

## **Guide to the John R. Klai II, FAIA Papers**

---

This finding aid was created by UNLV Special Collections and Archives staff. This copy was published on March 03, 2025. Please contact [special.collections@unlv.edu](mailto:special.collections@unlv.edu) for questions regarding this collection.

Persistent URL for this finding aid: <http://n2t.net/ark:/62930/f1mn54>

© 2025 The Regents of the University of Nevada. All rights reserved.

**University of Nevada, Las Vegas. University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives.**

Box 457010

4505 S. Maryland Parkway

Las Vegas, Nevada 89154-7010

[special.collections@unlv.edu](mailto:special.collections@unlv.edu)

---

## Table of Contents

---

Summary Information .....	3
Biographical Note .....	4
Scope and Contents Note .....	5
Arrangement .....	5
Administrative Information .....	5
Related Materials .....	6
Names and Subjects .....	7
Collection Inventory .....	7

---

## Summary Information

---

<b>Repository:</b>	University of Nevada, Las Vegas. University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives.
<b>Creator:</b>	Klai, John R., II FAIA, 1952-2023
<b>Title:</b>	John R. Klai II, FAIA Papers
<b>ID:</b>	MS-01204
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1983 to 2024
<b>Physical Description:</b>	0.85 Cubic Feet (1 oversized box, 1 box)
<b>Physical Description:</b>	1.67 Linear Feet
<b>Physical Description:</b>	20 Digital Files (0.049 GB) JPG
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English
<b>Abstract:</b>	The John R. Klai II, FAIA Papers (1983-2024) are comprised of the personal papers of American architect, John R. Klai II, FAIA. Materials include commendations presented to Klai for his achievements in the architecture and interior design profession from organizations like AIA Las Vegas; the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB); and the Nevada State Board of Architecture, Interior Design and Residential Design. The collection also includes digital images of plaques and trophies presented to Klai for his philanthropic work in the Las Vegas community. The professional files in this collection include publications featuring the work of Klai Juba Wald architecture + interiors, Klai's 2015 AIA Fellowship submission portfolio, magazine features about Klai, and a commemorative photo book of Klai Hall at North Dakota State University. Also included are a small number of Klai's personal sports memorabilia, including tickets for NCAA men's basketball tournaments in 1987 and 1989.

### Preferred Citation

John R. Klai II, FAIA Papers, 1983-2024. MS-01204. Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada. <http://n2t.net/ark:/62930/f1mn54>

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Biographical Note

---

John Reynolds Klai II, FAIA was born in Osnabrock, North Dakota in 1952. He attended the University of North Dakota's College of Business in Grand Forks for two years when an engineering class inspired him to change his studies to pursue a career in architecture. Klai eventually attended the architecture program at North Dakota State University (NDSU) in Fargo and received a Bachelor of Arts in Architectural Studies in 1977 and a Bachelor of Architecture in 1978. Klai moved to Las Vegas, Nevada in 1978 where he joined Marnell Corrao Associates. His first job involved the fantasy suites tower expansion to Caesars Palace. In 1995, Klai partnered with fellow NDSU graduate Dan Juba to form their own architecture and design firm Klai Juba Architects, which eventually became Klai Juba Wald architecture + interiors.

Throughout his career, Klai led projects in Las Vegas including the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino, the Forum Shops at Caesars, the Luxor, the High Roller at the Linq, and the Thomas & Mack Center at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). Before retiring in 2021, Klai was a registered architect in twenty-five states and worked on projects throughout the United States including the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Hollywood, Florida; the Choctaw Casinos & Resorts in Durant, Florida; and Live! Casino Hotel Maryland in Hanover, Maryland.

Klai met his husband, Jonathan S. "Jon" Sparer, FAIA in 1981 when Klai hired him to work at Marnell Corrao Associates. They married in 2014 in San Diego, California and made Las Vegas their home. Klai was active in volunteerism and philanthropy for organizations including the Boys & Girls Clubs of Las Vegas and the Discovery Children's Museum. He also served in leadership positions for the architectural profession including the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB); the Nevada State Board of Architecture, Interior Design and Residential Design; the Western Conference of Architectural Registration Boards (WCARB); AIA Nevada; and AIA Las Vegas. In 2015, Klai became a Fellow of the AIA (FAIA) College of Fellows for his service to the profession.

Klai was dedicated to supporting the architecture programs at NDSU and UNLV. He taught as a volunteer adjunct faculty for UNLV's Hospitality Design graduate program and also traveled regularly to teach at NDSU. In 2006, Klai was recognized with NDSU's Alumni Achievement Award and was also inducted into UNLV's Nevada Entertainer/Artist Hall of Fame.

Klai passed away on September 2, 2023 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

### Sources:

"Remembering Respected Architect and Philanthropist John Reynolds Klai II, FAIA," College of Fine Arts, UNLV, Accessed February 6, 2025. <https://www.unlv.edu/announcement/college-fine-arts/remembering-respected-architect-and-philanthropist-john-reynolds>

"John Klai Obituary," Legacy.com, September 14, 2023. <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/name/john-klai-obituary?id=53099777>

Klai Juba Wald architecture + interiors, Accessed February 6, 2025. <https://klaijubawald.com/>

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Scope and Contents Note

---

The John R. Klai II, FAIA Papers (1983-2024) are comprised of the personal papers of American architect, John R. Klai II, FAIA. Materials include commendations presented to Klai for his achievements in the architecture and interior design profession from organizations like AIA Las Vegas; the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB); and the Nevada State Board of Architecture, Interior Design and Residential Design. The collection also includes digital images of plaques and trophies presented to Klai for his philanthropic work in the Las Vegas community. The professional files in this collection include publications featuring the work of Klai Juba Wald architecture + interiors, Klai's 2015 AIA Fellowship submission portfolio, magazine features about Klai, and a commemorative photo book of Klai Hall at North Dakota State University. Also included are a small number of Klai's personal sports memorabilia, including tickets for NCAA men's basketball tournaments in 1987 and 1989.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Arrangement

---

Materials are arranged by topic.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Administrative Information

---

### Access Note

Collection is open for research. Arrangements must be made in advance to access digital files; please contact UNLV Special Collections and Archives for additional information.

### Publication Rights

This material is made available to facilitate private study, scholarship, or research. The donor, Jonathan S. Sparer, FAIA transferred all right, title and interest they had in the John R. Klai II, FAIA Papers (MS-01204) to UNLV. However, some material may be protected by copyright, trademark, privacy, publicity rights, or other interests not owned by UNLV. Users

are responsible for determining whether permissions are necessary from rights owners for any intended use and for obtaining all required permissions. Acknowledgement of the UNLV University Libraries is requested. For more information, please see the UNLV Special Collections policies on [reproductions and use](#) or contact us at [special.collections@unlv.edu](mailto:special.collections@unlv.edu).

## Acquisition Note

Materials were donated in 2025 by Jonathan S. Sparer, FAIA; accession number 2025-009.

## Additions

Further additions to this collection are anticipated.

## Appraisal Note

Acquired by Aaron Mayes, Curator of Visual Materials, as part of UNLV Special Collections and Archives holdings in architecture. All material that formed the original gift has been retained.

## Processing Note

In 2025, Tammi Kim processed the collection and wrote the finding aid in ArchivesSpace. Steps taken during processing include: rehousing physical materials, renaming digital files, and reformatting the digital files from TIF to JPG.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Related Materials

---

### Related Collections

The following resources may provide additional information related to the materials in this collection:

John R. Klai II, FAIA oral history interview, 2016 August 15. OH-02800. Oral History Research Center, Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada. <http://n2t.net/ark:/62930/f1cf2r>

Klai Juba Wald Architectural Records, 2000-2020. MS-01033. Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada. <http://n2t.net/ark:/62930/f10n0n>

Jonathan S. Sparer, FAIA oral history interview, 2015 March 04. OH-02282. [Cite format consulted: Audio recording or Transcript.] Oral History Research Center, Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada. <http://n2t.net/ark:/62930/f1xm46>

Jonathan S. Sparer, FAIA oral history interview, 2016 August 29. OH-02812. [Cite format consulted: Audio recording or Transcript.] Oral History Research Center, Special Collections

and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada. <http://n2t.net/ark:/62930/f1dd4g>

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Names and Subjects

---

- Architects
- Architecture
- Memorabilia
- Klai Juba Wald Architecture + Interiors

---

## Collection Inventory

---

Title/Description	Containers
John R. Klai II, FAIA certificates and commendations	
Certificates of achievement and recognition presented to John R. Klai II from AIA Nevada, NCIDQ, Nevada State Board of Architecture, Western Council of Architectural Registration Boards, and National Council of Architectural Registration Boards, 1983 to 2023	oversized box 01
"Man and Youth Award" trophy from the Boys & Girls Clubs of Las Vegas: digital photograph, 1991 (MS_01204_005) Physical Description: 1 Digital Files (0.003 GB) JPG	digital file 00
AIA Las Vegas President's Award: digital photographs, 2004 (MS_01204_008-010) Physical Description: 3 Digital Files (0.004 GB) JPG	digital file 00
Association of Fundraising Professionals Outstanding Philanthropist of the Year trophy: digital photographs, 2004 (MS_01204_012-013) Physical Description: 2 Digital Files (0.008 GB) JPG	digital file 00
Las Vegas commemorative crystal trophy: digital photograph, 2005 (MS_01204_011) Physical Description: 1 Digital Files (0.001 GB) JPG	digital file 00
UNLV Hall of Fame awards ceremony photograph album, 2006	oversized box 01
The Sidney: Nevada Hall of Fame award for Outstanding Achievements in Architecture: digital photographs, 2006 (MS_01204_014-017)	digital file 00

Physical Description: 4 Digital Files (0.010 GB) JPG	
Cornerstone Award from the Gay & Lesbian Community Center of Southern Nevada at the 14th Annual Honorarium: digital photograph, 2008 (MS_01204_006)	digital file 00
NEWH Lifetime Achievement Award from 2011 Annual Hospy Awards: digital photographs, 2011 (MS_01204_003-004)	digital file 00
Physical Description: 2 Digital Files (0.005 GB) JPG	
NCIDQ Examination Award for Service as Director of the CIDQ Board of Directors: digital photograph, 2013 (MS_01204_018)	digital file 00
Nevada State Board of Architecture, Interior Design and Residential Design commemorative plaque for License No. 1633: digital photograph, 2019 (MS_01204_019)	digital file 00
Physical Description: 1 Digital Files (0.003 GB) JPG	
Discovery Children's Museum trophy in memory of John R. Klai II: digital photograph, 2023 (MS_01204_007)	digital file 00
Physical Description: 1 Digital Files (0.002 GB) JPG	
"Remembering John R. Klai II" framed Congressional Record with inscription and note from Senator Jacky Rosen, 2023 September 21	oversized box 01
John R. Klai II, FAIA personal memorabilia	
NCAA West and NCAA semifinals and finals game tickets, 1987, 1989	box 02
Commemorative front page of April 3, 1990 issue of <i>USA Today</i> featuring UNLV Runnin' Rebels NCAA title winning game: digital photograph, 1990 (MS_01204_020)	digital file 00
Physical Description: 1 Digital Files (0.004 GB) JPG	
Leonard vs. Lalonde boxing match ticket, 1988	box 02
UNLV football autographed by UNLV Athletics Director Tina Murphy and UNLV Rebels Football Coach Tony Sanchez: digital photographs, 2016 (MS_01204_001-002)	digital file 00
John R. Klai II, FAIA professional files	
<i>Klai Juba Wald Collective Works</i> book, 2017	oversized box 01
John R. Klai II business cards for Klai Juba Wald, approximately 2015 to 2017	box 02
CAVU Las Vegas real estate booklet, 2015	box 02
John R. Klai II AIA Fellowship submittal, 2015	box 02
Magazines featuring stories about John R. Klai II, FAIA and Jonathan S. "Jon" Sparer, FAIA, 2005 to 2013	box 02
Commemorative photo book of Klai Hall at North Dakota State University, 2008	oversized box 01