

North Dakota SPEAKER BIOS



NIKNAZ AFTAHİ

Niknaz Aftahi is the founder and CEO of aec+tech, an innovation platform and community connecting AEC professionals with emerging technologies and tools. She previously worked as a design professional and Design Technology Director at architecture firms in the Bay Area. Niknaz serves as co-chair of the AIA's first AI Task Force and is also a member of the AIA San Francisco Design Technology Committee. She is a frequent speaker at national and international AEC tech events. Alongside her work in technology, she is committed to educational equity and has developed and taught online architecture courses for Bahá'í students in Iran who are denied access to higher education in their home country.



NIRVA FERESHETIAN

Nirva Fereshetian is Principal and Chief Information Officer at CBT Architects, an award-winning Boston-based design firm providing architecture, interior design, and urban design services nationally and internationally. She aligns technology strategies with business objectives, drawing on her interdisciplinary expertise in architecture, construction, and technology to drive informed decision-making and greater productivity. A passionate advocate for the AEC startup ecosystem, Nirva collaborates with emerging companies to help shape the future of the industry. She serves on the board of Boston Smahrt – Building Intelligence Group, is a founding member of Forum Ventures, and is a member of the AIA AI Task Force and Women Applying AI. In 2024, she was recognized as one of Boston's 25 Top Women in Tech.



TRACY JORDRE, AIA

Tracy Jordre, AIA, LEED AP, is an AIA award-winning Principal Architect and Workplace Expert at JLG Architects with more than 30 years of experience and a deeply human approach to workplace design. As leader of JLG's Workplace Studio, she guides design vision, workplace strategy, and business development while helping clients reimagine what the workplace can—and should—be. Tracy believes architecture can do more than support how people work—it can influence how people feel, connect, heal, grow, and thrive. Her work blends workplace strategy, experiential design, biophilia, sustainability, and sensory-informed design to create environments that support diverse ways of thinking, working, and connecting. Inspired by both professional and personal experience, she is a passionate advocate for neuroinclusive, mentally healthy workplaces and challenges the profession to design beyond the "typical user." Her leadership and award-winning work have been recognized by AIA, Prairie Business Magazine, and the Greater North Dakota Chamber, which recently named her a 2026 Women to Know & Watch in North Dakota Business.



KRISTINE KUBES

Attorney Kristine A. Kubes is principal of Kubes Law Office, PLLC, serving design and construction professionals through all stages of a project – from contracts to payment issues, liens, risk management, defense of professional liability claims. She also represents professionals before their respective licensing Boards. Kristine is a litigator licensed to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court, a mediator, an educator on construction, design, and ethics issues, and a certified VitalCog Trainer for suicide prevention in construction. Kristine is Past National Chair of the American Bar Association Forum on Construction Law. She served as a public member on the MN Board of AELSLAGID from 2006-2013, during which she served two terms as Board Chair from 2009-2011. Daughter of a teacher and a carpenter, Kristine uses the lessons they taught her every day.



PAUL LEWIS, FAIA

Paul Lewis, FAIA, is a Principal at LTL Architects in New York City and Interim Associate Dean and Professor at the Princeton University School of Architecture, where he has taught since 2000. He earned a BA from Wesleyan University and a Master of Architecture from Princeton University. LTL Architects has completed academic, institutional, residential, and hospitality projects across the United States and has received a National Design Award, multiple AIA awards, NY State AIA Firm of the Year, and induction into the Interior Design Hall of Fame. Recent projects include Poster House, The Helen R. Walton Children's Enrichment Center, a residence hall at Carnegie Mellon University, two straw houses, and the winning design for the University at Buffalo Resilient Campus competition. The firm's current research explores the architectural potential of plant- and earth-based materials, featured in *Manual of Biogenic House Sections* (2022). LTL is also the author of *Manual of Section* (2016), *Intensities* (2013), *Opportunistic Architecture* (2008), and *Pamphlet Architecture #21: Situation Normal...* (1998). The firm's work has been exhibited internationally, including at the U.S. Pavilion of the Venice Architecture Biennale, and is held in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Carnegie Museum of Art. Paul is a past President of the Architectural League of New York and a Fellow of the American Academy in Rome.



MATTHEW SEGAL, AIA

Matthew Segal, AIA, is an architect dedicated to advancing design and community in San Diego and beyond. Recently awarded the 2025 AIA San Diego Chapter Young Architect of the Year Award, Matthew's personal work includes award-winning projects such as The Post Office Lofts, Villa Cubo, and the Goldfinch Residence. Through a fully vertically integrated practice, Matthew personally oversees every aspect of his projects, including design, development, construction management, interiors, landscape, permitting, and MEP plans. His work prioritizes affordability, sustainability, and net-zero energy performance without compromising design quality. He consistently strives to do more with less in every aspect of his design and practice. In addition to his own work, Matthew has been pivotal in helping set the foundation for statewide progressive code changes, including the elimination of residential parking requirements and the implementation of micro-unit housing. He mentors students, supports community and arts initiatives, participates in real estate and urban development organizations, and was recently appointed by the Mayor to the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board. In his free time, Matthew is also an internationally published architectural photographer. Matthew has accomplished this personal body of work outside of his long-standing collaboration with his father and mentor, Jonathan Segal, FAIA, where he has also served as lead designer, project manager, and construction manager on seven award-winning projects.