

**APPROVED BY SENATE**

**02/05/2024**

**HD.24.10**

February 5, 2024

**UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN SENATE**

COMMITTEE ON HONORARY DEGREES

(Final; Action)

HD.24.10 Nomination for Honorary Degree Award – Gang

The Senate Committee on Honorary Degrees is pleased to nominate the following individuals for an honorary degree award to be conferred at the May 2024 Commencement exercises:

- Jeanne Gang

Information relative to the background and achievements of this nominee is attached. Based on the criteria approved by the Senate, the Committee has selected this individual for Senate consideration.

The Committee wishes to express its sincere appreciation to all who participated in the process, particularly those who spent considerable amounts of time and effort in preparing documentation for this nominee.

COMMITTEE ON HONORARY DEGREES

Prasanta Kalita, Chair

Paul Davidson

Robert Mannis

Pollyanna Rhee

Pedro Rodrigues Curi Hallal

Celestina Savonius-Wroth

Kai Shinbrough

Laura Wilhelm-Barr, *ex officio*

Jeanne Gang  
Founding Principal and Partner  
Studio Gang

EDUCATION:

BS, Architecture, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, 1986  
Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar, ETH Zurich, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, 1989  
M.Arch, Harvard Graduate School of Design, 1993

*Nominated by: Kevin Hamilton, Dean, College of Fine and Applied Arts, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign*

BASIS FOR NOMINATION:

For almost three decades, Jeanne Gang has pushed the boundaries of the good that architecture can do, connecting communities while protecting the environment. The unquestionable quality of her work clearly excels even the uppermost standards of our discipline, in Chicago, Paris, San Francisco or New York. The beautiful work evidences an extraordinary attention to detail and an unusual skill to operate in various scales and international contexts.

EXCERPT FROM THE NOMINATION LETTER:

“Ms. Gang’s work is of course visible around the world. But it is especially significant for this nomination that her record is as strong as it is in Chicago. Studio Gang’s exemplary work in the Chicago area includes Aqua Tower, the University of Chicago Campus North Residential Commons, Writers Theatre, City Hyde Park, the WMS Boathouse at Clark Park and Eleanor Boathouse at Park 571 on the Chicago River, Northerly Island, the Nature Boardwalk at Lincoln Park Zoo, the Columbia College Chicago Media Production Center, and the SOS Children’s Villages Lavezzorio Community Center. On March 27, 2019, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced that the design team led by Gang, Studio ORD, had been selected as the winner of an international design competition for the new \$2.2 billion Global Terminal at O’Hare International Airport.

In addition to her work as a stellar practitioner, Jeanne has also taught architecture design studios at prestigious universities like Harvard and Yale. Recognized around the world, she is also a MacArthur Fellow, and Time Magazine named her the ‘*World’s Most Influential Architect*’ in 2019.”

#### HONORS/AWARDS (NOT INCLUSIVE):

2004	Chicagoans of the Year, <i>Chicago Tribune</i>
2011	MacArthur Fellow
2012	Elected to National Academy of Design
2013	National Design Award for Architecture, Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum
2014	New Generation Leader, Women in Architecture Awards, <i>Architectural Record</i>
2016	Woman Architect of the Year, <i>Architectural Review</i>
2016	Chicagoans of the Year, <i>Chicago Tribune</i>
2017	Elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences
2017	William A. Bernoudy Architect in Residence, American Academy in Rome
2017	Louis I. Kahn Memorial Award, Philadelphia Center for Architecture
2018	Elected as an International Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)
2019	Most Influential Architect, <i>TIME Magazine</i>
2022	Architecture Innovator of the Year, <i>WSJ Magazine</i>
2022	ULI Prize for Visionaries in Urban Development
2023	Charlotte Perriand Award
2023	Architect of the Year, <i>Architectural Review</i>

#### EXCERPTS FROM THE LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION:

*Jonathan Massey, Dean, Taubman College of Architecture & Urban Planning, University of Michigan*

“Gang is currently a Professor of Practice at Harvard, and Founding Principal and Partner of Studio Gang Architects, an award-winning architecture and urban design practice with buildings and master plans at the University of Chicago, Columbia, and elsewhere. She is internationally recognized for her creative use of new materials and an environmentally conscious design approach to connect people with their communities.

Some of her most notable projects include St. Regis Chicago and Aqua, two skyscrapers which redefined Chicago’s skyline, the Global Terminal at O’Hare International Airport, the recently completed Richard Gilder Center for Science, Education, and Innovation at the American Museum of Natural History, the reimaged Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts in Little Rock, and the Arcus Center for Social Justice Leadership at Kalamazoo College. In civic, institutional, and monumental commissions, the firm brings an ecumenical flexibility to questions of form, style, and material, allowing the specific needs, priorities, and contexts of client and project to generate the most compelling and appropriate design, with little trace of a house style or authorial signature. This is a rare and generous gift in a top architect, as Gang’s peers are usually associated with a particular style. When executing towers and other market-driven commissions, on the other hand, the firm finds fresh formal and visual opportunity in standard configurations and the parameters of the developer’s pro forma.”

*Mo Zell, Interim Dean, College of the Arts and Architecture, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee*

“Jeanne made the headlines in architecture news when she rectified gender pay discrepancies in her office and modeled a pathway for other firms to follow. Her advocacy around this topic, in a field still dominated by men, is as important as ever. Activism also extends into her professional practice where she includes the *public* as her client, along with her actual client. In projects for Beloit College, Memphis, TN and a police station, the design resolutions prioritize serving the community by providing equitable access to all.

Jeanne Gang stands out as a prominent figure among leaders in her field. As a distinguished architect, she has earned top honors, including recognition as an elected member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the prestigious MacArthur ‘Genius’ Award. Despite these accolades, she remains steadfast in her commitment to the transformative potential of architecture to effect positive change, contributing to environmental innovation and championing social justice for the advancement of our global community.

What I most appreciate about Jeanne is how she is an action-oriented role model for the up-and-coming generation of architects. She doesn’t just talk about ways in which we can improve our world but shows us through her buildings. She is an inspirational leader.”

*Eleanor Esser Gorski, CEO & President, Chicago Architecture Center*

“Unpacking Studio Gang’s 25-year project portfolio reveals a responsible practice at its core that embraces ‘actionable idealism.’ Adaptive reuse, social justice, inclusive urban design, ecological restoration, and carbon reduction are top concerns of Jeanne’s, grounding her work in purpose. I know of no other architect who thinks of her impact on the built environment so holistically. Research and publications are another way that the studio disseminates thought leadership in these areas.

It should be no afterthought just how important a mentor and role model Jeanne is to so many young female-identifying architects. She has the professional accolades, from becoming a MacArthur Fellow to winning countless individual building award, and she is an outspoken advocate for closing the pay gap for women in the profession.”

*Sarah M. Whiting, Dean, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University*

“My support for her receiving an honorary degree exceeds my own personal encounters with Jeanne Gang; it also exceeds the public accolade and press that she has received. Finally, it exceeds the remarkable buildings that she’s made, including most recently the addition to the Museum of Natural History in Manhattan. While all of those accomplishments are significant, it is her commitment to how we, as humans, can live more harmoniously with the natural world that I think offers her up as an incredibly timely example to put in front of students and alumni: she models the kind of practice that we all need to adopt, given our state of climate crisis. She advocates and creates a world that is necessary, beautiful, and viable.”