

LINDA KEANE

FAIA | LEED AP

A CREATIVE ADVENTURE



Linda Keane, FAIA, artist, architect, and academic, is passionate about greening public imagination. Founder of architecture at the School of the Art Institute, she is co-founder of STUDIO 1032 with Mark Keane, University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, she contributes to sustainable initiatives along the Milwaukee-Chicago corridor. STUDIO 1032 combines architectural practice with animation and academic publishing for awareness of the complexities and importance of the design of the environment. Keane's socially constructed landscapes are rooted in nature, with artistic, environmental, educational, and entertaining intentions.

"The future of our world is in your hands."

HOW DID YOU DECIDE TO BECOME AN ARCHITECT?

I liked places and people, art and math, nature and the built environment. I was curious to learn more about their relationships.

CAN YOU TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOUR CAREER PATH?

My father was sending my mother and two older sisters through college. When it came to be my turn, my dream of going to college in Boulder Colorado in the mountains, or Cincinnati, Ohio, was dashed when he said I would have to start in state. At that time Notre Dame University wasn't accepting women, so the only school was the new College of Architecture and Planning at Ball State University. I attended there being the only girl in the class of 80. I had always yearned for a brother, so it actually didn't daunt me at all. I just wanted to learn!

What I didn't know was, as a new state school, it would be so progressive and instrumental, initiating a journey into the possibilities of architecture everywhere. The first-year studio combined landscape architects, urban designers, and architecture students which couldn't have been better. BSU/CAP offered field trip weeks where our class would travel to Montreal, New York, New Orleans, and other cities as an urban field experience. The college and industry partners supported competitions which funded a masonry scholarship to study brick housing in England post semester study abroad. BSU offered a semester abroad opportunity in London as well with side trips to Paris and Barcelona. My trip was under the guidance of a landscape architect who most certainly guided my path into ecological communities before I learned of landscape urbanism.

In addition, the 5 year M-ARCH professional degree program offered a 6 month internship which I did under the guidance of Orus O. Eash Architect in my home town of Fort Wayne, Indiana. I learned so much in his office of 5 and got such clear professional experience as well as a lifelong friend and mentor. Also, the college offered community based programs where students met and responded to community needs in small town Main Streets. It was a formidable and caring process.

I worked as an Architectural Designer for the firm of WOOLLEN MOLZAN & Partners in Indianapolis after graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Design and a Bachelor of Architecture from the College of Architecture and Planning at Ball State University. I was honored to receive the ACSA School Medal. I travelled to Turkey in 1979 on a Fulbright to study Geçi Condu or overnight housing. In Ankara, I stayed at the British Archaeological Institute, and learned about the field of archaeology and historic preservation.

An architect should have a desire to be constantly learning about the world, social cultures, history.

HAVE YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO BE IN A LEADER, OR HAS THAT CHANGED OVER TIME?

I have not always wanted to be a leader; I wanted first and foremost the freedom to learn. I wanted to be an explorer.

In continuing to acquire an understanding about the field - its practices, and its academic preparation paths, I chose to make the department more current and connected with an architecture program. I decided to be a leader to start a third architecture program in Chicago at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. It took me 20 years through five different Presidents and Deans to accomplish it. The process taught me the diversity of approaches to learning architecture around the world. In preparation, our faculty studied how an architecture program in an art school might be different. We set an agenda for offering ethical, environmental, ecological and engaged classes.

During this time, I led the development of the City of Chicago Green Roof Website with SAIC students. This 'seed' sprouted over 5000 Green Roofs throughout the city. Parallel to that, we worked with a team of students, teachers, administrators, and professionals to change a school referendum to a GREEN SCHOOL Initiative. Over 6 months, we worked to raise awareness of why Greening School Facilities and Campuses would benefit the community.

The referendum passed and we marched in the 4th of July Parade handing out free seeds and raffling several compost bins and rain water barrels while championing environmental education across all subjects.

Students took a faculty survey asking how teachers shared environmental education through the lens of their subject. While the school received a solar grant for photo thermal for the indoor pool, photovoltaic to offset electrical use, urban ag raised beds, bioswales, and rain gardens. It would take two more years for public /private financing of the state's first water filtering athletic field and bandstands with locker rooms for the field. At this point I stepped down from leading the department to co-found a non-profit to share E-learning resources for K-12 students that introduced scaffolding architecture and creative design careers connections. K-12 students in the US are design-denied (Design is not taught in most K-12 schools, yet it is our toolkit for the future) and nature-deprived (unstructured time of children outdoors is less than 30 minutes a week).

The early development of NEXT.cc STEAM by Design was supported by the NEA Design Education Innovation Grant, the Graham Foundation for the Advancement of Art and Architecture, a WI Art Education Grant, a USCGB Excellence in Green Building Education Award, the Art Institute of Chicago and the School.

When the Architecture program officially started, I stepped down to work on Green Initiatives with collaborating communities along the Chicago, Milwaukee, Madison, and Minneapolis Corridor, and to co-found the NEXT.cc STEAM by Design e-Learning Resource to empower youth voice and participation in building a better, more sustainable and just world.

HOW HAVE YOU WEATHERED THE CHANGING ECONOMIC CYCLES AND RECESSIONS?

By creating ecological, ethical, and engaged architecture courses in an Art School. By working with diverse creative professionals expanding learning experiences. And by collaborating with multi-professional teams to improve development of conservation and ecological education in the US and across the world. While working as an academic, and developing an eLearning resource for K-12, I also found the opportunity to work on green initiatives along the Chicago/Milwaukee/Madison/Minneapolis Corridor with many other organizations. Raising a family of 4 children, many dogs, and cats completed the circle of a full life.

My life expanded with my husband, Mark Richard Keane, head of the Frank Lloyd Wright Initiative of WI, and our four children. Children are the sun and the moon and the stars, and they all reawakened the need to be aware, appreciate, and steward kindness. I also thank all of the students I encountered who continued to challenge me to learn.

WHAT ARE SOME IMPORTANT MILESTONES YOU WOULD LIKE US TO KNOW ABOUT?

■ Authored the LUNCHLINE TELECOMMUNICATIONS Program at Ball State University and subsequently returned to teach there. I also became a registered architect, launched my own firm, and served as the design architect for the Hopewell Center. It focused on services for children and adults with special needs and was named in honor of the Indigenous people who resided on the site prior to our arrival.

■ Co-founding the NEXT.cc STEAM by DESIGN eLearning resource, I raise appreciation of the role of architecture in our health, society, and culture and to empower youth voice and participation to diversify the profession of architecture.

■ I lead the Department in Interior Architecture, expanding the curriculum into a professional Interior Architecture curriculum. I also began choreographing films on architecture for PBS with Mark Keane, building the first CD-ROM on Architecture by architects to share architecture with the public. Additionally, founding the third architecture program in Chicago at the School of the Art Institute, expanding the offerings to include, ethical, environmental, ecological, and engaged courses cross-listed with Art & Technology, Painting and Drawing, Performance and Visual Communication, and Fashion Design.

WHO MENTORED YOU ON YOUR PATH TO SUCCESS?

My parents, Charles Sappenfield, first Dean of BSU/CAP, Orus O. Eash Architect who left 600+ buildings in the world, Evans Woollen the III FAIA, Anne Taylor of Architecture and Children and the School Zone Institute, my children, my husband, many students, and countless women who I read about but never had the chance to meet in person.

IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WOULD HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY?

I have lived a bigger life than I could have ever imagined, and it is still opening up new possibilities like becoming a UNESCO Green Education Partner. It has been an eye-opening experience. I'm always open to learn about and from others, building a desire to rethink/redesign so many relationships in our contemporary world - relationships between nature and the built environment. We need human imagination and innovation now more than ever.

WHO DO YOU LOOK UP TO AS A LEADER AND WHY?

■ E.O.Wilson. He wrote many very important books- *Consilience*, *The Meaning of Human Existence*, *Biophilia*, *Half Earth*, *On Human Nature*, *The Social Conquest of Earth*

■ David Orr, from Oberlin College who wrote *Earth in Mind: On Education, the Environment, and Human Prospect*.

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WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT QUALITIES AN ARCHITECT SHOULD HAVE?

A desire to be constantly learning about the world, social cultures, history, material use, place experience, and ecological knowledge.

ARE THERE ANY RESOURCES THAT YOU HAVE FOUND USEFUL REGARDING LEADERSHIP?

Early on I took a short class on Leadership and learned deeply about the different types of leadership - dictator, autocratic, bureaucratic, transactional, democratic, laissez-faire, charismatic, transformational, and servant. I also learned about different learning types - introverted/solitary, extroverted collaborative, visual, aural, logical, natural, kinesthetic, digital, sensory, etc. I believe in appreciative inquiry, collaborating with diverse team members, and working together with each person to contribute their strengths and resources to come together for the common good. I also believe that the purpose of life is a life of purpose, helping others to determine their potential.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU WANT TO GIVE TO FUTURE LEADERS OF THE INDUSTRY?

The future of our world is in your hands. Accept and appreciate your choice in how you will live your life on earth. Work hard to make positive contributions. Make the most of everyday. As Buddha said, "What most of us do not realize is that we have little time."

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE IS THE RECIPE FOR SUCCESS?

Believe in yourself; set your mind on change and seed imaginations along the way. Appreciate all who you meet during your journey, even the ones that disagree. Keep your mind set on the goals that you make for yourself and with others. Be brave, be courageous. Finish what you start. Do your best every time. Appreciate life all around you. Breathe.

FROM THE EDITOR

To see more resources and topics mentioned in this article, check out the following:

<https://www.next.cc/>

<https://www.aiail.org/post/linda-nelson-keane-2019>

<https://www.saic.edu/news/linda-keane-professor>

TIMELINE

- 1972-1977**
Bachelor of Architecture, Bachelor of Science of Environmental Design, AIA School Medal, AIA Scholastic Medal, Honors Scholar, summa cum laude, Ball State University
- 1976**
PolyArk LONDON semester
Orus Eash, Architect, Architectural Intern, Fort Wayne, IN
Concrete Masonry Award: Brick Housing
- 1977-1978**
Woollen, Molzan, and Partners: Designer
Indianapolis, IN
- 1979**
Fulbright Scholar Turkey, Vernacular Arch
- 1980-1985**
Ball State University College of Architecture and Planning Asst. Professor of Architecture, Asst. to the Dean, Asst. to the Department, Coordinator Guest Lecture Series, Exhibits, Film Series, FYP, LUNCHLINE Telecommunications
- 1983-1984**
Master of Architecture,
UIC Fellowship, AAUW Scholar,
University of Illinois at Chicago
- 1984**
Licensed in Indiana (inactive)
- 1985-1987**
Linda Nelson Keane, Architect: Muncie, IN
- 1985-present**
The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Professor of Architecture and Environmental Design
- 1985-1990**
1998-2003
The School of the Art Institute of Chicago
Professor of Architecture and Environmental. Chair
- 1987-present**
Conference Point Center
- 1988-present**
Studio 1032 Architecture,
Architect / Environmental Designer
Chicago, IL & Milwaukee, WI
- 1989**
Founder Undergraduate Pathway in Architecture, Founder Bachelor of Interior Architecture
University of Illinois at Chicago College of Architecture, Design, and the Arts,
Adj. Professor Design Studio
- 1993**
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Adj. Professor, Paris Design Studio
(1993, 1998, 2001, 2004, 2007, 2010, 2013, 2016, 2019, 2022, 2024)
- 1998**
CoChair Design Initiative
- 1999-2002**
Chair Design Initiative
- 2002**
Founding Chair of Architecture, Interior Architecture, and Designed Objects Dept.
Founder Master of Architecture Program,
Introduced Lab+Seminar+Studio Curriculum
- 2004**
NCARB now Emerita, State of Wisconsin
- 2004-2007**
2019-2020
The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Professor of Architecture and Environmental Graduate Coordinator
- 2007-2010**
Metropolitan Planning Council
Place Making Board
- 2007-present**
NEXT.cc Eco Web 501(c)(3)
Creative Director
- 2008-present**
Design Education Curriculum Developer
- 2011**
Milwaukee Creative Alliance
- 2013-2015**
Project for Public Space
National Advisory Board
- 2015-present**
The School of the Art Institute of Chicago
Professor of Architecture and Environmental, Thesis Coordinator
- 2017-present**
Midwest Society of Acoustic Ecologists Board
- 2019-2021**
AIA HEAT Higher Education Arch Team
- 2020-present**
AIA K-12 IDEA TEAM
- 2021**
FAIA Emerita