



## **New Fellow Spotlight: The Honorable Stephen T. Ayers, FAIA, NAC, CCM, LEED AP 11th Architect of the Capitol President, The Ayers Group, LLC**

In 2010, Stephen T. Ayers was appointed by the President of the United States to serve a 10-year term as Architect of the Capitol. As the 11th Architect of the Capitol, Mr. Ayers was responsible for the facilities maintenance and operation of the historic U.S. Capitol Building, the care and improvement of more than 570 acres of grounds, and the operation and maintenance of 18.6 million square feet of buildings. He oversaw the care of all works of art in the U.S. Capitol under the direction of the Joint Committee on the Library and was responsible for the maintenance and restoration of murals, sculpture and other architectural elements throughout the Capitol complex. He also served as Acting Director of the U.S. Botanic Garden and the National Garden. The Architect of the Capitol has approximately 2,300 employees and an annual budget of \$730 million. Mr. Ayers retired after 35 years of federal service and now serves as President of The Ayers Group, LLC.

As Architect of the Capitol, Mr. Ayers served as a member of the United States Capitol Police Board and the Congressional Accessibility Services Board, as well as an ex officio member of the United States Capitol Preservation Commission. Additionally, the Architect of the Capitol is a member of the District of Columbia Zoning Commission, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the National Capital Memorial Commission. In addition to these positions, Mr. Ayers served as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Institute of Building Sciences, the Construction Management Association of America and the Construction Users Roundtable.

Mr. Ayers is a licensed architect in California, a member and Fellow of the American Institute of Architects, an Accredited Professional in Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design and was elected into the National Academy of Construction. Mr. Ayers is also a Certified Construction Manager. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Architecture from the University of Maryland and earned his Master of Science degree in Systems Management from the University of Southern California. He was awarded an honorary Doctor of Public Design by the Boston Architectural College in recognition of his service as a champion of historic preservation, great public design and sustainability.

The University of Maryland School of Architecture presented Mr. Ayers with their Distinguished Alumni Award and awarded him the Sigma Delta Tau Silver Medal for Distinction in Architecture. He is also the recipient of the Construction Industry Institute's Carroll H. Dunn Award for Excellence and the American Institute of Architects' Thomas Jefferson Award for Public Architecture. The National Institute of Building Sciences bestowed their highest award, The Mortimer Marshall Lifetime Achievement Award, to Mr. Ayers and Engineering New Record recognized his contributions to the build environment with the ENR Legacy Award.

### **What are you most looking forward to as a NAPA Fellow?**

I am really excited about being a new Fellow and finding ways to continue to serve and give back to our government as society as a whole. I'm excited to meet and learn from my new colleagues in NAPA. I enjoy work and I'm looking forward to being part of the meaningful and necessary work that NAPA does. As the head of a federal agency for many years, I often needed assistance and NAPA was a great resource. I'm excited to now be in a position to offer that same assistance to others.

### **What inspires you during these challenging times?**

In the face of the most unimaginable tragedies we have faced as a country, there are always people that naturally rise up, take charge and help others with a humble spirit. These people are just as afraid as others but something inside pushes them forward. These selfless and natural leaders inspire me. They are not celebrities or politicians; they are regular people that are inspired to take action to help others.

### **What do you enjoy most about the work you do?**

I'm an architect and a leader and both of those areas focus on people. As an architect I enjoy creating spaces for people to thrive and creating beauty. As a leader I enjoy creating environments and circumstances where people can thrive and be their best. I also enjoy working on making the world a better place through resilience and sustainability.

## **Who or what inspired you to work in public service?**

My dad was a Marine and fought in the Korean War and I highly valued his service and wanted to join the military as well. The military was always a natural calling for me. After graduating from College, I joined the Air Force and served as an officer for five years. During my service I found that with hard work, I could make a difference. I have always felt an immense sense of responsibility and accountability to the American people for my work in government and this challenged me to strive to do better every day. I got into public service through the military and stayed in public service because I enjoyed the immense responsibility.

## **Which of the Academy's Grand Challenges resonate most with you?**

It's impossible for me to name just one. As an architect, I naturally gravitate to Climate Change and to Building Resilient Communities; two things I have worked on my entire career. As an Agency head and leader, I gravitate towards New Approaches to Governance and Engagement. As a life-long public servant, I gravitate to Reinvigorating Public Service. It seems to me that I will have no problem finding a good fit.

## **What advice can you give to folks beginning careers in public service?**

Jump in right away, work hard, work long, surround yourself with people that will lift you up and make you smarter and take care of others.

## **What is the first concert you attended?**

As far as I'm concerned, there is no music other than music from the 1970's! My first concert was Led Zeppelin at the Capitol Centre in Washington, D.C. quickly followed up by Aerosmith. Some say I've mellowed a bit since then though I'm not sure that's true.