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## **American Institute of Architects honors SmithGroupJJR’s Michelle Acosta and Stephen Parker with 2018 Young Architects Award**

Washington, D.C., December 9, 2018 – SmithGroupJJR is pleased to announce that Michelle Acosta and Stephen Parker have received the [American Institute of Architects](https://www.aia.org/) (AIA) 2018 Young Architects Award. SmithGroupJJR is the only firm with multiple honorees in this year’s class of 18 award recipients.

The AIA Young Architects Award recognizes professionals who have been licensed 10 years or fewer, regardless of their age. It honors those who have shown exceptional leadership and made significant contributions to the profession early in their careers.

**Michelle Acosta**, AIA, EDAC is a healthcare project manager at SmithGroupJJR’s Phoenix office. She joined the firm in 2016 and is currently serving as the project manager for the Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community Northeast Ambulatory Care Clinic and the campus master plan for the University Medical Center of Southern Nevada.

Acosta has been an been active and dedicated member of the American Institute of Architects since she joined Arizona State University's student chapter, where she helped grow the chapter from 20 members to more than 100. This was the beginning of more than a decade of significant leadership roles within AIA. After becoming the associate director of AIA Phoenix Metro, she took on the role of regional associate director for AIA Western Mountain Region, where she was honored with the 2008 AIA WMR Directors' Recognition Award.

In 2014, Michelle relocated to Los Angeles and joined AIA Pasadena & Foothill (AIAPF) and within the same year was elected the 2016 Chapter President, becoming only the sixth female president in its 68-year history. In this role, she increased the diversity of its board of directors and established new ways to attract and mentor younger members. Today, she remains active with AIA, serving as Diversity and Equity Chairperson for AIA Arizona.

Acosta graduated Magna Cum Laude from Arizona State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Design.

**Stephen Parker**, AIA, NCARB LEED AP BD+C, joined SmithGroupJJR in 2014 and currently serves as an architect and planner in the firm’s Washington, D.C. office. He is engaged in a wide range of projects for the firm, including the expansion and extensive renovation of [Indiana University’s Assembly Hall](http://www.smithgroupjjrblog.com/how-universities-are-falling-back-in-love-with-their-brutalist-buildings/) and a next-generation hospital at [Sharp Chula Vista Medical Center](https://www.sharp.com/hospitals/chula-vista/expansion/next-generation-hospital.cfm) in San Diego. He also collaborates on multiple projects with the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs that are contributing to the creation of improved healthcare environments for veterans.

Parker has been involved with the AIA at multiple levels. As a student and architectural apprentice, he served on the AIA Greenville (South Carolina) executive committee and went on to serve as member of the executive board of AIA South Carolina. He became an early champion for the National Design Services Act, legislation intended allow design professionals to pay off their student debt through community design service. He was a founding member of the AIA’s National Design Services Act Coalition and currently serves as the National Advocacy Director for the AIA Young Architects Forum’s Advisory Committee. Parker is also an active volunteer in his community, serving organizations including the DC Building Industry Association, AEC Cares and Rebuilding Together.

Parker graduated Cum Laude from Clemson University with a Bachelor of Arts in Architecture, followed by a Master of Architecture from the University of Maryland.

Founded in 1857, [The American Institute of Architects](http://www.aia.org/) consistently works to create more valuable, healthy, secure, and sustainable buildings, neighborhoods, and communities. Through more than 200 international, state and local chapters, the AIA advocates for public policies that promote economic vitality and public wellbeing. Members adhere to a code of ethics and conduct to ensure the highest professional standards.

**SmithGroupJJR** ([www.smithgroupjjr.com](http://www.smithgroupjjr.com/)) is one of the world’s preeminent integrated design firms. Working across a network of 12 offices in the U.S. and China, a team of 1,300 experts is committed to excellence in strategy, design and delivery. The scale of the firm’s thinking and organization produces partnerships with forward-looking clients that maximize opportunities, minimize risk and solve their most complex problems. SmithGroupJJR creates exceptional design solutions for healthcare, science and technology organizations, higher education and cultural institutions, urban environments, diverse workplaces, mixed-use and waterfront developments, and parks and open spaces.