

[Professional Development]



Ms King outside of the Sky Suite Apartment at Arcosanti, Arizona.

“Change is the only constant in life. One’s ability to adapt to those changes will determine your success in life.” - Benjamin Franklin

Susan F. King, Leed AP, Principal for Harley Ellis Devereaux by Gail M. Cavanagh, Leed AP

Susan F. King, AIA, Leed AP is currently a principal for Harley Ellis Devereaux in Chicago. Her career path has been on the forefront of change in the architectural profession and she persevered through a time when changing her line of expertise did not coincide with the current growth in the architectural profession.

She is originally from northeastern Ohio and one of the first in her family to attend college. Her parents stipulated the terms under which she would be able to attend, telling her she could go anywhere she wanted but the college would have to be located in Ohio. Her talent for drawing and art was identified at a fairly young age, and it was while studying Frank Lloyd Wright’s Falling Water in her eighth grade art class, that she began to consider becoming an architect as an adult. Fortunately for Ms. King, there are several good architectural programs in that state and she settled on the University of Cincinnati. Guided by well-intended parents and a guidance counselor aunt, they advised Ms. King to enroll in UC’s interior design program. Once on campus and in studio, however, studying alongside the architecture students, Ms. King knew she had to switch majors to the Bachelor of Architecture program, as she would not be happy with being limited to interiors only.

UC has a great program for interns, helping them to find employment in the field during the years spent in class. She successfully interned at Trautwein Associates in Columbus, Ohio, Hague-Richards Associates in Chicago and Gilbert P. Cooke Associates in Baltimore, Maryland. During this time, she also confirmed for herself that living in a city was a lifestyle she desired. After graduation in 1987, she secured a position with Perkins & Will, leaving in 1989 to work at Eckenhoff Saunders Architects (ES).

ES’s market was industrial manufacturing facilities and healthcare. Ms. King’s knowledge of the business of architecture grew because the firm was smaller and the entire process was more transparent. She felt that her time there was an excellent learning experience. But, after five years, she was beginning to realize there her career path needed reassessment.

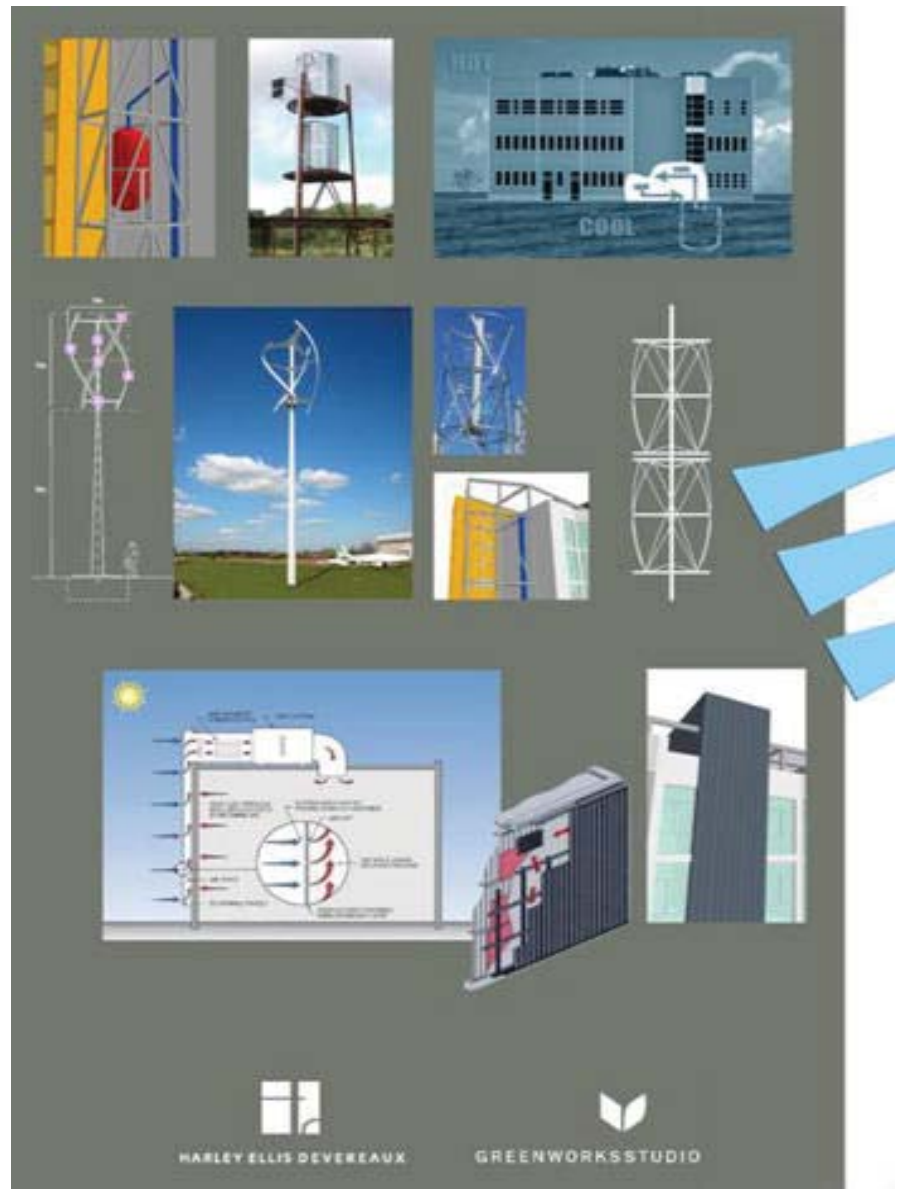
Her last project with ES, 1996-1997, was a joint venture with an American and Italian plastics company. At the company’s request, Ms. King was planning sustainable elements into the manufacturing process well ahead of LEED guidelines. For Ms. King, this was very early exposure to sustainability. Elements of sustainable programming included processing the waste generated in manufacturing in a closed loop, heat recovery from the machinery, daylighting the factory floor and using long lasting materials. This experience was positive but she was beginning to be perceived as an expert only in plastics manufacturing facilities and became motivated to pursue a move.

Despite her obvious broad range of skills, her professional focus on manufacturing made it difficult to change jobs. Her search for a new post took 3 years. Ms. King wanted to work for a firm that was more people-centric, that worked on schools and libraries and affordable housing. Additionally important to her move was the ability to grow with the company in project types and leadership. Her move to Environ, (later Harley Ellis Devereaux), in 1997 materialized when the job market started to heat up and talent with specific skills became harder to find. But this opportunity meant that Ms. King had to jump into a project without prior project experience. The new project was quite unlike anything that she had worked on previously. It was a 181-unit senior-living apartment building in Calumet City for HUD and she was hired as the project architect.

Her first exposure to the sustainable community in Chicago came when she joined Architects, Designers and Planners for Social Responsibility (ADPSR) in 1993. She joined CWA at the same time, seeking the company of other women architects. As her involvement with both groups grew, her outside interests started to become unwieldy and while remaining a member of both organizations, she chose to continue her more active community involvement with CWA. ADPSR was her first introduction into sustainability, showing a path to the concepts that would become part of the movement later and would inform her career decisions as time went on.

She became heavily involved in CWA, joining the education committee initially but was really attracted to the newsletter. As editor, Ms. King’s goal for the newsletter was to make it less of a manually-typed, informal communication and more of a magazine-type layout with several articles. She became the editor after six months at CWA and had the members participate in a competition to name the newsletter. The current name of the newsletter, “The Muse” was chosen at that time. During that time period, Ms. King wrote and edited a series of articles called Ladies of the Corridor/Ladies on the Threshold, for the Muse. The articles paired historic and contemporary women architects, with the goal of providing historic perspective and inspiration to the CWA membership. King authored many of these articles, but also encouraged other members to write them as well. Eventually, Ms King also served as vice-president and as president. She is very proud of being able to serve during the 25th year anniversary. She was on the board for two years following her presidency. One of her achievements at CWA was being instrumental in putting in place a “legacy advancement” concept for the leadership roles.

Her earlier exposure to sustainability while at ES and her personally motivated interest in sustainability while with ADPSR proved timely in her career path. Following her success at CWA, and her promotion to Associate at Environ, Ms. King joined the AIA, as payment of these membership dues was a benefit of the higher position. As a new member and looking for a way to become actively involved in this professional organization, she became a member of the AIA Committee on the Environment (CotE). She would become chair after three years. [continued]



GreenWorks Studio and Harley, Ellis, Devereaux

Recent Design Study for Earth-friendly Artist Housing in the South Loop.

[Calendar of Events]

Confirm dates, times, and locations with the sponsoring organization.

RSVP to all events by emailing RSVP@cwarch.org

September 2010

[14] CWA Monthly Meeting @ bulthaupt: 165 West Chicago Avenue. Networking 5:45-6:15pm, Meeting 6:15-7:15pm.

[23] Networking Happy Hour @ IDM Group: 200 N Michigan Avenue. 5:30-7:00pm, rsvp to rsvp@cwarch.org

October 2010

[12] CWA Monthly Meeting @ bulthaupt: 165 West Chicago Avenue. Networking 5:45-6:15pm, Meeting 6:15-7:15pm.

[19] Fall Members Reception “The Art of Networking” @ The Tile Gallery, 555 N. Franklin Street, Chicago. 5:30-8:00 pm. Speaker: Sharon Tash.

November 2010

[09] CWA Monthly Meeting @ bulthaupt: 165 West Chicago Avenue. Networking 5:45-6:15pm, Meeting 6:15-7:15pm.

[11] Networking with Construction Businesses, Architects, and Interior Designers @ WBDC Chicago: 8 S. Michigan Avenue, 4th Floor, Chicago, IL 60603. Co-Sponsored by CWA and the Women’s Business Development Center. Registration \$15.

December 2010

[14] CWA Holiday Party @ Hafele America Company Showroom, 165 W Hubbard Street, Chicago. 6:00-8:00pm.

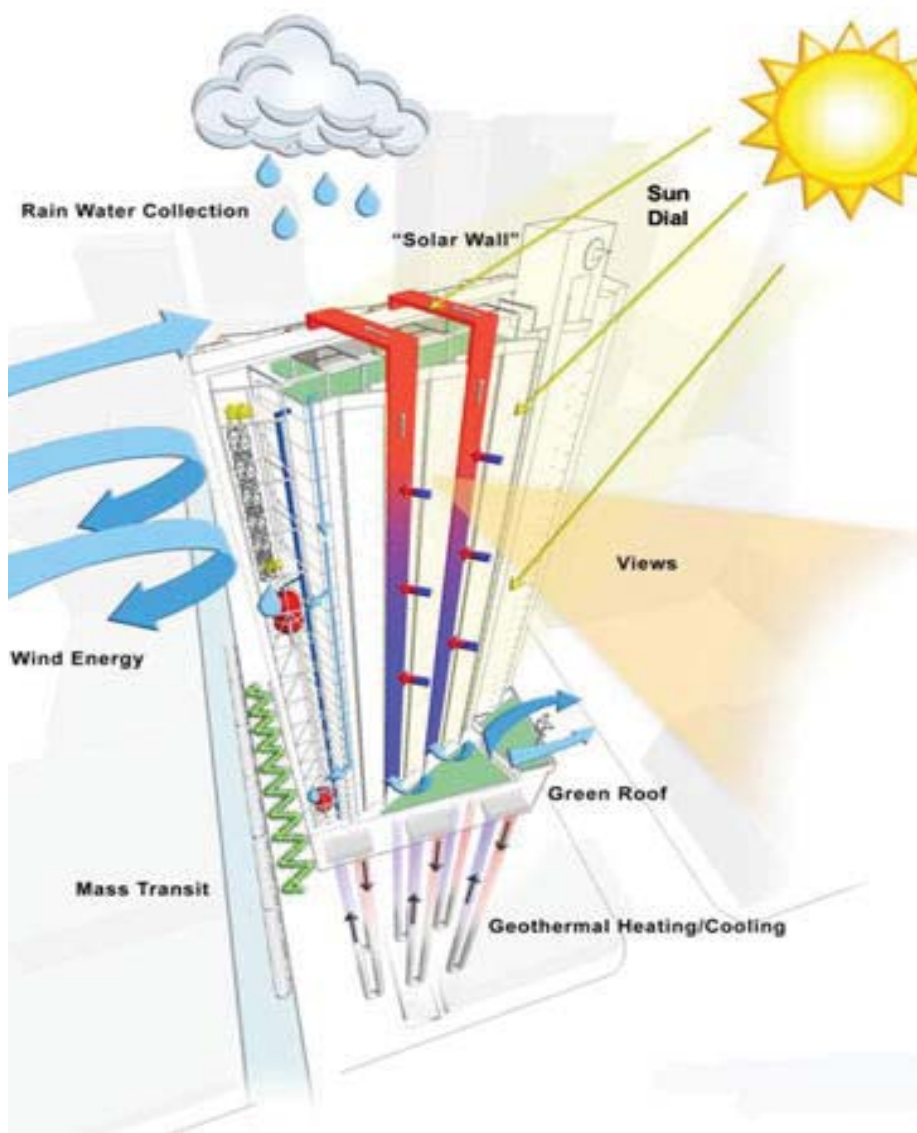
She was named a principal at Harley Ellis Devereaux in 2007 and is a leader of the sustainable design initiatives for the Chicago company and their Partner Company GreenWorks Studio.

This recession has brought a lot of "study" and planning work. While Ms. King finds it frustrating to not be building more, the explorations she is pursuing are promising in interest and scale. One selected study featured a project for artist housing in the south loop. Last summer, Ms. King led HED's internal examination of the 35 acre site for the Olympic Village. This became a stimulating exercise in planning athlete housing in the short term and a legacy neighborhood for the long term.

Currently the most interesting work at GreenWorks Studio is in the LA office where there is an on-going contract with Southern California Edison to perform a series of Net Zero Energy (NZE) Design related tasks. One recent project involved a study for Pulte Homes, that involved NZE strategies for a Del Webb Senior Community.

Ms. King's projects under construction include several that started prior to the recession. The construction of a second phase of a Senior Living (72 Independent Senior Apartments) is underway in South Chicago for Pathway Senior Living. It will be occupied by the end of year. The first Phase was completed at the end of '09 and is a Supportive Living Facility for frail seniors. The first phase received the Silver Level of LEED and the second phase is also pursuing Certification with both buildings contributing to the South Chicago LEED Neighborhood Development Pilot.

Ms. King has been the recipient of many awards, most recently the Mindful Metropolis' Readers Choice Award for "Best Green Architect". In 2008, she was also featured in i4design magazine as one of the "Suite Sixteen" which called her a "sustainable magician" because most of her work is created with shoestring budgets. CWA has a gallery on line that highlights the work of their members, <http://www.cwarch.org/HTML/membersgallery.html>. To see more to see more of Ms. King's work with Harley Ellis Devereaux go to www.hedev.com and www.greenworkstudio.com.



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[Events]



Photography courtesy of Cassandra Specht

"Striking a Balance" panelists from left: Kim Haig, Dorothy McCarty, Scott Prestangen, Lina Grigaitis, Marsha Spencer, and Rachel Branagan.

Striking A Balance

by Kim Haig, owner of kbh Architects

The combination of parenthood and architecture turned out to be a hot topic at the Hafele showroom this past July. A panel of architect/parents convened in front of a crowd of seventy to discuss how to avoid the pitfalls and successfully navigate parenthood while maintaining a presence in the world of architecture. Rachel Branagan moderated the panel discussion with Scott Prestangen, and four women and CWA members: Lina Grigaitis, Kim Haig, Dorothy McCarty and Marsha Spencer. The six parents represented a wide spectrum of parenthood, from new moms with very young kids working part time, to a single dad with a twelve year old and his own firm, to full-time architects with college and high school age kids.

Some audience members asked the panel how to approach the architect/parent dilemma at work with an employer. Though architecture firms vary widely in their approach to maternity/paternity leave, the panel agreed that approaching your boss with an open mind and communicating you and your family's needs clearly helps to sort out the best solution for leave and childcare arrangements. While big firms may offer some paid leave or disability pay, the best benefit in small firms is that you receive unpaid leave with, hopefully, a job still waiting when you're ready to return to work. And, smaller firms tend to be more flexible in finding childcare arrangements.

Marsha Spencer offered some insight into the far more generous benefits available to Canadians, including partial pay for 12 months, which prompted many in the audience to consider emigrating north. While the panel had different approaches for working with small children at home, from working out of the house to full-time daycare and even changing jobs to accommodate a new schedule, everyone agreed that it is generally easier to get licensed before having children.

In any case, parenthood will, by necessity, bring a shift in priorities. When children arrive they tend to take center stage and something has to give- either the 60 hour work week adjusts, or a spouse or caregiver steps in to fill the gap. While this sacrifice can be a difficult decision, it is also a very personal one, and each parent has to decide what works best for them. Some of the panelists started their own firm to gain more flexibility in their schedule, and some chose jobs close to home to make juggling easier. Dorothy McCarty offered the sage advice that if something isn't working out for you, try something else! She described her transition from a larger firm to a smaller one when the kids were little, and then back into corporate architecture when they were older. One humorous technique she used with her children while working at home, to help them decide whether to interrupt her work process or not, was to tell the kids, "Don't bug me unless you're bleeding!"

One of the common struggles with parent-architects is between the esteem of working versus the happiness found in parenthood. A portion of the discussion focused on how working moms often feel guilty for not being with their children all day, but believe other areas of their life would suffer (such as self-esteem) without working, and they are often compelled by economics as well. Kim Haig shared that she stopped feeling guilty when the kids got into high school and she realized that they had turned out alright, but she also felt strongly that architecture was an integral part of her life and compelled her to continue working throughout their childhood.

By the end of the evening, no perfect solution was offered, but with patience each architect has the skills to discover their own custom solution. It was a lively discussion, and, based on survey feedback, a useful one as well in encouraging architect/parents to utilize their creative skills in striking their own life/work balance.

CWA thanks Hafele and Sherry Kaye for generously hosting "Striking a Balance," donating a laser distance measurer for the raffle, and all the delicious goodies!

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