



Universal Design Institute (The Institute) is an international non-profit organization based in North Carolina dedicated to promoting the concept and practice of accessible and universal design. The Institute's work manifests the belief that all new environments and products, to the greatest extent possible, should and can be usable by everyone regardless of age, ability, or circumstance.

We all benefit from the usability improvements that have occurred over the past 40 years, generating both individual and collective health benefits. Improvements continue to occur at all scales: from the design of safer and easier-to-use home and consumer products to enhanced community design, where each of us has the opportunity to be fully integrated into rich community and personal experiences *The Institute* advances the concept of universal design in all design disciplines, including housing, public use buildings, outdoor and urban environments and related products.

The Institute

- ▶ performs design assistance and design development
- ▶ applies research to generate design solutions appropriate for the widest diversity of users
- ▶ evaluates existing products and buildings
- ▶ articulates the application of universal design to all areas of the built environment: workplace, public, outdoors, residential, and products
- ▶ collaborates with builders and manufacturers on the development of new design solutions
- ▶ develops and distributes educational publications and instructional materials -- tools most useful for professionals wishing to practice universal design and to individuals and families needing to learn of options and opportunities
- ▶ conducts training globally to increase knowledge of the application of universal design

History

Founded in 1997, *The Institute* expanded its mission in 2008 to include the built environment in its entirety, and most particularly, to include universal design as its primary guiding principle.

The Institute's staff represents a wealth of expertise in universal design and codes and standards mandating accessibility with an emphasis on human function, architecture, and planning. *The Institute* has developed technical and policy documents and developed a wide range of graphic and multimedia materials to explain technical specifications in context of the environment. *The Institute* has a history of collaborative, multidisciplinary work: research, plan review; development of new plans, survey instruments, photo documentaries, product designs, state agency policies, demonstration houses, educational programs, and contributing to federal and state legislation.

Ronald L. Mace, FAIA. *The Institute* follows the work of *Ronald L. Mace, FAIA* (deceased 1998) who used a wheelchair most of his life as a result of having polio. Ron was recognized, nationally and internationally for his accomplishments in accessible design, starting in North Carolina with his having developed the first illustrated state building code. Always seeing a universe where people with and without disabilities could share their lives, he not only coined the term "Universal Design," but he did much to fashion the tools so it might one day become a reality. Guided by his vision, *The Institute* developed a successful program of creating new, landmark designs and informational documents on accessible designs.

The Institute's principals, Richard Duncan and Leslie Young, each have a long career in the design of accessible and universal environments.

Mr. Duncan has spent nearly 25 years in the field of architectural and product accessibility and universal design in residential, public, and transportation environments. He has extensive experience in the design, costs, materials, and products in residential and non-residential settings. His work includes the subjects of affordable housing and home and repair financing and transportation accessibility as well as community design for constituencies that include people with disabilities and aging households.

Richard has worked at two of the nation's preeminent organizations in the field, the Adaptive Environments Center in Boston, Massachusetts and The Center for Universal Design in North Carolina and has been an associate with the Andrus Gerontology Center at the University of Southern California. He is a graduate of Tufts University and the planning program at the Department of City and Regional Planning at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Ms. Young is a recognized expert on architectural accessibility, with over 25 years experience in accessible and universal design. She has in-depth knowledge of the accessibility requirements in most federal legislation mandating accessibility including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Fair Housing Act of 1988, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

She worked with Mr. Mace at Barrier Free Environments, Inc. for over 15 years before accepting a position at the Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State University. Ms. Young designed a series of single-family residences for clients with disabilities and managed a project to develop an adaptable line of kitchen and bathroom cabinets.

She has either written or managed the development of a vast number of publications, slide shows, and videotapes on accessibility to the built environment. She co-authored the *Fair Housing Act Design Manual* with Mr. Mace for the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, still considered the "text book" when complying with the design and construction requirements of the Fair Housing Act. More recently, Ms. Young has managed several projects while at the NC State University Center for Universal Design including a series of videotapes on the ADA Standards for Accessible Design; the development of an interactive CD-ROM of universal design exemplars; and a detailed accessibility/universal design audit for the National Children's Museum, Washington, DC.