University of Kentucky College of Design Alumnus Mark W. Steele and his wife and business partner, Dale, have given $25,000 to name a first-year studio in the Gray Design Building. The studio will be named the “Mark Steele Architecture Studio in Memory of Chuck Graves.” Steele enrolled at UK in 1959 and graduated with a B.Arch in 1965. He and his classmates were the first graduating class to complete their degrees start to finish in UK’s College of Architecture. At that time, the College of Architecture was housed in the Reynolds Building, which is currently being renovated to become the Gray Design Building. In addition, Mark and Dale have made a deferred gift to the College of Design through their estate.

Part of Steele’s inspiration to name a studio in the Gray Design Building was to ensure that Chuck Graves’s name would be memorialized in the building. “I have a tremendous affection and respect for the University of Kentucky, and much of that goes back to the Reynolds Building, where the College of Architecture was born. It is symbolic to me that the College is returning to its birthplace.”

Charles Parker “Chuck” Graves was 31 years old when he came to Lexington in 1958 to lead the new College of Architecture. Steele fondly remembered the notable guest architects Graves brought to UK to teach and lecture and the field trips Graves organized both inside and outside Kentucky to introduce students to the highest levels of the profession.

Steele is the President and Founder of the M.W. Steele Group in La Jolla, CA. His firm has won numerous design awards and is recognized internationally for its integration of design and planning. Steele also served as Chair of the San Diego Planning Commission.