

Skidmore, Owings & Merrill Foundation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 18, 2011

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SOM FOUNDATION AWARDS WINNER OF THE 2011 SOM STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING TRAVEL FELLOWSHIP

Foundation celebrating its 30th Anniversary

Chicago, IL – The Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) Foundation announced today that the \$10,000 SOM 2011 Structural Engineering Travel Fellowship has been awarded to Ashley Thrall, who will receive her PhD this month from the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Princeton University, where she has also received an Master in Arts in 2009 and a Master of Science in Engineering in 2008. Working with Professors Sigrid Adriaenssens, Maria Garlock, and David Billington, her PhD research has focused on improving the sustainability of movable bridges by generating new forms that integrate the structural and mechanical systems

Based on her essay submitted for fellowship consideration, “Deployable Structures: Elegant Kinematics for Social Responsibility,” Ashley will utilize her fellowship to continue her interest in kinematic structures by studying the application of deployable structures for disaster relief. Her itinerary will include 1) visiting the site of a recent disaster, 2) meeting designers at research centers and design firms, and 3) evaluating deployable structures through site visits. Ashley will begin her itinerary in Haiti, at the site of the recent earthquake, and then will proceed to study deployable structures in the United States and throughout Europe.

Having grown up in Canton, Connecticut and graduating from Canton High School in 2000, Ashley then earned her Bachelor of Arts in Physics from Vassar College. While studying physics, she utilized her summers to gain research experience at Vassar College, NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center, the University of California – San Diego, CERN (European Center for Nuclear Research) and the University of Michigan. She was eventually drawn to structural engineering while seeking a field which blended her passion for design with her technical interests. Ashley is the daughter of Dr. Roger Thrall and Mrs. Marilyn Parkinson Thrall of Canton, Connecticut.

The SOM Structural Engineering Travel Fellowship is awarded annually through a national competition. In January 2011, the SOM Foundation received portfolio submissions from students at US schools having an accredited program in civil and structural engineering. The submissions were judged on the quality of the design portfolios, research proposals and travel itineraries.

Meeting in Chicago this year, the jury was comprised of some of the city’s most distinguished professionals: John Carrato, SE, PE, President and CEO, Alfred Benesch & Company; Inigo Mangano-Ovalle, Artist; Lawrence Novak, SE, PE, Portland Cement Association, Director of Building

Structures, and Mark Schendel, AIA, Principal, Studio Gang Architects. The jury was chaired by SOM Structural Engineering Partner, Bill Baker.

Now in its 30th year, the Foundation's fellowships continue to offer recent graduates the rare opportunity to travel in conjunction with carrying out in-depth research, collaborating with other professionals, and pursuing independent study outside the realm of established patterns. To date, the Foundation has awarded more than \$1,000,000 to architecture, design, and engineering students who have gone on to distinguish themselves in professional and academic careers.

About the SOM Foundation

The mission of the SOM Foundation Travelling Fellowship Program is to assist young architects, designers and engineers in expanding their professional education through the observations of culture, history, building and design that can only be achieved through travel. Prior Fellows have travelled to Asia, North Africa, and South America, as well as Europe and the United States.

In addition to the SOM Prize, the Foundation also offers a \$50,000 SOM Prize for Architecture, Design and Urban Design; sponsors two (2) \$2,500 Travel Fellowships, administered through the Royal Institute of British Architects, (RIBA) to two students of architecture in the United Kingdom, and funds a \$10,000 China Prize, bringing the total value of awards and travel fellowships to a total of \$100,000 annually.

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.

More information can be found at www.somfoundation.som.com

About Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP

Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP (SOM) is one of the leading architecture, interior design, engineering, and urban-planning firms in the world, with a 75-year reputation for design excellence and a portfolio that includes some of the most important architectural accomplishments of the 20th and 21st centuries. Since its inception, SOM has been a leader in the research and development of specialized technologies, new processes and innovative ideas, many of which have had a palpable and lasting impact on the design profession and the physical environment. The firm's longstanding leadership in design and building technology has been honored with more than 1,400 awards for quality, innovation, and management. The American Institute of Architects has recognized SOM twice with its highest honor, the Architecture Firm Award—in 1962 and again in 1996. The firm maintains offices in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Washington, D C, London, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Brussels, Mumbai, Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

More information can be found at www.som.com

Interviews and headshot available upon request

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