

MEMORIAL

H. Roll McLaughlin, FAIA

By James A. Glass

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H. Roll McLaughlin, a valued member of our club since 1975, passed away on April 20. It was Roll who, along with Gene Lausch, recruited me for membership in 2006 and for much of the last ten years Jim Stokes and I had the pleasure of bringing Roll to meetings when he was not able to drive himself. Roll, an architect, had very broad interests, and found the essays read here enlightening and often provocative. He also enjoyed the fellowship of the membership and liked the chance to exchange observations and stories with Literary Club colleagues from across the professions.

Outside the club, Roll made a profound contribution to Indianapolis and Indiana as an architect, pioneering advocate for historic preservation, and a civic leader and board member for a multitude of non-profit organizations and clubs. He was an artist and inveterate sketcher who became an architect through an apprenticeship with several architectural firms and eventual mastery of the licensing exams for architectural practice. His design work began in the early 1940s and continued for over 70 years. One of his seminal early buildings was the ranch house he designed for his parents on 116th Street in Carmel in 1950—one of the first local interpretations of the house form that was going to sweep through the nation during the 1950s. Among the notable buildings that he designed in the 1960s and 1970s were the Glenn Black Laboratory for Archaeology and Beck Chapel at Indiana University, the Visitors' Center at Angel Mounds State Historic Site, and Park Tudor School, where we meet. He also designed a host of private residences in Indianapolis and other Indiana cities. A drive with Roll down the streets of the north side of Indianapolis would occasion a steady flow of comments by him—“oh, here a house of a client, there is the house of another client, here is a house where the client asked me to design an addition...”

In historic preservation, Roll was one of the founders of Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana in 1960 and served as its president or chairman for most of

its first 20 years. He formed an enduring friendship with philanthropist Eli Lilly, who, largely because of his confidence in Roll, provided major financial contributions to Landmarks. That support enabled what is now Indiana Landmarks to become one of the largest and most effective preservation organizations in the country. Roll was one of the first restoration architects in the state and guided the restoration of many important buildings in the early years of preservation during the 1960s and 1970s, including the Andrew Wylie House in Bloomington, the Morris-Butler House and Benjamin Harrison Home in Indianapolis, the Indianapolis City Market, the Old State Bank in Vincennes, the Thrall Opera House in New Harmony, East College at DePauw University, the interior restoration of the Indianapolis Central Public Library, and the Gothic Chapel and Waiting Station at Crown Hill Cemetery. Roll also played a key role in the initial revitalization of Lockerbie Square, designing the DeBruler House, the first new residence downtown in over 30 years, and overseeing the restoration of one the first historic houses, the Holler House. He also helped guide the preservation of many of the worker's cottages in Lockerbie, when demolition seemed likely. He was in addition an indefatigable advocate for historic preservation, speaking to countless civic groups with a slide presentation in which he pleaded for "A Future for the Past."

At the national level, Roll was a leader in the modern preservation movement as it took shape in the 1960s and 1970s. He was appointed an inaugural member of the Historic American Buildings Survey Advisory Board, served as a trustee of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and chaired the Historic Buildings Committee of the American Institute of Architects.

As a civic leader, Roll always was sought out for counsel and as a board member, often as a chair of building committees. Among the non-profits beside Indiana Landmarks that he aided were the Indiana Historical Society, the Indianapolis Museum of Art, Park Tudor School, Conner Prairie, the Eiteljorg Museum, Crown Hill Cemetery Heritage Foundation, and Historic New Harmony. And he was a president and supporter of Woodstock Club.

Roll always encouraged younger people in architecture and preservation and was a mentor to so many of us. It was a privilege to count him as a friend.