

Buildings tell stories and are an embodiment of our memories – the clients who commission them, the architects who design them, the builders, the people who use them, the photographers and those of who tell the stories.

Victoria Composite High School was constructed between 1949 and 1951. It was the first composite high school to be built in Edmonton. Maxwell Dewar was the City Architect at the time and designed this innovative facility. It won an international award for school architecture in 1952. He went into private practice in 1950 and went on design the 1957 Edmonton City Hall with his firm Dewar Stevenson Stanley. Unfortunately Maxwell Dewar died on April 1, 1955, before City Hall was completed. It is reported that he left an indelible impression on the architectural community during his lifetime.

Peter Hemingway is perhaps the architect with the greatest public recognition in Edmonton. His legacy is huge and he transformed the city with iconic buildings. Central Pentacostal Tabernacle, designed in 1964 and 1970, was the first of his pyramidal buildings, along with St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church in St. Albert, followed by the 1973 Muttart Conservatory in Cloverdale. We lost Central Pentacostal Tabernacle a few years ago.

Kelly Stanley was an excellent architect and mentor, as were many of the senior architects after the war. He nurtured the early career of architect Donald Bittorf, who with James B. Wensley designed some wonderful buildings that included the 1969 Edmonton Art Gallery. Stanley formed a partnership with Maxwell Dewar in the early 1950s and later left Edmonton to become Chief Architect for the Federal Department of Public Works and Expo 67 itself. Downtown's Paramount Theatre is one of his best buildings, and a great memory for Edmontonians after the War. This is where Ernest Manning recorded his regular Sunday morning radio program.

Construction of the Alberta Government Telephones Building began in 1951 and was completed by 1958 with 14 storeys. It is Edmonton's first curtain wall building, designed at the same time as New York's famous Lever House on Park Avenue. Rule Wynn Rule was probably Alberta's most recognized and prolific architectural firm after the war. The partners were educated at the University of Alberta's School of Architecture in the 1930s. This building remains a testament to the vision of AGT and its architects, who wanted to be seen as being on the leading edge of modern technology in the age of the cold war and the start of space exploration.

Neil McKernan was a quiet architect who surprises us with his numerous and delightful modern offices, houses and institutions. In his lifetime, he also nourished the education of many young architects who passed through his office on the way to independent practice and as a result remained an important design office.

The City of Edmonton was remarkable for its commitment to excellent architectural design and maintained the position of City Architect to ensure that City buildings were well-designed and in the best interests of the citizens. Robert Falconer Duke took over the position from Maxwell Dewar in 1949 and served until the mid-1960s. His designs included Canada's first planetarium in Coronation Park.

Peter Hemingway challenged his clients to look beyond the conventional and was recognized nationally for his visions. As a result his buildings are iconic and, in the case of the Muttart Conservatory, have come to represent the city itself.

The 1960s. "They say you want a revolution. Well, you know, we'd all like to change the world", as the Beatles said. The University of Alberta Students' Union changed Edmonton when they hired Diamond Myers and Wilkin to design the Housing Union Building in 1968. It was part of the University's new Master Plan. No building had been built like this before. This response to our harsh winter climate was unprecedented and set the stage for other glass-covered indoor streets such as West Edmonton Mall and the Walter C. McKenzie Health Sciences Centre. Edmonton was on the world stage and this building was published in every major architectural publication in the world.

On behalf of the team of colleagues with whom I have worked over the past few years, we hope that Edmontonians will revere their recent architectural history. It offers greater preservation challenges than previous generations of buildings but our sense of place wouldn't be the same without them.