

## MURPHY, Ronald Eyare (1924 – 1992)

**R**onald Murphy practiced architecture in London for almost forty years, from 1953 to 1992. During those years he was responsible for the design of many buildings at the University of Western Ontario, at first in the Collegiate Gothic tradition, but moving towards Modernism in later buildings.

Ronald Eyare Murphy was born in Mexico City on December 12, 1924, the son of Nyles Murphy and Ida Inniss. He attended elementary schools in Mexico City, and secondary schools in Halifax, N.S. and Toronto, Ontario. He studied architecture at the University of Toronto, receiving the degree of Bachelor of Architecture in 1952. During the summers of 1944, '46 and '47 he worked as an architectural draftsman for Beck & Eadie, Architects, Shell Oil Company of Canada, and Mathers & Haldenby, Architects, all in Toronto, and as a job captain for Mathers & Haldenby from 1948 to 1953. He became a member of the Ontario Association of Architects and the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada in 1952.

In 1953, Murphy joined O. Roy Moore & Co., Architects, London, as an associate. This long established firm could trace its history back to 1857, when William Robinson set up practice as a land surveyor and architect. Roy Moore had carried on the practice following the death of his father, John M. Moore, who had been a principal from 1882 to 1888, and again from 1901 to 1930.

Murphy carried on the practice following Roy Moore's retirement in 1958, at first under the name of O. Roy Moore & Associates, then from 1964 as Ronald E. Murphy, Architect. Douglas Hall became a partner in 1964, and Norbert Schuller in 1968. The following year, the firm became Murphy & Schuller, Architects, but in 1970 merged with Green and Martin, Architects, St. Thomas. In 1974 the firm Murphy, Schuller, Green and Martin, Architects, was dissolved, and Murphy carried on as a sole practitioner. In 1991, he was joined by his son, David R. Murphy, in the firm Murphy & Murphy, Architects, Inc.

After he joined the Moore firm in 1953, Ronald Murphy designed many buildings at the University of Western Ontario, continuing and developing the Collegiate Gothic tradition established in 1914 by John Moore and F.H. Spier, a Detroit architect.

Middlesex College was his major contribution to this tradition, along with Medway Hall, Delaware Hall, the Law School, the Engineering Building, Talbot College and the Natural Sciences Building.

However, Murphy later introduced some more modern architectural ideas and materials to the University. He gave the typical Collegiate Gothic features a modern treatment in Alumni Hall and the Natural Sciences Building, then designed the Social Sciences Building, the D.B. Weldon Library (in association with John Andrews) and the University Community Centre (in association with Ken Snider) in the Modern style, using exposed poured in place concrete structures. He was awarded the Prestressed Concrete Institute Design Award in 1972 for the design of the Weldon Library. He also designed the Platt's Lane Estates, a student housing complex, for the University, in 1976.

Besides his work at the University, Murphy designed many other buildings in London and region. More than six hundred projects were built under his direction including Bank of Montreal main branch banks, City of London fire halls, the Salvation Army Children's Village, the Salvation Army Bethesda Centre, the London Hospital Linen Services Facility, the Bell Building at Talbot Square (designed in association with Adamson Associates, Architects), and the Ontario Police College in Aylmer (designed in association with DuBois, Tillmann & Lamb, Architects).

Ronald Murphy demonstrated his commitment to his profession in his participation in the activities of the Ontario Association of Architects (OAA), especially in his service on OAA Council from 1966 to 1968.

In 1988, Murphy donated the Murphy-Moore Collection of Architectural Records, over 6,000 architectural drawings and documents from the archives of the firm dating from 1857 to 1920, to the D.B. Weldon Library at the University of Western Ontario.

Ronald Murphy died on August 23, 1992. He was predeceased by his wife Ann, whom he married in 1952, and survived by their sons, Douglas, Robert and David, the last of whom carried on his practice.