



Michael Hodgson:

Hi, I'm Mick Hodgson along with Ken Carbone, co-chairs of this evening's event. Thank you for joining us for this opportunity to honor three Medalists, two Corporate Leadership Award honorees, 22 Fellows, and the winners of this year's Worldstudio AIGA Scholarships — all of whom have led the way in the quality of their work, the quality of their character, and their commitment to those who have followed and will continue to follow them.

As we start planning AIGA's centenary, this, the sixth annual Design Legends Gala, our celebration of this profession is in its relative infancy. This gala demonstrates that the industry has begun to assume the responsibility for honoring its past as well as preparing for the future. This evening, over 450 of you at 46 tables have joined us to celebrate the excellence of the profession and the community that we're all a part of. These are wonderful numbers in these more difficult times, and we thank you. In addition, this year is the first time we are specifically recognizing more than 200 firms and designers whose work was selected in 365: AIGA's Design Competitions and 50 Books and 50 Covers. This work is currently exhibited in the AIGA Gallery on Fifth Avenue. If you haven't already done so, please try and stop by before you leave town. And finally, thanks to Ken Carbone who bravely accepted his new role as the New York half of this team.

[Applause]

Ken Carbone:

Thank you, thank you. Mick, why did we move here from Chelsea Piers?

Michael Hodgson:

Oh, that's really easy. I actually asked Ric about that and he said it was Don Draper's suggestion.

Ken Carbone:

So now it's time to say thanks. Thanks to the Gala committee members who made the evening possible and the honorary committee. To the always enthusiastic and never tiring Pam Williams and Kenna Kay for taking on tables. Okay, tables and chairs — the ones you're sitting at — which really meant a lot of nagging of you until you said yes. We also want to say thank you to Trollbäck and Company, who took on the job of doing this year's AV and décor, and it's unbelievable that two hours ago this was a white box. And to Scott Stowell and Gary Fogelson, who have planned a terrific after-party, the first time we're doing a Gala with an after-party immediately after this event. [inaudible] Oh, one other thing, as my co-chair reminded me, you see those cards that are in front of you? We're encouraging you to add to the centerpiece or build little towers out of those cards, and you're all welcome to take them with you. We also want to say thank you to Mucca Design, who designed this year's program.

And yes, it is made — it is embossed in marzipan so you can eat it. Now to our sponsors, our presenting sponsor, lynda.com.

[Applause]

Our Leadership sponsors, Lippincott, Mohawk, Poulin and Morris, Precise Continental, and Target.

[Applause]

And to our Patron sponsors, Adobe, Aquent, Pentagram, Sappi, and SpotCo.

[Applause]

And finally, to our in-kind sponsors, American Printing Company, and Crane and Company.
[applause] Now I have the great pleasure to welcome our fearless leader to the stage, the executive director of AIGA, Ric Grefé.

[Applause]

Richard Grefé:

Well, welcome everyone. I'm Ric Grefé, executive director of AIGA, and every year we look forward to this gathering because it has a sense of — really a palpable sense of people to people, and people connecting with people, and it's really wonderfully reassuring certainly at times like this to see the elements of community and fellowship that characterize AIGA and the profession. The evening's really about inspiration. We'll recognize those who use design in a strategic context, JetBlue and Patagonia, and also the legacy of AIGA, which is to honor those individual designers who leave us in awe at what great design is and what it can be — this year Pablo Ferro, Carin Goldberg and Doyald Young.

[Applause]

We're also honoring the AIGA fellows who've been selected by chapters for their impact on design and the profession. And I would hope that AIGA itself is making a difference as well. We've grown over the years. In 1964, the 50th anniversary of AIGA was held in this room and now we're 64 chapters; student groups on over 200 campuses; over 20,000 members who represent more design professionals, design educators and design students than any other professional association in the world, and yet we're continuing to try to transform the organization and focusing now on relevance, leadership, and opportunity for the profession. When we talk in those terms, they sound relatively lofty and institutional, and we know that the power of the profession is really when designers work alone or together and that AIGA strength comes when designers gather at events like this.

Most of you know the traditional role AIGA plays in promoting design excellence, but in addition, I just want to bring you up-to-date on a number of things. We, AIGA, and the profession are finally making strides in placing the discussion of the value of design and design thinking before the most influential business leaders at the Competitiveness Council in Washington, TED, Aspen, Salzburg, PopTech, the World Economic Forum in both Davos

and Dalian, and we're engaging designers in the discussion of issues that go well beyond design. AIGA is also more global, multi-cultural, multi-disciplinary, and we're deeply involved in demonstrating the role of designers or the role that designers can play in addressing social problems as well as the challenges in business and culture. We have a Mandarin website, two offices in China, UNICEF has made us an extension of their innovation laboratory so that we can involve designers and design students worldwide with UNICEF challenges including, this year, the issues of education of girls in the Third World. Chapters are enabling designers to be involved in mentoring, compelling community needs, and global causes. In Europe and Asia, our colleagues are seeking our council on issues of design and design education. And here in the States, we have AIGA employees in place in the offices of two Secretaries of State as an extension of our election design work, and we're on call for many other calls from states that are seeking our guidance in terms of ballot design. We're also exploring the role of designers in rethinking government service among government agencies. And, of course, we're always looking for ways to involve designers with young people who might unleash their creative talents with the right encouragement.

All of these initiatives and many more wouldn't be possible without your energy, engagement, and generosity. I want to thank everyone for attending tonight. At once, you're honoring the past and enabling a great future for the profession through your support of the gala, of AIGA and the profession, and the initiatives your contributions will make possible. And I also want to remind anyone who feels this is a terrific evening that you ought to join us at Make/Think, our biennial design conference, in Memphis, October 8 to 11, where there are going to be more people, more time, more stimulating design and speakers, and at least as much fun.