



PILLARS

LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM

2024-2025 REVIEW



AIA
Kansas City



2024-25 PILLARS CLASS

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Keegan Thompson, AIA - DLR Group

Melissa Waton, Assoc. AIA - HOK

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Wesley Morris - PE, RCDD - Garver

Zach Russel - PE - PMA Engineering

ABOUT PILLARS

The Pillars Leadership Training Program of the American Institute of Architects Kansas City prepares a representative cross section of the chapter's emerging leaders and individuals from the building community for their role in shaping the future of both the architectural profession and the greater Kansas City metropolitan area. The training program includes active participation in programs and exposure to community leaders and issues. Each class spends their time exploring core issues that affect our profession and the region within which we practice. Through discussions with leaders and colleagues, dialogue among themselves, tours and research the group will be able to understand and present to the AIA as a whole how we can make a positive change within our community. The AIA Kansas City Pillars program is a nationally recognized program for its originality and depth and has inspired similar AIA leadership studies in other US cities. The program continues to raise the bar of what young professionals want out of their profession and how we as professionals can make an impact on our built environment.



Pillars group photo with Steve Foutch on the stairs of HyVee Arena



Panel discussion at CPKC

MAY

For the May session of Pillars, participants explored the role Sports play in shaping Kansas City's growth, economy, and urban landscape. The event kicked off with lunch at HyVee Arena provided by one of the in-house concessions.

From there, the Pillars visited with Steve Foutch, CEO of Foutch Brothers. Steve gave a breakdown on everything that they did to rehabilitate the arena and reactivate as a sports hub in Kansas City. After the Q&A session with Steve, he gave the Pillars class a tour of the facility and continued to answer questions.

The group then headed over to the Kirk Family YMCA, where we met with Mark Hulet, President & CEO of the YMCA of Greater Kansas City. Mark talked about his years of work with the YMCA and the process of opening a new YMCA location and the challenges that came with renovating a historic building into a great community asset. Mark then gave us a tour of the new facility and explained the different community engagement activities that draw families to the YMCA for various needs.

Next, the group traveled to CPKC, the first of its kind stadium dedicated to women's professional sports. The Pillars class was given a tour of the stadium by an incredible docent, Scott Sherry from JE Dunn (contractor that built the stadium), and Andrew Kessel from

Generator Studio (architect that designed the stadium). After the tour the Pillars had a panel discussion with DePrice Taylor, Executive Director of Community Relations for the Kansas City Current, Dave Borchardt, Vice President of Corporate and Community Relations for the Kansas City Sports Commission, Mark Hulet, Scott Sherry, and Andrew Kessel. The Pillars asked were able to ask the panel all of there burning questions about sports and how those impact the city. After the panel was over the Pillars class was able go down on the edge of the field, we didn't touch the grass, and meet with the panelists for a little one on one discussion.

The group then reconvened at The Blue line to wrap up the session with a Happy Hour. This session gave Pillars attendees a valuable understanding of how Sports is a key driver in connecting individuals, community, and businesses and how thoughtful leadership can continue to transform Kansas City into a more integrated, thriving, and healthier city.