

John Sinclair

*“an inspired
teacher...”*

Harry F. Cunningham Gold Medal Nominee



August 4, 2007

AIA Nebraska
P.O. Box 80045
Lincoln, NE 68501

Dear Selection Committee:

It is with the utmost pleasure and sincerest admiration that I, along with the partners and team at Sinclair Hille Architects nominate John Sinclair, AIA for the Harry F. Cunningham, FAIA, Gold Medal.

We cannot do justice to John's life's work by talking merely about the buildings he has created—although they will serve a lasting legacy in and of themselves. John's success is also manifested through the many relationships he has fostered and the wisdom he has shared during these creative endeavors. John has touched so many lives. He is an inspired teacher—he has taught countless architects to be sensitive and passionate about their work; to be good listeners, mentors, teachers, spouses, parents, friends; and to be active community members and protectors of our built and natural environment. I hope and truly pray that my combined life's works and lessons will total even a fraction of John's.

We hope the following pages and following quotes give you an insight into this inspired teacher...

"Teacher. That's the first word that comes to mind when I think about John Sinclair."

- *Michael Eisenbarth*

"John is a perfect example of a person who is dedicated to the highest and finest goals and standards of the Architecture Profession..."

- *Mike DeKalb*

"John is certainly among the most respected architects in Lincoln, based on his personal integrity and how the quality of his work has added value to our city."

- *Stephen Henrichsen*

We hope that you join us in our belief that John's life embodies all that is good about architecture, community, and family. We thank you for your consideration of this submittal.



Kevin Clark, AIA
Principal
Sinclair Hille Architects

Founding Principals

John E. Sinclair
James C. Hille

Principals

Daniel J. Grasso
Kevin A. Clark
Lizabeth A. Kuhlman
John F. Kay

Associate Principals

Richard B. Toren
Loree J. Pospisil
Michael J. Penn
David E. Quade
Matthew A. Cole

Senior Associate

Christopher Beardslee
David S. Unick

Associates

Charles W. Bachmann
Mark R. Jobman
Kelly R. Morgan

700 Q Street
Lincoln, NE 68508
T: 402.476.7331
F: 402.476.8341

601 E Locust St., Ste. 202
Des Moines, IA 50309
T: 515.244.7640
F: 515.244.7642

www.sinclairhille.com

The Harry F. Cunningham Gold Medal

Nominee:

John E. Sinclair, AIA

REGISTRATION

Registered Architect, States of Nebraska, Kansas, and Iowa

CERTIFICATION

1984-present National Council of Architectural Registration Boards

EDUCATION

1972 Master of Architecture,
Graduate School of Design
Harvard University, Cambridge, MA

1970 Bachelor of Architecture with
Distinction
University of Nebraska - Lincoln

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

1981-present Sinclair Hille Architects, Lincoln, NE
Architect and Principal in the Firm

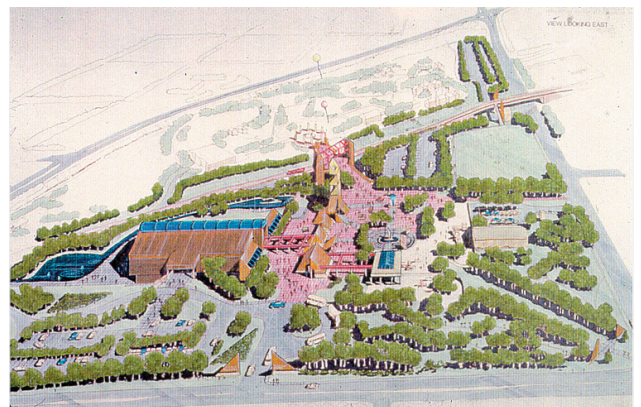
2005 UNL College of Engineering
C.M. Instructor

1975-1981 The Clark Enersen Partners,
Lincoln, NE
Project Architect and
Associate Principal

1974-1975 University of Nebraska - Lincoln
Instructor, College of Architecture

1972-1974 Design Group Architects, Lincoln, NE
Design Architect

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA



John Sinclair graduated from Benson High in Omaha and went on to graduate from UNL in 1970 with a Bachelors of Architecture. Then in 1972, he graduated from Harvard with a Masters of Architecture. Sinclair came from a family that stressed the importance of a good education and discovered “what you learn when you go to a school like that (Harvard) is that your educational background and what you learn here in Nebraska is really top notch.” Sinclair graduated from Harvard during a recession, so he returned to Lincoln, finding work in a small firm. He also taught at the UNL College of Architecture because he believes, “it is important for architects to keep in touch with their profession and education.” Sinclair continued teaching at UNL part-time until the early 1990s. During the 1970s, Sinclair lead the design department at Clark Enersen Partners and was fortunate to find a mentor in one of the partners at the firm, Albert Hamersky. “We are very different architects but everything that I learned that has any merit I learned from him,” Sinclair said.

In 1981, Sinclair and Jim Hille founded Sinclair Hille Architects and over the past 25 years it has grown from three employees to 31 employees and has a second office in Des Moines, Iowa. During the early years of Sinclair Hille Architects, they focused on historic renovation and reuse architecture including the renovation of the Hardy Building Housing Development, the Candy Factory, the Grainger Building Housing Project and the WaterPark Condominiums.

The project that put them on the map in the aspect of public awareness was designing the First Church of Christ Scientist. “It was the first new building ever done in a historic district in Lincoln,” Sinclair said. “Since we were building in the Near South Neighborhood in the middle of a historic district the building had to be approved by the Historic Preservation Committee so it was an interesting challenge for us.”

Sinclair will always have a special place in his heart for that building because it represented what their goals were in the early years and the goals that they have tried to maintain ever since.



Another area John has enjoyed working in is affordable housing. He has completed around 5,000 units of affordable housing in Nebraska and Iowa. "Housing by its nature does not clamor for attention but we have always felt that good architecture did not need to just be assigned to those that might have more money to spend on buildings so we have tried to bring architecture to all levels of consumers," Sinclair said.

Sinclair also believes that good architecture doesn't come from just one person but instead a number of talented people working together to achieve something great. "The firm was founded on that idea," Sinclair said. "Jim and I knew that to really be successful you had to have very talented people around you and you had to challenge them, but you also have to give them free reign and let them go."

John's strong commitment to his church, his wife Stella, and their five children has always guided his life as well as influenced his firm and employees. John has consistently maintained a healthy balance between work and family. This focus has taught two generations of architects and 31 current employees what it means to be an architect, husband and father.

Looking back at the past 25 years, and all of the projects he has been a part of, Sinclair is still proud of his work on the First Church of Christ Scientist because, "Twenty-five years later it still looks as good as it did 25 years ago. It has that timeless quality." Sinclair thinks that architecture needs to be timeless which is something he has come to appreciate even though "we are living in a disposable society and most clients don't think about their building being here in 25 years." John has created many timeless buildings, even more enlightened clients, and countless inspired architects.

This biography includes excerpts taken from an article titled "From the Ground Up" written by Jessica Pomanteer (Life Style., Summer 2006).



I. SERVICE TO PROFESSION

- 2000-2005 AIA Nebraska, Government Affairs Liaison
- 1998 Nebraska Joint Committee on Professional Practice
- 1998 Board Member, Architectural Foundation of Nebraska
- 1997 Past President, AIA - Nebraska
- 1996 President, Nebraska Society of the American Institute of Architects
- 1989-1990 Mayor's Sign Code Committee, Lincoln, NE
- 1987-1988 Mayor's Street Planning Advisory Committee, Lincoln, NE
- 1986-1988 Board Member Haymarket Development Corporation, Lincoln, NE
 - Design Committee Chair
- 1982-1983 Mayor's Radial Re-Use Task Force, Lincoln, NE
- 1982 Board Member, Lincoln Builders Bureau
- 1981 President, AIA Lincoln

II. SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY/STATE

- 1998-2004 Board Member - Food Bank of Lincoln
- 1987-1993 Board Member/Planning Committee Chairman, Catholic Social Services
- Visiting Critic, College of Architecture, University of Nebraska - Lincoln

III. SIGNIFICANT WORKS

Awards

- 2004 AIA Honor Awards, Sinclair Hille Architects Office
- 2001 Larry Enersen Award for Urban Design Sinclair Hille Office Building
- 1994 City of Lincoln Urban Design Award Grainger Building Renovation
- 1993 Downtown Lincoln Assoc. Builders Award Grainger Building Renovation
- 1990 City of Lincoln Urban Design Award Hardy Housing Development
- 1990 City of Lincoln Urban Design Award Center Oaks and Fair Oaks Housing
- 1987 City of Lincoln Urban Design Award Three Pines Court Housing Development
- 1976 Central States Region, AIA Honor Award Duplex Residence, Lincoln, NE



Projects

- Candy Factory
- Center Oaks Fair Oaks
- Charles Housing
- Chateau
- Chimney Rock
- Christ Lutheran Church
- Community Playhouse
- Cornhusker Place Detox Center
- Double Y
- First Evangelical Church
- First Presbyterian Church
- Floors Inc. & Cannery
- Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center
- Gere Library
- Grainger Building
- Hardy Building
- Haymarket Parking Garage
- Haymarket Pedestrian Crossing
- Hayward Place
- Horizons Community Church
- Jaynes Street Church
- LPS North Star High School
- LPS Southwest High School
- Lincoln Orthopedic Clinic
- Madonna Rehabilitation Center
- NMPP
- Nebraska Heart Hospital
- Nebraska Heart Institute
- North American Martyrs Church
- Park One Office
- Perry Housing
- Que Place Garage
- SECC Energy Square



Candy Factory



Community Playhouse

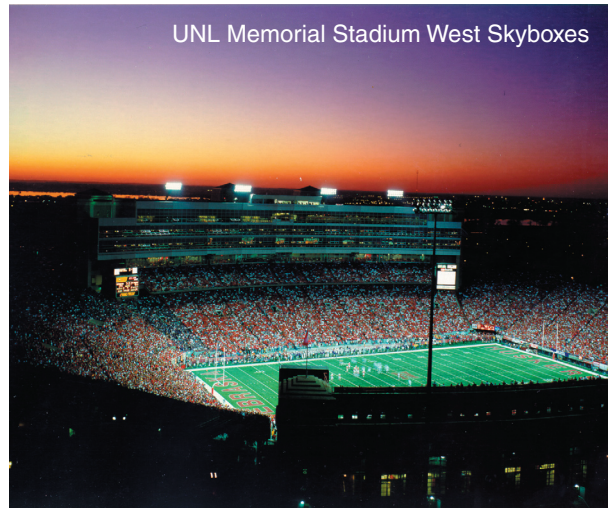


Gere Library



STATEMENT ON CONTRIBUTIONS

- Sinclair Hille Office
- Southeast Community College - Housing
- Southern Heights Church
- St. Francis
- St. Gregory the Great Seminary
- State Fair Master Plan
- Summerhill Phase I Townhomes
- Summerhill Phase II Apartments
- Sump Memorial Library - Papillion
- Three Pines Court
- Union Bank 13th and O Street
- Union Bank 27th and Pine Lake
- Union Bank Rock Island Depot
- UNL Alexander Building
- UNL Avery Hall
- UNL Barkley Center
- UNL College of Business
- UNL Foundation Gallery Office
- UNL International Quilt Study Center
- UNL Memorial Stadium West Skyboxes
- UNL North Stadium Improvement
- UNL Schmid Law Library
- UNL Softball Complex
- UNL Student Union
- UNL Varner Hall
- UNO Allwine Hall
- Valentino's
- Van Dorn Meadow
- Water Park
- Wesleyan Neighborhood Study
- Wesleyan Student Center
- Wesleyan Student Union Remodel
- YMCA Cooper Family
- YMCA Landscape
- YWCA Housing



Southern Heights Church

Union Bank Rock Island Depot

UNL Memorial Stadium West Skyboxes

Water Park

In life there are talkers and there are implementers. John is an implementer. While others are busy selling concepts, John has formulated the next step of design and is getting his clients across the finish line in the most professional and ethical fashion. He respects and honors the process as well as the substance, which means more of his ideas get built. simply put, **he is one of the best in his field.**

Kent Seacrest

Seacrest & Kalkowski, P.C.

It is with the greatest of pleasure that we acknowledge John Sinclair for all he has done for architecture in the region. As consulting engineers, we have found John to be a man of honor whose attributes make everyone on his team want to give their very best to create projects that make a difference and uniquely answer a client's request.

On a personal level, I have always found John's demeanor and actions worthy of emulating. In his selfless way, he seems to put the industry and others ahead of himself in his decision making process. It must be old age sinking in!

We are grateful to John for all he has done for the architectural community and humanity itself.

John has made a significant difference.

George M. Morrissey

Morrissey Engineering

I was closely associated with John Sinclair in the design of two new high schools for Lincoln Public Schools in Lincoln, Nebraska. Through this process John earned my deepest respect for his work as a creative, innovative and skilled designer. Just importantly, John earned my deepest respect for the type of person he is and he demonstrates that through his daily actions. He cares deeply about people and uses his craft to demonstrate that caring.

As a designer of educational facilities John uses his innovativeness to create environments that are focused on quality teaching and learning. His caring for the students and their learning was always very apparent and was the foundation for his work and his leadership in the design of our high schools.

I am proud to have worked with John and to call him a friend. He touched my life and those of many children in our community that will benefit from his work on our schools.

Dennis A. Van Horn

*Associate Superintendent for Business Affairs
Lincoln Public Schools*

I've known and enjoyed working with John Sinclair for the past thirteen years. John is a man of many talents. He is dedicated to his profession and it shows through his creativity and inner passion. **He is an honest and trustworthy businessman.** John is also a hard-working individual. John treats all people with respect and dignity and is treated back with the same. Although John is a quiet, sincere and conservative individual....when he speaks people listen. He is admired by many!

Loree J. Pospisil

*Business Manager / Associate Principal
Sinclair Hille Architects*

I have had the deep pleasure of knowing John since we attended Architecture school together at the University of Nebraska (a few years ago). Since then I have seen many aspects of his work, from involvement in the Haymarket redevelopment, to award winning designs for parking facilities, to energy efficient/green schools and participation and assistance on city committees.

John is a perfect example of **a person who is dedicated to the highest and finest goals and standards of the Architecture Profession** and their support to the community.

It is my pleasure to support his nomination.

Mike DeKalb, AICP County Planner

Lincoln City Lancaster County Planning Department

I highly recommend John Sinclair for the AIA award. I have worked as a city planner for the Lincoln/ Lancaster County Planning Department for the past 17 years and have found John to be a wonderful asset to the City of Lincoln. He is sincere, honest and above all else dedicated to finding solutions that work for his clients and also the community as a whole. John's tone may be quiet, but his words and actions are always so well thought out that they draw attention and consideration. I also know that John's work extends to after hours as he is active in the community through volunteer work. **John is certainly among the most respected architects in Lincoln, based on his personal integrity and how the quality of his work has added value to our city.**

Stephen Henrichsen, AICP

*Principal Planner
City of Lincoln / Lancaster County Planning
Department*

John Sinclair has been, and continues to be an exemplary role model for both personal and professional growth. Committed to community service, he **has continually shown how to lead with a servant attitude**. John's humility and approachability are admired and respected. His professional knowledge, ability to resolve conflicts and commitment to excellence continue to motivate my personal and professional growth.

David Quade, AIA
Architect/Senior Associate
Sinclair Hille Architects

Teacher. That's the first word that comes to mind when I think about John Sinclair. I say this because I've always felt like I have learned something each time I work with him; either through direct instruction or through observation. I've always enjoyed working on projects with John because of this. He has the ability to say so much while actually saying so little; sometimes without saying anything. This is a wonderful teaching tool. It seems that it takes only the slightest peer over his glasses to say, "Are you sure that's what you want to do?" This prompts me to revisit what I am doing at that moment and confirm that it is the correct course of action, or that I need to consider other avenues for the path to the solution. John also has a very similar glance over his glasses that says, "Well done." To me this is also the guiding hand of the Teacher: encourage the student to move forward on the path that has been chosen. John's ability to teach is one of his traits that I am truly appreciative of, and thankful that he has shared it with me.

Michael Eisenbarth
Principal

John will forever have a very special place in my heart. I was blessed with the opportunity to be the Development Officer for the College of Architecture at UNL for five years. During that time, I was always treated with respect and appreciation by John for my efforts in enhancing student and faculty development within the College. However, I truly believe John is the one who deserves the appreciation and respect. He and his colleagues have given back to the college, University and Lincoln community in so many ways and continue to do so every day. John knows the importance of building on excellence and it shows in his professional work and in his interactions with students, faculty and clients. John has taught, critiqued, supported, encouraged and motivated many students and faculty members over the years. **He and his firm continually look for ways to give back to the College** through mentor support, scholarship and program support, internship opportunities, professional development, participation in reviews/critiques/interviews, teaching courses, sitting on advisory boards, and in offering professional advice. John is someone you can always count on. He is honest, dedicated and creative. Not only

has the University of Nebraska benefited from his talent, but the entire county. **Thank you John for everything. You are an outstanding individual!**

Kaye Jesske

I have worked as an electrical engineering consultant with John Sinclair for many years. He has always impressed me first and foremost with his kindness and gentle nature. He is always gracious and humble in his interactions with people. It is easy to see when working with John that **his passion for Architecture is genuine**. The enthusiastic way he approaches a project is infectious. He brings out the best in his clients, consultants and co-workers. The firm John co-founded is very well known in our community for setting a high standard for Architecture. **I am a better person and engineer for knowing and working with John**. He is more than deserving of any positive recognition he receives.

Gene Neemann
Senior Project Manager
Alvine Engineering

I was pleased to see that you have submitted John Sinclair for the H.F. Cunningham Gold Model award. **John has restored my faith in Architects** with his outstanding customer service and empathy for the client. John is a part of our team at Concordia University, Nebraska and a great example of what Architectural service and Design should be.

Mel Varner
Dir. Of Operations
Concordia University, Nebraska

I have known John Sinclair as a friend and colleague for 10 years working for and alongside him on many challenging projects. Working is really not the appropriate word since I never considered John to be "a job requiring work". Rather, I considered it a joy and privilege to be on projects that John touched. John always commanded my utmost respect because of the way he approached his profession and the respect he had for his consultants. It has been a pleasure knowing John. To quote Rudy Giuliani, former mayor of New York City, **"a leader must manage not only results but expectations"**. John is always very clear on expectations and this affected the rest of his team when it came time to perform for him. For exhibiting and practicing this leadership style, John has left a lasting impression on me personally and professionally.

Jack L. Pagel
Principal

I have had the privilege of working with John Sinclair for the last 22 years. I have worked with him on a variety of project types; small and large and all were done with a level of professionalism that has garnered him the respect of his clients, colleagues and employees. I have seen him experience personal hardships with courage and dignity, and professional triumphs with humility.

In the process of growing a company, I've seen John's example shape the professional development of young architects who are now becoming leaders in our community and in the profession, locally and around the country. With his listening skills and thoughtful consideration he has provided me with valuable advice that has helped me grow personally and professionally. It's difficult to adequately describe the impact that John's example, leadership and advice has had on my life over the years. Let me just say again, **it has been a privilege.**

Christopher M. Beardslee, AIA
Architect/Senior Associate
Sinclair Hille Associates

The Weitz Company has had the distinct pleasure of working with John Sinclair on a variety of commercial building projects throughout the State of Nebraska. Recent projects have included the Davis Square Student Housing project for Creighton University in Omaha, various projects for the University of Nebraska at Omaha, and the Nebraska Heart Institute's Heart Hospital and Medical Office Building in Lincoln, to name a few. John's core values, approach to client services, and professionalism have always been impeccable. He treats everyone with respect and values their opinions and contributions.

We have even experienced some very difficult and challenging situations together. In all cases, it is someone like John Sinclair that I want on Weitz side of the table. **His leadership, creativity, and problem solving skills are second to none**, along with his ability to instill these values within his firm and everyone he comes in contact with.

As one of the regions and nation's largest commercial contractors, we have experience with many different design firms on a whole variety of projects. Our best endorsement is Weitz selection of John and Sinclair Hille Architects to partner together on various design/build opportunities. We look forward to continuing our relationship with John and his firm for many years to come.

Radd C. Way
President
Weitz Company

It gives me great pleasure to recommend John Sinclair as a recipient of the prestigious Harry F. Cunningham Gold Model. John's distinguished architectural career

speaks for itself. A closer look at **his career reveals a distinguished body of work in serving the less fortunate of his community.**

John has unselfishly given his time and considerable talent to the Food Bank of Lincoln, serving as a Board Member, and officer of the Board for several years. In 1997, John was instrumental in our Food Bank's move from an 8,000 square foot location to our present 21,500 square foot facility. John was heavily involved with the design process of our building, which has resulted in outstanding growth for our organization. Thanks in part to John Sinclair's leadership and support, we increased our capacity to distribute food by hundreds of thousands of pounds per year.

His quiet leadership on our Board of Directors always provided a sharp focus for the issues at hand. His respectful compassion for low-income people and their needs was always evident. John has also lent his talent and time to a number of our agencies that have expanded their feeding capacities. John Sinclair has lent a helping architectural hand to thousands of people in our community, and in doing so, has helped lift thousands of lives.

John Sinclair is truly an asset to the community of Lincoln, and the community of architects.

Scott Young
Executive Director
Food Bank of Lincoln, Inc.

As a co-founding partner of Sinclair Hille Architects, I have the privileged perspective formed over 25 years, of knowing John Sinclair as my business partner, architectural colleague and friend. Time has a way of revealing who we are as people and professionals, and occasionally, there are those who distinguish themselves through character and skills that elevates both the profession and those around them. I had the fortune of having just such a partner.

John Sinclair has never pursued distinction personally. However, John has succeeded through manners of excellence, establishing a career of distinction through the legacy of his teaching, mentoring, professional leadership, and architectural practice.

Of his many attributes, foremost is John Sinclair's persona of calming wisdom. Having presided over the growth of Sinclair Hille Architects and over the most complex and demanding architectural projects, John's capacity to elevate discussions, to find commonality in diversity of interests, and to draw forward the best of others are the skills that make great architects great.

Jim Hille
Principal Emeritus
Sinclair Hille Architects