



The  
**Architect**  
♀

Women in  
Contemporary  
Architecture



# Merrill Elam

United States of America



*"The search for broader meanings and possibilities is the phenomenon of architecture that continues to fascinate us."*

## PROFESSIONAL HISTORY

Merrill Elam received a bachelor of arts in architecture at the Georgia Institute of Technology in 1971 and a master's in business administration at Georgia State University in 1983.

In 1984, Elam, together with Mack Scogin, Ennis Parker, and Lloyd Bray, founded Parker and Scogin Architects in Atlanta, Georgia. In 1986 the firm was reconfigured as Scogin Elam and Bray Architects, Inc., and then in 2000 became Mack Scogin Merrill Elam Architects, Inc.

Elam's work has received national and regional awards and international recognition. She has served as an adjudicator for academic and professional organizations and has lectured and taught at universities throughout the United States. In 1994, she held the Louis Henri Sullivan Chair in Architecture at the University of Illinois in Chicago. In the 1991-1992 academic year, she was the Harry S. Shure Professor at the University of Virginia and the William Wayne Caudill Visiting Lecturer at Rice University.

Elam is a corporate member of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), a founding member and past president of the Architecture Society of Atlanta, past president and member of the Georgia State Board of Architects, and a past member of the board of directors of Art Papers.

## Selected Awards

- South Atlantic Region AIA Honor Award, 2000, 1994, 1992, 1988, 1987, 1979
- Georgia AIA Design Award, 1999, 1997
- National AIA Honor Award for Excellence, 1999, 1993, 1992, 1991, 1987
- Architectural Record* Houses Award, 1998, 1997, 1991
- Architectural Record* Interiors Award, 1996
- Chrysler Award for Innovation, Chrysler Corporation, 1996
- Academy Award in Architecture, American Academy of Arts and Letters, 1995
- Georgia AIA Award for Excellence in Architecture, 1993, 1990
- Silver Medal for Consistent Pursuit and Achievement in Architectural Design, Atlanta Chapter of the AIA, 1989
- Honored for Achievement in Architecture at the celebration of "Women's Work," sponsored by Atlanta Women in Film, 1983
- Competition Winner, for "A Tower of the Southern Memories," Arts Festival of Atlanta, 1982

## Selected Publications

- Young, Jason. "Mack and Merrill: The 1999 Charles and Ray Eames Lecture." *Michigan Architecture Press*, 1999.
- Andersen, Kurt. "Clayton County Headquarters Library." *Time*, January 1998.
- Giovannini, Joseph. "Maine Frame." *Architecture*, March 1998.
- Iovine, Julie. "Return to Innovation in a House that Dares." *The New York Times*, 2 July 1998.
- Stein, Karen. "Record Houses: 64 Wakefield Drive, Atlanta." *Architectural Record*, April 1998.
- Welch, John. "Desert Storm." *RIBA Journal*, January 1998.
- Elam, Merrill. "John J. Ross-William C. Blakley Law Library." *Architecture + Urbanism*, March 1995.

## FIRM PROFILE

Mack Scogin Merrill Elam Architects, Inc. is organized around the complementary skills of the two principals, Mack Scogin and Merrill Elam, both of whom participate in all projects on a daily basis. They have extensive experience in the formation and leadership of multidisciplinary project teams, and bring the understanding of large projects and organizations to a personal practice in architecture.

All staff members are architects or intern architects and collaborate fully on the work. Projects realized by the firm are diverse in size, type, and location. In addition to architecture, services offered by the firm include graphic design, exhibit design, and interior design, planning, and programming.

Prior to founding Mack Scogin Merrill Elam, the principals worked with a third principal, Lloyd Bray, as part of Scogin Elam and Bray Architects, also based in Atlanta. The three worked together for more than twenty-five years, starting with tenures at Heery and Heery Architects in Atlanta, a large, multidisciplinary architectural and construction management firm. While executing design and management work for project types ranging from airports and hospitals to corporate and industrial complexes, Elam and Scogin gained extensive experience in the techniques of controlling the time, cost, and project delivery processes for multifaceted, demanding projects. It is this experience, combined with an unyielding commitment to meeting the needs of clients with inventive architecture, which most distinguishes the firm's work.

Clients of Mack Scogin Merrill Elam expect innovative design with a mature approach to the practical constraints of

architecture. The firm's involvement in architecture goes beyond mere problem solving to questions that address architecture's larger role in today's society.

Project types range from educational institutions, public libraries, and arts facilities, to corporate and residential structures. Current and recent work includes the Rheingold Residence in Brookline, Massachusetts; the Knowlton School of Architecture at Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio; Herman Miller Georgia Operations Consolidation in Cherokee County, Georgia; and the Lee B. Philmon Branch Library in Riverdale, Georgia.

## Selected Clients

- Arizona State University Board of Regents
- Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System
- The City of Atlanta/CODA
- Clayton County Library Board of Trustees
- Corning Enterprises, Inc.
- Don and Sylvia Shaw Salon and Spa
- Georgia-Pacific Corporation
- Herman-Miller, Inc.
- The Ohio State University
- Tulane University
- Turner Broadcasting System, Inc.
- University of California, Berkeley

## DESIGN STATEMENT

### "The Design Challenge"

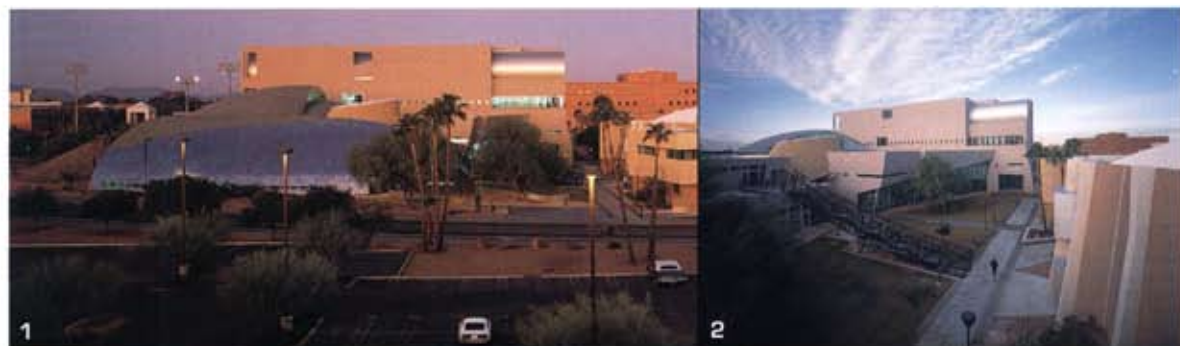
Although individual design challenges are bound up in and met during the making of discrete projects, "the design challenge," as a general concept, belongs to the greater project, which is architecture itself. Architecture questions what and why, how, and to what end, but in terms that transcend specific projects. The fact that the answers to questions arising from the most recently completed constructions are never completely satisfactory or adequate attests to the ever-present, insistent challenge of the project of architecture.

## ILLUSTRATED PROJECTS

- John J. Ross-William C. Blakley Law Library, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona, 1993*
- Carol Cobb Turner Branch Library, Morrow, Georgia, 1991*
- Nomentana Residence, Lovell, Maine, 1997*
- Don and Sylvia Shaw Salon and Spa, Atlanta, Georgia, 1995*
- 64 Wakefield, Atlanta, Georgia, ongoing*



**John J. Ross-William C. Blakley Law Library, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona:** 1 East elevation, showing the dynamic forms of the new law library, located on the fringe of the orthogonally planned campus; 2 An "oasis-like" plaza links the existing law school and the new library, creating a law campus within the greater university campus; 3 Interior view of circulation desk and entry area. Forms and spaces are organized over and around distinct functions. Exterior and interior work in concert to modulate the intense Arizona sun, providing myriad architectural experiences. Photo credit: Timothy Hursley



**Carol Cobb Turner Branch Library, Morrow, Georgia:** 1 Detail with children's handprints. Exterior walls are of glass and Georgia red clay-colored synthetic stucco; 2 Detail at children's area. Just outside is a small garden and reflecting ditch; 3 East elevation. The asymmetrical plan has a dividing breezeway/corridor with rooms off both sides, skewed up toward the bright blue sky and away from the flat, heat-filled, hostile site. Connections to other community buildings and neighborhoods, the points of the compass, and property lines all give form to the building. A vertical steel and glass tower serves as a negative center support, from which the mushroom-like roof emerges on a simple post-and-beam structure. Photo credit: Timothy Hursley



**Nomentana Residence, Lovell, Maine:** 1 Western elevation, showing forms added onto forms. Rooms are always in spatial and visual continuation, giving the impression of small "house-towns" that resist feelings of isolation in the rural Maine setting; 2 View from living room deck toward pond and mountains; 3 View of living room toward deck; 4 View of entry/library. Photo credit: Timothy Hursley



**[Below] Don and Sylvia Shaw Salon Spa, Atlanta, Georgia:** 1 View of entry. The atmosphere is clean and sparkly but quiet and private, allowing each client to be moved from pleasure to pleasure while feeling the sole occupant of the spa; 2 Detail of stairwell that separates upper level of manicures and pedicures from lower level of more extended services. Photo credit: Timothy Hursley



**[Above] 64 Wakefield, Atlanta, Georgia:** 1 Westward view of lap pool and bedroom. Only the 70-foot width of the site was long enough for the pool, so it was installed on the second floor, shielded from the street by a translucent glass wall but open to sky and air; 2 South elevation, showing wood frame structure with stucco and glass enclosing surfaces; 3 View from bedroom stair. Interior materials include painted gypsum wall board and cementitions. Photo credit: Timothy Hursley