

Renowned architect dies at 84

By Jeanne Bennett
Staff writer

Memorial service for Edwin J. Peterson, 84, an internationally recognized architect, will be at 3 p.m. Wednesday at Salem Lutheran Church, one of the local projects he designed.

Hazen & Jaeger Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Mr. Peterson, who died Saturday, was born in Sweden and came to the United States when he was 1. He became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1916 in Bonners Ferry, Idaho.

He came to Spokane as a youngster and graduated from North Central High School. Mr. Peterson earned a bachelor of science degree in architecture from Washington State University in 1931 and attended Harvard University on a scholarship, earning his master's degree in architecture in 1933.

He worked as an architect for Whitehouse and Price and in 1937 opened his own office. Several of his local designs received recognition from national architectural publications, and he was listed in Who's Who in the West and Who's Who on the Pacific Coast.

Mr. Peterson served in the Army as a captain with combat engineers during World War II in Puerto Rico, Europe and the Pacific. He returned to his architecture practice in 1946 and in 1951 was recalled by the Air Force during the Korean War. He had been a technical adviser on housing to the secretary of the Air Force and was stationed in the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., for four years. After his release from active duty, he retired as a lieutenant colonel from the Air Force Reserve.

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THE AIR FORCE RESERVE.

After the Korean War, he practiced architecture internationally. He went to Spain in 1955 as chief of housing for the Air Force. As chief of the architectural and urban planning division of the State Department, Mr. Peterson was assigned to the Republic of Vietnam in 1967 to "direct the modernization of Vietnam." In a 1970 Saigon ceremony, Vietnam's president presented him with the Chuong My Merit Medal, 2nd Class, in recognition of his achievements as project manager in directing construction of a 2,000-unit housing project.

His assignments also included France, Iran, Pakistan, Central America and Turkey where he specialized in schools, community development and urban planning. He retired from the State Department's Agency for International Development in 1975.

During his service with the State Department, he also maintained homes in Spokane and at Newman Lake, returning between assignments.

A qualified artist, he had a collection of watercolors that he painted in all of the countries he had worked. He also was a photographer and private pilot.

Mr. Peterson had been active in numerous professional and social organizations. He had served as president of the Spokane Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and was a member of the Pakistan Institute of Architects and the Retired Officers Association. He also was a member of the Spokane Club.

Survivors include one son, Army Lt. Col. Gregory Peterson, who is on duty at Fort Shafter, Hawaii; one sister, Alma Johnson of Spokane; and one brother, Henry Peterson of Southbury, Conn.

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