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October 21, 1994

Jury of Fellows  
The American Institute of Architects  
1735 New York Avenue N.W.  
Washington, DC 20006

Ladies/Gentlemen:

I am pleased to have an opportunity to support the nomination of **Mr. David Michael Harper AIA** for a Fellowship in the American Institute of Architects. My 25 years of experience as a researcher and a practitioner in wind resistant construction provide a basis for my assessment of Mr. Harper's significant contributions to this field.

Mr. Harper responded to a very important challenge in accepting an appointment as chairman of the Building Code Committee of Dade County, Florida following the most destructive hurricane in U.S. history. He faced incredible demands in the scope of his task, the adversity of the political climate and the pressure of time.

Of particular consequence is a stance taken by Mr. Harper in supporting an unpopular, but vital change to the South Florida Building Code (SFBC). Although every major report on the causes of the disaster in south Florida during Hurricane Andrew named windborne debris as a major contributor, there was immense reluctance in the building industry to consider this factor in new construction practice. Showing superb adeptness, Mr. Harper led the committee, the building industry, the public and, ultimately, the political community to a precedent setting action--the adoption of a debris impact standard in the SFBC.

The change to building design practice fostered by Mr. Harper will have far reaching consequences. Other building code authorities in the U.S. are in the process of adopting similar provisions based on the Florida precedent. Also significant are insurance industry actions in adopting the SFBC debris impact standard as a basis for awarding premium credits for wind resistant construction.

Mr. Harper's commitment to purpose, organizational skill, leadership and vision in advancing hurricane resistant construction should be recognized. He has effected a fundamental change to building design practice in hurricane prone regions that will ultimately be embraced around the world by architects, engineers, the building industry and those who insure the built environment.

Very sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joseph E. Minor'.

Joseph E. Minor, P.E.  
Thomas Reese Professor

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