

## This Just In 01/02/02

### MacArthur Genius Mockbee Dies

Samuel "Sambo" Mockbee, FAIA, professor of architecture at Auburn University and 2000 John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Fellow, died December 30 at the Auburn University Medical Center. He was 57.

Mockbee is best known for his work at the Rural Studio, an extension of the AU College of Architecture, Design, and Construction in rural western Alabama that he cofounded in 1993 and codirected with fellow AU architecture professor D.K. Ruth.

Teaching students the social value of their work as well as how creativity can overcome the constraints of a tight budget, the Rural Studio serves the impoverished residents of Hale County, Ala. Designing and building houses using surplus and recycled materials, the students create comfortable and beautiful houses for around \$30,000.

"The goal is not only to have a warm, dry house, but to have a warm, dry house with a spirit to it," Mockbee once said. "What we build are shelters for the soul as well as homes for bodies."

"Sambo Mockbee was compassionate both about his students and disadvantaged people," remembers AIA Executive Vice President/CEO Norman L. Koonce, FAIA. "At the Rural Studio, he gave his fantastic design abilities at no cost to people in great need. He had no impediment of ego in helping others. The AIA mourns the loss of a true champion of design for all people."

Mockbee, a bearded and burly fifth-generation Mississippi native, received his BArch from Auburn University in 1974. In practice since 1977, he cofounded Mockbee/Coker with Coleman Coker, FAIA. He won national AIA Honor Awards for the Cook Residence in Oxford, Miss., and Barnard Observatory at the University of Mississippi, and two *Architectural Record* House Awards. Among his other work was the Mississippi Pavilion for the 1984 World's Exhibition in New Orleans. He was elected to the AIA College of Fellows in 1989.

At the Cooper-Hewitt Museum/Smithsonian Institution's



first National Design Triennial exhibit, "Design Culture Now," exhibited in 2000, Mockbee was the only individual represented twice (for his work with Mockbee/Coker and for the Rural Studio). He also received the "Use Your Life Award" given by Oprah's Angel Network on the Oprah Winfrey Show.

A noted academician, Mockbee was the Gresham Professor and 2000 J. Streeter Wiatt Distinguished Professor at Auburn. He has served as a visiting professor in the schools of architecture and design at Harvard University (1996), the University of Virginia (Shure Professor, 1997), Yale University (Davenport Professor, 1997), and the University of California, Berkeley (Freidman Professor, 1998).

Funeral services were held January 2 in Mockbee's hometown of Meridian, Miss. He is survived by his wife, Jacquelyn Johnson Mockbee, and three children, Margaret Lee Mockbee, Sarah Ann Mockbee, and Carol Covington Mockbee.

The family requests memorials be made to Julius Mockbee Education Fund, c/o Ken Barton, P.O. Box 22567, Jackson, MS 39225-2567. 