



25 July 2012

Crain's Chicago Business  
150 North Michigan Avenue, 16th Floor  
Chicago, IL 60601

To the Editor:

The Partners and Directors of Skidmore Owings & Merrill LLP (SOM)'s Chicago office support the protection and preservation of Bertrand Goldberg's iconic Prentice Hospital building in Streeterville. Over more than 75 years, our Firm has created some of our city's most significant architectural landmarks—places like the Inland Steel Building, John Hancock Center, Willis (formerly Sears) Tower, and Trump International Hotel and Tower. The career of Bertrand Goldberg paralleled the first six decades of our history. While best known for the Marina City complex along the Chicago River, Goldberg was a unique talent who is only beginning to be recognized for his full body of outstanding—and very Chicago—work. Just last year, the Art Institute of Chicago presented a comprehensive exhibition that documented his contributions from the small scale of furniture to large-scale urban interventions.

We believe that Prentice should be saved as an important part of Chicago's unique architectural legacy—one that draws great numbers of visitors and their economic activity to our city every day. The building stands as a strong symbol of Goldberg's—and our—commitment to innovative modern architectural work.

Northwestern's needs are evolving and it is perfectly sensible that its maternity and psychiatric services have been moved to newer facilities. But the hospital's inventory of real estate in the area is extensive and architects have identified ways that it can maintain its world-class patient care and research facilities while re-using the old Prentice building for any number of purposes that it requires now and in the future. Northwestern should embrace this architecturally significant structure and re-use it, consistent with its own legacy of innovation.

Chicago has led the development of modern architecture since the nineteenth century—when architects like Louis Sullivan, Frank Lloyd Wright and Daniel Burnham defined standards for design and planning that still inspire our civic leaders, our entrepreneurs, our citizens and our visitors every day. Bertrand Goldberg's Prentice Hospital is part of this unparalleled history and we must save and renew this twentieth-century architectural milestone as part of our commitment to Chicago's continuing role as a place of architectural innovation and achievement. The world still looks to Chicago's architectural firms—like SOM—to solve the most pressing problems in built form for this and future generations. It is imperative that Bertrand Goldberg's Prentice Hospital be kept as an active participant in Chicago's never-ending conversation of architectural innovation and design excellence.

Sincerely,

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Cc: Stephanie Meeks, National Trust for Historic Preservation  
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