

I will begin with an obligatory greeting for the New Year. As the 2021 President of AIA Michigan, I consider it an honor to carry the mantle forward with the Board for the next 11 months. As I say the words "New Year" that we all said with hope in 2020, I still repeat them with hope. Since we first stepped into the COVID-19 pandemic, we felt that we were mired in quicksand, and it only slowed down from there. There is hope in our future, but a great deal of unknown still remains.

I know we all look to the upcoming year with hope. I choose to ask, as members of AIA Michigan, what have we learned? We did learn to be resilient and have greater flexibility in many ways. We had little choice, really. We did learn that we can and should look to each other to share questions and answers. I recall the Town Hall meetings last spring where we as the architectural and construction community shared our stories and successes together to help our firms successfully cope as well as survive within the situation we were dealing with. We shared stories and methods to communicate with each other and our fellow architects. Those stories were not shared just in Grand Rapids, or Lansing, or Detroit but were readily shared across the state and perhaps further. We quickly figured out how easy that was to do with electronic media and did so with a new fervor. I believe that there is a lesson there, that as we find clues, provide education opportunities, or even provide fellowship opportunities that we reach to a broader community with whom we share our profession and our interests. I hope that successes breed more success. AIA membership to me was of more practical benefit to me personally than any other time I can recall.

Late in 2019, AIA Michigan assembled a task force to set a new Strategic Plan for AIA Michigan, to set a direction for the next half decade. You can find that Strategic Plan on the website if you are interested. I'd like to highlight one aspect of that Strategic Plan and joint out the initiative behind it. Early last year, a new committee was formed, the Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion committee, the J.E.D.I. committee in short form. The committee currently has fourteen members. The committee is open to all members, and would welcome additional members' voices. Contact the committee at AIAMI@AIAMI.com is you wish to know more.

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Some five or more years ago, I attended the first conference of Design Core Detroit after Detroit had joined the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, attended by artists and designers of many ilk. When architects and architecture were discussed, they were viewed as an elitist profession, which I still recall with some amount of distress. We have all heard and read about our profession and its issues about its lack of diversity and inclusion as a profession. Without going into a great deal of detail, I will say that this is obviously one of the reasons that the committee was formed. One of the first questions of the committee was about the condition of the profession regarding equity and diversity specifically in Michigan. In order to answer that the committee will be sending a questionnaire in the coming months to sources some specific local data. I would ask that as much as we all may dislike surveys, that you open this one and answer it honestly. It will be confidential and (reasonably) brief.

In this same vein, and as a reminder, NOMA, the National Organization of Minority Architects, will be hosted in Detroit during the 50th anniversary year of its formation in Detroit at the AIA National Convention that year. I look forward to their success this year and hope that I can promise them the assistance and cooperation of all of AIA Michigan's members this year. You can find more information at NOMA Detroit's website www.nomadetroit.com

Regards.



Robert A. Hoida, AIA
2021 President
AIA Michigan