

Acceptance Speech by Principal Lawrence W. Speck, FAIA, on behalf of the firm

I want to tell you how wonderful it is to work as part of a large firm—or at least as part of this large firm.

Architecture is a broad, complex field requiring a vast array of different talents, skills, capabilities and inclinations. It demands the exercising of every part of the human brain. This is tough for a small group of people because they might find themselves really stretching to cover all of the bases.

It is extraordinarily liberating to be able to find some piece of the larger architectural pie that you love and are really good at and to be able to spend your time doing that one thing very well. But that is only possible when you can be surrounded by a group of diverse people who possess all of the other capabilities architecture requires and who are equally good at what they love to do. When you get a firm full of diverse, committed people who, collectively, cover all of the bases, then a real synergy can occur and the whole really does become greater than the sum of the parts.

We are an extremely diverse group at Page Southerland Page, and it starts with the five principals. Matt Kreisle, my partner in the Austin office, is a master at marketing. I have never known anyone so perceptive, so savvy, so thorough and so intense in pursuing a job he wants us to get. He exercises amazing attention to detail and has a hunter's instinct for stalking the prey and capturing it. His passion for getting the very best work out there for the firm is contagious.

John Cryer, my partner in the Houston office, has an impeccable business mind. He is deeply knowledgeable about economic forces, financial markets, managing projective data and systematic decision-making. His great strengths are in logic and analysis and in calm, long-term decision-making. John enjoys being a part of a larger business community and feels solidarity with them, particularly when special needs arise.

My partner in our Washington office, James Wright, is a deeply intelligent and worldly person. He has worked around the globe in many challenging situations. He has the depth of knowledge, personal integrity and unflinching dignity to deal with the volatile and complex global practice of architecture. Nothing fazes him at home or abroad.

Mattia Flabiano, my partner in our Dallas office, is the ultimate “people person”—genial, affable and sincerely interested in colleagues and co-workers around him. He is a real team-builder with a keen sensitivity to what motivates people and makes them want to pull together for a common cause. He makes work fun and exciting.

This diversity is pervasive throughout the firm. Among the Associate Principals and Senior Vice-Presidents there are very accomplished experts in programming, master-planning, healthcare planning, engineering for demanding high-tech environments, project management, building systems and many other areas. Each person contributes mature, sophisticated perspective and judgment about our complex field, but it is only together that we represent a holistic picture. From the seasoned pros to the freshest intern, we rely on each other to create a comprehensive view of what architectural practice can be in the twenty-first century.

We are not only diverse in our skills and perspectives, but we are also very rich in our range of backgrounds. That richness stimulates a creative environment where differences provoke questions, alternatives and open-mindedness.

We come from sixteen different countries—not just the expected ones these days like England, China and Korea, but also some pretty exotic places like Thailand, Turkey, Honduras and Peru. We are a young firm with 56 per cent of our people under forty, but we also have 8 percent who are over 60. The oldest among us is 72 and the youngest are 22, and it just happens that the oldest is the grandfather of one of the youngest. So we are still a family business like the Page Brothers were in the early twentieth century.

When we celebrated our centennial in 1998 our motto was “The Next 100 Years.” Over the first decade of that next 100 years, under a very focused leadership team at the top, we have made extraordinary strides in reinventing ourselves and creating a strong direction for the firm in the twenty-first century. We look forward to that same kind of constant reinvention for the next nine decades.

