

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

JUNE 6, 2022

Dear Members of the Cunningham Gold Medal Selection Committee,

The Cunningham Gold Medal is awarded for "... the most distinguished achievement in architecture or service to the profession of Architecture." Our nominee, Patricia Birch (Pat), has skillfully impacted our profession for forty years through both design and service. Pat's practice has been thoughtful, exacting, and always client focused.

During graduate school, Pat's talent won her an internship at the internationally known firm of I.M. Pei & Partners in New York City. This experience led to an Associate position at the prestigious firm of Sasaki Associates, Inc in Watertown, Massachusetts. Pat would have certainly advanced her career at Sasaki and her experience would have been in a big city with countless high-profile clients. However, there was a calling for home. Family brought Pat back to Nebraska where she became a principal at Sinclair Hille & Associates, Inc. Recently, Pat completed her career with a fifteen-year tenure as Manager of Architecture with The Schemmer Associates. She often said, "I always knew I wanted to make a difference in a place I know and love, with family around me." Thankfully, we got to be the beneficiaries of her decision to come home, her creative work, mentorship, and leadership.

Pat's built work is broad and at varying scales. From a focus on families, as seen in her design of various multi-family projects, to larger public commissions such as the Gere Public Library Expansion and her AIA Award winning Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center. In Lincoln, the Hewit Place building creates a cultural destination within the city and helps to redefine the edge between UNL's campus and the city of Lincoln. And on a much larger scale, Pat, as the design architect, redefined the west side of UNL's Memorial Stadium.

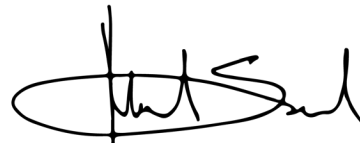
Pat's approach to architecture was through the thoughtful use of materials, integration of structure, and a sensitivity to place and context. Most of all, she was deeply concerned about the individuals for whom the spaces were designed and, therefore, human wellbeing became the center of her design approach.

Not only is Pat gifted at understanding the people who use the architecture she designed, she has always been passionate about supporting the people making the architecture around her. Pat has a deep respect for contractors and people working in the trades and she was a champion for all members of her design teams. While Pat should be awarded the Cunningham Gold Medal because of her award-winning architecture and service to the community and profession, the committee should understand the breadth of her immeasurable mentorship and support of countless architects throughout their careers. She is a consummate leader and does so with grace, kindness, and knowledge. As nominators, we have both been fortunate to work alongside Pat as young interns and as experienced architects. We would not be the architects we are today without Pat's leadership. In both cases, Pat made us better, pushed us to be creative, and demonstrated how an architect has a voice and an obligation to impact the world positively and sustainably.

Please review the enclosed information and consider Pat Birch for this important award. Pat's contributions to the profession are evidenced in the projects she has pursued and the countless individuals she has impacted over the course of her career.



Peter Hind, AIA



Michael Sinclair, AIA

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Lincoln, Nebraska 68510

SCHEMMER.COM



Pat Birch,

AIA, LEED AP

Biographical Data

Pat received both her undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and studied at Nebraska Wesleyan University, Lincoln, NE. Additionally, Pat received a certificate from Harvard University Graduate School of Design in Public Library Planning and Design.

Professionally, Pat has made significant contributions to local and internationally known design firms including: The Clark Enersen Partners; I.M. Pei Partners; Wilmot Bower and Associates; as an Associate with Sasaki Associates; as a partner with Sinclair Hille & Associates and The Pearson Birch Studio; Schoenleber, Shriner + Hittle; and completed her career as an Architecture Manager/ Shareholder with The Schemmer Associates.

Pat has been deeply involved with architectural education serving as a parttime faculty member at UNL, Boston Architectural Center, and Arizona State University (while in London). Further, she has helped to shape education by acting as a volunteer team member for multiple National Architecture Accreditation Board School evaluations. Schools include: The Academy of Art at the University of San Francisco, University of San Antonio, Texas, New School of Architecture + Design, San Diego, University of Houston Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture, Texas, and Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago.

In her community, Pat has been a proud member of Rotary 14 since 2013. She has volunteered her time with the Lux Center for the Arts, Habitat for Humanity, Lincoln Parks Department, and NeighborWorks Lincoln, among numerous other organizations.



Statement of Contributions

Leadership Positions in Firms

Associate, Sasaki Associates
Principal, Sinclair Hille and Associates
Principal, Pearson Birch Studio
Schoenleber, Shriner & Hittle
Shareholder, Architecture Manager, Market Leader - Higher Education, Market Leader - Multifamily Housing, The Schemmer Associates

AIA Nebraska

President, AIA Nebraska 2005
Board Member, AIA Nebraska 2002-2005
AIA NE Honor Award; Masonry Award. Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center
Women in Architecture, Founder

Teaching and Service to Teaching and the Profession

Part-time Faculty, UNL College of Architecture
Design Studio Instructor, Boston Architectural Center
Faculty Associate, Arizona State University (London UK)
Team Member, NAAB School Accreditation Team

- Academy of Art University, San Francisco
- University of Texas at San Antonio
- New School of Architecture and Design, San Diego
- University of Houston, Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture
- IIT College of Architecture

Member, Project Review Board, University of Nebraska
Member of Cather Circle - University of Nebraska

Community Service

Member, Building Codes Taskforce, for the City of Lincoln NE
Chair, Fund Raising Committee, Lincoln/Lancaster County Habitat for Humanity
Board Member and Secretary, Lincoln/Lancaster County Habitat for Humanity
Board of Directors, LUX Center for the Arts
Board of Directors, Rotary 14
Board of Directors, Rotary 14 Foundation
Fund Development Committee, NeighborWorks Lincoln
Leadership Lincoln - Fellows IX



Notable Projects

Hewit Place, University of Nebraska Foundation, Lincoln, Nebraska

Six-story building interwoven with the Que Place Parking Facility; Birch was Design Architect in association with Bahr Vermeer & Haecker. Offices for the Center for Great Plains Study; galleries for the Great Plains Art Collection and the Lentz Center for Asian Studies.

Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center, Nebraska State Historical Society, AIA Award, Omaha, Nebraska

Birch was Design Architect for this 15,000 SF building which connects to the Ford Birth Site Park in Omaha. Major program spaces include: three state-of-the-art conservation laboratories for objects, paper and textiles, a reference library, a microscopy laboratory, offices, a multipurpose meeting room and temporary exhibition hall, and an exhibit on Gerald R. Ford.

Prairie Crossing, Lincoln Housing Authority, Lincoln, Nebraska

Pat Birch was the Design and Project Architect for the Lincoln Housing Authority's Prairie Crossing. The 9.5 acre development consists of 76 affordable rental units. Pat was responsible for conceptual design layout of the site, working closely with the civil engineer, as well as architectural design for a variety of building types. These included townhomes, eight-plexes, clubhouse, maintenance and garage buildings, and mail kiosk. The site was organized in a traditional neighborhood design approach to establish a sense of place with every apartment entry presenting its front door and porch to the streets. The four-plex townhomes have front porches facing Grainger Parkway and garages accessed from an alley. Playgrounds were located central to the community and away from traffic. The architectural design was based on the Prairie Style, with hipped roofs and broad roof eaves, horizontal bands of cast stone belt courses, and a rhythm of brick, lap siding, panels and trim. It included fully accessible ground level units in addition to those meeting Fair Housing.



Hewit Place



Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center



Prairie Crossing

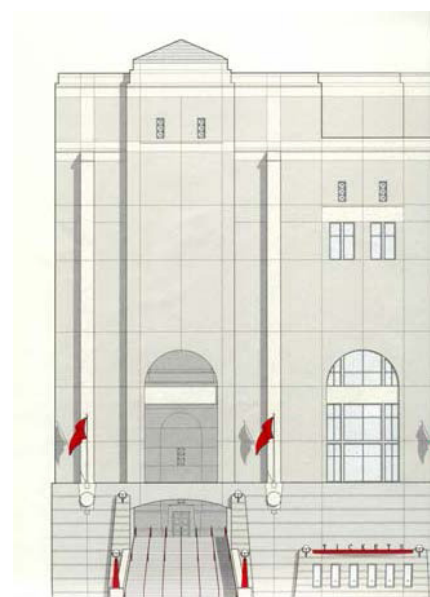


Notable Projects

Memorial Stadium West Stadium Expansion, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Birch was the lead Design Architect for the exterior design of this expansion to the neoclassical Memorial Stadium. Influenced by the architectural order of the existing concrete structure, the addition incorporates a cast-in-place, rusticated concrete base, large arched windows at the concourse level and a precast concrete skin. Twelve flags represent the twelve member schools of the athletic conference.

The six-level structure provides an expanded concourse, club level seating with a lounge, 42 skyboxes, press boxes, a press lounge and a photo deck at the roof.



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“Pat’s guidance gave me the direction and confidence to navigate my journey in architecture, especially during my transition from an academic to a professional environment. From welcoming

me to my first day at the office to getting lunch and chatting about future endeavors, she never failed to share her excitement, support, and wisdom. I have witnessed her unparalleled dedication, influence, and success as a woman in architecture, all of which inspire my pursuits in the discipline today.”

Gabriella Argamosa,
Intern and Graduate Student

Notable Projects - Libraries

Charles H. Gere Branch Library Addition & Remodel, Lincoln, Nebraska

30,000 SF remodel and addition included expanded youth services and staff work areas. The addition doubled its size and included community meeting rooms, a new entrance, restrooms and a much-improved circulation desk, which was located adjacent to new back-of-house areas including staff offices. The expansion also addressed accessibility throughout. At the time of the project, Gere had the largest circulation of the Lincoln City Library's facilities and the existing space could not accommodate the growth. Birch was Design Architect.

Sump Memorial Library, Papillion, Nebraska

Birch was Design Architect for the 23,000 SF new library in the historic city center. Adult, young adult and children's collections were designed in flexible space to allow future expansion. The library serves the community in many ways by providing a computer lab, children's activity room, reading nooks, private study rooms, and multi-purpose public meeting rooms. An under-floor duct system provides electronic wiring flexibility.

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"I cannot think of a more deserving candidate for the Harry F. Cunningham Gold Medal than Patricia (Pat) Birch. Pat was my mentor throughout the beginning of my architecture career and I'm grateful for all the time she devoted to sharing

her wealth of knowledge with me. No matter how many deadlines or meetings she had, she always took the time to educate me, rather than just give me redlines to pick-up. Pat showed me that architecture is more than just creating beautifully purposeful spaces; she taught me to think through all the details, to genuinely care about our clients, and to be aware of how the built environment might impact an individual, a community, and the environment."

Kelly Heatley, AIA



Charles H. Gere Branch Library



Sump Memorial Library

Notable Projects

Teachers College, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Birch was Design Architect for the project located at a crossroads on campus. The new 56,000 SF building embraces the corner it occupies and provides a presence for the Teachers College on campus. The three-story structure connects to, and is sandwiched between, two existing structures. The facility houses the departments of Educational Psychology, Educational Administration and the Buros Institute of Mental Measurement.

Major program spaces include: a 150-seat lecture hall, faculty offices, classrooms, the Buros Library and the Educational Psychology Clinic.

YWCA Housing

The YWCA of Lincoln developed the property at 14th and O Streets in Lincoln to provide low-income residences in the heart of the city. Two buildings provide twelve multistory apartments. The two-level, three-bedroom units are accessed from a private courtyard. The building facing O Street has commercial space at the street level that is currently leased by a flower shop and restaurant. The building at the south side of the courtyard provides private garages for each apartment which is accessed from the alley. One unit was provided with an elevator to enable full accessibility. The project was developed with Low Income Housing Tax Credits.

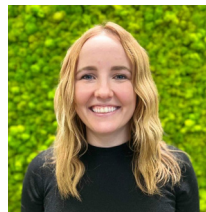


UNL Teachers College



YWCA Housing

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“My first real world experience working under an Architect was with Pat Birch and I am forever grateful. Pat took me under her wing at a time where I was still juggling the idea of wanting

to be an Architect. She took me everywhere she could, meeting new clients and giving me opportunities and experiences that set me up for total success. I wouldn't be the Architect I am today without her mentorship, patience, and expertise. She is truly incredible!”

Meadow Rose Pirigyi, AIA

Notable Projects - Multi-Family

In recent years, Birch has managed several large multi-family projects for a variety of clients. Her personal approach, attention to detail, and ability to focus on the needs of each unique client has led to not only successful projects, but lasting relationships with clients, contractors, and colleagues alike.

Emerald View, Lincoln Housing Authority, Lincoln, Nebraska

Emerald View is a mixed-income development in south Lincoln, with approximately half of the units leased at rents affordable to low-to-moderate income households. Pat's extensive knowledge on Low Income Tax Credit projects and her ability to manage and coordinate several key players and agencies made for a seamless pre-design and application submittal process.

The Landing At Lake Manawa, Council Bluffs, Iowa

The 29-acre site will consist of single-family homes, townhomes and four apartment buildings.

Schemmer provided schematic design and development planning services for Knudson Development's project located on the north shore of Lake Manawa in Council Bluffs. The development will include a clubhouse and pool, walking paths, a dog park, community gardens and other outdoor spaces for the benefit of residents.

Tree House, Council Bluffs, Iowa

Design services were provided to Knudson Development for their proposal to the City for a mixed-use development on 8.5 acres at 34th Street and 1st Avenue in Council Bluffs. The proposal was successful, and Schematic Design for phase one of the project was completed in summer 2020. The project consists of 248 housing units, approximately 15,000 SF of commercial space and a variety of site amenities.

Summer Hill, Lincoln Housing Authority, Lincoln, Nebraska

Birch was Design Architect for the Lincoln Housing Authority's Summer Hill Townhomes. The project's ten fourplexes provide three bedroom units with attached garages for low income residents in south Lincoln.



Emerald View



The Landing At Lake Manawa



Tree House



Summer Hill



Children's Square



Bowen Hall – Wayne State College



Cascade Fountain

Notable Projects

Children's Square U.S.A., Council Bluffs, Iowa

Birch was the Project Manager and Project Architect for this project and completed a master plan and existing buildings analysis for the 10-acre campus. The 130-year-old institution, which serves the needs of children, youth and families, has ever-evolving and expanding needs for the treatment and education of children and adolescents experiencing serious emotional disorders.

The outcome of the master plan led to the design of a new Residential Treatment Unit building and the remodel and expansion of the Academic Center (K-12 school). Both of these planned facilities serve the needs of special education students in safe environments.

Bowen Hall – Wayne State College

Birch managed the programming and renovation of the 100,000 SF, nine-story residence hall containing 434 beds at Wayne State College. The project renovated and remodeled a 1966 building. It included new study areas, restrooms, building finishes, mechanical systems, window replacement and improvements to existing electrical and fire alarm systems to achieve code compliance and greater energy efficiency.

Cascade Fountain

In addition to Birch's work as an architect, she has served the community in various ways through Rotary 14 including the Board of Directors and as chair of the Environmental Project Committee. In 2021, Rotary 14 made a sizable financial contribution to the Lincoln Parks Foundation for the renovation of Cascade Fountain, originally built to commemorate the legacy of Nebraska educators. LPF and Rotary 14 invited Birch to speak at the ground-breaking of the renovation project about a teacher who had made an impact on her life. Birch paid homage to Mr. Alan Gilmore, her high school drafting teacher. Thus, Birch's career had come full circle – from her introduction to architecture in high school, to her legacy of forty years of practicing architecture and mentoring others on their path toward becoming an architect, just as Gilmore had done for her.



Letters of Recommendation

JOHN E. SINCLAIR
ARCHITECT EMERITUS
STATE OF NEBRASKA
402-304-6455

<jesinchome@icloud.com>

May 23, 2022

To the Members
of the Harry F. Cunningham Gold Medal Selection Committee:

I am pleased to have the opportunity to recommend Patricia Birch, AIA, for your consideration to receive this year's Harry F. Cunningham Gold Medal.

It has been my pleasure to know Pat since her studies at UNL in the early 1980s, during which time she was a 6th year graduate student of mine in Architectural Design. Suffice it to say that it did not take long for me to recognize that she was a person of outstanding capabilities in both graphic skills and design sensitivity. That summer she worked in our office and following graduation she accepted a position at Sasaki Associates in Watertown, Mass.

In the 1990s we lured her back to Lincoln, where she eventually became a partner in our practice, Sinclair Hille & Associates. During that time she was responsible for the design of many significant buildings including the Gere Branch Lincoln Library, the Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center in Omaha, the Union Bank Office at 27th & Pine Lake in Lincoln and the Memorial Stadium West Addition for the University of Nebraska Athletic Department, to name but a few.

She began her own practice around 2000, and then eventually became the Manager of Architecture for the Lincoln branch of Schemmer's regional practice, a position from which she has just recently retired.

In my thirty plus years of practice, I can say unequivocally that Pat's architectural talent and sensitivity have consistently been at the highest level of our profession. And the buildings that she has designed in our State and around the Midwest will remain a testimony to that creativity.

It seems fitting to me to recognize and honor her many contributions to Nebraska architecture over the time span of her career, by awarding her the Cunningham Gold Medal.

With sincere regards:



John E. Sinclair
AIA Emeritus
State of Nebraska

Letters of Recommendation

May 21, 2022

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

Dear Cunningham Selection Committee,

It gives me great pleasure to support Pat Birch for the Harry F. Cunningham Gold Medal. From my first engagement with Pat as her instructor during the Hess London Program of 1980 it was clear she would be an effective architect able to break the difficult gender barriers of that era. Pat was one of only two women in the class but clearly a class leader and a thoughtful A+ student. She continued her education to gain a Master of Architecture from UNL with distinction and later a Certificate in Library Planning from the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

Pat was an early boundary pusher for women hoping to practicing architecture. Her achievements began with her formative development as an intern architect with the international recognized office of IM Pei in NYC, followed by a five years as an architect in training with Sasaki Associates in Watertown, MA. It is there that Pat, as a design associate, evolved into a complete and knowledgeable professional.

Pat's early contributions to women in Nebraska design began with her work with Sinclair Hille & Associates in Lincoln in 1990's. Pat became a design principal at that office and a mentor and model for many women who would followed her lead. At Sinclair Hille & Associates she produced a notable body of design work that established her as a thoughtful and effective professional. The work included the Gerald Ford Birth Place Museum, an addition to the Gear Branch Library in Lincoln and the West Addition to Memorial Stadium.

In the last twenty years Pat has been a principal at Schemmer & Associates building the architectural side of a large interstate A&E practice in Lincoln. When you are able to bring in work it enables gender parity in architectural leadership. Pat is one of first few women of her generation to blaze a trail for Women in LEADERSHIP positions in large firms in Nebraska. Pat is noted for the time she has devoted to mentoring a number of young women in their early careers and encouraging more women in other parts of the firm to take on leadership roles.

Pat has established a strong record of selfless public service to the community and the profession: Beginning with her participation in Leadership Lincoln she established a record of service to many civic organizations. Most recently she served on the Rotary 14 board of directors and is currently on that Foundations Board of Trustees. In support of the arts Pat was a board member for the Lux Center for the Arts.

Pat has lead by example as AIA Nebraska President and on its board of directors. Her contribution to imerging professionals includes a series of teaching appointments at UNL College of Architecture and at the Boston Architectural Center. At a national level Pat provided thoughtful input to a series of five accreditation team visits to schools of architecture for the National Architectural Accreditation Board (NAAB).

Pat's career has set a standard for womens leadership roles in Nebraska's larger office environment and provided an example for a generation of women to follow her lead.

Sincerely,



Thomas Laging, FAIA
Emeritus Professor of Architecture
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Letters of Recommendation



P.O. Box 5327 • 5700 R Street • Lincoln, Nebraska 68505

May 17, 2022

To the Members of the Harry F. Cunningham Gold Medal Selection Committee
American Institute of Architects
1735 New York Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20006

RE: Pat Birch – 2022 Harry F. Cunningham Award

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support of Pat Birch to be considered a recipient of the 2022 Harry F. Cunningham Award. It is my understanding such acknowledgement represents the highest honor of achievement in architecture or service to the profession of Architecture in Nebraska.

On Schemmer's behalf, Ms. Birch delivered exceptional client service to the Lincoln Housing Authority from the initial planning stage through final design - Emerald View Apartments. Pat truly listens to her clients, as evidenced by the comprehensive notes she would scribe and distribute. This attribute demonstrated her attention to detail and ensured all points of discussion were addressed. In addition, Pat displayed absolute professionalism – from her manners to her character. I admire her humility, her unwavering work ethic, and more importantly, her friendship. She is now someone I consider a friend outside of the office setting.

Pat is patient, authentic, trustworthy, and confident. I value her leadership style. She has the mindset to include all in the conversation – fostering cohesiveness and investment in the project. A strength that is not common in the marketplace. In addition, it was very apparent that her teammates at Schemmer hold Pat in great respect – her knowledge and years of experience.

It is with great admiration, that I write this letter to convey my heartfelt gratitude to Pat Birch for the excellent service she provided the Lincoln Housing Authority and that I hope she is designated with the 2022 Harry F. Cunningham Award. There would be no better ambassador for the award then Ms. Birch.

In kindest regard,

Thomas G. Judds
Lincoln Housing Authority

Telephone: (402) 434-5500

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(TDD) Telecommunication Device for Deaf: 1-800-545-1833 Ext. 875

Email: Info@L-Housing.com

www.L-Housing.com

Letters of Recommendation



PLANNING
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May 28, 2022

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

Dear Cunningham Medal Committee Members,

Pat Birch has a talent when it comes to getting involved, helping others, and getting things done!

Therefore, it is with privilege and pleasure that I write this letter in support and recommendation of Pat Birch's nomination for the AIA Harry F. Cunningham Gold Medal.

Pat has demonstrated leadership since I first met her 20 years ago through our participation in the AIA Lincoln & AIA Nebraska Chapters. She is an advocate for the architecture profession, for good design, and for mentorship.

One of the largest, ongoing impacts that Pat has had on the profession of architecture across the state of Nebraska was asking the question "Should Nebraska have a Women in Architecture group?" when she was serving as AIA Nebraska's President in 2005. From this simple question, she gathered a group of ladies in April of that year to discuss, and after a resounding YES!, Nebraska Women in Architecture (WIA) was born. Now, 17 years later, the group has continued to thrive. It has expanded from the original 12 ladies to 375 to include all who have an interest in architecture: architects, designers, engineers, vendors, contractors, and more. This group & platform has become much more than Pat ever dreamed of. It has become a place to seek inspiration, comradery, mentorship, learning, and most importantly, friendship.

Pat's 40 years in the architecture profession have left deep footprints. She regularly volunteers to coordinate events, to present, and offers support at activities that encourage & inspire others around her.

An architect, volunteer, advocate for our profession, mentor, friend ... no matter which hat she is wearing, Pat excels at making connections and exemplifies what it means to be a Citizen Architect.

She truly lives the attributes and ideals represented by the Cunningham Medal.

Thank you for your consideration of her nomination.

Sincerely,

Kristi Nohavec, AIA, PE, LEED AP
AIA Nebraska Past President (2010)
Nebraska Women in Architecture Chairman (2005-current)
KMNohavec@leoadaly.com