



# Alabama Council AIA

## Orange Beach Nice Treat for Architects

The convention at Perdido Beach Resort was a much needed treat for our members.

The events began on Friday morning with presentations from Pete Choquette, AIA, LEED AP BD+C and Daren Draper, PE, LEED AP with the Epstein Group. Don Brown, FAIA, with Brown Studio Architecture and Robin White with Alabama Power also gave an update on the Building Code. We heard presentations by Block USA and had an interesting and entertaining watercolor presentation by Muir Stewart. The keynote address was given by Steve Dumez, FAIA, of Eskew Dumez Ripple, graciously sponsored by Auburn University's College of Architecture, Design and Construction. The opening reception in the tradeshow was sponsored by Henry Brick Company. The tradeshow was a wonderful time to relax and mix and

mingle and make new acquaintances.

Saturday morning was kicked off by Barbara Sable of RLI Design Professionals, sponsored by J.R. Prewitt and Associates. Members heard from Douglas Oliver of Morris Architects and learned more about the Rural Studio's 20K House from its director, Mari- on McElroy.

A summer beach shower didn't hold back from golfers enjoying the course at the Gulf Shores Country Club. Those who didn't want to play golf could relax and enjoy the ocean view or partake in a smaller watercolor presentation by Muir Stewart.

The Past President's Reception was sponsored by Alabama Concrete Industries Association and was held during the Alabama Architectural Foundation's Silent Auction. Afterward, the President's Dinner, sponsored by Alabama

Power Company, was another wonderful networking event.

Sunday morning wrapped up the convention with presentations by Kim McMurray, AIA, regarding updates to the Alabama Council AIA Disaster Task Force and an update on the Pratt City RUDAT Project. Cart Blackwell, from the Mobile Historic development Commission, ended our education sessions with a presentation on George Bigelow Rogers, Architect of the Mobile Renaissance.

If you were able to participate in this convention at Perdido Beach Resort, we are very glad you visited with us. Whether you are an AIA member, Associate AIA member, Affiliate, spouse or exhibitor, we thank you for coming to Orange Beach. We know your time is important and we appreciate you supporting your profession and the Council.

# Courtney Brett, 24, Recognized as Youngest Member of Architect Institute

by Emily Hill -- Press-Register

Daphne, AL - "Congratulations to Ms. Brett on being the AIA's youngest active Architect member."

The June 26 email to 24-year-old Courtney Brett from the American Institute of Architects was something that she'd been waiting for since being handed graphing paper and drawing tools at age 10. Born in Honolulu to a military family, Brett was constantly moving when she was young. But at every stop, teachers recognized that she was extremely bright. In fact, by the time she began high school in San Angelo, Texas, she jumped straight into the 10th grade, skipping ninth. And when 10th grade was over, said Brett, she found herself bored and looking for a challenge.

That challenge soon arrived when her parents pulled up stakes to move again.

Instead of starting at a new high school, Brett, straight out of 10th grade, went on to Mary Baldwin College in Virginia via an early admission initiative, the Program for the Exceptionally Gifted. She was a 14-year-old freshman. At age 16, she transferred to Auburn University's School of Architecture, being one of 40 students selected from among more than 300 applicants.

The next year, 2005, Brett participated in Auburn's acclaimed

Rural Studio, which builds innovative homes and other structures in impoverished areas of west Alabama.

"Architects learn to be stewards of the community. It really had a big impact on me as a designer," Brett said.

She graduated from Auburn in 2007 with a bachelor of architecture degree.

Her rapid rise and relative youth have garnered attention.

"Quite often, young graduates pursuing registration as an architect have many obstacles that delay them: career hurdles, family obligations, financial issues, and the like. It is a real tribute to Courtney that she established registration as a goal and accomplished it early in her professional career," said Cindy McKim, executive director for the Alabama Board of Architects.

Right out of college, Brett was recruited by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, one of the largest architectural firms in the world. She spent the next 2½ years with the firm in New York, on projects such as the New York Jets' training center, schools and hospitals, and a petroleum complex in Doha, Qatar, that she described as "a new city in the desert."

In 2010, Brett headed back South, to the Gulf Coast, marrying hus-

band Daniel and starting work for DHS Ventures as a director of design. Now, two years later, she's branched out yet again.

"I was really ready to be on my own as an architect," said Brett, of Daphne, who established her Casburn Brett Architecture firm this year, and has started taking projects within the past several months.

Matt Tinder, head of media relations with the American Institute of Architects, spoke words of praise for Brett's accomplishments. "Courtney is in the unique position to bring a level of diversity to the profession not often seen; her intelligence, skill, and talent matched with her youthfulness will provide her clients with a perspective that is rarely encountered," Tinder said. "We are excited and amazed at the potential Courtney possesses and will serve as an inspiration to an entire generation of architectural students entering into the profession."

Said Brett, "I just knew, since I was 10 years old, this is what I wanted to be. I believe design is problem solving. It helps me come up with creative solutions to problems in every aspect of life."

She is applying that creativity to her own life, as well. Brett said that she's setting out to design a house for her and her husband.