



Aggie Bonfire memorial among design winners

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Projects to serve a faith community, aid nature study and commemorate a disaster were recognized Thursday night with honor awards from the San Antonio chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

In addition, a vote by chapter members selected architect Robert H.H. Hugman's original designs for the River Walk for the inaugural 25-Year Award, for projects that have stood the test of time.

The River Walk visionary's widow, Elaine Hugman, accepted the award on his behalf, saying he would have felt it was the highest honor he could receive.

The design awards were presented at the Witte Museum on Thursday, a few hours after the invited jury finished its work.

Jurors were architect Muscoe Martin of Wallace Roberts & Todd, Philadelphia; Michael Wollaeger, former executive editor of Architectural Digest and now editor in chief of Western Interiors and Design; and architect Dan Wheeler of Wheeler Kearns Architects, Chicago.

The jury cited three projects for honor awards:

Fisher-Heck Architects was recognized for its work on restoration and renovation of San Fernando Cathedral and for the new Cathedral Center, on Main Plaza in downtown San Antonio.

"This is a great civic project, combining historic preservation, sensitive construction and creation of a wonderful urban plaza," the jury wrote. "The new building is a nice counterpoint to the cathedral, balancing a protective base with an open second level."

Lake/Flato Architects was cited for the World Birding Center in the Bentsen Rio Grande State Park.

The jury thought the use of Quonset hut shapes was "a bold idea, in scale with the surrounding landscape, but achieved in a light-handed manner." The jury added, "Ecological design strategies are well integrated with the building and site."

Overland Partners earned an honor award for the Bonfire Memorial at Texas A&M University in College Station.



Express-News file photo

The Bonfire Memorial in College Station was among the designs honored Thursday night.

"This project addresses both individual and community loss in a dignified and moving way. With powerful simplicity and gravity, it creates a strong sense of place," the jury wrote.

The jury issued one merit award, to Overland Partners for the Corinth Civil War Interpretive Center in Mississippi.

Wheeler said the jury appreciated the Corinth project's "integration between building design, landscape and site design and exhibit design."

The jury chose four projects for citation awards: Triple S Steel, an industrial project in San Antonio by Lake/Flato Architects; the Laguna Gloria-Driscoll Villa Restoration for the Austin Museum of Art, by Ford, Powell & Carson Architects & Planners; the Lenora & Walter Brown Asian Art Wing at the San Antonio Museum of Art, by Overland Partners; and the Capps Loft in San Antonio, by Poteet Architects and FAB Architecture.

The Jean Yates Community Center, by Debra J. Dockery, Architect, won the Mayor's Choice Award.

In addition to its awards for whole building projects, the jury recognized portions of three projects for the newly established "Divine Detail Award."

The San Antonio office of 3D/I took Divine Detail Awards for brickwork using custom-made five-sided bricks at the Valencia Hotel; and for the reconstruction of the "Sweet Grapes" sculpture niche in the Majestic Theatre foyer.

Although the official 25-Year Award went to Hugman's River Walk design, an online vote by San Antonio Express-News readers turned the "People's Choice" spotlight on the former USAA headquarters, now used by SBC, designed by Phelps & Dewees & Simmons and Atlee B. Ayres and Robert M. Ayres.

AIASA bestowed honorary memberships on three non-architects who have advanced the architectural profession.

The new honorary members are Robert Cadwallader, former president of the modern design company Knoll International; former San Antonio Mayor Howard Peak; and attorney Lewis Tarver, founder of the Architecture Foundation of San Antonio.

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