

Q & A with Allen Eskew, Recipient of the 2013 LSU College of Art + Design Distinguished Alumni Award

1) What does receiving the Distinguished Alumni Award mean to you?

Recognition of a body of professional work.

Since graduating from the architecture department in 1971, I have devoted 40-plus years to the study of architecture. I've been fortunate to make contributions throughout our state, our region, and to the national conversation. With my partners and studio staffs, we have enjoyed the adventures of invention, creativity, and learning. We are proud of our creative roots here in South Louisiana, a place of amazing cultural diversity and natural beauty.

2) Which of your career accomplishments are you most proud of and why?

The vibrancy of our creative studio.

Since the founding of my first firm in 1986, we at Eskew+Dumez+Ripple have continued to grow our practice from our studio setting in New Orleans. We've been fortunate in numerous project successes and development of client relationships. However, my proudest achievement is the ongoing stability of our firm and its continued interest in creating community and fostering cultural diversity.

3) What inspires you to continue to give back to the LSU College of Art + Design?

My personal commitment to the power and influence of academic mentorship.

Key professors in the School of Architecture gave me my earliest grounding and curiosity for the fundamentals of design. The care and encouragement I received from my first studio instructor, Professor Gene Metz, was pivotal as he instilled an attitude of optimism. From Professor Jack St. Martin, I was challenged to the power of holistic thinking. And from Professor Robert Heck, a gift of encouragement and endorsement. It was Professor Heck that nominated me for a 1969 Historic American Building Survey Fellowship for documenting the architectural fabric of Nantucket Island off the Massachusetts coast. That summer's fellowship, upon reflection, altered my personal horizon as I embraced the power of travel and the educational value of preservation studies.

These three individuals represented some of the strongest mentoring I received during my formal educational adventures. I continue to support the LSU College of Art + Design because I am a product of personal mentoring and hope that today's students are finding similar moments of encouragement that will help to frame their future careers.