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"Bridging the Gap"  
Photographs By Elsa Dorfman

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# BRIDGING THE GAP

Photographs by

*Elsa Dorfman*

**H**ow do you build a community? For all the expertise of architects, planners, contractors, and developers, no one can provide the most essential ingredient: time. Only time can provide the shared experience and history that begin to define a community, and only time can foster the transmission of values that give a community its unique identity.

Boston is known nationally for the special character of its architectural community — its unusual degree of collegiality, activism, and commitment to the public good. These are values that have been transmitted from generation to generation in time-honored ways: through teaching, mentoring, and by example.

The idiosyncratic character of the architectural profession means that generational relationships in architecture probably stretch standard sociological definitions. Architects might not reach the height of their careers until their 60s and often continue to practice throughout their lives. Teachers and students frequently become later collaborators. Older architects know they can learn as much from their younger colleagues as they themselves can teach. The architectural community is small enough that individuals know one another personally or by only one or two degrees of separation. News of distinguished work travels fast.

The portraits on the following pages demonstrate the richness of the generational connections in Boston's architectural community. They were taken by Elsa Dorfman, an internationally recognized portrait photographer based in Cambridge, who works with a 200-pound, 20x24 Polaroid camera, one of only six in the world. Her work represents another kind of generational link, capturing moments in people's lives, revealing personalities, and preserving memories for a future time. It is no accident that her website (<http://elsa.photo.net>) is organized around the most recognized symbol of connections within the Boston community: the diagram of Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority subway lines, commonly called the T map.

— Elizabeth S. Padjen FAIA



*Tad and Tim. December 5, 2005.  
Museum*

Sharing a monthly bowl of chowder (and an occasional martini), Tad Stahl FAIA and Tim Love AIA also share the notion that architects can create their opportunities. Stahl, now an executive architect with Burt Hill, launched his practice in 1960 at the age of 30, when he

convinced British investors of the value of a Boston site; the resulting State Street Bank Building was the first major downtown building in 40 years. Love founded Utile, Inc. at the age of 40, using design skills to investigate underdeveloped parcels and present them to developers.



*Jane and Sally. January 5, 2006.  
bmlucas*

Both Jane Weinzapfel FAIA and Sally Harkness FAIA have been pathfinders for the younger women architects who have followed them. A founding principal of The Architects Collaborative, Harkness has balanced practice, teaching, motherhood (seven children), a term as the 1985 BSA president,

and books on sustainable design and accessibility. A founding principal of Leers Weinzapfel Associates and a 2002 Visiting Artist at the American Academy in Rome, Weinzapfel has similarly juggled practice, teaching, and motherhood. She is the 2006 president of the BSA.



*John and Brandy. January 18, 2016.  
John*

John Wilson FAIA and Brandy Brooks share a commitment to the profession's ethical responsibility to the social fabric of the city. Wilson, a principal emeritus of Payette Associates, founded the BSA Task Force to

End Homelessness; his work on social issues has been recognized by the AIA Whitney Young Award. Brooks is interim director of the Community Design Resource Center, an initiative supported by the BSA and the BAC.



*Michael and Maryann. December  
22, 2004.  
Dubuque*

Landscape architect Michael Van Valkenburgh and architect Maryann Thompson AIA met as teacher and student at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, later becoming employer and employee. Their shared design

sensibilities led to their current relationship as collaborators and friends — an example of the fluid nature of some generational relationships and the cross-disciplinary collaborations that are increasingly common in Boston.



*HAR and Hugh - Jan 11, 2016.*  
*D. Sullivan*

Hugh Shepley FAIA retired from Shepley Bulfinch Richardson & Abbott, the firm that was founded by his great-grandfather, H.H. Richardson. In addition to his vast influence on American architecture, Richardson's career marked the ascendancy of architecture as a profession. Shepley,

a past president of the Boston Society of Architects, has carried professional standards into the 21st century; his generous encouragement of his colleagues exceeds even the generous girth of his esteemed relative.



*Kyu Sung Woo, John Hong, Jinhee Park, January 18, 2006  
Delmar*

Kyu Sung Woo FAIA, John Hong AIA, and Jinhee Park share a relationship built on mentoring, friendship, shared experience, and family. Woo and Park are graduates of Seoul National University; all three are Harvard alumni. Woo once worked for Hong's father on urban design projects in

Seoul. Woo is the principal of Kyu Sung Woo Architects. Park and Hong, who are married, are principals of Single Speed Design. Woo recently won the Asian Culture Complex competition in Gwangju, Korea; Single Speed Design won an honorable mention.