

**Sam H. Halley, AIA's persistence and leadership contributed to the demise of a significant threat to the profession and to the crucial relationships necessary for success in the design and construction industry.**



It was called the “**Contract from Hell**” and it almost derailed the practice of architecture in Kentucky and throughout the country in the late 1990s. The National Construction Law Center (NCLC) from Atlanta, Georgia, undertook to market its replacement for AIA contract documents to state and local governments throughout the U.S. Kentucky was the first state government to be successfully marketed by NCLC. The contract, unfairly and inappropriately, shifted the risks to the design professionals in many areas. The NCLC correctly understood that governments, in one stroke, could impose the document on thousands of architects if they could get one large state government to implement it. Kentucky became that state government. And Sam H. Halley, AIA stopped it through his leadership of AIA Kentucky’s Government Affairs Committee.

At the time, the **Commonwealth of Kentucky** was embarking on a **one billion dollar capital construction effort**. Even more important, the NCLC contract effort in Kentucky was quickly identified as one of the essential “front lines” in the battle relating to the “Contract from Hell” nationally. The battle began in 1996 with “General” Sam Halley, AIA leading the AIA’s effort to thwart this, and by 1998, the Kentucky Finance and Administration Cabinet determined that it **would proceed to approve the NCLC contracts**. Game over? Not so fast. Spending enormous amounts of time, Sam, as Legislative Chair, led the charge to derail this approval. He and his team met with countless numbers of legislators, cabinet staff, legal counsels and members of the Governor’s office staff to obtain a fair forum for discussion.



**SUCCESS!**

In the fall of 1998, AIA Kentucky, under Sam’s leadership, was finally able to convince the Commonwealth that the interests of the profession and, more importantly, the public were not being served by implementing the NCLC documents and agreed that new contracts would return to being based on the AIA contract models. The AIA had won; now the game was over. With Sam at the helm, **AIA Kentucky had stopped the NCLC effort cold**. Ramifications of this reverberated across the country. The American Institute of Architects collectively **breathed a sigh of relief**, for had Kentucky caved, it would have been the first of many state battles to come. “General” Sam Halley, AIA, had maneuvered his troops to victory and the profession was grateful.

AIA Kentucky reported on Sam’s activities beginning in 1996, identified the “Contract from Hell,” reported its approval by the Commonwealth in 1998, and then finally lauded **Sam** for spending “. . . **enormous amounts of time and energy** working on this issue . . .” Robert Brooks, nationally known attorney, who has worked with AIA for more than 20 years, and who has represented AIA on many issues in Kentucky and nationally, writes, “. . . it was primarily the leadership, commitment, persistence and strong hand of Sam . . .” that was represented by AIA Kentucky’s newsletter, when it said, “. . . this is perhaps the best example in many years. . . that, collectively, we can accomplish what no architect or engineer can do alone.” Sam Halley to the rescue; AIA knew it and appreciated it.



**Sam Halley, AIA, has served in many capacities** in the AIA, among them, President of both his chapter and state organizations. But Sam, whose government affairs leadership in AIA, was paramount to his volunteer work ethic was involved in many other organizations. He founded and was President of his neighborhood association for eight years, was active at the University of Kentucky, served on many non-profit boards and even served on the Lexington-Fayette Urban City Council. He has mentored hundreds of architectural students from the University of Kentucky in his private practice, **Omni Architects**, of which he was the founding principal. He has served on design review boards and led community discussion on design/development.



Throughout the years, AIA has recognized Sam’s extraordinary leadership. His firm has won the **Firm of the Year** award from AIA Kentucky **TWICE**, in 1987 and 2008, something that no other firm has done. He was presented the **highest award** that AIA Kentucky bestows, the **C. Julian Oberwarth Award** (equivalent to AIA’s Gold Medal) in 1992 for his “. . . long-standing commitment to the betterment of the profession.” He won the AIA Kentucky Distinguished Service Award in 1986. He also received the AIA Student Medal upon his graduation from the University of Kentucky School of Architecture in 1966. And yes, along the way, Sam’s firm has won numerous design awards, doing what he likes best, practicing architecture.

During his thirty-eight years of innovative practice and leadership, Sam Halley, AIA has focused on helping Kentucky architects create a more proactive environment in which the profession can succeed in designing quality projects. That says it all!