

Sir James Irwin President's Medal Citation

South Australian Chapter



Australian Institute of Architects

Recipient Name: Mr John Schenk LFRAIA

Award given: 2015 Sir James Irwin President's Medal

Awarded by: David Homburg, SA Chapter President

Award Citation: The recipient of this year's Sir James Irwin President's Medal is well known to us. In fact it would be fair to say that he has influenced a significant number of architects in their most formative years - in some respects it was under his tutelage that architecture got serious.

A graduate of the University of Adelaide, he spent some of his early years in North America, completing a Masters in California, during which he began his career in education as a teaching assistant at an experimental summer residence college within the University of California College of Letters and Science.

He then went on to gain professional experience in several prestigious firms in the north east of the United States, before returning to South Australia to commence a long career in teaching architecture at the South Australian Institute of Technology (now known as the University of South Australia, a career that continues to this day.

But while his focus has been on education, he has also had an active role in the profession of architecture. He is a Life Fellow of the Australian Institute of Architects and has served as a Chapter Councillor, chaired the Education Committee, been a Sessional Commissioner at the South Australian Environment Resources and Development Court and spent study periods at the South Australian Housing Trust and (former) Department of Environment and Planning.

He has also completed numerous residential projects for clients around South Australia, some of which I know continue to delight their owners.

As this year's recipient, John Schenk's knowledge of South Australian architecture and design is encyclopaedic, a result of not only teaching many of us over the years, but also through his professional involvement and research in housing in its many forms.

And I know firsthand his capacity to fill in the missing detail in discussions, whether they be about people, projects or events.

Architecture at its best is a compelling amalgam of science, art, humanities and business. But those that get us going in the first place are the educators, the people who teach us and put fire in our bellies.

He exemplifies the intersection of education, research and practice. And so in recognition of this, it is with great delight that I award this year's Sir James Irwin President's Medal to one of our most regarded educators, Mr John Schenk.