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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**SOM FOUNDATION MARKS 25TH ANNIVERSARY,
ANNOUNCES NEW GRAND PRIZE**

CHICAGO, IL – Since 1981, the Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) Foundation has helped young architects and engineers broaden their education through traveling fellowships awarded annually. To date, more than \$1 million has been given to 155 students, including some of today’s leading designers and engineers.

In celebration of the Foundation’s 25-year legacy, a new grand award—the SOM Prize—has been created. The \$50,000 grant will be awarded to the most promising student in Architecture, Urban Design and Design*, as selected by an independent jury of prominent professionals. Past jurors include Peter Eisenman, Frank Gehry, Charles Gwathmey, Cesar Pelli, Billie Tsien and Tod Williams.

The jury also will award a traveling fellowship of \$20,000 to a runner-up. Graduating undergraduate and graduate students of accredited U.S. schools of Architecture, Engineering, Urban Planning and Design are eligible.

In addition, the SOM Foundation offers a \$10,000 Structural Engineering Traveling Fellowship, a \$10,000 United Kingdom Award and, in recognition of SOM’s activities in China, starting this year, a \$10,000 China Prize will be given, bringing the total value of the awards and travel fellowships to \$100,000 annually.

“We are very pleased to mark our anniversary with the realignment of existing fellowships and the establishment of the new SOM Prize to identify and nurture the most talented future leaders in the design profession,” said Mustafa K. Abadan, AIA, Chairman of the SOM Foundation. “Over the last 25 years, the Foundation has offered distinguished students the opportunity to grow as designers and enrich their knowledge through traveling fellowships. The SOM Prize now will also enable one outstanding student to do in-depth research, collaborate with other designers, and pursue independent study outside the realm of established patterns.”

As Chairman, Abadan directs the Foundation with Vice Chairman Ross Wimer, AIA and Secretary/Treasurer William Baker, SE, PE, FASCE. The Foundation recently named Susan Larson as its new Executive Director. Larson has 16 years experience in non-profit management, including 10 years as Communications Director for the Chicago chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

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Competition posters will be mailed to accredited U.S. schools of Architecture, Design, and Engineering this month; applications will be available on the Foundation's Web site thereafter. For more information, visit www.somfoundation.som.com.

** Defined as Interior, Graphic and Product Design*

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The programs of the SOM Foundation are funded through an endowment established by the partners of the architectural firm Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP (SOM). The Foundation's activities are wholly separate from those of the firm.

Celebrating its 70th anniversary in 2006, SOM is the first two-time recipient of the prestigious American Institute of Architects Architecture Firm Award. Some of SOM's design projects include the Sears Tower (Chicago), John Hancock Center (Chicago), Lever House (New York), San Francisco International Airport, and the Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre Extension.