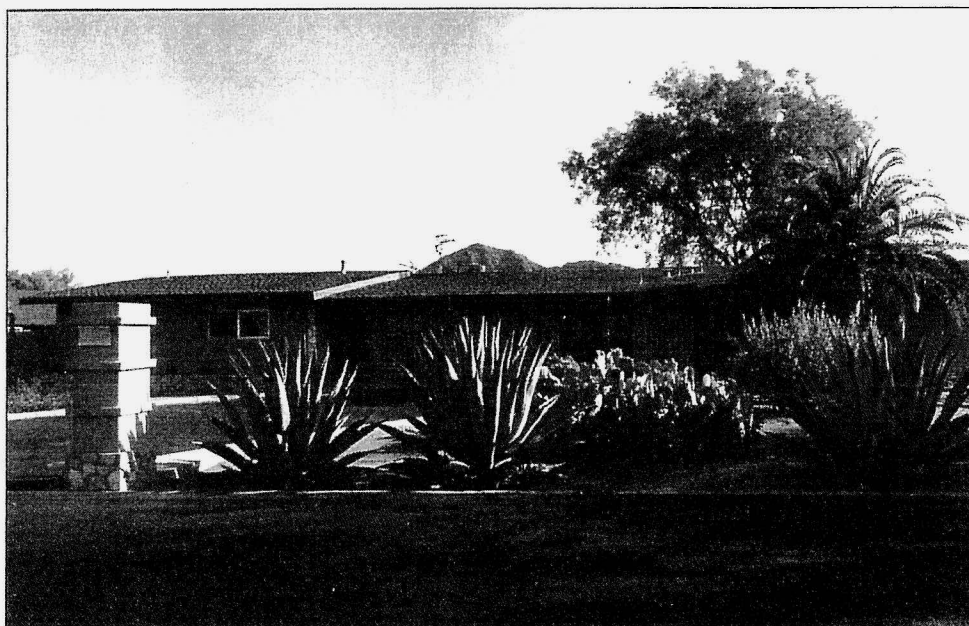
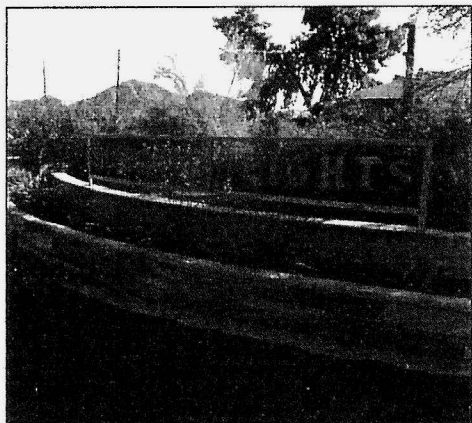


The talented and creative architectural firm of Allan & Olsson, Architects, A.I.A. was active in Arizona from 1955 through the mid-1960s. The company designed buildings mostly in the Valley and Prescott.

The company had two offices, with George Allan, Jr., based primarily in Prescott and Hugo Olsson, Jr. in Phoenix. The firm also provided architectural services in Holbrook, Keams Canyon, Litchfield Park, Payson, and Willcox. Building types included an impressive array of custom residential, commercial, municipal, healthcare, educational, and religious facilities.

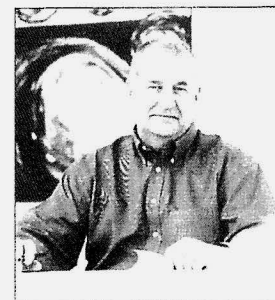
The firm evolved to become Allan, Olsson & Scarbro from 1965-1967, and, later, Allan-Scarbro & Associates. Allan established his sole proprietor business in Prescott in the mid-1970s.

This column focuses on the work created by the firm Allan and Olsson for the initial 10-year period starting in 1955, a productive and innovative time. The company's imaginative co-founders, Allan



Architect's Perspective: Allan and Olsson, Architects, A.I.A.: Modernists

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and Olsson, had many similarities before coming together. They were both pilots in World War II, educated in Colorado, moved to Phoenix in the 1950s, and supported AIA efforts.

Born in 1925 in Phoenix, Allan served as a pilot officer in the Army Air Force 1942-1945. He received a Certificate from the National Landscape Institute in 1947, and a Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Denver in 1952.

After graduation, Allan returned to Phoenix and became an AIA-Central Arizona Chapter member. He was active as an AIA volunteer in 1965-67 with the AIA School & Colleges Architecture Committee and, in 1966-68, on the Preservation of Historic Buildings Committee. Allan passed away in Prescott in 2006.

Olsson was born in New Kensington, Pennsylvania in 1920. His family moved west in 1923 where Olsson became a stand-out student at Glendale Union High School in 1938. He attended Phoenix College and Arizona State University before serving in the Marines as a fighter pilot from 1941-46. As the result of his actions at Guadalcanal, he was awarded the Purple Heart.

After earning a B.S. Architectural Engineering Degree at the University of Colorado in 1950, Olsson worked for Edward L. Varney Associates, and Ralph Haver.

Olsson joined the AIA Central Arizona Chapter in 1960 and served as its president in 1966. He became the Director of Facilities Planning at Pima Community College in 1974, where he stayed for 12 years. Besides his architecture skills, Olsson was an accomplished watercolorist, taught art classes, and was president of the Southern Arizona Watercolor Guild. He retired in 1986 and died in 2003.

As a child, my family socialized with the Olsson family, who lived nearby. As the kids played together, undoubtedly Olsson and my father philosophized about Arizona architecture.

The highlighted projects reveal Allan & Olsson's contemporary designs.

The **Sherwood Heights** residential subdivision was built at the northeast corner of 56th and Oak streets in Scottsdale starting in 1955. This 79-acre development included 117 single family homes on half-acre lots.

The property had a gently rolling topography and natural desert landscaping. The developer, D.D. Castleberry and the architects, Allan and Olsson, choose to retain the natural desert landscape to differentiate it from the other typical post-war residential subdivisions with grass yards.

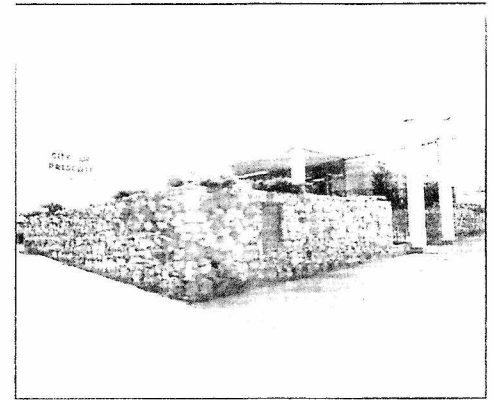
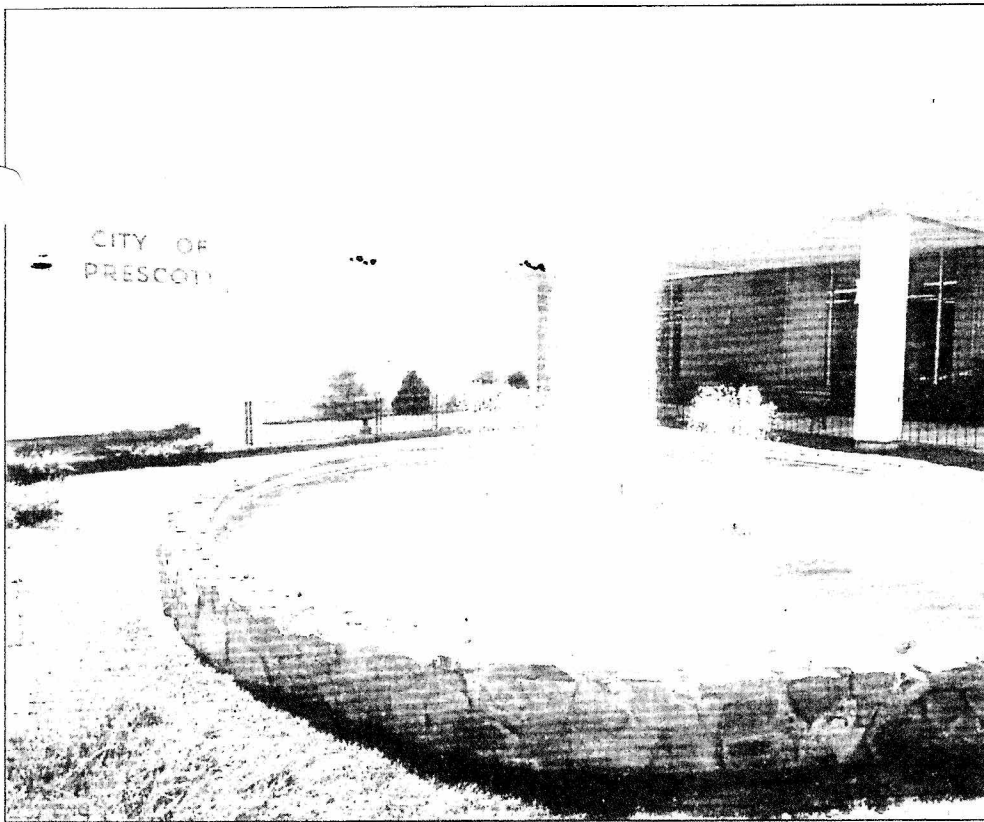
Entries with a pair of low, gateway features with sandstone walls and an overhead steel-framed sign defined the neighborhood. Homes were situated to work with the sloping sites, respect existing drainage washes, and often had an angular relationship with the street.

House windows were oriented towards Camelback Mountain to the north

Left: Sherman Heights subdivision.

Top right: Prescott Municipal Building, 1968.

Right: George Allan Jr. and Hugo Olsson, 1961. and Frerich residence.



offices. Construction included smooth white walls, tall glazing, natural stone retaining walls, and a flat roof.

The ultra-modern architectural character reflected the desired "modern setting" for city offices. Upper exterior walls appear to float visually above the lower earth-bound stone walls. An outreaching breezeway structure visually anchored the composition to the street.

The contemporary building was somewhat controversial at the time, although Prescott architect William Otwell, FAIA, noted that it is a "good representation of its era," and that "there was no looking back in time."

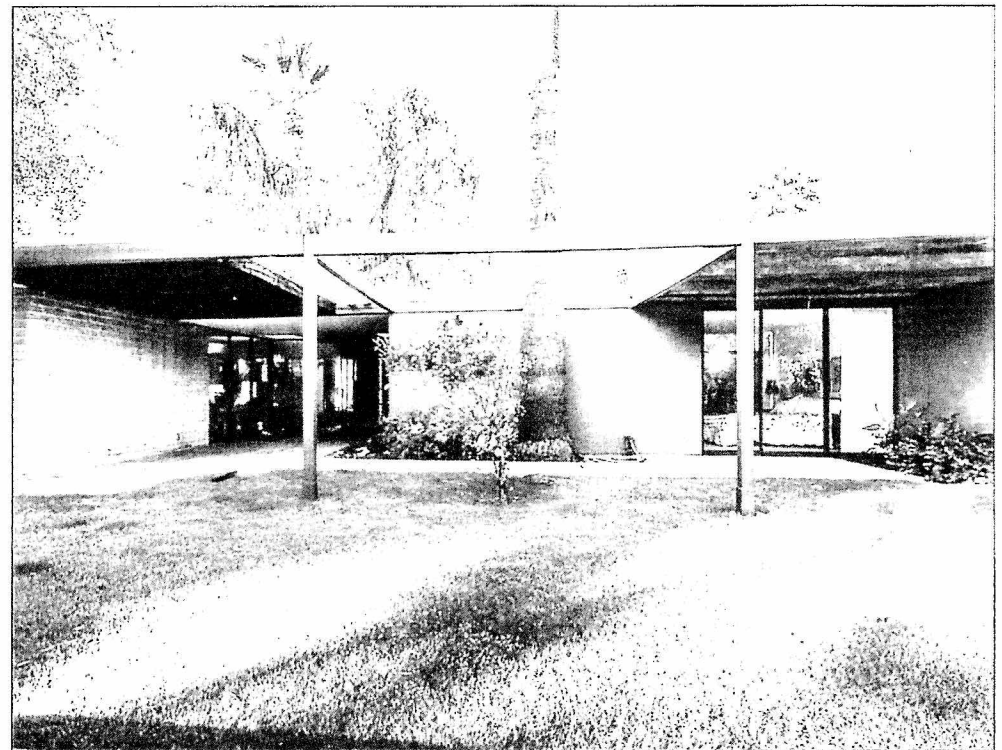
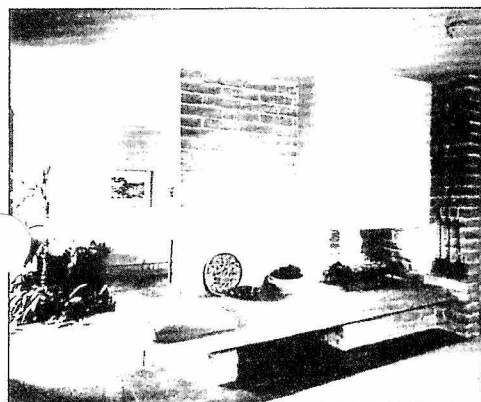
Dignitaries attending the December 29, 1963, building dedication included U.S. Senator Barry Goldwater, Arizona Governor Paul Fannin, and Arizona Supreme Court Justice Renz Jennings.

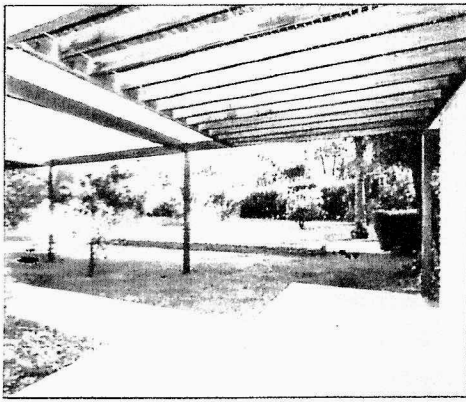
Paul Senetra constructed the **Dr. and Mrs. D.W. Frerichs Residence** on a one-

and Papago Buttes to the south. The California Ranch or Contemporary architectural style homes were constructed of adobe units, brick, concrete mump block, and board & batten. Roof options included asphalt, wood shingles, or cement tiles. The exterior wall and roof material choices provided an aesthetically varied character throughout the subdivision, thereby suggesting a semi-custom residential development.

Salt River Project (SRP) sponsored the unique 'Electric Living Home' program within the Sherwood Heights subdivision at a house at the intersection of 56th Street and Lewis Drive. This house was only one of two dozen homes throughout the United States that were completely powered by electricity.

The **Prescott Municipal Building** was constructed in 1962, as the community needed to consolidate scattered municipal





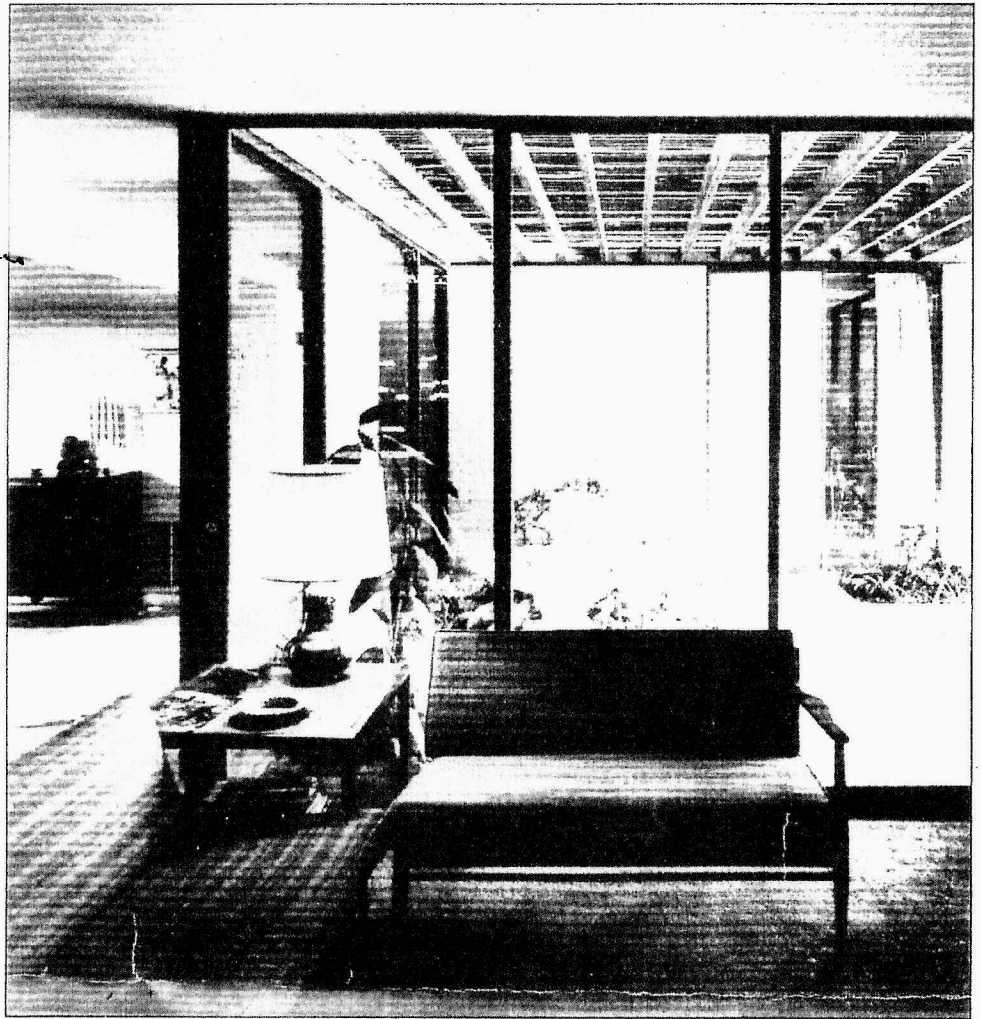
Top and right: Frerich residence.
Below: Rendering of the Frank Knoell Medical Center, 1962.

acre lot at 321 East Pomona Road in 1958. The 3,000 square-foot, award-winning Phoenix home design was based upon a predetermined planning grid, which provided an implied spatial order throughout.

The main entry is from the north and delivers one to an open and glazed space with a view to a patio. Left of the entry is the bedroom wing with the master bedroom suite and two bedrooms sharing a hall bathroom. Right of the entry are the kitchen, dining, and living clusters.

The residence received the prestigious 1961/1962 Western Home Awards - Award of Merit from *Sunset* magazine. Described as "distinctive and harmonious," the home's strong indoor-outdoor relationship included "A shaded patio matches every room including the kitchen. Floor to ceiling expanses of glass and sliding glass doors are used in lieu of windows."

The structure has an elegant, low horizontal profile with concrete slump-block bearing walls, which are exposed to the exterior and interior. There is an exposed, tubular steel post and beam structure, full height glazing



throughout, an open two-vehicle carport, and a flat roof.

The home also received a Design Award in the Ninth Annual Honors Program sponsored by the AIA Western Mountain Region. In 1972, the home was expanded to include a loft studio for artist Ruth Frerichs and a family room.

The midcentury architecture of Allan & Olsson had an indelible impact on the state and set a high standard of contemporary design in Arizona. The attitude behind the firm's work is best said in a description of Olsson.

He had "an eye for the aesthetic, and an enduring spirit of optimistic curiosity."

Other Allan and Olsson Projects:

- R. Kline Hillman residence, Litchfield Park, 1957
- Paul W. Litchfield residence, Litchfield Park, 1957
- 5800 Cactus Wren Road residence, Paradise Valley, 1957
- Thomas Lake residence, Paradise Valley, 1957
- Park Central Shops, Phoenix, 1958
- Johannessen-Girard Office Building, Phoenix, 1960
- Orangewood Baptist Retirement Home, Phoenix, 1960
- Navajo Indian Hospital, Keams Canyon, 1960
- Payson High School, 1961
- Kilgore MacFarlane, Jr. residence, Paradise Valley, 1961
- Taylor Hicks Elementary School, Prescott, 1962
- Frank Knoell Medical Center, Tempe, 1962
- Marine Prep School, Harlington, Texas, 1963
- Holbrook Hospital, 1964
- Camp Sky-Y Additions, Prescott 1964

