



AIA Ohio  
Board of Directors  
400 W. Wilson Bridge Road  
Suite 120  
Worthington, OH 43085

Dear Directors,

AIA Columbus is proud to nominate Matt Toddy, AIA, for the AIA Ohio Mentor Award in recognition of his outstanding contributions and leadership in mentorship within the architectural profession and the local community.

Matt has demonstrated exceptional dedication and commitment to the advancement of young professionals. He played an instrumental role in launching the ARCHway program, a mentorship and leadership initiative that connects young architects and designers with firm leaders in the Columbus architectural community. It is a comprehensive approach to mentorship that also focuses on developing leadership skills for emerging talent through thought-provoking sessions. The ARCHway program will launch its fourth year in 2024.

The impact of the ARCHway program on our young leaders has been tremendous. ARCHway has proven to be an effective platform for architects at different stages of their careers to come together and engage in meaningful interactions. Participants have had the opportunity to strengthen their skills, explore different career pathways, build networks, and access valuable professional and personal resources. The program has provided a nurturing space for emerging talent to grow and develop into confident leaders in our industry. To date, over 30 young professionals have gone through the program. Of the 30, three have launched their own firms, 10 have moved into AIA Columbus leadership roles, an additional three are active in AIA Columbus committees, one founded the NOMAColumbus chapter, and many have been promoted within their firms.

In addition, Matt is very active in the AIA Columbus Emerging Professionals Committee. In 2023, he curated a series of programs connecting young professionals to Fellows and firm leaders, facilitating the transfer of knowledge, experiences, and best practices. The series has explored a range of relevant topics, fostering insightful discussions. The most recent session, a speed networking session, focused on bridging the gap between generations, finding your passion, and creating an inclusive work culture. This ongoing series is expected to continue bimonthly in 2023.

Matt exemplifies the qualities and attributes of an exceptional mentor. His unwavering support, guidance, and leadership have made a lasting impact on our profession, enabling young professionals to thrive and contribute to the architectural community. We wholeheartedly endorse Matt Toddy for the AIA Ohio Mentor Award and believe his contributions are deserving of this esteemed recognition.

Thank you for considering this nomination.  
Graciously submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hannah Ewwaraye".

Hannah Ewwaraye, AIA  
AIA Columbus President-Elect  
2023

## SUMMARY STATEMENT

**Matt is a nationally-recognized champion of young architects and emerging professionals. His experience as an innovator extends from practice to service, advancing the profession by mentoring future generations of architects. A passionate mentor, he inspires, empowers, and elevates architects and aspiring architects in Ohio and across the nation.**

## BACKGROUND

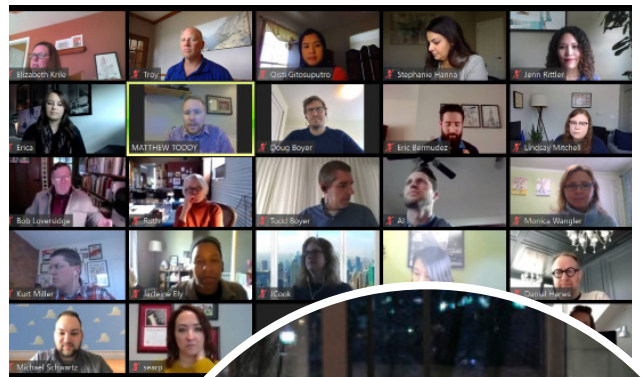
Through his professional and volunteer activities, Matt develops innovative practices and processes in a collaborative environment, whether at his firm, in his community, or in the AIA at the local, state, regional and national level. Matt leverages his passion for innovation as a means to inspire, empower, and elevate others through a variety of mentorship styles at all levels of professional development.

## MENTORSHIP IN EDUCATION

As a two-time graduate of the Knowlton School of Architecture (KSA), Matt is committed to eliminating barriers to professional practice. He provides students insight into the profession and opportunities to experience the day-to-day rigors of practicing architecture. In addition to his annual role as Alumni Mentor in the KSA Alumni Mentorship Program, which he has participated in for ten straight years, Matt has been invited to present at AIAS meetings on the topic of “What Firms Look For” and “What AIA Membership Looks Like Beyond AIAS”. Matt’s commitment to architectural education extends beyond the college level to K-12 programming. For eight straight years Matt has participated as a professional mentor in the East Fairfield Technical School’s Architecture & Construction Management program, where he coaches high school seniors through their capstone project, culminating with a schematic-design level presentation at the end of the school year. In just ten years of practice, Matt has directly mentored over 30 individuals pursuing architectural education at the high school, undergraduate, and post-graduate level or entering the profession as an emerging professional.

## MENTORSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Mentorship is a critical aspect of professional service, and as an Institute leader, Matt has led, created, coached, and participated in a wide range of mentorship programs throughout his career. In 2018, Matt addressed a deficiency in AIA Columbus programming and co-founded the ARCHway Mentorship Program – an innovative, hybrid mentorship and leadership development program that connects young architects and associates with firm leaders in the Columbus architectural community. Matt led a session titled “Shaping your Career” as a part of the 2020 ARCHway cohort. Through five years and three cohorts, ARCHway has directly connected 36 mentees with professional mentors in the Columbus architecture network. As AIA Columbus President in 2022, Matt led the development of a new Strategic Plan, which included advancing racial, ethnic, and gender equity in the profession, engaging emerging professionals



and elevating EP voices as strategic priorities. As the OVR Young Architect Regional Director for the national Young Architects Forum (YAF), Matt surveyed local components across the country to collect data on mentorship programming then leveraged that information to inform the development of the Align Mentorship Program, of which he served as a pilot member as YAF Strategic Vision Director.

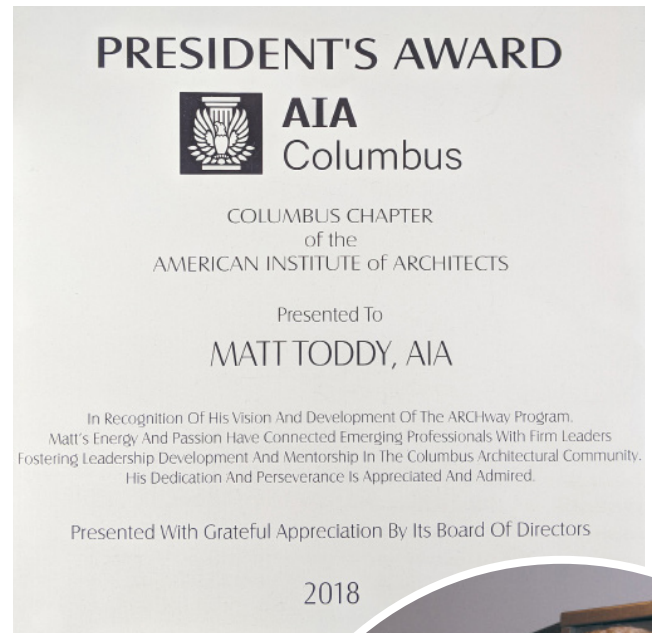
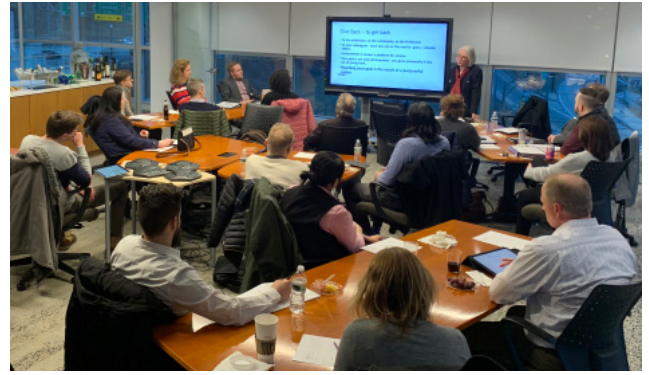
In 2021, Matt was recognized with the AIA Young Architect Award (YAA), which honors individuals who have demonstrated exceptional leadership and made significant contributions to the architecture profession early in their careers. After receiving the award, Matt established a YAA coaching program in Columbus to help other deserving young architects navigate the application process. Now in its third year, the program has successfully coached five young architects to receive the recognition. In 2022, Matt was invited to present the keynote to the AIA Houston Christopher Kelley Leadership Development Program. Matt developed an innovative workshop focused on identifying the intersection of personal strengths and passions, then developing a personal leadership brand that leverages those intersections. The keynote was met with enthusiasm, and Matt will present the workshop at the 2023 AIA Women's Leadership Summit in Boston, MA. Through his leadership in AIA Columbus and the AIA Young Architects Forum (YAF), Matt has directly and indirectly mentored over 150 architects and aspiring architects through the ARCHway Mentorship Program, the Align Mentorship Program, YAF Focus Groups, YAF committee leadership, and YAA coaching.

### MENTORSHIP IN PRACTICE LEADERSHIP

Matt believes mentorship is inseparable from the practice of architecture. Now in his second year leading Astra Studios, Matt develops innovative processes that drive staff engagement and development. Through seven years of firm leadership, Matt has led staff onboarding initiatives, staff development and retention initiatives, and team charrettes focused on finding efficiencies in the project delivery process. As Partner and Director of Operations at Astra Studios, Matt leads a team of eight architects and designers by designing innovative project management systems, and dedicates time to training staff in their effective use. Matt believes transparency is key to a team's success, and provides access and insight to the entire staff in matters of practice management, finance management, and business development. To work at Astra Studios is to be mentored in the practice of architecture.

“In recognition of his vision and development of the ARCHway Mentorship Program, Matt's energy and passion have connected emerging professionals with firm leaders fostering leadership development and mentorship in the Columbus architectural community.

John Meegan, AIA 2018 AIA Columbus President  
AIA Columbus President's Award



## ARCHWAY MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

### STRATEGY

In 2017, Matt and the Board of Directors of AIA Columbus discussed the increasing mentorship gap faced by young professionals in the Chapter. Matt and fellow Director Jenn Rittler, AIA collaborated to develop the ARCHway Mentorship Program – an innovative, hybrid mentorship and leadership development program that connects young architects and associates with firm leaders in the Columbus architectural community. To launch the program, **Matt secured \$6,000 in funding for the program from the AIA Columbus Board of Directors to supplement a \$5,000 College of Fellows Emerging Professional Grant.**

ARCHway emphasizes the importance of two-way mentorship, pairing advisors with advisees in an innovative speed-mentoring session. The program continues with a personal leadership and skills assessment, followed by the opportunity to set personal and professional goals. Subsequent ARCHway sessions discuss achieving diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace.

### IMPACT

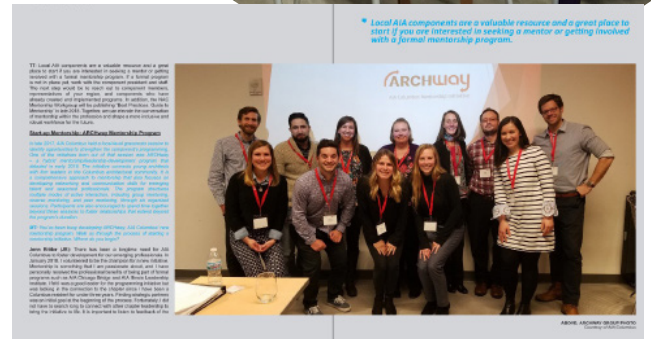
**65% of the 36 ARCHway graduates have become AIA committee members and chairs or lead on the Board of Directors.** The program's first edition was so successful that the AIA Columbus Board of Directors fully funded the program's second iteration in 2020. ARCHway is featured in the AIA Young Architects Forum publication CONNECTION. Matt arranged for the program to be featured at the 2019 Ohio Valley Regional Convention Leadership Development Workshop, which provided an opportunity for emerging professionals to develop leadership skills they need to cultivate and advance their careers. **The 2019 CACE Annual Conference recognized ARCHway as an exemplary program** and featured it in a panel of component-level mentorship programs.

“ARCHway made one thing really clear: be a lifelong learner.”

Michael Schwartz, Associate AIA  
ARCHway Class of 2020

ARCHway showed me the value of in-person collaboration to develop teams with diverse strengths to address design challenges in the community.

Kurt Miller, AIA  
ARCHway Class of 2020



Below: Matt led the transition of ARCHway sessions to virtual format in the wake of Covid-19, proving that mentorship is critical - even moreso during a pandemic



## CHRISTOPHER KELLEY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

### STRATEGY

Many architects, regardless of career stage, find themselves working through inefficiencies and mis-application of their individual skill set, leading to frustration, burn-out, and departure from the profession. This paradigm is exacerbated by the difficulty of identifying quality mentors who are interdependently invested over the long term.

In 2022, Matt developed an interactive workshop to guide AIA Houston Christopher Kelley Leadership Development Program Scholars. These scholars identify their passions and distinguish how they are uniquely wired to lead in the practice of architecture, while also exploring how learned skills and capabilities inform their individual “lane” of practice. The Scholars workshopped these concepts through a series of “Leadership Labs” where they designed an architectural practice built on these passions and skill sets. **The CKLDP Scholars left equipped to design a career steeped in passion, informed by skill sets, and capable of replication through mentorship.**

### IMPACT

Matt’s workshop served as the CKLDP keynote. Leveraging the success of the program, Matt has adapted the workshop into a conference-friendly format. **He will present “Leadership Lab: Designing an Intentional and Meaningful Career” at the 2023 AIA Women’s Leadership Summit in Boston, MA.**

### AIA YOUNG ARCHITECTS FORUM

**As the 2023 Chair of the AIA Young Architects Forum, Matt leads the largest-ever YAF committee through the implementation of a new 5-year strategic initiative.** Matt leads and oversees an Advisory Committee of five Directors and two chairs while providing vision and coordination to a committee of 49 Young Architect State Representatives.

Prior to his role as Chair, Matt served as Strategic Vision Director for the YAF, where he led a Focus Group of five Young Architect Regional Directors in the development of innovation-focused programming. In this role, **Matt provided direct mentorship to national AIAS leadership through the development and execution of the YAF/ AIAS Chaos Sessions (2020) and Pod[chaos]t Series (2021).**

During Matt’s tenure as Young Architect Regional Director, he worked with the Community Focus Group to research mentorship initiatives across the country. This research led directly to the creation of the Align Mentorship Program, a joint effort of the YAF and the College of Fellows focused on pairing similar-career stage young architects with a cohort of Fellows. **Matt served as a pilot member of the Align program, which now serves 107 young architects across the country.**



### Your Personal Leadership Brand



Top: Matt at the AIA Houston CKLDP Keynote Presentation

Above: Matt presenting as Chair at the 2023 YAF Annual Meeting

## IMPACT

**Matt's leadership of and through the YAF have directly and indirectly expanded mentorship efforts nationwide.** His service as Chair of the group during this year of significant transition has **facilitated an expansion of the committee and the Align Mentorship Program, ensuring that over 50 new young architects have the opportunity to enter into a mentorship relationship.**

## AIA COLUMBUS EMERGING PROFESSIONAL COMMITTEE

### STRATEGY

In addition to his leadership of the ARCHway Mentorship Program, Matt serves as an advisor to AIA Columbus' Emerging Professional Committee. Matt meets with committee leadership on a regular basis to strategize content and plan sessions for the group. **Most recently, Matt helped the committee develop a series of sessions in conjunction with AIA Columbus' Fellows Committee to facilitate mentorship and networking and create a safe environment for emerging professionals to learn from their more experienced colleagues.**

At the May 2023 speed networking session, Matt served as a table leader where he discussed his experiences as a firm and Institute leader with several small groups of emerging professionals. Future plans for the series include an informal "Picnic with the Fellows" and a sketching happy hour - both focused on creating space for mentorship between AIA Columbus' most-experienced and least-experienced members.



Top: Matt with the 2023 YAF Committee

Above: Matt presented to the KSA AIAS Chapter on "What Firms Look For" in 2017.

Below: Matt emceed the 2018 AIAS Quad Conference Kickoff Party

Below Left: Matt shared his leadership experience with AIA Columbus EPs



## IMPACT

At the most recent session, Matt spoke with 20 emerging professionals while providing access to 3 other local leaders. **So far in 2023, the series has reached over 40 members**, and demand is high for additional sessions.

## KSA AND AIAS MENTORSHIP

### STRATEGY

At the Knowlton School of Architecture (KSA), Matt collaborates with the school's administrators to provide mentorship for undergraduates enrolled in the school's Alumni Mentorship Program. As an alumni mentor, he organizes office and construction site visits and portfolio and resume development. **Matt also works closely with AIAS chapter leadership, and helped to execute the 2018 Midwest Quad Conference.**

### IMPACT

**Matt has mentored 12 undergraduates through the KSA Mentorship Program**, many of whom have continued on to practice architecture or to pursue a Masters of Architecture. Matt presented the KSA Mentorship Program at the 2019 CACE Annual Meeting as an exemplary model for bridging the mentorship gap between academia and the profession.

## EFCTS SENIOR CAPSTONE PROJECT

### STRATEGY

**Matt's formative experience as a vocational student in his high school drafting class motivates him to seek opportunities to pay it forward by empowering high school students exploring architecture as a career.** At the Eastland-Fairfield Career & Technical School, Matt works with high school seniors enrolled in the Architecture & Construction Management program. Matt advises students, helping them to develop program, massing, plan, and elevation studies for their senior capstone project. At the end of the semester, Matt attends the senior capstone presentations, providing constructive feedback alongside other practicing professionals, further equipping students for the rigors of collegiate-level design education.

### IMPACT

**Since 2014, Matt has mentored eight students through the high school vocational program**, several of which have continued on to study architecture as a college major.



Top Right: Matt at a KSA Alumni Mentorship Program mixer

Right: (3) of Matt's EFCTS seniors and their capstone projects



26 June 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

I am delighted to write this letter of recommendation for Matt Toddy as a candidate for the AIA Ohio Mentorship award. I have known Matt since 2018, when we both began our tenure on the Young Architects Forum (YAF) as regional representatives. We now work together closely on the YAF Advisory Committee (AdCom), the national leadership group for the YAF, and I am confident in endorsing him. His qualifications as an exceptional mentor shine through his work on the YAF, and his engagement nationally with programs like the Christopher Kelley Leadership Development Program (CKLDP) and the Women's Leadership Summit has given him a platform to lead mentoring conversations nationwide.

Matt's leadership within the YAF has been truly outstanding. While serving as the Strategic Vision Director, he guided his workgroup to create a new podcast in collaboration with AIAS, and through creating the Future Forward Grant through a partnership with the Large Firm CEO Round Table (a consortium of the 60 largest firms in our industry). The grant is a \$10k investment in innovative practice, product, or process, and it is instrumental in funding new ideas that will shift how we work. I became the Director of Strategic Vision last year, and Matt's dedication, innovative thinking, and attention to detail were instrumental in my success as I stepped into the role. He has been a steady guide and mentor, patiently answering all my questions and going above and beyond to ensure my success and the initiatives I lead.

While serving as the Chair of the YAF, he leads the committee through focus groups and content creation initiatives. His natural ability to inspire and motivate others has influenced the development and professional growth of 50+ national leaders. Matt consistently embodies the core values of the YAF, including mentorship, leadership, and collegiality, which have fostered an environment of collaboration and excellence.

Additionally, Matt played a pivotal role in guiding the YAF towards a new strategic initiative called "Architects in Action." Through his visionary thinking and strategic planning abilities, Matt successfully spearheads this initiative, which engages young architects to have a positive impact on society. His ability to inspire and mobilize others towards a common goal is a testament to his leadership acumen and his unwavering dedication to the betterment of our profession and our society.

Both Matt and I spoke at the prestigious CKLDP at AIA Houston, where we discussed the importance of mentorship and self-determination about one's career path in our field. Matt's ability to articulate his ideas, coupled with his passion for mentorship, left a lasting impression on the audience and showcased his ability to inspire and influence others positively. Matt will also be presenting at the upcoming WLS in October of 2023 with me. His involvement in this event highlights his commitment to fostering diversity and inclusivity within the architectural profession. Empowering women in leadership roles and his willingness to share his expertise and experiences make him an invaluable asset to the architectural community.

In conclusion, I wholeheartedly recommend Matt Toddy for any opportunity that aligns with his exceptional skills, unwavering dedication, and passion for architecture. His remarkable qualities as a leader, collaborator, guide and visionary make him an outstanding candidate for this prestigious mentoring award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Kate Thuesen'.

Kate Thuesen, AIA, NOMA, LEED AP, NCARB  
Talent Acquisition Leader, DLR Group  
National Director of Strategic Vision, AIA Young Architects Forum



June 21, 2023

AIA Ohio  
Design Awards Jury  
400 W. Wilson Bridge Road  
Suite 120  
Worthington, OH 43085

RE: Recommendation Letter for Matt Toddy, AIA

Dear AIA Ohio Mentorship Award Jury,

I enthusiastically recommend Matt Toddy, AIA for the AIA Ohio Mentorship Award. Matt's passion for mentorship and the future of the architecture profession is apparent through his involvement in the design community. His efforts set a framework for maximizing advocacy and empowering the next generation of architects.

Matt is a driver for positive change. With Matt, we co-founded AIA Columbus ARCHway in 2018. Embracing inclusive collaboration with equitable principles for growth, ARCHway connects emerging professionals with firm leaders to encourage leadership development. Through Matt's guidance this hybrid mentorship/leadership program deploys multiple modes of interaction – group mentoring, reverse mentoring, and peer mentoring – in combination with guest lectures, panel discussions, and implicit bias training. Matt's leadership of ARCHway has profound impact on the Columbus Design community as the program has generated a pipeline of future leadership.

As the needs of the emerging professional evolve, so does ARCHway. The program framework allows for flexibility to accommodate changing needs while delivering high results. Through Matt's efforts, the AIA Columbus ARCHway program has created a legacy through three editions since its inception. 65% of ARCHway graduates are involved in AIA leadership, such as serving on the AIA Columbus Board of Directors. Through a sound financial model, the program endures and has plans for its next iteration in 2024.

Matt is an excellent candidate for this accolade. He consistently displays leadership and tireless contribution to practice and service. His vision, expertise, and passion would be an asset to the AIA Ohio Mentorship Award program, and I am honored to support him.

Graciously submitted,



Jennifer Rittler, AIA  
Associate Principal, Moody Nolan  
AIA Columbus President 2023



June 26, 2023

AIA Ohio Board of Directors  
400 West Wilson Bridge Road  
Suite 120  
Worthington, OH 43085

RE: Recommendation for Matt Toddy, AIA for the AIA Ohio Mentor Award

Dear AIA Ohio Board of Directors,

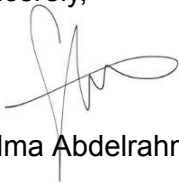
Hello, my name is Salma Abdelrahman I am a recent graduate from the Ohio State University with my Master's in Architecture, in 2022.

I was introduced to Matt Toddy back when I was an undergrad during my junior year attending an AIAS meeting; Matt and his colleagues had come in and spoken to us about joining AIA Columbus after graduating as well as hosting a Q&A for students regarding internships and first job qualifications. The way Matt presented and answered the questions made the students feel less stressed about applying for jobs and helped them feel comfortable talking to firms at the Career Fair.

The summer before my senior year, I attended the AIAS Grassroots Conference in Washington, D.C. as the AIAS President for the OSU Chapter. There they mentioned the importance of having a mentor you can rely on during your career as an architect, and how important it was to reach out to people you think can be great mentors. During that time, I reached out to Matt asking him if he could be my "real life mentor", and he graciously accepted, even though he was slightly confused by the "real life" part. To me, that meant a mentor in Architecture for all stages of my career. Matt has been a great mentor for the past 4-5 years. Matt has guided me through a lot of struggles that students go through such as applying for internships, applying to grad schools, and trying to find a field of interest within Architecture. He is someone that I went to constantly for advice and guidance. I also knew that everything Matt would tell me was his honest opinion and he would never lead me astray.

Matt is a mentor that I feel lucky and grateful to have, he is a hardworking person that puts all of his efforts into his career and passion to help others. Not only is Matt a great mentor to me, he is also a great role model that I strive to become like him one day.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Salma Abdelrahman', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Salma Abdelrahman, Associate AIA

June 27, 2023

AIA Ohio Honor Awards Jury

**AIA Ohio Mentor Award  
Matt Toddy, AIA Nomination**

It is my pleasure to voice my support for Matt Toddy for the AIA Ohio Mentor Award. Matt has been an exemplary leader within the Institute and the profession, guiding many young professionals within the industry to grow and better themselves. I have had the opportunity to volunteer with Matt as part of the AIA Young Architects Forum and witness the work he has done over the past several years to encourage and mentor students, emerging professionals, and other young architects not only at home here in Ohio but also across the country.

Personally, I consider Matt a mentor, even if we have not been paired together as part of a formal mentoring program. Since 2020 when I stepped into the role on the Young Architects Forum previously held by Matt, he has consistently been someone that I have relied on for support, guidance, and encouragement during my own involvement in AIA and within my career. And I know that I am not the only individual who has benefited from Matt's leadership, as he has always had a drive to fulfill the core values espoused by the Young Architects Forum of mentorship, leadership, and collegiality. During Matt's tenure as Strategic Vision Director for the Young Architects Forum, he saw the value in utilizing the creative minds of students and young professionals outside of our committee to look at the future of practice and used that opportunity to connect with and mentor future members of the profession.

As he has moved into being chair of the Young Architects Forum he has had the challenge of shepherding a new strategic vision for the committee - Architects in Action; Catalyzing for Change - in which the committee is focused on advocating for and empowering young architects in the profession, providing opportunities for young architects to grow through mentorship, education, and communication, and making the profession a more inclusive and equitable place for all who wish to join.

I highly recommend Matt for the AIA Ohio Mentor Award in recognition of all he has done to support and mentor his fellow members within the profession.

Sincerely,



SETH DUKE, AIA

Architect | Bialosky Cleveland

Ohio Young Architect Representative | AIA Young Architects Forum

**RUTH M. GLESS, FAIA Emeritus**

41 East Lincoln Street  
Columbus OH 43215

24 June 2023

John Orsini, AIA  
President, AIA Ohio Board of Directors  
400 Wilson Bridge Road  
Worthington OH 43085

Re: Matt Toddy, AIA  
2023 AIA Ohio Mentor Award

Dear AIA Ohio Board,

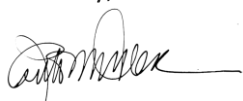
I am honored to support Matt Toddy, AIA for the AIA Ohio Mentor Award. Matt has dedicated his professional life toward mentoring his fellow professionals. Mentorship is integral to everything he does as an architect; it permeates his own practice, and it extends beyond as he focuses and his energy toward the wider profession.

As a 2021 Young Architect Award winner – Matt believes in lifting up those who follow. Consequently, in his practice, he focuses his energy in bringing up younger staff up in knowledge of design, building technologies, and business management. He has developed in-house strategies devoted to the skills of project delivery and business development, to ensure that staff have a holistic understanding of what goes into the art of building and of running a firm.

As a volunteer, Matt takes this mentorship beyond his own practice. He advocates for the next generation of leaders at all levels of the AIA, creating opportunities for emerging professionals and young leaders to make their voices heard at the local component, state component, and National level. An example – he established a YAA coaching program in Ohio to assist other young architects in the application process, a program that has successfully helped five young architects in winning the award. He has taken the ideas in this Leadership Development Program on the road – to AIA Houston and soon to the 2023 Women’s Leadership Summit, to be held in Boston. Also on the national level, he chairs the Young Architects Forum, which has a mentorship priority toward equipping young architects across the country to be leaders in the profession and in the community.

There are many examples of Matt’s leadership either creating programs or disseminating them – all focused on developing practice management or leadership skills at all levels of the profession. I heartily recommend him for the Mentor Award, and I am excited at the prospect of supporting him toward Fellowship when the time comes.

Sincerely,



**Ruth M. Gless, FAIA Emeritus**  
2021 AIA Ohio Gold Medalist  
Chair, AIA Columbus Fellows Committee  
Co-Chair, AIA Ohio Young Architects Award Advisory Committee