

From: [Architectural Lighting September-October 2013](#)

Posted on: October 23, 2013

One-on-one

## Bonnie Littman

President of USAI Lighting

By Elizabeth Donoff



Credit: Peter Ross

*Lighting is a family affair for Bonnie Littman. The third generation of her family to work in the industry, Littman can trace her lighting roots back to her grandfather, William Littman, who, in the 1930s, built fluorescent fixtures that GE introduced to the public at the 1939 World's Fair. Her father Eugene, who passed away in July, joined the family business, growing it into the company known as Lightron. But he never assumed that his children would follow in his footsteps. (Littman's brother and sister also run their own lighting companies.) "I don't think my dad was looking for any of us to be in lighting," Littman says. "It's just something that we were always fascinated by as kids and really fell in love with." It's this legacy and spirit of innovation that drives her today as she steers USAI Lighting into the 21st century.*

**Do you have a lighting philosophy?**

Regardless of the time of day, your location, or the activity you are engaged in—working, learning, healing, etc.—you should be able to maximize your performance in those tasks. Light should make life easier and better.

**Is there a text that has had an impact on your thinking about light?**

*Chronotherapy: Resetting Your Inner Clock to Boost Mood, Alertness, and Quality Sleep* by Dr. Michael Terman (Avery, 2012). Several chapters focused on color temperature and intensity as it impacts human performance.

**What makes a great piece of lighting equipment?**

A great fixture is one that offers everything a user needs with no compromise. We take a systems approach to the design and development of everything that we make. We start from the inside and work our way out. It is time consuming and costly.

**In this economy, how do you make that happen successfully?**

The people who specify and buy these products know that there's no compromise. When you make products that people can rely on, then they want to buy from you and you are rewarded for technical risk-taking.

**What are the most exciting technical developments you are seeing in lighting?**

LEDs have evolved from a one-dimensional source that were based on energy efficiency to a multidimensional design tool that redefines how we think about illuminating a space. But the most important innovation is really how color is delivered. The pursuit of personalized lighting and color flexibility is going to be the big story for many years to come.