

THIS YEAR IN NEWS

AIA Mobile Chapter 60th Anniversary

special points
of interest:

this year in
news

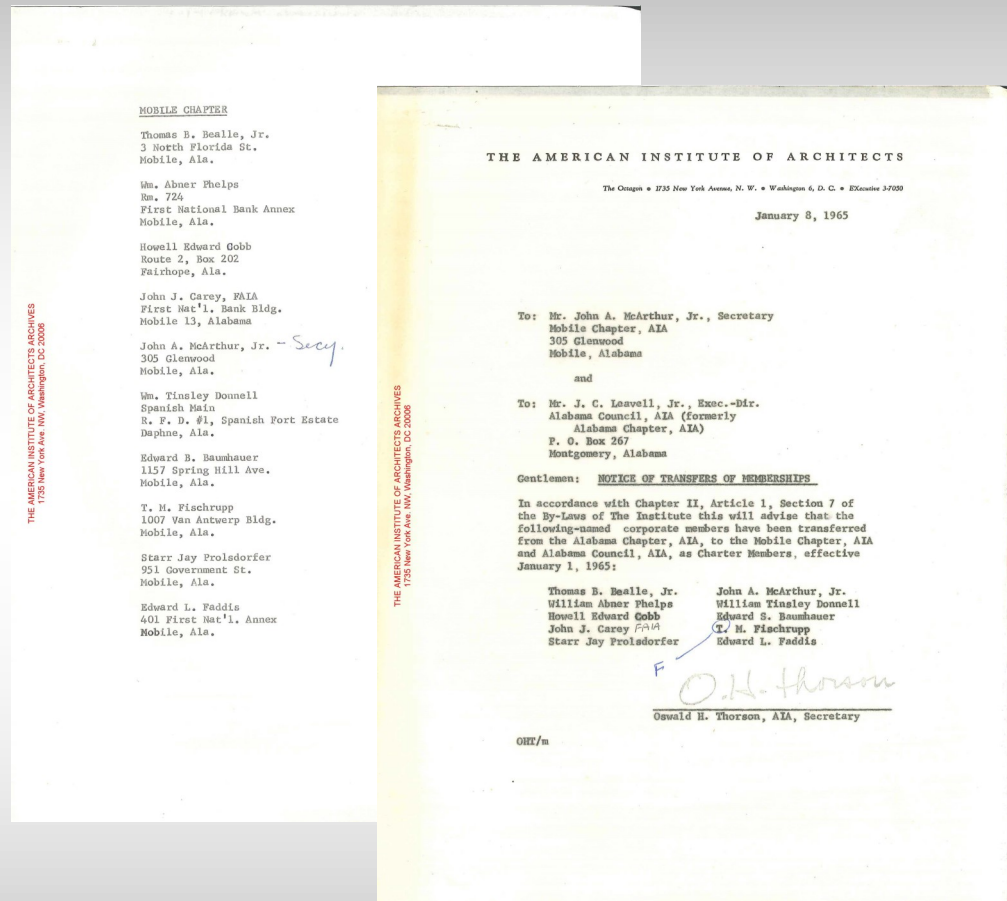
mentoring
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The Mobile Chapter was founded in 1965, which makes this year the 60th anniversary of the chapter. That was also the first year that the Alabama members of the American Institute of Architects, AIA, formed into four Chapters and affiliated under a state-wide organization. In addition to Mobile, the other chapters were Birmingham, Montgomery and North Alabama (Huntsville).



A Challenge to AIA Members

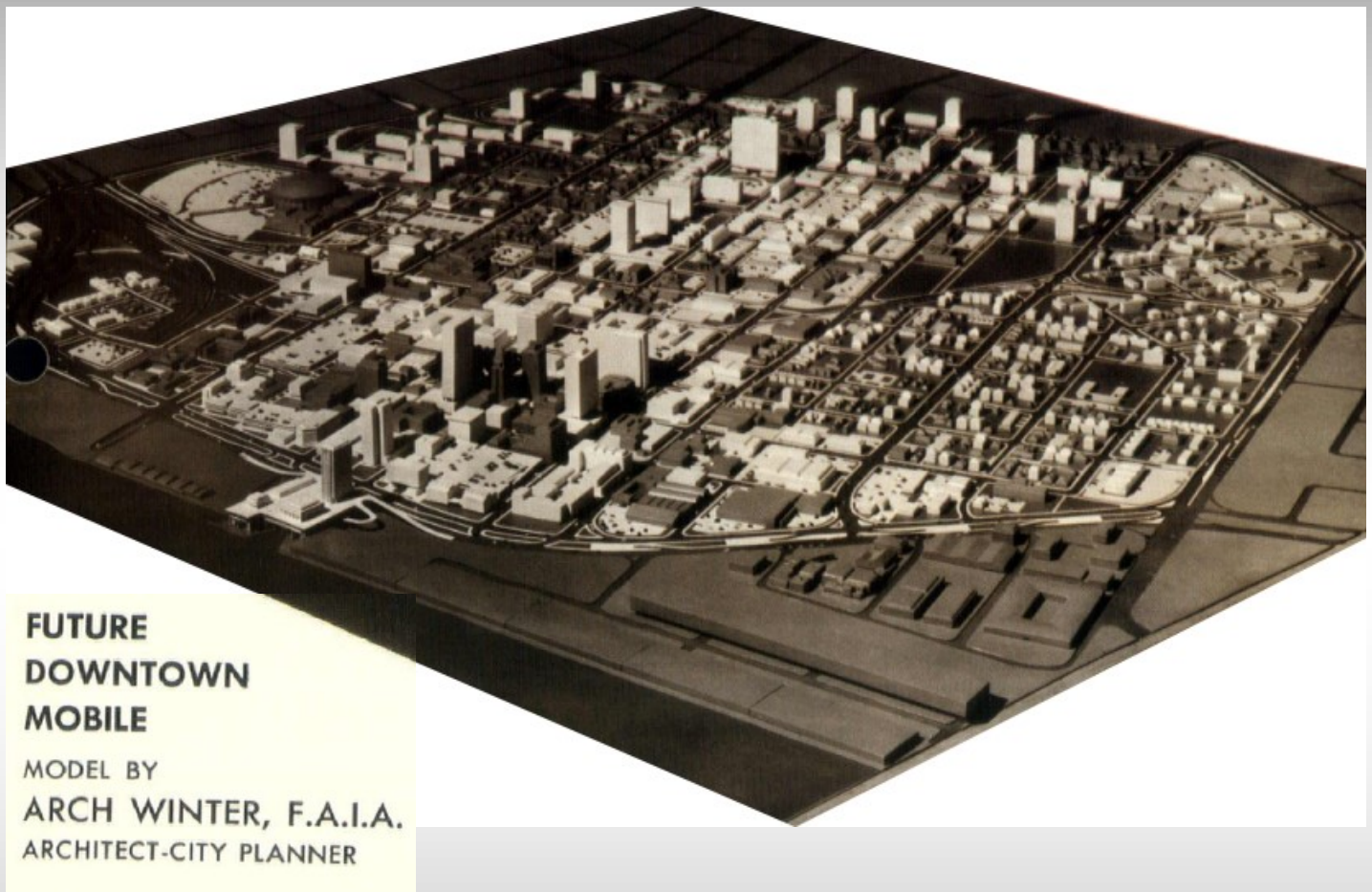
Never has there been a time when people within associations needed so urgently to work together to bring their best efforts and abilities to bear on common problems.

The challenges which associations have faced in the past are likely to be dwarfed by the challenges of the future. Technological change, manpower issues, the challenge of competitive industries and expanding government—all these are beating upon us with such insistence that there is hardly time to attend to one emergency before another crisis is upon us.

Per the Alabama Architect Magazine, Edward B. Baumhauer was the State's AIA Vice President and the Mobile Chapter's Public Relations Committee Chairman, and J. Frederick Dietz, and C. Dewey Crowder were the Mobile Chapter's President and Councilor, respectively. Crowder is also active on the Committee on Preservation of Historic Buildings with members Harry Inge Johnstone and Wayne McRae. John A. McArthur, Jr., heads the Mobile Chapter Editorial staff, which also includes Eugene Gray, Thomas Bealle, and Norman Grider. At its inception, the Mobile Chapter AIA met at 12 noon on the last Friday in each month at no fixed location. William G. McMinn was the head of the Department of Architecture at Auburn University.

The first Alabama Architect that focused on the Mobile Chapter that I encountered online was published in the July-August 1966 article, the year that Baumhauer was also the State's AIA president. It is interesting to note that his editorial debut could have been written today:

"All indications point to the continued rapid expansion of the Gulf Coast area that has been characteristic of it for some years. The abundance of natural resources and labor, and the presence of unmatched recreational, educational, and cultural activities provide strong incentives for new industry. Despite the existing large and diverse industrial development, the tremendous potential has hardly been touched."



The president forewarns the architects of their responsibility in "influencing the forces generated by the growth into logical, comprehensive patterns that fully recognize the human as well as the economic implications of their work" and predicts that there will be a tremendous traffic increase when Mobile becomes the Gulf's largest port. The plans for the still in existence International Trade Center (Port Authority) by A. B. Benson & Company Architects were introduced. Apparently, the plans included a top floor restaurant with an observation and dining terrace overlooking the port.

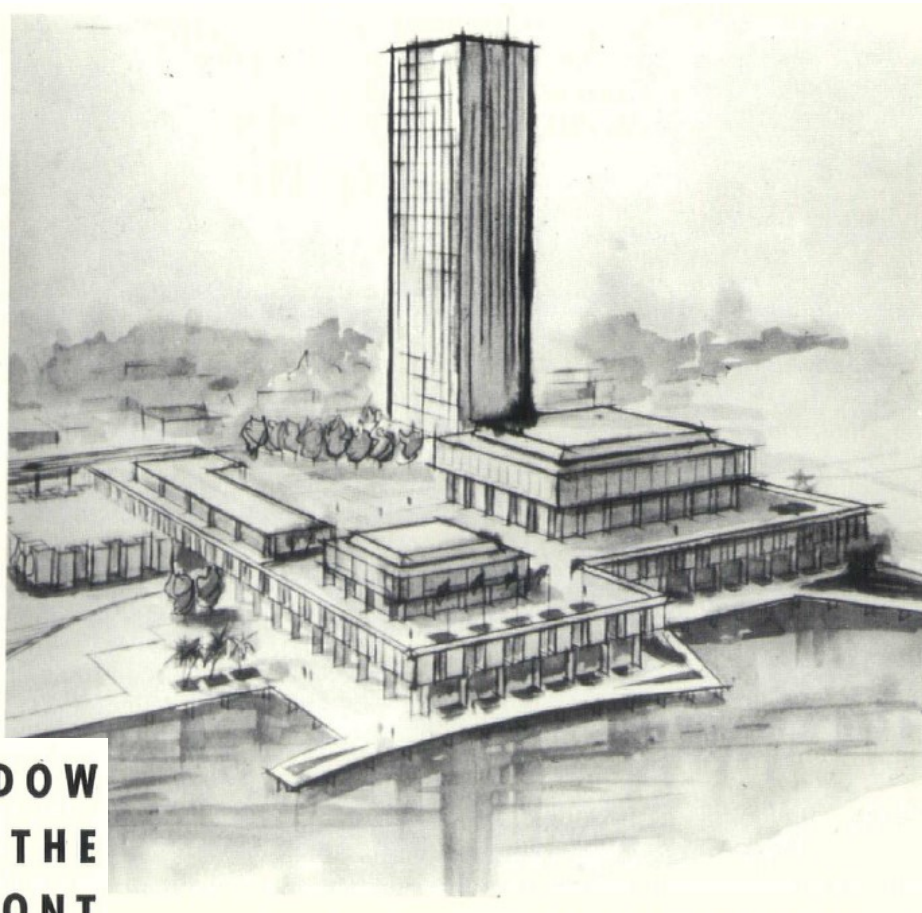
The second article in this publication is particularly important because it introduces a cautionary tale just before showcasing all the modernistic architectural projects envisioned for Mobile. Norman H. Grinder's fanciful article is definitely futuristic but also admonishes the creation of high-speed highways if these compromise the avenues of Oaks. Among other things, he warns against failing to recognize the ugliness of what we are allowing to be built, land speculation for tract house neighborhoods, while endorsing our acceptance of the new building forms. In the same vein, W. Frank Laraway alerts architects to pursue beauty, whether pursuing historic or modernistic architecture. Apparently, our generation was not the only one that has faced the dilemma between

architecture as a business versus an art form. On the one hand, we must make sure that our details prevent structural failures or water penetration, that the materials and methods were developed within the constraints of the projected bid, and that the design respects the codes, particularly life safety. On the other hand, the building will have to be respectful of the client's program and aesthetics while upholding the purity of the architectural concept and the integrity of the construction materials.

Arch Winter, FAIA, was an architect city planner that envisioned a downtown river park along Water Street. It is interesting to note that the designs were drawn while the AIA president's article focuses on the expansion of the industry at the port and an increase in the flux of people to the city.

The Port City showcased many projects with modern architecture, such as Office Buildings by Prolsdorfer & Smith Architects and Hammond & Sheperd Registered Architects & Associates, a Graden Center for the Malbis Plantation Nursery by Frederick C. Woods – Thomas P. Steber and Associates, Architects, a Scout Reservation Facility by Dietz, Prince & Fischrupp Architects, an International Trade Center by A. B. Benson & Company Architects, and an Automotive Agency by Edward B. Baumhauer Architect.

Many of the advertisements in the original issues of Alabama Architect magazine were from long standing affiliates such as the Alabama Concrete Industries Association, ACIA, Jenkins Brick Company, and Alagasco, the Alabama Gas Corporation.



WINDOW ON THE WATERFRONT

ARCH WINTER, F.A.I.A.
Architect-City Planner

MENTORING MOMENTS

L. Craig Roberts

It is difficult to write about larger-than-life personalities and at the same time provide a token of the more mundane chronological information. In this condensed biography of Craig Roberts, I will attempt to start with the latter and hopefully rise to the former. Indeed, despite all the information generously provided by Craig to document his career as an architect, it is clear that the man is so much more than the sum of all his works.

Craig was born in Guntersville, but his family moved shortly thereafter to Gadsden. He attended Auburn University, graduating in 1975, and soon after started his first job as an architect with Dietz, Prince and Fischrupp Architects (later rebranded as DPF) in Mobile Alabama. Craig has been married to Robert (Rob) Spicer for 30 years. He swims daily, tends to his garden, and volunteers his time for a variety of organizations and causes. Our local chapter of the American Institute of Architects, AIA, is particularly indebted to him for the

innumerable historic tours that he hosts almost yearly on a variety of topics of great relevance to our profession. He has an almost encyclopedic knowledge of local history, from people and architecture to Mardi Gras.

Craig's aptitude for high design was quickly recognized during his drafting tenure at DPF, and after only one year with the firm, he was encouraged to pursue his designs beyond the replication of expected shopping center details. There is a lot to be said to having the gumption to embark so early on in a solo career. Craig may credit his success to the help of others such as Robert Merriwether, James C. (Jimbo) Mostellar, endorsements by pleased clients, copious articles in design magazines such as Southern Living, and appearances on television, such as in HGTV's Homes Across America. But as far as I am concerned, his success rests almost entirely on his confidence and ability to conceptualize and bring to fruition high design for his clients.

Often, we disregard acclaim and fail to recognize the value of our



standing as an architect because we do not have the public recognition of household names such as Frank Lloyd Wright and Frank Gerry. Craig was instrumental in bringing back to Mobile vernacular architectural typologies such as the raised cottage, while taking modern architecture to levels of complexity and innovation that none of his peers came even close to emulating. His portfolio is uncompromisingly varied, extensive, and at the highest level of design. Even though his work is recognized and acclaimed among Mobile's high society and often depicted in high-gloss design magazine prints, it is still at its core,

MENTORING MOMENTS

private residential architecture, subject to the whims of the clients and not as readily available for public consumption as is much of the lesser public facing architecture. Had it been, we would have been awed by thoughtfulness in the designs, to the details, and the quality of the materials. And more importantly, we would have experienced a modicum of the fulfillment that his clients, those that get to live in these houses and surrounding grounds, get to experience in their daily lives. Indeed, Craig is not only the architect of the building, but he is also the designer of the interiors, the purveyor of the furnishings, the master gardener of the grounds, the dream maker.

What has always been striking about Craig is his ability to follow through with pursuits that were often not popular with his peers. He continues to be undaunted in his affiliation with what he considered to be worthwhile causes, first in school leadership groups and later in professional preservation groups. Having known Craig for longer than a decade, I credit his personal intent to do what is right and not what is easy or popular. He contends that he can do this eloquently because of his training at the Dale Carnegie Seminar Program on Public Speaking for vast audiences. Perhaps that training cemented his uncanny ability to do so but his personality is the real driver of this aptitude.



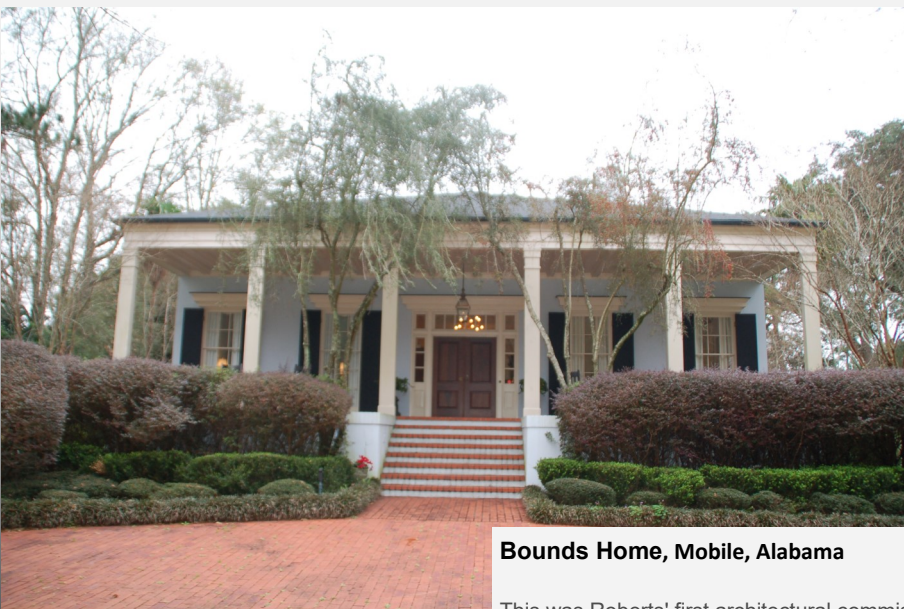
D. Bigler Home, Mobile, Alabama

Nestled on three and one-half acres on the Country Club of Mobile's rolling golf course, this Classic Revival home is placed as to take advantage of views of the course which extends almost a mile to the east giving the feel of a European country estate. The grounds feature some of the city's most beautiful Heritage Live Oaks. The classical interiors feature large rooms, five masonry fireplaces, and ornate ironwork throughout. Also found throughout the house are surfaces of exquisite limestone, granite and marble .

MENTORING MOMENTS

But what many fail to see is that behind his well carved designs and passionate discourse is a very big heart. Craig has been there for Mobile through his committed participation in countless challenges that range from humanitarian causes, historic preservation, and support for the arts. I served with Craig on the City of Mobile, Architectural Review Board (ARB) and can attest to his preparedness and through knowledge of

precedence. The ability to rely on him for his expertise in historic architecture and recollection of preceding applications, afforded the ARB immeasurable assistance. He is Mobile's greatest ambassador. He hosts tours of the city as if he could trace his ancestry to its foundation. Craig is a prodigal son who returned to remind us of the importance of history, of its people and of its celebration of Mardi Gras. Just like the Carnival Museum, there is only one Craig Roberts in the world.



Bounds Home, Mobile, Alabama

This was Roberts' first architectural commission in 1978. The Bounds sent the architect to spend summer weekends with noted New Orleans architect Albert Wolf in order to gain expertise in Gulf Coast regional architecture. This home typifies the New Orleans Garden District Style.

A LOOK BACK AT AN AMAZING YEAR OF EVENTS!

Dear Members and Affiliates,

As we wrapped up 2024, we're filled with appreciation for a year full of professional growth, meaningful connections, and unforgettable experiences. From coastlines to cultural landmarks, this year's events brought our team closer together and left us inspired for what's ahead.

National Conference

We started strong with the National Conference—an incredible opportunity to connect with professionals from across the country, gain insight into industry trends, and proudly showcase the work we're doing. The knowledge and energy brought back from this event helped shape our year in a big way.

Social Outing

Following all that professional development, we took some time to relax and reconnect during a fun social outing at the Bluegill, sponsored by Tarkett. It was a laid-back event filled with good conversations, laughs, and great food and drinks.

Deep Sea Fishing Trip

Later in the year, our deep sea fishing trip delivered sunshine, salt air, and a few good fish stories. Whether you were reeling in a catch or just enjoying the ride, it was a memorable day of adventure and camaraderie. This event was sponsored by Tarkett, Musco Sports Lighting, Bell & McCoy, The Garland Group, and Kimley-Horn & Associates.

State Conference

Many of us attended the State Conference in Orange Beach, where our team continued to shine. It was a great chance to share ideas, learn from our peers, and reaffirm our commitment to excellence at the local level.

Exploring the Bottle Creek Indian Mound Complex

Our visit to the Bottle Creek Indian Mound Complex offered a fascinating glimpse into local history and culture. Walking the grounds of this important site gave us all a greater appreciation for the region's heritage. This event was sponsored by James Hardie

Christmas Party

We closed the year on a festive note with our annual Christmas party. With great food, holiday cheer, and a room full of laughter, it was the perfect way to celebrate a successful year and the friendships we've built along the way. We thank all of our members and affiliates and especially our sponsors Spire, Tarket, Bell & McCoy, Terracon, The Garland Group, Harris Contracting Services, Oakleigh Custom Woodworks, and Exterior Materials. A huge shoutout to Mohawk Group for providing all of the Christmas Trees and orchestrating their delivery to the children's hospital.

Here's to 2025!

Thank you all for bringing your passion, energy, and positivity to every event and every day. Here's to another great year ahead—full of growth, connection, and plenty more great memories.

Warmly,

AIA Mobile Board

2025 MONTHLY PRESENTERS



january
16th

AIA Mobile
Lunch & Learn
60th Anniversary

Original Oyster House
12:00 P.M.



february
20th

AIA Mobile
Lunch & Learn
60th Anniversary

Original Oyster House
12:00 P.M.



march
20th

AIA Mobile
Lunch & Learn
60th Anniversary

Original Oyster House
12:00 P.M.



april
17th

AIA Mobile
Lunch & Learn
60th Anniversary

Original Oyster House
12:00 P.M.



may
15th

AIA Mobile
Lunch & Learn
60th Anniversary

Original Oyster House
12:00 P.M.



june
19th

AIA Mobile
Lunch & Learn
60th Anniversary

Original Oyster House
12:00 P.M.



july
17th

AIA Mobile
Lunch & Learn
60th Anniversary

Original Oyster House
12:00 P.M.



august
21th

AIA Mobile
Lunch & Learn
60th Anniversary

Original Oyster House
12:00 P.M.



september
18th

AIA Mobile
Lunch & Learn
60th Anniversary

Original Oyster House
12:00 P.M.



october
16th

AIA Mobile
Lunch & Learn
60th Anniversary

Original Oyster House
12:00 P.M.



november
20th

AIA Mobile
Lunch & Learn
60th Anniversary

Original Oyster House
12:00 P.M.

2025 UPCOMING EVENTS

February

Leadership Summit in Washington, DC attended by Keith Parker, AIA Mobile Vice-President

March or April

Chili Cookoff

June

AIA National Conference attended by Catarina Echols, AIA Mobile President

Mardi Gras Historic Bus Tour with Cart Blackwell and Craig Roberts

August

Deep Sea Fishing sponsored by

Fall to be determined

Bellingrath Gardens Home and Gardens Tour with Tommy McGee and Craig Roberts

September

CEU Day

October

Turkey Trot

State Convention in Orange Beach, attended by AIA Mobile Board Members

November

Social Hour at the Bluegill sponsored by Tarkett

December

Annual Christmas Party at Gulfquest