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HMFH Architects celebrating 50th anniversary

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Shown (from left) are: HMFH principals Julia Nugent, Tina Stanislaski, George Metzger, Lori Cowles, Pip Lewis, and Laura Wernick.

photo credit: Shane Godfrey

Cambridge, MA HMFH Architects is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2019. Founded in 1969, HMFH pioneered a groundbreaking, community-based approach to creating learning environments known for innovation, sustainability, and durability.

“Our motivation and long-term success come from our tradition of listening to and learning what each unique community aspires to achieve,” said Laura Wernick, FAIA, senior principal with HMFH. “We think about and practice design at a human scale, applying what we’ve learned over the years to not only solve technical issues but also respond creatively to the physical, social, and emotional needs of students.”

50 Forward

HMFH’s year-long anniversary celebration, ‘50 Forward,’ will explore the present and future state of school design with an ongoing series capturing important features, versus fleeting trends, that have endured over the decades. “As we look forward from this milestone anniversary, we will build on the valuable lessons from 50 years of innovative educational design,” said George Metzger AIA, senior principal.

For this anniversary year, HMFH is also increasing its internal commitment to a carbon-neutral future. “We are exploring new ways to track and reduce our own carbon footprint in addition to that of our buildings,” said Metzger. “We are confident that our focus on collaboration and creative design will enable us to make great strides toward a more sustainable and resilient future for our practice as well as for our clients.”

Design Excellence Bridges Decades

From the firm’s first educational commission, a kindergarten building in Mansfield, Mass., to contemporary projects such as new high schools in Arlington and Saugus, Mass. and the new student commons for the Roeper School in Birmingham, Michigan, HMFH has established a legacy

of design excellence. HMFH today is a growing 50-person practice with a diverse leadership group and certification as a Women Owned Business. The firm works with public-school districts, independent schools, universities, public agencies, and communities, with many of these client relationships spanning multiple decades.

“Designing a successful 21st Century school is a complex challenge,” said Dr. Kathleen Bodie, Ed.D., a current client and superintendent of schools for the Town of Arlington. “What we expect our schools to provide keeps expanding. The designers at HMFH understand this change, and are skilled at creating flexible, engaging environments that work for students across a diverse range of learning styles and individual needs.”

HMFH’s design work has consistently received honors and awards, beginning with the prestigious Walter Taylor Award earned for the firm’s earliest projects including the Brewster Elementary School and Charlestown High School. More recently, recognition for the firm’s design work and community contributions include Project of Distinction Awards from the Association for Learning Environments, Preservation Achievement Awards from the Boston Preservation Alliance, and William Caudill Citations, the highest recognition for school design awarded by American School & University.

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