

# AIA News

## Gordon H. Chong, FAIA, takes office as 2002 AIA President

Gordon H. Chong, FAIA, of the San Francisco firm Gordon H. Chong & Partners, was inaugurated as the 78th president of the AIA during ceremonies held December 8 at the Organization of American States in Washington, D.C. At his inaugural, Chong spoke of the changing role of the architectural profession and challenged architects to help “change the world” by designing more livable communities, creating affordable housing, respecting historic resources, and developing alternative transit opportunities and urban infill projects.

“These are the issues that matter. And they are *our* issues,” he declared. “The clarion call must be that Design Matters. Not just in the magic of a wonder-affirming project like the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, but on the day-to-day projects that we all work on: schools that enhance your daughter’s ability to learn; hospitals that enhance your son’s ability to heal; laboratories for the biotechnology industry that promote scientific research, innovation, and creativity; houses of worship that bring peace, tranquility, and emotional sustenance.”

Chong observed that architects are uniquely qualified to spearhead positive change in business and for consumers. “In a global economy, differentiation represents value. Design represents a competitive advantage while benefiting the consumer as well as the broader public,” he said. “It [design] is what we do best. It’s a gift that we can and must contribute to

our communities.”

Citing Malcolm Gladwell’s 2000 book, *The Tipping Point*, which refers to a point of critical mass, Chong argued that design is fast approaching such a threshold in American society and again challenged the profession to take the leadership reins. “We are not there yet, but I believe we are at a critical junction,” he noted. “Do we have the will to move the cause of design to the tipping point? Or will we let others define the quality of life by criteria other than design?”



CHONG

Chong is the founding partner of Gordon H. Chong & Partners, an 85-person firm based in San Francisco with an office in Sacramento. He has also served in leadership positions for his local chapter and regional components as well as:

- AIA national regional director
- Founder and leader, national AIA initiative on Practice and Prosperity (now Redefinition of the Profession)

- Member, AIA AIM Implementation Advisory Group
- Board of Trustees, Mills Women’s College
- Board vice chair, State of California Hospital Building Safety Board
- Planning commissioner, City of Berkeley.

Chong, born and raised in Hawaii, earned his BArch from the University of Oregon and his MArch from Edinburg University, Scotland. He and his wife Dorian have two daughters. ■