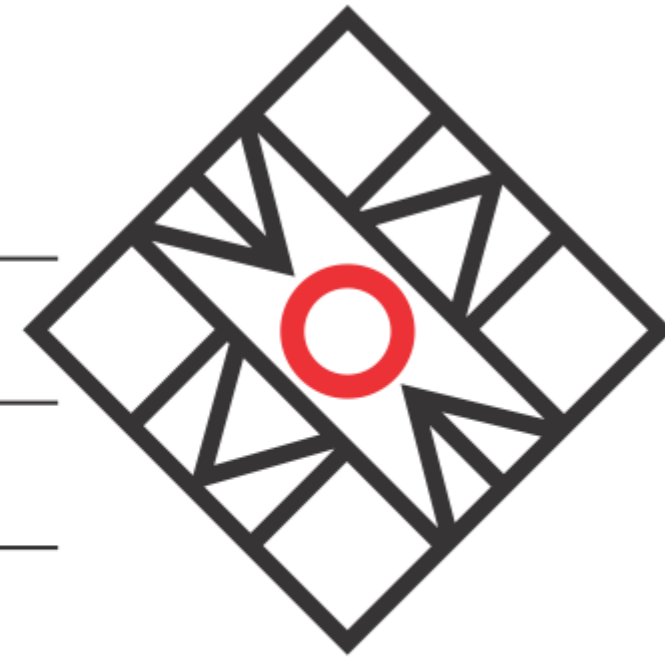
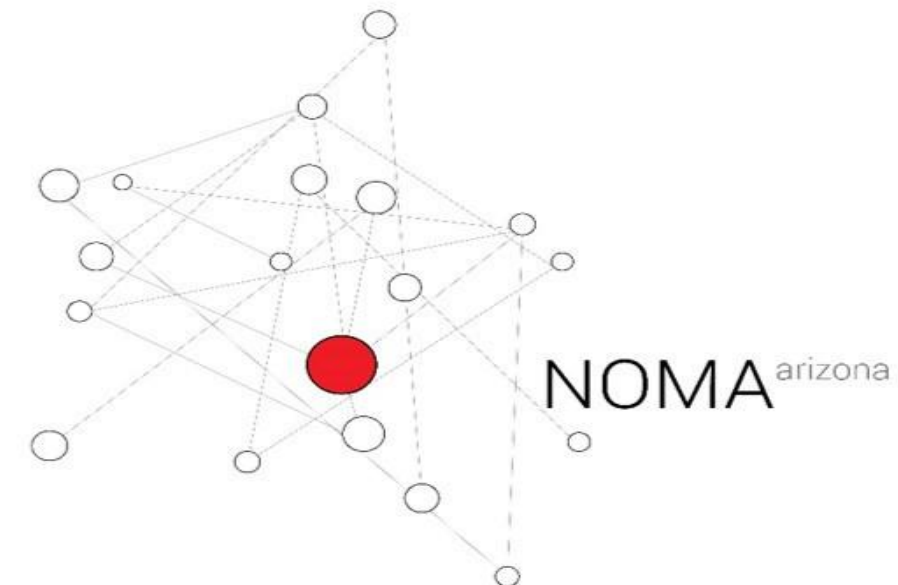


the NATIONAL  
ORGANIZATION  
of MINORITY  
ARCHITECTS  
Arizona



“Our Strength is Our Diversity”



## Mission

Our mission is driven by the desire to create a team...

"With the goals to inspire/empower and be a resource to under-served communities in Arizona, regardless of socio-economic status, culture, language, race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, disability, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or age ."

"Where our strength will be our diversity, where we are not only interested in teaching the community, but also learning from it."

"That supports professional and personal growth and development, with a proactive approach to reach out to the design and construction community to enrich knowledge of industry practices.

"That strives to increase the number of women and minorities in our profession, and to help advance their careers in an upward trajectory and extract each individual's potential.

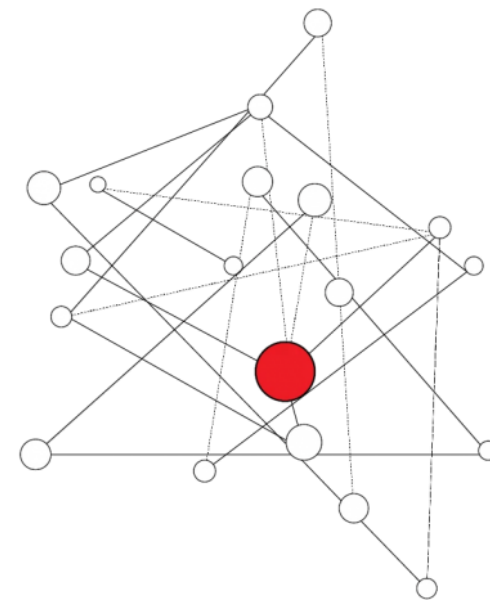
"That is welcoming, a resource, reliable, educated, sustainably minded and encourages fellowship/social awareness."

17 founding members of NOMA Arizona:

Olga Bracamontes | Jon C. Christopher | Anthony Floyd, FAIA | Maurita Harris | Victor Irizarry | Abraham James III

Esteban Loya | Steven McLeod | Greg Miller | Carlos A Murrieta | Gary J. Nelson | Deirdre Rowles | Malak Orra-Saleh

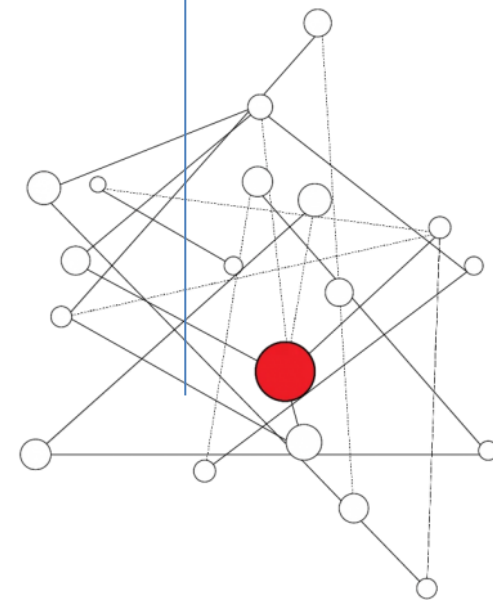
Andrew Saleh | Sidney Smith | Varnell Smith | Sophia Urbaez | John Williams (in memoriam)



# NOMA Arizona Chapter Diversity

- As of September 2021, NOMA Arizona is the largest chapter in the Western Region with 76 paid memberships
- Number of Members on the roster:
  - 2018 - 17 members
  - 2019 - 40 members
  - 2020 - 55 members
  - 2021 – 76 members

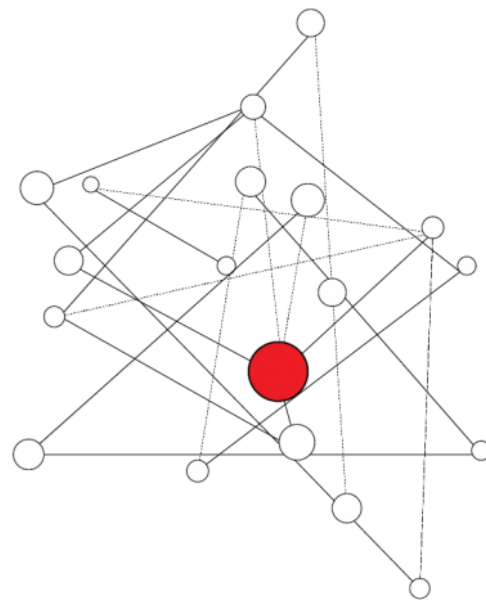
• Black/African-American	19	25%
• Native American/Alaska Native	1	1.3%
• Asian	16	21%
• Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	0
• Hispanic/Latino	24	32%
• Middle Eastern	1	1%
• White	10	13%
• Other	4	5%
• Prefer not to say	1	1%
• Paid Members = 76		



# NOMA Arizona Member Firm Owners

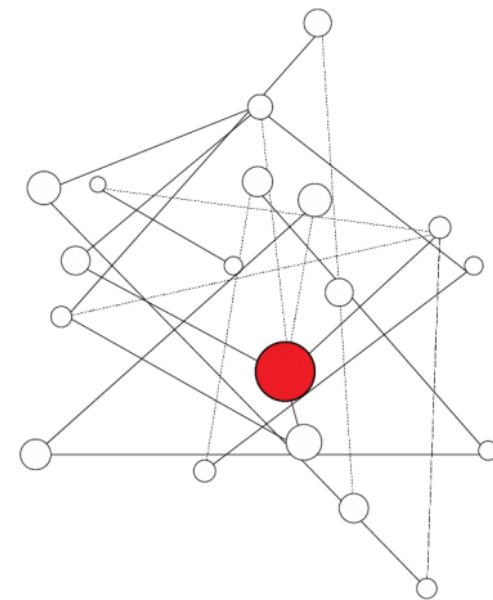
---

- Carlos Murrieta, RA – Merge Architectural Group
- Sara Yehia, RA – Kenzy Architects
- Zahir Poonawala, RA – ZPA Design
- Diane Jacobs, RA, FAIA – Holly Street Studio
- Taz Khatri, RA – Taz Khatri Studios
- Norma Michaels, ASID – NM Interiors, Inc.
- Jason Borum, PE– Borum Engineering
- Kai Ekbundt – 23 by Kai



# NOMA Arizona Chapter Committees

- ARE Prep – Luis Cruz-Martinez and Maria Lozada
- College & University Liaison – Zahir Poonawala and Olga Bracamontes
- Call to Action Initiative – April Didlake
- Coffee Talk Series – Gary Nelson
- K-12 Outreach – Fatima Garcia, Omar Bailey, Michelle Ray, Maurita Harris
  - Project Pipeline – Omar Bailey and Zahir Poonawala
- Membership – Taz Khatri
- Civic Diversity Initiative – Christian Solorio, Miguel Solorio
- Mentorship – Sidney Smith and Maurita Harris
- Professional Development – Norma Michaels
- Scholarship and Sponsorship
- Social Media/Branding – Jena Esquivel
- Webmasters – Mary Sellin and Van Escobar
- Community Outreach
- Business Development – Kyndra Trevino-Scott
- Student Leaders
  - Alisa Santiago NOMAS ASU President
  - Ana Lorenia Astiazaran NOMAS CAPLA





# 2017



- At the prompting of Gary Nelson, RA, a small group began the process of getting the pillars in place to start a chapter following the guidelines outlined by the National component.
- We had our first NOMA information night at the AIA Arizona office in April 2017, we decided in June to proceed with applying for a chapter.
- We planned our chapter at the New Times building (formerly the historic Booker T Washington elementary school, one of Phoenix's segregated schools)
- We applied for our charter in September 2017 with 17 founding members.
- The Bylaws were written and the list of proposed Executive Board members was provided.



## National Organization of Minority Architects Now An Arizona Chapter, Set To Make Impact

At the 1971 Detroit American Institute of Architects Convention, 12 African-American architects convened from all over the country and recognized the glaring absence of an alliance committed to the growth and development of minority architects.

This meeting of the minds soon evolved into the National Organization of Minority Architects. NOMA is a nationally recognized professional organization created to "champion diversity within the design professions by promoting the excellence, community engagement, and professional development of its members."

This year, NOMA Arizona became the 19th chapter of NOMA and is

dedicated to the development and advancement of minorities in the design and construction industry.

"Our strength is our diversity," stated Gary J. Nelson, president of the chapter. "Through mentorship and career-day participation, the organization exposes minority youth to design and construction-related fields such as architecture, interior design, engineering, landscape architecture, and general contracting, in order to expose them to possible career paths."

"NOMA Arizona has also become a resource to the multicultural students at The Design School at Arizona State University. The chapter strives to ensure that all students are supported and val-

ued and events for ASU students have included job search seminars, providing "Home Cooking Away From Home," at a chapter member's house, and hosting a cultural heritage guest speaker event."

NOMA Arizona has flourished as the current 17 members extend both their time and expertise to the mission of building a strong chapter. The chapter is multidisciplinary as well as multicultural.

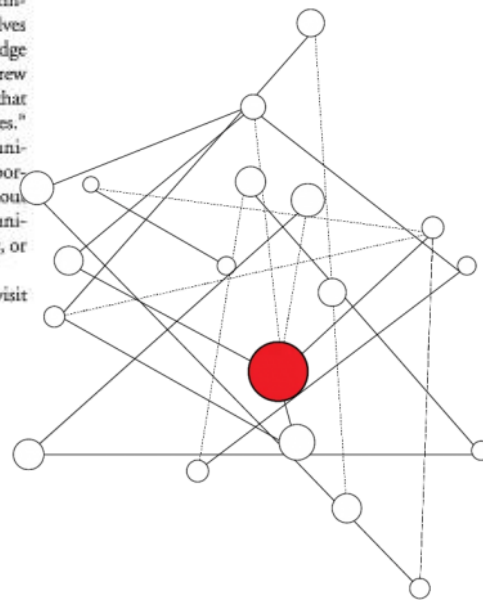
"It's not just about what you do, it's also who you are! The vision of NOMA Arizona is to have a statewide presence, as reflected in its logo, and continue to be multicultural and diverse in its membership. This includes architects, interior designers, landscape architects,

engineers, general contractors and other members of the design and construction industry. We also acknowledge and celebrate our cultural heritages."

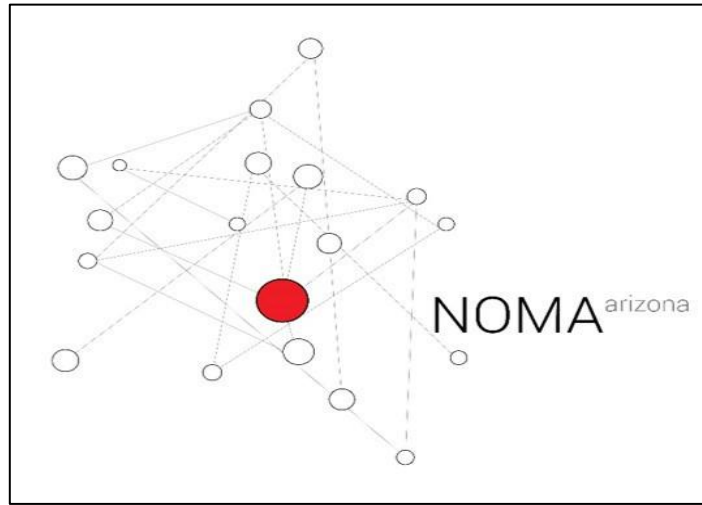
Nelson - who is second-generation Caribbean-American - continued, "When we introduce ourselves to other members, we acknowledge our birthplaces, the states we grew up in, and our heritages; we feel that they are important parts of our lives."

NOMA Arizona is a community-based organization seeking opportunities to be involved throughout Arizona as volunteers for community service, mentorship, career day, or professional comradery.

For more information, visit [nomaarizona.org](http://nomaarizona.org).







Esteban Loya was the designer of our logo. In collaboration with Gary J. Nelson and Varnell Alexander Smith. The concept is without the outline of the state of Arizona borders, you can see that the circles represent many of the cities throughout the state and we're all linked together with Phoenix at the core.

October 2017



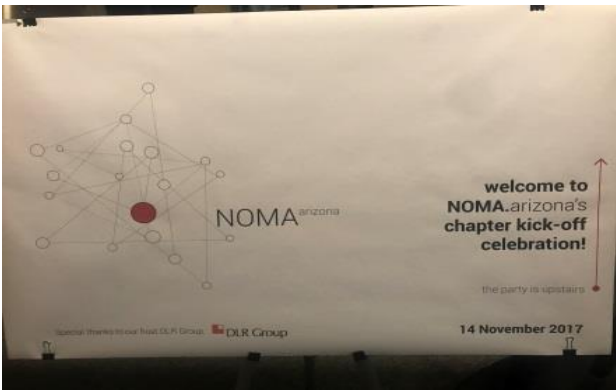
The National Conference was hosted in Houston, Texas  
Attendees included:  
Gary Nelson  
Malak Orra

November 2017

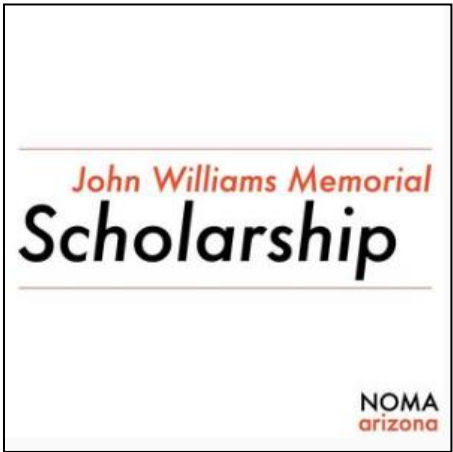
**Original Executive Board Members:**  
President – Gary Nelson  
Vice President – Malak Orra-Saleh  
Secretary – Sophia Urbaez  
Treasurer – Deidre Rowles  
Parliamentarian/Historian – Greg Miller



Our first official chapter meeting was November 14, 2017 at DLR Group



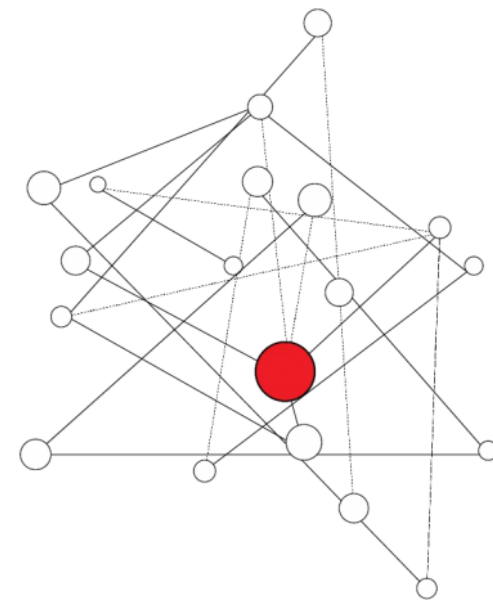
Committees were formed:  
Mentorship – Chairpersons: Sidney Smith and Maurita Harris  
Community Service – Chairperson: Carlos Murrieta  
Scholarship- Chairperson: Gary Nelson



In honor of founding member John Reese Williams. To date we have provided \$14,000 to a total of 5 recipients. Oriana Gil-Perez and Carlos Mendez Gradillas were the first recipients.

# 2018

- Goals for 2018:
  - Community Service and Engagement
  - Become a presence in the community
  - Encourage more member attendance at National NOMA Conference
- Accomplishments:
  - NOMA Arizona Meet and Greet at DLR Group in February
  - February 2018 Website and Instagram go live!
  - Chapter meetings held at various firms around the valley including Gensler, DLR Group, Gould Evans, Holly Street Studio and Arizona State University School of Design
  - New members received official NOMA membership pins
  - Members Presented at NOMA National Conference on the topic of “Hosting a Job Search Seminar” (Olga Bracamontes, Malak Orra-Saleh, Gary Nelson, Isaiah Jones-Lane)
  - Home Cooking Away from Home was conceived as a means to bring together our NOMA family during the holidays for both Professionals and College Students who cannot be with their families
  - Members Norma Michaels and Carlos Murrieta were highlighted on Channel Cox 7 “Su Vida” for her interior design firm and his architecture firm respectively
  - Merge Architectural Group, owned by President Carlos Murrieta, was recognized as a Top Ten Architectural Firm in Ranking Arizona magazine being 100% Hispanic and Minority Owned. Also featured on Telemundo in a spotlight on Architecture practice by immigrants
  - Member Sara Yehia obtained her architectural license in 2018.





January 2018

Official  
Chapter  
Charter  
received  
January 16,  
2018

April 2018

Community Service  
Project:  
Volunteering at  
National Refugee  
Day at Vista  
Elementary



Community  
Service Project:  
National  
Rebuilding Day

October 2018

Collaborations  
with ASU Design  
School:



National Conference was hosted  
in Chicago. Attendees included:

November 2018

1<sup>st</sup> Annual Home  
Cooking Away  
from Home –  
hosted by  
member Diane  
Jacobs



March 2018

1<sup>st</sup> Annual Job  
Search Seminar



July 2018



Planning Session  
for 2019

Gary Nelson  
Malak Orra  
Olga Bracamontes  
Sidney Smith  
Yuki Corella  
Isaiah Jones



Members presented on "How to host  
a Job Search Seminar"

December 2018

Community  
Service Project:  
Wrapping  
Christmas gifts  
at Phoenix  
Mission



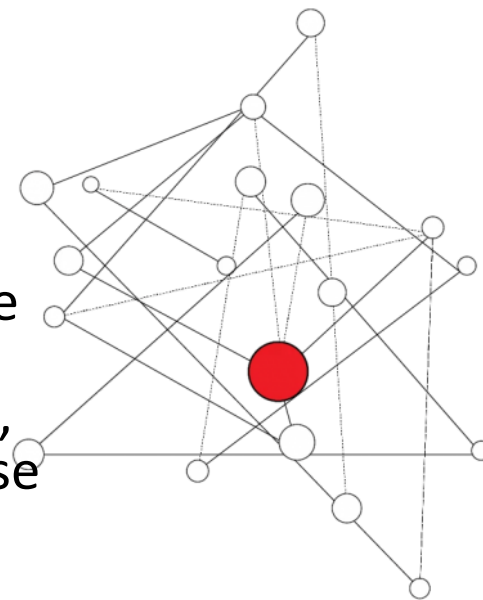
# 2019

- Goals for 2019:

- Provide more resources for Professional Members
- Become a liaison between College Students and Professionals
- Become a more visible presence in the community
- Planning Session for 2020
- Hold first elections for new Executive Board

- Accomplishments

- First Business Workshop conducted by members Norma Michaels and Sara Yehia to promote Professional Development and more networking and business opportunities for members
- “Teach Me Something” series initiated by member Jesus Mungarro
- Mentors/Mentees applications received and paired
- First ARE Prep Session was held to promote licensure
- Professional Chapter assisted Arizona State University in establishing NOMAS student chapter (Isaiah Jones-Lane and Kyndra Trevino-Scott)
- Members presented at NOMA National on “Impacting Our Future” (Olga Bracamontes, Sophia Urbaez and Oriana Gil-Perez)
- Holly Street Studio Owner/Founder, Member Diane Jacob wins Phil Freelon Award for the Historic Preservation, Renovation and Restoration Category
- Chapter meetings held at various firms around the valley such as Cunningham Group and ART Resource Library. Meetings and events were also held at Historical sites George Washington Carver Museum, Steele Indian School Park and Ellis-Shackelford House





January 2019

MLK  
Day of  
Service

April 2019



“Teach Me  
Something Series”  
speakers: Tara  
Brown and Sidney  
Smith



July 2019

First ARE Prep  
Session



Community  
Service Project:  
Tiny Home  
Project with  
“Build Us Hope”

October 2019

National Conference  
was hosted in  
Brooklyn. Attendees  
included:  
Gary Nelson  
Olga Bracamontes  
Yuki Corella  
Carlos Murrieta  
Maurita Harris  
Sophia Urbeaz  
Isaiah Jones-Lane  
Oriana Gil Perez  
Susan Clay  
Rhonda Harvey

November 2019

2nd Annual  
Home Cooking  
Away from  
Home – hosted  
by member  
Sidney Smith



February 2019

1<sup>st</sup> Business  
Workshop



ASU Food Pantry  
Drive



August 2019



Planning Session  
for 2020



Holly Street  
Studio won  
Phil Freelon  
Award for the  
Historic  
Category

December 2019



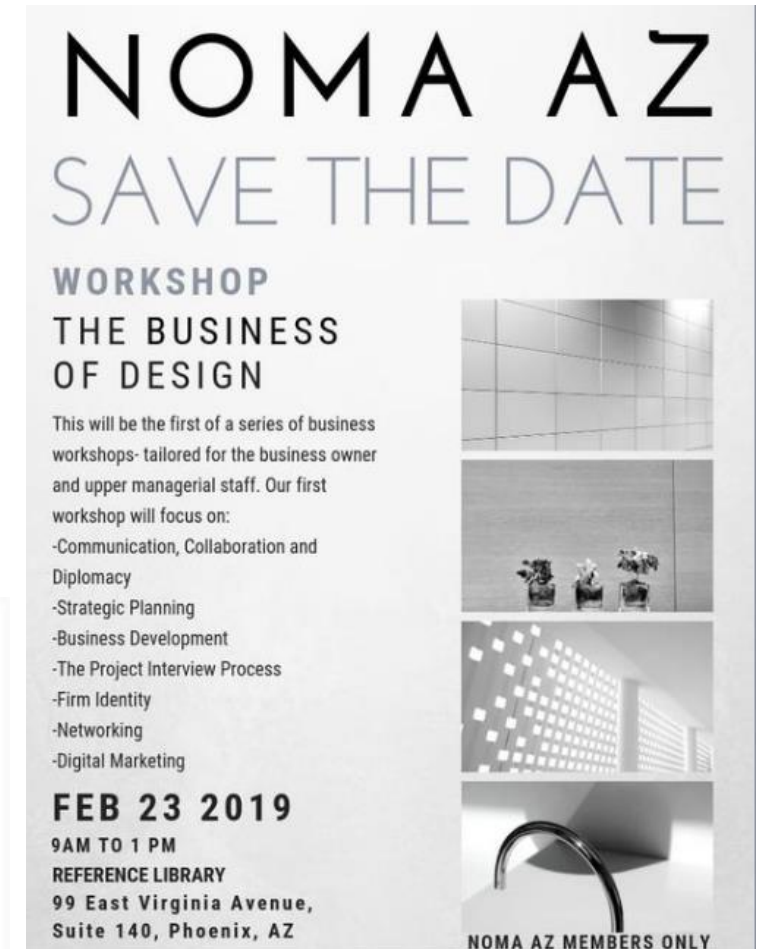
Founding members  
honored at chapter  
meeting with plaques



Members presented on “Impacting our Future”  
Olga Bracamontes, Sophia Urbeaz, Oriana Gil Perez



# Milestones 2018 and 2019



Build Us H.O.P.E and NOMAArizona have partnered to construct a sustainable tiny home for a veteran. We are seeking donations large and small and would take great pride in demonstrating how much local companies care about those in need in our community.

If you're interested in giving or curious for more information - contact us at [noma.arizona@gmail.com](mailto:noma.arizona@gmail.com)





# 2020

- Goals for 2020:

- Provide more resources for Professional Members
- Become a more visible presence in the community
- Planning Session for 2021
- Usher in new Executive Board

- Executive Board for 2020-2021:

President: Carlos Murrieta

Vice President: Sophia Urbaez (transitioned to Elizabeth Grajales in 2020)

Secretary: Kenneth Webb (transitioned to Brooke Montelongo in 2020)

Treasurer: Ricardo Millhouse (transitioned to Kyndra Trevino-Scott in 2021)

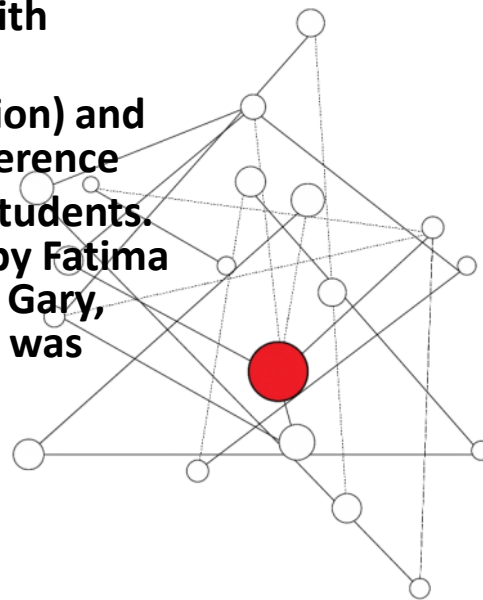
Parliamentarian: Eduardo Robles (Transitioned to Maurita Harris in 2021)

Immediate Past President: Gary Nelson

Unanimously approved by existing board members.

- Accomplishments and Adjustments:

- Job Search Seminar at Corgan
- NOMAS at ASU hosted members at Black History month panel discussion on Design and Construction
- Networking Workshop at The Reference Library for members
- Crafted a Call To Action 10 Point Plan for Real Change in the Design and Construction Industry was presented to several firms throughout the valley
- Celebrated Women's History Month by highlighting female membership on Social Media
- Eight Graduates presented with Kente Clothe
- First John R. Williams Scholarships awarded
- Meetings were converted to virtual setting due to the pandemic.
- Incorporated "Slide Slam" series into virtual meetings to showcase members professional work
- Member Christian Solorio appointed to City of Phoenix Alhambra Village Planning Committee
- In Person community outreach was suspended due to the pandemic including "Build Us Hope" "K-12 Outreach" and "AZ Kids Build" with Adopted school Barcelona elementary
- Members Olga Bracamontes, Victor Irizarry (Special AIA Recognition) and President Carlos Murrieta were moderators at the AIA State Conference
- K-12: Introduction to the design process class with Isaac E. Imes students. Students to design and build a bench for their school. Organized by Fatima Garcia and Bhoomi Desai. Teacher volunteers included Susan and Gary, with Fatima and Bhoomi throughout the semester. Final built day was cancelled due to COVID.
- Member Nicole Mehaffey got her architectural license in 2020.



January 2020

### Job Search Seminar at Corgan



March 2020

### Networking Session at The Reference Library



September 2020

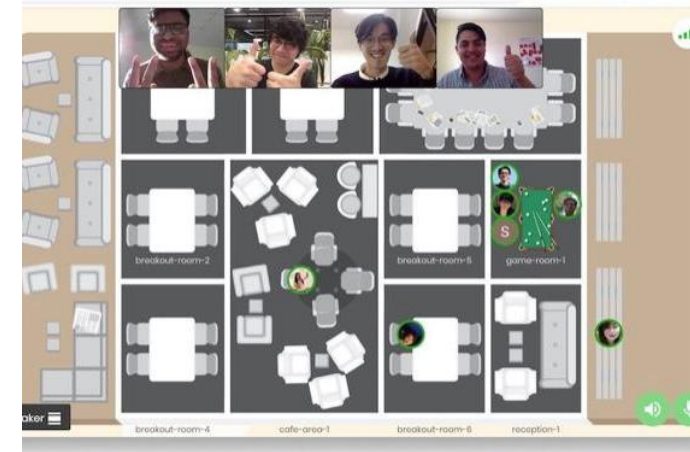
Members selected for “Say it Loud Now” online Directory of Great Diverse Designers hosted by ‘Beyond the Built’

Carlos Murrieta  
Yukiko Corella  
Fatima Garcia  
Gary Nelson  
Maurita Harris  
Luis Cruz-Martinez  
Jessica Edith Zamorano-Rivera

**SAY IT LOUD - NOW**

November 2020

3rd Annual Home Cooking Away from Home – was virtual, DJ was member Gary Nelson



February 2020

### African-Americans in Design and Construction Panel Discussion at ASU



July 2020

### Call to Action presented in the wake of the murder of George Floyd

#### NOMAarizona - Call to Action

10 Action Points for Real Change in the Design and Construction Industry

- 1 Acknowledgement of historic and current systemic and institutional racism and gender inequality in the United States.**  
*This is the most important, the other 9 points will not matter unless there is acknowledgement (much like an addict that needs to realize their addiction before recovery).*
- 2 No longer use the phrase “politically correct”.**  
*It's about doing the right thing and treating everyone with dignity and respect.*
- 3 Develop strategies.**  
*Instill hiring & recruiting practices that are more objective for initial consideration, reach out to more diverse schools/programs to recruit qualified staff that also increases diversity.*
- 4 A no tolerance policy of racial/sexual/LGBTQ/religious disrespect and harassment.**  
*Consequences not just for staff but also clients, consultants or upper management (e.g. a principal). It should no longer be tolerated due to revenue, bringing profit or clients to the firm, a current practice in some firms.*
- 5 Allow open dialogue, encourage listening and understanding.**  
*This will be uncomfortable for some staff. Firms must take the initiative to become more educated on the challenges of minorities & women not just in the profession but also in their communities.*
- 6 Buy in from all staff, especially critical with White staff.**  
*This is not a Black or Brown, People of Color or Woman problem, it's America's problem.*
- 7 Eliminate subjective promotions and partnerships.**  
*Provide actual identified measurable metrics and paths towards upper management and leadership for all staff.*
- 8 Mentor all staff that have expressed interest in “next levels”.**
- 9 “If they see or hear something, say something!”**  
*Each staff members should be their brother and sister's keeper regarding any observation of disrespect due to race, gender, religion or sexual orientation inside and outside the workplace.*
- 10 Treat people as YOU want to be treated.**

October 2020

Members attended NOMA National Virtual Conference hosted by Oakland chapter 2020 Conference presentation – A Tale of Two Cities – How to start a NOMA chapter, presented by member Gary Nelson with Phil Dougherty, president or NOMA KC



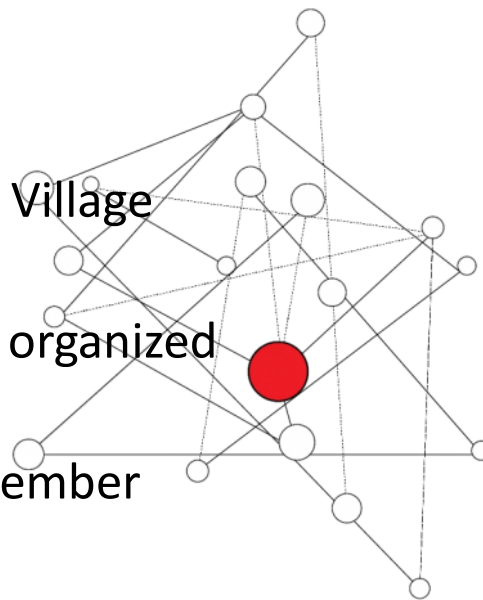
# 2021

- Goals for 2021:

- Adjust to ongoing pandemic impact on members and design and construction industry
- Continue chapter meetings in virtual setting
- Provide more online resources for Professional Members and Students
- Become a more visible presence in the community
- Planning Session for 2022
- Award John R. Williams Scholarships
- Usher in new Executive Board
- Jena Esquivel – heads up Social Media
- Membership – lead by Taz Khatri
- Business Development – Kyndra Trevino-Scott

- Accomplishments and Appointments:

- Members participated in AIA+NOMA Diversity Series Sidney Smith (facilitated by Carlos Murrieta and Fatima Garcia)
- Members participated in Local First Arizona Impact Series “We Have a Problem” Immediate Past President Gary Nelson and Diane Jacobs
- Member Sara Yehia, appointed to Urban Land Institute Advisory Board as well as recognized by NCARB in their “Architect Spotlight” as a member of NCARB’s “2019 Re-Think Tank”.
- Member Diane Jacobs was appointed to AIA Fellow
- Professional Development Series continued online with Borum + Martin Consulting Engineers as Presenters on “How to Design at Healthy HVAC Environment”
- Members Taz Khatri and Sara Yehia Adjunct Professors at ASU
- President Carlos Murrieta and Maurita Harris, guest Lecturers at ASU
- Immediate Past President Gary Nelson selected for USA Today Storytellers Project “I Am” series
- Member Victor Irizarry elected to AIA Phoenix Metro Secretary
- Member Maurita Harris appointed to City of Phoenix Alhambra Village Planning Committee
- Project Pipeline Western region, virtual camp, represented and organized locally by Member Omar Bailey
- ARE Prep Seminar on Construction + Evaluation organized by Member



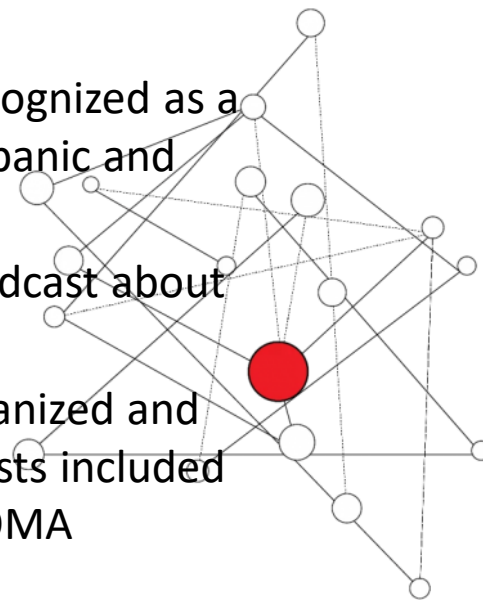
# 2021 continued

- Goals for 2021:

- Adjust to ongoing pandemic impact on members and design and construction industry
- Continue chapter meetings in virtual setting
- Provide more online resources for Professional Members and Students
- Become a more visible presence in the community
- Planning Session for 2022
- Award John R. Williams Scholarships
- Usher in new Executive Board
- Jena Esquivel – heads up Social Media
- Membership – lead by Taz Khatri
- Business Development – Kyndra Trevino-Scott

- Accomplishments and Appointments:

- First Project Pipeline NOMAaz chapter in person with Roosevelt School District and Apple. Omar and I organized it and we have several members volunteering (Olga Bracamontes, Maria Lozada, Yuki Corella, Nakia Neves, Gary Nelson, Luis Cruz-Martinez, Rosie Gomez, Oriana Gil-Perez, Vaishali Kalra, Estefania Pena, Dulce Arambula). District to continue to collaborate with K-12 committee for future camps and classes.
- Ten Graduates presented Kente Clothe at Steele Indian School Park. Custom NOMA AZ water bottles were also distributed to members
- Hosted Diversity Career Fair online with 14 firms and four students were offered jobs by local firms that participated facilitated by Olga Bracamontes and Brooke Montelongo
- President Carlos Murrieta, was selected by NCARB to write for the NCARB 5.0 Development Committee and was also appointed to the Arizona Board of Technical Registration Evaluation Committee
- Member Nicole Mehaffey got her architectural license in February 2021.
- Celebrated Women's History Month by highlighting female membership on Social Media
- Merge Architectural Group, owned by member Carlos Murrieta, was recognized as a Top Ten Architectural Firm in Ranking Arizona magazine being 100% Hispanic and Minority Owned
- President Carlos Murrieta was part of the AIA10 Tracing Architecture podcast about personal and professional balance in architecture
- AIA Phx Metro and NOMAaz first collaboration on "Diversity Series" organized and facilitated by Carlos Murrieta, Charnissa Moore and Fatima Garcia. Guests included members Sidney Smith from NOMAAZ and Lance Collins from SoCal NOMA





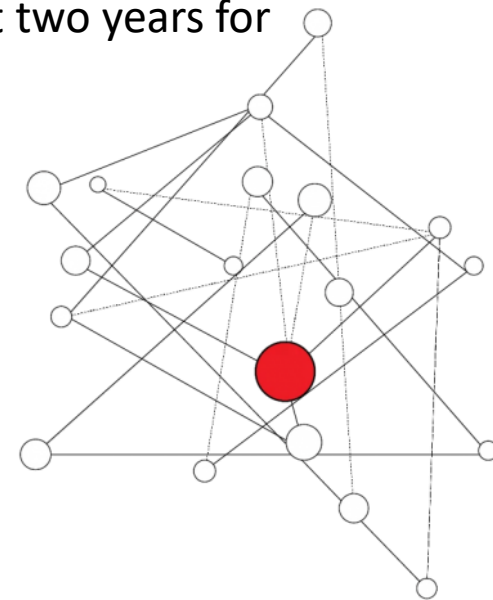
# 2021 continued

- Goals for 2021:

- Adjust to ongoing pandemic impact on members and design and construction industry
- Continue chapter meetings in virtual setting
- Provide more online resources for Professional Members and Students
- Become a more visible presence in the community
- Planning Session for 2022
- Award John R. Williams Scholarships
- Usher in new Executive Board
- Jena Esquivel – heads up Social Media
- Membership – lead by Taz Khatri
- Business Development – Kyndra Trevino-Scott

- Accomplishments and Appointments:

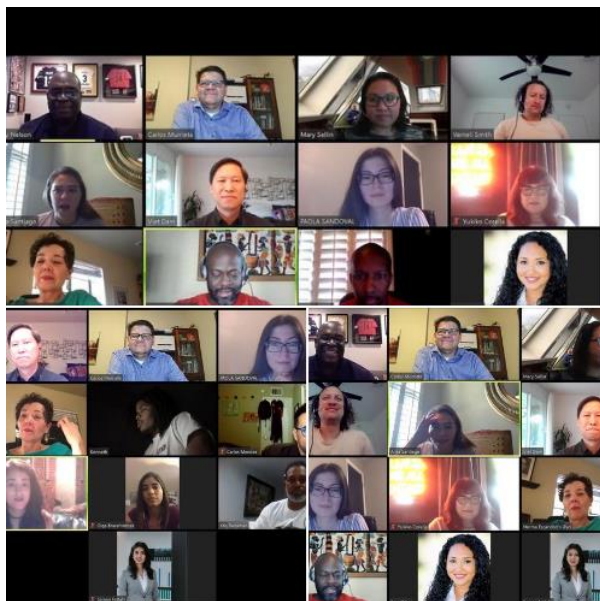
- Christian Solorio appointed by the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors to Arizona State House of Representatives serving Legislative District 30 for West-Central Phoenix in November 2021
- Maria Lozada wins AIA Associate Award in November 2021
- Carlos Murrieta appointed to AIA Phoenix Metro Secretary for 2022, Arizona State Board of Technical Registration, NCARB ARE Development Committee and ULI DEI Committee
- Victor Irizarry appointed to AIA Phoenix Metro Treasurer for 2022
- Sara Yehia appointed to AIA Arizona State Board Member
- Brooke Montelongo appointed as AIA Arizona Allied Director for 2<sup>nd</sup> term 2022
- Damon Leverett named AIA Arizona President-Elect for 2022
- Damon Leverett and Oriana Gil-Perez both acted as moderators/presenters for NOMA 50 National Conference for independent seminars
- Miguel Solorio passed final ARE exams in December 2021, now an officially licensed Architect
- The new Executive Board was elected in October 2021 to serve the next two years for 2022-2023:
  - President – Maurita Harris
  - Vice President – Fatima Garcia
  - Secretary – Brooke Montelongo
  - Treasurer – Nakia Neves
  - Historian/Parliamentarian – Luis Cruz-Martinez





January 2021

Chapter meetings continued to be virtual



April 2021

Graduates presented Kente Clothe at Steele Indian School Park



August 2021

Planning Session for 2022



2021 John R. Williams Scholarship recipients Alisa Santiago, Atlas Hopkins, Julia Lopez

March 2021

Diversity Career Fair



May 2021

4<sup>th</sup> year University of Arizona student member Ana Astiazaran received AIA COTE top ten for students award



Members participated in various virtual speaking engagements



ENTERTAINMENT  
Storytellers Project to present 'I Am' series celebrating all Americans

Michelle Rogers USA TODAY Contributor

Published 2:07 p.m. ET Feb. 16, 2021 | Updated 2:28 p.m. ET Feb. 16, 2021

Tuesday  
March 2<sup>nd</sup>  
5PM AZ time  
Link in bio

Gary J. Nelson  
AIA, NOMA, NCARB  
NOMA Vice President West  
NOMA Arizona President



Project Pipeline



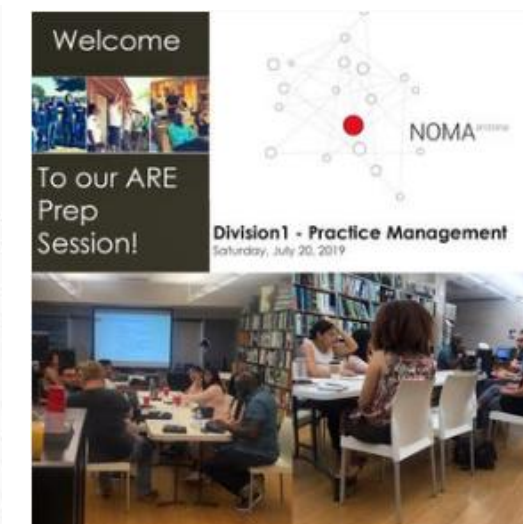
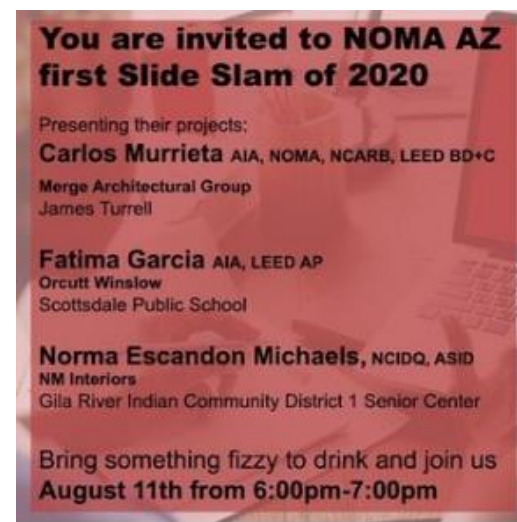
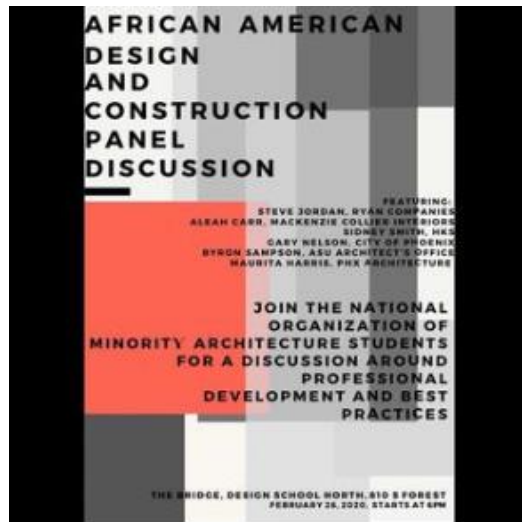
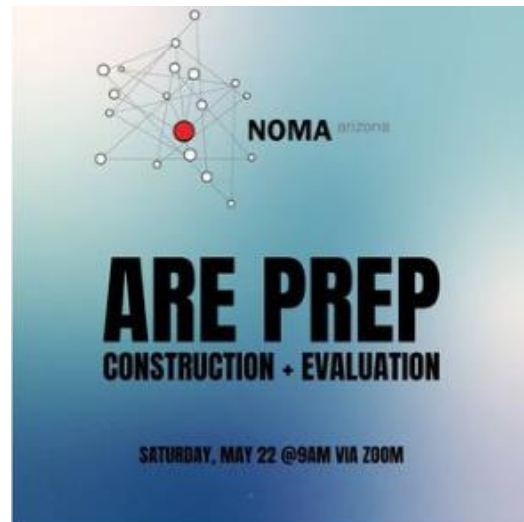
November 2021

4<sup>th</sup> Annual Home Cooking Away from Home planned to be hybrid event at Steele Indian School Park and virtual





# Milestones 2020 and 2021



# Links to Video format

---

[Victor Irizarry Metal Architecture](#)

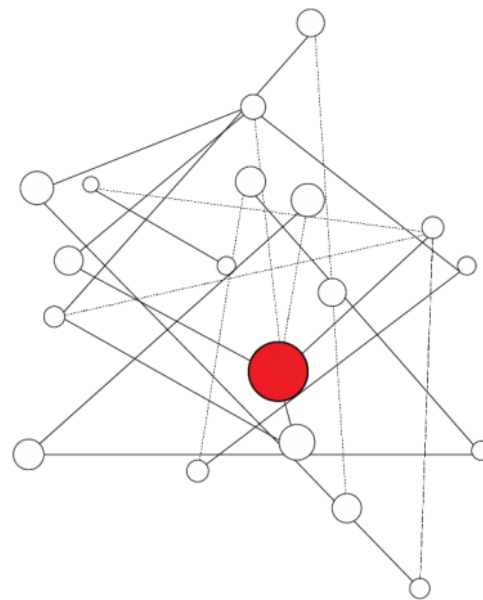
[USA Today Storytellers I Am Series Gary Nelson](#)

[Merge Architectural Group Award Wining Architectural Firm Carlos Murrieta](#)

[NM Interiors Hispanic Heritage Month Norma Michaels](#)

[Architect Spotlight NCAB Sara Yehia](#)

[Local First Arizona We Have a Problem Gary Nelson](#)





---

# Thank you!

