

ARCHITECT BIOGRAPHY

From the National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Zall House at 5401 E. 6th Avenue, Denver (5DV.9221) by Diane Wray Tomasso listed in 2005 (as edited by staff).

RODNEY S. DAVIS (1915-1997)

Rodney S. Davis was born on December 31, 1915 in Longmont, Colorado. His father, Clifford Davis, a wholesale automobile dealer, studied architecture at the University of Illinois. When the younger Davis was only eight years old he discovered some of his father's architectural drawings and, inspired, he posted a sign on his bedroom door with the legend, "Rodney Davis, Architect." His father provided Davis with a miniature drafting board. Clifford Davis died in 1926 and the family moved to Denver shortly afterward.

In 1930, while still in high school, Davis joined Denver architect Edwin A. Francis' one-man office, initially serving as a draftsman and errand boy but later as a designer. During this period, Francis designed mostly buildings in historic revival styles; Davis was responsible for many of the Modern designs credited to the firm. In the 1930s Davis became interested in the Art Deco Style. In ca. 1935 he designed the Art Deco Style Twentieth Century Fox Film Distributor Building. Davis continued working for Francis for more than two years after his high school graduation.

Davis received a Bachelor of Architecture degree from Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. Before enlisting in the Navy to serve as a World War II fighter pilot, Davis returned briefly to Denver to design the Zall House. This was his last project for the Francis' firm and represents a transitional work for Davis, as it combined both historic revival elements and the Art Deco Style.

After his war service, Davis worked on low income apartments and housing complexes under the Federal Title 18 special loan program. In 1947 he returned to Denver and joined Fisher & Fisher, then the city's largest architectural firm well-known for the design of luxurious residences and noteworthy commercial buildings in historic revival styles. Davis became one of the firm's principal designers soon after joining. In 1953 he headed the design team for the Rocky Mountain Osteopathic Hospital (now the University East Pavilion of the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center); the hospital was featured in the July 1954 issue of *Progressive Architecture*. Davis also initiated a relationship with Porter Memorial Hospital in 1954 and his firm continues to work for Porter to the present day. During this period Davis also worked on non-hospital projects, serving as on-site supervisor for Burnham Hoyt's Central Library (1951-1956) and principal designer of the Colorado Department of Employment (1955).

In 1959, Davis was made a partner. The architectural firm was known as Fisher, Fisher & Davis until the death of Arthur Fisher in 1957, when it was renamed Fisher & Davis. This firm undertook major renovations to the Brown Palace, the Denver National Bank Building (and Broker Restaurant), the Denver Country Club, the Cactus Club and Montaldo's. The firm prepared the structural designs for numerous buildings, including the Byron G. Rodgers Federal Building, the United States Court House, and the William Muchow-designed University of Colorado Engineering Science Center (1966) in Boulder.

In 1967, Alan Fisher broke the partnership and formed Fisher, Reese & Johnson with architects John D. Reese and Hilary M. Johnson. At that time Davis established the firm of Rodney S. Davis Associates. In 1980, the firm name changed to the Davis Partnership and later to the Davis Partnership, P.C. Over the years, the Davis practice focused increasingly on healthcare

design. Key hospital projects included Saint Luke's Hospital (now A.M.I. Saint Luke's), Littleton Hospital, Boulder Memorial Hospital and portions of Penrose Hospital in Colorado Springs.

Davis was active in the American Institute of Architects, serving as president of AIA Colorado in 1963, co-chair of the National AIA Convention in Denver in 1964 and member of the AIA Committee on Architects for Health. Davis was named the 1990 AIA Colorado Architect of the Year and received an AIA Colorado Chapter Certificate of Appreciation. Davis also served as a board member of the Downtown Denver Improvement Association; he received their Commendation Award for Voluntary Contribution of Valued Architectural Services. He was also honored by the Denver Planning Board for his service from 1968 to 1972. He was a board member and volunteer vice-president of Historic Properties of the Central City Opera Association and director of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver.

Rodney S. Davis died at the age of eighty-one on March 6, 1997. His firm, one of the largest multi-disciplinary architectural firms in the Rocky Mountain region, continues to play an important role in the Denver metro area, demonstrating a special expertise in facilities for education, healthcare, research and commerce.

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