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A New Path Forward for the School of Architecture Founded by Frank Lloyd Wright

The "School of Architecture" is changing more than just its name

The School of Architecture at Taliesin has formally dropped the 'Taliesin' component of its original name to be more widely recognized as a renowned graduate degree program rooted in its founder's philosophies. It is now known as "The School of Architecture" founded by Frank Lloyd Wright as the Taliesin fellowship in 1932.

The School of Architecture was established at Taliesin as an apprenticeship program by Frank Lloyd Wright and his wife, Olgivanna Lloyd Wright and served as a launching point for many of the world's premier architects since its founding. The new name pays homage to the school's profound history while in a Wright-like fashion paves the way for uncharted exploration in ways unique to **The** School of Architecture.

The change occurs both in name and in physical location as The School of Architecture has severed ties with the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation and will relocate to the nearby culturally significant sites in Arizona that are stewarded by The Cosanti Foundation: Cosanti in Paradise Valley and Arcosanti, in Mayer.

New President Chris Lasch who had been Dean of The School of Architecture at Taliesin since 2017, will lead The School in the new academic year.

"Being in residence at Cosanti and Arcosanti will allow the school to continue its tradition of hands-on experimental architecture and to focus, as both Soleri and Wright did, on the relationship between the natural world and the human-made environment, the role of craft and "making" in architecture, and the use of experimental materials and technologies. Our students are encouraged to respect and work within the landscapes around them while developing their own innovative concepts and projects," said Lasch. "Our collaboration with the school is a welcome link between our shared past and a bonded future. Paolo Soleri, Wright's one-time apprentice, possessed a similar passion for exploratory architecture that we now have the opportunity to bring to life in the form of a graduate degree program offered by - The School of Architecture," said John Walsh, former board chairman of The Cosanti Foundation.

Building on Frank Lloyd Wright's revolutionary designs and architectural concepts, The School of Architecture will continue to offer an immersive program in architecture that teaches and practices 'learning by doing.' Board of Governors members Victor Sidy and Bing Hu have worked tirelessly to prepare a path forward for the school, which had previously announced its closure in January 2020, all the while ensuring the school's strong connection to its founder is kept intact. After public outcry from several distinguished graduates of the school and many others in the architecture world, it reversed its decision to close and its leadership became dedicated to establishing a new name, new location, and new vision.

"We are grateful to our new board members for their tremendous generosity which has allowed us to identify a new campus through our collaboration with The Cosanti Foundation and permits us to

implement additional intensive programming for our students.” says Victor Sidy, former head of school and dean of The School of Architecture, and current managing principal of Victor Sidy Architect.

Graduates themselves, Hu and Sidy recognize the significance of Frank Lloyd Wright’s influence and how, by weaving that into a one-of-a-kind curriculum, builds on a legacy that is key in setting the school apart.

Hu, the Vice Chair for the Board of Governors at The School, states “As a graduate, I wanted my role to enhance the experience that future students would have here. We reached out to other alumni with the hope of adding strength and diversified expertise to the school’s esteemed Board of Governors. I am excited for our students to have the opportunity to learn from these great minds.” Hu is principal of H&S International architectural firm and one of the most sought-after architects internationally.

Newly Elected Board Member October 2020:

Pat Neal, founder of Neal Communities, is respected for his business leadership, public service and philanthropy. A graduate of the Wharton School of Finance at the University of Pennsylvania, Pat is a former state legislator and senator. Neal Communities was named America’s Best Builder by *Builder Magazine* and the National Association of Home Builders. In 2015, Neal Communities received the prestigious Builder of the Year Award from *Professional Builder Magazine*. In addition to leading his successful business, Pat Neal is a major philanthropist. Over the past decade, he and his companies have contributed more than \$8 million in support of local community organizations, such as: The American Cancer Society, Women’s Resource Center, 4-H Club, Child Protection Center, and the Boys & Girls Clubs of Manatee and Sarasota.

Newly Elected Board Members August 2020:

Bing Wang is currently an Associate Professor at Harvard’s Graduate School of Design. Her design firm, HyperBina Design Group, is credited with the winning design proposal for the National Library of Israel in Jerusalem, and the design of He’nan Public Security Institute Campus in Zhengzhou, a 400-acre communal neighborhood in Shanghai. Dr. Wang has worked as an investment consultant at Lehman Brothers and is one of the founding principals of KaiLong REI and YoungYou Investments LLCs, a private equity company based in Shanghai, focusing on investments in the real estate industry and equity investments in media production companies.

Jason Donofrio has worked for public advocacy and environmental organizations in Arizona, Maryland, Vermont, and Colorado, leading teams on crucial campaigns affecting environmental conservation, civic engagement, consumer protection, and higher education affordability. As a director of various development departments, he has helped to oversee multi-million dollar fundraising campaigns, develop and advocate public policy, and has experience cultivating donors to support organizational programs. Donofrio is the former Director of Development at The School and is the current Chair of Development.

Sarah Herda is the Executive Director of the Graham Foundation, the largest foundation in the United States committed to awarding project-based grants to individuals and institutions working at the forefront of architecture. The Graham Foundation also produces public programs to foster the development and exchange of diverse and challenging ideas about architecture and its role in the arts, culture, and society. In 2009, she was named one of *Icon Magazine’s* 20/20—a list of 20 architects and 20 designers who are changing the way we work and think. Herda serves on The School’s Academic and Audit Committees.

Elected to the Board in April 2020:

Bing Hu is a school alumnus, owner of the architecture firm H&S International, and is one of the most

sought-after architects nationally and internationally. Since establishing the firm in 1994, Hu has completed over three hundred projects with a construction value exceeding \$10 billion. His projects have been honored with more than twenty major international and regional design awards, including multiple Gold Nugget Awards, and Excellence in Masonry and Architecture Awards. Hu is Vice Chair for The School's Board of Governors.

Chris Koch is the current President and CEO of Carlisle Companies Inc. With revenues of over \$4.1 billion, Carlisle Companies Inc. manufactures and distributes construction materials, transportation products, and general industry products. Koch serves on the Finance Committee for The School and has committed to contribute construction materials for the Student Shelter Program, a unique design-build program at the core of The School's master's thesis.

Jim Benson currently serves as President and CEO of Benson Botsford and sits on the Board of Directors of ValMark Financial Group. Benson is the former President and CEO of John Hancock Life Insurance Company and co-author of the bestselling book, *22 Keys To Sales Success*. Benson serves as the Treasurer of The School of Architecture.

John Sather is the owner and senior partner at Swaback, PLLC, and has been involved in virtually all of its award-winning community design and architectural projects for over twenty-five years. His most well-known projects include the complete renovation of the Arizona Biltmore Hotel, the flagship station design for Univision Television Group, both Forest Highlands clubhouses, and the new golf and cultural community of Martis Camp in Lake Tahoe. Sather is an alumnus of The School.

Qingyun Ma is a designer, educator, and was named one of the world's most influential designers by *BusinessWeek*. His experience and involvement on an international level make him a leader in the design community. He founded the firm MADA s.p.a.m which designed and built modern buildings and urban communities, garnering worldwide recognition. Ma was the Dean of the School of Architecture at the University of Southern California. He established the American Academy in China, a base for visiting scholars to facilitate their research and foster academic exchange. The American Academy in China will be supporting a student exchange program with The School of Architecture.

Victor Sidy is an alumnus and former head of The School. Sidy is an architect, planning/development consultant, educational leader, and advocate for quality in the built environment. He has worked with artists, architects, and planners in Russia, the Netherlands, France, Vietnam, and throughout the United States. Sidy hosted a television series on architecture for EMG Satellite Television that aired from 1996 to 1998 and was the youngest member of *Architecture Magazine's* 1999 feature, "Young Americans."

About the School of Architecture

The School of Architecture aims to change the world through architecture. Originally founded by world-renowned architect Frank Lloyd Wright in 1932 as an apprenticeship program, the graduate school provides a program in architecture that teaches and practices learning by doing, new ways of looking, an ability to honor and build with the landscape and experimentation. The school offers a professional project-based Master of Architecture degree, with a focus on organic architecture and is accredited by the National Architectural Accrediting Board and the Higher Learning Commission. Above all, the school aims to serve its diverse communities by making its environment more sustainable, open to all and beautiful.

About The Cosanti Foundation

Since 1965, the nonprofit Cosanti Foundation has been dedicated to influencing the way our built world is created in balance with the environment. Through its scholarly publications, engaging public programming and stewardship of the architecturally-significant sites, Cosanti, in Paradise Valley, Arizona and Arcosanti, near Cordes Junction, Arizona, The Cosanti Foundation continues its important work of influencing the way cities and communities are shaped by the guiding principles of arcology. Arcology – a portmanteau of architecture and ecology – is a term coined by Cosanti Foundation founder and theoretical architect, Paolo Soleri (1919-2013) and promotes exhibiting ecological accountability, leaving a limited carbon footprint, demonstrating resourcefulness, and learning by doing.

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