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TONY COOK

In 1961, armed with a B.Sc. in Physics from Acadia University, **Tony Cook (B.Arch.65)** was on a career path towards oceanography when a number of influences of varying intensity intervened. His brother, **Jeff Cook**, a long-time professor of architecture at Arizona State University, suggested that he consider architecture, and that the School about to open at Nova Scotia Technical College would provide an excellent opportunity. The idea of becoming part of an innovative new school was attractive and after a 2-month voyage on the Sackville was interrupted at regular intervals by bouts of seasickness, oceanography was quickly losing its appeal.

Being a member of the first architecture class was everything it promised. The switch from science to architecture meant coming from a narrowly focused discipline into a generalist education. Those early years under the directorship of **Doug Shadbolt (Hon.D.Eng.70)** introduced Tony to a whole new cultural world and taught him the benefits of an unbiased approach to design problems. That approach included purging preconceived ideas, partly to encourage creative thinking, but also because an empty vessel is easier to fill. He came out of the school feeling enriched as an individual, if still a bit vulnerable as a practicing architect.

One of 5 in the first graduating class of 1965, Tony set off for Toronto, looking for work. Those first years were spent at a large firm, Shore & Moffat, which provided exposure to all aspects of practice. In 1967 he set off for England, where he was employed in the well-known firm of Sir Robert Matthew Johnson Marshall. Britain had a major expansion of universities underway and Tony became a member of the production team for the new Technical University at Bath. That year in London was the greatest influence on his career development. The office atmosphere at RMJM was informal, more academic than business oriented and filled with architects from all over the world. While that atmosphere may have been bad for profits, it encouraged an exceptional amount of innovative thinking. London itself provided a non-stop feast of inexpensive cultural events.

When Tony returned to Halifax in late 1968 he joined the firm of Fowler Bauld & Mitchell, where he is currently Vice President. This move immediately gave him the opportunity to design relatively large projects, starting with the King's Place development in Fredericton. This project led to several other major commissions, including Carleton Place, Frederick Square and finally the Sheraton Hotel. FBM also became a major provider of design services in the health care field during this period, with Tony acting as a principal designer and/or project director. A third significant category of practice has developed in the secondary educational field, with Tony as project director for virtually all of these buildings.

As inevitably happens in most medium sized firms, Tony's contribution to design commissions has moved from the principal designer to the principal overseeing the designers. In his 33 years with FBM, architectural practice has become much more complex, with new parameters driven by environmental, technical, regulatory and cost considerations. Production methods have changed vastly, from pencil drawings and blue prints on linen to digital technology. As a reminder of where he started, Tony still keeps his original mechanical pencil from school days on his desk, though it rarely gets used. When Tony started practice the telephone and snail mail gave lots of time to make decisions; today communications dominate daily practice, almost to a point of absurdity.

In his spare time Tony enjoys his sailboat *Genevieve*, out of Armdale Yacht Club, where he has served several years as Rear Commodore. His brother Jeff recently passed away, but Tony will always be grateful for the advice that he switch to architecture from oceanography; better to use boats for pleasure! cook@fbm.ns.ca



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