

Top: The Luyten House (1939), Minneapolis. Photo Richard Lundin II

Bottom: The Tyler House (1940), Falcon Heights, Minnesota. Photo Bill Olexy

Right: Living room of the Oskam House (1962), Edina, Minnesota. Photo Bill Olexy

MINNESOTA CHAPTER
OF THE SOCIETY OF
ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIANS

MNSAH

WITH RESPECT TO ARCHITECTURE | SPRING 2023



MNSAH Annual Meeting
Minnesota Humanities Center
Wednesday, April 19, 2023



Elizabeth Scheu Close

JANE KING HESSON, KEYNOTE SPEAKER

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Elizabeth Scheu Close in her Minneapolis office, c. 1940. Roy M. Close Family Papers

Elizabeth Scheu Close: A Life in Modern Architecture

Jane King Hession, keynote speaker

This year’s annual meeting presentation features Jane King Hession, who will speak about her Gebhard Award-winning book *Elizabeth Scheu Close: A Life in Modern Architecture*.

Elizabeth “Lisl” Scheu Close (1912-2011), a pioneering woman in the field of architecture, left an indelible mark on Minnesota’s built landscape during her long career. In 1938, with her husband, architect Winston Close, she founded the first practice in the state dedicated to modern design. Over the next six decades, the firm designed more than 250 modern residences as well as medical and laboratory facilities. Their “Opus One” was the 1938 Faulkner House, the first house in Minneapolis influenced by the International Style. In addition to custom homes, during the 1940s and ‘50s, Lisl designed prefabricated houses for the Page & Hill Company of Minnesota. She later estimated 10,000 houses were produced from her designs. In 1950 the US State Department sent one of her prefabs behind the Iron Curtain to serve as the “Model American Home” at the Berlin International Industrial Exposition. For her significant impact on the architecture of Minnesota, in 2002 she became the first woman to receive AIA Minnesota’s Gold Medal, the highest honor that organization bestows.

Although she is closely associated with modernism in Minnesota and lived in the state for 75 years, Lisl was born in Austria to a politically prominent Viennese family. She grew up in one of Europe’s earliest modern residences—the 1912 Scheu House, designed for her parents by iconoclastic architect Adolf Loos. The experience of growing up in the singular house and her exposure to an international array of visitors who gathered in it, led to her decision to become an architect and her eventual immigration to the United States. The fact that she did not know of a single female architect at the time, did not deter her.

Lisl, whose mother was Jewish, left Austria in 1932 when political pressures began to build. With the help and financial support of a family friend, Boston department store magnate Edward Filene, she continued her architectural education at MIT, earning both her bachelor’s and master’s degrees by 1935. She launched her job search during the Great Depression, a difficult time for architects to find work. As a rare woman in the field, she faced additional obstacles on the road to employment simply because she was not a man.

Today, Lisl is remembered for her prolific career as a residential architect, the scores of well planned, sensitively sited modern houses she designed, her service to her profession, and as an inspiration for subsequent generations of women architects who would follow in her footsteps.

Jane King Hession is an architectural historian and curator specializing in modernism. She earned her Master of Architecture degree from the University of Minnesota. She is the coauthor of *John H. Howe, Architect: From Taliesin Apprentice to Master of Organic Design*; *Frank Lloyd Wright in New York: The Plaza Years, 1954–1959*; and *Ralph Rapson: Sixty Years of Modern Design*. She is the author of *The Kraus House: The Frank Lloyd Wright House in Ebsworth Park*. Jane is a past president of the Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy and the Minnesota Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians.

The Details

DATE AND PLACE:
 Minnesota Humanities Center
 987 Ivy Avenue East
 Saint Paul, MN 55106

6:00 p.m. Reception
 6:30 p.m. Dinner
 7:30 p.m. Annual Meeting
 8:00 p.m. Keynote Presentation
 9:00 p.m. Adjourn

COST:
 \$45.00 for MNSAH members
 \$55.00 for nonmembers

REGISTRATION:
 Deadline: Thursday, April 13, 2023
 Please register online at www.mnsah.org/events/annual-meeting/ or mail your check and menu choice (payable to MNSAH) to:
 MNSAH
 c/o Bob Frame, Treasurer
 178 Goodrich Avenue
 St. Paul, MN 55102

Note: Members who wish to attend the annual meeting and presentation, but not the dinner, may do so at no cost. Please notify MNSAH at info@mnsah.org if you plan to attend only the meeting and presentation.

MENU:
 Chicken Escoffier or Butternut Squash and Wild Mushroom Lasagna

DIRECTIONS:
 From Highway 35E, exit onto Maryland Avenue, proceed east 1.7 miles to Earl Street, turn left and go four blocks to Ivy Avenue East, turn left and the Humanities Center will be on your right.

MNSAH Nominating Report

MNSAH members who attend the annual meeting on April 19, 2023 will vote on the following slate of officers and board members.

President	Rolf Anderson
Vice President	Dennis Gimmestad
Treasurer	Bob Frame
Secretary	Barb Bezat
At Large	Renee Barnes
	Martha Douglas
	Nicole Foss
	Greg Gaut
	Gary Reetz
	Matt Seltzer

All officers are nominated for a one-year term. Board members **Dennis Gimmestad**, **Martha Douglas**, and **Nicole Foss** are nominated for an additional two-year term. The remaining board members will be serving the second year of the two-year term to which they were elected in 2022.

1943-2023 Lock Bounds



Lock Bounds during the MNSAH tour of Mankato. Photo Rolf Anderson

MNSAH is sad to announce the death of Lock Bounds, who died on February 3, 2023 at age 79. Lock was a former president of MNSAH and a key member of the Program Committee for many years.

Lock was born in Clarksdale, Mississippi, on May 25, 1943. He graduated from Clarksdale High School and Millsaps College. He then earned his law degree from the University of Mississippi. Lock first worked for Legal Aid in Clarksdale and then accepted a position with the Lawyers Co-operative Publishing Company in Rochester, New York, where he worked as an editor. It was there that he met his wife, Linda, who also worked for the firm.

In 1997, the company was purchased by Thompson-Reuters, which also purchased West Publishing in St. Paul. Lock then accepted a transfer to St. Paul. He and Linda joined MNSAH shortly thereafter and thus began their long involvement with the organization.

Both Lock and Linda served on the MNSAH board and worked tirelessly on the Program Committee. Lock took on every imaginable task from working with bus companies to arranging meals and venues for our tours. MNSAH members will also recall the elegant receptions that Linda would arrange following an event.

For years, the Program Committee met at Lock and Linda's spacious home in the Merriam Park neighborhood of St. Paul. Our meetings began with a glass of wine in the living room, after which we would migrate to the dining room for the meeting, where the first order of business was to decide the type of pizza to order. We didn't adjourn until Linda served us her homemade cookies.

In October 2021, Lock and Linda moved to Tucson, Arizona, where they began an active lifestyle in their new community. Last fall, Lock traveled to Clarksdale for his 61st high school reunion. While there,

he had arranged to meet Star Tribune music critic Jon Bream, who was a friend and neighbor of Lock and Linda's in St. Paul. Jon was writing an article on the history of the blues in Mississippi, and, not surprisingly, Lock served as his guide.

Ironically, Jon's article appeared on the cover of the Variety section on Sunday, February 5, 2022, two days after Lock passed away. Lock is quoted in the article, and Jon also acknowledges the unique assistance he provided as a native Mississippian.

It's hard to comprehend that Lock is no longer with us. And while we are grateful for his dedication to MNSAH, he was also a member of our MNSAH family and our friend. We mourn his death, but remain grateful that life brought Lock to St. Paul so that he could become part of our lives.

ROLF ANDERSON

MNSAH's Fall Tour of Peavey Plaza and Loring Greenway



Historians Charlene Roise and Liz Gales guide MNSAH members on a tour of Peavey Plaza and the Loring Greenway. Photo Rolf Anderson



Remi Nation, granddaughter of Greg Gaut and Marsha Neff, enjoying the refurbished pool at Peavey Plaza. Photo Greg Gaut

news

FROM THE BOARD

The Modern Masters Committee is pleased to report that the project to compile biographical information on each of the 28 subjects of our Minnesota Modern Masters interviews has been completed. Each biography includes background information, education, work history, major projects, select awards, and a statement about why the individual is significant. This information will be posted on the MNSAH website to assist viewers and researchers.

Professor Kay Bea Jones, from the School of Architecture at Ohio State University in Columbus, contacted MNSAH about a threatened building on campus. The 1954 building was constructed for the Ohio State Wesley Foundation, but was later occupied by the Summit United Methodist Church beginning in 1977. Minnesota architect Ed Sovik, who is the subject of a Modern Masters interview, redesigned the interior to serve as a contemporary worship space. The interior represents an example of his important innovations in church design. The dynamic interior is adaptable to multiple uses and

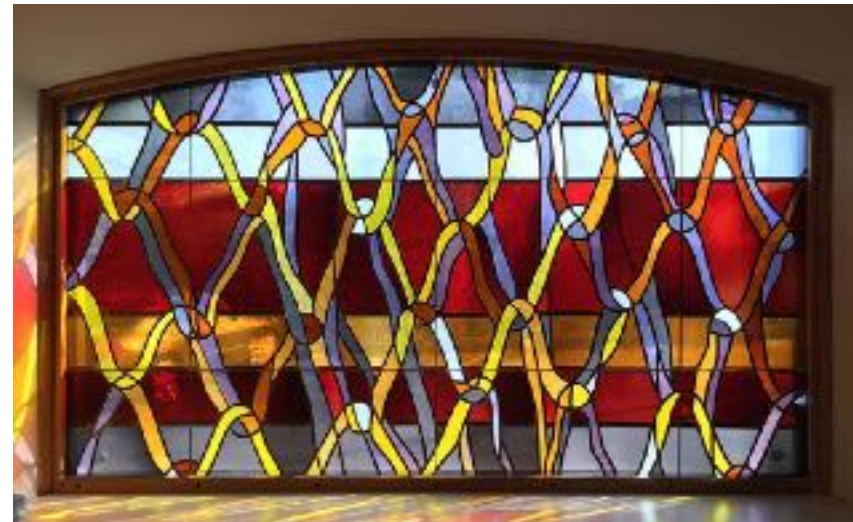
features an undulating wood ceiling and stained glass windows with non-traditional imagery. Because of the high demand for land for other uses, such as student housing, the building is now threatened with demolition.

Professor Jones was a student of Sovik's at Yale University and had long admired his work. She reached out to MNSAH hoping that Minnesotans would assist in the effort to preserve Sovik's design. MNSAH's Advocacy Committee responded by providing a letter of

support. This is the first instance I recall in which MNSAH actively supported the preservation of a building outside of Minnesota.

We look forward to seeing you at the MNSAH Annual Meeting on April 19, 2023 at the Minnesota Humanities Center. This will be our first in-person annual meeting since 2019!

ROLF ANDERSON
MNSAH PRESIDENT



Stained glass window designed for the Summit United Methodist Church by Ed Sovik. Photo courtesy Professor Kay Bea Jones

A Christmas Gift for Phelps Mill

The first hint of good news for Phelps Mill and the ongoing saga of the 1908 stone dam and proposed fish passage project came just before Christmas. Sue Granger of Gemini Research, who has doggedly followed this story from the very beginning, reported on a December 20th meeting of the Otter Tail County commissioners. The commissioners, she said, voted unanimously to turn down the proposal to create a fish passage at the mill. The project originally was proposed by the Minnesota

DNR and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS). "I think it's over," Sue said.

Then, on February 3rd, came an email from Louise Mauldin, who had been managing the Section 106 process for the FWS. "The FWS is closing the Section 106 consultation for the Phelps Dam project at this time," she wrote. The county commissioners had indeed provided the historic 1889 mill and stone dam with a Christmas gift of ongoing preservation.

The commissioners' vote followed a public meeting on December 12th that Sue attended, along with some 20 community members and representatives from FWS and DNR. MNSAH President Rolf Anderson had submitted a letter to the county commissioners and the County Parks and Trails Director Kevin Fellbaum, commenting on the most recent proposal to construct a fish bypass around the dam instead of removing it. In the letter, Rolf and MNSAH, a consulting party in the 106

process, recommended the "No Action" alternative instead of constructing the "Fish Bypass Channel." As proposed, he wrote, the \$2.7 million channel, "staggering in scale," would create "an immense canyon around the dam," altering the historic district's landscape. This would result in a "drastic and irreparable adverse effect" to the mill and dam.

The Society for Industrial Archeology's (SIA) regional North Star Chapter has also been a consulting party, under the leadership of archeologist Tim Tumberg, SIA board member and native of nearby New York Mills. The SIA is the leading nationwide advocate for the study and preservation of the industrial heritage, including sites such as Phelps. At MNSAH's urging, SIA President T. Arron Kotlensky submitted a last-minute letter to Kevin Fellbaum on the day of the public meeting.

In his letter, President Kotlensky pointed out that Phelps Mill "retains a rare, complete set of milling equipment and is Minnesota's only rural, water-powered flour mill with exterior turbines." The proposed bypass channel "would severely alter the hill immediately west of the dam, alter the idyllic mill pond, add a new large engineered structure to the site, and divert a significant amount of water from the dam." He concluded that the bypass "would adversely affect the district's historic character and its ability to convey its significance," and urged the county to forgo the project.

Efforts to create a fish passage at Phelps Mill go back at least to 2019, when FWS announced the Section 106 process in a letter to the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

Proposals have evolved through several iterations, from removal of the historic stone dam to the most recent version involving a channel bypassing the mill and dam complex, which prompted the letters from MNSAH and the SIA. The 106 process throughout has been erratic and frustrating for MNSAH, with unexplained long pauses in communications from FWS.

Fortunately for Phelps Mill, the entire affair has ended with no effect to the historic district. Thanks to the substantial and continuing research by Sue Granger, we all now have a far better understanding of the mill's significance, extending to regional and perhaps even national importance, with the potential for National Historic Landmark status.

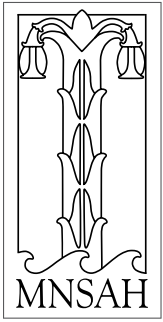
BOB FRAME



Phelps Mill and Dam. Photo Rolf Anderson



The Phelps Mill Historic District is set within a pristine landscape with no modern intrusions. Photo Susan Granger



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Inglenook, Scheu House (1912), Vienna. Designed by Adolf Loos. Photo Bill Olexy, 2010