



Gensler officials participating on a discussion panel at the 2007 Rowlett Lecture include, David Calkins, AIA, Judy Pesek, IIDA, M. Art Gensler, Jr., FAIA, FIIDA, RIBA and Jim Furr, FAIA.

Gensler team discusses firm’s evolution, philosophy

EDITOR’S NOTE: The CRS Center’s 2007 John Miles Rowlett Lecture Series, held Feb. 9 at Texas A&M University’s Presidential Conference Center, focused on the unique role design and culture have played in the 40-year evolution of Gensler, the award-winning Houston-based architecture, planning and design firm.

The half-day presentation, “Gensler: The Power of Design,” marked the 28th Rowlett Lecture, which annually features a distinguished firm from the design, planning and construction industries. Gensler, which was founded in San Francisco in 1966 as a three-person interior design practice, today boasts more than 2,400 employees and offices in 30 cities, including London, Amsterdam, Tokyo and Shanghai, with 13 specialized practice areas and more than 2,000 active clients.

Highlighting this year’s lecture was a presentation by Gensler founder and AIA Fellow, Art Gensler, who traced the company’s history and transformation, which was achieved, he said, without compromising the unique Gensler culture. Other presentations and panel discussions featured Gensler employees and clients addressing topics such as “the power of design,” “building great relationships,” and “charting a new course.”

Below, one of the many Texas A&M College of Architecture students who attended the lecture, Raechel Schneider, a freshman environmental design major, shares the insights she gained from the Gensler presentation on “The Power of Design.”

Firm’s story appeals to freshman ENDS student

By **RAEACHEL SCHNEIDER**

Freshman, environmental design student

As a freshman environmental design major, the 2007 Rowlett Lecture, “Gensler: The Power of Design,” was my first, and it proved to be a great, inspiring opportunity. Mr. M. Arthur Gensler, Jr., chairman of the board of Gensler, was a very charismatic speaker. He explained how Gensler’s growth, from a small firm in San Francisco to a world-renowned architectural firm, was fueled by its unwavering commitment to

teamwork, innovation and the creation of real value.

One appealing theme that rang throughout the lecture was Gensler’s being a “one-firm firm” focused on group effort and company loyalty, instead of individual success. According to Marshall Strabala, AIA, director of design for Gensler’s South Central Region, the people at Gensler “strive to do something that other firms don’t, and that is to collaborate across the board ... It’s not one person with a design vision following it through, it’s a whole bunch of people.”

I was also pleased to hear that if joining the Gensler team, I would not be immediately expected to hold my own or otherwise fail. The firm’s sense of family was evident in the panelists’ friendly banter and their comfort with each other. They discussed Gensler’s unique process for predicting how well a prospective employee might assimilate into the company culture, which seems to be another factor contributing to the firm’s success.

I was initially intimidated by Gensler’s expectation that employees commit to staying with the firm for a very extended period. But that fear was alleviated once I learned of the firm’s extremely inventive “Boomerang” program, allowing employees to work at another firm and return to Gensler when ready. That Gensler employees have the advantage of working in entirely different environments, with different sized firms and different focuses was the most interesting concept revealed at the lecture and it appealed greatly to my desire for variety.

Throughout the lecture, Gensler panelists demonstrated the firm’s timelessness. They have endured name changes and tremendous expansion by continually adjusting strategies to fit the time, and by building a unique culture and team spirit that binds employees together. I found the lecture extremely beneficial and look forward to some day joining such a great firm and practicing what I’ve only begun to learn.



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From the director CRS Center Web site adds Rowlett video, podcasts

By ROBERT JOHNSON, CRS Center director

The CRS Center is going visual. If you missed the 2001 Rowlett Lecture, "The Legacy of CRS," you may now view this historical event by visiting the CRS Center Web site <crscenter.tamu.edu> and clicking on the "video link." You may then download the section of the conference that you desire by clicking on "wmv." And yes, you may also download any part of the lecture as a *podcast* for your *iPod* or for *iTunes* by clicking on "mp4."

We have also been collaborating with Barker Productions, KAMU-TV and the Presidential Conference Center at Texas A&M to make the recent Rowlett Lecture, "Gensler: The Power of Design," available on the research channel <www.researchchannel.org>. This will not be available until later this summer. In the future, you can expect more content from the CRS Center Archives and other events to be available in video format. Happy viewing!



Mariano Ortiz (second from left), a 2007 master of architecture graduate from Texas A&M University, receives the 2007 Emerging Student Leader Award from Jim Furr, FAIA, Judy Pesek, IIDA, and David Calkins, AIA, of Gensler, (behind the check), with Tom Regan, dean of the College of Architecture (at left).

Argentinian student earns Rowlett Lecture's inaugural Emerging Student Leader Award

Mariano Ortiz, a native of Argentina and a recent Texas A&M master of architecture graduate received the first Emerging Student Leader Award at the Feb. 9 Rowlett Distinguished Firm lecture. Gensler, the 2007 distinguished firm, presented the inaugural award. Subsequent awards will be presented annually by future featured firms at the Rowlett Lecture.

Ortiz was selected by Gensler from a list of 10 outstanding students who were nominated by college faculty. This year's award includes a one-semester internship with Gensler and \$1,000.

"It is a real honor for me that such an important firm as Gensler prizes my aptitude and effort and sees my potential for great

accomplishments in the field of architecture," said Ortiz. "This award represents an enormous step forward to one of my goals: succeeding as a professional architect in the United States."

In nominating Ortiz, Guillermo Vasquez de Velasco, executive associate dean of the College of Architecture, identified him as his "most talented design student ever." Ortiz also played a leading role in the design of the proposed A&M Experiment Station in Costa Rica and in the management of the Department of Architecture's Las Americas Virtual Design Studio, which connects design students and studios throughout the Western Hemisphere via live video conference feeds.

Lavy tapped as associate directorship of CRS Center

Fulfilling his lifelong dream of living in the United States, Sarel Lavy joined the College of Architecture faculty in October 2005. Shortly thereafter, he was appointed associate director of the CRS Center.

Prior to moving to College Station, Lavy lived in Israel, where he completed a B.S., M.S. and a Ph.D. in civil engineering from the Technion — Israel Institute of Technology. Lavy says the move was a smooth transition, except for his initially limited English skills and not being able to simply catch a bus to visit his family. Today Lavy speaks excellent English and has assimilated well into the U.S. culture. At Texas A&M, he teaches courses in facility management and cost estimating and serves as the secondary faculty advisor to

the Facility Management Student Chapter.

When asked about the difference between his practice here in the United States and in Israel, Lavy says that teaching is basically the same in both the United States and Israel, with the main difference being the number of students; the Technion, one of the largest universities in Israel, has only 18,000 students, less than half of the number enrolled at Texas A&M.

Aside from teaching and touring the state with his wife and son who came with him from Israel, Lavy also serves as a faculty fellow for both the CRS Center and the Center for Health Systems and Design at the Texas A&M College of Architecture. In these two positions and with his classes, Lavy has tackled a number of research projects, most of which offer his graduate students a chance to work on real, rather than hypothetical projects. His students have performed physical condition assessments of buildings on the Texas A&M campus and worked to help school systems in New Mexico increase their facilities' performance. These projects, along with many guest speakers have added a novel and interesting element to his courses, which have increased in enrollment from six students last fall to 16 in the spring.

"Sarel has quickly shown himself to be a vital member of the faculty here at Texas A&M and an ideal associate director for the CRS Center," said Robert Johnson, CRS Center director. "We invite you to welcome Dr. Sarel Lavy and his family to the College of Architecture and Texas A&M University."



Associate CRS Center Director Sarel Lavy teaches facility management and cost estimating at Texas A&M.

Student worker provides insider's view of CRS Center's value

By **SCOTT SOMERVILLE**
Former CRS Center student worker

About two years ago, I returned from a semester of studying architecture in Europe with a mind full of knowledge and a pocket devoid of money. At the time, I was quite willing to take any job that provided me with a paycheck, but fortune smiled upon me long enough to place me at the door of the CRS Center as I searched for a student worker position. Although much of my college life had been spent at Langford, I had never really fully understood what the CRS Center was, or even what "CRS" stood for. It was only after I began work there that I discovered just what it had to offer the college and architecture in general.

The remainder of my time at Texas A&M was spent in the employ of the CRS Center, where most of my time was spent archiving the personal files of various partners of the CRS firm. From an outside perspective, the filing, scanning, and digitizing of the documents may have seemed mundane, but the substance of the files was anything but, especially to an architecture student. Every day gave a little more insight into not only

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the design process of CRS, but also how the business side of a strong architecture firm was run.

Hidden in plain sight among the stacks of the archives are programs, writings, sketches, renderings and slides of projects from nearly all types of buildings and locations. Browsing for a few minutes will yield more than a few surprises, as I found out. There are plans for military bases in Saudi Arabia, brilliant drawings of hotels around the U.S., original photos from my favorite architectural photographer, correspondence from some of the era's most prominent architects, and master plans for Texas A&M, just to name a few. I even found that buildings familiar to many Texans had been designed by CRS.

While walking around the studios of Langford, it is hard to find one project that could not benefit from the research available in the CRS Center. More than

once, I would find another student struggling with a design problem that had already been addressed by CRS, albeit 30 years prior.

In one of his many TIB notes, Bill Caudill suggested that the "historical approach" is one of the best aides to architectural education. As I have come to believe, this is just what the CRS Center is intended for. In the years since the firm's heyday, styles of architecture have changed so dramatically that copying any building from those years might prove virtually fruitless, but the method in which good architecture is produced differs very little.

I consider myself very fortunate to have spent time working at the CRS Center, for it is and will remain an invaluable source of architectural thought.



Scott Somerville

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Newsletter of the CRS Center for Leadership and Management in the Design and Construction Industry

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CRS Center scholarships fund student endeavors

This spring, the CRS Center presented scholarships, fellowships and a grant to students in the departments of architecture and construction science.

Construction science students, Rhucha Gujarathi, Nataraj Ashok Jayaraman and Vishnu Jhaveri, each received a \$1,000 Facility Management scholarship for the 2007-08 academic year to aid in their pursuit of graduate certificates in facility management, the academic program managed by the CRS Center.

Also, Zhe Wang, a Ph.D. student in architecture, received the Jonathan King Scholarship for \$1,000. The multi-year William W. Caudill Student Research Fellowship was awarded to Hyojim Kim and the William W. Caudill Student Research Grant was awarded to Christine Liu. Both students begin their Ph.D. studies in architecture in Fall 2007. These awards honor Bill Caudill, FAIA, founder of the CRS architecture firm.

Students win IFMA Foundation scholarships

Three Texas A&M College of Architecture graduate students, Carlos Nome, Isilay Civan and Naresh Kalla, earned International Facility Management Association (IFMA) Foundation scholarships for 2006-2007.

The Houston Chapter of IFMA honored Isilay Civan with the Doug Underwood scholarship of \$1,000, and Naresh Kalla with the George Graves scholarship of \$1,000. Carlos Nome received a \$3,000 scholarship from the Philadelphia Chapter of IFMA.

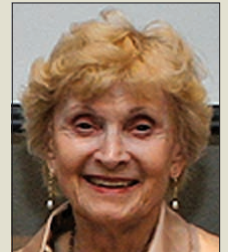
The awards were presented at the 2006 IFMA World Workplace conference in San Diego, California.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

The Facility Management Industry Advisory Council meets Thursday, Nov. 8, 2007 at the Memorial Student Center on the Texas A&M University campus. For details, contact Susie Billings at the CRS Center by phone, 979.847.9357, or e-mail, sbillings@archmail.tamu.edu.

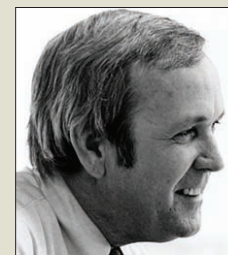
IN MEMORIAM

The CRS Center is saddened to announce that Aleen Plumer Harrison Caudill passed away in December 2006 and C. Herbert Paseur, FAIA, passed away in March 2007.



Aleen Caudill, of Houston, was the second wife of William (Bill) Wayne Caudill, FAIA, who was an architecture professor at Texas A&M University and who with John Rowlett, started the architecture firm CRS in 1946. Aleen and Bill married in 1974.

Herbert (Herb) Paseur, of Houston, was one of the eight founders of the architecture firm, CRS. He served as president



and CEO of the firm from 1971 until his retirement in 1981. He is survived by his second wife, Geraldine (Jerre) Mabry, who he married in 1966.