

BRIGHT Future

Lifescapes scholarship awards inspire new landscape designers

By Samantha Gonzaga

Donald Brinkerhoff ('52, ornamental horticulture) knows how life-altering a scholarship can be.

Once upon a time, before the founder of Lifescapes International, Inc. left his mark on the profession, he experienced dire financial straits that pushed him to the verge of quitting school. Many years later, Brinkerhoff would seal his legacy in the glamorous mythos of Las Vegas, becoming the first landscape designer inducted into the American Gaming Association's Hall of Fame alongside Frank Sinatra and casino mogul Steve Wynn for designing 17 casino resorts on the Las Vegas Strip, and redesigning its world-famous Las Vegas Boulevard in 1995. He also introduced the terminology "softscape" and "hardscape" into the industry lexicon.

As a Cal Poly Pomona student, Brinkerhoff was spared from choosing between his studies and survival when landscape architecture professor and department chair Howard Boltz helped him secure a \$1,000 Sears Roebuck Company scholarship – roughly \$10,000 in today's dollars.

"That was the impetus for the scholarships," says his daughter **Julie Brinkerhoff-Jacobs**, who is now the president of the internationally recognized and award-winning firm. "It was part of our gratefulness to the College [of Environmental Design], to give back and invest in the future."

In 2004, Lifescapes gifted Cal Poly Pomona funds to establish the **Lifescapes International Landscape Architecture Endowment**, which provides multiple scholarships every year. It was followed in 2012 by yet another commitment, the **Don Brinkerhoff Landscape Architecture Scholarship Award**, the college's largest annual scholarship, which awards \$10,000 to second- or third-year students with financial needs and who demonstrate leadership ability.

Lifescapes supports the college and its landscape architecture program in other ways. Eighty percent of its design staff are Cal Poly Pomona alumni, including executive senior principals Dan Trust, Roger Voettiner and Andrew Kreft (of Cal Poly San Luis Obispo) with "40 percent of overall staff being women designers



as well as business personnel," according to Brinkerhoff-Jacobs.

As the firm celebrates more than six decades of achievements this year, Lifescapes has another gift: the proceeds of a limited-edition "legacy" book. Available in early 2020, it's a hefty visual collection of its top projects' design processes and sketches, saluting the firm's heritage and celebrating its future.

The unrestricted \$10,000 Brinkerhoff scholarship supported **Nicole Nguyen**'s ('15, landscape architecture) senior year at Cal Poly Pomona, even allowing her to pay off a small education loan she took out in her junior year. What was left over, she used for her first trip abroad after graduation.

"It helped recharge and re-inspire me as a person and as a designer," says Nguyen, now a designer at **BGB Design Group in Costa Mesa**. "I remember having lunch with Don and his daughter Julie, and the conversations we had about their travels. They were excited to hear that I was planning to take my first trip abroad after graduation, which was only made possible with the [Lifescapes] scholarship."

The Brinkerhoff Scholarship let Osmond Van ('19, landscape architecture) participate in the college's oldest and longest-running study abroad program in Italy.

"It has changed my outlook on what I want to do when I graduate," Van shares from Castiglion Fiorentino in eastern Tuscany, where he is spending the 2019 fall semester. "It had provided me the opportunity to visit different international masters' programs. I have always planned to go to graduate school, but I was limiting myself to schools within the States. The study abroad program has opened up new doors in a different country."

60 Years of Iconic Designs

The Plaza at Coral Gables

Coral Gables: A 7-acre mixed use project in South Florida, this project will be city's largest mixed use development featuring an animated destination drive, fully amenitized plaza for the community, as well as the enjoyment and historic preservation of an original, two-story Floridian building integrated into the environment. Water features, restaurants and retail destinations caress and activate the project.



The Grove

Los Angeles: Set on 20 acres adjacent to the historic Farmers Market, The Grove is not only a Southern California landmark offering a lush, park-like setting it is also recognized as one of the most successful retail destinations in the world, being in the top ten 10 centers of continuous financial success since it opened in 2002. An ICSC international award-winning property.



One Sino Park

Shanghai, China: Overlooking the Huangpu River, this multi-family residential community will be the first tower and park-like setting of a 14-tower development once it is finished.



Bellagio

Las Vegas: Famous for its grand entrance and its water "spectaculo," this 3,000-room hotel boasts an Italianate-inspired garden complete with an interior conservatory featuring changing gardens depending on the season and holidays, such as Chinese New Year, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day and others.



Pechanga Resort & Casino

Temecula: The largest Four Diamond resort on the West Coast, Lifescapes paid tribute to the Pechanga Band of Luiseno Indians by honoring and incorporating into this expansion effort native plant materials and carefully relocating four majestic oak trees (considered sacred by the tribe), plus a cultural roof deck garden which features the work of native artists. The pool complex, The Cove, features five pools, four spas and an active event lawn for special concerts, which round out the property.



Rockefeller Center Channel Gardens

New York City: Nestled within a complex of 14 commercial buildings and one of the city's most historic centers on the west side of Fifth Avenue, the 200-foot plaza promenade features six granite pools that can be interchangeable from water to soil, allowing for interesting, dynamic garden expressions throughout the year. Lifescapes is honored to have been part of this rotating landscape setting for years.



Lifescapes International, Inc., co-founded by Donald Brinkerhoff and his late wife Barbara, has been telling stories through landscape architecture for more than six decades. The firm has designed hundreds of projects worldwide – from master-planned communities and parks, to golf courses, retail, mixed use, master planned and multifamily communities, to megaresorts.

"We have one non-negotiable point in our design: we create garden designs that people love, we don't create for us," says daughter Julie Brinkerhoff-Jacobs. "It's one of the things I love about humanity, that there is a core reality and truth about who we are and what we enjoy goes back to being in awe of an experience, an opportunity to sit around with friends and talk and connect with each other. It's about embracing the belief that beautiful gardens are good for the soul."