

6-2023

The Sky's the Limit: Pauline Saliga's Legacy of Continuity

Amanda C.R. Clark

Whitworth University, amandaclark@whitworth.edu

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Recommended Citation

Clark, Amanda C.R. , "The Sky's the Limit: Pauline Saliga's Legacy of Continuity" Whitworth University (2023). *Library Faculty Scholarship*. Paper 28.

<https://digitalcommons.whitworth.edu/libraryfaculty/28>



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The Sky's the Limit: Pauline Saliga's Legacy of Continuity

It is an honor to commemorate Pauline's remarkable work as both a stabilizing force and organizational mover for the Society of Architectural Historians these past decades. As I gathered my thoughts about her role in shaping the success of SAH, I reached out to my father, Leland M. Roth, longtime member of the Society and SAH president from 1977 to 1980. As he recalled, Pauline attached personal thank you notes to all contributions made to the organization. Such individual signs of thoughtfulness and care always defined Pauline's work for the Society.

In 1999, Pauline took a prominent role in the celebration of the Society's sixtieth anniversary. As she affirmed in the December issue of *JSAH*, the Society "strives continually to achieve and exceed the ambitious goals that the founding members set forth in 1940."¹ Indeed, she was an effective agent in manifesting those goals. As she expressed her desire to "improve and expand its publications, programs, and fellowship opportunities" in coming years, she did help the Society meet these challenges by providing ever-expanding funding opportunities to members, particularly to students and emerging scholars. She also facilitated the creation of the SAH Affiliate Groups and oversaw the launch of the celebrated open-source database *SAH Archipedia*.

¹ Pauline Saliga, "The Society of Architectural Historians Celebrates Its Sixtieth Anniversary," *JSAH* 58, no. 4 (December 1999).

Pauline's successes over the years were many, including the global expansion of the Society's reach. But even as she steered the Society toward an innovative future, she also kept her eyes on the past. The SAH was founded in 1940 during a summer session at Harvard University, when "a number of professors and students in the field of architectural history met for informal, extracurricular talks, discussions, and study trips."² Pauline always kept her sights on the spontaneous enthusiasm that characterized these activities. Embracing the aphorism that the past is prologue, she enthusiastically supported the mission of the organization, which she outlined in four points:

- (1) to provide forums for all whose interest is the history of architecture;
- (2) to foster an appreciation and understanding of the built environment;
- (3) to encourage and disseminate research in the field; and
- (4) to promote the preservation of significant monuments worldwide.³

In this way, Pauline tirelessly upheld the indispensable service provided by the Society in remembering and celebrating the built environment of the past and the present.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

Pauline was a scholar in her own right, continuing to publish on architecture and design in venues such as *Design Issues* published by MIT Press.⁴ Prior to her tenure as SAH Executive Director, Pauline researched and promoted the work of influential architects such as Daniel Burnham and Louis Sullivan.⁵ She championed Chicago architects and skyscraper innovation, as revealed in her edited volume *The Sky's the Limit: A Century of Chicago Skyscrapers* (1990). And she strongly promoted both junior and senior architectural historians in the field, consistent with the founding aims of the Society and the Charnley-Persky House.

We are indebted to Pauline for her prodigious and foundational work for the Society, and for her efforts to preserve and celebrate our diverse built environment. She inspires each of us to continue the work that she started with her same passion and dedication. Thank you, Pauline.

AMANDA ROTH CLARK

Whitworth University

SAH Chapter Liaison

⁴ Pauline Saliga, "Architecture and Design in American Museum circa 2000," *Design Issues* 5, no. 1 (Autumn 1988), 71-81.

⁵ John Zukowsky and Pauline Saliga, "Late Works by Burnham and Sullivan," *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies* 11, no. 1 (Autumn 1984), 70-79.