

LEDDY MAYTUM STACY ARCHITECTS

Leddy Maytum Stacy Architects announces the passing of Marsha Ann Maytum, FAIA, Founding Principal and environmental and social justice design advocate.

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LEDDY MAYTUM STACY Architects sadly announces that architect Marsha Maytum, FAIA (1954-2024), died on February 10, 2024 after a three-year odyssey with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS).

Kira Gould, Hon. AIA, a friend of the firm, writer and strategist dedicated to advancing design leadership and climate action, offers this remembrance:

Ruth Bader Ginsberg said, in a now-famous quote: "Fight for the things that you care about. But do it in a way that will lead others to join you."

In many ways, Marsha embodied this quote. Her passionate commitment to deploying the power of design to address two of the most pressing challenges of our time - the climate emergency and social justice - gave her a deep tenacity and purpose. Her impact on both the built environment and the profession of architecture is indelible; her influence on legions of colleagues and others continues to ripple.

Marsha was a national leader in design, advocacy, practice, and the profession. Her award-winning practice focused on environments for civic and educational institutions, as well as special needs housing. In the early 1990s, she was a pioneering advocate for the sustainable adaptive reuse of existing and historic structures such as the Thoreau Center for Sustainability at the Presidio of San Francisco. Her drive to create architecture for everyone led to several first-of-their-kind projects serving people with disabilities, including Sweetwater Spectrum in Sonoma, Calif., a new residential model for people living on the Autism spectrum. She relentlessly campaigned for an understanding of design as a holistic endeavor -- an activity with social and environmental implications, not just material and aesthetic ones. She was an empath of the highest order, applying her skills and visions toward advancing the profession of architecture with persistence, rigor, and diplomacy for the benefit of all. She dedicated her career to dismantling the split between design and environmental and social issues. She transcended the day-to-day practice of architecture, thinking and acting more broadly on behalf of the future of the profession. This manifested in tireless advocacy work through the American Institute of Architects and other groups, and numerous trips to the Hill in Washington, DC, to talk with legislators about design, climate, health, and community.

Her quiet, tenacious brand of leadership is notable, especially in a profession where ego often proliferates. Marsha's modeling that form of design leadership has powerfully influenced many people in the industry. It is as if her enormous humility gave her a changemaker superpower, to the point that thinking "what would Marsha do" is something others actually do. Her influence was never showy or loud. She seemed to prefer to focus the energy on the actual work -- the design, the advocacy, and the collaboration. And the results showed.

One of Marsha's most visible and enduring achievements was her leadership role in getting the landmark 2019 Resolution for Urgent and Sustained Climate Action adopted by the American Institute of Architects. Marsha was chair of the AIA Committee on the Environment at the time. She was one of the key leaders of the campaign for the AIA membership and AIA Board to embrace the Resolution, which in turn led to the shaping and installment of the Framework for Design Excellence. Nearly 30 years after COTE's founding, the AIA made this historic shift toward defining design excellence as inclusive of health, environmental, and equity issues. The Resolution passed with overwhelming support. Marsha taught throughout her career and was always a champion of the next generation. Her work to secure Architecture 2030 support for the COTE/ACSA Top Ten for Students Competition helped get that program its footing; it's now in its tenth year.

Architect Julie Hiromoto, FAIA, of HKS, collaborated with Marsha through AIA and COTE. "Marsha's vision, mentorship, and generative force to get things done lifted many of us, helping us to see and realize the positive change that is possible," she says. "She helped us understand what we -- and architects together -- can do to change the world and empower the next generation."

Her firm, LEDDY MAYTUM STACY Architects, has won hundreds of awards, including many AIA COTE Top Ten Awards. She was quoted in the AIA reports, "[The Habits of High-Performance Firms](#)" and "[Lessons from the Leading Edge](#)," as well as many books about design and sustainable design. In the book *Practice with Purpose: A Guide to Mission Driven Design* (ORO Editions, 2023), Marsha, along with her husband and partner, Bill Leddy, and their partner, Richard Stacy, described their approach to building a mission-driven practice. LEDDY MAYTUM STACY Architects is considered a model of this approach; they earned the AIA's Firm Award in 2017.

Architect Carl Elefante, FAIA, of Quinn Evans, and 2018 President of the American Institute of Architects, references the book as context for her influence. "*Practice with Purpose* states that everything begins with good intentions, in fully realizing the obligations of the public trust vested in the architecture profession," he says. "But appreciating our obligations is not all it takes to deliver on them. Perseverance and passion are even more essential. I deeply admired Marsha's open mind and heart, her excitement and curiosity in ferreting out the best outcomes, and her determination to make constructed places that realize worthy ideals."

For further information, please contact marketing@lmsarch.com.

<https://www.architecturalrecord.com/articles/16112-newsmaker-marsha-maytum-on-the-architect-as-advocate>
<https://alsnetwork.org/spotlight-on-marsha-maytum-faia-leed-apa-leader-through-design-social-justice-and-als-advocacy/>