

Tom Findley, AIA

Biographical Data



The LEO A DALY firm has been Tom Findley's professional architectural life since graduate school. During that time, Tom has designed buildings and cities around the world. His passion for architecture - especially the Design Management Process - helped give design excellence and its cultivation new emphasis and support in his firm. This, in turn, led to design innovation in all company projects, locally, nationally, and internationally.

As Senior Design Principal, his focus was on transforming the LEO A DALY company to share this emphasis on Design Excellence. In 1981, upon the passing of his mentor, Leo A. Daly II, Findley wrote a detailed essay to his new boss, Leo A. Daly III, entitled: "A proposal for the 3rd Generation of the Leo A Daly Company...Design Excellence." In this essay, Tom boldly and clearly outlines the great opportunities available through better design.



Quality design is the essence of architecture. A built environment without Design Excellence is purely construction work."

Tom Findley





Top left and going clockwise: The Strategic Air Command Museum; First National Bank Tower; and Georgia Gwinnett College Library

"As an architect, I believe in the power of ideas; in the powerful potential for architecture to positively enhance the passage of daily life, both functionally and symbolically." - Tom Findley

In his management responsibilities, Tom guided this ongoing quest for design excellence as a member of the firm's Executive Design Excellence Committee. Because of Tom's leadership and vision, to this day, all LEO A DALY offices now employ a Design Principal with support studios, filled with talented young staff focused on design achievement. Tom also mentored countless young architects, inspiring them to strive for design excellence in their own work.

The firm's design reputation continues to grow, as evidenced by multiple design awards and publications and several recent prestigious commissions. Findley's Design Excellence programs, applied throughout the firm and enthusiastically embraced by Leo A. Daly III, were key determinants in attaining the following commissions:

- The Pope John Paul II Museum & Cultural Center, Washington, DC
- The Strategic Air Command Museum, Omaha, NE
- The 45-story First National Bank Tower, Omaha, NE
- The 300,000 SF Central Library for the University of Nevada, Las Vegas
- Our Lady of Angels Cathedral, Los Angeles, CA (in affiliation with Rafael Moneo)
- The 67-story Cheung Kong Tower, Hong Kong (in affiliation with Cesar Pelli)
- The 310,000 SF Central Library for the University of Nevada, Reno, NV
- The Pechanga Museum and Cultural Center, Temecula, CA
- The 250,000 SF Central Library for Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, CA



Tom Findley and the AIA

Tom joined the AIA in 1979 and has served on many AIA committees since then. His primary focus was on public education. Although his work for LEO A DALY took him all over the world, Tom interrupted his travels in the 1990s to get more involved in AIA chapter leadership.

AIA offices he has held include:

1994 - Director / AIA Omaha Chapter
1995 - Treasurer / AIA Omaha Chapter
1996 - President-Elect / AIA Omaha Chapter
1997 - President / AIA Omaha Chapter
1998 - Past President / AIA Omaha Chapter

The Joslyn Castle Institute for Sustainable Communities (JCI)

From 1998 until his retirement, Findley served as a board member of this young Institute, which promotes sustainable living, teaching, and built examples in Omaha and across the state, in the region, in the nation, and in the world.

University of Nebraska Professional Advisory Council (PAC)

Starting in 1980, Tom critiqued and lectured at architectural studios. He also served as a member of PAC, constantly interfacing with faculty, professionals and students to promote a closer link, and effective handoff, between architectural education and practice.

The University of Nebraska Project Review Board

Beginning in 1990, Tom served on a four-member Architectural Design Review panel for the State of Nebraska system. This panel's role was to ensure good design quality and value for its state-owned University Campus architecture.

Tom's role on this review panel was to be a clear voice for architectural design excellence. This role grew into a speaking opportunity in 2001 at the Regional Society of College and University Planners Conference in November in Monterey, Mexico.



The Trans-Mississippi Exposition of 1898 Centennial Celebration

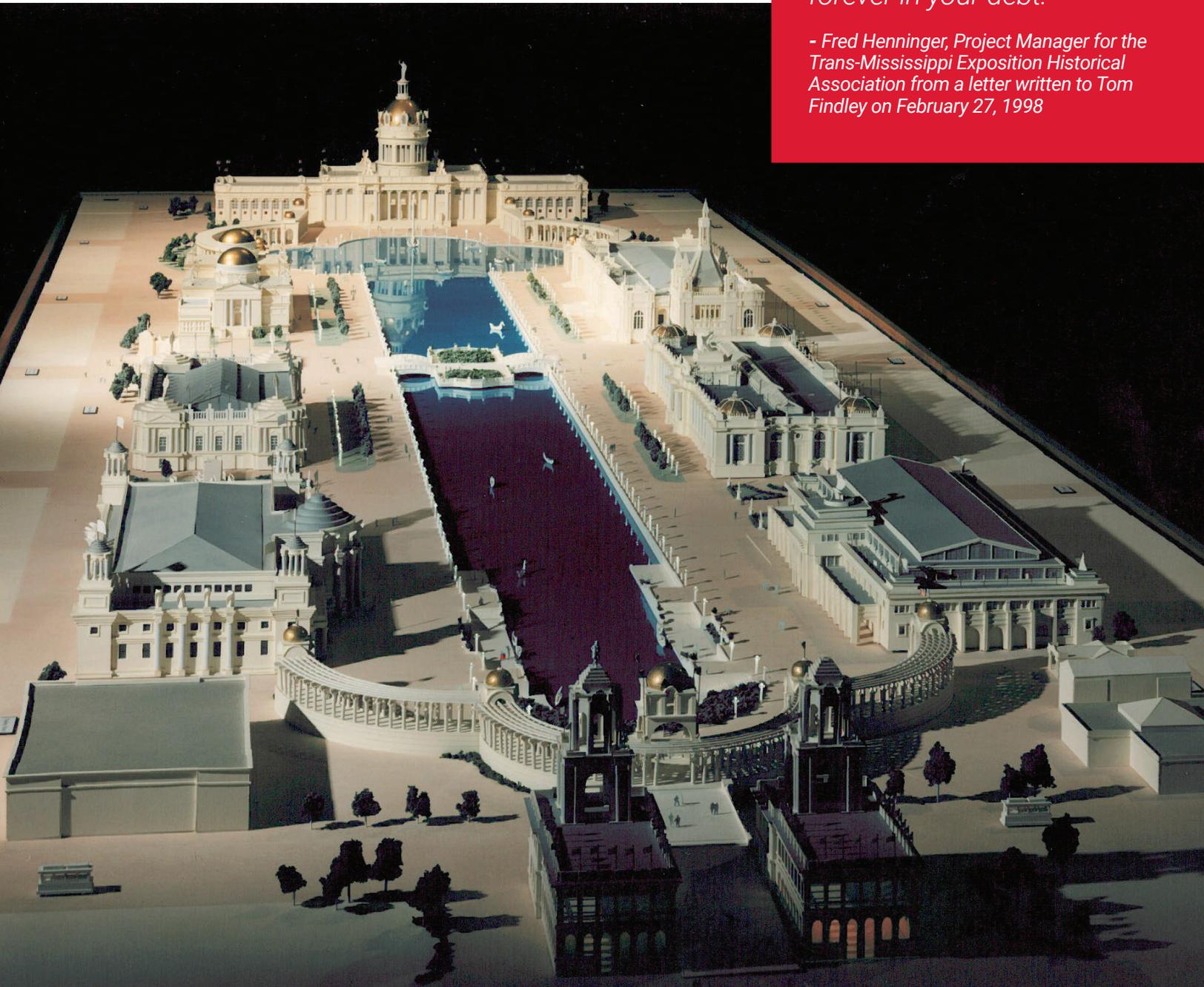
As President of the Chapter, Findley organized a massive AIA effort to publicize and visualize the 100th anniversary of the Trans-Mississippi Exposition of 1898 - World's Fair built in Omaha. With the help of 12 Omaha firms, the AIA Chapter built a 16' long by 4' wide model of the lagoon buildings of the Exposition, which was donated to the City.

Most people in Omaha had no idea that these fantastic, highly detailed, full-scale, neo-classical buildings had been built in 1897-1898 of wood studs and horse-hair plaster along a man-made 7000' water-filled lagoon on the northern edge of downtown.

The net result was an overwhelming public interest in architecture and what it means to the human experience. School children and adults built models, artists painted architectural pictures, and TV and radio stations couldn't get enough of this story. A team including LEO A DALY, the Historical Society and the mayor's office developed a 5/8 scale replica of a portion of the original exhibit, which lives on to this day in the Durham Museum.

"I knew I was talking to the right person because you immediately grasped the significance of the project for architects as well as for the city. It exceeded our wildest expectations and will continue to delight and inform people for years to come. Our Historical Association thanks you and the citizens of Omaha are forever in your debt."

- Fred Henninger, Project Manager for the Trans-Mississippi Exposition Historical Association from a letter written to Tom Findley on February 27, 1998



Statement of Contributions

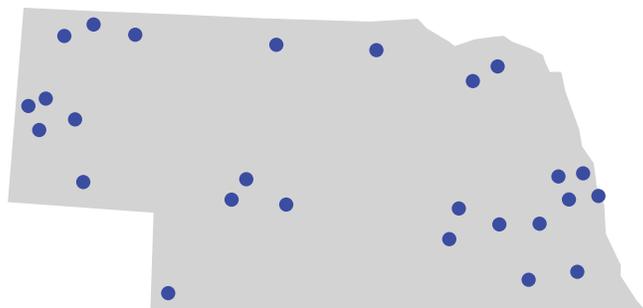
Tom Findley's dedication to design dates back to his early years when he helped organize, design, and build four cluster infill townhome projects within the city limits of Omaha. Each project exhibited the value and beauty of higher density residential living, and demonstrated the neighborhood strength gained from involving the homeowners in the Design Process. Four of these projects were built, and had a lasting impact on the city. Frequently used as examples by builders, these units were studied, and often copied by many local builders.



The Treehouse Association

One of these infill projects was Findley's design pilot project called the Treehouse Association, which involved building 10 townhouses around a single townhouse on 1.1 acres of midtown land. The cedar clad, salt-box roofed houses and decks embraced a central community vehicular plaza (the "public side") and an exterior perimeter of treed gardens (the "private side"). Later, Tom designed three other infill projects in midtown Omaha.

The Treehouse has been studied and written about by the University of Nebraska and the public many times. After these projects, zoning laws in Omaha began to change to more easily accommodate higher density, in-town living.



Tom's professional influence on projects span communities throughout the state of Nebraska.

The Yanbu New Town

Using what he learned in Nebraska, Findley applied these high-density design lessons to design the new town of Yanbu in the Saudi Arabian desert on the Red Sea. This new town embodies the urban design principles in which he believes - that there is richness and value in placing houses next to the shops and schools; that it is good to not have to drive your car to lead your everyday life; and that the key to high density living is the proper zoning of public and private space. The fact that this project was in the desert only made it more interesting, allowing the sun and wind to be a player in the design of the city.

Tom's passion for design crossed international boundaries. The things he learned here in Nebraska informed his designs abroad, and his international experiences helped to broaden the ideas he used back in his home state, as well.

Rural School Advocacy

Tom's enthusiasm for architecture wasn't limited to large scale international projects. Many hours were spent in the car on road trips throughout central Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa and Missouri improving the area's rural schools. Tom excelled at listening to people's concerns, whether at the local coffee shop or in a town-hall meeting. He always looked for solutions that provided a benefit to all of the stakeholders involved, and assisted in numerous successful referendums in the Sand hills of Nebraska in communities like Bayard, Chadron, and Crawford.

He worked closely with local school boards, faculty, staff, and concerned parents in analyzing the district's needs and determining the best solutions. Tom knew that a bond issue involving school improvements in hard-hit communities would not be successful unless everyone understood the need, and everyone benefitted. He worked closely with the District' Bonding agent in developing solutions within a set budget, and he aided in conveying the 'why' and the 'how' to the voters.

Tom's Lasting Legacy

Tom used everything he had during his tenure - renderings, computer TV animation and major 4' x 8' models developed in his office - to help city officials and the public visualize the rich potential of downtown living and the unique added benefit that the Missouri Riverfront brings to that experience. The many service organization showings, newspaper articles, TV coverage, public debates and the sales tax vote that saved the Civic Auditorium, were often visually supplemented by Tom's pro-bono work.

Tom's influence at LEO A DALY can still be seen today in our design commitment to help revitalize downtown Omaha. The Omaha Downtown and Riverfront continue to develop at a rapid pace, but with full community awareness, thanks to Tom's vision and commitment to educating the public about architecture.



Learning Environment Speeches

Tom gave a lot of speeches, but he was particularly passionate about learning environments.

"The Power and Benefits of University Project Design Review Boards"

Regional SCUP (Society of College & University Planners)
 Monterey, Mexico
 November 12, 2001

"Building the New SAC Museum: The Vision...the Process...the Reality"

1999 Mutual Concerns of Air & Space Museums Seminar
 Washington, D.C.
 March 24, 1999

"Space Saving Densification through Automation in University Library Design"

Regional University Planning Seminar and Tour of UNLV New Central Library, University of Nevada
 Las Vegas, NV
 October 17, 2001

"The Process of Planning Libraries for the Future"

Pacific Region SCUP Conference (Society of College & University Planners)
 Honolulu, HI
 March 22, 1999

"The Design Process and Learning Environments"

National SCUP Conference (Society of College & University Planners)
 Denver, CO
 July 18, 2000

"Carnegie Revisited: Constructing New Libraries through New Public/Private Partnerships"

PLA Seventh National Conference (Public Library Association)
 Kansas City, MO
 March 13, 1999

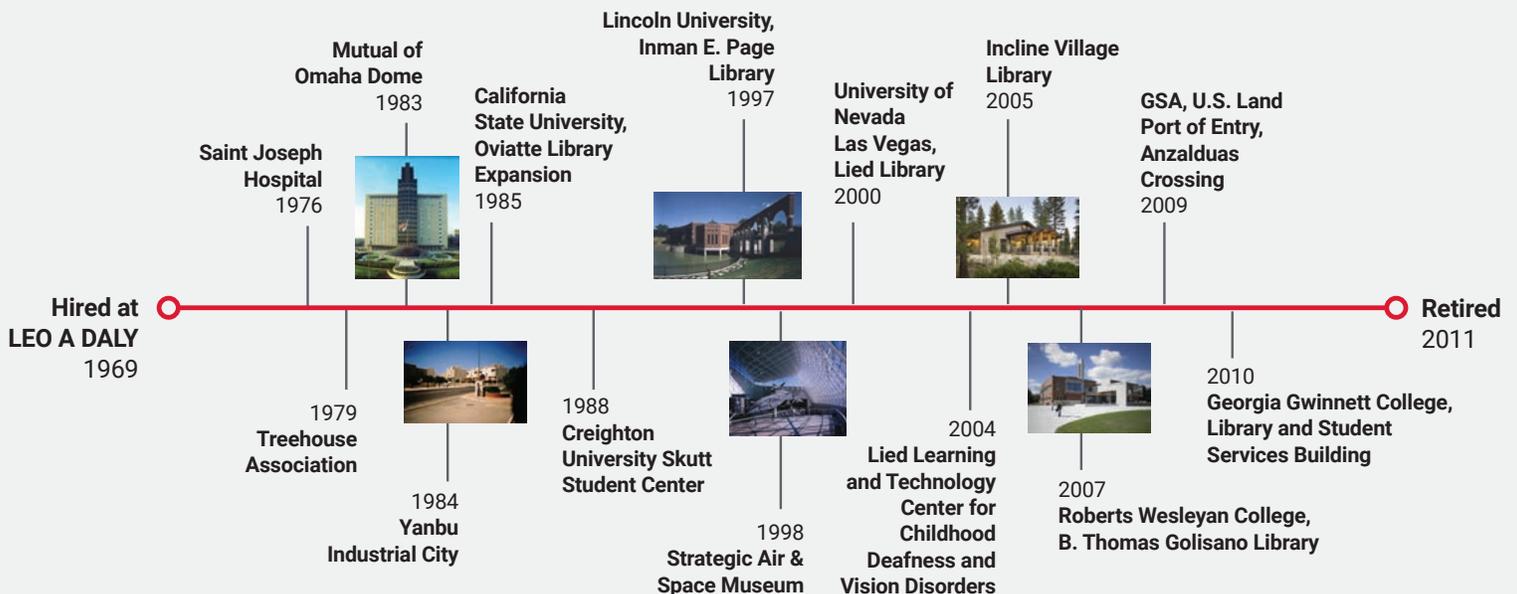
"Designing 21st Century Schools"

ASHRAE Annual Meeting/Public Session (American Society of Heating, Refrigeration & Air Conditioning Engineers)
 Seattle, WA
 June 21, 1999

"Renovation and Expansion of Schools in a High-Density Urban School District/Westside District 66"

AASA National Conference (American Association of School Administrators)
 New Orleans, LA
 February 19, 1999

Career Highlights



Miscellaneous Material

BVH ARCHITECTURE

Selection Committee
Harry F. Cunningham Award

Committee members,

I am pleased to write this letter of support for Tom Findley who I have known for the past 50 years.

Tom and I worked together at the Leo Daly Company for four years in the late 1960s'. It was there that we forged a close working relationship and friendship that lasts to this day.

Tom was the first of four siblings that became architects. He spent forty two years of his career at the Daly Company, and left a lasting legacy of significant buildings, not only in Omaha, but worldwide. He had a keen sense for good design, as is reflected in his many AIA award winning projects.

My relationship with Tom went beyond the professional connection. The two of us, along with 3 other architects, formed an alliance in 1976 and created a unique living environment called the Treehouse in central Omaha. Tom and his family lived on this wooded 1.5 acre tract. The property came up for sale, and he called me with the idea to buy the property and create a courtyard community where we would all live. After two years of planning and building, the Treehouse emerged as a successful experiment in new urbanism. Tom and I were neighbors for twenty years. He lives there today.

In my opinion, Tom Findley meets the criteria for this distinguished award. I urge you to give his nomination your serious consideration.

Respectfully,



Gary Bowen, FAIA



July 16, 2018

AIA Nebraska
Cunningham Medal Committee
335 North 8th Street, Suite A
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

Cunningham Committee Members,

I am honored to support the nomination of Tom Findley for the Harry F Cunningham Gold Medal. As a Director of Design for Leo A Daly, Tom has designed many outstanding examples of architecture in his community and across the world. He has given his time to mentor a generation of young architects, leading by example and guiding others on the tenants of excellent design.

Tom has a passion and enthusiasm for architecture that is easily contagious for both clients and other architects to share. His expertise in library design, no doubt comes from his thirst for knowledge and love of a broad perspective in how the built environment interacts and participates with the public.

A prolific Architect, Tom has displayed tremendous energy in the realization of both large civic buildings and smaller projects with an amazing level of detail. He is always eager to have thoughtful dialogue of the positive attributes of design, with a strong background growing up in a family of architects.

It is hard to know the true value of someone who interacts with so many architects, clients and friends, but I know the impact that Tom made on my career and I am very grateful to have had an opportunity to interact with him on many professional levels. I have to imagine that sentiment is common to a multitude of others.

Again, I am honored to support the nomination of Tom Findley AIA for the AIA Nebraska's 2018 Cunningham Gold Medal.

Highest Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bruce D Carpenter'.

Bruce D Carpenter, AIA
Senior Vice President
HDR

July 16, 2018

To: The selection committee - Harry F. Cunningham Gold Medal

Re: The nomination of Thomas Findley

Dear committee members,

I am writing to you in support of the nomination of Thomas Findley for this year's Harry F. Cunningham Gold Medal in Architecture. I believe that Tom's contributions to the profession and his enduring influence on so many young architects over the years make him more than qualified as a candidate for this honor.

My first introduction to Tom came as a graduate student at UNL's college of architecture. I stood to describe my proposal for the semester's final project and he sat in one of the chairs reserved for the jury. It would be the first of several critiques in my graduate education where Tom served in that role - something I came to learn he made a regular practice.

My first job was in the Omaha design studio at Leo A Daly. Tom extended that opportunity to me and I wound up sitting just a few desks away from his own studio table where he worked each day. For the next 10 years I worked under his direction and leadership.

A number of years have gone by since then, and I have come to appreciate the extraordinary value of his mentorship to my own career development. Perhaps more importantly, is the profound impact I believe Tom has had on the careers of so many other architects in our state. Tom believed in young people. He gave those under his supervision tremendous opportunity and was for them their wisest teacher and strongest defender when they would stumble a bit in the course of their professional growth. He equipped others with professional knowledge and shared his own experience freely and willingly with those under him. He had an infectious love for design that could not go unnoticed and was always challenging those around him to do their very best work.

I believe that Tom's career as an architect, leader, youth mentor and advocate for our profession would make him an excellent choice for this high honor.

Sincerely,



Michael J. Penn
Principal, Sinclair Hille Architects

Founding Principals Emeriti

John E. Sinclair, AIA, NCARB
James C. Hille

Principals

Daniel J. Grasso, AIA, LEED AP
Lizabeth A. Bavitz, AIA, LEED AP
John F. Kay
Michael J. Penn, AIA, LC, LEED AP
David E. Quade, AIA, CSI

Associate Principals

Richard B. Toren
Loree J. Pospisil
James A. Krieger, LEED AP

Senior Associates

Charles W. Bachmann, AIA

Associates

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