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SERA Principal Don Eggleston Announces Retirement

After 45 years of leadership at SERA Architects, Principal Don Eggleston will retire at the end of 2016.

In his time at SERA, Don has championed some of Portland's most transformative renovations, and a workplace culture that put employees at the helm of their firm.

"It is rare for one to spend so much time at one firm," Don said of his 47-year career. "I have had great challenging, professionally fulfilling projects, and feel that I have left my mark on the communities I have been involved with over the years. Most of all, it has been fun."

Eggleston joined founder Bing Sheldon in 1971 for the student union addition at the University of Oregon. During the 1980s, Eggleston became the "E" in the newly named SERA Architects. For both men, preserving Portland's historic buildings, and reclaiming them for vulnerable populations, was a top priority.

In the periods between 1995 to 1997 and 2003 to 2006, Don led the City of Portland's Seismic Task Force as co-chair and chair, respectively, helping publish new building safety codes so progressive that they were eventually adopted by the State of Oregon.

Eggleston's talent for seeing the potential within existing buildings led to many of SERA's most complex and marquee projects, from the Edith Green – Wendell Wyatt Federal Building, a former brutalist energy hog and now one of the federal government's premier sustainable buildings; to the Courtyard by Marriott – Portland City Center, a once derelict office tower and today a thriving hotel and restaurant; and the Meier & Frank Building, a historic department store known today as The Nines Hotel, which was masterfully modernized by carving out a 9-story atrium in the building's center.

Eggleston thanks his commitment to client relationships for other fine SERA projects, like the renovation of Pioneer Courthouse and the new Collaborative Life Sciences Building & Skourtes Tower – two projects years in the making and notable favorites of his.

Among staff, Eggleston is known for his quiet leadership, mentoring and for creating a culture of caring. Alongside Sheldon, Eggleston led the firm to become 100% employee-owned. As envisioned, the ESOP gave employees incentive to stay with the firm, build and own its success.

"Don put me in charge of my first major architectural project and I've been fortunate to work alongside him for most of my career," said Natasha Koiv, a principal who's been with SERA for 31 years.

"He's shown me to put client relationships first, to build trust and to be an advisor," she said.

Eggleston's retirement plans include spending more time with his wife, four children and eight grandchildren. He will also continue pursuing his interest in unique and challenging projects around the city in a consulting role.

About SERA

SERA is a 100% employee-owned Architecture, Interior Design and Urban Design & Planning firm specializing in sustainable placemaking at all scales. Founded in Portland, Oregon, in 1968, SERA holds a key role in the development of the city's national reputation for livability. Today, the firm builds on its early experience of adaptive re-use and historic renovations with design and planning for hospitality, workplace, mixed-use housing, higher education and civic projects. Now with a second office, in Silicon Valley, its vision remains to create places that enrich the human experience, evoke delight, and provide an enduring legacy for future generations.

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