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## **Big honors for Peterson (Cindy) and Abbott**

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This is the time of year when the Sarasota area starts raking in its usual haul of architecture awards.

Cindy Peterson and Carl Abbott got things rolling recently.

Abbott, whose Sarasota practice passed the 50-year mark last year, was given a Lifetime Achievement Award from the University of Florida's architecture school. He earned his degree there before going on to study under Paul Rudolph at Yale in the early 1960s.

Peterson, as if her 2016 honorary membership in the American Institute of Architects-Florida/Caribbean chapter were not enough, will go to Orlando next week to collect the same honor, except this time from the national AIA.

For Peterson, earning such an honor requires an enormous amount of work and sacrifice to advance the cause of a profession in which she has only a supporting role.

The wife of prominent Sarasota architect Guy Peterson, Cindy is his firm's archivist, earned a master's degree in library science, curated the architectural archives at the University of Florida, co-founded the Center for Architecture Sarasota, acquired the Scott Building in downtown Sarasota as CFAS' headquarters and commanded its renovation. She also partnered with the University of Florida's CityLab architectural program, chairs CFAS' board of directors and produces a steady stream of educational exhibits and events, including the fundraising Modern Show on May 13.

And, she has a day job — executive director of the Elling Eide Center for Asian Studies, where she oversees the cataloging and curating of the late Sinologist’s mammoth collections of books, art and artifacts.

“Honorary membership in the American Institute of Architects is an accomplishment achieved by only those that dedicate years advocating for the profession,” said Joyce Owens, a Fort Myers architect who is the 2017 AIA-Florida president. “Cynthia Peterson has dedicated a lifetime.

“In her new role as a visionary member of Florida Foundation for Architecture, she will utilize her passion and expertise as a preservationist of architectural archives to curate traveling architectural exhibitions around the state.”

Said Tampa architect Mickey Jacob, AIA’s 2013 national president, “She has touched the architecture profession in a way that not many people have touched it ever,” Jacob said. “She has a transformative way of thinking about architecture, from both a practice concept to an educational process and a historical context, as well. Her enthusiasm in being a vocal advocate for what architecture does in our communities, and being someone who believes that design makes lives better and actually lives that, is something that you rarely see.

How does design make lives better? By creating spaces and places that are efficient, comfortable, visually appealing and that create interactions between people and their surroundings, Jacob said.

“Understanding how buildings touch the pedestrian environment is an example,” he said. “By taking the CFAS building and repurposing it as a community gathering place, where people come not just to socialize, but to learn and share thoughts, to celebrate, to have social collisions that you normally wouldn’t have with people — this, as a piece of architecture, and her leadership in bringing it in, has created a place that has become a node of energy in your community.

“We as a profession and the community of Sarasota are very lucky to have Cindy Peterson doing what she does.”

Early in his career, Abbott worked with Yale classmates Norman Foster and Richard Rogers, who today are two of the most famous architects in the world.

Meanwhile, Abbott has raked in the awards over five decades in the Florida / Caribbean region. Honors include the Medal of Honor for Design, and no one has won more AIA-Florida “Test of Time” awards “for buildings of enduring significance to the people of the region.”

Abbott also has been recognized as a Distinguished Alumnus of UF. As a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects, Abbott has lectured to the World Monument Fund, the Frank Lloyd Wright Conservancy, DOCOMOMO and the Maya at the Playa Global Conference.

“Abbott has practiced his craft with a consistency of elegance and experiential quality unparalleled by almost any other architect of his generation,” wrote Robert McCarter, former architecture dean at UF and an architectural historian.