

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**YOUNGEST FEMALE ARCHITECT IN THE UNITED STATES:
SS&L'S DREW HALEY SMITH EARNS LICENSE AT 23**

3 September 2024

AUBURN, ALABAMA — Seay, Seay & Litchfield, P.C. (SS&L Architects) is proud to announce that Drew Haley Smith, a native of Auburn, Alabama, has become the youngest female licensed architect in the United States. At just 23 years old, Drew Haley completed all the requirements to be a licensed architect, an accomplishment she completed over six years sooner than the average architect according to the National Council of Architecture Registration Boards (NCARB).

Drew Haley graduated with honors in 2023 from Auburn University's College of Architecture, Design & Construction (CADC). She earned dual degrees in Architecture and Interior Architecture from Auburn's nationally recognized architecture program. She currently works in the Auburn branch office of SS&L Architects where she has managed projects totaling upwards of \$173M.

Drew Haley completed the rigorous, six-part Architecture Registration Examination (ARE) and Architectural Experience Program (AXP) in just one year following her graduation from Auburn University—an extraordinary feat considering that the average time to licensure is about eight years according to NCARB.

This rapid success can be attributed in part to the experience she gained at Auburn University as well as the robust support provided by the SS&L Academy, which offers resources and guidance to aspiring architects within the firm. Auburn's CADC is known for producing graduates with some of the highest ARE pass rates in the country, thanks to dedicated faculty members such as David Hinson, Associate Dean and Professor, and Mindy Walden, Career Services Specialist. Auburn architecture students are heavily encouraged to proactively seek firms that invest in the mentorship and development of their employees.

Before graduation, Drew Haley was fortunate to gain experience at several architecture firms across Alabama in addition to her internships at SS&L Architects. She volunteered as a Teacher's Assistant, DBIA Competition Team Leader, AIAS Director and Fundraiser, and CADC Ambassador. She also participated in Auburn's Rural Studio Program and Interior Architecture Program. At Rural Studio, Drew Haley gained hands-on experience with real-world construction problems and solutions, and the Auburn Interior Architecture Program gave her a path forward to become a licensed Interior Designer. Each of these experiences played a vital role in helping her become the youngest female architect in the country.

Drew Haley thanked her family and mentors, stating,

"I am so thankful to everyone at SS&L and Auburn University. It is such an amazing experience to be surrounded by a team of passionate, driven people. A special thank you to my parents for keeping me motivated, my siblings for keeping me light-hearted, my mentors for keeping me on track, and my incredible co-workers for their constant support and encouragement. It is a wonderful blessing to be surrounded by such positive people.

I would especially like to thank Nick Vansyoc and Mr. Jimmy Seay who have gone above and beyond to support and encourage me in every possible way. Nick is one of the most incredible leaders I know and never ceases to amaze me with how he handles even the most difficult situations. Mr. Jimmy is such a light to everyone he interacts with and is our biggest advocate. We all love him.

Also, big shout-out to Claire Hardin and Max Liles for helping me with my workload when completing the AXP hours in time seemed impossible. All the interns—Lucas, Olivia, Lenny, Lanier, Graham, Josh, Jordan, Taye, Reyna, Seth, Amy, and William make every day such a joy.

Most importantly, I would like to thank the Lord Who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think (Ephesians 3:14-21). All credit ultimately rests with Him and His blessings are innumerable and eternal (Psalm 145:3)."

"Drew Haley Smith has made an excellent addition to our team in our firm," said Jimmy Seay, Jr., Founder & Senior Principal Architect at SS&L. "Her passion is evident in her designs and her work ethic is top tier. Our team is blessed to have her aboard. Drew Haley's achievement is a testament not only to her own dedication but also to the supportive environment created in the CADC Program at Auburn University. We are committed to fostering the growth of talented individuals like Drew Haley, who represent the future of our industry. We look forward to watching her career flourish as she continues to make significant contributions to our firm and the communities we serve."

ABOUT SEAY, SEAY & LITCHFIELD ARCHITECTS

Delivering Quality by Design for half a century, Seay, Seay & Litchfield Architects is a design-oriented firm grounded in exceptional client service. Based in Montgomery, Alabama with branch offices in Dothan, Auburn, and Huntsville, the firm specializes in creating innovative solutions that enhance the built environment. Each SS&L team member prioritizes creativity and attention to detail to ensure the success of each project they undertake.

Founded in 1977 by visionaries James Seay, Sr. and Jimmy Seay, Jr., and later enriched by the expertise of Frank E. Litchfield, III, our firm has grown into a powerhouse of architectural innovation. SS&L Architects now employs the largest number of registered architects in the central Alabama region and boasts one of the best intern development programs in the nation.

Services provided by SS&L include architectural design, interior design, landscape architecture, master planning, graphics, etc. Types of projects include residential, civic, commercial, K-12/higher education, and military facilities.

For more information about Seay, Seay & Litchfield Architects, please visit our website at sslarch.com.

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Smith constructing a ramp Ophelia's Home in Newbern, Alabama