

KENNETH NEUMANN, FAIA



Kenneth Neumann, FAIA, died of cancer on January 19, 2007. The funeral was held at Temple Shir Shalom in West Bloomfield on January 21, 2007. He is being buried in Chicago on January 23, 2007.

Ken was born November 6, 1939 in Chicago, Illinois. He is survived by his wife of 42 years, Beverly; his son, Scott Neumann (and granddaughter Sydney); his daughter, Susan Kaplan (and son-in-law Ross Kaplan, and grandchildren Perry and Aaron); his son, Paul Neumann; and his sisters Ceil Rothbart (and her husband Gary Rothbart) and Lois Katz (both of Chicago).

Ken Neumann, FAIA, founder and Principal in Charge of Design at Neumann/Smith Architecture, dedicated nearly four decades to creating architecture of excellence. A charismatic leader, he energized and challenged his colleagues, architects and engineers alike, to inspired solutions for his clients' problems. In 1977 he was one of six Young Architects honored by Building Design & Construction; in 1979 he was the youngest person elected to the prestigious national AIA College of Fellows; in 1989 he was the recipient of the AIA Detroit Gold Medal, its highest honor; in 1999 he was the recipient of the AIA Michigan Gold Medal, its highest honor. In 2006, the American Institute of Architects, Detroit Chapter, chose Ken to receive the Blessing Award named after Charles Alexander Blessing, FAIA, the most prominent figure in American city planning, and one of Ken's early mentors.

Ken was inspired early to care about the importance of design at the University of Illinois (BArch) and the Harvard Graduate School of Design (MArch) where he won numerous competitions and awards, including the Grand National Award in the Ruberoid Urban Design Competition.

Ken began his professional career as an Architect-Planner with the Detroit City Planning Commission. His master plan of Detroit's Cultural Center and Central City received a National Award of Honor from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Subsequently he worked as Architect/Planner for the Chicago architectural firm Loeb, Schlossman, Bennett & Dart where he developed the master plan of the port city of Asdod, Israel.

He was a partner in his own firm, Rossen/Neumann & Associates (with the late Sanford Rossen), before the age of thirty. Ken's ability to look beyond the ordinary and his unwavering commitment to the highest standards of professional practice are manifest in important commissions for a wide range of clients such as the SPO World Headquarters for General Motors Corporation, The National Corvette Museum, the New Detroit Science Center, the Livonia Community Recreation Center, the Holocaust Memorial Center in Farmington Hills, the new Warren Civic Center, and numerous projects in the City of Detroit including the renovation of the central plaza of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan's downtown campus, the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, two Student Residence Halls and the Campus Fitness Center at Wayne State University, the redevelopment of DTE's downtown campus, the One Kennedy Square.

Throughout his career he has been involved with professional organizations including the National AIA Committee on Design (1973-83), Institute Honor Subcommittee (1981-83), AIA Michigan Awards Committee (1975-86), AIA Michigan Design Retreat (1989-94), AIA Michigan Fellows Committee (1980-95), Regional Representative to AIA College of Fellows (1994-97), Member and Chair of AIA College of Fellows Jury (1997-99), Harvard Graduate School of Design Alumni Council, and guest lecturer and juror at several university architecture schools.

Under his leadership, the firm earned over 150 design honors including the 1997 AIA Michigan Firm Award for having "consistently produced distinguished architecture". The firm's work has also been published in numerous books and periodicals including Architectural Record, PA, AIA Journal, Architecture, House Beautiful, Better Homes & Gardens, Elle Decor and design journals in Italy, Poland, Germany and Japan.

Contributions can be made to:

Michigan Architectural Foundation
in Honor of Ken Neumann
553 East Jefferson
Detroit, Michigan 48226
OR: in care of Neumann/Smith Architecture
400 Galleria Officentre, Suite 555, Southfield, Michigan 48034.

OR:
The Beaumont Foundation
in Honor of Kenneth Neumann

I have been with Ken for 26 years when I joined the Rossen/Neumann firm. We have been partners in Neumann/Smith for twenty years and shared a work station for most of that time. Our partnership has always reflected the balance of the practical and the creative that is one of the hallmarks of our work.

Ken felt that "our work has strength of purpose and great integrity in its living up to buildings appropriate for our century and kind of lifestyle."

Ken has touched many an architect in our city, and many of those have gone on to influence their new firms.

I will miss him as a brother and our family at Neumann/Smith will continue his legacy of design excellence for many years to come.

Joel Smith, AIA