Donnie Longenecker, Instructor

CE+D

Hometown: Smyrna, Georgia

Donnie Longenecker is a passionate landscape architect, UGA alumnus, instructor, and faculty advisor for the 2013 LABash Conference. Click the “for more information” button below to read more about Donnie.

CED Instructor Donnie Longenecker with the LABash 2013 Committee:

From back row, left: Robert Arrington, Juan Guzman, Aaron Hursey, Alex Tidwell, Sydney Thompson, Nathan Aarons, Quynh Pham, Grace Miller, Meredith Wynn, Audra Lofton, Sarah Boyer, Meg Robie. Not pictured: Stephanie Rattanong and Ann Nguyen.

Where did you earn degrees and what are your current responsibilities at UGA?

I earned my Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (BLA) from UGA in 1990, and my MLA from University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign in 1997. Currently, I hold the position of lecturer – a position that gives me the opportunity to work both in the classroom and in private practice.

Hometown

Well, I was born in Ft. Wayne, Indiana and moved to Smyrna, Georgia at the age of 2. To borrow a line from the Indigo Girls- “When God made me born a Yankee, he was teasing…”
When did you come to UGA and what brought you here?

I started UGA in the fall of 1985 with the intention of majoring in journalism. I was going to be a sports broadcaster. A trip to the 1984 Georgia Auburn game 'sealed the deal' on my school choice (even though we lost!). I knew several people who were majoring in landscape architecture and the prospect of being able at some point to look back over my life and visit projects that I had built was very appealing to me…so that’s what I did. Twelve years later, I got the opportunity to come back here, start my own business and teach in “my spare time.”

What are some highlights of your career at UGA?

Honestly, most of the “highlights” of my undergraduate career are not suitable for publication. But, I will say that the biggest take away for me was the confidence I gained from being able to survive and thrive away from the security of home. Another undergrad highlight was being president of the college’s student organization. We took an organization that you wouldn’t be caught dead being a member of and turned it into something that everyone wanted to join.

These days, every day is a highlight! How many people get to come back to their alma mater and do all the things they love doing? Not many…

Favorite courses?

Now, or back in the day? Back in the day it was all the computer aided design, land planning, and engineering courses. Now a days, I guess my favorite course is whatever I am teaching at the moment…unless it involves drawing perspectives…

Favorite ways to interact with students?

Nicknames. I’m horrible with names so instead of remembering names, every student presents me with the opportunity to give them a memorable nickname based on the way they act in class, some derivation of their name, or if they look like someone famous. It’s funny how these nicknames seem to stick and students from ten years ago are still using the nickname that I gave them…”Crunky” “Mr. Sunshine,” and “Band Camp” are some of the more memorable ones. I’ve also had Jeff Gordon, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, ET and Flea in my classes.

What do you like to do when you are not working?

My wife would say that I like to work when I’m not SUPPOSED to be working. But, I enjoy a variety of things: working around the house, cooking, playing the piano, reading, college football, golf, and just hanging out with my wife and our 5 four-legged children.

Community/civic involvement includes…
Most of my community/civic involvement comes from projects that we take on in my studio classes. For the last 3-4 years, I’ve been involved with the UGA Metropolitan Studio helping the folks in Newton County make their long range 2050 plan a reality. Last semester, my construction implementation studio developed a master plan for Cochran Mill Nature Center in Chattahoochee Hills, GA. The students’ work will result in this non-profit realizing a goal of obtaining the deed to their property. Lately, I’ve been trying to put together a design-build charrette for Athens Habitat for Humanity in conjunction with the LABash 2013 conference.

More about you…

Does being on this page count against my 15 minutes of fame?! Man, I hope so. I hate the spotlight and would rather be in a cabin in Alaska far away from the rest of the world.