

THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS NEWS

ROMALDO GIURGOLA

WINS AIA GOLD MEDAL--

ARCHITECTURE'S HIGHEST AWARD

Contact: Pete McCall
(202) 626-7465

For Immediate Release

WASHINGTON, D.C., December 3, 1981--Internationally recognized architect Romaldo Giurgola, FAIA, partner in the firm of Mitchell/Giurgola Architects, New York City and Philadelphia, today was selected to receive The American Institute of Architects' highest award--the Gold Medal.

Giurgola was chosen by the AIA Board of Directors "in recognition of most distinguished service to the architectural profession or to the Institute." The award, which may be given to an architect from any part of the world, will be presented to Giurgola next June during the 1982 AIA national convention in Honolulu.

Giurgola, 61, is the Ware Professor of Architecture at Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture and Planning. He is the 43rd person to receive the Gold Medal in the 75 years since it was first bestowed.

In the statement of nomination, Giurgola was described as "a practitioner and partner in a firm whose record of awards and competition wins is outstanding." The latter include the AIA Headquarters Building in 1965, the 1974 competition for the Wainwright Building addition to the Missouri State Office Complex in St. Louis, and most recently the worldwide competition for Australia's new Parliament House in Canberra.

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1735 NEW YORK AVE. N.W.
WASH. D.C. 20006
(202) 626-7300

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In winning the Australia prize, Mitchell/Giurgola (in association with Australian architect Richard G. Thorp) was selected over 329 entries. The winning design was cited by the jurors as "outstandingly successful in all aspects...and brilliant in its simplicity."

Among the architectural designs for which Giurgola has been honored are the American College of Life Underwriters, Bryn Mawr, Pa.; the United Fund Headquarters Building, Philadelphia; the Mission Park Residential Houses at Williams College, Williamstown, Mass., and the University of Washington Law School, Seattle. This year, in addition to receiving the Philadelphia Chapter/AIA Merit Award for his design of Strawberry Square in Harrisburg, Pa., Giurgola's firm also was awarded a silver medal for the Wainwright State Office Complex and an Honor Award for the Lukens Steel Administration Building in Coatesville, Pa., by the Pennsylvania Society/AIA.

The firm's list of national AIA Honor Awards includes Columbus East High School in Columbus, Ind.; the Adult Learning Research Laboratory in Bryn Mawr, Pa., and the Penn Mutual Life Insurance Co. Tower, Philadelphia. In 1976, Mitchell/Giurgola received the AIA's Architectural Firm Award--the highest honor the Institute confers on architectural firms that have consistently produced distinguished architecture over a 10-year period. Their work, which has been shown in every major architectural publication in the world, includes commissions in Italy, Columbia, Brazil and Venezuela.

Romaldo Giurgola was born in Rome, Italy, was educated at the School of Architecture of the University of Rome, graduating with honors, and then received a masters degree from Columbia University, New York, in 1951. In 1958, Giurgola became a partner with Ehrman B. Mitchell Jr., FAIA, in the Philadelphia firm Mitchell/Giurgola Architects. Later a New York office was established.

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"Since then his career has been multifaceted," said the AIA Board statement. "He has contributed to the architectural profession as an educator and administrator, as an author, as a superlative draftsman, as an enthusiastic AIA participant, and as a designer who pushed the esthetic limits. He is respected and admired by the young and not so young and by modernists and post-modernists in Europe, North and South America, Asia and Australia.

"A particularly endearing quality of Giurgola's work is that it exhibits and combines a profound respect and acknowledgement of the past with a truly crisp and optimistic view of the future." This was especially significant in his firm's selection as the architectural design consultant for the U.S. Capitol planning group, headed by Architect of the Capitol George M. White, FAIA. The group has just completed the comprehensive U.S. Capitol Master Plan and has presented it to the Congress for adoption.

Giurgola has said, "Our buildings are reflections of aspects of life, expressing continuity, history and the desire of a future. They are the manifestations of projects for life that people everywhere pursue. In them all is design, from the texture of a wall to the caliber of a space. They aspire to be architecture."

For his "notable contributions to the advancement of the profession," Giurgola was elevated to fellowship in the AIA in 1975. He also bears the honorary title of "Commendatore," conferred on him by the president of Italy in 1972 for special merit in the fields of architecture and teaching.

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While conducting a successful practice and teaching architecture, Giurgola has written extensively on urban planning and architecture. His most noted book is Louis I. Kahn (coauthored with Jaimini Mehta in 1975). Two new books by Giurgola--Saarinen and Saarinen, and Mitchell/Giurgola Architects--will be published in 1982. He also authored the important essay, "Reflections on Buildings and the City: The Realism of the Partial Vision," in the Journal, Perspecta, in 1975.

A professor of architecture for almost 30 years, Giurgola taught at Cornell University from 1952-1954, and the University of Pennsylvania from 1954-1967. He chaired the architecture department at Columbia University from 1967 to 1972 when he was named the Ware Professor of Architecture. He was a resident professor of the American Academy in Rome in 1977, and now serves on Princeton's advisory council.

Giurgola is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Board of Trustees of the American Academy in Rome and the Accademia Nazionale di San Luca in Rome, an honorary society dating from the sixteenth century whose international membership is selected on the basis of outstanding individual contributions to the arts.

As recipient of the AIA Gold Medal, Giurgola joins a distinguished roster including Frank Lloyd Wright, Louis Sullivan, Mies Van der Rohe, Eliel and Eero Saarinen, Louis Kahn, Philip Johnson and I.M. Pei.

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