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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Society of Architectural Historians to Honor Chicago's Architectural Educators at October Gala

CHICAGO — The Society of Architectural Historians (SAH) annually honors a cohort of individuals for their outstanding work shaping the built environment, advocating on behalf of historic places, or making architectural history accessible and interesting to a public audience. This fall, the Society will recognize four Chicago-based professionals who have excelled at engaging the public in architectural dialogue: architectural authors **Robert Sharoff** and **William Zbaren**; anthropology professor and archaeologist **Rebecca Graff**; and former Chicago Architecture Center CEO **Lynn Osmond**.

They will be honored at SAH's annual gala, [SAH Celebrates](#), taking place Friday, October 24, 2025, at The Casino in downtown Chicago. Tickets for the event are on sale now.

Each year, SAH honors the contributions of those who create, critique, curate, or campaign for spaces both iconic and humble. The Society applauds this year's honorees for making architectural study accessible to the public through engaging imagery, storytelling, and exploration of the City of Chicago and beyond.

In addition to being a program of recognition, SAH Celebrates is the Society's largest yearly fundraising opportunity. Proceeds support the Society's stewardship of the internationally-renowned Charnley-Persky House (1891-92), which serves as its international headquarters, and SAH educational programs and publications, including the award-winning [Buildings of the United States](#) book series and [SAH Archipedia](#), the Society's open-access online encyclopedia of U.S. architecture and landscapes.

Designed by famed Chicago architect Louis Sullivan with assistance from his junior draftsman Frank Lloyd Wright, the Charnley-Persky House is today recognized as a National Historic Landmark and a Chicago Landmark for its pivotal place in modern

residential design. As its permanent tenant, SAH ensures the building remains open to the public for tours and as a meaningful venue for educational events around architecture.

SAH Celebrates tickets are [on sale](#) for \$215 per person (including a \$50 tax-deductible donation to SAH), and may be purchased online at sah.org/programs/sah-celebrates starting September 4. Guests will indulge in gourmet cuisine, live entertainment, and an exclusive preview of new programming for the coming year. SAH plans to announce a new partnership with the Library of American Landscape History (LALH) at the gala. The collaboration will create new opportunities for scholarship on the history of landscape design and planning in North America.

Sponsorship opportunities are available. Demonstrate your dedication to the built environment and place your name or brand in front of more than 13,000 SAH subscribers. Please contact SAH Executive Director Ben Thomas, bthomas@sah.org, or call 312-573-1365 for more information.

Event Details:

SAH Celebrates

6:00–9:00 PM

Friday, October 24, 2025

The Casino (195 E Delaware Place, Chicago, IL 60611)

About the 2025 Awardees:

Robert Sharoff and William Zbaren

Robert Sharoff and William Zbaren may be Chicago's most prolific architectural book team. Their twenty-year partnership has produced seven definitive architectural books, several of which highlight Chicago architects and architecture.

Sharoff is a prolific writer on arts and culture for the New York Times, the Chicago Tribune and Chicago magazine, among many others. With his news reporter's penchant for digging deeper and getting the correct facts, Sharoff has unearthed surprising, little-known episodes in Chicago and architectural design history.

Zbaren is also a long-time New York Times contributor as well as a prominent Chicago photographer with a keen eye for architecture. He is the creator of images for books and major publications that convey the sense of buildings with the same impact as actually being there—and often directing the eye to qualities that have been overlooked. He is also a professor of architectural photography at the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago.

At SAH Celebrates, the Society of Architectural Historians will honor this pair for their unique written and visual communication style, which balances accessibility and sophistication to engage general readers who may not have prior training in architecture or architectural history.

Rebecca Graff, Ph.D.

Rebecca S. Graff is an Associate Professor of Anthropology at Lake Forest College. A historical archaeologist with research interests in the 19th- and 20th-century urban United States, she explores the relationship between temporality and modernity, consumerism and material culture, and contemporary heritage and urbanism through archaeological and archival research.

At SAH Celebrates, we will honor her especially for her commitment to literally unearthing and telling the stories of Chicago's varied urban neighborhoods and houses.

She led two archaeological excavations at the Charnley-Persky House in 2010 and 2015 to excavate garbage from the historical "midden" – an onsite dump for domestic waste – which was uncovered during maintenance work on the property. In 2010, more than 20 undergraduate students worked for five weeks to uncover artifacts and features at the site through DePaul University's Urban Historical Archaeology Field School program saw. In 2015, Graff directed excavations through Lake Forest College, assisted by a digital humanities grant from the Mellon Foundation, where she was joined by 10 students from Lake Forest College, Beloit College, St. Olaf College, Northeastern Illinois University, and Chicago's LaneTech High School.

Her research has been supported by the American Historical Association and the National Endowment for the Humanities (SHARP), the Karla Scherer Center for the Study of American Culture (University of Chicago), the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the Greater Midwest Foodways Alliance.

Lynn Osmond

Lynn Osmond is Principal of Osmond Consulting and former President & CEO of Choose Chicago, the city's official tourism organization. She is also President Emeritus of the Chicago Architecture Center (CAC), where she led for more than 25 years. At the CAC, she transformed the institution into a global leader in public engagement with architecture and design, launching Open House Chicago, expanding the award-winning CAC River Cruise, and opening the new Chicago Architecture Center in 2018.

Her commitment to the built environment extends through her service as a previous president of International Women's Forum Chicago, chair of the Association of Architecture Organizations, member of the Magnificent Mile Association, board member

of the Driehaus Foundation, and as a Chicago Landmarks commissioner. An Honorary Member of the American Institute of Architects, Osmond has received numerous national and international honors for her contributions to architecture advocacy, education, and design.

At SAH Celebrates, the Society of Architectural Historians will honor Lynn for her leadership in public outreach connecting millions to a new curiosity about the built world around them. Lynn's efforts align perfectly with SAH's mission to promote the study and interpretation of architecture for the benefit of all.

About SAH:

The [Society of Architectural Historians](#) promotes the study, interpretation and conservation of architecture, design, landscapes and urbanism worldwide. SAH serves a network of local, national and international institutions and individuals who, by vocation or avocation, focus on the built environment and its role in shaping contemporary life. SAH is headquartered in Chicago's historic Charnley-Persky House, one of the few extant Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright residences. The Society publishes its quarterly print *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians (JSAH)* and the *Buildings of the United States* book series, organizes study tours, and hosts the SAH Annual Conference. SAH's digital resources include *SAH Archipedia*, a media-rich online encyclopedia of American architecture, and SAHARA, a shared online image archive for teaching and research. To learn more about SAH or to become a member, visit sah.org.

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