

Media Kit

RICE DESIGN ALLIANCE FACT SHEET

History The Rice Design Alliance (RDA) was formed in 1972 by David A. Crane, dean of the [Rice University School of Architecture](#). Crane formed RDA to provide a community forum for issues concerning the built and natural environments. By April 1973, RDA had a board of directors, a substantial member roster, and had sponsored its first program.

Mission Rice Design Alliance is a non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of architecture, urban design, and the built environment in the Houston region through educational programs, the publication of *Cite: The Architecture + Design Review of Houston*, and active programs to initiate physical improvements.

Membership From a nucleus of Rice University faculty and architecture alumni, RDA's membership expanded to include faculty, students, and alumni from the [University of Houston College of Architecture](#); design, engineering, and construction professionals; and civic-minded Houstonians. Currently RDA has more than 2,300 members. Membership is open to the public.

Board of Directors RDA is led by a board of directors composed of 50 community leaders from various fields, the dean of the school of architecture at Rice University, and two student representatives each from Rice and the University of Houston College of Architecture.

Members of the 2009-2010 RDA Executive Committee are:

David Spaw, AGC – President Chief Executive Officer, SpawMaxwell Company

Kimberly Hickson, AIA, LEED AP – President-Elect, Project Director, Gensler

David Harvey, Jr.- Vice President President, D. E. Harvey Builders

Edwin C. Friedrichs, P.E., LEED AP – Treasurer, Senior Principal, President – Infrastructure Division, Walter P Moore

Lonnie Hoogeboom, AIA – Secretary Partner, Natalye Appel + Associates Architects, LLC

Chuck Gremillion – Past President, Regional President, A&E – The Graphics

Complex, A Division of Thomas Reprographics

Key RDA Staff

Linda Sylvan – Executive Director

Mary Swift – Associate Director, Membership

Kathryn Fosdick – Associate Director, Programs

Raj Mankad – Cite Editor

RDA Outreach – Education, Engagement, Impact

EDUCATION Education is the cornerstone upon which RDA was forged. RDA provides Houstonians with a forum for considering and discussing design and the built environment. RDA has sponsored over 327 lectures, 74 panel discussions and symposiums, 46 architecture tours, 21 exhibitions, nine film series, ten grant competitions, and four national design competitions.

Lectures RDA holds two lecture series annually. Topics span the design and building spectrum and have included design activism; landscape as urbanism; mainstream design; and engineering architecture. Special lectures have given Houstonians their first opportunity to see architects like Frank Gehry and Cesar Pelli before they became international superstars.

Civic forums RDA Civic Forums are a vehicle for examining issues that affect Houstonians and the city. These panel discussions allow the public to gather information about a current issue and to join in a dialogue with experts.

Publications RDA's quarterly journal, *Cite: The Architecture + Design Review of Houston*, started publication in 1982 and is the only consistent voice of architectural criticism in Houston. A related blog, offcite.org, addresses current issues with more editorial voices. *Ephemeral City: Cite Looks at Houston* is a collection of 25 critical essays on the late modern city that originally appeared in *Cite*.

Special Programs Additional programs such as exhibitions, film series, design charrettes, and project tours complement the annual schedule.

ENGAGEMENT The ability to effect change comes from mobilizing people toward a common goal. RDA brings people together for idea exchange, socializing, and hands-on involvement.

Architecture Tours Conducted annually since 1975, RDA architecture tours present examples of local residential architecture and evolving Houston neighborhoods. The tours are themed around a particular architect, such as the iconic John F. Staub; a style, like Spanish-Mediterranean; or an emerging trend, such as live-work houses and small houses. Featured neighborhoods have included Tiel Way, Riverside, Shadowlawn, Broad Acres, Southampton, and the Museums District.

City Study Tours RDA organizes trips to cities throughout the United States and the world, to experience architecture through local guides, private receptions, and behind-the-scene tours. RDA members have visited Paris, Buenos Aires, San Francisco, Chicago, and Marfa, Texas, to name a few destinations.

Annual Gala and RDA Award for Design Excellence Launched in 1987, the gala recognizes individuals and institutions that have made exceptional contributions to architecture and design in Houston. Past recipients of the RDA Award for Design Excellence include Gerald D. Hines, George and Cynthia Mitchell, Walter P. Moore, Jr., BMC Software, the Texas Medical Center, and Herbert Wells.

RDA Partners This dynamic group of RDA members in their 20s and 30s enjoy experiencing architecture and entertainment at special events designed just for them.

IMPACT RDA is committed to initiating physical improvements for the betterment of the Houston region, through tangible projects and funding.

Design competitions RDA's first national design competition was held in 1985 for Sesquicentennial Park, along Buffalo Bayou on the north side of downtown Houston. Until then, an open competition for a major civic project was unprecedented in Houston. The competition resulted in a master plan for the park, which obtained funding and is now completed.

The 99K House This international competition drew 182 entries for the design of an energy-efficient 1,400 SF single-family house in Houston's historic Fifth Ward. The construction budget had to be less than \$99,000. The winning design is site adaptable, but specific to the Gulf Coast region. Construction is completed and the house will be sold to a qualifying low-income family.

Grants The Initiatives for Houston program is designed for students and faculty of the Rice School of Architecture, the University of Houston College of Architecture, Prairie View A&M University, and Texas Southern University. It supports projects that focus on Houston's built environment, its history, present condition, and future development. To date, RDA has awarded more than \$80,000 in grants through Initiatives for Houston.

Charrettes Each August the RDA Partners hosts an all-day design charrette. Architects and designers have sought solutions to such challenges as activating Buffalo Bayou, designing a bridge to connect two parts of Memorial Park ensuring the safety of pedestrians, and recycling and waste disposal.

Spotlight: The Rice Design Alliance Prize A new award was instituted in 2009, with a purpose of recognizing emerging architects early in their professional career. The inaugural Spotlight Prize went to Antón García-Abril, founder of Ensamble Studio/Materia Inorgánica in Madrid, Spain. The prize carries a \$1,500 cash award and the opportunity to lecture at The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.