

BRAND, Ronald Guildford (1920 – 1990)

An architect who used his creative talents and experience from his practice to launch a second career in building construction research, Ronald Guildford Brand became recognized throughout Canada as a leading authority on the study of airtightness and the building envelope.

Ronald Brand was born in the southwestern Ontario town of Lucan on February 20, 1920. He obtained a diploma in Education at the London Normal School and taught at a rural school for a year before enlisting with the Royal Canadian Air Force in August 1941. He served as commanding officer with the Radar Branch at Port aux Basques, Newfoundland during World War II before being honourably discharged in December, 1945. Persuaded by an architect friend in his unit, Brand enrolled at McGill University's School of Architecture, graduating in 1951.

After briefly working in Ottawa, Brand obtained membership with the Ontario Association of Architects in 1952. He moved to Windsor and joined the well-established firm of Sheppard and Masson, which evolved into the partnership of Brand, Langlois, and Wills. Brand was the design partner, embodying his love of Modernism in his hospitals, churches and civic buildings, including the Windsor Western Hospital and Essex County Courthouse. In 1961, Sheppard, Masson, Brand & Langlois were Massey Medal finalists for the Vincent Massey Collegiate. For twenty years, Brand observed the problems experienced by the building envelope of older buildings and became convinced that most of these were preventable. His teaching past began to catch up with him and he felt a

mission to improve the industry. Brand left for Ottawa to join the faculty of the newly-formed School of Architecture at Carleton University in 1972.

Brand found the transition invigorating. He plunged into research and obtained summer contracts with the National Research Council, Public Works and other federal departments. His expertise in building science, in particular, the newly-emerging study of airtightness and the building envelope, culminated in his Ph.D. thesis, *Architectural Details for a Cold Climate*, at the Université de Montréal in 1987. This became the basis for his much acclaimed *Architectural Details for Insulated Buildings*, published by Van Nostrand Reinhold three years later. Much in demand, he was often on tour throughout Canada lecturing and conducting seminars on roofing and the building envelope. Many of his papers found their way to the National Library.

Soft-spoken and down to earth, Brand rejected the ivory tower persona of academia and was very approachable to his students. His creativity spilled over into the design and fabrication of his own furniture and clothing. He was an athlete who loved sports that had a particularly spatial component such as skiing, surfing, windsurfing and sailing, and he was a well-known member and competition winner of the Ottawa Rowing Club. His energy and physical fitness rewarded him with the appearance of a much younger man. During his sabbatical year, Brand and his wife set off to visit their daughter in Florida on their sailboat. It proved to be his last celebration of life; he died unexpectedly, shortly after their return, on June 25, 1990.