



Paul M. Rudolph

**Paul Marvin Rudolph** was born on October 23, 1918, in Elkton, Kentucky. He took his Bachelor of Architecture at Alabama Polytechnic Institute (now Auburn University) in 1940 and, after working for a year in the office of E.B. Van Keuren in Birmingham, Alabama, and for a few months with Ralph Twitchell in Sarasota, Florida, he proceeded to Harvard University as a Fellow in Architecture.

The war interrupted his studies, and he served as Officer-in-Charge of Ship Construction at the Brooklyn Navy Yard in New York City from 1943 to 1946, designing merchant ships. Returning to Harvard, he studied under Walter Gropius, and took his Masters in 1947. His architecture classmates at Harvard included I.M. Pei and Philip Johnson.

In 1947, he formed a partnership with Ralph Twitchell in Sarasota, Florida, but also traveled to the UK and Europe as a Wheelwright Traveling Fellow as an advanced student in the Harvard Graduate School of Design. He quickly established a reputation for designing modern, sophisticated vacation homes employing innovative design schemes and materials, and won an AIA Award of Merit for Best House of the Year in 1949. Twitchell and Rudolph had wide influence as leaders of the “Sarasota School” of architecture, and their works featured a clean, open contemporary floor plans, terrazzo floors, wide overhangs, and flat roofs. They focused on making buildings suffused with light and in harmony with their surroundings.

Bruce Barnes, in his introduction to “Paul Rudolph and his Architecture” for the UMass Dartmouth Library, documents Paul’s rise to become one of the world’s leading architects:

In 1952, he ended his partnership with Twitchell but continued to practice in Florida, increasingly attracting the attention of the architectural press. He started to receive invitations to serve as guest critic and lecturer at prestigious architectural schools including Yale University. With his national reputation growing, he acquired commissions outside of the South, including the design of two important exhibits for the Museum of Modern Art. This led him to receive two commissions for large-scale buildings in Massachusetts, the Jewett Art Center at Wellesley College (1955) and the Blue Cross Building in Boston (1956).

In June of 1957, it was announced that he had accepted the chairmanship of the Department of Architecture at Yale University. During his years at Yale he began receiving commissions for monumental structures from throughout the Northeast including the Art and Architecture Building at Yale, the Government Services Center in Boston and the SMTI/UMass-Dartmouth campus. By this time he had adopted a distinctive style, mostly in concrete, that drew from many sources including Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier as well as his own prodigious imagination. By the mid-1960s he was one of the most celebrated and in demand architects in the country.



Rudolph’s tenure as an educator at Yale was noted by his willingness to bring important national and international designers to campus to serve as guest critics and lecturers. His Art and Architecture building included a penthouse suite for these distinguished guests. Talented students from around the globe were drawn to Yale to study in this environment. Yale educated a host of designers during these years who would

become the next generation of leading architects, including Norman Foster, Robert A. M. Stern, Richard Rogers, Der Scutt and Stanley Tigerman, to name a few.

After leaving Yale in 1965, his career began a slow decline that escalated alarmingly in the early 1970s. By the end of the 1970s, his domestic commissions were few. It was at this time that he began to receive attention from developers in the rapidly expanding nations of Southeast Asia. He received commissions for large scale projects in Singapore, Hong Kong and Indonesia that once again gained him considerable notice in the architectural press, particularly in Europe. The Bond Centre in Hong Kong and the Dharmala Sakti Building in Jakarta are striking examples of his architecture.

At Yale, Paul, as a professor in the Masters course in architecture, taught some notable students, including Muzharul Islam, Norman Foster and Richard Rogers. Foster, in particular, has attested to the significant influence that Rudolph had upon him. Paul's commissions had a considerable impact on both the Yale campus and the city of New Haven, and both arenas served not only as a proving ground for developing emerging architectural ideas, but also necessitated careful attention to forging relationships between old and new structures. After leaving Yale, Paul received honorary doctorates from Colgate (1966), Florida State (1970), and Southeastern Massachussets (1970).

Paul moved his office to New York City in 1965. He had purchased, in 1961, a three-story penthouse atop a four-story 1860 townhouse at 23 Beekman Place in Manhattan. This was not only Paul's home, but also a place where he experimented with and refined his ideas about architecture. Although Paul's interiors have been significantly altered by renovation, the exterior has been preserved as a New York landmark.



In the notes for an exhibition of Paul's work at MOMA in New York in 1970, Arthur Drexler, MOMA's Director of Architecture and Design, described Paul's work as follows:

With few exceptions, Paul Rudolph's buildings can be recognized by their complexity, their sculptural details, their effects of scale, and their texture. Rudolph has been particularly successful in working with a broad range of dimensions: in a single building the observer will see elements varying in size from massive curved projections, designed to 'read' from a distance, to such details as the texture of striated concrete. All of them are designed to suggest human use, affording both inhabitants and passersby a kaleidoscopic variety ...

Although his buildings must be experienced from all sides, certain views seem to have dominated, if not altogether determined, their total design – a consideration that is reflected in his preference for studying buildings through perspective drawings more than through models.

Rudolph's interest in variety of contour and mass has been pursued not only in unique buildings designed for specific programs and sites; he has also sought to enrich the architectural possibilities of such unyielding problems as mass housing. For many years he has studied the resources of the mobile home industry as they might be applied to the manufacture of multiple-room housing components. These units could be stacked, hung, or plugged into a vertical core of utilities to produce a kind of housing more generous than our archaic building trades make economically feasible.

Paul died in New York on August 8, 1997, from asbestos-related cancer, possibly a consequence of exposure during his stint at the Brooklyn Navy Yard during WWII. The historian of architecture Robert Bruegmann, contributing to a collection honoring Paul, penned an insightful tribute to Paul and his work:

In the months before his death, Rudolph was working on a new town outside Surabaya, the second largest city in Indonesia. ... As he talked, he became carried away by the opportunities, the chance to show how to unite buildings and land, how to order the town in such a way that it might appear orderly, rational and spatially exciting. 'I am hell-bent', he said, 'to get this town into comprehensible form'. Comprehensible urban form.

That was the quest from the day Paul Rudolph first discovered architecture. It was a goal that remained constant over the years, despite his maturing and the oscillations in style of his colleagues. No one has ever worked with more energy or with more devotion to this task than Paul Rudolph, and no one has been as successful in creating a body of work in which those most ancient of architectural elements — space and light — are better fused with modern urban needs.

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Paul's parents were Keener Lee Rudolph, born May 23, 1886, and Eurie D. Stone, born September 20, 1890. Both were from McCracken County, Kentucky, and they married there, in Eurie's parents' home, on June 19, 1912. Keener was a preacher and Eurie was a school teacher. Keener's WWI draft registration card, dated September 1918, shows that he was a Minister in Elkton, Kentucky. He had medium height, medium build, dark brown hair, and blue eyes. As a Methodist preacher, he moved around Kentucky as his church appointment changed – in 1920, the family was living on Main Street, Cadiz City; in 1925 they were in Marion County; in 1930 they resided on North Main Street in Greenville. While Paul was still young, they moved to Athens, Alabama, where Keener was appointed a dean at Athens College.



Paul, Marie, Mildred, Eurie, Keener, Ruth, about 1926

Keener and Eurie had 4 children: Ruth L., born about 1914 in Tennessee; Paul Marvin, born October 23, 1918, in Elkton, Kentucky; Eurie Marie, born September 5, 1920, in Trigg County, Kentucky; and Mildred O., born January 9, 1925, in Marion County, Kentucky. Keener died on December 5, 1980, and Eurie died on November 27, 1981, both in Stone Mountain, Georgia.

Paul's grandparents on his father's side were John L. Rudolph, born January 10, 1845, in McCracken County, Kentucky, and Dicey Jane Young, born November 9, 1847, in Paducah, Kentucky. John was a farmer. They married on September 28, 1865, and had ten children, born between 1866 and 1886; son Keener was the tenth. Dicey died on November 22, 1909, and John died on September 12, 1912, both in McCracken County.

Paul's grandparents on his mother's side were John W. Stone, born February 6, 1845, in Virginia, and Amity M.C. "Mettie" Newman, born February 1, 1850, in Paducah, Kentucky. John was a farmer. They married on February 12, 1872, in McCracken County, Kentucky. They had 11 children, and daughter Eurie was the youngest of those who survived childhood. John died February 9, 1910, and Mettie died January 17, 1929, both in McCracken County.

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Paul Rudolph's principal works include:

- Twitchell Residence, Sarasota, Florida, 1941 (with Ralph Twitchell) (destroyed)
- Miller Residence, Sarasota, Florida, 1947-48 (with Ralph Twitchell) (demolished)
- Revere Quality House, Sarasota, Florida, 1948 (with Ralph Twitchell)
- Healy Guest House "The Cocoon House", Sarasota, Florida, 1948-50 (with Ralph Twitchell)

Bennett Residence, Bradenton, Florida, 1949-51 (with Ralph Twitchell)  
Wheelan Cottage, Sarasota, Florida, 1951 (with Ralph Twitchell) (destroyed)  
Walker Guest House, Sanibel Island, Florida, 1952  
Hook Guest Residence, Sarasota, Florida, 1953  
Hiss Residence "The Umbrella House", Sarasota, Florida, 1953-54  
Jewett Art Center, Wellesley College, Massachusetts, 1955-58  
Blue Cross Building, Boston, Massachusetts, 1956-60  
Applebee Residence, Auburn, Alabama, 1956  
Martin Residence, Athens, Alabama, 1957  
Burkhardt Residence, Sarasota, Florida, 1957  
Riverview High School, Sarasota, Florida, 1958-59 (demolished in June, 2009)  
Married Students Housing, Yale University, 1958-61  
Art & Architecture Building, Yale University, 1958-64  
Temple Street Parking Garage, New Haven, Connecticut, 1959  
Milam Residence, Jacksonville, Florida, 1960-62  
SMTI/UMass-Dartmouth master plan & buildings, 1962-71  
Boston Government Service Center, Boston, Massachusetts, 1962-63  
Orange County Government Center, Goshen, New York, 1963-67  
Rudolph Residence, 23 Beekman Place, New York City, 1967-77  
The Chapel, Tuskegee Institute, Tuskegee, Alabama, 1969 (with Fry & Welch)  
Deane Residence, Great Neck, New York, 1970  
Oriental Masonic Gardens Housing, New Haven, Connecticut, 1970  
Bass Residence, Fort Worth, Texas, 1970-71  
Burroughs Wellcome Corporate Headquarters, Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, 1970  
The Colonnade Condominiums, Singapore, 1980-87  
Beach Road II Office Tower Project, Singapore, 1981  
Wisma Dharmala Sakti Building, Jakarta, Indonesia, 1982-88  
Lippo Centre (formerly the Bond Centre), Hong Kong, 1987

The following are illustrations of some of Paul's most notable works:



#### **Twitchell Residence, Sarasota, Florida, 1941**

This house, at 101 Big Pass, Siesta Key, Sarasota, Florida, was designed with Ralph Twitchell. It was featured in *Architectural Forum*, September 1947. As of 1969, the owners were Garrison and Marjorie Creighton. It was sold in 2005 to current owner, Joseph King. Subsequently, it was damaged by fire, and destroyed in 2007. (Photo: Chris Mottalini)



#### **Healy Guest House, Sarasota, Florida, 1948-50**

Dubbed “The Cocoon House”, this Twitchell-Rudolph design, built at 3575 Bayou Louise Lane, Siesta Key, Sarasota, Florida, was an experiment in structure and technology, using steel straps to maintain its curved catenary shape. The roof structure is an original technological assembly: the steel straps are fastened to flexible insulation boards, and the roofing material, Cocoon, is sprayed on.



#### **Bennett Residence, Bradenton, Florida, 1949-51**

The Alan and Barbara Bennett Residence, at 3901 Riverview Boulevard, Bradenton, Florida, was designed with Ralph Twitchell. In 2001, it was sold to architect Joseph King, who has written extensively on Rudolph. It is currently for sale again.



#### **Walker Guest House, Sanibel Island, Florida, 1952**

The Walt W. and Elaine Walker Guest House, 4143 West Gulf Drive, Sanibel Island, Florida, features large louvered flaps hanging from an external light wood frame. According to Paul himself, “two bays on each side of this guest cottage are filled with pivoting panels which function as (1) the enclosing wall, (2) the ventilating element, (3) the shading device, and (4) the hurricane shelter. The third bay is filled with glass, to admit light and splendid views. When the panels are closed, the pavilion is snug and cave-like, when open the space psychologically changes and one is virtually in the landscape”. (Photo by Lloyd Alter)



### **Hiss Residence Sarasota, Florida, 1953-54**

The Philip Hiss Residence, at 1300 Westway Drive, Lido Shore, Sarasota, Florida, was named “The Umbrella House” for its external trellis. The trellis was destroyed in 1966 by Hurricane Alma and never replaced. In 2005, it was sold to current owners Vincent and Julie Ciulla, who are doing a restoration, as shown in the photo.



### **Jewett Art Center, Wellesley College, 1955-58**

The building is composed of three sections: two wings, one devoted to the visual arts and one to the performing arts, are bridged by an exhibition gallery.

The original design intent was to locate studios in the upper stories of the visual arts wing; thus, large expanses of glass and skylights were used to provide the maximum amount of natural light.

An interesting feature of this wing of the building is the “brise-soleils” shielding the windows on the north and south elevations. These porcelain-on-aluminum grilles provide a sunscreen, cutting the sun’s glare and adding textural richness to the building. The performing arts wing is a more solid and inward-looking structure because it does not have the same large-scale use of glass.



### **Riverview High School, Sarasota, Florida, 1958-59**

The Riverview High School was Paul’s first large-scale project. According to architect Charles Gwathmey, “Riverview High School is a fantastic prototype of what today we call green architecture. He was so far ahead of his time, experimenting with sun screens and cross-ventilation.”

The building was demolished by the school board in June, 2009.



### **Art & Architecture Building, Yale University, 1958-64**

This complex building contains over 30 floor levels in its 7 stories. It is made of ribbed, bush-hammered concrete. The design was influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright's Larkin Building, and the later buildings of Le Corbusier. When it first opened, it was praised widely by critics, and received the Award of Honor by the AIA. As time went by, however, the critical reaction to the building became more negative. A large fire in 1969 caused extensive damage and during the repairs, many changes were made to Paul's original design. It is now being renovated with the intent of restoring it to the original design.



### **Milam Residence, Jacksonville, Florida, 1960-62**

The Arthur W. Milam Beach House, at 1033 Ponte Vedra Boulevard, Jacksonville, Florida, is perhaps Paul's most famous house design. As described in the *Architectural Record*, it is "essentially a series of platforms: the floor plane drops to form an extended conversation pit in the living area, rises to create a platform for dining, and four risers higher becomes an inglenook defined by a low parapet. The second

floor plane is continuous as a floor but is interrupted to permit more than half of the living space below to extend to the roof. A mezzanine overlooking the living-dining area adds a pleasant spatial complication as does the dropped roof deck which creates a lowered ceiling over the inglenook to make a cozy group around the fire even cozier".



### **Orange Co. Govt. Center, Goshen, New York, 1963-67**

Paul's Orange County Government Center is a concrete Brutalist classic featuring a series of extruding boxes that call to mind the work of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. Natural light was just as important to Paul in this design as in his houses, and so clerestories are carefully placed to the north and south sides of the building to increase the flow of natural light in the interior. The extrusions of the boxes as seen from the exterior reveal fundamental ideas of the forms found within the walls.



### Rudolph Residence, 23 Beekman Place, NYC, 1967-77

According to David Hay of New York Magazine, “When Rudolph submitted his plans for adding his modernist apartment atop this townhouse, the neighbors objected. What has never been in dispute is the great imagination on display. ‘It’s a view inside his mind: clear but so complex’, notes Gregory Horgan, the project manager on-site.”

“As one enters the apartment’s small, stainless-steel-floored lobby, there’s an unnerving sensation. Thanks to glass panels on the right, a two-story-high bedroom suite looks to be almost floating out into Beekman Place.”



### Tuskegee Institute Chapel, Tuskegee, Alabama, 1969

In an interview with Peter Blake, Paul described his design thinking on this project as follows: “When working on the Tuskegee Chapel, I suggested a continuous slot of glass around the perimeter just below the roof, so the natural light enters the sanctuary diagonally. The roof is hyperbolic paraboloid in form for acoustic reasons, and the space rises diagonally and escapes through glass. The directions of the movement of space are in opposite but balanced directions, which is largely responsible

for the dynamic quality of the space. In addition, there is a varying velocity of the movement of space. The floor is almost level, but the ceiling height above the floor constantly changes, so that the space moves rapidly where the ceiling is high but more slowly where the ceiling is low. All of this must be imagined, so that there is a balance between opposite movements of space and light.”



### Bass Residence, Fort Worth, Texas, 1970-71

The Sid R. and Anne H. Bass Residence, at 1801 Deepdale Drive, Fort Worth, Texas, was Paul’s biggest single-family project. (Photo: Anthony Monk)

According to Roberto DeAlba, “Because of its strong horizontal cantilevers and its white-steel and glass

finishes, it has been suggested that the Bass Residence resembles a hybrid of Frank Lloyd Wright’s Fallingwater and Mies van der Rohe’s Farnsworth House. But the spatial diversity and complexity Rudolph achieved in the Bass Residence is unparalleled by either of those works.”



### **The Colonnade Condominiums, Singapore, 1980-87**

Initially intending to design a housing structure as a set of prefabricated units hoisted onto a structural frame, the ideas and visual intricacies of the Colonnade Condominiums were developments of the unbuilt Graphic Arts Center of Manhattan.

Paul referred to these replicable units as the “twentieth-century brick”, a means of construction that would seemingly make construction of large scale buildings more feasible. However, technical and financial reasons expelled the possibility of the prefabricated units. Instead, the Colonnade was built of pour-in-place concrete, which still successfully conveyed the appearance of the initial design goals.

The views from the large windows are some of the most beautiful in the world. The locations of bedrooms and more private spaces are shielded from the sun by the glazed windows.



### **Wisma Dharmala Sakti Building, Jakarta, 1982-88**

According to Anthony Monk, “The Dharmala office building rises 26 stories out of the pitched roofs of Jakarta, in a modern design which reflects the historic parts of the city where it is located. Its relationship with the existing bustle of small-scale buildings at the ground level is achieved by a multi-layered skirt of public rooms around an entrance courtyard. Rudolph planned this open atrium and its surrounds to be, like a village, with all the ease of access and variety that villages always possess.”

“The context and sense of place so important to Rudolph in his architecture has been achieved with the interaction of these spaces at these lower levels where the occupants walk into the building.”

“The Indonesian climate is hot and humid, and shade and breezes are welcome. So in this context, Rudolph has produced an architectural design system for this building which reflects the beautiful traditional roofs

in this area, incorporating deep overhanging eaves and cantilevered spandrels with 45 degree slopes that shield all floors from direct sunlight.

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Written by Thomas J. and Donna A. McQuade

Research by Donna A. McQuade, phone 347-274-9903, email [donna@mcquades.net](mailto:donna@mcquades.net)