



ILLUMINATION AWARDS 2026

SEPTEMBER 24, 2026



“ The best light is the light you don’t even realize is there. Light is an emotion — the emotion of the people and their sense of comfort within the space.”

Olivier Perriguer
VP Commercial Architectural Business
Lutron Electronics



Read the full case study
lutron.com/blackrock

Photographer: Connie Zhou



Welcome to the 2026 Chicago Illumination Awards!

September 24, 2026

*Awards Ceremony and Dinner
5:00-10:00pm*

*Join our Master of Ceremonies, Justin Castellano,
as we recognize outstanding Chicago projects
at the Illumination Awards Ceremony.*

Greetings from the President/MC

Presidential Address

Dinner/Intermission

Project Awards

Sponsorship and Membership Recognition

EP Luminaire Competition

Company Shorts Videos



Master of Ceremonies

After a six-year hiatus, Justin Castellano returns to Chicago as Master of Ceremonies for this year's Awards Gala. With more than two decades in the lighting industry and a background in professional theater, Justin has built a reputation for bringing energy, humor, and memorable storytelling to every stage. As the creator of the "Just In Time" speaking brand, he believes that the right message—delivered at the right moment—can inspire, connect, and illuminate. Tonight, it's only fitting that he's back in Chicago, just in time to celebrate the people who continue to move our industry forward.

*Congratulations to
Kaleigh Murphy,
the winner of the
Cover Design Contest!*



Illuminating
ENGINEERING SOCIETY

Letter From The President

Dear IES Chicago Section Members,

Color has the unique ability to transform a space, shape an experience, and influence the way we see the world around us. It creates depth, connection, and impact. In many ways, our Section has spent the past year doing the same.

We have been immersed in opportunities to learn, collaborate, and grow. Each event, educational program, volunteer effort, and industry partnership has added its own distinct hue to the vibrant tapestry of our community. Individually, these moments have been meaningful; together, they have created something truly remarkable.

What makes our Section exceptional is not any single event or accomplishment, but the collective contributions of our members. Like a carefully curated palette, each volunteer, sponsor, board member, and participant brings unique perspectives, experiences, and talents that strengthen our organization and help advance our shared mission.

As we look ahead, I am excited by the possibilities before us. Our industry continues to evolve through new technologies, innovative design approaches, and a growing commitment to creating spaces that are not only functional, but meaningful and inspiring. I hope the IES Chicago Section continues to be a place where professionals from across our industry can learn from one another, support each other's growth, and advance the mission of the IES together. It is your involvement, whether through participation, volunteerism, sponsorship, or sharing your perspective, that helps strengthen our community and expand our impact. I encourage you to stay engaged and help shape what comes next for IES Chicago.

Thank you for your support, engagement, and dedication throughout the year. It has been an honor to serve as your President. May we continue to be inspired by new ideas, strengthened by our connections, and illuminate the path forward together.

Warm regards,

Jaslyn Otero

President, IES Chicago Section



IES Chicago Section Board of Managers

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Contact president@ieschicago.org to join the BOM



PAST PRESIDENTS

2023-2025 Rachael Stoner

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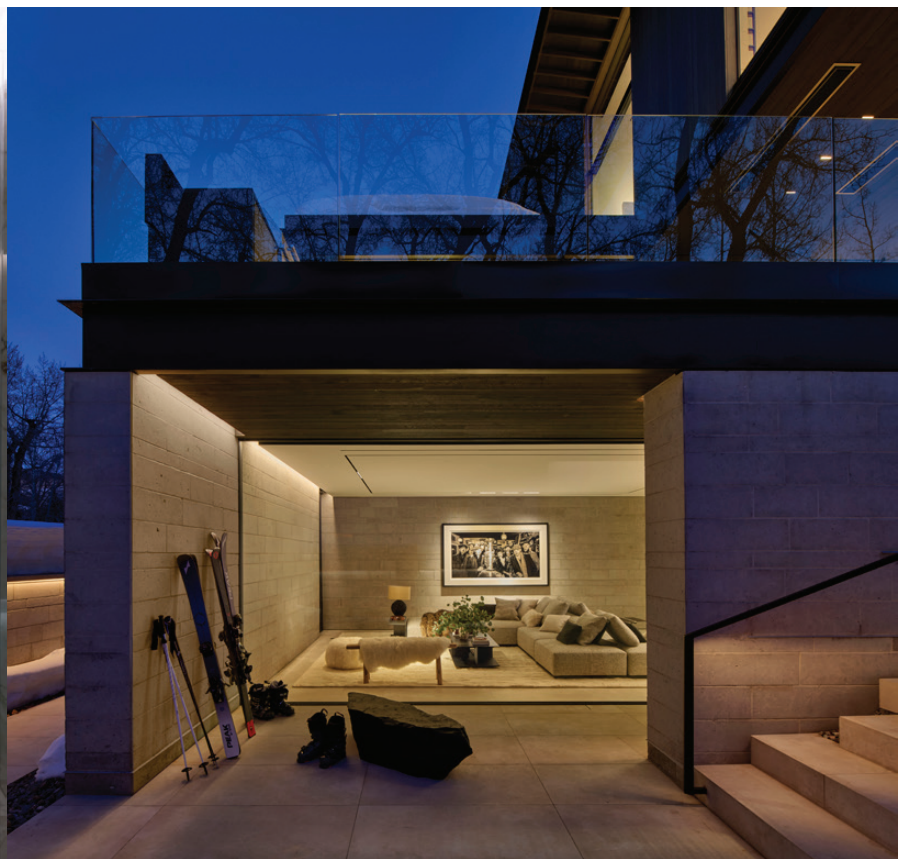
1999-2001 Carla Bukalski



Modern Slopeside Hideaway



At dusk, calm illumination reveals the warmth of the home, a composed presence supporting integrated outdoor living and balancing architecture with the surrounding darkness.



The lighting design for Modern Slopeside Hideaway is defined by restraint, precision, and a deep connection to its mountain setting. Nearly all illumination is seamlessly integrated into the architecture, creating a layered environment where luminaires remain largely unseen and exterior views remain the focus. Concealed linear lighting, small-aperture downlights, and carefully controlled accent illumination provide visual comfort, reveal material textures, and support daily living without clutter. Extensive mockups using 3D-printed fixtures refined integration and performance. An innovative remote DMX control approach delivers exceptional flexibility while reducing infrastructure, wiring, and installation requirements, demonstrating how invisible lighting can elevate both architecture and experience.

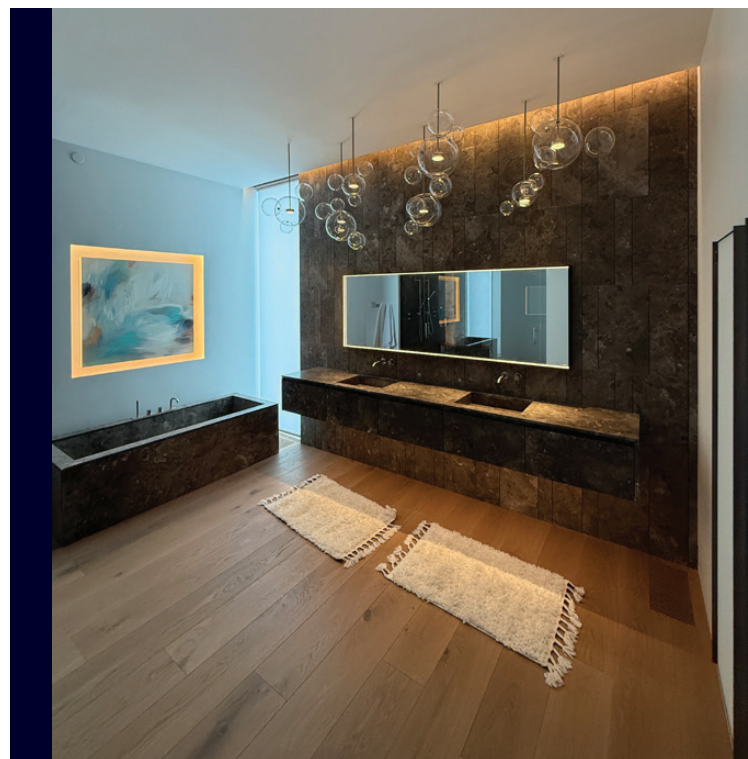
DESIGN TEAM

AKLD Lighting Design

Anne Kustner, CLD, IALD, IES, LEED AP

Harmon Lee, Member IALD, IES-EP

Preslee Vaught *(Formerly of AKLD Lighting Design)*



An intricate ceiling pocket houses a lensed linear LED and small-aperture narrow-beam fixtures, balancing ambient wall grazing, while accenting the counter preserving a pristine ceiling.



222 N. LaSalle Lobby Renovation



Key challenges included concealing fixtures—especially at the balustrade. Slim LED tape was hidden behind a fascia and wired to remote mezzanine drivers to illuminate the balustrade.

Ornate-golden doors are subtly lit by adjustable recessed fixtures with regressed sources and black louvers, integrated to illuminate their craftsmanship while maintaining elegance and drama.

The 222 N. LaSalle Lobby renovation uses lighting as the primary design element to transform a dated atrium into a sophisticated, European-inspired hospitality environment. Warm 2700K illumination is seamlessly integrated into architectural features, including balustrades, pilasters, millwork, seating, and ceiling details, creating an immersive atmosphere defined by softness and chiaroscuro. Extensive mockups resolved the challenge of concealing fixtures within historic architectural elements while maintaining visual integrity. Low-glare in-grade uplights emphasize suspended drapery, decorative fixtures provide ambient warmth, and precision accent lighting highlights key features. Throughout, high-performance fixtures with 0.1% dimming enable flexibility for events while reinforcing the lobby's refined character.

DESIGN TEAM

Schuler Shook

Giulio Pedota, IALD, CLD, LC, LEED AP

John Jacobsen, Design IALD, IES, LC

Samantha Komber (Formerly of Schuler Shook)

Tishman Speyer

OTJ and Serendi







Molson Coors Chicago Headquarters

The lighting design for the Molson Coors Chicago Headquarters unifies four distinct workplace floors through a cohesive strategy that balances performance, hospitality, and brand identity. Custom curved suspended luminaires and continuous cove uplighting create a consistent indirect lighting layer that enhances visual comfort, reduces glare, and connects diverse architectural environments. Open office areas feature adaptable direct/indirect lighting systems that improve flexibility and support collaborative work. Hospitality-inspired spaces use warmer color temperatures and focused accent lighting to highlight materials, graphics, and branded elements. Layered lighting, integrated controls, and tailored solutions for unique ceiling conditions create dynamic, user-centered environments that support productivity, engagement, and community.

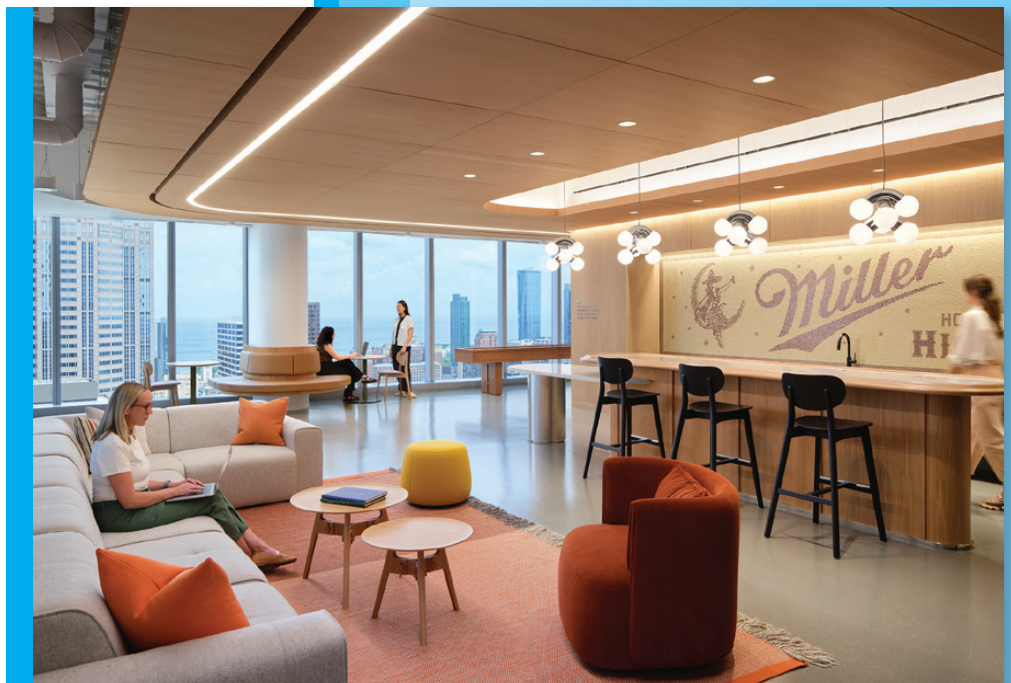
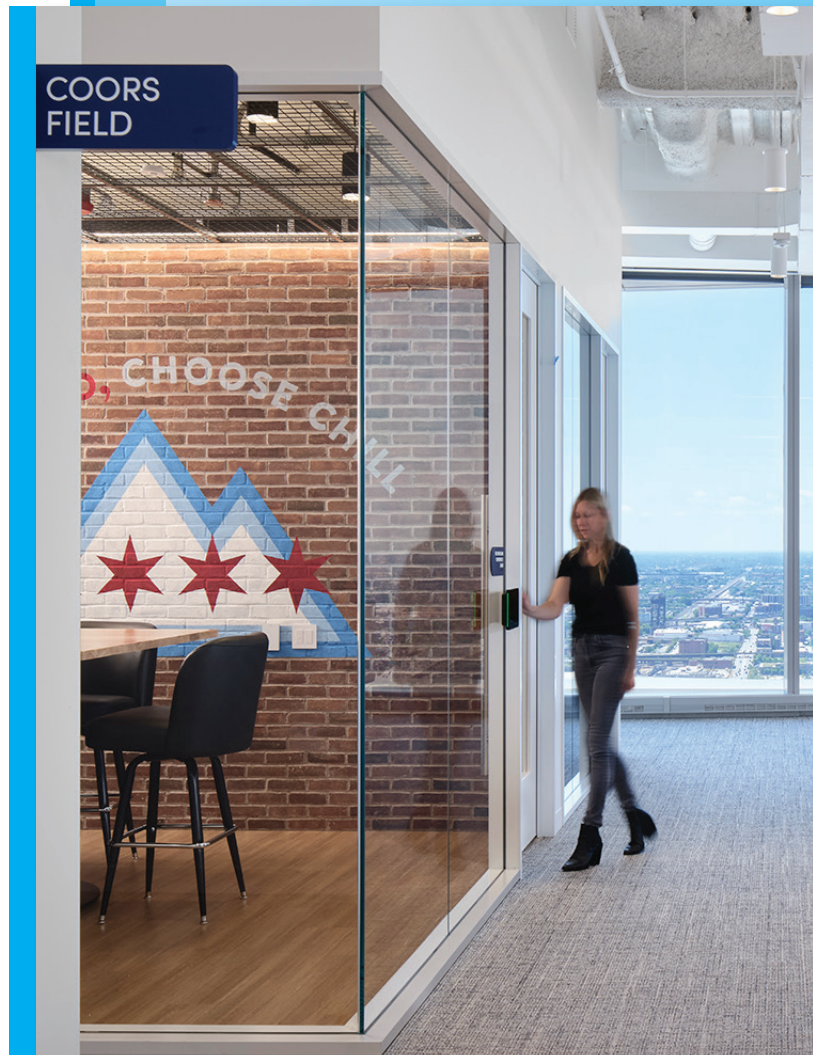
DESIGN TEAM

Gwen Grossman Lighting Design

Gwen Grossman, LC, IALD, CLD, IES
Alexandria Quella, IALD



Open office with custom pattern unistrut and linear direct/indirect distribution fixtures. Small huddle with 27K lighting, suspended fixtures in wire mesh ceiling.





Lighting controls provide various local override wall stations with onsite programmed scenes for all private spaces, reception, open lounges and bar, giving control flexibility to all users.





Why IES?

Community Education Networking

When you join the IES, you obtain access to a wealth of educational resources, publications, content, and standards to advance your professional knowledge.

Mission & Vision

Mission Statement

The IES seeks to improve the lighted environment by bringing together those with lighting knowledge and by translating that knowledge into actions that benefit the public.

Vision Statement

To become the leading global lighting organization dedicated to communicating the value of lighting quality to its members, allied professional organizations, and the public.

As a member, you are part of a peer-based community, and gain opportunities to build your professional network and enrich your leadership skills.

EXCLUSIVE CONTENT & EDUCATION

- Unlimited Webinars
- CEUs
- LD+A Magazine
- LEUKOS
- New Standards

LEADERSHIP & VOLUNTEERISM

- Unlimited Webinars
- CEUs
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- New Standards

NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

- Local Section Membership
- Global Membership Directory
- In-Person Events
- Virtual and Hybrid Events

PREFERENTIAL PRICING

- Lighting Library Subscription
- IES Society-Level Events
- LightFair
- On-Demand CEUs
- Education Courses

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IES Chicago thanks the generous Annual Sponsors who make all of our courses and events possible.

Luminary Level



Visionary Level



Champion Level



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Interested in sponsoring? Reach out to sponsorship@ieschicago.org



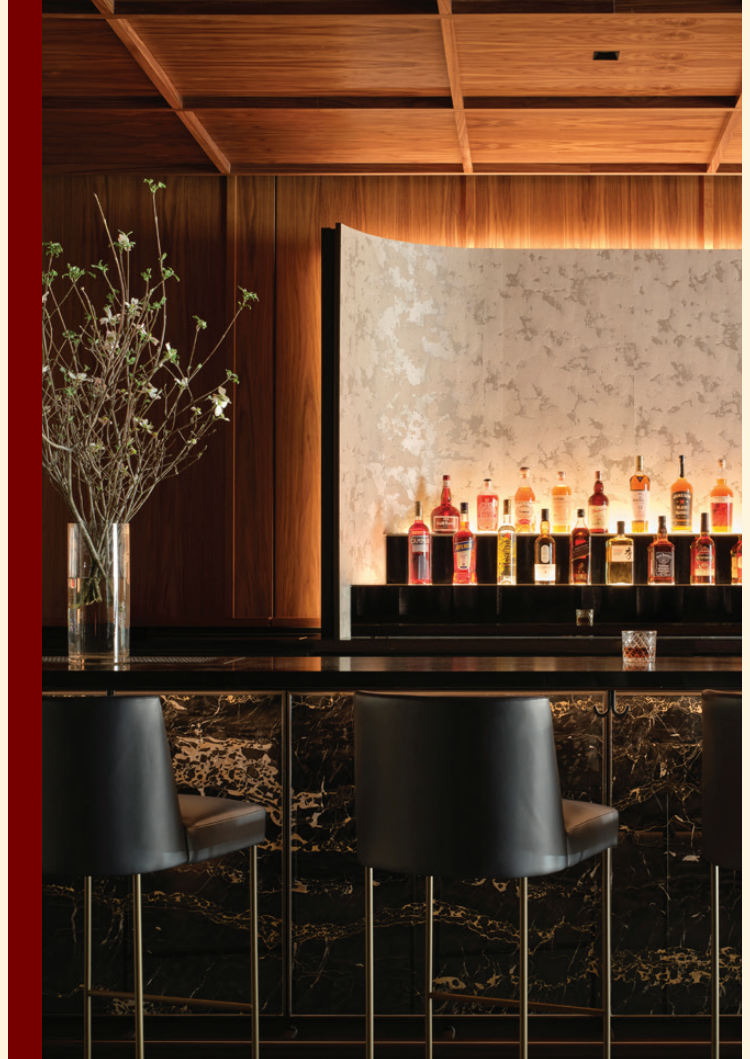
United Airlines O'Hare Polaris Lounge Expansion

The lighting design for the United Airlines O'Hare Polaris Lounge Expansion creates a refined, hospitality-driven environment that balances passenger comfort with the demands of a high-traffic airport setting. A layered approach combines ambient, accent, and task lighting to define dining, lounge, bar, and circulation areas while maintaining visual cohesion throughout the space. High color rendering LED sources and carefully calibrated color temperatures enhance material richness and reinforce the lounge's warm, residential character. Precise beam control, shielding, and luminaire placement minimize glare and reflections, while flexible dimming and zoning strategies support changing conditions throughout the day, delivering a seamless and elevated guest experience.

DESIGN TEAM

Gwen Grossman Lighting Design

Gwen Grossman, LC, IALD, CLD, IES
Alexandria Quella, IALD



Liquor bottles glow from custom integrated risers, as a curved uplight illuminates the riser wall anchored by a concealed halo that warms the wood wall.

Tight-beam downlights illuminate individual dining tables, introducing focused highlights that add visual sparkle and hierarchy to the dining experience.





Grazing uplight reveals the texture of rustic velvet curtains as integrated low-level toe-kick lighting provides a continuous, soft ambient glow throughout the dining room.

Low-level lighting defines banquettes and the bar fascia, complemented by tight-beam downlights illuminating the bar top and tables in the lounge.





HOK Chicago Studio

The HOK Chicago Office lighting design celebrates the historic character of One Prudential Plaza while creating a high-performance, future-focused workplace. Indirect ambient illumination serves as the primary light source, preserving architectural clarity and maintaining an uncluttered ceiling plane. Integrated daylight sensors balance natural and electric light to enhance visual comfort and energy efficiency. Carefully placed accent lighting highlights historic columns and structural details with a contemporary interpretation of Chicago modernism. Dynamic white task lighting provides individual control for material evaluation, comfort, and neuroinclusive design goals. Specialized solutions, including illuminated ceilings and integrated lighting slots, support collaboration, precision work, and seamless architectural integration.

DESIGN TEAM

Polymath Design

Kerri Callahan, AIA, IALD, IES



Integrated daylight sensors balance natural and electric light throughout the day, optimizing visual comfort and energy performance.

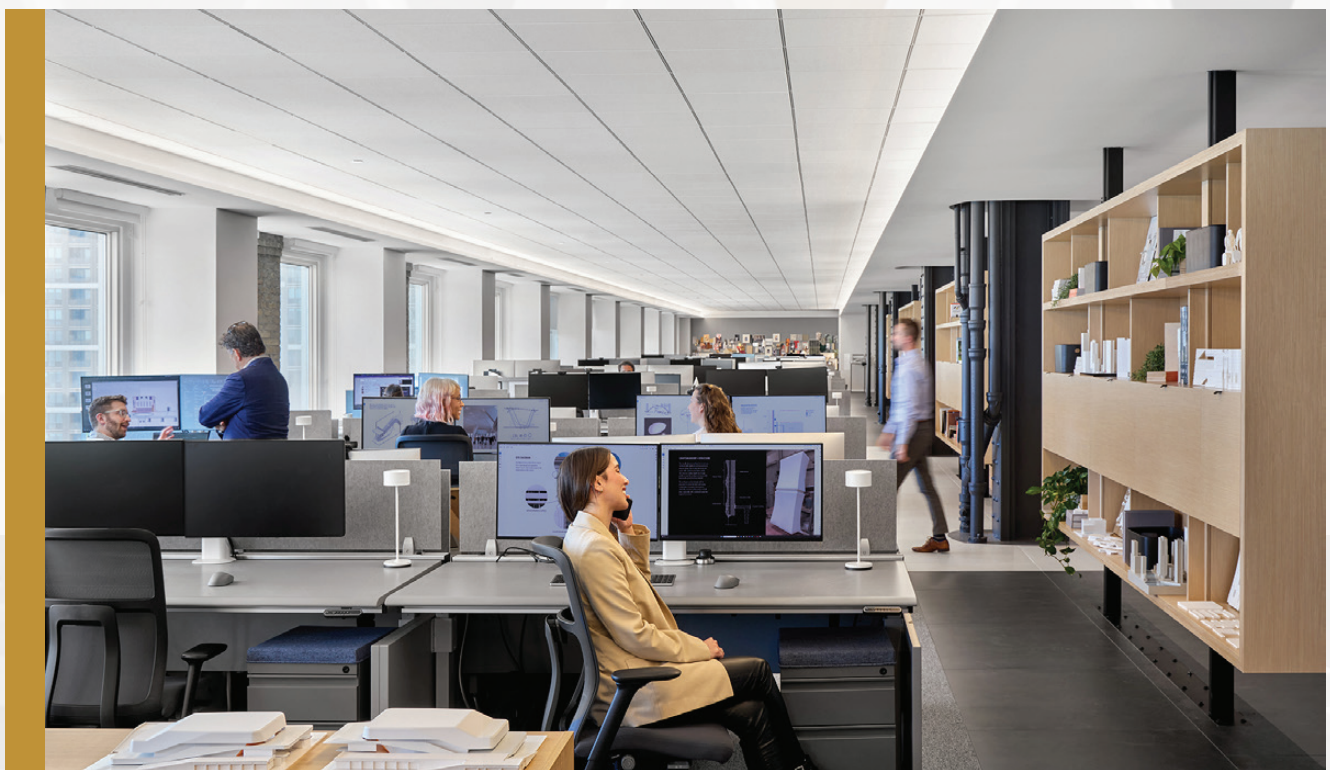
Dynamic white task lighting at workstations provides individual control—essential for evaluating materials.





The lobby's geometric array nods to Chicago modernism while providing an energy-efficient solution that highlights the historic columns and their exposed rivet detailing.

At a 9'-6" ceiling height, high-efficiency indirect cove lighting transforms the ceiling plane into a luminous surface, making the architecture itself the primary light fixture.





2026 Service Awards

Thank you to all those who have served past and present to make the IES and Chicago Section a success.

Chicago Section Service Award

The IES Section Service Award is presented by a Section to a member in recognition of outstanding service to the Section, principally of a non-technical nature, that has significantly furthered the purpose of the Society continuously over 5 years in various programs and activities.

Past Recipients

John Rapacz 2026
Rachael Stoner 2026
Abigail Sorensen 2022
Justin Castellano 2022
Alexandria Mazurski 2021
Ashley Mikels 2021
Brandon Stanley 2021
Erin McLellan-Dawe 2020
Emily O'Brien 2020
Grant Kightlinger 2020
Miory Kanashiro-Kightlinger 2018
Carla Bukalski 2003
Peter Hugh 2003
Evelyn McGowan 2001
Wayne Fresen 2001
Rick Kellen 2001
Bernard Boylan 1981

Section Meritorious Award

The Section Meritorious Service Award is a significant and meaningful award for individuals having given exceptional service over a long period of time; greater than 15 years.

Past Recipients

Evelyn McGowan 2020
Vern Brooks 1982
Bernard Boylan 1981
Erwin Veit 1980

Distinguished Service Award

The Distinguished Service Award is presented in recognition of continuous dedicated service to the Society, principally of a non-technical nature, having significantly furthered the purpose for which the Society was founded, and continued over several years in various programs and activities at, typically, regional and international levels.

Past Recipients

Peter Hugh 2023
Leslie M. North 2020
Carla Bukalski 2018

IES Fellow Designation



Leslie M. North
FIES, PE, IALD, LC, LEED AP

Leslie North was named a 2026 IES Fellow, one of the Illuminating Engineering Society's highest honors, recognizing members whose sustained contributions have meaningfully advanced the art and science of illumination. The designation is awarded for valuable contribution to the technical activities of the Society, to the art or science of illumination, or to related scientific and engineering fields, and unlike most IES awards, it is not a one-time recognition — it confers the lifelong professional suffix FIES and inducts recipients into the Board of Fellows, which advises the Society at large. Notably, no member can nominate themselves; Fellow status is conferred only through the recommendation of peers, past recipients, and IES leadership, making the honor especially meaningful. She joins a distinguished roster of past Chicago-area Fellows, including Rick Miller (2021), Randy Burkett (2015), Mitchell Kohn (1993), and Peter Contos (1989). Leslie was doubly recognized this year's IES Conference in Denver, also receiving a discretionary IES Staff Award for exemplary service and support, a distinction that came as a complete surprise. Leslie's IES journey began as an Emerging Professional, when she started attending committees simply out of curiosity rather than any expectation of expertise. Through years of listening, learning, and staying engaged, she found that opportunities and meaningful contributions naturally follow those who show up. Looking back, she credits her involvement with IES and its volunteers with enriching both her career trajectory and her life. Leslie extends her gratitude to the mentors, colleagues, and fellow lighting professionals who have shaped her path, noting that the work of advancing the profession is far from finished.

Presidential Award Winner

The IES Presidential Award is an award presented at the discretion of the Society's President to recognize individuals who have made an exemplary impact through their leadership and volunteerism. Jana received this recognition for her many years of dedicated leadership of the IES Illumination Awards Program, one of the Society's signature programs and an important platform for recognizing design excellence across the lighting profession.



Jana Owens, PE

Over the eleven years of service and seven years as chair, Jana has played an instrumental role in shaping and strengthening the program, helping to expand its reach while bringing greater clarity and structure to the policies, procedures, and countless details that keep it running successfully. Her commitment, leadership, and willingness to put in the work behind the scenes have made a lasting impact on the program and the broader lighting community.

Membership Milestones

55
YEARS

Walter Krupinski

40
YEARS

Bob Dozier

30
YEARS

Carla Bukalski
David Janney

25
YEARS

Gina Jackson

20
YEARS

Peter Lena
Richard Rudnicki

15
YEARS

Zane Coleman
Emily Lai
Michael Renner
Dan Schwade
Michael Skurla

10
YEARS

Michael Crimmins
Casey Diers
Tyler Garlock
Michael Malvin

5
YEARS

Sarah Chaplick
John Haser
Bonnie Shilney
Travis Shupe



Foglia YMCA Lobby Renovation

The Foglia YMCA Lobby Renovation uses lighting as the defining element in transforming the building's public face and creating a memorable community destination. Centered on the rotunda elevator tower, the design integrates rows of RGBA linear LED fixtures behind translucent glass to deliver dynamic, color-changing illumination. Extensive mockups refined fixture placement, brightness, glass characteristics, and cavity depth to achieve a balanced architectural effect. More than 30 programmed lighting scenes feature subtle fades, chases, and mosaics that reinforce YMCA branding while maintaining visual sophistication. Complementary decorative and integrated lighting enhance wayfinding, functionality, and the overall visitor experience, creating a vibrant and welcoming civic centerpiece.

DESIGN TEAM

Maureen Mahr Lighting Design

Maureen Mahr, IALD, CLD, MIES, LC, LEED AP

Weese Langley Klein Architects LTD

Rich Klein, AIA

CannonDesign

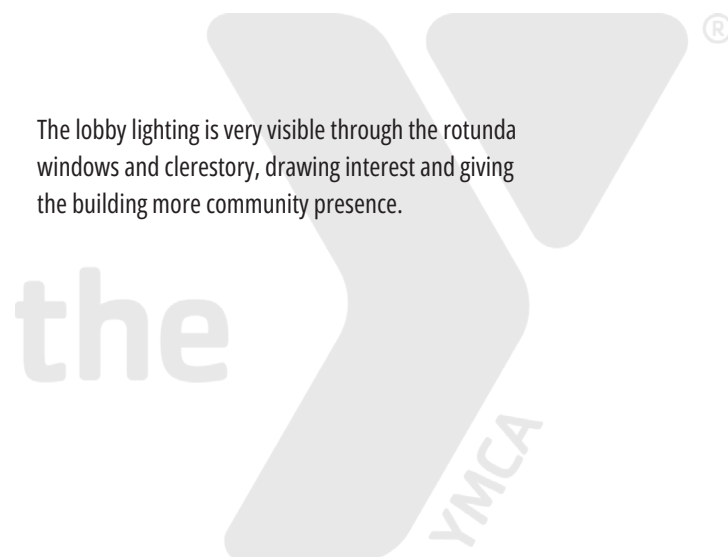
David Broering

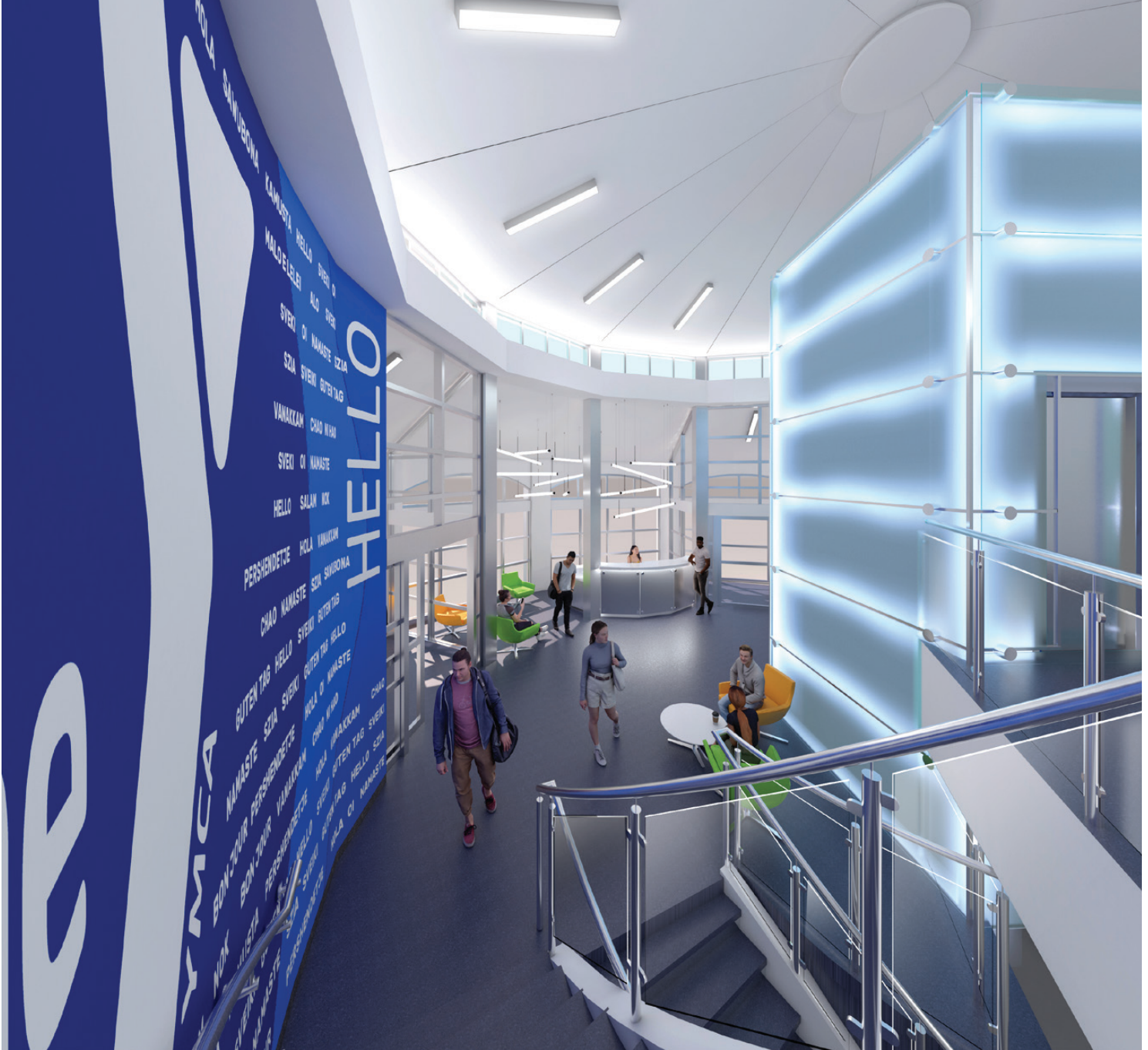


The relocated reception desk improves flow through the space and is anchored by a playful series of glowing linear pendants, custom modified to hang horizontally.



The lobby lighting is very visible through the rotunda windows and clerestory, drawing interest and giving the building more community presence.





The design team envisioned a glass tower backlit by white LEDs. The family liked the idea, but wanted “more!”. The concept upgraded to color-changing, dynamic lighting. Numerous mock-ups refined the design.





Medical College of Wisconsin Center for Cancer Discovery

The lighting design for the Medical College of Wisconsin's Center for Cancer Discovery supports advanced research while creating an inviting and inspiring environment. Tailored lighting strategies respond to the unique requirements of laboratories, collaboration spaces, circulation zones, and public areas, ensuring optimal visibility, comfort, and flexibility. A balanced integration of daylight and electric light enhances the multi-story lobby, while indirect coves and linear elements strengthen wayfinding and highlight architectural forms. Decorative lighting energizes collaboration hubs, and carefully coordinated laboratory lighting supports precision research tasks. Standardized LED fixtures, dimmable controls, and centralized management deliver exceptional energy performance and operational efficiency.

DESIGN TEAM

CannonDesign

Raisa Shigol, LC

Sophie Holle, EIT

Kelly Cerri, PE

Davis Smith (*Formerly of CannonDesign*)





The new building's exterior lighting combined with its illuminated transparent façade enables seamless integration with the existing campus architecture.



A well-balanced mix of natural and electric light makes the lobby area visually pleasant, aided by a lighting control system that can be fully dimmed.



Adjustable multiples integrated into wood ceilings emphasize column bays, and pendants establish a welcome areas for social interaction.



Littelfuse

The lighting design for Littelfuse's new workplace transforms the office into a physical expression of the company's core identity: connection, energy, and innovation. Inspired by electrical circuitry, a suspended linear lighting system weaves throughout the floorplate, providing wayfinding, visual cohesion, and efficient general illumination. Strategic fixture spacing creates a hierarchy of light levels that supports both open work areas and circulation zones while reducing energy use. User-focused controls enable individualized comfort and optimized video conferencing environments with balanced vertical illumination. With a low lighting power density and environmentally responsible luminaire selections, the design delivers performance, wellness, and brand integration in a highly efficient workplace.

DESIGN TEAM

IA Interior Architects

Ashley Mikels, LC

Shane Smith

Lila Marty



Decorative lighting creates a visually dynamic ceiling plane while preserving clear exterior sightlines, delivering intrigue without obstructing views or daylight.

Architectural lighting defines the conference room ceiling plane, delivering balanced vertical illumination for video conferencing while reinforcing material warmth and spatial cohesion.





The lighting is not an applied layer; its integral to the space, woven into the architecture.

Suspended luminous globes, dynamically arranged, deliver optimal illumination, transforming a playful composition into a high performing lighting solution.





Southampton Playhouse

The lighting design for the Southampton Playhouse transforms a historic 1932 theater into an immersive, contemporary cinema experience while respecting its landmark façade. Inspired by immersive color environments, four monochromatic cinema spaces use programmable RGBW LED lighting and color-matched architectural finishes to create fully saturated, sensory-rich environments. Theatrical-grade controls synchronize lighting with projection, sound, and pre-show content, supporting a wide range of programming from film screenings to live presentations and community events. Seamlessly integrated lighting enhances the architecture without distraction, while carefully designed wayfinding, aisle, lobby, and exterior lighting improve safety, accessibility, and the overall visitor experience.

DESIGN TEAM

The Lighting Practice

Brian Wiley, LC, MIES, Design IALD

Jonathan Hoyle

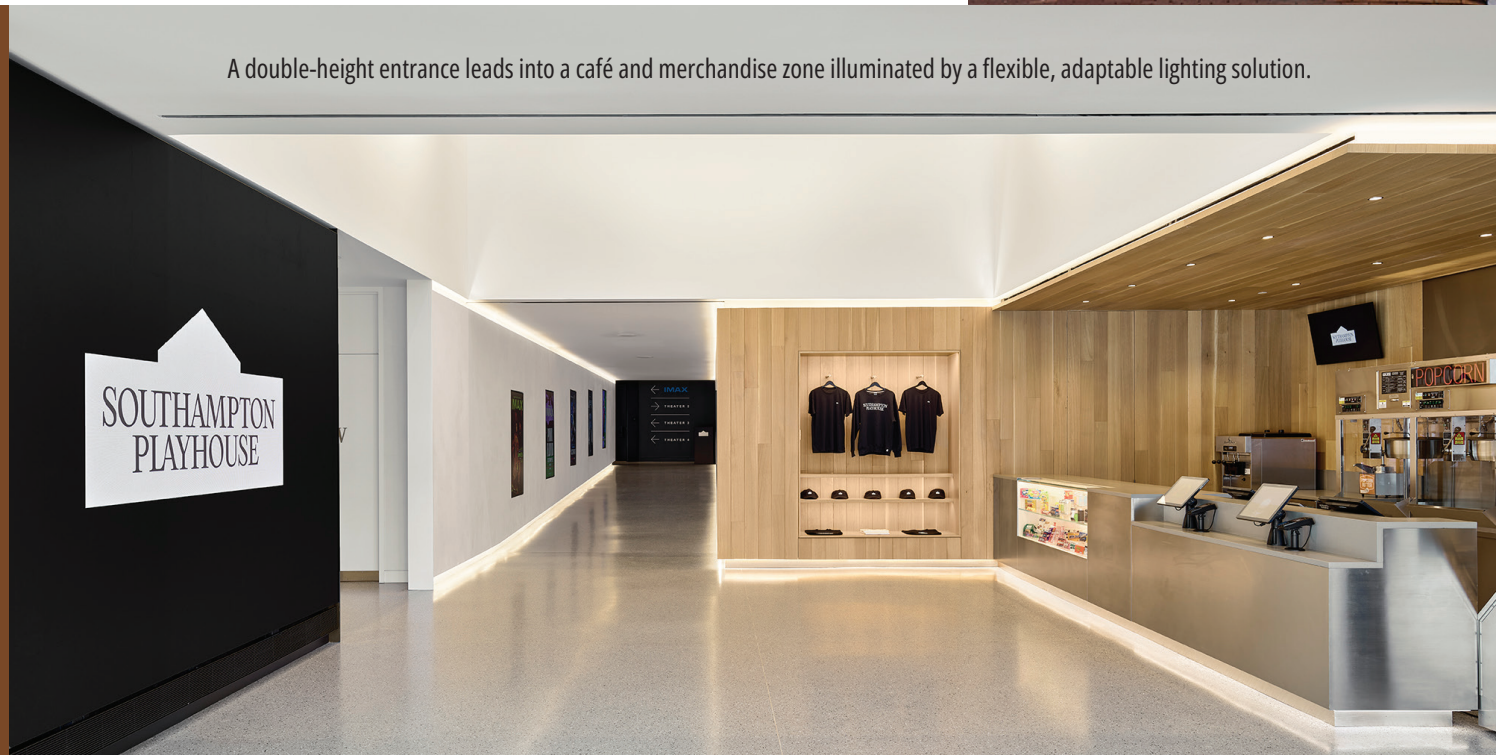
Rachel Lee, Member IALD, IES EP

1100 Architect

Ed Parker, AIA



A double-height entrance leads into a café and merchandise zone illuminated by a flexible, adaptable lighting solution.





Preserving its historically registered façade and iconic 1980s marquee, the building is a warm glowing beacon for the community.



The smallest cinema offers an intimate viewing experience, softly illuminated in red by a clean, even pipe-grid lighting system.



Cinema 4's reconfigurable seating and adaptable lighting accommodate community events and special screenings.



Matching architectural surfaces to lighting color was essential in delivering this level of visual intensity while maintaining comfort, clarity, and proper contrast ratios for guests.



Jacobs Music Center

The Jacobs Music Center renovation transformed San Diego's historic 1929 Fox Theatre into a modern performance venue while preserving its Spanish Baroque character. Designed to support a world-class symphony and contemporary audiences, the project addressed acoustics, accessibility, production capabilities, and building systems. Lighting improvements were carefully integrated into the historic architecture, including refurbished chandeliers and sconces with modern light sources, discreet supplemental fixtures, and layered accent lighting that highlights architectural details. Flexible lighting controls enable both daily operation and theatrical performances. The design meets modern energy standards while enhancing audience immersion, ensuring the venue remains a vibrant cultural destination for generations.

DESIGN TEAM

Schuler Shook

John Jacobsen, Design IALD, IES, LC

Joshua Grossman, ASTC

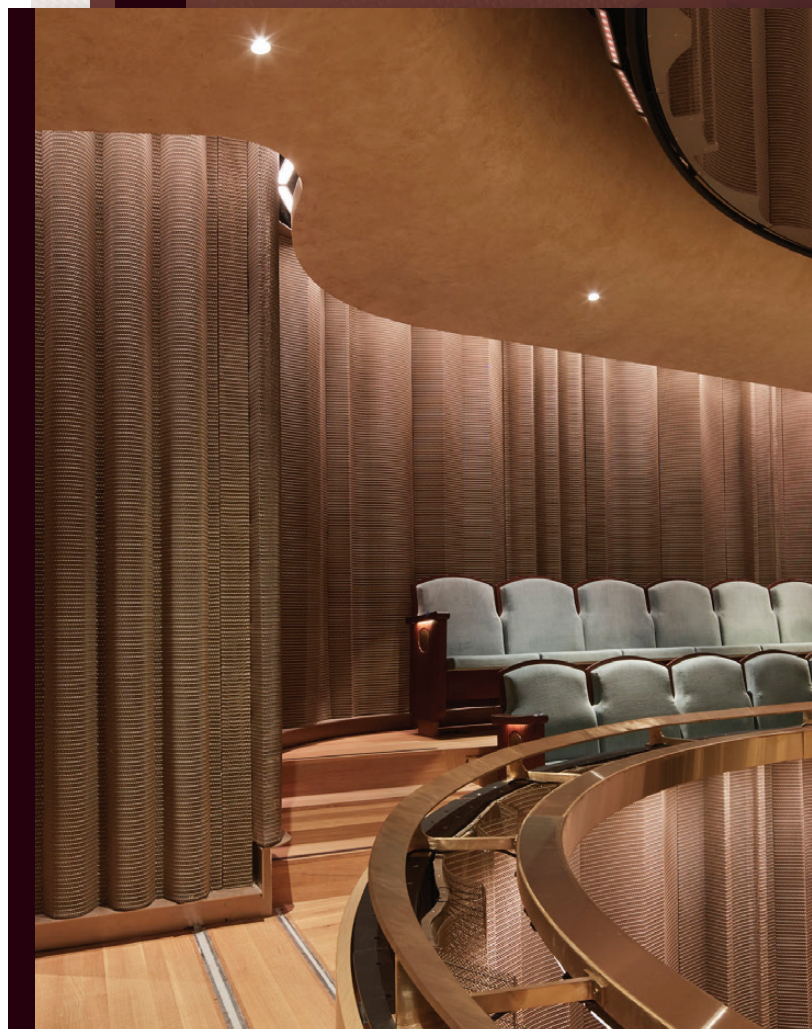
Emily Klingensmith, IALD, CLD, LC, LEED AP

Sam Kitchel

Jess Baker, Design IALD, IES, LC *(Formerly of Schuler Shook)*

Samantha Komber, Design IALD, LC *(Formerly of Schuler Shook)*

Jackson Pattermann *(Formerly of Schuler Shook)*



The new dual-purpose terrace surrounding the stage features soft audience seating and integrated color-tunable frontlight for auxiliary seating.



A transformative renovation honors the history of this concert hall while enhancing the musical and performance experience for artists and audiences.



...t downlighting for intimate
...ary musicians.



Historic fixtures were refurbished to incorporate modern light sources. The central chandelier's deceptively large support includes multiple layers of internal illumination and ceiling uplight.



...l, all while
...d audiences alike.

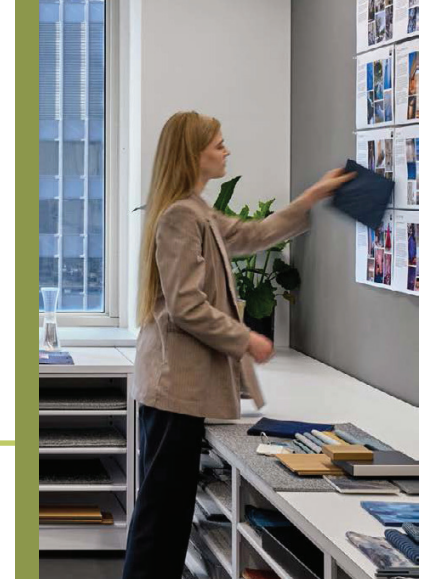




CHICAGO SECTION

Illuminating

ENGINEERING SOCIETY



Emerging Professional

The IES Emerging Professionals Initiative is a sub organization of members of all experience levels and backgrounds that is committed to providing community support and mentorship opportunities to those who are entering the lighting industry. Some EPs have completed years of studying lighting design, while some have taken unique paths through arts, design, or sales, just to name a few, coming together to connect, learn, and grow as a group. Understanding that everyone brings a unique perspective and inquiries, the IES board and EP chair are dedicated to providing community support and mentorship opportunities to bring these different backgrounds together for growth and collaboration. By creating spaces and events to encourage individuals to connect, learn, and make memories. Our hope is to grow EPs- who feel supported by their IES and design community, while the foundation of their careers is being laid.

An Emerging Professional (EP) is a recent graduate entering the workforce for the first time OR a professional making a career move/change. A person shall be considered an emerging professional for five (5) years after graduation or entry into the lighting industry. Students are considered members of this group.

For more information on the IES Emerging Professionals program, please contact **Kaitlyn Hayes** at ep@ieschicago.org with any inquiries or to join the mailing list.



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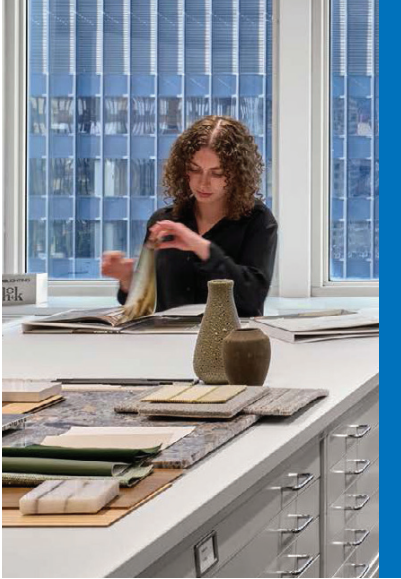
LLI ARCHITECTURAL
LIGHTING
MICRO LINEAR LIGHTING



RGBLIGHTS
DYNAMIC LIGHTING

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Continuing Education

Whether new to lighting or just looking to gain extra experience, join these two exciting courses for continued education. Please contact education@ieschicago.org for more information!

Organizational Team Training

The IES Chicago Section is also proud to offer organizational training and coursework to provide a tailored educational experience for your team. While this won't grant a CEU, it will give your team the exact training you seek. Please reach out to education@ieschicago.org to discuss this option in detail.

Fundamentals of Lighting

New to lighting? The IES Chicago Section has you covered through our Fundamentals of Lighting curriculum. The 10-session FOL offers fantastic opportunity to hone your lighting knowledge by learning from local industry leaders. Weekly, we will explore: a history of lighting, perception of light, luminaire design, modern control techniques, photometry & metrics, codes & standards, lighting design processes and lighting indoor & outdoor spaces.

Do you want to learn more about the specifics? Please contact education@ieschicago.org for more information!



***Thank you to all design teams who submitted this year.
We look forward to celebrating your next great designs in 2027!***





Advanced lighting and intelligent controls.

At Current®, inspiration flows both ways. We're inspired by the people who design, craft, live, work & play in spaces. Our award-winning family of brands is dedicated to providing specifiers with the essential tools for designing connected lighting environments, both indoors and out.

The logo for prescolite, featuring the word "prescolite" in a lowercase, white, sans-serif font, preceded by a white circle containing a stylized lowercase "p".A photograph of a modern office interior. The space features a light-colored ceiling with several recessed circular lights. The walls are white, and the floor is a light, polished concrete. On the left, there is a glass-walled office area with a wooden door. In the center, there are two framed abstract paintings on the wall, and a dark brown leather sofa and armchair are positioned in front of them. The overall atmosphere is clean, bright, and professional.

LiteFrame® Commercial

LiteFrame® Commercial enables a quiet ceiling design that supports visual comfort in today's commercial spaces. And with superior color rendering from TriGain™ technology, it delivers a more comfortable experience for the people beneath it.

A flexible design, range of distributions, and simple installation helps keep projects moving.

currentlighting.com