



## The Spirit of Leadership

**Michigan Architectural Foundation scholarship recipient Taylor Kile leads by example**

Little did Taylor Kile realize that designing and building a vanity table in her high school woodshop class was her first step towards becoming an architect. “When I was a kid, I wanted to become a lawyer. But I also liked to re-design and re-arrange my friend’s rooms,” said Taylor. “My woodshop teacher thought my project design was particularly well done, and suggested I consider a career in architecture. After I took an AutoCAD class, I was convinced.”

Taylor, now enrolled in University of Detroit Mercy’s (UDM) School of Architecture, is the recipient of two 2020 Michigan Architectural Foundation (MAF) scholarships: the AIA Michigan President’s Scholarship, awarded to architecture students who have demonstrated leadership in professional, community or public service activities; and the Professional Concepts Insurance Agency (PCIA) Scholarship, which recognizes students for exemplary community involvement.

This fall, Taylor will start the senior year of her architecture program – and throughout her time as a UDM student, she’s been busy. Taylor has been taking graduate classes while working on her undergraduate degree, in order to satisfy requirements for her double major in Architecture and Civil Engineering (with a minor in Leadership).

Taylor particularly enjoys how her architecture program challenges her. “With other academic disciplines, such as math, there’s often just one answer. In architecture, there are multiple ways to solve a problem,” Taylor says. “How many academic programs, and professions, can say that?”

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Designing healthy, safe spaces for people that will impact future generations is what Taylor loves most about architecture. “That architecture starts with the person I am designing for, and that it will benefit people on an ongoing basis, hopefully for generations to come, is powerful.”

As an architect, Taylor wants to design large, engaging community spaces, as well as smaller scale projects that can be personalized to reflect their owners. She also is interested in designing housing solutions for developing countries, often where housing is crumbling right across the street from luxury hotels.

Taylor spent a week in Cuba to gain a better understanding of the housing challenges faced by its residents, and is planning a co-op trip to Jamaica for the same purpose. She also is considering doing her graduate thesis on the U.S. trade embargo against Cuba’s impact on resource allocation. Taylor is so passionate about architecture in developing countries that she invites those who would like to have a conversation on the topic to contact her at [kilet122@gmail.com](mailto:kilet122@gmail.com).

How does Taylor think architecture improves the quality of life for people? “As architects, our actions have strong impact on our communities. From the materials we use to how and where we create structures, we have a duty to make better places while also respecting our natural environment.”

She continues, “Designing buildings that are less ‘cookie cutter’ also helps contribute to making places where people want to be.” She also feels that architects have a responsibility to make sustainable design affordable, and would like to help clients find grants and other available resources to make projects a reality.

Taylor also is a member of UDM’s cheerleading squad. She and her squad teach cheer and team work skills to girls in the community, and in conjunction with other UDM athletes, her squad also takes kids with cancer trick-or-treating at Halloween.

Taylor also has been involved with UDM’s NOMA (National Organization of Minority Architect’s) student chapter, helping develop a rainwater capture and management system for vacant lots in Detroit. She also volunteered with Kaboom!, an organization focused on boosting kids’ physical, social and emotional health, to build a playground in Detroit’s Stein Park.

“One of my goals is to inspire other architecture students to not only to pursue their dreams – but also to get involved on campus and in their community, doing things that help others see how architecture makes life better.” Taylor continues, “I also want to say thank you to the MAF scholarship donors; your generosity has certainly touched my life, and you have helped me tremendously through your contribution to my educational goals.”

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