



ASPIRE 2026 DESIGN AWARDS

Jury Chair

Steve Raike FAIA, LEED AP BD+C

Lake Flato; Partner

Steve Raike draws from over 20 years of experience as an architect and educator to design projects of varying scales, including residential, commercial, institutional and civic work. He enjoys exploring maximum efficiency in design and thoughtfully applies these principles to achieve high-performance buildings. Pairing his architectural experience with previous experience in the construction industry, Steve provides high value to projects through thoughtfully designed architecture that demonstrates the craft of construction with details and materials.

A passionate educator, Steve has lectured throughout North America on tectonics, craft and building performance. He also leads Lake Flato's in-house education programs and has developed a curriculum that cultivates the firm's tradition of merging the craft of architecture with innovative, high-performance design.

Aspire Design Awards Committee Chair

Dennis Stallings, FAIA

Principal | Design Director Emeritus at Clark Nexsen

Dennis Stallings is Principal and Design Director Emeritus for [Clark Nexsen](#). Throughout his career, he championed a collaborative and inspiring design process focused on innovative solutions for higher education, institutional, and cultural clients. His leadership helped elevate the standard of design, resulting in elegant and practical buildings that consistently exceeded expectations.

A lifelong advocate for design excellence, Dennis's work has earned broad professional recognition. Under his design leadership, his firms received more than 100 design awards, including 20 during his tenure at [Perkins&Will](#) (formerly The Freelon Group) and more than 80 at [Clark Nexsen](#), which was named the 2017 AIA North Carolina Firm of the Year. In recognition of his personal contributions to architecture and the profession, he received two of the state's highest honors: the 2016 Kamphoefner Prize for his commitment to modern architecture and the 2022 F. Carter Williams Gold Medal.

Dennis's commitment to architecture extends deeply into academia and professional service. Since 1993, he has served as a Professor of Practice at North Carolina State University, mentoring generations of aspiring architects. He also continues to support the profession through his participation on AIA design award juries, the Kamphoefner Committee, and his role as a Southeast Regional Representative for the AIA College of Fellows.



Jury

Austin Chase

Design Principal, Raymond Jungles, Inc.

Austin grew up in Virginia, where the bustling metropolis of Washington DC converges with the peaceful rural landscape. This unique juxtaposition sparked his interest in the interplay between people, architecture, and nature, eventually leading him to pursue a degree in Landscape Architecture from Virginia Tech.

Since 2023, he has worked for the award-winning and internationally recognized landscape architecture firm Raymond Jungles Inc. (RJI), where he serves as Design Principal. Rooted in an ethic of stewardship of the land, RJI creates landscapes that respond to surrounding natural systems while restoring ecological balance at a human scale. The firm's work is known for immersive tropical planting, habitat creation, and timeless landscapes that blur the boundaries between architecture and nature.

John Harrison, FAIA, RDI, LEED Fellow

Senior Manager, BEE Incorporations

John is an architect and sustainability leader with over 30 years of diverse experience developing sustainability and certification solutions impacting over 5,000 projects globally for dozens of brands and companies. He authored the Starbucks LEED for Retail Volume Build Program and led the execution team responsible for corporate wide sustainable strategies and LEED certifications. With over 1,600 certified stores in 22 different countries, the program certified more projects than any other private company in the world.

In private architectural practice, John spent 13 years at Mithun, Inc. in Seattle working with a variety of retail, commercial and institutional clients and helped spearhead the infancy of LEED Certifications for many key projects including: REI, Miraval Resort and Spa and the IslandWood Environmental Learning Center. John is currently the Senior Manager for BEE Incorporations in charge of the EMEA region working with multinational corporations on certifications, custom sustainability solutions and compliance reporting. John is a nationally and internationally recognized speaker on sustainability at scale and has led presentations to building professionals on subjects related to LEED volume certification and sustainability at the national AIA convention, multiple Greenbuild conferences and a variety of other industry events. John is a dedicated environmental advocate serving on the boards of EarthCorps and the Northwest Natural Resource Group and a member of the AIA COTE Advocacy Task Force.



John Sanders, FAIA

Sanders Pace Architecture, Partner

John is a founding partner of Sanders Pace Architecture, created in 2002 primarily for focus on design opportunities within Knoxville's Downtown Central Business District and its immediate surrounding neighborhoods. His passion for design can be seen on the challenging projects that he and his firm have been involved within those areas. Along with his professional investment comes his personal redevelopment endeavors of several properties within the district that have been successfully completed, returning blighted or unusable properties back to vibrant reuses.

His influence is evident in the thoughtful rehabilitation of forgotten, neglected buildings in fringe neighborhoods, elevation of overlooked project typologies, and energetic service through teaching and civic engagement. John's work is meaningful, creative, and inspirational. John is an active member of the AIA and has served on the State board and planning committees and as local chapter president. He has served and chaired on several AIA chapter design award juries across the country. John is a graduate of the University of Tennessee where he has served as an Adjunct Lecturer. He continues to participate as an invited studio critic and juror for the College of Architecture and Design. John was elevated to the AIA College of Fellows in 2018 in recognition of his contributions to the profession and was awarded the AIA East Tennessee's Gold Medal along with Brandon Pace in 2024 which is the highest honor that the chapter can bestow upon a member.

Erica Weeks

Green Building Certifications at Paladin, Inc. Director

Over the last twenty years, Erica has helped develop synergies and lead project teams to sustainable solutions that add value to building owners. Erica's keen ability to tackle the complexity of buildings through both design and construction has led to over 200 LEED certified projects. Erica volunteers her time and expertise as a board member of the MTSU Interior Architecture Advisory Board, a member of the Metro Nashville/Davidson County Sustainability Advisory Committee (2024-2028), Chair of the USGBC's WE TAG (2024-2026), LEED v5 Steering Committee (2024-2026), Vice Chair of MEP2040's Manufacturer/EPD Engagement & Advocacy working group (2025-2027), and will be AIA National's in-coming 2027 chair for the Building Performance Knowledge Community.

In recent years, Erica has volunteered with AIA National's Framework for Design Excellence cohort, developing sustainability action toolkits for the "every day" architect.

Erica holds a Bachelor of Architecture degree from UT Knoxville and is a licensed architect in TN and California. Erica also holds several professional credentials as fostered by her love of learning, teaching, and problem solving. [LEED Fellow, ASHRAE Certified Decarbonization Professional (CDP), AIA, NCARB, LEED AP BD+C, ID+C, HOMES, ND, O+M, LEED for Cities & Communities Pro, EDAC, WELL AP, SITES AP, Regenerative Design Certificate Holder, WEDG (Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines) Associate, ENV SP, Living Future Accredited (LFA) Professional, FITWEL Ambassador, TRUE Advisor [ZERO WASTE], USGBC Green Classroom Professional, ILFI Biophilic Design Certificate Holder]

In 2021, Erica was recognized as one of two individual Regional Leaders in the USGBC's "Big South" for her on-going leadership to create sustainable buildings and communities. She was named a "Shero" in Courage by the USGBC in 2020, and one of Nashville Business Journal's Women of Influence in 2017.