you have to eat regularly to stay healthy and fit and it's hard to get it all in. It's their job and they put a lot of time into it when it's their season. It's hard to manage. So you get the spaces as comfortable for them and help them as much as possible where they can touch down with their laptop anywhere to get a paper done, you know? But still have a couch to relax because they're sore, or the hydrotherapy pool. You need to do every—

KL Things you didn't have when you were a student athlete.

LMH Yeah, right. Well, and when I played softball at the University of Minnesota, it was pre-Title IX, so we were a rag—I don't know—we were just a band of—we had University of Minnesota uniforms on, but we didn't have a budget. We didn't play Big Ten teams. We played River Falls or Winona or, you know, I'm sure our coach and their coach had to go through quite a lot to even get a bus to get us to get there.

40:06

I don't know where the money came from to start athletics in those days. It was not anything like it is now. It wasn't really even—it was probably considered a club sport. It was not—and I remember early around Title IX time—well actually, this would have been after Title IX because I was at the University, but there was a design going on for Williams Arena, and it was a renovation, and they had the women's sports locker spaces and the men's sports locker spaces. And then Chris Voelz who was the women's athletic director—Minnesota was quite progressive in that we had a women's athletic director and a men's athletic director. And that's—you don't see that anymore and the University doesn't do it anymore. I mean, it's a lot of administration, but she came to me when I was at the University and said, "The men's locker room has wood paneling. The women's locker room has painted concrete block. Is that fair?" And you know what, it isn't fair.

And no one at the time really had given it a lot of thought. It was—this is a revenue sport that brings in lots of money for the men. So, she brought it to me and I went to the design team and construction team and said, this isn't going to fly. This isn't fair. But you had to take it on. It wouldn't have been fought. Today that wouldn't happen. The designers wouldn't even go there. But this was 1986—1988—1990—it was around then. And you had to always be kind of making a point, but in a respectful—I guess—I was not the type that was in your face ready to pick a fight. It would just be, "This doesn't seem fair to me. Can you explain it?" "Well, it's a budget issue." "Okay. Well, maybe there shouldn't be any wood anywhere then." I mean, that's a solution. Let's figure out some options. And I know it got resolved. I can't remember the final solution, and it's probably been remodeled since then. But they were handled equally.

KL What advice would you give to emerging professionals just beginning their careers in architecture?

LMH I think they should expose themselves to as many different aspects of it as they can. They need to get registered. This has been a thing with a lot of young architecture graduates that what we're seeing is the registration process is really long and difficult. And some of them are just saying, "I'm not going to sign drawings. I'm not going to have my own firm. I don't need to get registered." But you can't really call yourself an architect if you're not registered. And you aren't an architect. And you don't know now what path you might want to take 20 years from now, 30 years from now, 40 years from now. So, I do advise all of them, get registered. Make sure you have that license that shows a level of competency you've achieved because you don't know what you might choose to do. That senior project manager job at the University that opened up so many doors later, you had to be a registered architect.

KL Almost all public sector work.

LMH Yeah. And if you're competing against—let's say you decide I don't even want to be in architecture—I'm going to go work for the City of St. Paul planning. An architect is going

to be more highly regarded than someone who went to architectural school who didn't become an architect. It shows a level of competency that you passed all those exams. That I think you would always compete at a higher level. And you don't know if you're going to want to do design, or if you're going to do construction administration, or you're going to do interiors. When you're young, you should expose yourself to all of it and figure out where your passions lie. But it's really important to get registered, and I talk to the young ones a lot about that.

KL How would you talk to someone who's considering entering architecture as opposed to a person who's completing their college experience and beginning an internship. What would you say about considering the field at all?

LMH Well one thing I love about being an architect is no day is ever the same as another. There are so many possibilities of what you could be getting involved in. And, even then, there are so many things that can happen in your day. I think of people that are maybe in somewhat more traditional business roles where there may be more of a predictability to what they're doing. Things come out of nowhere in architecture. There is a certain level of predictability of what you think you're going to accomplish this week. But things can go so many different directions with design and construction and owner's decisions. I just think that it's a great field to get involved in. It has so many possibilities of where you can go with it within architecture.

I think that we have had historically an issue with the salary ranges in architecture and how committed you have to be with architecture school and registration and internship because, frankly, most students fresh out of college are not particularly useful in a lot of ways in a firm because they haven't been exposed to much, but they're like a sponge. They soak it all up and, if they learn from their mistakes and don't do their mistakes again, they improve and get more and more responsibility along the way. But our pay scales have always been an issue when you consider the commitment made. And I think that things are starting to come around in that regard, but there is a lot of competition with compensation with owners, and that trickles down to not being about to pay people what they're really worth.

KL What do you hope your legacy is to the architectural profession?

LMH I hope I'm remembered as a good architect, a good leader in the architectural and designing construction industry, someone very well-connected in the industry and well-known and respected. Someone fun to work with.

KL What year did you get your FAIA [Fellow of the American Institute of Architects]?

LMH 2009—ten years now.

KL So, at that juncture you were well into the Studio Five segment of your career and still prior to now the JLG segment of your career. So, I think it's always funny when we approach this question when we are talking to people who are still practicing and looking forward to continuing to practice and bristle a little bit at the legacy question. So can you tell me about what it means to you to be FAIA?

LMH It's quite an honor. I had been on the National Board of Directors for AIA 2005 to 2007, and that gave me national exposure. It also cemented some wonderful friendships nationally with other architects that were also on the board during that time. It really opened up my awareness of what others are doing around the country and internationally. The fellowship convocation event is a lot of pomp and circumstance. It's usually in a beautiful piece of architecture or in a national cathedral or a space that has a lot of presence. And if it's like—mine was in San Francisco in a cathedral at the top of the hill. And it had a pipe organ and it was playing this beautiful classical pipe organ deep music. And my sons had flown in on their own nickel to be a part of it.

50:05

And they were then in—young professionals. They had finished college. They were working, and we were all together. It gets you choked up. They intentionally designed this all to where you can't keep yourself a dry eye. And between, you know your family's there, you're thinking of the history of the College of Fellows that you're now a part of it. And I remember thinking at the time, "I'm not going to be the woman that cries." So I wouldn't let myself, while I was in the process of it, I wouldn't let myself think about it.

And what was funny was, in my particular event, I knew the national president who puts the medal around you. I knew the chancellor of the college of fellows. He was a friend of mine. You go, they put the medal on you. This person shakes your hand. That one shakes your hand. This one gives you a book. It goes down this whole line. I knew all of them. And my sons afterwards said, "What the heck? Everyone in the line gives you a hug?" "Well, they're all my friends." It's like, the president puts a ribbon around me and gives me a big hug. Then I go to the next one and he gives me a big hug. And I'm like going down this line getting hugged all the way along, and everyone else is handshake, handshake, handshake. It's like, well, they're all my friends. So that was even more special, that I knew everybody involved in the whole ceremony that was giving me the medal.

KL Can you talk a little bit about your AIA service through the years?

LMH Sure. Let's see, when I first started as a young architect, Tom Hoskens, who's with Cuningham, he and I started the young architect's group. This was in the 70s—probably late 70s. We had a young architect's group. And then in the 80s, when I was at the University, I pulled back a little bit from a leadership role in AIA Minnesota just because of not wanting to get into any issues between the University and the organization. But I got more involved—I was able to bring AIA documents into the University of Minnesota's contracts which was a good step for them in using standardized contracts that have case law behind them instead of their own contract while I was at the University.

I was President of AIA Minnesota in 2000. I was on the National Board of Directors from 2005-2007. I was on the Minnesota Architectural Foundation for six years, and I'm guessing that was around 2008-2014—might have been 2010-2016, but somewhere in there I was on the Minnesota Architectural Foundation for six years. I've held a lot of positions within AIA Minnesota and nationally. So I tend to step back. I mean, I get asked to be on certain—I think Mary Margaret is looking to have me on a task force. I'm occasionally on a task force or other committee, but I'm trying to step back from that and give younger people the opportunity to be in leadership roles.

I lead a group with Craig Rafferty and Gary Demele who are both fellows. We lead a group every year for potential new fellows to help them navigate the fellow's submittal process. And that has helped a lot in having more candidates from Minnesota apply for fellowship and more successful candidates getting their fellowship. Because of this group that Craig Rafferty's been involved in for years, I've been involved with for years, and so has Gary. And so that's been a worthwhile endeavor.

KL Right—sure. I know you probably can't cite statistics for that, but sort of ball-park—has it gone to being from one or two per year to three or four per year, is it something like that?

LMH Yeah, I think it probably has been that type of an impact. And it has been consistently three or four per year lately, which for Minnesota is good that we—California and New York and Chicago have so many of them. But, for Minnesota, we do really well. Wisconsin doesn't have very many typically. And we actually will help Wisconsin. We'll help North Dakota, South Dakota. We're willing to include them in our curriculum. We have assignments along the way. You have to have this by this date, this by this date. If they want our help, we go to our region. At the national level, this part of the country is known as the North Central Region on the national board. And that's Minnesota, Wisconsin and the Dakotas. So we are willing to include them because they don't have—I think there is maybe one fellow from South Dakota, and I'm not sure there even is one from North Dakota. And Wisconsin doesn't have very many. So Minnesota definitely has more fellows than our neighboring states.

KL What is it about service to the AIA that is so important to you, that has been important?

LMH Well, I've always wanted to give back from what I—from the success I've had. And I enjoy mentoring those younger than me and sharing experiences and helping others become as successful as I've been. Yeah, this is a big part of it. And I think part of it, like when I was president of AIA Minnesota in 2000, Sue Blumentals I think had been the year before, but prior to that was Elizabeth Close in like the 60s or 70s or something. I mean, women, even in the role of President of AIA Minnesota was a rare occurrence.

KL So this leads me to ask another question. I don't want to put words in your mouth about mentoring and mothering, but you mentioned it being a family decision going to the University. But you also mentioned pulling back from AIA during those years which was coincidentally when you had younger children.

LMH Young children—right.

KL So would you like to discuss what it has meant to be a working mother in this profession?

LMH Sure. There were times when it was absolutely nuts balancing it all. I think that my husband and partner was always a true partner. And thank heavens that he stepped up. We would share the daycare drop off, pick up. We would share, "The kid's sick, but I have an important meeting. Can you come and cover?" It was always a 50-50 deal with that. And I don't think I could have successfully accomplished it without. And I think a lot of the young people—I know a lot of young parents in our office—it is kind of an everyday thing now that you are 50-50 and you share, but in those days, we were coming out of an era where the man worked and the woman stayed at home. That's how my husband and I were raised. And so, to break out of what you see as the typical scenario to balance careers, it probably helped that we were both architects, so it couldn't be that yours was more important than mine. They were equally important. Our kids turned out incredible. I'm going to get choked up again. And so we must have done a good job because they're really amazing. And we have great grandkids now too—I mean, wonderful grandkids, not great-grandkids—four—two boys and two girls. And they're all living in California—having the good life in California.

KL Wonderful. This has been a fascinating conversation. I've really enjoyed it. Is there anything else you want to address? Any stories that are important to you to tell?

LMH I think I hit the good ones [laughter].

KL I think you did too. Thank you.

[End of Interview]

Total Interview Time: 1:00:14

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