

To Whom It May Concern,

It is my pleasure to write to you on behalf of Michael Nelson, AIA.

Zeidler Partnership hired Michael in 1989 as on-site representative for the 205,000 sf Raymond F. Kravis Center for the Performing Arts in West Palm Beach, Florida, based on his impressive credentials in this particular building type.

Michael's previous work on similar projects including serving as site representative on a similar major Performing Arts Center (PAC), and his excellent recommendations supporting his specialized experience, assured us that he was the perfect fit for the Kravis, a groundbreaking model project (both literally and figuratively) for South Florida.

Michael's performance was exemplary, and as the project moved toward successful completion, he boldly proposed Zeidler open a regional office in Palm Beach, intuiting strong potential for growth.

Reflecting our deep confidence in Michael, we did not hesitate. Nor were we disappointed. As director of the West Palm Beach office, he aggressively grew the operation, eventually leading a 27-person team, directing the design of all regional projects, and fully managing specific major projects.

His vision, dedication and drive resulted in participation in projects across the US including a \$40m School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Florida. This major undertaking was a direct result of his outstanding execution on projects for UF's Schools of Dance, Music and Theatre.

Of note, Michael also led the internationally award-winning Port of Palm Beach Cruise Terminal and Headquarters project, as well as The Scripps Research Institute's east coast headquarters (won by Zeidler in competition with world-renowned firms including Rafael Vinoly, HOK and Cesar Pelli.). His team contributed substantively throughout the latter project, a tribute to his collaborative style and superb executive management skills.

Michael's performing arts expertise in particular served the entire firm well. He helped secure and worked on numerous PAC's conjointly with several of our Canada-based offices.



Globally, Michael worked in China with our Beijing and Chengdu offices on a PAC in Chengdu. In Kurdistan, he led the master planning for a massive 76-acre development that included a performing arts center, convention center, two malls, two hotels and a conference center.

The dramatic economic downturn in the US in 2008 severely impacted our profession. Consequently, Zeidler was forced to close several offices by 2012, Palm Beach amongst them.

In our effort to retain Michael, who had become a key member of the firm, we invited him to join us at our Toronto headquarters.

Regrettably, personal obligations, most notably his mother's declining health, prevented him from accepting our offer. Nevertheless, we remained in regular contact over the past six years as he maintained a small practice in Palm Beach.

The recent passing of his mother has prompted Michael to seek new opportunities with major international practices.

I have known Michael professionally for 28 years. Throughout his tenure with Zeidler, he was an exceptional team leader, a gifted designer, and a driven and accomplished business development professional.

I could not recommend him more highly for a significant role in any firm looking to enhance or develop a performing arts practice, or in need of a truly well-rounded, seasoned professional.

Eberhard Zeidler

Partner Emeritus

Zeidler Partnership Architects