

## Valley Legacy Architects

Frederick Penn Weaver, FAIA:  
Weaver & Drover Remembered

By Frank Aazami and David M. Brown

**A perfectionist draughtsman, an artist,  
a loving husband and a good father**



Frederick 'Fred' Weaver, FAIA, founder of the distinguished Phoenix architectural firm, Weaver & Drover, was so honored in 2002 by Herman P. Jacobi, an associate in the firm, 1950–1991, its lead designer and a Weaver family friend. The successor company, DWL Architects + Planners Inc., is celebrating its 70th anniversary in 2019.

"Meticulous, knowledgeable, a great Spec writer and Superintendent on any job, fair-minded, above all a great speaker," explained Jacobi, as reported by James Abell, FAIA, in research for the AIA Arizona College of Fellows.

An Illinois native and World War II Navy veteran, Richard 'Dick' E. Drover, AIA, met Weaver in Phoenix at E.L. Varney and Associates Architects in 1948. He left in March 1950 to join Weaver in the new firm. He retired from the firm in 1978 and died in March 2002.

The nattily bow-tied Drover, Abell notes, based on Jacobi's memories, was the free spirit, designer and planner to Weaver's acute administrator. They were, Jacobi noted, a "perfect match in 1950, based on mutual respect, honesty and fairness, and architectural know-how.

"To bring a complicated job in front of clients, we sometimes needed Fred to explain and talk about it, although he might not have known all the details. He would have been able to talk about the making of matchsticks for an hour without knowing all the details about it," added Jacobi, who died in 2010.

Weaver & Drover, later Drover, Welch & Lindlan and today DWL Architects + Planners, designed significant Arizona buildings: Phoenix Sky Harbor International Terminals 2, 3 and 4 (1962– and with Lescher & Mahoney Architects, 1979 and 1990); Arizona State's Charles Trumbull Library and Pedestrian Mall (1966); dozens of schools throughout Arizona; churches; civic buildings; and memorable Valley National Bank branches, the most famous of which, at 44th Street and Camelback Road (1968) in Phoenix, is a Chase branch today.



*Fred Weaver and his partner Dick Drover helped to establish "standards for architectural excellence that help guide today's practicing architects and inspire tomorrow's"*

*- Frank Aazami*

## Frederick Penn Weaver, FAIA (cont.)

Fred Weaver and his partner Dick Drover helped to establish "standards for architectural excellence that help guide today's practicing architects and inspire tomorrow's," says Frank Aazami, principal of the Private Client Group for Russ Lyon | Sotheby's International Realty in Scottsdale, one of the Valley's premier luxury real estate firms.

"He has left all of us in the Valley richer for his commercial and residential designs as well as for his longstanding and broad civic participation in the community he loved."

### Born into Building

Weaver was born on August 30, 1912, in Carlsbad, New Mexico, where his father, Frederick Penn Weaver, was a construction foreman and water master for the U.S. Reclamation Service. His mother was Juanita (Hakes) Weaver; her family had moved to the then Territory of New Mexico from Fitchville, Ohio, when she was a child.

When the Weavers moved to Phoenix in 1921, Weaver remained in water management with the Salt River Water Users Association as a "zanjero," a ditch rider, and water master.

His son, Fred, revealed an early flair for drawing and watercolor paintings at Balsz Elementary School and Phoenix Union High School, where he met Lois Ann Maffeo, a future schoolteacher and his wife; her family had moved to Globe, Arizona, about 1875.

Multi-talented, he was on the debate team and played cornet in the high school band, graduating in 1930. At Phoenix College, he studied engineering and liberal arts, while participating in its band, boxing team and theater club, finishing his studies in 1932. He completed his Bachelor of Architecture degree at the University of Southern California in 1936.

Fred and Lois were married in Long Beach, California, December 31, 1936. After working as a draftsman there for a year, he returned to the dry climate of Phoenix to soothe an arthritic lower spine.

Here he worked for V.O. Wallingford, one of Arizona's earliest licensed architects. He then joined the firm of Charles J. Gilmore Architect in 1938, later Gilmore, Scott, Varney and Yost, and finally, after Gilmore's death in 1946, E.L. Varney and Associates Architects. During this time, he became an associate in the firm and passed his licensing exams in 1940.



3. (above) Weaver & Drover 1950. Dick Drover, left, Hermann Jacobi and Fred Weaver, right, 1950. Courtesy DWL Architects



1. (previous page) Fred Weaver, FAIA . Courtesy DWL Architects  
2. (previous page) Valley National Bank, 44th St. and Camelback  
Photo courtesy: DWL Architects

4. (below) St. Agnes Church  
Photo courtesy: DWL Architects

*"When generations yet unborn shall gather to worship their Creator, they shall always know that one of His creatures planned here a temple that spoke of Him clearly and beautifully..."*

*- Rev. Monsignor Robert J. Donahue*

During World War II, his health prevented active service, but he worked at a Goodyear defense plant in the early 1940s, taking the long bus ride daily from his home in Phoenix.

In August 1949, Weaver opened his firm at 1010 North 24th Place in Phoenix. The family lived in the home, including the five children, Margaret, Charlene, Kathleen, Fred III and Virginia. At the back of the property, he established a separate office, which is still

standing. Later, the firm moved to 128 East Camelback Road, then on the far north end of the city. Among its first projects were an elementary school expansion in Phoenix and St. Agnes Church.

Weaver died May 30, 1968, at Good Samaritan Hospital, age 55. The church bulletin of St. Agnes noted on June 9, as written by Rt. Rev. Monsignor Robert J. Donahue: "This parish shall ever be in his debt, and when generations yet unborn shall gather to worship their Creator, they shall always know that one of His creatures planned here a temple that spoke of Him clearly and beautifully..."

His work is remembered. "Fred Weaver's uncompromising attention to detail, willingness to explore using new things in new ways, and his acute business sense continue to influence DWL's culture and our 70 years of enduring success," says Mark R. Dee, AIA, LEED AP, executive vice president for DWL Architects + Planners.

### Architectural Excellence among other Excellences

In April 15, 1948, Weaver was granted membership in the American Institute of Architects, Arizona Chapter. Another distinguished Phoenix architect, Fred M. Guirey, nominated him; it was Guirey who introduced Jacobi, a Frankfort, Germany, émigré, to Weaver in 1949.

The application notes that Weaver had already contributed to the Valley in church, medical and secondary school designs. In part, this says: "He has shown understanding and given strength to the use of modular concrete structures expressed in the bold and simple structural system and their flexibility and economy through the knowledge of his subject."

## Frederick Penn Weaver, FAIA (cont.)

And, "His understanding and belief in strong and well-drafted contract documents and administration of the work has been an incentive to the younger professionals in the area and has greatly contributed to the general upgrading of the construction industries in the area, as well as a more appreciative understanding of our profession."

This was followed in 1964 by the conferring of the distinguished fellowship status, FAIA.

Much of his and the firm's work exemplifies Mid-century Modernism, which continues to influence Valley architecture for its simplicity, clean timeless lines and welcoming approach to the desert.

"The examples of Weaver & Drover branch banks in this study pay close attention to the desert environment by providing various methods of shade for the windows and entrances to the buildings," wrote Phoenix-based architectural historian Donna Reiner in *Follow the Money: Identifying the Custom Architecturally Designed Branch Bank*, her master's thesis in Historic Preservation at Goucher College, 2009.

The firm was sensitive to new architectural influences, while not slavish. The International-style Arizona Title Building was the first high-rise in Phoenix, and the sinuous lines of the magnificent Chapel at the Arizona State Hospital (1963), also in Phoenix, recall Le Corbusier's Chapelle of Notre-Dame-du-Haut in Ronchamp, France.

Weaver & Drover were innovators, too. The award-winning ASU Hayden Library was designed by Jacobi so that College Avenue closed adjacent to it, replaced by a pedestrian-centric mall — presaging contemporary city development and redevelopment paradigms and private-side shopping complexes.

Perhaps most memorable are the Mid-century Modern Valley National Bank branches, in particular, the elegant, elongated Highland Avenue and Scottsdale Road building (1967), now a retail center which does not celebrate the original vision, and the 44th Street and Camelback Road building — "a Jewel-like project," and "an architectural oasis," Jacobi described it.

Also in Tempe, when the Apache branch from 1962 was demolished in 2006 for Barrett, the Honors College at ASU, the futurist Buckminster Fuller-style geodesic 'Golden Dome' was stored; it's now an outdoor shade structure/event ramada at the university's Vista Del Sol student housing.



5. Arizona Title Building  
Photo courtesy: DWL Architects  
6. Arizona State Hospital Chapel  
Photo courtesy: DWL Architects



*"The work of Weaver and Drover connects our Valley to the optimistic and visually interesting Mid-Century era of solid, yet connected growth and beyond,"*

*- Scott Jarson*

"The work of Weaver and Drover connect our Valley to the optimistic and visually interesting Mid-Century era of solid, yet connected growth and beyond," says Scott Jarson, director of Sales + Creative Development for azarchitecture/Jarson & Jarson, the noted Phoenix-based real estate company specializing in the sale of architecturally significant homes. "They should be cherished as such.

"These buildings should also serve as economic reminders to the architects and developers of today that good design can endure and, frankly, even sell. My own mother chose to bank at the Valley National Bank at Camelback and 44th Street, simply because of the unique beauty of the structure. But their legacy is broader than even that; thousands of people interact with Weaver & Drover structures today and probably don't know it."

Although the Weaver & Drover architectural legacy is mostly nonresidential, the home he built in 1951 for his family at 712 West Vernon Street in the Encanto Vista Historic District is superlative — one of Jarson's favorites. The four-bedroom 2,394-square-foot "Encantohaus" was later remodeled by owner Frank Austin, a devotee of Mid-century Modern. The Weavers moved in in July of that year.

The details include large-framed windows, organic materials such as wood, red brick and stone. "When designing a building, we start with the function and expand our ideas from there . . . 'form follows function'. . . Weaver designed this home, post-war, when designs were focused on the American family — marrying functional spaces with high-design elements derived from Bauhaus and International styles, creating what we know as midcentury modern," said Sean Warfield, a designer at DWL Architects + Planners.

7,8. Hayden Library ASU  
Photo courtesy: DWL Architects



## Frederick Penn Weaver, FAIA (cont.)

The Weaver home and others built in the post-War Mid-century Modern style, by other noted Valley exponents such as Beadle and Haver, command premium resale prices and help once-struggling inner-city neighborhoods gentrify. This one recently sold for more than \$700,000.

"Weaver & Drover are known to have delivered well-designed commercial, institutional and governmental commissions throughout the Phoenix area and done with a confident, sophisticated and elegant touch," says Doug Sydnor, FAIA, whose father Reginald 'Reg' Sydnor, FAIA, was also a distinguished member of this pioneering generation of Valley architects. "Their body of work also speaks to addressing the professional responsibilities of creating a crafted, buildable, efficient and cost-effective built result."

Sydnor notes that in the late 1970s, Varney Sexton Sydnor Architects and Drover Welch & Lindlan teamed under "Associated Samaritan Architects" and worked with Bertram Goldberg of Chicago on the Good Samaritan Hospital Major Addition in Phoenix, and his firm, DSAA also teamed with DWL on the 2009 Scottsdale Appaloosa Branch Library.

Community and civic service were as important to Weaver as good architecture.

He was, among many positions, a member of the advisory board to the City of Phoenix Building Code; cochairman of the Legislative Committee to the Arizona State University; and a Phoenix Planning and Zoning Commission member, serving as its vice chairman in 1959.

In other voluntary roles, he was a member and president of the Dons Club; a sustaining member of the Boy Scouts of America; and a member of the Phoenix Development Association, again, among many others.

Weaver & Drover was also committed to educational excellence and sponsored a travel prize for the top fourth-year ASU Architecture student to study architecture in Europe for the summer, Abell notes.

The firm employed many outstanding associates, such as Frank Henry, an ASU architectural graduate who studied under Charles Montooth and Fred Langhorst, Paul Winslow, FAIA, and George Christensen, FAIA. In turn, mentors such as Christensen have passed



9,10. Encanto Home  
Photo courtesy: DWL Architects



11. Valley National Bank, 44th Street and Camelback Road  
Photo courtesy: DWL Architects

12. Valley National Bank, Highland and Scottsdale Roads  
Photo courtesy: DWL Architects

on Weaver's legacy to today's Valley architects such as Mark Candelaria, AIA, whose Scottsdale firm has become celebrated through the U.S. for its residential designs.

"How highly regarded he was by both business and civic leaders!" recalls daughter Charlene Joehnk, now living in Prescott.

"Not only was he a visionary and widely respected architect, he was also highly sought after for his views on city planning and development. Aside from his professional and public service, he was also a great father who instilled strong moral values in each of his five children, along with a deep-rooted appreciation of advanced education. Equally important, he always found the time to spend with his family and be involved in their activities."

"Daddy would be amazed to think he was held in such high regard," says her sister, Margaret 'Margie' Barlow, a Flagstaff resident. "We were blessed in ways we never imagined when we were growing up. How fortunate we were, and are." ■

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*This is the seventh in a series of stories about pioneering Arizona architects and was sponsored by Frank Aazami, Russ Lyons | Sotheby's in Scottsdale. Previous stories have celebrated the work of Al Beadle, George Christensen, Bennie Gonzales, Frank Lloyd Wright, Ralph Haver, and Reginald Sydnor. Brown is an Arizona writer (azwriter.com)*

