

PROFILE

DONALD K. CARTER, AIA, AICP

Firm: UDA Architects.

Training: B. Arch., Carnegie Tech; Graduate Studies, Urban Design and Regional Planning, University of Edinburgh, Scotland.

Personals: Married, two children.

Awards/Honors: AIA National Citation of Excellence in Design, 1988; AIA Pittsburgh Design Awards, 1986, 85, 83, 81; BOMA Building of the Year, 1986; Progressive Architecture Awards, 1986, 83; PSA Design Awards 1984, 82.

Chapter and Community Activities: PSA Board, 1984-present; AIA Pittsburgh Board, 1980-83; Chapter President, 1983; American Institute of Planning; Leadership Pittsburgh, V.P. of Alumni Assoc.; Foundation for Abraxis Board; Swisssvale Planning Commission.

Leisure Time Interests: I read a lot of non-fiction, work out at a health club and write long letters to my kids who are away at school.

Specialty: UDA is a diverse firm. We've de-



"I gladly traded in Modern Physics for the History of Architecture." Don Carter, AIA.

signed everything from office buildings to the Metropol nightclub. Our specialty is probably buildings of public assembly—LaRoche College Center, Liberty Center, the Jewish Community Center—places where the building itself has an internal life that involves the public. A lot of our work is urban design and planning, practiced on a national basis.

When and Why You Chose Architecture as a Career:

In high school I was very good at mechanical drawing and liked it, but I graduated in the post-Sputnik era when guidance counselors put people like me in engineering. I started at Carnegie and worked part time for an electrical engineer who worked for architects. We had a wonderful client—Stanley Pyzdrowski. He liked my drawing skills and suggested that I consider architecture. The next semester I transferred into architecture. Looking back, I'm glad I had the engineering experience—a lot of people ignore the technical side. But I gladly traded in Modern Physics for the History of Architecture.

Favorite Project:

Liberty Center. I was principal-in-charge from the very beginning when it was a competition to win the project. We assembled a complicated team of architects, engineers, hotel operators, developers, and representatives from the city. When the whole thing opened on New Years Eve, 1986, we had fire works and a laser show—it was exciting.

Favorite Pittsburgh Building:

I like everything by Richardson and Osterling. There's a little gem of Osterling's on Fourth Avenue—the

Magee Building. It has a very sophisticated rhythm to the facade, yet a playfulness in the details. That's my favorite.

Favorite Building in the World:

Fallingwater. There's a presence in that building—whether it's a spiritual or an emotional presence—the building itself is very much alive with the spirit of Frank Lloyd Wright. His buildings are like that wherever I've seen them.

Most Enjoyable Aspect of Architecture:

Getting the job right for the client.

Least Enjoyable:

There's a spreading cancer of litigation in construction. It's very expensive and time consuming. We all suffer from it.

World's Greatest Architect:

Frank Lloyd Wright. He had an incredible ability to merge ancient and modern forms. Though I've read *Many Masks*, a recent biography which talks about his personal failings, I still admire the art of the man. He was a giant in the twentieth century.

Most Aesthetically Pleasing City:

Edinburgh, Scotland—it has an unusual topography with a castle up on a rock. I especially like the completeness of the 18th century part of Edinburgh. At that time the city was the Athens of the North—the center of philosophy, art and architecture. Robert Adam designed a section of the city called New Town and some of the squares there are lovely forms. It's well tended—the grass is as green as you'll see anywhere and there are flowers all over.

Advice to a Student of Architecture:

Draw a lot, travel, work summers for architects or in construction, and learn to write well. Drawing and writing are architects' skills. We have to be able to do both well.

What Gives You Itchy Fingers:

It's not a building, but whole neighborhoods that displease me—Route 22 in Monroeville, McKnight Road and unfortunately, the Parkway West. The retail and commercial buildings that are going up and the standards that are being created in those strips are appalling. It's not the kind of environment we deserve in Pittsburgh—that horrible sprawl. There are techniques that work to deal with slopes, wooded hillsides, access, architectural and design standards. It isn't hopeless but it takes strict controls and talented people. Right now it's just run amuck.

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