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CIRCLE 15

Record News

Arthur Erickson, lauded Canadian architect, dies

Canada's most influential architect, Arthur Erickson, died on May 20 at the age of 84. The only Canadian ever to be awarded the AIA's Gold Medal (1986), Erickson built to acclaim in Japan, Kuwait, England, and up and down the U.S. West Coast. His legacy, however, is most evident in the city of his birth and death, Vancouver.

One has to go all the way back to Daniel Burnham's shaping of Chicago to find another North American architect who so dominated a large city's architectural culture. Like Burnham, Erickson was celebrated both for his technically innovative and elegant buildings and his progressive urban ideals and schemes. Many regard Erickson as the intellectual author of "Vancouverism" – an approach to city building characterized by developments that are high-density, high-amenity, socially inclusive, and respectful of nature.

Erickson's talents were honed early. He had a gallery show of his paintings while still a teenager; studied Japanese; and spent World War II serving with the British Intelligence in India. Inspired to study architecture after reading a profile on Frank Lloyd Wright in *Fortune* magazine, Erickson graduated from McGill University in 1950. He extended a Pilkington Glass traveling scholarship into a 30-month architectural tour around Europe, and then returned to Canada.

Two 1960s designs (with former partner Geoffrey Massey) in Brutalist concrete established



his reputation: the megastructural Simon Fraser University and the waffle-framed MacMillan-Bloedel office tower. In the 1970s, he implemented his trademark ideas of new modes of public space, integration of nature

into city centers, and buildings as landforms in his three-block-long Robson Square in Vancouver. In 1976, he completed his masterwork, the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia.

For much of his career, Erickson was more admired than supported in Vancouver. He was the sole designer of no major design commissions there between the 1983 Vancouver Art Gallery and the 2002 Waterfall Building (designed in association with Nick Milkovich). Unpaid Middle Eastern work, along with the strains of commuting between offices in Toronto, Vancouver, and Los Angeles, led to a high-profile bankruptcy in 1992.

Carving out a role as public intellectual that few architects risk, Erickson constantly called for better designs from his peers, and for Vancouver to make the investments in transportation, housing, and institutions befitting its inevitable fate as a world city. His pronouncements doubtlessly scared away clients and cost him financially, but their legacy has galvanized Vancouver and provided a template for architects everywhere struggling to reconcile form-making, city-building, and living with nature. *Trevor Boddy*

RECORD NEWS NOTED

Ed Feiner, FAIA, former chief architect of the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), has joined the Washington, D.C., office of **Perkins+Will** as principal. Feiner founded the GSA's Design Excellence Program and was instrumental in developing the agency's green-building standards.

Robert P. Madison, FAIA, who in 1954 opened Ohio's first practice owned by a black architect, was chosen to deliver the commencement address at the Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland. Madison, a World War II veteran, holds an M.Arch. from Harvard and studied at the L'Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris as a Fulbright scholar. In 1982, he founded the Ohio Association of Minority Architects and Engineers.

The **AIA** has announced the four recipients of the **2009 Jason Pettigrew Memorial ARE Scholarships**: Jill C. Finn, Venesa Alicea, Melissa Kegan Tom, and Ha Pham. The award covers the cost of the Architecture Registration Exam.

The American Academy of Arts and Letters hosted its annual award ceremony on May 20. **Stan Allen**, **Wendell Burnette**, and **Jeffrey Kipnis** received the \$7,500 prizes given in the architecture category; **Juhani Pallasmaa** received the \$5,000 Arnold W. Brunner Memorial Prize in Architecture. Additionally, architect **Tod Williams** was inducted into the 111-year-old academy.