

Stanislawa Nowicki, Architecture

MARCH 20, 2018 | **VOL 64 ISSUE 27 ([HTTPS://ALMANAC.UPENN.EDU/VOLUME-64-NUMBER-27](https://almanac.upenn.edu/volume-64-number-27))** | **DEATHS** | **PRINT**



Stanislawa (Siasia) Sandecka Nowicki, an emeritus professor of architecture in what was the School of Fine Arts, now the School of Design, died in Alexandria, Virginia, on February 18. She was 105 years old.

She was born in Pultusk, Poland, and worked on the Polish Pavilion at the 1937 International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts in Paris, where her work was part of the contribution to the Polish entry that won the Gold Medal for Graphics. She also worked for a year in Paris with famed Swiss-French architect Le Corbusier on the photomontage for the Temps Nouveaux and on a model for a stadium.

Siasia Nowicki

She earned a master's degree in architecture from Warsaw Polytechnic Institute in 1938. She then married architect Maciej (Matthew) Nowicki. After World War II, she co-authored a plan for the rebuilding of Warsaw. She and her husband moved to the U.S. in 1946, and in 1948 Ms. Nowicki began teaching at North Carolina State University in Raleigh. In 1951, a year after her husband was killed in a plane crash, Ms. Nowicki was hired as an associate professor in Penn's department of architecture in what was then called the School of Fine Arts, and she moved to Pennsylvania. She was recruited by the school's dean, G. Holmes Perkins, well respected for his role in the redevelopment of Philadelphia and advancing the school at Penn, as a leader of the core curriculum: "Getting her was a coup; she could well have been the best teacher we had."

She taught the first-year classes, introducing students to design and basic building technique and was one of the two first female faculty appointed to the School (*Almanac* March 28, 2017 (<https://almanac.upenn.edu/articles/unsung-women-pioneers-at-penn-who-paved-the-way-for-the-future/>)). In 1958 she became a full professor; she was the first female full professor of architecture in the country. She remained at Penn (aside from one year spent at the University of Southern California) until her retirement in 1977; at that time she was named an emerita professor.

In 1978, Ms. Nowicki received the AIA Medal from the American Institute of Architects (*Almanac* March 7, 1978 (<https://almanac.upenn.edu/archive/v24pdf/n23/030778.pdf>)) in recognition of her contributions and influence on the architectural profession. The AIA recognized her "... for an outstanding career in architecture education. Respecting her students as individuals, she consistently demanded the best that each could produce. Her emphasis on the quality of architecture, its aesthetic values, and its social meaning, have had a profound influence on all who have been privileged to know her as teacher or as colleague."

In 1987, The Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture awarded Ms. Nowicki the title of distinguished professor for sustained creative achievement in the advancement of architectural education. In 2017, the Polish government awarded her the highest distinction for culture and the arts, the Gloria Artis gold medal, in recognition of her being an inspiration to the younger generation of designers and architects.

She is survived by her son Peter, five grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.