

Jay A. Pritzker 1987 Laureate Kenzo Tange Ceremony Speech

John Julius Norwich, the noted English architectural author and historian in the foreword to his *World Atlas of Architecture* mentions two architectural masterpieces of the last quarter century. He failed to mention the Kimball unfortunately and I believe his error. One is the East Building of the National Gallery of Art and the other is the Olympic Stadium in Tokyo. The former was by IM Pei, a former laureate, and the latter is by the man we honor this evening, Mr. Kenzo Tange, the 1987 laureate.

The author questions why architecture and the men who practiced it have been so consistently underrated. One explanation offered is that there's so much of it we take it for granted and one of our attempts has been to solve that problem. In the few years since we began this prize, we've been delighted to see it achieve the stature it has. But a prize, any prize, can only be great by virtue of the people it honors and by who is capable of selecting those honorees. We've been fortunate to have a dedicated group of jurors that has changed over the years but has not diminished one with that stature. From the inception, Carter has chaired this jury and we're extremely grateful to Carter and the other members of the jury for the burdens that they've borne. No one would deny that the architects that have been selected have been exceptional. Last year, it was Godfrey Boehm, who was nice enough to come in from West Germany for this event this evening. It's also significant to notice that both the laureates and the jurors come from the international community.

There've been five laureates from Japan, England, Mexico, Austria and West Germany and four others from the United States. In the *Shock of the New*, you may recall the book by *Time* critic, Robert Hughes, he indicated how worldly architecture has become. He was discussing who is French, whose style would become known by a phrase coined by Americans, Phillip Johnson and Hitchcock and how Meis Van Der Rohe, a German carried it forward derivative of Frank Lloyd Wright, who had based his organic and spatial concept on Japanese traditions. While it's our primary mission to reward achievements of living architects, we also honor all of those architects who have gone before, who strove to elevate the human spirit. One such was Louis Sullivan, a great American architect and a pioneer in the development of the skyscraper, who happens to come from Chicago. We held one of these ceremonies in a room from one of his buildings, The Stock Exchange, which is now in the Art Institute in Chicago. Formerly, we had a symbol of the prize consisting of work done by Henry Moore but we could only produce nine of them and we used all nine. We're now introducing a new symbol, which is a replica casting of an ornament that Mr. Sullivan did in a landmark building in Chicago. It's the Carson Pirie Scott Building. It's this medallion. By virtue of holding this ceremony in the Kimball, we also pay tribute to Louis Kahn, the architect of this much acclaimed building.

Jay A. Pritzker, 1987 Laureate Kenzo Tange (continued)

We also want to thank Kate Fortson, Ted Pillsbury and the staff at the Kimball for making all of this possible. There are some similarities between Louis Kahn and Kenzo Tange. Kahn had been quoted as saying, "Before functionalism, before design, even before an understanding of the materials must come feeling." Kenzo Tange has said, "Architecture must have something that appeals to the human heart." Kahn visited the ancient Greek and Roman buildings of Europe as did Tange and both felt their influences in different ways. Had the Greeks invented a muse for architecture she'd be dancing with joy in the heights of Mt. Olympus tonight. Professor Tange, on behalf of my family, we'd like to present you with the symbol of the prize, this piece by Louis Sullivan and wish you many more years of beautiful buildings.

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