

# Thornton Tomasetti

CONTACT: **Great Ink Communications – 212-741-2977**  
**Eric Gerard/Deborah Geiger**  
[egerard@greatink.com](mailto:egerard@greatink.com); [deborah@greatink.com](mailto:deborah@greatink.com)

**Thornton Tomasetti, Inc. – 917-661-7800**  
**James M. Kent** [JKent@ThorntonTomasetti.com](mailto:JKent@ThorntonTomasetti.com)

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***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

## Thornton Tomasetti Foundation Awards First Scholarship to Urban Assembly School of Design and Construction Graduate

**(NEW YORK - July 14, 2008)** – Gar Yan Yeung, a top-ranking senior from the first graduating class of the Urban Assembly School of Design and Construction (UASDC) has received a \$5,000 Thornton Tomasetti Foundation scholarship at a recent graduation ceremony at UASDC in New York City. The presentation was made on behalf of the Foundation board of governors by Richard Tomasetti, chairman of the Thornton Tomasetti Foundation and founding principal of Thornton Tomasetti, Inc., an international building engineering and technology firm.

The Thornton Tomasetti Foundation Scholarship in Honor of David A. Thurm, chief information officer of the New York Times Co., recognizes Yeung’s high-level of academic performance and interest in sustainable design, articulated in her winning essay: “Why is Sustainability Important to Architecture and Engineering?”

Yeung recently completed an internship in the New York office of Thornton Tomasetti, where she worked every Tuesday of the academic year along with her classmate Michael Barrientos. “It was really surprising for me to win this scholarship and it feels amazing to be selected to be the first recipient of this award,” she said. “Working with the engineers at Thornton Tomasetti gave me a great perspective on what they do and how different it is from the approach of architects. It was fun and I learned a lot.”

The Thornton Tomasetti Foundation was established in February 2008 to support the education and community outreach activities of young engineers and architects.

UASDC, one of 16 small public high schools and junior high schools serving more than 4,300 students, is part of the Urban Assembly, a non-profit organization that creates and manages a community of New York public schools. Its founder and president is Richard Kahan.

“We wanted this scholarship to assist students from a high school of great diversity—the Urban Assembly School is it,” said Mr. Tomasetti, who was instrumental in establishing the company’s relationship with the innovative school established in Midtown Manhattan in September 2004. “This is just one of the unique types of philanthropy that the foundation is currently implementing,” he said. “The scholarship was created in honor of

David Thurm because of his tremendous interest in the content and process of architecture and engineering—particularly in sustainable design.”

Thornton Tomasetti was one of the first structural engineering companies to establish a mentoring partnership with UASDC in fall 2006. At that time, Erin Pesant, project engineer, Christopher Wodzicki, senior engineer, and Lisa Davey, associate, were invited to attend design seminars that hosted design professionals every Wednesday during the school year for students interested in pursuing a career in engineering, architecture or construction management.

“Students learned basic principles of architecture and engineering including scale, perspective and building models,” Pesant said. One class had to build a model of a specific type of bridge, such as an arch, cable stay or cantilever bridge, assigned by the teacher using materials such as cardboard, string and Popsicle sticks. Another class built models of skyscrapers out of paper. and a third designed an outdoor space for the city.

This year, part of the school’s first graduating senior class—including Gar Yan Yeung and Michael Barrientos—worked as interns two to three hours a week instead of taking the design seminar. As part of their internship, their school required that they attend an internal meeting, research the history of Thornton Tomasetti and learn to adhere to company policy. In addition, they helped the staff with tasks such as filing shop drawings, printing AutoCAD drawings and daily project organization.

“Allie Clarke, the program director, and the [school] principal, Lawrence Pendergast, really reached out to us for help in setting up the internship program,” Pesant said. “Most of the seniors were able to be placed in some of the top engineering and architectural firms in the city.”

UASDC is dedicated to providing a college preparatory education for students with an interest in the art and science of architectural design, and for students who learn best by doing and seeing. Themes of design and construction are designed to stimulate excitement about learning by giving real-life relevance to classroom teaching and increasing students’ awareness of their built environment. Core curriculum includes: Introduction to Architecture, Design Studio and Careers in Design and Construction.

### **About The Thornton Tomasetti Foundation**

The Thornton Tomasetti Foundation, a tax-exempt, non-profit organization, has two primary missions:

- Fund fellowships, scholarships and internships for undergraduate students, and those planning to pursue graduate studies in building engineering, design or technology.
- Provide financial support for individuals and organizations pursuing philanthropic activities related to building engineering, design or technology.

Key elements of the program are college scholarships, traveling internships, and grants to, and partnerships with, nonprofit organizations.

For more information contact [info@ThorntonTomasettiFoundation.org](mailto:info@ThorntonTomasettiFoundation.org)

*The programs of the Thornton Tomasetti Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization, are funded through an endowment established by the principals of the firm. The Foundation's activities are wholly separate from those of the firm.*

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