



James Taylor (*The Architect*, Spring 1992, p.6; RAIWA)

James Taylor (1937-2022) was born 11 July 1937 at Dundee, Scotland. James went to a comprehensive State School, the Harris Academy, located in the West End of Dundee. He then undertook architectural training, graduating from Duncan of Jordanstone College (now part of the University of Dundee) in June 1960. Whilst studying, James had commenced a period of military service in the Parachute Regiment, was granted a commission in the Territorial Army in 1959, and made many jumps over the UK and France.

James undertook architectural work at St John's, Antigua during 1960-1961, which he described as "mainly expensive houses for Americans", and then transferred to Barbados in the West Indies (1961-1962), where he was also involved in the design of hotels. He began flying lessons in London during 1962, soon logging solo hours, and became an Associate of the Royal British Institute of Architects (ARIBA) in October 1962.

Taylor moved overseas again in 1963 to work as an architect in Abadan in Iran, an oil town, which at that time had the largest oil refinery in the world. In 1965 he moved once more, to Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia, and gained experience as a health architect on a 1000-bed general hospital. In 'K-L', James was a member of the Royal Selangor Club ("bachelor's hang-out") and the 'Hash House Harriers' (an international group of non-competitive running social clubs). He drove an ambulance during the May 1969 riots, Sino-Malay sectarian violence sparked by an election result. In what he described as a "wild social bachelor community", perhaps to his relief he met Marnie, and they were married on 6 December 1969. Their first child, Jamie was born in January 1971.

James arrived in Perth, Western Australia at Christmas 1971, as a thirty-four year old with a young family, to work for the Western Australian Public Works Department (PWD). He was recruited by PWD principal architect Stan Cann (1915-1991) to join the hospital division, and commenced work in 1972. Second child Deborah was born in March 1973. James Taylor, of 109 Hale Road Wembley Downs, registered (no.703) with the Architects Board of Western Australia on 1 May 1973, and became an Australian citizen in July 1975. His hospital work included the Royal Perth Hospital North Block, Wanneroo Hospital, the Bentley and Fremantle Psychiatric Units.

Some of James' WA public service positions over time included: 1982-1985 Architect, Hospitals Design Investigation, PWD; 1985-1987 Manager, Marketing Services, Building Management Authority (BMA); 1987-1990 Manager, Accommodation, BMA; 1990-93 Senior Architect, Health, BMA; 1993-1994 Manager Consulting Services, BMA; 1994-1997 Project Director – Perth a City for People, Premiers Department. During 1999-2009 James returned to private practice with MacCormac Architects.

In Perth, James became 'a fervent admirer of the Western Australian lifestyle'. He first joined the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA) in 1976. His passion and enthusiasm for the Institute soon resulted in his active involvement in the WA Chapter and his subsequent election as the WA Chapter President in 1987-1988. During this period, the WA Chapter operated from premises in Altona Street West Perth, only a short walk from James' government office in Dumas House. In this role, he was responsible for appointing one of the longest serving members of the Chapter staff, Norma Richwood (Frempong-Manso), who developed the WA Chapter's professional development program.

During the 1980s the RAIA (WA) *Chapter News* was initially edited by James and then for a period of five years by Rod Mollett. On his retirement as editor Taylor made the tongue-in-cheek remark that "one of the virtues of relinquishing the editorial position was it was no longer necessary to read the newsletter". During his presidential term, James was keen to document the history of the architectural profession in WA, and was instrumental in commissioning Duncan Richards to prepare the history *High Hopes* as a record of the local profession.

Following his term as WA Chapter President, James remained on National Council and was actively involved in organizing the highly successful 1990 National Architecture Convention which was held in both Perth and Kuala Lumpur - resulting in a strengthening of relationships with the Malaysian Institute of Architects. The conference, based on the theme *Architecture in Isolation* - attracted a large range of international speakers.

Following the success of this conference and James' active involvement in many other Institute initiatives, he was subsequently elected as the National President of the Institute In 1993-94. During his period on National Council, James was a great advocate for the introduction of Continuing Professional Development and was one of the founding Board members of the Institute's professional indemnity insurer. In 1992, while serving as the National President Elect of the RAI, James reached the impressive milestone of 20 years of service with the PWD and its successor the Building Management Authority (BMA). A humorous rhyme was penned in honor of 'JT', of which a few paragraphs follow:

AN ODE TO 'J.T.', A LAD FROM DUNDEE
(to mark 20 years with the PWD,
although when appointment was granted it started that way
its turned out to be in the transformed BMA)

... Instead, to Malaysia he decided to go
where he first met his wife at a Tennis Club show
It was here, that he learnt how hospitals to plan
and it was this that resulted in a call from Stan Cann

James had become homesick again and applied for a job
that the advert said was near the town of his mob
Though Perth it did say, it did turn out to be
the Perth on the Swan, and not near Dundee

So finally to Perth and the PWD
where he discarded his kilt, after Stan called him 'she'
Now James has been here over 20 long years
still excelling at work when compared to his peers ...

After his term as National President, James remained active in the local chapter and undertook the role of chair of the WA Honours Committee for almost a decade. In December 1994, James was recognized with Life Fellowship of the RAIA. The citation reads:

James Taylor has contributed significantly to the process of hospital design and construction in WA, drawing upon his earlier experience in that field in particular in teaching and regional hospitals, northern country hospitals and in interior fit-out. His expertise and clear judgement in marketing and public relations, developed through his professional experience, has been applied avidly for the benefit of the profession in Australia through his extensive involvement in the committees and leadership of the Institute.

James has dedicated his energies and a significant part of his private and professional time to enhancing the public perception of architects, in promoting architectural competition and excellence in design through the State and National Awards programs and the outreach of National Conventions in Australia and Asia. He has endeavored tirelessly to raise the profile of the profession, within the profession itself and in the community through public relations and the media in its various forms. His concern of the just practice of architecture and the well being of architects across Australia continues beyond his recent careful leadership as National President of the Institute.



110 apartments at 2 St Georges Terrace Perth (Kym MacCormac)

When he retired from the BMA, James joined MacCormac Architects and worked on the conversion of two office buildings into 110 apartments at 2 St Georges Terrace in Perth. During the nine years he worked with Kym MacCormac, he administered the contracts for the David Jones store at Perth, three St Martins projects and Equus Apartments in the Perth CBD.



Hay Street façade of David Jones store at Perth (Kym MacCormac)



Equus Apartments at 580 Hay Street Perth (<https://convido.com/property/equus-perth/>)

Following his second retirement, he became a keen member of the Royal Perth Golf Club, developing his golf skills which he had honed on the Wembley golf course as the organizer of the Taylor Group which hit off every Sunday for about 15 years. James was also a keen participant in the Architects' Golf Day. James Taylor died 17 May 2022 at Wembley Downs aged 84 years. He was survived by his wife Marnie, son Jamie and daughter Deb, and is fondly remembered by all who knew him for his wit and generous, kindly manner.

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