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**AIA Central
Oklahoma**

A Chapter of The American Institute of Architects

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**AIA HONORS THOSE IMPACTING THE
ARCHITECTURAL PROFESSION AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

Oklahoma City -- The lights went out at Will Rogers Theatre on Friday but that didn't stop the American Institute of Architects, Central Oklahoma Chapter from holding their 2017 AIA Honor Awards Program. AIA holds their awards ceremony to recognize and thank those who work to improve the built environment and the profession of architecture. Storms knocked out power but AIA used cell phones and candles to light the room and honor these very deserving individuals, companies and organizations.

The **Solomon Andrew Layton Award** is given to an architectural firm which has distinguished itself over the past five years, to the betterment of the profession and community through leadership, vision and design. This year's award was presented to **Rees Associates, Inc.**

In November of 1975, Dr. Frank Rees founded REES. From the very beginning, they have been dedicated to delivering exceptional design solutions to their clients. REES is now a thriving mid-sized architecture, planning and interior design firm, but their focus remains the same – building lasting partnerships with their clients.

Rees Associates gives back to their community. It's always been a priority and has a permanent spot as one of their corporate values. In addition to their volunteerism, they provide leadership in the community, through organizations like Leadership OKC, AIA Central Oklahoma, Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence, ACHA and Leadership OKC's Loyal program.

Rees is also making an impact through design. Jay Johnson, Former VP and COO of Stillwater Medical Center says, *"Our success would not be possible without the work of REES. Our campus has improved and become a source of pride in Stillwater because of Rees' design leadership."*

The **William Wayne Caudill Award** is meant to recognize and honor an individual AIA Central Oklahoma member who has displayed a long-standing commitment to the betterment of the profession and the well-being of architects. **Fred Schmidt, FAIA of FSB** was presented with this year's William Wayne Caudill Award.

Within his community, Fred Schmidt recognized that architecture could be a unique tool in teaching citizenry a creative approach to everyday problem-solving while learning about the benefits of a quality architectural environment. He has challenged civic, community, and professional organizations to become aware and involved in the quality of architecture in their respective communities.

Fred's design philosophy is: "I believe architecture, and therefore every architect, has a responsibility to its communities and to a shrinking environment of the world community. Architecture touches the life of world citizens on a daily basis; they are born in it, live in it, learn in it, work in it, and recreate in it. The quality of architecture directly affects the quality of our lives and our communities. As architects, we are stewards of the built environment and must be diligent in creating public awareness of the positive virtues of a quality built environment and of the value of the architect's role and contribution to that environment."

Fred has given countless hours over the course of his career to promoting the value of architects and the role they play in building better communities. This along with Fred's love of the profession of architecture and his commitment to AIA is why the selection committee felt he was so deserving of this honor.

The **B.H. Prasad Honorary Award** is presented to individuals, businesses or organizations who have contributed to the betterment of the architectural profession, the community and the built environment. This year's honoree, the **Okie Mod Squad**, gives their time, talent and resources to promote architecture in Oklahoma.

The Okie Mod Squad formed in 2007 when a small group of mod-minded friends began gathering in each other's homes to discuss mid-century design and architecture. The group grew so much that in 2009, they created a Facebook page, started an Instagram account, and developed a website. Their Facebook page now has over 3,700 followers.

Over the years, the Mod Squad has organized open houses, architecture tours, parties, a Modern Swap meet, architecture presentations, and the Oklahoma Modernism Weekend, all to promote Oklahoma architecture. In addition, the Mod Squad has worked with Preservation Oklahoma, the Central Oklahoma Chapter of the AIA, and the Oklahoma City Foundation for Architecture in efforts to save some of our best architectural icons.

The **Keystone Award**, is awarded to recognize a general contracting firm that has displayed a consistent level of quality in their area of practice that exceeds normal standards, and elevates the creative design of the architect by cooperation and skill. This year AIA honored **Smith & Pickel Construction**.

The Smith & Pickel philosophy emphasizes that all are members of a team working together toward the common goal which is building the safest, most economical, and highest quality projects. Smith & Pickel Construction believes the quality of the project is determined by the relationship between the owner, architect and general contractor. Smith & Pickel Construction has worked with a variety of Oklahoma architects to produce quality architecture with projects like, Chesapeake Boathouse, Classen Curve, Bob Moore Auto Group and Dean McGee Eye Institute.

The **Robert M. Lawrence Volunteer Award** is given to an individual who has exemplified the unselfishness of volunteering of his/her time and talents to promote the programs of the AIA Central Oklahoma throughout the past year. This year's honoree, **Geoffrey Parks, AIA** has a long-standing commitment to AIA.

Geoff was instrumental making AIA Central Oklahoma's new office space, with a street front, in Midtown, a reality. Geoff worked many hours to help get the office ready for AIA. He was there weekends and evenings painting, planting and cleaning. In addition to Geoff's work on the office, he co-chairs the Local Advocacy Committee and serves on several other committees.

This year's Honor Awards Program was part of Architecture Week. Architecture Week is held each year to showcase the role that architects and architecture play in everyday lives.

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AIA Central Oklahoma is a 450-member professional organization committed to serving the community and the profession by promoting excellence in, and public awareness of, the built environment through quality architecture.