

## Four UF buildings nominated for No. 1 building in Florida contest

Filed under [Announcements](#), [InsideUF \(Campus\)](#), [Top Stories](#) on Tuesday, March 6, 2012.

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — Four [University of Florida](#) buildings have been nominated for Florida's "Top 100 Buildings" by the Florida Association of the American Institute of Architects as part of its "Florida Architecture: 100 Years. 100 Places" competition.

The buildings are the University Auditorium, the Baughman Center, the Florida State Museum and the Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity House.

Each building has an opportunity to be recognized as the No. 1 building in Florida, pending a statewide public vote on the AIA Florida website ([www.aiafla.org](http://www.aiafla.org)). The voting began Monday and ends March 31.

Michael Blachly, director of University of Florida Performing Arts, said that it is an honor to have two UFPA facilities nominated for Florida's Top 100 Buildings.

"Each of these two buildings, in their own right, is an aesthetic work of architecture reflecting on its location on the University of Florida campus," Blachly said.

Designed by John Zona, the Baughman Center near Lake Alice was completed in July 2000 and was inspired by Thorncrown Chapel in Eureka Springs, Ark., by architect E. Fay Jones. With its travertine marble floors, hardwood paneled ceiling and soaring windows, it is regarded as one of the most peaceful, beautiful buildings in Gainesville.

Early in the design process, Zona rented an RV and spent a week on the land where the Baughman Center would be built.

"During that week, we saw how the sun came up and went down," Zona said. "It's traditional of cathedrals to have a rising sun on the front and the setting sun on the back. The proximity of the site made it possible to honor that tradition."

The center is open for private contemplation on weekdays and often hosts private events, such as weddings and memorial services, on weekends.

Erected in 1924 by Edwards and Sayward Architects and renovated and expanded as a bicentennial project in 1976 by architect James McGinley, University Auditorium is included in the National Register of Historic Places. It includes a concert stage with seating for 843 and the Friends of Music room — a tastefully designed and decorated room used for receptions. The building also is home to the Anderson Memorial Organ.

Blachly said both buildings are functional and aesthetically pleasing, but that neither of those attributes was sacrificed for the sake of the other.

The Florida State Museum — also known as Joshua C. Dickinson Hall — was designed by architect and author William Morgan, who received an honorary Doctor of Arts degree from UF in February, and was completed in 1970. The Museum Road building, which is Morgan's first built work of "earth architecture," draws influences from the pre-Columbian and natural history focus of the museum program.

"Thousands of budding young architecture students have been inspired by Dickinson Hall over the past 40 years as a model of spatial layering and translation of program, site and architectural form," said Martin Gold, director of the UF School of Architecture, located in the College of Design, Construction and Planning.

The structural system is adapted from highway overpass design and Morgan exposes the reinforced concrete waffle slab as the finished material, Gold said. The gently sloping pyramid form and open terraces transition from ground to roof to courtyard landscape, expressing ancient architecture while engaging the natural contours of the sloping site.

The Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity House, designed in 1965 by architect and UF alumnus Gene Leedy of Winter Haven, revealed Leedy's experimental work with long-span precast concrete structural "tee" members in Winter Haven, Gold said. The design of the building, which is located on UF's fraternity row, utilizes the long-span structural system to create large shaded circulation areas, cantilevered balconies and an open courtyard.

"The combination of exposed concrete, red brick (a UF tradition) and crawling vegetation provides both civic and residential scales – quite appropriate for a fraternity house," Gold said. "Countless others have used the structural tee technique in many buildings around the state of Florida and beyond."

AIA Florida is an association of architects with a mission to unite, educate and position architects to lead the shaping for Florida's future, and is currently celebrating its 100-year anniversary.

Zona, who has been a member of AIA for 39 years, said the purpose of the "Top 100 Buildings" contest is to bring awareness and education to the general public about the value of good design.

"I was thrilled and happy for the building, for the university and for me," Zona said. "It's a wonderful honor."

For more information about how to vote in the AIA contest, please visit <http://www.aiaflatop100.org/>.