

# PRESS RELEASES

## New Orleans firms sweep AIA Louisiana Design Competition

New Orleans architecture firms swept the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Louisiana 2019 Design Competition, with three firms winning Honor Awards, and New Orleans firms winning seven of the eight Awards of Merit.

The Honor Award winners included Trahan Architects for the Alliance Theater Transformation at the Woodruff Arts Center in Atlanta, studioWTA for an Emerald Street Residence in New Orleans and Rome Office for The Schoolhouse in New Orleans.

Trahan Architects also tied for the sought-after Members' Choice Award and won an Award of Merit for the Betty & Edward Marcus Sculpture Park at Laguna Gloria in Austin, Texas; and studioWTA won an Award of Merit for Mussafer Hall in New Orleans.

EskewDumezRipple won two Awards of Merit – one for the Palmisano headquarters in New Orleans, and another for The Chop at the CAC in New Orleans. Also winning Awards of Merit were VergesRome Architects for the Rouquette Library at St. Joseph Abbey & Seminary College in St. Benedict; Holly & Smith Architects for the St. Michael Special School Restoration and Addition in New Orleans; and Manning Architects in partnership with Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects for the Goldring/Woldenberg Complex Addition and Renovation at Tulane University in New Orleans.

The awards were given at the Awards Luncheon at the AIA LA '19 Conference on Architecture in Baton Rouge on September 13.

Following are descriptions of the projects and judges' comments:

**Trahan Architects – Alliance Theater** – The 650-seat chamber and lobby of the theater were gutted and transformed, with steam bend millwork guardrails and balconies and sophisticated laser positioning in a world-class acoustically designed theatre. The judges were “enamored with the steam bent plywood, which is THE detail – and a bold choice - of the space.”

**StudioWTA – Emerald Street Residence** – This rehabilitation project included restoring original design features of the home while redesigning severely damaged spaces to include floor to ceiling glass panels, along with a contemporary kitchen and connected outdoor spaces. The judges appreciated the research that went into a “respectful renovation that inserts new components in a way that elevates the project.”

**Rome Office – The Schoolhouse** – This project converted a 1894 schoolhouse into multi-family apartments and commercial space. The original exterior was restored, while the classrooms were transformed into 1-bedroom apartments and the above ground basement was converted into revenue-generating commercial space. The judges called the design “simple sublime.” It “successfully navigated the challenging conditions of precise restoration and contemporary additions – a dance that allows the original building to breathe, while providing a more contemporary aesthetic for the new residents.”

Trahan Architects – Betty & Edward Marcus Sculpture Park – The new welcome pavilions integrate architecture and landscape to draw visitors into the park along a central walk with shade canopies. The project also integrates The Pavilions house – a new welcome center, outdoor café and retail shop. The judges noted the shade canopies, detailing and distance of vertical planes in the pleasing design.

StudioWTA – Mussafer Hall – This project was a three-story addition and renovation of a 1902 Dutch Renaissance style building into a student success center, while protecting a 100-year-old oak tree in the university’s historic quad. It resulted in the skewed form of the new addition which maximize natural light. It also includes a robust stormwater management strategy. The judges stated the design approach was well-executed with a complete commitment to direction in a challenging project.

EskewDumezRipple – Palmisano Headquarters – This new office building provides an open work flow with large, open work spaces, an expansive entry courtyard, outdoor covered terrace, open common areas and expansive views of the Mississippi River. The judges applauded the design that provides utilitarian perception from a distance and a beautifully restrained interior.

EskewDumezRipple – The Chop at the CAC – A hub of entrepreneurship, the project includes preserving classic architecture while incorporating modern elements on two floors of the CAC. The commons area is the heart of the co-working space to facilitate connection. The judges noted the design strikes an aesthetic balance between the old and the more contemporary features, with the stair/ceiling as a dynamic device to unite the two levels.

VergesRome – Rouquette Library – This new library skews the mid-century modernism architecture of the original campus toward 21<sup>st</sup> century, while reinforcing the pillars of priestly study. It also mitigates against the catastrophic floods that engulfed the campus in 2016. This design, the judges stated, has many thoughtful references to the original campus while it stands on its own as a striking piece of architecture.

Holly & Smith – St. Michael Special School Restoration & Addition – This project was a historic renovation of a circa 1850 townhouse into a classroom with a chapel addition and new main entrance to the campus. The judges termed this a high-level restoration project with a sensitive, well-executed addition including form and detail.

Manning Architects in partnership with Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects - the Goldring/Woldenberg Complex Addition and Renovation – This addition connected two existing buildings with openness, use of the “learning on display” concept and strict LEED certification requirements. It includes classrooms, offices and multi-use spaces. The judges considered the serpentine wall composed of glass shaped around the trees as a bold, yet sensitive and elegant, design.

A nationally recognized panel of judges selected the 11 winning projects for 2019 from 69 entries in seven categories, submitted by architects across the state.

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## **Baton Rouge architecture firm wins Award of Merit in AIA Louisiana Design Competition**

The Baton Rouge design firm WHLC Architecture was honored with an Award of Merit in the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Louisiana 2019 Design Competition. It was among 11 total winners, with three being Honor Awards, and the other eight winners being Awards of Merit.

WHLC Architecture won for its renovation and expansion of the David E. Roberts Center for Economic Development building in Baton Rouge. The design reconnects the building with the streetscape, provides natural light, and provides a modern, progressive work space for a 1950s building. Judges stated that the dramatic change is a wonderful blend of inspiration from the original architecture and modernization through an interesting interior.

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## **LA Tech architecture school project wins state honor**

A project to design and build a special needs-oriented zip line launch and landing structures, including a "tree house" and climbing tower has won the sought-after Members Choice Award by the American Institute of Architects Louisiana chapter in its 2019 Design Competition. ARCH 335 Louisiana Tech University Design Build, along with professors Robert Brooks, AIA; and Brad Deal, AIA, designed the project.

They were awarded the honor at the AIA LA Design Conference Banquet on Thursday, September 12, in Baton Rouge.

The 712-foot zip line and support structures are at Camp Alabama in Choudrant, Louisiana. They encourage children with special needs to embrace the thrilling experience of flight. At the "launch," dramatic steel walls gesture skyward, visually obscuring and revealing the zip-line. The varied deck facilitates safe loading, and a pivoting swing-arm allows wheelchair-bound campers to be hoisted up, swiveled into position, and transferred onto the zip line.

Riders unload at the "tree house," which extends horizontally as the land falls away. Campers then find themselves on an elevated perch overlooking a stream where they can observe a multitude of flora and fauna. A floor hatch provides access to the ground below, reinforcing the feeling of "tree house." A 50-foot tall steel tower signifies flight and offers an accessible ropes course challenge.

The brave are rewarded with a dramatic view of the horizon from the treetops. The project is inspired by a parable in which two peregrine falcons are gifted to a king who admired the birds for their speed, power and grace. One of the falcons, however, simply would not fly. After many unsuccessful attempts by experts to remedy this, the king was visited by a peasant who claimed she could get the falcon to fly. Upon seeing the second falcon high in the air, the king implored "How?!" The falcon responded, "Simply by cutting the branch the bird was resting on. Some souls," she said, "need to be reminded they have wings."

The Members' Choice Award is voted upon by architects attending the Design Conference. This year, for the first time in many years, two projects tied for the honor. They were the zip line and treehouse project, along with Betty & Edward Marcus Sculpture Park at Laguna Gloria in Austin, Texas by Trahan Architects of New Orleans.

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