

Congratulations to tonight's honorees - all the newly licensed architects in New Mexico. There are so many of you that have already touched my life in a positive way. Many were students when I taught Sustainability at UNM. Some of you saw me speak for the first time giving a lecture about Biomimicry and learned about my love of nature. A handful of you are past and present employees, who have experienced my deep passion for integrating sustainable design into the practice of architecture. A good majority of you know me today as the founder of Verdacity, a sustainability consulting firm. As colleagues, you know firsthand of my passion for the field of architecture and its contribution towards making a healthier, more sustainable world.

Your choice in pursuing a license in architecture sets you apart from others in our field. In doing so, you have chosen to no longer follow the lead of others, but step into the leadership role yourself. The path to becoming a licensed architect is not for the faint of heart. This milestone is the end of a long journey, while at the same time a new beginning.

There are many people that helped you along your journey. I invite you to take a moment to think about your mentors. Some of those mentors may be here with you tonight. Your parents, your professors, your partners and colleagues. Those that taught you how to *think* about the world a little differently. Those that pulled up a seat alongside you and helped you *understand* how to detail a building. Those that took

you under their wing and showed you *how to interact* with a client. Your journey is made up of a million subtle moments that when strung together, are the *you* that is here on this rooftop tonight. Take this moment to pause, and breath in, *thank you*.

Nearly twenty years ago, I received my architectural license. I understand the sacrifice that each of you made in putting your life on hold to spend more time studying, more time preparing for the next exam. I recall the exhilaration of passing my final test, and the relief of returning to normal life. That moment was an exciting time when the world felt wide open. It is my sense that some of you may be feeling that exhilaration right now. Your career is in front of you and it is yours to create.

It is my privilege tonight to share with you the thoughts and experiences that have shaped my career. Deep satisfaction can be found in aligning one's true self with that which is relevant in our time. There is a purpose for each of us, and it is our obligation to solve today's challenges from that unique perspective.

In living your life from a place of purpose, there is a distinction between what you think you *want* to be and what you are *called* to be. Finding your purpose requires getting to your *core motivation*. It's about finding your *why*.

My journey into architecture started as a little kid. One of my earliest memories is sitting on a yellow shag rug playing with an array of triangles, rulers and colored pencils as my father, a young architect, sat at his drafting table. In high school it was my turn to sit at the drafting table. My teacher often reminded us that he was best friends with Bucky Fuller as we sat and learned how to draw gears with a protractor and T-square. At some point in every architect's career, they design a chair. My time came when I was taking pre-architecture courses at Pratt in New York City. My dad worked alongside me in our garage to build a giant red rocking chair, inspired by Gerrit Rietveld's Schroeder House. Let's just say, it was an edition of one.

As I learned more about architecture, I also began reading about issues of the time. One book by Al Gore called "Earth in the Balance" made a profound impact on me. It described the problems associated with global warming and helped popularize environmental issues. I spoke with my dad about the impacts of the built environment on the natural world. I somehow started to sense that the linear flow of resource extraction to waste was not sustainable over the long haul.

I began college with a desire to learn more about how architecture could solve this emerging problem. I quickly learned that my professors did not have the expertise nor the passion in sustainable design that I had hoped. In looking elsewhere for support, I found that the language for sustainable design was not yet prominent in our field. In

that moment, I decided that I would first have to become an architect, and then find ways to integrate sustainability into my practice.

Finding your *why* requires that you try things out and observe what truly moves you. Over the course of your life, you will have many experiences that share a common theme. In looking back, you will find that your *why* has been in you all along.

I moved to New Mexico from the east coast after graduating in 1994. I was intrigued by the southwest, especially how the climate had such a noticeable impact on the design of buildings. I thought this seemed like an interesting place to start a career. I spent my first few years interning at local firms, building my knowledge of the field. I completed my exams and became a licensed architect in 1999. I made it. Now, I could work on my endeavor of bringing sustainable architecture to the mainstream.

It was the year 2000, and the language for sustainable design was still not well defined in New Mexico, or for that matter, in the country. I wanted to learn everything I could about integrating sustainability with architecture but could not find the right place to continue my professional apprenticeship.

Serendipitously, I ran into a colleague who shared the same concern. At the age of 27, one year after receiving my license, I co-founded an architecture firm with 3 others who shared my idea of bringing sustainable design to mainstream New Mexico.

We quickly learned that starting a firm based on ideals alone was a difficult endeavor. In our struggle to build credibility around the emerging concept of sustainability, I decided to become a LEED accredited professional. This was 2002 and LEED was not as popular as it is today, but it did link my inclinations about sustainability with a verifiable body of knowledge.

Soon thereafter I was asked to speak at a luncheon. After my talk, an attendee came up and thanked me for the information and said, “I have a job for you.” This request led to the first LEED certified building in New Mexico, after which came a lot of publicity. Soon I was getting requests to consult on other LEED projects, and my role in the firm started to shift.

Finding your calling is the constant practice of asking *why* you are doing what you are doing and continuing to ask *why* until you get to the idea that resonates. At each point in my life I was gathering more information about *how* I wanted to be an architect. In my choice to pursue a career as a consulting architect, I found the opportunity to make the broader impact that I had been searching for.

Five years ago, I founded Verdacity with the goal of creating a place where professionals could work with a wide audience to practice sustainable architecture on a daily basis. Another word for sustainability is balance. Today, at Verdacity we are working towards creating **a balanced life on earth where man-made structures and natural systems function eloquently as one ecology.**

There are fundamental changes occurring in many industries today. Consider the hotel industry with Airbnb and the transportation industry with Uber. Industries are reorganizing to adapt real-time. *Will the changing conditions on planet earth, and the rise of new technologies change the way we practice architecture?*

The reality is that in today's world, we need a new way to perform work that is more responsive to changing conditions. The ability to follow a non-linear, organic model of self-organization may help us create better solutions to today's challenges. So, *what are some of these challenges?*

Did you know that the total number of man-made objects on planet earth is greater than the total number of biological species? If we spread out all the man-made objects in one even layer over the surface of the earth, it would weigh 10 pounds per square foot.

This is so substantial that there is now a name for this accumulation of mass – it is called the **technosphere**. As designers of the built environment, we are responsible for a large part of the growing technosphere. The problem with the technosphere is that it does a poor job of breaking down materials thus continues to accumulate mass over time. In contrast to the technosphere is the biosphere - the zone on planet earth that supports all life. It is a complete, self-contained, and permanently balanced system.

*What if the technosphere functioned more like the biosphere? Emerging disciplines such as **biomimicry** are teaching professionals to design objects so that they function more like natural systems. As architects, it will likely be one of our responsibilities to bring life affirming elements to our designs such that buildings become contributors to, rather than just consumers of, the resources on our planet.*

The emergence of 3D printing is beginning to solve the problem of excess waste. We are already starting to see 3D printed homes. This is revolutionary in that it has the potential to bring housing to places where previously unavailable. It can solve social inequity problems and provide disaster relief.

3D printing is just the start. But we can do better. Currently, the 3D printing process utilizes materials such as concrete that we already know are creating a negative impact on our environment. *Is that really how we want to continue to make things?*

This might be another opportunity to turn to nature to explore alternative ways to build. Nature creates with organic materials that self-assemble into useful shapes without the use of toxins or energy intensive processes. *In our lifetimes, I believe we will straddle between traditional construction methods and the emergence of new ways to assemble buildings and habitable spaces.*

100 years ago, there were different challenges that the designers of our community were facing. Their design briefs were largely related to developing infrastructure. Albuquerque saw its first paved roads, streetlights, and bus system. This building that we are standing on top of tonight became Albuquerque's first skyscraper. Our city was expanding east into the mesa.

As chairman of the Albuquerque City Commission, Clyde Tingley set a vision for our city. His personal passion for public parks and healthful spaces led him to rally public consensus to acquire tracts of land and preserve them *from* development. This may have seemed unusual during this period of rapid growth. Yet, his vision laid the groundwork for Albuquerque to be known today as one of the country's greenest cities.

His perseverance created livable urban spaces that resulted in a quality of life that we still benefit from today.

Tingley showed us the importance of having a vision and being persistent in its realization. As licensed architects and community servants, it is our job to promote a vision for our community. We must speak up on behalf of creating livable communities for all.

The *ability to vision a future* sets humans apart from other species. We use language not only to describe reality, but to create new realities. We are the only species that can tell a story about what *could be*, and rally others to join together in its creation.

There is great power in an authentic vision.

It is my *hope* that you give yourself the time to explore what architecture means to *you*. And that you get actively involved in the conversation about what you can do as a licensed architect to improve the quality of life in our community today and in the future. The practice of architecture is a selfless act.

As you move forward with your career, some of you will find your true calling in designing buildings. Others will design a business. Others will inspire the next

generation through teaching. Some of you will draw inside the lines, and others will color around the edges. Whatever your contribution is, be sure to always honor your *true self*.

Now that you are a licensed architect, it is your time to step into the light. You are qualified to work on complex problems. You are certainly capable of creating a vision. What our community needs most, is for each of you to be *uniquely you*.

Kris Callori is the founder of Verdacity, a professional sustainability consulting firm in Albuquerque, New Mexico. As a licensed architect and visionary leader, Kris has been instrumental in shaping the green building movement in New Mexico over the past twenty years. She was a member of the first class of LEED Fellows and one of the first WELL APs in the nation. She has a Bachelor of Science in Architecture from The Catholic University of America and a Master of Science in Biomimicry from Arizona State University. As CEO of Verdacity, she leads a team of enthusiastic professionals that bring green buildings to life. Kris was honored as a Health Leader by the Urban Land Institute and named a 2018 Women of Influence by Albuquerque Business First.