

SFCS Architects Celebrates 105 Years as Senior Living Enters Largest Modernization Cycle in Decades

National architecture and design firm marks milestone as operators accelerate renovation of aging campuses to meet new expectations for wellness, independence and connection

Senior living design is undergoing a fundamental shift as spaces once planned around efficiency and routine are being reimagined to support movement, social connection and autonomy. That shift is now intersecting with market forces, with [one in five Americans set to be 65 or older by 2030](#) and occupancy in independent and assisted living at its [highest level since before the pandemic](#).

At this pivotal moment, SFCS, Inc. is marking its 105th anniversary and working with organizations to translate changing expectations into built environments that remain relevant in the decade ahead.

“For many years, senior living focused on safety and efficiency — but those are baseline expectations,” said Allen Hale, managing principal at SFCS. “Today’s residents want independence, purpose and spaces that feel uplifting and human. Communities built twenty or thirty years ago were not designed for that reality. Modernization is no longer optional; it is essential.”

Research-driven insights shaping the next era of design

Over the past two years, SFCS advanced its understanding of what enhances quality of life for older adults through two major research initiatives.

In 2024, the nationally recognized architecture, engineering and interior design firm partnered with the [International Council on Active Aging \(ICAA\)](#) to complete a wellness program audit for communities participating in its 39th annual By Design conference. The data has helped evaluate how programming supports physical and mental well-being and where design can better reinforce those goals. SFCS also conducted a gerontologist-led focus group with C-suite executives during the [2024 LeadingAge Annual Meeting](#) in Nashville. Early insights indicated that wellness program effectiveness is closely tied to how physical space supports daily engagement, movement and social connection.

In 2025, SFCS expanded its research through ongoing collaboration with the ICAA, the [National Investment Center for Seniors Housing and Care \(NIC\)](#) and [Sage](#), focusing on strategies that support adaptability, wellness and long-term relevance for aging communities.

SFCS’s commitment to advancing senior living design is demonstrated through a robust, ongoing program of research and collaboration. As recognized leaders in the field, SFCS does not simply rely on past experience; instead, the firm actively seeks out new insights to shape environments that enhance the quality of life for older adults.

A milestone focused on what comes next

Founded in 1920, SFCS now serves clients across senior living, education and community environments. As part of its 105th anniversary, the firm has refined its leadership structure to support collaboration and innovation across its offices in Roanoke, Charlotte, Louisville and Philadelphia.

The new structure includes three main areas: one focused on supporting current clients and building new relationships; another on creating fresh, innovative design solutions; and a third on handling administrative tasks to support the design teams.

We are pleased to announce the promotion of three members of our leadership team to Managing Principal and four Senior Associates to Associate Principals. While each has already been serving as a valued member of the firm's leadership team, this announcement formally recognizes their expanded responsibilities and leadership roles.

Joining Allen W. Hale, Managing Principal, and Kerry D. Buck, Senior Principal, the firm's leadership team now includes:

- **Curtis R. Jennings, III, AIA, NCARB** - Managing Principal, leading National Business Development
- **Emily M. Jimerson, AIA, NCARB** - Managing Principal, leading Professional Practice
- **Allen L. McNutt, PE** - Managing Principal, leading Business & Finance Operations
- **Daron A. Speight** - Associate Principal, Architectural Practice Lead, Charlotte Office Leader
- **Amy A. Taft, LEED AP** - Associate Principal, Regional Business Development Leader
- **Matthew M. Henigan, AIA, NCARB** - Associate Principal, Philadelphia Office Leader
- **Lauren F. Tilley** - Associate Principal, Contract Specialist

This leadership structure reflects the firm's continued growth and commitment to focused, accountable leadership across all areas of practice.

SFCS has also launched “105 Years of Enriching Life, By Design,” a storytelling initiative leading up to the firm's [41st annual By Design Conference](#) in February 2026, where leaders in architecture, development and senior living will examine the future of aging environments. The in-person celebration will include educational sessions featuring SFCS research initiatives to advance the senior living industry, a display of some employee contributions to a 2025 – 2045 time capsule, and other celebratory activities to mark the milestone.

“Senior living residents are looking for places where they can live fully, not just safely,” said Emily M. Jimerson, AIA, NCARB, principal and professional practice leader. “This milestone is not about looking back. It is about preparing for what comes next.”

Modernizing aging campuses for the next generation

Across the country, operators are prioritizing renovation and repositioning alongside new development. SFCS's integrated approach helps providers evaluate buildings holistically, considering resident experience, infrastructure, engineering solutions, future care needs and financial sustainability together.

“The best designs improve how people live and how communities operate,” Hale said. “We are helping clients build environments that will remain flexible and relevant for decades.”