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## **SMMA names Finnegan as its CEO, president, and chairman of the board**

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Lorraine Finnegan

Cambridge, MA SMMA, an integrated planning and design firm, appointed Lorraine Finnegan as its chief executive officer, president, and chairman of the board. An accomplished architect, team leader, and 27-year SMMA employee, Finnegan succeeds Ara Krafian, who will retire in June after 34 years with the Cambridge-based firm, including 18 years as CEO. Krafian will maintain an advisory relationship with SMMA.

The transition marks a new era at SMMA, which is celebrating its fifth generation of leadership, its first woman chief executive, and the 70th anniversary of the employee-owned, multidisciplinary design firm.

“Our founders built SMMA on a foundation of respect, resilience, and self-determination – principles that have guided us for nearly 70 years,” said Krafian. “Lorraine embodies these values wholeheartedly and continually demonstrates her unwavering commitment to our future through leadership, integrity, and strategic vision. She is the ideal person to lead SMMA into its next chapter.”

Born and raised in the west of Ireland, Finnegan earned a BS in Architectural Technology from Herriot Watt University through the Regional Technical College in Limerick. She earned a BS in Architecture from Boston Architectural College in 2012.

Finnegan joined SMMA in 1999, quickly establishing herself as a creative leader in the firm’s fast-growing K-12 practice. Applying her skills as a project architect and later as a project manager, she gained a following among clients and peers while expanding her versatile design knowledge and organizational skills. In 2017, she was promoted to vice president and director of the K-12 market as she continued to lead many of SMMA’s largest and most prominent school projects. Her project leadership highlights include Winchester High School, Somerville High School, West Elementary/Shawsheen Preschool in Andover, and the newly opened Waltham High School.

In 2022, Finnegan was appointed to the firm’s board of directors.

“My aspiration for SMMA is that we continue to grow as an integrated design collective,” said Finnegan. “Our team members see the value of a multidisciplinary model for our clients, and they appreciate the ways our teams collaborate and what that does for their personal and professional growth.”

Finnegan is known as a mentor to young staff and an empathetic supporter of women colleagues inside and outside SMMA. She is a past president of the New England Chapter of the Association for Learning Environments and an active member of the Boston Society of Architecture, having served on the Educational Facilities Committee and Women in Design Committee.

Krafian, who joined SMMA in 1991, leaves SMMA with a legacy of transformative leadership and commitment to clients and colleagues for over three decades. His tenure as CEO, beginning in

2007, saw him steer the firm through existential challenges, including the Great Recession and the challenges of the COVID pandemic. With his stewardship, SMMA deepened its collaborative, multidisciplinary design ethos, reaching new project scope and sophistication levels while expanding into new markets such as federal government work, which more than doubled in size.

Brian Lawlor, senior vice president and long-time leadership partner to Krafian, expressed gratitude for how Krafian influenced firm culture. "Ara wanted all of us to succeed at SMMA. He put a huge amount of himself into that goal, sacrificing an extraordinary amount of personal time and energy. His spark, sense of humor, and compassion will continue to inspire us and be part of what our firm and people bring to their work every day."

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