

PROFESSOR AND DEPARTMENT CHAIR OF ARCHITECTURAL STUDIES



*“Confucius lived a half a world away and centuries ago when he said, ‘I live in a very small house but my windows look out on a very large world.’ This is my story. I come from a small Missouri River town and am blessed by the powerful influence of Mizzou lessons and mentors to make a difference in our world.”*

*Distinguished Faculty Award*

54TH ANNUAL DISTINGUISHED FACULTY AWARD

THIS AWARD, THE HIGHEST HONOR THAT THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI ALUMNI ASSOCIATION PRESENTS TO A FACULTY MEMBER, WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1960.

IT RECOGNIZES A FACULTY MEMBER WHOSE SUSTAINED EFFORTS IN TEACHING, RESEARCH AND SERVICE HAVE ADDED TO THE EXCELLENCE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI.

THE AWARD ALSO PLACES SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THE FACULTY MEMBER’S RELATIONSHIP WITH STUDENTS.

Just four years after joining MU as an energetic young faculty member, Dr. Tofle was named chair of her department in 1984. Since then she has led the department to national recognition. One of the first-ever accredited interior design programs, it was named a Top 10 program and “4th Most Admired Graduate Program in Interior Design in the U.S.” by *DesignIntelligence*, a publication of the Design Futures Council. She led her department in developing the first and still only online doctoral program in interior design. Her research interests are in environmental gerontology, place attachment, and historic preservation. Following graduate work at the University of Minnesota, she co-published and edited journals and books including *Aging, Autonomy, and Architecture: Advances in Assisted Living*, *Popular American Housing*, and *Color in Health Care Environments*. Respected in academia and in practice, she is a Center for Aging Fellow, NCIDQ-certified, a LEED Accredited Professional, and a Registered Commercial Interior Designer in the State of Missouri. For 15 years, Ruth chaired MU’s Campus Planning Committee for Facilities and Grounds and was a constant in guiding the campus to become the beautiful, well-designed place it is today. Born and raised in Washington, Missouri, her work is recognized worldwide. She received a post doctorate fellowship from the National Institutes of Mental Health, the American Society of Interior Designers Environmental Design Award, and Fulbright Fellowships to China, Morocco and Tunisia. She participated in faculty exchanges in Thailand and Korea and was President of the Missouri Fulbright Alumni Association. An early advocate for

ADA and universal design, Ruth received the Faculty Friend Award from the MU Access Office for her efforts in accommodating students with disabilities.

- Fulbright Fellow for Chinese History and Culture in People’s Republic of China in 1988
- Associate editor of the *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research* since 1991
- Recipient of a Faculty-Alumni Award from the Mizzou Alumni Association in 1992
- Fulbright Fellow for Continuity and Change in Morocco and Tunisia in 1993
- Received a Franklin County Missouri 4-H Alumni Award for outstanding contributions to community and/or the Franklin County 4-H Program in 2009
- Recognized by *DesignIntelligence*, a publication of the Design Futures Council, as one of the “30 Most Admired Educators for 2013”
- Chair of the Missouri State 4-H Foundation
- Jefferson Club Fellow
- Member, Mizzou Alumni Association

She and her husband, Marvin, live in Columbia. She has two children: Jessica Breed and Jonathan Brent, BA ’02.

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