# Guest Writer

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## Good Friends are Like Stars

There is a saying that 'Good friends are like stars. You don't always see them, but you'll always know that they are there."

To me, that summarizes the relationship between AIA San Antonio and SDA. Since I can remember, we've always been partners.

When I was named AIA San Antonio's Executive Director in 1993, I was new to the practice of architecture and soon found myself lost in the minutia of architectural acronyms, contract documents and AIA. As I worked all alone running the chapter, I found myself asking - where is there a community that could provide professional support?

Thankfully, that question was answered by Elaine Kalinowski, SDAC, who came into the AIA office seeking documents. As we talked, she mentioned that I should consider joining the local chapter of SDA. It was the supportive group of design firm professionals who could answer my questions and help me with business challenges I was facing.

Membership in SDA gave me a professional lifeline. It taught me professional skills and it gifted me with a lifetime of wonderful friends and professional colleagues. It was a home within a home where I could ask questions, laugh and learn and ultimately grow into the new career I had chosen.

SDA brings a unique perspective to the work of the AIA. We need one another to maximize the opportunities for our firms, and our profession. A partnership with SDA and AIA San Antonio has always been a top priority. I wish other AIA chapters would also make this a priority, so that they too could foster a rich dialogue in the profession, a dialogue that often is missing.

To have a partner you must first be a partner. That means participating. I eagerly joined SDA and am proud to say that I am a Past President of the San Antonio Chapter. Throughout my tenure as AIA San Antonio's Executive Director, I have consistently supported my staff in membership and active engagement with SDA. I know first-hand the rewards it will bring back to our chapter. AIA San Antonio is also proud to host SDA meetings in our facility at no charge to the chapter, again because those meetings bring value to our member's firms.

It is no surprise that the same chapter who so eagerly welcomed me nearly three decades ago, is the proud recipient of SDA's 2021 Best In Class - Membership Award – one of many national awards the San Antonio Chapter continually brings home. SDA San Antonio has consistently proven its value to its members and the firms who support member engagement.

I think it is now time for me to once again give back to the chapter that gave so generously to me. It is time to renew AIA's understanding the importance of SDA across the nation. I'm ready to tackle that challenge just as you were ready to throw me a lifeline so many years ago. I hope I can count on your help - after all, we are partners, right?

