

JORDEN, James Henderson (1943 – 1991)

James Jorden practiced architecture in Chatham for over twenty years until his untimely death in 1991. In the course of those years, he designed many important buildings in Chatham, Kent County and adjacent parts of Southwestern Ontario, and was also actively involved in professional and community affairs. Through his professional excellence and his personal integrity and compassion, he set an example for his colleagues, and enhanced the image of the architect in the communities which he served.

James Henderson Jorden was born in Sarnia on January 18, 1943, the son of James Wesley Jorden, a bank manager, and Elizabeth Henderson. He attended primary school in Orillia and Sudbury and secondary school (John McGregor High School and Chatham Collegiate Institute) in Chatham. He studied architecture at the University of Toronto, receiving several awards, including the Ontario Association of Architects Guild Medal for Design, and graduated with the degree of Bachelor of Architecture in 1967. He worked for Joseph W. Storey, Architect, and Robert E. Steele, Architect, in Chatham, and for Clifford Wong, Architect, in Hong Kong, before continuing his studies at Harvard University, from which he received the degree of Master of Architecture in 1970. He joined the Ontario Association of Architects and the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada in July of that year.

Jorden then returned to Chatham, and to the office of Joseph Storey, with whom he worked for five years. When Storey died in 1975, Jorden established the firm of James H. Jorden, Architect, continuing the work and the reputation for excellence of the Storey firm. In 1983 he joined forces with Wilfrid B. Lamb, Architect, of London, to create the firm of Lamb & Jorden, Architects/Planner, with offices in London and Chatham. In 1991, Peter Cook joined the firm, which then became Lamb, Jorden & Cook, Architects.

The projects that Jim Jorden designed during his career have shaped communities from London to Windsor. They included many notable office and headquarters buildings: the Chatham Civic Cen-

tre, Kent Municipal Offices, Union Gas Head Office, Chatham Police Headquarters, and Chatham Hydro Administration Offices, all in Chatham. They also included schools and university buildings, such as The Pines High School in Chatham, the Catholic Education Centre in Sarnia, and the Energy Conversion Centre and Canterbury College Residence, both at the University of Windsor, and community centres, such as the Maple City Centre for Older Adults, and the Walpole Island Community Centre, as well as numerous local bank branches and private residences.

During Jorden's years of practice the firms of which he was principal or partner introduced a number of technical innovations to the Chatham area, both with respect to construction - such as load bearing steel stud framing, single ply membrane roofing and solar heating, and with respect to office operations - such as computerized drafting, computerized specifications, facsimile transmission and two stage bidding procedures.

Jorden's commitment to his profession was felt not only in his work, but also in his involvement in the affairs of the Association, most notably as a member of Council in 1989, serving as Councillor Liaison to the Complaints Committee and the Discipline Committee, and as a member of the St. Clair Society of Architects. He was also vitally interested in architectural education. He gave talks about architecture as a career to high school groups and was active in providing job opportunities to architectural students, including those in the co-operative programs.

Jorden was also fully involved in his community, notably as a member of the Chatham and District Chamber of Commerce and the Chatham Kiwanis Club; he served as President of both organizations.

Jim Jorden died suddenly at his home on September 29, 1991, only 48 years old. He was survived by his wife Bonnie and their two daughters. He was also survived by his many fine contributions to the architecture of Southwestern Ontario. His clients and colleagues remember him as a person with integrity and compassion, and a positive influence on all those around him.