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News Letter



Joseph Murphy, *St. Ann of Normandy Catholic Church*, 7530 Natural Bridge Road, 1952; façade sculpture by Hilles Arnold

Editor's note: Following up on our spring article about Joseph Murphy's family home in University City, now the home of one of his daughters, we have a brief reminiscence by one of his sons. Murphy's talent brought him to the forefront of St. Louis architecture at several points in his career. In 1929, he won the prestigious Paris Prize offered by the American Beaux-Arts Society, which enabled him to study at the École des Beaux Arts in Paris. In 1938, he teamed up with Kenneth Wischmeyer to win the competition for design of the Municipal Opera Arcade in Forest Park. Beginning in the late 1940s, his series of startlingly modern churches for the Catholic archdiocese, designed in partnership with Eugene Mackey, Jr., brought him national attention, followed in 1960 by the Climatron. During this time both men inspired a generation of students at Washington University. Following Mackey's sudden death in 1968, he formed a new firm, Murphy, Downey, Wofford & Richman, which developed its own practice. As the generation that knew Murphy personally passes, scholars are beginning to look at his work in a more systematic way. We have a great opportunity to learn what they are up to when Mary Brunstrom speaks at Landmarks Association on Sunday, November 7. See the Activity calendar for details.

REMEMBERING DAD, JOSEPH D. MURPHY by John B. Unger Murphy

I am John B. Unger Murphy, the eighth of nine children, the youngest son of Joseph D. and Ann N. Murphy. I come to be involved in construction of buildings via my company, Murphy's CELL-TECH.

It is pleasing for me to read what other people experi-

enced with my father and family. At that time, I was a child. The fact that Dad was a respected notable architect did not enter my mind; he was Dad to me. And he did things to try to convey to us the joy he felt with his work, art, and family.

I first learned to love buildings and to appreciate how people use their buildings from my father. As a child I heard stories of the construction of the cathedrals in France, Russia, and Istanbul. As a family we would visit new buildings that he had designed as they were being opened. I remember the Loretto-Hilton Center for the Performing Arts at Webster College in Webster Groves, the Climatron at Shaw's Garden, the Muny Opera in St. Louis' Forest Park, the 1960s addition to the St. Louis Art Museum, the Old Cathedral renovation west of the Arch, St. Louis County Court House, and many hospitals and churches around St. Louis. I remember Dad telling me to always remember that buildings need to serve the people using them, and to avoid doing buildings that aggrandize the architect without serving the people.



Joseph Murphy, c. 1936; photo courtesy of Caroline Murphy deForest

I remember him telling the story of his young student days about not putting enough effort into his Life Drawing class. His professor questioned him about his lack of effort. Dad described that he told his professor he enjoyed his drawing but that he wanted to focus on his drafting as more useful to be an architect. His professor described why it was important to devote serious effort to his Life drawing classes to become a good architect, the gist of which is as follows, to the best of my memory: "You see the model and you practice drawing the salient lines that are that model in your drawing to all who see your drawing. Later, as an architect, you will have cli-

ents describing in words their desire for their new building or home, and you will have to draw the salient lines of their desire onto paper. That is why your life drawing classes are important to becoming a fine architect.” And then Dad mentioned something about how he had to do well in all his classes to keep his scholarship intact. I do not know how old he was or which school this was.

I had the good fortune of my father being the architect of my first building that I ever built, the Franconia Market Place in Franconia, New Hampshire. Afterward, he told me I was his toughest client! Sorry DAD, but thank you. The Franconia Market Place was completed in 1978, one of the first super insulated commercial buildings in the United States.

Dad was always a teacher at heart, sharing his excitement in his quiet way. I remember one summer afternoon while his Alzheimer’s disease was affecting his speech in 1987-88, he gave me a lesson in how sunlight affects what we see by bringing my attention to a pot of flowers on a table on an open patio outside our summer cottage on Cape Cod, then using his hands and a few words to describe the flow of light and the light’s relationship to the flowers and the affect of the placement of the flowers to the light. It was awesome.



Joseph Murphy, Ronda, Spain, 1931. From “Through American Eyes: Views of Europe by St. Louis Artists and Architects” at the Frank Lloyd Wright House through January 2.

A SOURCE FOR THE EAST GATES OF WESTMORELAND PLACE?

by Esley Hamilton

Back in 1989, I discussed the history of Westmoreland Place with Norris Allen. His home at 9 Westmoreland had been built in 1890 by his wife Dorothea’s grandfather William L. Huse to designs of Eames and Young. Norris and Dorothea were the last of the original families in Westmoreland and Portland Places. Norris had a great interest in architecture and historic preservation. He had saved the house at 5 Westmoreland Place, another Eames & Young design, after it was damaged by fire, and when H. H. Richardson’s John Lionberger House had been demolished as part of the clearance of Vandeventer Place, he had rescued its wrought-iron side porch and installed it on his own house.



East Gates, Westmoreland Place, 1889, Eames & Young, from Charles C. Savage, Architecture of the Private Streets of St. Louis, 1987, p. 45

Norris recalled that someone had told him in an authoritative manner that the gate pavilions of Westmoreland Place on Kingshighway, also by Eames and Young, were copied from a monument in Edinburgh by Robert Adam. Adam (1728-1792) was the leading architect in Britain through much of the latter half of the eighteenth century. He was a native Scot, the son of William Adam (1689-1748), who had been Scotland’s foremost architect from the 1720s on. Much of Robert’s later career had focused on Scotland, and he contributed several important buildings to Edinburgh, notably the Register House (from 1774) and the University (from 1789).

The only monument he designed there, however, is the mausoleum he designed to commemorate the great philosopher and historian David Hume (1711-1776), and it looks nothing like this. The Hume Monument is situated on Calton Hill at the end of Princes Street in the vicinity of several other notable monuments and a familiar sight on the circuit of Edinburgh landmarks.

Recently, however, I have discovered that there is a second monument in Edinburgh with Adam connections. This is the mausoleum of William Adam, designed in 1750 by Robert's eldest brother John Adam. Secluded at the far end of Greyfriars Churchyard, south of the castle, it is not well known, although probably more than it was twenty years ago, as more of William Adam's country houses have become accessible to the public and his popular reputation has risen. It has arched openings and a low pyramidal roof rising above a Doric frieze. Today it is difficult to photograph, but a perspective drawing made by Robert Adam in 1753 shows it when new.

In the Westmoreland pavilions, the arches of the Adam design appear only in the north one. The south one has paired windows on three sides and a door on the fourth, inner side. It must have been used as a utility room, or, more optimistically, as a gatekeeper's office. Both buildings are Romanesque in feeling and have low attic stories under their broad overhangs, in contrast to the classical detailing of the Edinburgh example. So William S. Eames, the design partner of Eames & Young, certainly did not copy from Adam.



William Adam mausoleum, Edinburgh, 1753-55, designed by John Adam. This sketch by Robert Adam was probably drawn before the mausoleum was built. It shows Edinburgh Castle in the distance and George Heriot's School immediately behind. From David King, The Complete Works of Robert and James Adam, 1991, p. 360.

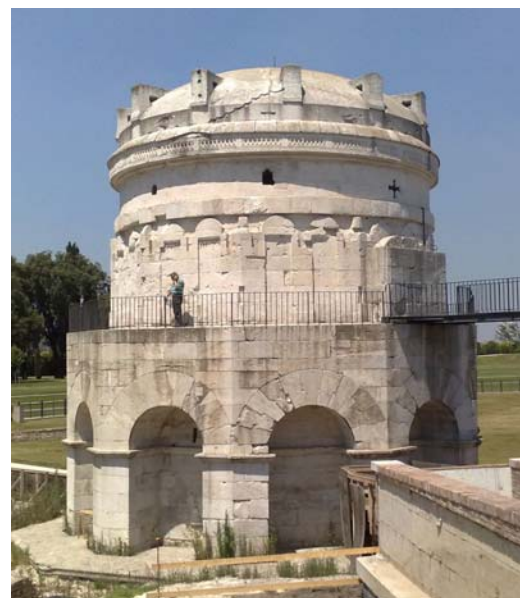
But Eames might have been inspired by the overall shape and proportions of Adam's design and might have used

them as the conceptual platform on which to construct the original designs we see facing Kingshighway. If this is true, then Norris Allen's memory of a century ago offers a significant insight into the way traditional architects were capable of creative synthesis.



David Hume Monument, Calton Hill, Edinburgh, Scotland, 1777-78, designed by Robert Adam

Another example of this process is the aforementioned Hume Monument, in which Robert Adam drew on two classical sources to produce a new and original creation. It is a circular building with a Doric frieze, usually said to have been inspired by the mausoleum of Theodoric at Ravenna (520 AD), but also related to the tomb of Cecilia Metella on the Appian Way in Rome, dating from about 60 BC. Adam had probably seen both of these monuments during his Grand Tour.



Mausoleum of Theodoric, Ravenna, Italy, c. 520 AD.

A look at the Mausoleum of Theodoric shows that it shares little more than its generally cylindrical shape with the Hume Monument. Even that feature is only partial, as the lower part of the building and the arcade surrounding it are octagonal. It also has a shallow, buttressed dome.

THE ENDANGERED HYPERBOLIC PARABOLOID



Devin Colman of the Recent Past Preservation Network is worried about buildings with roofs shaped like hyperbolic paraboloids. During the Mid-Century Modern era, they were typically constructed of thin-shell concrete. The Priory Chapel on Mason Road and the McDonnell Planetarium in Forest Park are examples of the construction technique, although not the exact shape.

If you're not familiar with what these are, imagine a Pringles potato chip - it bends downward on two edges and upward on the opposite two edges, like a saddle. Sometimes they are called saddle roofs.



Colman says that several have been demolished in recent years because people aren't aware of their significance and can't easily find information about them. He would like to nominate the whole building type to the National Trust's "11 Most Endangered Places" list, which is updated each May. Here are some examples from around



Mausoleum of Cecilia Metella, Rome, c. 60 BC, from a 19th-century photograph

The Mausoleum of Cecilia Metella, by contrast, has a much larger diameter but is truly circular in plan. It has a coarsely laid foundation and is topped by a medieval defensive parapet, but the body of the tomb is composed of regularly shaped ashlar, as is the Hume Monument. Most tellingly, it is banded by a frieze and a cornice. Here again, the architect's freedom to depart from a model is seen in Adam's decision to use a Doric frieze of triglyphs and paterae rather than the original frieze of bucrania and festoons that had been detailed by Giovanni Battista Piranesi. Possibly Adam saw his frieze as more masculine in character than the Roman one.



Mausoleum of Cecilia Metella, Rome, c. 60 BC, detail of the frieze, seen in an 18th-century engraving by Piranesi

We can see that from Adam to Eames, the best traditional architects were historically not merely copyists but creative artists within the grand tradition. Historians looking for sources for traditional buildings should therefore cast a much wider net than they have too often done.

the country. Do you know of any examples in the St. Louis area or elsewhere in Missouri?



The Cross Country Inn, 2601 U.S. 290, in Austin, Texas before the unfortunate replacement of its curtain wall



The Tramway Gas Station, now the visitors center for Palm Springs, California, designed in 1965 by Albert Frey



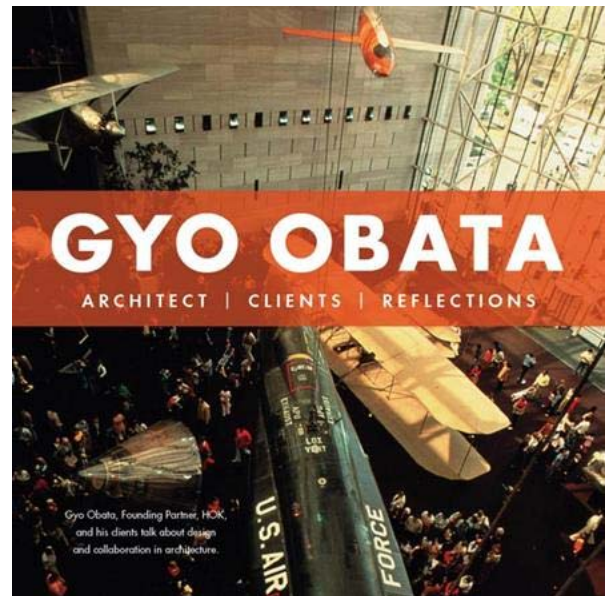
Union 76 Gas Station, 427 North Crescent Drive, Beverly Hills



Olympic Saddledome (now Pengrowth Saddledome), Calgary, Canada, 1983, Graham McCourt Architects

GYO OBATA: ARCHITECT, CLIENTS, REFLECTIONS *by Jamie Cannon*

A wonderful new book, *Gyo Obata: Architect, Clients, Reflections*, is the collaborative effort of Marlene Ann Birkman, professor of education at Webster University, and world-class architect Gyo Obata, FAIA. The book is about Gyo's career as an architect and, of greater significance, the essence of his practice and style for the past 55 years. The narrative contains a great deal of information both personal and professional about Gyo, his thoughts, and his concerns, and it illuminates the ways in which he manages to bring the client into his world of design. An architect reading this book will surely learn new ways of listening to clients so that they eventually become lifelong friends.



Almost every St. Louis architect is familiar with the work of HOK, the internationally renowned firm founded by Gyo, George Hellmuth and George Kassabaum in the 1950s. Many, including myself, have worked there at some point in their own careers. Yet, only about thirty or so have had the experience of working directly with Gyo on an important commission. This book recreates the experiences of both Gyo and his clients and as you read, you become an eyewitness to the process, resulting in more than one “aha!” moment.

Books on architecture are one of my passions – I now have more than 300 in my library and have read some several times. Many, of course, are largely picture books filled with exotic color photos of outstanding buildings. To my knowledge, no internationally known architect has thus far shared his own thoughts about a building project while inviting his client to respond with their own candid recollections of the experience with the same building.

Gyo has selected thirty buildings from 1962 (St. Louis Priory Chapel) to 2011 (Great American Building at Queen City Square) and turns each project into a revealing conversation between architect and client. Read the fascinating back-story about the designs of the Priory and of Gyo's own home. Max Obata, Gyo's younger son, has offered a very tender essay about his father and the design experiences as their new home was under construction. In addition, any architect would cherish the obvious symbiotic relationship that Gyo had with Father Luke Rigby during the design phase of the Priory.

Every individual mentioned in this book has learned to love architecture. You will too. While the ideal audience for the book is the young architect less than ten years out of school, whatever your professional level in the field, you can read the book and learn from it. It has the potential to change your career and your outlook on life.

ARCHITECTS & FUNDRAISING, 1915

In this era of unidentified political contributions, it is interesting to see that in 1915, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* could publish the names and contribution amounts of every individual and business donating to a fund that had been set up to attract the Republican and Democratic national conventions to St. Louis in 1916. The paper arranged the names by business or profession and began publication on December 1, 1915. Architects were the second category, after Advertising and before Automobiles.

ARCHITECTS

T. P. Barnett Co., \$10
 Barnett, Haynes & Barnett, \$20
 F. C. Bonsack, \$10
 P. J. Bradshaw, \$4
 G.F.A. Bruggeman, \$10
 H. G. Clymer, \$10
 J. M. Dunham, \$10
 Eames & Young, \$12
 Ewald, Allen & Toensfeldt, \$10
 Helfensteller, Hrisch & Watson, \$10
 Hellmuth & Hellmuth, \$4
 Klipstein & Rathman, \$10
 La Beume & Klein, \$4
 Will Levy, \$10
 Theo C. Link, \$4
 Mauran, Russell & Crowell, \$20
 Guy Study, Roth & Study, \$10
 Taylor, Isaac S., \$10
 Irwin R. Timlin, Bell Telephone Co., \$4
 William Wedemeyer, \$2
 Widmann & Walsh, \$50
 Henry Wright, \$4

These contributions seem to have been consistent with others from individuals and small organizations. For example, brickmaker Anthony Ittner gave \$4, while John G. Hewitt, secretary of Winkle Terra Cotta, gave \$20. Larger organizations gave more, although not consistently. Dorris Motor Car Co. gave \$50, Switzer's candy company \$100, Monsanto Chemical Works \$200, National Stock Yards \$500, Boatmen's Bank \$574, and the largest, Anheuser-Busch \$3,500.



The 1916 Democratic National Convention at the St. Louis Coliseum

In spite of the fund, the Republicans chose Chicago for their 1916 convention, June 8-10. They nominated Supreme Court Justice Charles Evans Hughes for president. The Democrats, however, did select St. Louis, meeting at the Coliseum June 14-16, where they nominated Woodrow Wilson to a second term. The Coliseum had been built just a few years earlier at Washington and Jefferson to designs by Frederick Bonsack. It was demolished in 1953.



Isadore Shank, Tangiers, 1926. From "Through American Eyes: Views of Europe by St. Louis Artists and Architects" at the Frank Lloyd Wright House through January 2.

**Talk: "Faith's Modern Forms:
The 1950s Churches of Murphy and Mackey"**
Sunday, November 7, 3 p.m.
Landmarks Association, 911 Washington Avenue
(enter from 10th Street side)

Mary Reid Brunstrom, doctoral candidate in Art History and Archaeology, Washington University, discusses significant architectural innovations in three Catholic churches by Murphy and Mackey: St. Ann in Normandy, St. Peter in Kirkwood; and Resurrection on Meramec in South St. Louis. All three were recognized nationally and internationally for their imaginative new forms as well as for the architects' integration of architecture and the arts. Reservations are essential as space is limited. Phone 314-421-6474 or e-mail landmark@stlouis.missouri.org.

Curator's Tour: "Through American Eyes"
Sunday, November 21, 1 p.m.
The Frank Lloyd Wright House in Ebsworth Park
120 North Ballas Road, Kirkwood

Artist Peter Shank will lead a tour of the outstandingly beautiful views of Europe, Africa, and Asia he has assembled for this exhibit, all by St. Louis architects and artists, including his father Isadore Shank. The installation in the Kraus House is also outstanding. For reservations, call 314-822-8359 or e-mail info@ebsworthpark.org. Adults \$10, children 12 and under \$5, members free. See Exhibit listing for more.

**Talk: "STL Loves MCM:
Embracing Recent Past Preservation"**
Sunday, November 21, 3 p.m.
Landmarks Association, 911 Washington Avenue

Toby Weiss of the blog B.E.L.T. showcases some of St. Louis' best Mid-Century Modern buildings. With the Arch as our global calling card, it's time for St. Louis to embrace and protect its MCM heritage.

**Exhibit: Lines of Beauty: Original Renderings
by St. Louis Architects**
through Wednesday, December 15, 2010
Toft Gallery at Architecture St. Louis
911 Washington Avenue, Suite 170

Selected from the private collection of Kyrle Boldt, III, this exhibit of exquisite and rare architectural renderings and hand-drawn perspectives showcases the talents of some of St. Louis' most accomplished architects, including Wees, Helfensteller, Hirsch & Watson, Charles Eames, Murphy, Bernoudy, Shank, Dunn and others. These beautifully executed works illustrate the artistic

capabilities that are still an essential component of the architectural profession. Open during Landmarks Association's regular office hours and before and after Sunday talks November 7 and 21; phone 314-421-6474

**Exhibit: "Joe Jones:
Painter of the American Scene"**
through Sunday, January 2, 2011
St. Louis Art Museum, Forest Park

St. Louis-born artist Joe Jones (1909-1963) achieved national prominence in the 1930s for his depictions of both urban and rural life in the U.S. Paintings, mural studies, drawings and prints by Jones from both public and private collections are included in this exhibition, curated by Andrew Walker. The show focuses on the period in which Jones's social and artistic experiences in St. Louis served as the foundation for his most vital work.

**Exhibit: "Through American Eyes: Views of
Europe by St. Louis Artists and Architects"**
through Sunday, January 2, 2011
The Frank Lloyd Wright House in Ebsworth Park
120 North Ballas Road, Kirkwood

This exhibit features views of Old World architecture in drawings, watercolors and etchings by artists and architects from St. Louis. Among those included are Charles Eames, Joseph Murphy, Gene Mackey, Fred Conway, Arthur Osver, and curator Peter Shank. Advance reservations are required; call 314-822-8359 or e-mail info@ebsworthpark.org. Fees: \$10 adults, \$5 children 12 and under, members free.

**Exhibit: "Designing the City:
An American Vision"**
through Saturday, January 15, 2011
The Sheldon Galleries, 3648 Washington Ave.

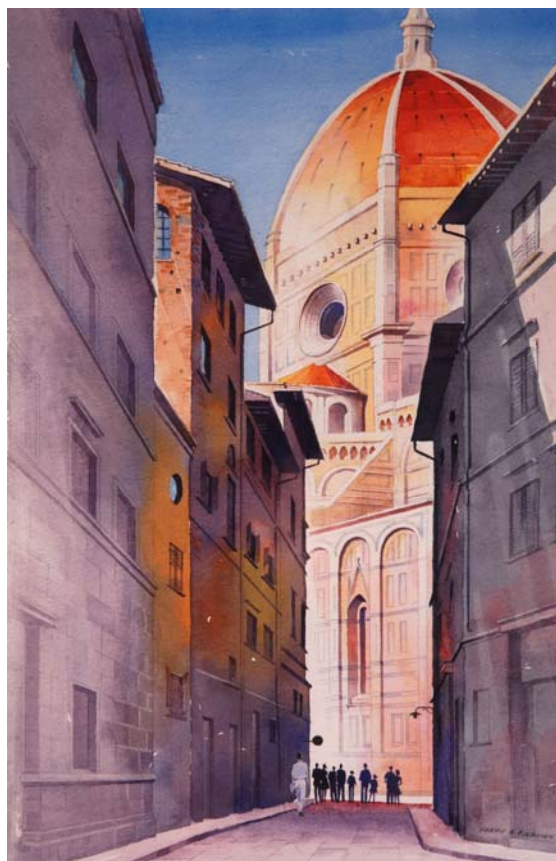
Drawn from the Bank of America collection, this exhibition offers a unique opportunity to see famous images of American architecture by outstanding American photographers, including Berenice Abbott, Harold Allen, Richard Nickel, and John Szarkowski, along with Bill Hedrich, Ken Hedrich, and Hube Henry of the Hedrich-Blessing Studio.

SAH Annual Gathering
Sunday, February 13, 6 to 9:30
Location to be announced

Hold the date and start thinking about the building you're going to show at this always enjoyable event

VINTAGE ST. LOUIS ARCHITECTURE POSTERS AVAILABLE

Terry Beckmeyer has located a dozen copies of the large poster published in 1989 by the St. Louis Chapter of the American Institute of Architects to celebrate the history of St. Louis architecture. Arranged horizontally as a timeline on three registers, the poster uses the fine black and white photos that Doris Danna collected for the *Guide to the Architecture of St. Louis* that the Chapter published that year, with text and captions by Esley Hamilton. Terry is selling them for \$5 each, plus \$6 shipping, or all twelve for \$50 and \$10 shipping. Contact Terry at tbeckmeyer@hotmail.com.



Harry B. Richman, The Duomo in Florence, watercolor, 2001; From "Through American Eyes: Views of Europe by St. Louis Artists and Architects" at the Frank Lloyd Wright House through January 2.

News Letter

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Spring issue	15 February
Summer issue	15 May
Fall issue	15 August
Winter Issue	15 November

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