

Princeton University

Honors Faculty Members
Receiving Emeritus Status



June 2008

The biographical sketches were written by
colleagues in the departments of those honored.

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Ralph Lerner



Ralph Lerner FAIA, the George Dutton '27 Professor of Architecture, joined Princeton's faculty in 1984 and served as dean of the School of Architecture from 1989 to 2002. He is retiring from the faculty of Princeton's School of Architecture to become dean of the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Hong Kong. Born in New York in 1949, Ralph studied with the charismatic architect and teacher John Hejduk at the Cooper Union, receiving a bachelor of architecture degree in 1974. Hejduk's influence remained strong, both on his design work and on his teaching philosophy. Ralph received a master of architecture degree from Harvard University in 1975, and began his teaching career at the University of Virginia. He spent a year teaching in London from 1979 to 1980, and returned to Harvard as an associate professor in 1980. He came to Princeton from Harvard, and was promoted to associate professor with tenure in 1987.

During this time, he also developed a significant design practice characterized by work at a wide range of scales, from architecture to urban design, historic preservation, exhibitions, and furniture. He has been awarded numerous international design commendations; most notable among these are five *Progressive Architecture* awards, including a First Award for the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (1987), and three *Architectural Design* awards. The plan for Lower Manhattan's Financial District, which was a collaboration between several design firms, received a Progressive Architecture Citation in 2004. Ralph's work has been published in numerous architectural journals and has been exhibited at the National Building Museum, the Institute of Contemporary Art in London, and New York's Museum of Modern Art. He is also the recipient of first awards for many international architectural and urban design competitions including: Eva's Kitchen Social Services Complex (Paterson, New Jersey); Epping Town Hall (Epping,

England); Cherry Garden Pier Housing (London, England); and, most significantly, in 1986, the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (New Delhi, India).

He also has been active as a professional adviser to numerous national and international design competitions. Recent design work includes Battery Park City Design Guidelines for the North Residential Neighborhood, the Princeton Ballet/American Repertory Ballet School, the renovation of the President's House at Rockefeller University, the Lower School Building for the Princeton Charter School, and a new plan for the city of Winston-Salem's downtown. He participated in the design of one of five proposals for an Olympic Village as part of New York City's bid for the 2012 Olympic Games.

During his tenure as dean of the School of Architecture, Ralph built upon the excellence of a faculty already distinguished in design and the history of architecture. He recruited significant new design faculty members, including Jesse Reiser and Elizabeth Diller, who was the first architect ever to receive a MacArthur Fellowship. He strengthened the Ph.D. program in the history and theory of architecture, and consolidated the school's emphasis on urban issues with the appointments of M. Christine Boyer and Mario Gandelsonas. The appointment of Guy Nordenson, an innovative structural engineer, completed this well-balanced faculty. In addition, Ralph reorganized the curriculum for the A.B. degree into a single path with more diverse options for individual students. He added courses in computing and imaging, restructured courses in the area of building sciences to reflect advances in the field, introduced landscape studies into the undergraduate and graduate curriculum, and began a long overdue renovation of selected areas of the School of Architecture Building.

He returned to teaching full time in 2002, and in 2003, he received a Rotch Traveling Studio Grant, which sponsored a research trip to three cities in India for his graduate design studio. He continues to practice architecture, and has had a strong international orientation, including serving as director of a consortium of schools of architecture

under a FIPSE grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Although retiring from Princeton, Ralph continues to be very active as an educator, professional adviser, and architect. We wish him the best of luck in this challenging new position, and we look forward to continued collaboration.