

P R E S S R E L E A S E

September 25, 2019

Decatur and Austin Win Awards for Outstanding Design



Two new Decatur buildings, Austin High School and Decatur High School, each received awards for outstanding design from the North Alabama Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. The awards were received by Nola | Van Peursem Architects of Huntsville, the designer of both schools.

AIA North Alabama conducts an annual Design Awards program to recognize excellence in architecture. The group celebrated the 2019 Design Awards on September 19th in Huntsville. The program honors built works by North Alabama architects, and honors the highest standards of design. A group of distinguished architects from Charlotte, North Carolina served as jurors for the awards program.

Three projects were chosen from a field of eighteen submittals from across North Alabama. Two of the award-winning structures are Decatur buildings.

Austin High School received a Merit Award. The jury lauded the design for its transparency and use of natural light, as well as the way the building connects indoor and outdoor spaces. They liked the monumental entry and dramatic sequence of communal spaces, and commented that the project shows discipline and restraint.

Decatur High School took the highest recognition in the program, an Honor Award. Decatur High School also received the “Peoples’ Choice Award” for best project of 2019. The jury commented on the successful integration of old and new, and the dramatic transformation of the campus. They appreciated the attention to detail, elevating a conventional material palette with elegant building shapes and a generous use of natural lighting.

Frank Nola of Nola | Van Peursem Architects praised the Decatur School Board and Superintendent for their vision and fortitude in taking on the design and construction of two new high schools simultaneously. He thanked the School Board for challenging the design team to create buildings that reflect the individuality of each school community, and for the invaluable guidance the Board offered in the creation of both designs.

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