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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

With this issue the editors present their fifth annual survey of the "100 Largest Architectural Firms in the U.S." (see page 14). This will be followed in May by the 100 Biggest General Contractors and in July by the 100 Biggest Corporate Building Clients. Over the years these three lists have proved to be some of the most sought-after articles among FORUM's 63,000 subscribers, judging from periodic reader interest surveys and requests for reprints.

Obtaining dollar volume figures for these lists from contractors and clients is relatively easy; most of them look at building primarily as a business matter. The architects are another story; many of them feel, quite properly, that architecture is an art as well. And some decline to participate on the grounds that bigness (or "business") can easily get confused with quality (or "art").

Our survey must look at the 100 biggest architects purely from a business viewpoint; obviously, volume should not be equated with quality of work. As in other fields, quantity sometimes threatens quality:

1. As every principal of a growing architectural firm knows, bigness can mean loss of control over design. Also, it can be hard to find talented designers willing to work in large offices.

2. Some big firms have gotten that way by placing primary emphasis on service to their clients, with design a secondary concern.

3. Others have grown by specializing in buildings that demand far more engineering and production know-how than architectural skill. There are many exceptions where quality and quantity happily go together (see below).

To the best of our knowledge, no one has ever dared to compile a list of the 100 *best* architects. It would be not only inappropriate but pointless for our editors

to attempt such a list because they are constantly evaluating the best architectural work in every issue of the magazine. In feature articles the editors make value judgments on the quality of the architecture they publish, but their lists of the 100 biggest are published strictly as news—in the magazine's *News* department.

During the last three years, the work of some 300 architectural firms has been featured in FORUM. Many of these firms are small, young, up-and-coming ones; some of them may advance to important commissions with FORUM's encouragement. Some of the firms are very large and well-established ones, for there are, of course, a handful that are responsible for a prodigious number of good buildings.

On the basis of a 3-year page count, the work of the following 25 firms (in alphabetical order) has received the greatest amount of editorial space in FORUM:

Anshen & Allen; Edward L. Barnes; Marcel Breuer & Associates; Caudill, Rowlett, Scott; Mario J. Ciampi; Curtis & Davis; Ulrich J. Franzen & Associates; Victor Gruen Associates; Harrison & Abramovitz; Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum; Victor A. Lundy; Mies van der Rohe; C. F. Murphy Associates; I. M. Pei & Associates; Paul Rudolph; Eero Saarinen and Associates; Sert, Jackson & Gourley; Skidmore, Owings & Merrill; Edward Durrell Stone; The Architects Collaborative; John Carl Warnecke & Associates; Warner, Burns, Toan, Lunde; Harry Weese & Associates; Whittlesey & Conklin; Minoru Yamasaki & Associates.

Few would quibble that most of these 25 firms would appear on anyone's 100 "best" list. Yet it is significant that only 11 of these 25 firms are among this year's 100 biggest. Hopefully, the ratio will increase.

—J.C.H. JR.

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