

ILLUMINATION AWARDS 2025



SEPTEMBER 18, 2025



*Thank you to all design teams
who submitted this year.*



IES *Illumination Awards*

September 18, 2025

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

Join our MC, Sara Schonour,
as we recognize outstanding
Chicago projects at the
Illumination Awards Ceremony.

Greetings from the President/MC
Presidential Address
Dinner/Intermission
Project Awards
Sponsorship & Membership Recognition
EP Luminaire Competition
Company Shorts Videos



Master Of Ceremonies

Sara Schonour (Pronouns She/Her) is honored to be back to host IES Chicago's IA awards for her third year in a row! Hailing from the Boston Section (where she serves as President), you might also recognize Sara from WILD (Women in Lighting + Design, Mentorship Committee Co-Chair) NACLIQ (the North American Coalition of Lighting Industry Queers, Executive Co-Chair) or as the Education Director for the Business of Light. She spent most of her career leading the lighting studio at world-renowned architecture firm Cannon Design, before starting her consulting firm, Luxsi (and her side hustle, Space Poppers!). Now, she mixes illumination, education, entertainment, and entrepreneurship fluidly in the industries she enjoys most. Sara speaks regularly in classrooms, on podcasts, and at conferences on various topics surrounding light and life. You can see Sara in action representing the world of lighting and engineering on the hit Netflix show, Baking Impossible! Sara is thrilled to be part of this year's Illumination Awards celebration, and sends hearty congratulations to all of tonight's honorees!



Letter From The President

Good Evening,

As we close another remarkable year, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to each of you for your continued support, creativity, and dedication to the IES Chicago Section. Your passion for lighting design and commitment to excellence have made our community a beacon of innovation and collaboration. It's been a year of meaningful connection, and I'm deeply grateful for the energy you bring to our shared mission.

Partnership from our sponsors not only fuels our programming but also reinforces the collaborative spirit that defines our community. To our dynamic mix of Chicago agents, manufacturers, and specifiers—thank you. Your generous support has been instrumental in bringing our events and initiatives to life, and your investment in the future of lighting continues to elevate the success of the IES Chicago Section.

This past year was marked by exciting growth and engagement. Our annual Golf Outing brought together professionals from across the region for a day of camaraderie and networking, while the Catenary Lighting event showcased the transformative power of design in public spaces. These moments not only celebrated our craft but also strengthened the bonds within our community. Your participation and enthusiasm made these successes possible.

Innovation continues to be a cornerstone of our work. From exploring emerging technologies to advancing sustainable practices, our members are leading the way in shaping the future of lighting. The ideas and conversations sparked at our events reflect a community that is not only forward-thinking but also deeply committed to making a lasting impact.

As we look ahead, I'm excited about the opportunities that await us. Thank you for being part of this journey and for helping us build a brighter, more connected future. I look forward to another year of growth, inspiration, and shared success.

Warm regards,

Jaslyn Otero

President, IES Chicago Section



IES Chicago Section Board of Managers

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VICE PRESIDENT

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ILLUMINATION AWARDS

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Jaslyn Otero, Aurora Lighting Design, an RBLD Studio

Rachael Stoner, EXP

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2008-2010 Avraham Mor

2006-2008 Giulio Pedota

2004-2006 Kim Eber

2002-2004 Bridget Cross

2001-2002 Chris Dolan

1999-2001 Carla Bukalski

BOARD OF MANAGERS

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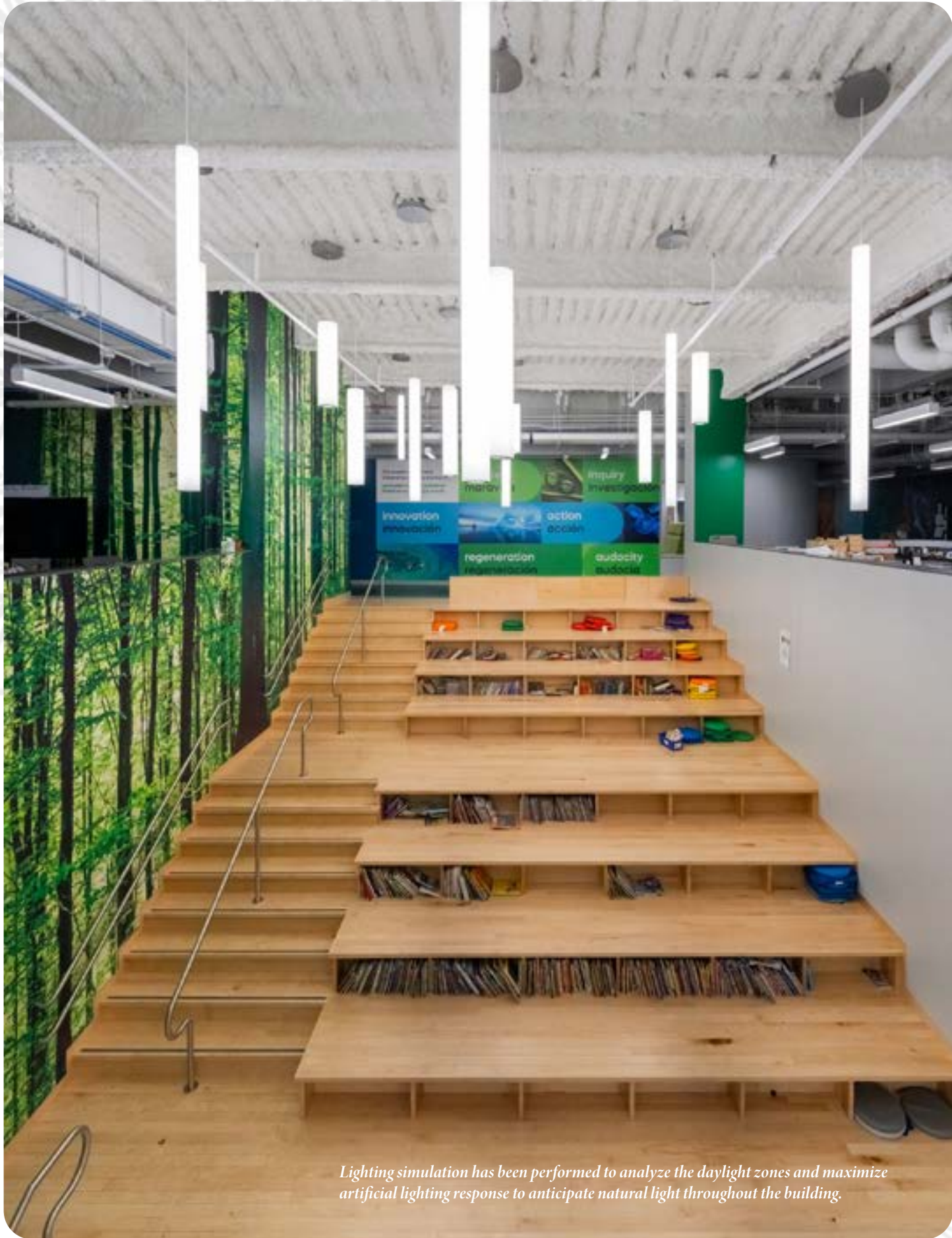
Carla Bukalski,

Aurora Lighting Design, an RBLD Studio

Kaitlyn Hayes,

Stantec - Emerging Professionals Chair

Contact president@ieschicago.org to join the BOM



Lighting simulation has been performed to analyze the daylight zones and maximize artificial lighting response to anticipate natural light throughout the building.



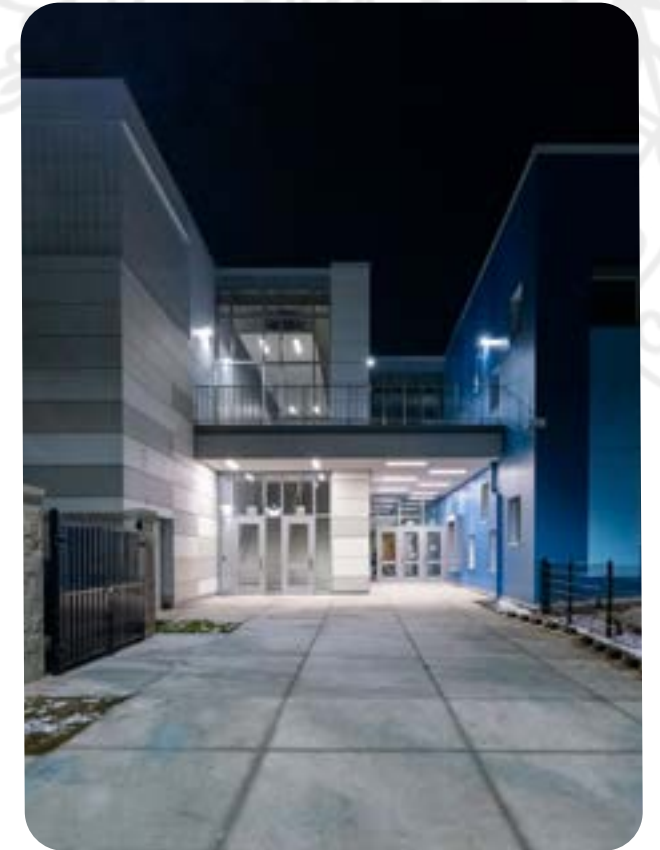
AWARD OF MERIT

SUSTAINABLE FUTURE SCHOOL

As the nation's first net-zero charter school, this project showcases how sustainable lighting design can elevate educational environments while meeting rigorous energy goals. A multi-layered strategy prioritizes illumination in key learning zones, minimizes lighting in non-essential zones, and integrates advanced controls like daylight harvesting and occupancy sensors for real-time responsiveness. Fixtures were carefully selected to reduce glare, enhance comfort, and maintain Dark Sky compliance outdoors, all while exceeding the Chicago Energy Transformation Code. The result is a high-performance, self-sufficient space that proves energy efficiency and inspiring design can coexist in net-zero architecture.

DESIGN TEAM

Krzysztof Pajerski
dbHMS



Exterior fixtures are capped to prevent uplighting, with minimal light levels to ensure Dark Sky compliance while providing a safe and secure passageway for occupants (above).

Strategic fixture placement distributes energy loads efficiently, providing increased illumination in play areas while reducing lighting in adjacent spaces to optimize energy use (below).





AWARD OF MERIT

SPEEDEE LABS

Speedee Labs embodies McDonald's future-focused innovation strategy, with lighting design that supports dynamic collaboration and experimentation across global teams. Integrated seamlessly with angular architecture, the lighting balances corporate functionality with creative energy, using 3000K for general spaces and 5000K in food testing zones. Use of tunable white technology in prototype and drive-thru labs enables finish evaluation under varied conditions, while energy-efficient low-glare fixtures deliver high performance at just 0.61 w/sq ft. The result is a flexible, intuitive environment that inspires exploration and reflects Speedee Labs' commitment to pushing boundaries in food and technology.

DESIGN TEAM

Ashley Mikels, LC
Interior Architects



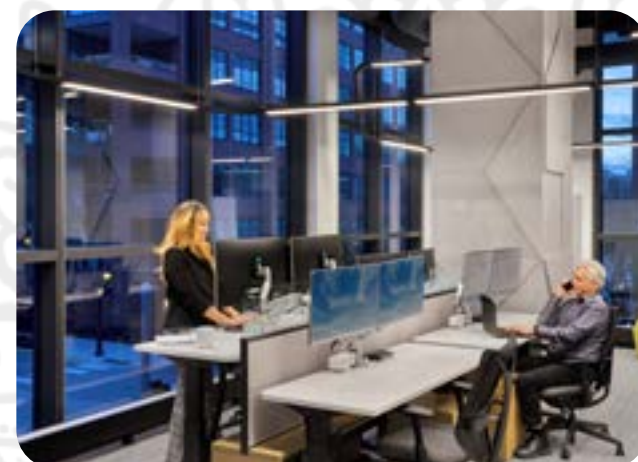
As visitors descend, the custom brand-colored fixtures shift from suspended to wall-mounted triangles inspired by the bowtie worn by Speedee, the first McDonald's mascot.



The hub features decorative sconces highlighting textured columns, with a dynamic, color-changing wall of linear tubes offering kinetic energy and customizable scenes for global visitors.



Digital screens and triangular light fixtures create a bold, energetic first impression, guiding visitors toward the client's customizable test kitchen.





AWARD OF MERIT

CONFIDENTIAL TECHNOLOGY CLIENT EVENT CENTER

This reinvigorated event center for a global technology company uses lighting to immerse guests in a culture of innovation while supporting hybrid and in-person events. A continuous pendant and integrated wall lighting guide circulation through themed breakout spaces, while acoustic ceilings with concealed uplights and miniature projectors evoke natural light and regional context. In the main event space, digitally addressable, color-tunable fixtures and DMX integration provide full production flexibility within a shallow, utility-dense plenum. The lighting design meets IECC-2018 standards while creating a warm, welcoming environment that reflects both brand identity and technical excellence.

DESIGN TEAM

Emily Klingensmith, IALD, CLD, LC, LEED AP
Schuler Shook

John Jacobsen, Design IALD, IES, LC
Schuler Shook

Travis Shupe, Design IALD, IES
Schuler Shook



The color changing linear wallwash fixtures can be controlled by the main room's production systems to signal guests when an event is about to begin.



Abstract acoustic baffle ceilings in the pre-function core and an informal breakout area are indirectly lit from soft linear uplights concealed above.



Color changing linear wallwash fixtures highlight super graphics on folding overhead doors. Static white linear pendants graze the surrounding brick tile wall.



Emerging Professionals

The IES Emerging Professionals (EP) Initiative – Chicago Section is a dynamic community of young professionals who have found their way into the lighting industry through a variety of paths. Some have studied lighting design in depth, while others bring fresh perspectives from backgrounds in the arts, design, sales, and more.

Rooted in the vibrant design culture of Chicago, this initiative is supported by the IES Board and EP Chair, who are dedicated to fostering mentorship, connection, and growth. Through inclusive events and engaging opportunities, we aim to help EPs build relationships, expand their knowledge, and create lasting memories.

Our mission is to empower Emerging Professionals to feel supported by both the IES and the broader design community as they lay the foundation for their careers. **Contact:** ep@ieschicago.org to join!

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!

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!

Fall 2025

Tuesdays, September 30th - December 2nd
Jacobs - 525 W Monroe, Suite 1600
(all courses are held from 5:30pm to 7:30pm)

Register on www.ieschicago.org
Space is limited

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.



CHICAGO SECTION

Illuminating
ENGINEERING SOCIETY

“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 Perrigueur
VP Commercial Architectural Business
Lutron Electronics



Read the full case study
lutron.com/blackrock

Photographer: Connie Zhou





AWARD OF MERIT

FLACK GLOBAL METALS

This corporate space blends hospitality and innovation, with a lighting design that reinforces brand identity while supporting flexibility for events, collaboration, and recruitment. Zoned, dimmable lighting controls allow the environment to shift seamlessly between presentation, social, and work modes without compromising comfort or performance. Fixtures were selected to reflect the company's industrial heritage while meeting energy code requirements through strategic placement and high-efficiency performance. Detail integration was key for luminous panels, shelf lighting, and accent downlights. The result is a sophisticated, adaptable space where lighting enhances both the architectural narrative and the user experience.

DESIGN TEAM

Ashley Mikels, LC
Interior Architects



The broadcast room utilizes flicker-free key lights to accent participants during live video sessions while featuring the trading floor in the background.



Accent downlights highlight the steel-look entry, emphasizing industrial textures and creating a visual connection between the company's history and the innovative nature of the design.



Custom shelves are accented with integrated lighting to highlight the architectural elements, creating a dramatic contrast between the sleek, polished finishes and raw, industrial textures.



AWARD OF MERIT

USONA INSTITUTE

Usona Institute's new headquarters uses light as a therapeutic tool to support introspective healing for clients with anxiety, depression, and PTSD. Each therapy pod features dynamic RGB-3000K lighting with DMX-addressable zones and touchscreen controls, enabling customized shows and presets tailored to individual therapeutic needs. Custom fixtures and immersive elements like the Luminosity chandelier and Alhambra dome create layered, responsive environments that integrate daylight, electric light, and sensory stimulation. From the warm, wood-accented lobby to the adaptable therapy spaces, the lighting design supports Usona's mission to transform mental health care through intentional, experiential illumination.

DESIGN TEAM

- Leslie M North
Aurora Lighting Design, an RBLD Studio
- Marty Peck
Creative Lighting Design & Engineering, LLC
- Jaslyn Otero
Aurora Lighting Design, an RBLD Studio
- Gloria Paz-Arroyo
Aurora Lighting Design, an RBLD Studio



Luminosity in active mode. Wall color and shows harmonize or contrast to the movement of the central sculptural chandelier at the discretion of the therapist.



Hydro-therapy light immersion creates a mood. Preprogrammed shows adjust color sequences for central vault, side coves, and pool lighting while balancing white lighting elements.



T3 emphasizes mass timber roof while providing soft indirect light. Fully dimmable floor and ceiling set mood. Sliding wall is closed to block out window.



2700K LEDs project a warm hearth and safety complementing the Prairie style architecture. Coordinating lighting in the mass-timber construction and wood detailing posed challenges (above). Therapy wing lobby features perimeter outlined undulating acoustic mushroom gills peppered with 1-inch random stars that warmly enhance wood finishes (below).





2025 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

- 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 Alford-McGowan 2001
- Wayne Fresen 2001
- Rick Kellen 2001

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

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

2025 Annual Sponsors

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

Luminary Level



Ambassador Level



Visionary Level



Champion Level



Leader Level



Contributor Level





The “Hall” is a bright, collaboration area. Concealed uplights above trellis beams and linear, lensed downlights below illuminate desks and provide balance with daylight (above). Direct-indirect cylinders celebrate the “Solarium’s” tall ceilings, large-scale pendants illuminate the plant-filled counters, and “grazers” highlight pilasters to balance contrast with daylight windows (below).



AWARD OF MERIT

**GENSLER
SAN FRANCISCO OFFICE**

This global design firm’s workplace showcases how lighting can foster community, flexibility, and inspiration within a forward-thinking office environment. Discreet, uniform lighting supports adaptable spaces for collaboration and events, while expressive elements like the RGBW ‘squiggle’ pendant and vaulted tunnel uplights add identity and whimsy. Integrated daylight, direct-indirect fixtures, and tailored lighting zones offer staff a range of environments, from bright communal areas to quieter, focused zones, without compromising comfort or performance. Meeting Title 24 requirements and targeting LEED Platinum, the lighting design exemplifies how thoughtful solutions can elevate workplace experience and sustainability.

DESIGN TEAM

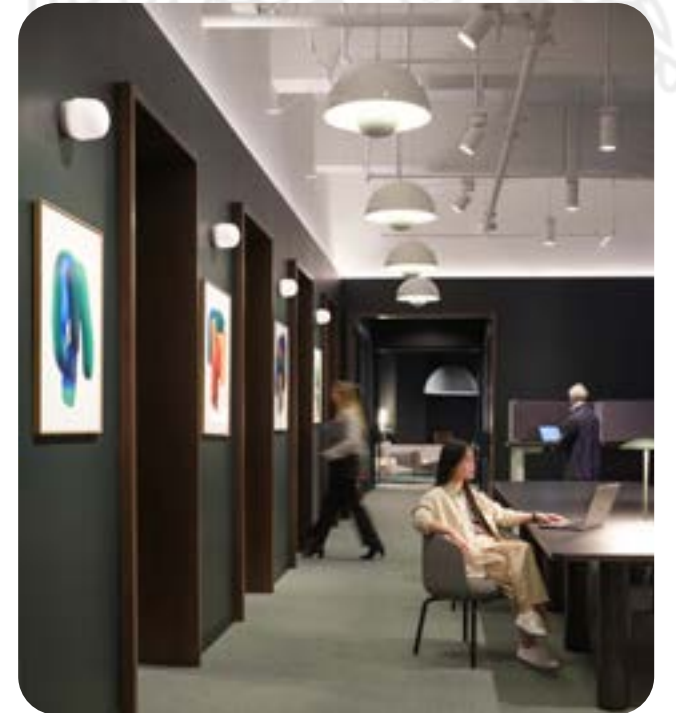
Emily Klingensmith, IALD, CLD, LC, LEED AP
Schuler Shook

John Jacobsen, Design IALD, IES, LC
Schuler Shook

Samantha Komber, Design IALD, LC
Schuler Shook

Jess Baker, Design IALD, IES, LC
(formerly with Schuler Shook)

Rachel Nagy
(formerly with Schuler Shook)





AWARD OF MERIT

NORTH SHORE CONGREGATIONAL ISRAEL, FRANK HALL + CROWN HALL

Frank Hall and Crown Hall, located within the historic North Shore Congregation Israel, uses light to honor heritage, foster connection, and symbolize resilience. Frank Hall's menorah-inspired coves and central luminous fixture create a spiritual link to the temple, with layered lighting scenes supporting both intimacy and grandeur. Crown Hall's dynamic ceiling of curved coves and starfield downlights offers versatile lighting for celebrations and community events, with programmable scenes enhancing mood and storytelling. These spaces represent hope and resilience for a community deeply affected by tragedy, including the 2023 Highland Park shooting. The late Events and B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator lives on in the comforting glow of our lighting design—a tribute to her dedication and spirit.

DESIGN TEAM

Alex Quella
Gwen Grossman Lighting Design
Gwen Grossman
Gwen Grossman Lighting Design



The elongated curved coves fill the space with indirect illumination while complementing the existing architectural façade, visible through the window.



The soft luminous ceiling and glowing gold cove reflect the site line into the existing iconic temple, connecting the two spaces together through illumination.



Coves, symbolizing the menorah, guide the way into the temple, a 15.5' diameter luminous fixture centered in the space, inset within a gold cove.





Varied lighting elements coordinated with varied ceiling conditions harmonize seamlessly to celebrate the architectural expression (above). Portals off main thoroughfare give glimpse of luminous ceilings and walls entice occupants in for a rest or sidebar conversation (below).



AWARD OF MERIT

215 N. PEORIA

This financial firm's urban office merges elegance and functionality, with a lighting design that enhances architectural materiality while supporting varied work and entertainment needs. Integrated into acoustic baffles, millwork, and curved ceiling lines, the lighting uses 3500K 90CRI sources and advanced controls to exceed IECC 2018 energy standards by 21%. Carefully placed luminaires support screen visibility, task flexibility, and visual comfort, while decorative pendants and minimal point sources reinforce the firm's refined aesthetic. The result is a sophisticated, high-performance environment where light defines form, guides movement, and elevates the user experience.

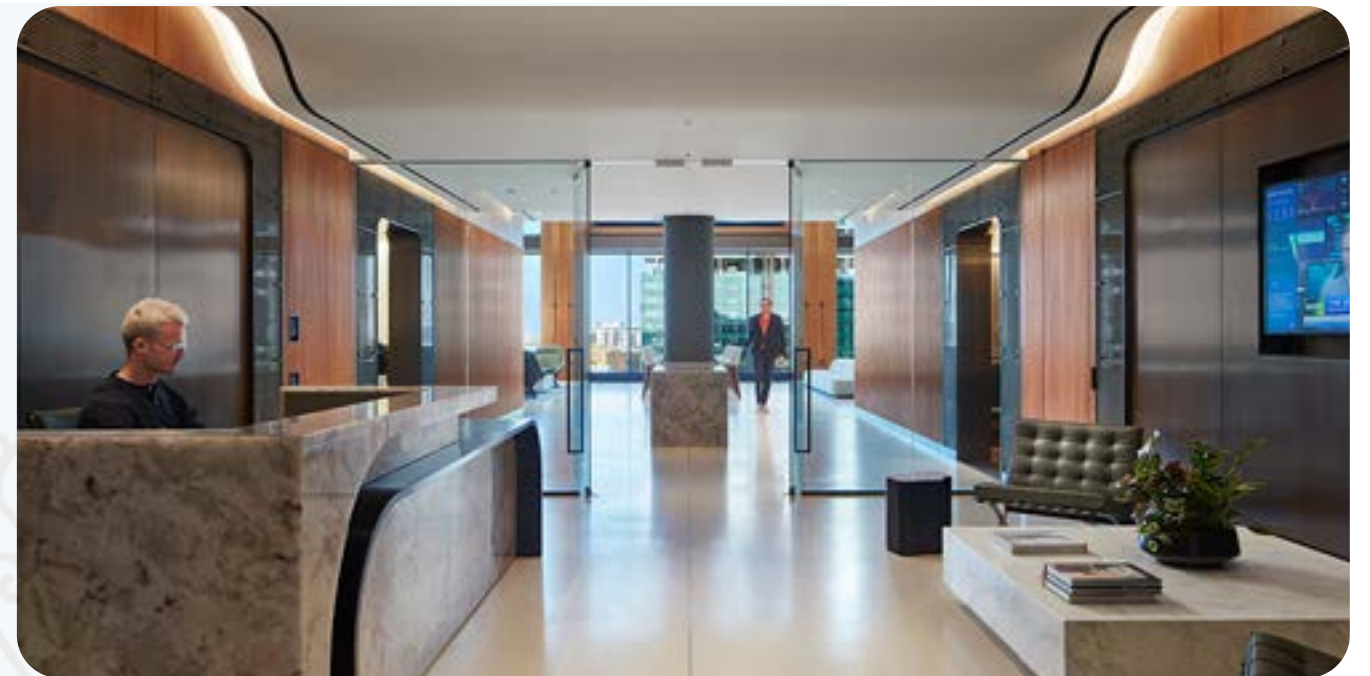
DESIGN TEAM

Leslie M North
Aurora Lighting Design, an RBLD Studio

Jaslyn Otero
Aurora Lighting Design, an RBLD Studio



Elements work in harmony. Uplight at outer bays segment room without obscuring screens. Millwork column light detail acts as destination marker from entry (above). Linear lensed slot elements trace curved ceiling lines, guiding visitors from the entrance to the expansive huddle space. Miniature downlights provide general lighting (below).



Introducing New Star Lighting's new CompleteCare™ Fall Prevention portfolio

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Membership Milestones

40
YEARS

Leslie M North
Kevin Willmorth

35
YEARS

Anne Kustner Haser

30
YEARS

James Crowley
Bob Graham
Emily Klingensmith
Rick Sabatello
James Baney

20
YEARS

Geoffrey Thiesse
Gwen Grossman

15
YEARS

Geoffrey Bushor
Mark Groenke
Grant Kightlinger
Ryan Morgan
Thatcher Waller
Drew Woodward
Philip Wyton

5
YEARS

Roxanna Bailey
Mandar Bankhele
Amir Cubic
Jeff Davis
Peter Demars
Juliana Ejsmont
Ellen Kuklinski
Chris Land
Michael Mahlum
N. Oliver Maudlin
Kelsey Nowak
Chris Prezas
Richard Schewe

10
YEARS

Anya Chase
Robert Kramer
Chris Smith-Petersen
Jonathan Vollers



The first look at the amenity bar/lounge reveals the scrim curtain chandelier, grazing light at the back wall, and main bar accents, adding depth (above). Maintaining the warm, residential feel, the lower-level gaming showcases vertical brick grazing and a pool table luminaire, both highlighting and focusing attention on this amenity (below).



AWARD OF MERIT

225 W. WASHINGTON

At 225 W. Washington, the transformation of a former educational space into a vibrant tenant lounge was driven by a lighting design that balances drama, intimacy, and energy efficiency. A custom scrim curtain chandelier, lit from within, creates a sparkling focal point, while grazing and accent lighting highlight architectural features like the wood staircase and ornamental pipe organ. Carefully layered lighting scenes, integrated with daylighting and dimming controls, support a range of uses while meeting IECC 2021 energy standards. The result is a cohesive, tenant-focused environment that enhances wellness, fosters connection, and elevates leasing appeal through thoughtful, sustainable design.

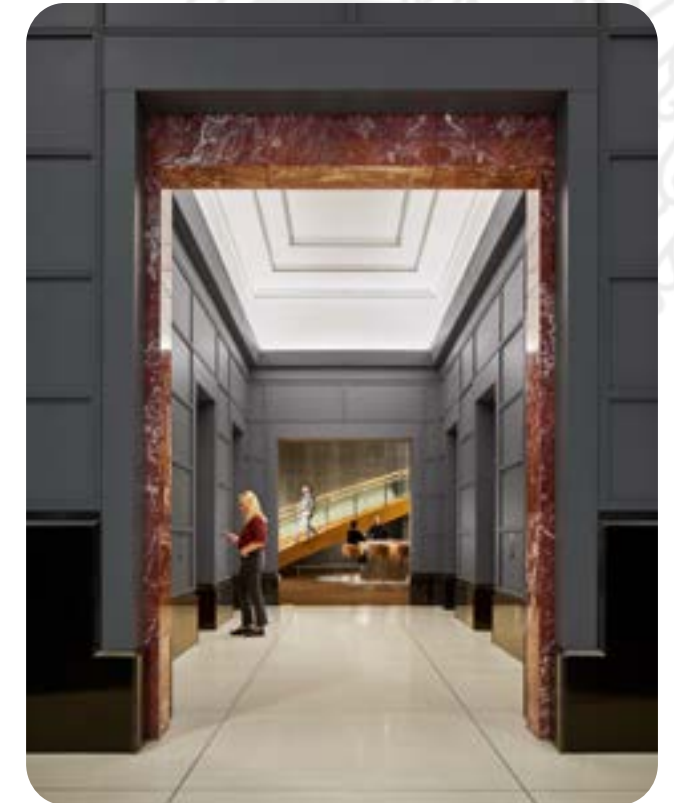
DESIGN TEAM

Gwen Grossman

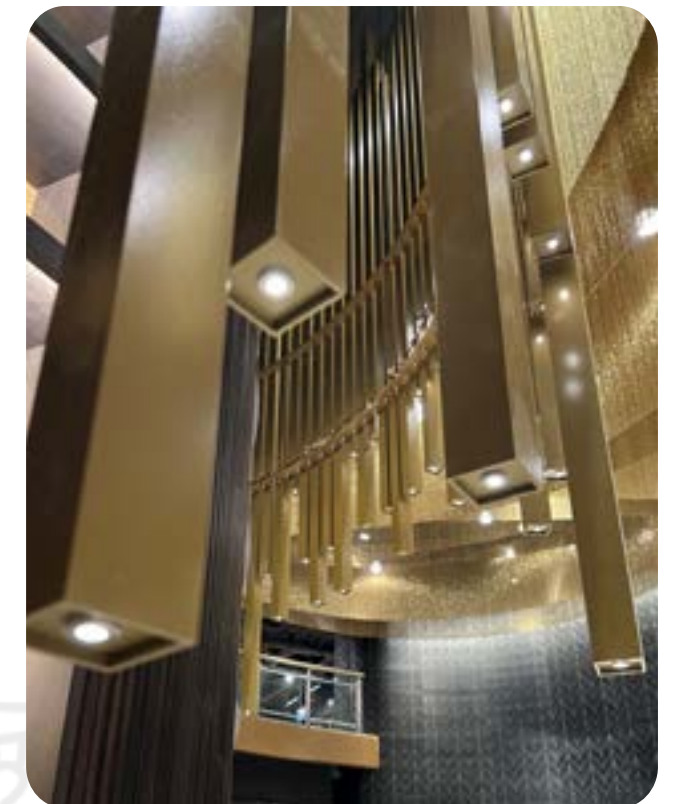
Gwen Grossman Lighting Design

Diana Ades

Gwen Grossman Lighting Design



In the lobby, energy-efficient LED cove lighting enhances the narrow space, creating a pinch point and offering a glimpse of the warm amenity area beyond (above). Tiny pin spotlights at each ornamental organ pipe and front-light grazing emphasize the backbar's verticality, contrasting with the horizontal lighting of the bar shelving (below).





Daylight from clerestory windows, indirect electric light above the wood structure, and vintage-inspired luminaires seamlessly balance transitions between day and night (above). 3D topographic map of the surrounding riverbed is highlighted with perimeter graze lighting while providing volumetric illumination to the lobby for a dynamic visual effect (below).



AWARD OF MERIT

ADA HOTEL

The newly constructed Ada Hotel blends history and hospitality, with a lighting design that balances natural and electric illumination to create a warm, dynamic atmosphere. Low-profile LED tape light grazes the atrium's topographic ceiling, eliminating the need for downlights while enhancing architectural contours and communal spaces. Vintage-inspired fixtures and integrated accent lighting reinforce the hotel's narrative, while a sophisticated control system orchestrates seamless transitions from daylight to evening ambiance. Despite tight ceiling conditions, the lighting design achieves visual comfort, energy efficiency, and a timeless aesthetic that honors the site's legacy and riverside setting.

DESIGN TEAM

Kerri Callahan, AIA, IALD, IES
Polymath

Lee Greenberg, AIA
OTJ



Second floor event and gathering space utilizes miniature track spotlights while low profile LED tape with graze optic provides ambient lighting throughout the atrium (above). The intimate lounge within the third-floor bar achieves a delicate balance of natural light and nostalgic illumination, creating a warm and inviting atmosphere (below).





AWARD OF MERIT

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY ROTHSCHILD & CARMICHAEL COLLEGE

Rothschild and Carmichael Colleges expand the university's residential system with Collegiate Gothic-inspired architecture and over 600 student beds, supported by rich amenity spaces. The lighting design emphasizes warm, energy-efficient solutions with layered illumination strategies, integrating custom decorative fixtures and discreet architectural lighting. Each college features a distinct family of fixtures developed in close collaboration with the design team and a local fabricator, aligning with the unique architectural detailing while maintaining stylistic cohesion. LED sources at 2700K and flexible controls support both aesthetic goals and sustainability, contributing to Carmichael's LEED Gold certification.

DESIGN TEAM

Jim Baney, IALD, CLD, LEED AP
Schuler Shook

Travis Shupe, Design IALD, IES
Schuler Shook

John Jacobsen, Design IALD, IES, LC
Schuler Shook

Jess Baker
(formerly with Schuler Shook)

Brian Wiley
(formerly with Schuler Shook)

Peter Lee
Schuler Shook

David M. Schwartz Architects
Hastings Architecture



Carmichael Great Room features a two-tier chandelier with ambient glow, uplight, and focused downlight, all separately controlled. Wall sconces add visual interest at the perimeter (above). Illuminated portals lead to the Carmichael Courtyard. Custom lanterns provide ambient lighting, while miniature spotlights highlight the vaulted ceiling (below).



The Rothschild Great Room utilizes two-tier chandeliers with cylindrical diffusers, companion wall sconces, and recessed downlights for reading tasks (above). The Carmichael Dining Hall features custom chandeliers with glowing globes and concealed uplight rings, custom sconces, and recessed downlights, all separately controlled for layered illumination (below).



Upcoming Events

IES Chicago is excited to share a preview of the diverse and engaging programming we're planning for the upcoming year. Whether you're a seasoned professional, an emerging leader, or a curious student, there's something for everyone:

What to Expect

- *Industry Insights & Technical Deep Dives*
- *Explore trends, technologies, and best practices shaping the future of lighting.*
- *Hands-On Learning & EP-Focused Events*
- *Skill-building workshops and collaborative sessions designed for emerging professionals.*
- *Community Engagement & Outreach*
- *Opportunities to give back, mentor, and inspire the next generation.*
- *Tours & Field Experiences*
- *Get behind-the-scenes access to innovative projects and manufacturing facilities.*

Save the Date

October 2025

CTA RPM Overview
(Red and Purple Modernization)
IES Chicago + IALD
Midwest Volunteer Collaboration

November 2025

What's Wrong with Lighting? Chicago Edition

December 2025

Lighting Tips & Tricks

January 8, 2026

Annual Holiday Party

February 2026

BIM Technology & Standards

March 2026

Chicago Henge Photography Workshop

April 2026

Factory Tour (EP Focus)

May 2026

Hospitality Lighting: Hotel Walking Tour

June 2026

Annual Golf Event

All dates subject to change.



Renew Your Membership Today

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

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

We look forward to celebrating your next great designs in 2026!



*Unmask
the Light*

A night of celebration, elegance, and shadows...where only the light fixtures dare to reveal what's beneath the mask.

A+M

Unveiling lighting artistry from AFX, Elite, Hubbardton Forge, Lee Broom, and Matteo.