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**Remembering Glenn Noboru Togawa, FAIA**

*Partner, Mentor, Community Advocate*

June 14, 1946 – March 26, 2025

Los Angeles, CA — One year after his passing, AC Martin honors the life and enduring legacy of Glenn Noboru Togawa, architect, founding partner, mentor, and community leader, whose work helped shape Los Angeles' multifamily residential landscape and generations of design professionals.

Longtime partners Glenn Togawa and Tim Smith designed the first Type III wood-over-concrete podium building in California, placing four to five wood-frame housing levels above a concrete base. This building model is now widely used across the state as a practical and scalable solution for mixed-use housing that enables higher-density residential communities while maintaining economic feasibility for developers.

Born and raised in Boyle Heights, Glenn's roots in Los Angeles deeply informed both his architectural perspective and his lifelong commitment to community. He earned his Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Southern California School of Architecture in 1969 and obtained California State Licensure in 1974.

In 1975, Glenn co-founded Friedman Togawa Smith alongside Tim Smith — the firm that would later evolve into Togawa Smith Martin and ultimately join AC Martin. Over decades of practice, he became widely respected for his leadership in multifamily residential and mixed-use retail/residential design, championing a developer-friendly, technically rigorous, and hands-on approach to architecture.

Glenn's work was distinguished not only by technical strength but by relationships. He believed architecture was fundamentally about people — about trust, collaboration, and service. His ethos combined a poetic appreciation of place, inherited from his father, with a methodical, deeply relational approach to practice.

He retired from active practice in 2008, yet retirement never diminished his engagement with the profession or his generosity toward others. His commitment to pro bono service and community advocacy remained steadfast throughout his life.

In 2024, Glenn published his memoir, *Within the Borders*, writing: *"If through my sharing I inspired even one out of a hundred individuals, by one memory or event, my goal would be worth the effort (of writing the memoir) ..."* The breadth of his influence makes clear that he inspired far more than one.

AC Martin President and CEO, Tom Hsieh, shared, "Glenn was not only my professional mentor, but also a life mentor to me. What I appreciated most about Glenn was his passion not only for architecture, but for helping people improve themselves.

To Glenn, great design came from a process of diligent refinement and adjustments over time. In much the same way, he believed happiness in life comes from learning, growing, and striving to be better over time, which was Glenn's definition of happiness.

Glenn didn't just shape remarkable buildings; he helped shape the lives of the people who knew him. His influence and legacy continue to guide our work and culture every day in our firm."

Those who celebrate his life have reflected on his defining characteristics: generosity, service, kindness, and quiet strength. His philosophy was simple yet profound:

*"I believe emphasizing doing what we enjoy, what comes natural, and what provides satisfaction, offers the rewards we strive for ourselves and for others. They become achievements."*

Glenn's legacy lives on not only in the buildings that shape communities across California but in the culture of mentorship and service embedded within AC Martin and the broader architectural community.

On the first anniversary of his passing, AC Martin extends gratitude to colleagues, clients, friends, and community members who continue to honor his memory and carry forward his example.

Link to Tribute Video: <https://vimeo.com/1170472555?fl=pl&fe=sh>



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Celebrating the Life of

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**AC Martin** is a California-based architecture, planning, interiors, and research firm that uses an integrated design approach to shape cities, communities, and campuses. As the longest continuously operating firm in Los Angeles, we honor the legacy we have built while embracing the future. With offices across California and a passion for design excellence, we embark on each project as an opportunity to positively impact the communities we serve and enrich their culture.

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