June 1, 2020
Conference News

**THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF MINORITY ARCHITECTS' OCTOBER 2020
CONFERENCE TRANSITIONS TO A VIRTUAL EVENT**
NOMA Will Convene Virtually to Protect Attendees' Health and Safety During COVID-19

WASHINGTON, D.C., June 1, 2020 — The National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA) announced today that the 48th Annual National NOMA Conference will take place online during its scheduled dates of Oct. 14-17, 2020, with the call for conference papers. NOMA made the decision to move the conference online in order to protect the health and safety of NOMA members, partners, sponsors, and friends during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Globally, the pandemic has had a disproportionately adverse impact on communities of color. COVID-19 related deaths were much higher among African American and Hispanic/Latino households in the U.S., further prompting NOMA to consider the demographics of our membership in the decision.

"Our top priority is the protection and health of our NOMA family and friends in the wake of this very disruptive and deadly viral outbreak," said Kimberly Dowdell, NOMA, AIA, LEED AP, NCARB, 2019-2020 NOMA President and HOK Principal. "We will gather to discuss the pressing issues that COVID-19 has brought to light from the safety of our homes this year. As architects, our ability to design communities that are just, equitable, diverse, and inclusive (JEDI) will be more imperative than ever before. This global pandemic has spotlighted the need for urgent action. We invite all architects and designers to join us in meaningful collaboration in pursuit of a better, more resilient and healing built environment.

Originally planned to take place in Oakland, CA, and hosted by the San Francisco NOMA Chapter (SF NOMA), the conference theme of "Spatial Shifts: Reclaiming our Cities" will feature a dynamic set of online lectures, seminars, and networking events. The conference theme, announced last year, was a predictive call to empower architects as designers, community members, leaders, and environmental stewards to champion the shift of our current structures to more equitable systems.

"We are excited about creating an online environment that fosters fertile ground for critical discourse on issues that impact minority communities in Oakland, and the nation as whole," said June Grant, NOMA, RA, SFNOMA President, 2019 NOMA Conference Co-Chair, and Founder of BlinkLAB architecture. "I am especially intrigued by this new opportunity to hear the voices of global members who were previously unable to attend our annual conference."

The call for presenters is now open. Sessions will be reviewed by the American Institute of Architects (AIA) for continuing education credits. Presentation solicitations will be organized in the following categories:
- Who Belongs?: Policy & Politics
- Culture: Space & Urban Structures
- Housing: Place, Space, Consumption and Production
- Climate Justice: Grounding In Green
- The Expanded Role of the Architect: Reclaiming Design, Development & Technology
- Professional Practice
- Oakland Intersection: A unique workshop for Non-Profit Organizations and Architects

"This year's online conference is an opportunity to widen the understanding of public spaces and available avenues of engagement in our professions," said Rod Henmi, NOMA, FAIA, LEED AP, 2019 NOMA Conference Co-Chair, and HKIT Design Director. "From in-person to online, we will provide an evocative and educational agenda that tackles the immense challenges in the built environment."

The NOMA virtual conference will include the following programming highlights:
- J. Max Bond Jr. Lecture
- National member meeting and 2020 licensure pinning ceremony
- Phil Freelon Professional Design Awards (application deadline Aug. 15)
- Barbara G. Laurie Student Design Competition
- New this year, the SEED Awards, in coordination with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and Design Corps. (application deadline Aug. 1)

Last year's NOMA conference held in Brooklyn, NY, hosted a record-breaking attendance of more than 1,200 people. Next year will mark the 50th anniversary of the founding of NOMA. NOMA's 49th annual conference will be held in Detroit in 2021, celebrating five decades of service to the profession since the organization's founding, which stemmed from the AIA

Convention in Detroit in 1971. To sponsor a future NOMA conference event, visit
www.noma.net/sponsorship.

About the National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA):

The National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA) was formed nearly 50 years ago to represent the needs of African American architects. Founded in 1971 at the AIA conference in Detroit, the purpose of NOMA was to bolster and provide support for the handful of Black licensed architects around the country. Today, NOMA is a haven for architects of all origins who seek inclusion in the design industry. We continue to advocate for the licensure of African American architects (who account for only two percent of all licensed architects today), as well as those from other from underrepresented backgrounds. NOMA is extremely hopeful about the profession's future due to the strong presence of student leaders from over 80 schools across the U.S. and Canada. As we continue to support our NOMA students (NOMAS), we anticipate they will be major contributors to our field, and we are proud of the work they are doing right now to prepare for the future.

NOMA has 30 professional chapters across the U.S. and 75 student chapters, National Organization of Minority Architecture Students (NOMAS) — mentored by regional NOMA chapters. NOMA and NOMAS membership is predominantly African-American, with other minority members including Native American, Hispanic, Middle Eastern, East Indian, and Asian, as well as an increasing segment of non-minority members who support NOMA's mission. NOMA supports it's student members by providing mentorship, scholarships, and job opportunities to ensure their successful transition into the profession.