



Lighting the Way

SLM picks its first St. Louis Luminaries. In high school, it's easy: You pick a brain as valedictorian, a populist as class president, a schmoozer for student government, and a cute couple as homecoming king and queen. But when you grow up, the honors grow vague: visionaries, leaders, geniuses, entrepreneurs, hot people, cool people, people of the year...

We're about to add to the confusion.

When we looked around the St. Louis landscape, there were plenty of candidates for the aforementioned categories. But the quality we wanted to recognize was warmer than vision, nobler than coolness. It had to do with light; with people whose ideas glow so brightly, they illuminate a path for the rest of us.

They're Luminaries.

And in the shortest, darkest month of the year, we're awfully glad they're here.

BY MARGARET BAUER, JEANNETTE COOPERMAN, BRYAN A. HOLLERBACH, CHRISTY MARSHALL, JARRETT MEDLIN, STEFENE RUSSELL, AND STEPHEN SCHENKENBERG



Blueprints for the Future

Patricia Whitaker

Interior Designer and CEO

Good architecture undoubtedly illuminates—but not in the way one might expect. While flashy iconoclasts capture our imagination, it's those who understand strategy that survive. Strategic building plans—and alliances—are crucial.

As the strategist at the helm of architecture and interior-design firm Arcturis since its inception in 1977, Pat Whitaker has taken her company from a one-woman outfit, designing doctors' and dentists' offices, to the region's largest interior-design firm and a top-20 architecture firm. When St. Louis' most influential companies—including Energizer, Edward Jones, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, and Nestlé Purina PetCare—break new ground, Arcturis gets called into action.

In 2000, Whitaker added public-sector clients to the roster: universities, local governments, and nonprofits, including Rex Sinquefeld's Chess Club and Scholastic Center and the Girl Scouts of Greater St. Louis. As others foundered on the recession's shoals, Arcturis quadrupled its revenue and more than doubled its staff. Its listing among *Interior Design* magazine's 100 Interior Design Giants this year placed its valuation at \$231 million.

Whitaker's clearly never forgotten her humble origins; Arcturis' benefits packages remain tops in the area. It's not just any head honcho who's able to please employees and clients, year after year, but Whitaker manages it. This year alone, her firm's forward-looking civic designs won awards from the St. Louis RCGA, Mayor Francis Slay, the Prestressed Concrete Institute, and the International Interior Design Association's Midwest arm—and Whitaker herself scored the St. Louis Forum's 2009 Trailblazer Award.

Whitaker serves on a slew of nonprofit boards, including the YMCA, the United Way,

St. Louis Children's Hospital, and the RCGA. In 2010, look for her to bring her civic involvement and business pursuits into even closer alignment: Arcturis has proposed a green home-building initiative to help revitalize northeastern University City, and it's also been involved in the planning stages of Paul McKee's proposed NorthSide Regeneration project and the city of Clayton's bold new police headquarters. —M.B.



Conversation Starter

Whitaker knows how to combine practicality with ambience, and in one of her favorite assignments, the ambience was practical: a meditation space for a police station in Illinois, so officers could regain peace and perspective after high-stress situations.