



NILS M. SCHWEIZER AWARD 2025

Jeffrey Bush, AIA, LEED AP

Jeffrey developed a passion for architecture during high school while volunteering at his uncle's firm in Washington, DC. As an early adopter of computer programming and an avid sketch artist, he realized that architecture was the perfect career for him when he learned from his uncle that computers were increasingly being integrated into the field. By the time he graduated high school, his aspirations had fully shifted from becoming a computer programmer to pursuing a career as an Architect.

Jeff is inspired by the profound impact his work can have on the local community and the vital role he plays in shaping environments that promote inclusion, engagement, and connection. He recognizes that architecture is not just about designing physical spaces but about crafting environments that can influence the lives of individuals, foster a sense of belonging, and create opportunities for positive social interaction. For Jeff, every project is an opportunity to design spaces that are accessible, welcoming, and responsive to the diverse needs of the people who will use them.

PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP

Jeff Bush has been a valued HKS employee for more than 28 years. He began his career as a summer intern and has steadily progressed into his current role as a Principal and Senior Project Manager, working across a variety of practices. Every day, Jeff approaches his work with a mindset of advocacy and impact, which he shares across colleagues in Orlando, and beyond. He routinely makes time for one-on-one mentor meetings with staff, regardless of what practice or project team they work within.

Jeff is an incredible listener and connector. He maintains a thorough understanding of the goals and aspirations of younger staff, and constantly works to position them for opportunities to learn and grow toward their goals. Because he is such a great listener and possesses an authentic ability to connect with staff at all levels, Jeff is widely sought after for his perspective, insight and advice. These qualities enable him to have a broad impact on the culture of the Central Florida Architecture community, while engendering a sense of belonging that extends far beyond the bounds of his work.

Jeff has been an active member of the local AIA since 2005, contributing to the growth and development of the architectural community. Through his advocacy work on the City of Orlando's Appearance Review Board, he has played a key role in shaping the character of development in Downtown Orlando, ensuring that new projects enhance the area's aesthetic and cultural integrity. Additionally, Jeff has dedicated his time and expertise to the Board of Directors for Lake Eola Charter School, where he has helped guide the institution's growth and development. He has also served on several boards for the City of Casselberry, further extending his leadership and influence in the region. These are just a few examples of Jeff's ongoing commitment to leadership and his lasting impact on the Central Florida community.



Jeff has been a licensed architect working in Central Florida since 2000.



2007 Orlando Business Journal 40 under 40

Jeff is currently the Treasurer of the Orlando Chapter of the National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA) which seeks to elevate the community by increasing the number, capabilities and influence of minority professionals throughout Central Florida. His involvement with the Orlando Chapter of NOMA dates back to 2002. During this time he has volunteered on numerous initiatives to expand community engagement and provide mentorship amongst his peers and aspiring professionals. Through his dedicated efforts, he has played a key role in organizing events, workshops, and networking opportunities that foster collaboration and growth within the architecture and design community. His commitment to mentorship has helped nurture the careers of many young professionals, empowering them to succeed.

In 2022, Jeff was featured in an exhibit at the Orlando Science Center, in collaboration with Black Architects in the Making (BAM). This exhibit, which was part of the celebration of Black History Month, sought to shine a spotlight on the accomplishments of local architects, with the goal of inspiring the next generation of aspiring professionals. The exhibit not only showcased his work but also aimed to broaden representation, encouraging young visitors to envision themselves in similar roles and inspiring them to pursue careers in architecture and related fields. By highlighting these local leaders, the exhibit fostered an environment of empowerment and possibility, providing valuable role models for students from diverse backgrounds.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Beyond his day-to-day commitments, Jeff consistently prioritizes giving back to his community, dedicating his time and energy to initiatives that make a lasting difference. He is deeply involved in projects that support and uplift others, whether through volunteering, mentoring, or helping local organizations. A notable example of his dedication is his participation in Northland Church's Serve Days (Home Repairs). He played a key role in coordinating material procurement and, on the event days, led a team of volunteers to work on mostly exterior home repairs, including siding restoration, painting, landscaping, and other minor repairs.

His efforts extend far beyond mere involvement, as he seeks to create deep, lasting change, forging meaningful connections and fostering a sense of unity and purpose within his community. Jeff's work in these areas amplifies his impact, ensuring that the positive influence he has reaches far and wide, benefiting countless individuals in the process.



Jeff was involved in Construction Orlando from 2007 - 2015 which raises food for local food banks.

Jeff has been a guest speaker at multiple Central Florida Middle and Elementary Schools to educate students on the architecture profession and the impact they can make in the community. In 2015, Jeff conveyed architectural building concepts to four-year-olds from Trinity Lutheran school and facilitated learning activities that the students could grasp.



BOYS & GIRLS CLUB

As a former member of the Boys & Girls Club himself, Jeff has witnessed firsthand the transformative power of a positive community network in the lives of children and families. His personal experience with the organization has fueled his deep commitment to supporting its mission and amplifying its impact. Beyond his efforts in advocating for and securing funding for the Boys & Girls Clubs, Jeff has taken on leadership roles on several boards, helping to guide the organization's initiatives and strengthen its reach within the community.

In 2005, Jeff organized HKS Orlando's annual golf tournament and strategically aligned it as a fundraiser for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Florida. Over the past 20 years, this event has raised more than \$250,000, directly benefiting a wide range of at-risk children across the region. These funds have gone toward critical programs and resources that support the development and well-being of young people, ensuring they have access to opportunities that might otherwise be out of reach.

Building on this success, Jeff has extended his involvement to include mentorship and teaching opportunities for HKS staff to engage with the Boys & Girls Clubs in a more hands-on, impactful way. By creating avenues for employees to participate in educational initiatives, Jeff has fostered a cultural shift within HKS, encouraging a mindset of leadership, service, and giving back. Through these efforts, Jeff continues to make a lasting, positive impact on both his professional community and the lives of children in Central Florida.



*Boys & Girls Club Hughes Branch Board Member
(2001-2015 – President, VP)*

*Boys & Girls Club of Central Florida, Board of Directors
(2012-2014)*

"Jeff Bush, a principal of HKS, has been our biggest champion and was also a member of Boys & Girls Clubs himself. Jeff served on our Board of Directors for 20 years sharing his passion for our mission and extending his advocacy through his network on our behalf. He demonstrated outstanding service to our mission and children through the giving of his time, talents, and resources to further the goals and objectives of Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Florida and ensure our children had the chance to develop their full potential."

*Sarah Johnston
Chief Development Officer
Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Florida*

Jeff is involved in the WeCare annual Boys & Girls Club event that helps the kids make ornaments and holiday gifts.





2014 FAMU Career Days



2025 FAMU Career Days

ACADEMIA

Jeff earned his Bachelor's degree in Architecture in 1995 and his Master's degree in Architecture in 1998 from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU), where he developed a strong foundation in both the technical and creative aspects of the field. Since his graduation, he has remained deeply connected to his alma mater, actively nurturing relationships with faculty and staff. His commitment to supporting FAMU's architecture program has been unwavering, as he continually seeks to give back to the institution that helped shape his career.

Each year, Jeff participates in the university's Career Days, where he plays a crucial role in helping to recruit recent graduates, providing them with invaluable guidance on navigating the early stages of their careers. His involvement extends to establishing connections that lead to student internships, offering real-world experience that helps bridge the gap between academic learning and professional practice. Jeff's dedication to mentoring and fostering new talent in the field has made him an integral part of FAMU's efforts to support its students.

Additionally, Jeff has served on the Accreditation Board, where his insight and expertise contribute to the ongoing development and refinement of the architecture program. His service in this capacity ensures that the university's curriculum continues to meet the highest standards and prepares students for success in the evolving world of architecture. Through his continuous engagement with FAMU, Jeff remains a valued resource, helping to cultivate the next generation of architects while strengthening the bonds between academia and the professional world.

In 2021, Jeff, alongside several colleagues at HKS, took a proactive and hands-on approach to fostering collaboration between the professional world and academia by organizing a unique virtual Design Studio partnership with FAMU. Rather than simply coming in at the end of the semester to provide critiques, the HKS team took on a role similar to adjunct professors for the entire semester, creating an immersive learning experience for the students. This allowed them to develop a deeper connection with the students and offer meaningful guidance throughout the design process.

The HKS team met with the students every other week, providing feedback, discussing design ideas, and helping to explore potential solutions to the design challenges students faced. By maintaining this regular, ongoing presence, they were able to offer consistent mentorship, support, and real-time input, ensuring that the students' work evolved over time with careful consideration and refinement. Throughout the semester, Jeff and his colleagues worked closely with the course professor to establish clear project objectives and deliverables, aligning the students' academic goals with real-world design practices. This collaboration created a cohesive and dynamic environment in which the students could benefit from the expertise and experiences of practicing professionals while still having the structure and guidance of their academic framework.

For the final design critiques, the HKS team expanded the experience by engaging the larger HKS office, bringing in a broader range of voices and perspectives. This allowed the students to experience the collaborative nature of professional design, as well as receive feedback from a diverse group of seasoned architects, enriching their understanding of the field. This partnership not only provided invaluable hands-on learning for the students but also strengthened the connection between FAMU and the architectural industry, offering students a direct link to potential career paths and professional opportunities.

CAREER IMPACT

For Jeff, his career is not just about designing buildings, but about making meaningful contributions to the fabric of his community. He is passionate about the idea that architecture, when done thoughtfully, can help to bridge divides, promote understanding, and create a sense of shared ownership and pride among community members. Ultimately, Jeff's work is a reflection of his dedication to making a lasting, positive impact that enhances the lives of individuals and strengthens the sense of unity within the community.

He is driven by the belief that thoughtfully designed environments can act as catalysts for community growth, bringing people together and providing them with the resources and spaces they need to thrive. Jeff sees his work as an integral part of creating equitable spaces where everyone feels seen, heard, and valued. His commitment to fostering inclusivity means that he strives to break down barriers—whether they be physical, social, or cultural—and to design with the understanding that architecture has the power to elevate the collective experience of a community.

With 28 years of professional experience, Jeff has worked on almost 200 projects for a variety of clients throughout Central Florida and beyond. He continues to be excited to work with teams and creatively solve problems that impact the community.

SELECT CENTRAL FLORIDA PROJECTS

Disney Celebration Town Center

Celebration, Florida

Seuss Landing at Universal's Islands of Adventure

Orlando, Florida

CNL Tower I and Tower II

Orlando, Florida

Seminole County Justice Center and Annex

Sanford, Florida

Orlando Regional Medical Center North Tower

Orlando, Florida

Hilton Orlando Hotel

Orlando, Florida

Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts

Orlando, Florida

Omni Orlando Resort at ChampionsGate, Osceola County Convention Center

Davenport, Florida



Pier 66



Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts

CONCLUSION

Through his efforts, Jeff builds bridges that connect people from all walks of life, forging powerful bonds that have the potential to transcend individual projects. His dedication to creating a more inclusive and supportive environment helps foster a strong sense of unity and purpose among those he serves, bringing people together to work toward common goals. Jeff's work in these areas amplifies his influence, ensuring that the positive impact he has extends far beyond immediate outcomes and resonates for years to come.

Jeff is the ideal candidate for the Nils M. Schweizer Award. His leadership in community activities and service directly affects not only the architecture profession through his dedication to FAMU, NOMA, AIA and numerous leadership boards but his direct involvement in The Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Florida through his leadership roles and fundraising efforts has impacted countless youth in the community. Ultimately, his contributions reach countless individuals, leaving an indelible mark on the community and inspiring others to engage in service and kindness.

Nominated by: Nathan Butler, FAIA, LEED AP

TIMELINE

- **1995:** Bachelors Degree, FAMU
- **1995:** Hired as an intern by HKS
- **1998:** Masters Degree, FAMU
- **2000:** State of Florida Registered Architect
- **2001 - 2015:** Boys & Girls Club Hughes Branch Board (Vice President and President)
- **2002:** NOMA Orlando Member
- **2005:** LEED AP Accreditation
- **2005:** AIA Orlando Member
- **2005:** Started HKS' Annual Golf Tournament Benefiting The Boys & Girls Club
- **2007:** Orlando Business Journal, 40 Under 40
- **2007 - 2015:** Canstruction Orlando
- **2008 - 2014:** Lake Eola Charter School, Board of Directors (Vice President and President)
- **2010 - 2017:** DRC/Appealance Review Board (Chairman and Vice Chairman)
- **2012 - 2014:** Boys & Girls Club of Central Florida, Board of Directors
- **2021:** HKS/FAMU Design Studio Partnership
- **2022:** BAM Exhibit at Orlando Science Center
- **2025:** NOMA Orlando Treasurer