

JWDA

October 10, 2006

Ms. Lorri D. Sipes, FAIA
Chair, 2007 Jury of Fellows
American Institute of Architects
1735 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20006-5292

Re: Norm Applebaum, AIA – Nomination to the College of Fellows


I have the honor of stating my unconditional support of the nomination of Norm Applebaum, AIA to the College of Fellows to you and the 2007 Jury of Fellows. I have followed Norm's career over the last twenty years (although he's been practicing for over thirty) with interest and curiosity. I have great respect for his unique vision and his work and have watched with interest and genuine admiration as his practice has matured and developed. Norm is a bit of hidden gem and has not received the wide acclaim that his wonderful design and attention to detail surely deserve.

Earlier this year I had the privilege and pleasure to attend a fund-raising event hosted at a home that Norm spent the last 8 years designing and building. To say that I was stunned and dazzled by this arresting piece of work would be an understatement. My initial impression was of an open aerie, surely the work of a world-class designer. As it began to sink in I recognized Norm's signature details from the cantilevered beams to the sensitivity to the indoor and outdoor environment to unique stain glass features to clerestory windows. I quickly confirmed that, yes, this was Norm's work. It was an amazing encounter to experience the project in such an unexpected manner (it's too bad that you and the jury will have not had that pleasure). I can say that I am completely surprised that this home has not yet been featured in a national magazine like Architectural Digest because the caliber of the work encompassed by this project is monumental.

Working in the modernist vein, Norm has re-imagined the vernacular – the California ideal of indoor-outdoor living. The technical aspects of his fundamentals and innovative use of space set him apart from run of the mill residential architects. To borrow a phrase from filmic culture, I would describe Norm as an auteur due to his primary control and responsibility for each project and also because of his matchless applications of architectural principles. Each one of his projects is a residential masterpiece.

Norm is a devoted designer, artist, and master-craftsman. He has elevated the profession nationally with his personal practice. His thorough devotion to his clients and projects, his aptitude at originating, expressing, and promoting innovative design when approaching a challenge, his dedication to invention, and his exceptional manner of supporting local appreciation for architecture, all set him apart from his colleagues. As such it is with great pride that I recommend Norm Applebaum, AIA for elevation to College of Fellows. After reviewing Norm's submission, I trust you will feel as I do, that his contributions to our profession are worthy of this great honor. I highly recommend that you give Norm your most favorable consideration.

Sincerely,



Joseph O. Wong, FAIA

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