



Brian Wright c.1990 (AIA WA)

**Brian Frederick Charles Wright** (1952-2025) was born 14 September 1952 at St John of God Hospital in Perth, second son of Basil Eugene and Violet Joyce Wright, who had married in India. Brian had an older brother, Gordon Richard (1946-2020), and the boys grew up at 105 Wood Street in Inglewood.

Brian attended St Peter's Primary School, then CBC Bedford - now Chisholm Catholic College - before moving on to Guildford Grammar School, where his leadership qualities shone early. Family record that 'in Year 11, he became the youngest-ever Cadet Under Officer in the school's history, a distinction that led to his appointment as School Prefect—an honour typically reserved for Year 12 students and achieved by only one other student in the school's history. He was also a proud member of the 1st XI Hockey team. He graduated in 1968, already embodying the leadership and excellence that would define his life.'

Brian went on to study Architecture at the WA Institute of Technology (WAIT, now Curtin University) graduating in 1975. While studying, he was able to work with Montague Grant Architects, as Basil Wright had met 'Monty' Grant (1929-1992) through the family's hardware business' involvement in supplying projects. After graduating, Brian travelled to the United Kingdom. In 1977, he registered with the Architects Board of Western Australia (reg no 833) and in 1981 launched his own practice - Brian Wright Architect Pty Ltd - operating out the rear of Wright's Hardware, at Beaufort Street Inglewood.



Wright's Hardware at 854 Beaufort Street in Inglewood, June 1982 (SLWA 363794PD)

That humble little office turned out to be more than just the start of his professional journey - it was also the beginning of a lifelong love story. It was there Brian met Catherine Mary Porter, who was working as the receptionist at Wright's Hardware. Brian and Catherine were married on 30 December 1979 at North Perth Gospel Chapel, and the couple had children Byron b.1981, Christopher b.1982 and Alyssa b.1986. Together, Brian and Catherine designed and built almost every home they lived in: Ferndale, North Lake, Attadale, Ardross, and finally Bedford - just one suburb from where his life began.

In the 1980s, Brian's firm had the distinction of being the only architectural practice in WA to design a number of 'best-selling' project homes for the major project homebuilders in Perth. After joining with former WAIT colleague Kevin Palassis in the late 1980s, Wright worked on the \$40 million Observation Rise units in Scarborough, then Lang and Rose Hancock's grand 'Prix D'Amour' built in 1990 at Mosman Park. Of the celebrity residence (demolished in 2006), Brian noted that "Professionally, I was very pleased with the project, because the firm delivered exactly what the client wanted - and that is what being an architect is all about." With Palassis, Brian was also involved with the complex stripping-out works to the Perth Concert Hall and the City of Perth Council House on St George's Terrace, prior to their refurbishments.



The Hancock's 'Prix D'Amour' at Wellington Street, Mosman Park (<https://www.flickr.com>)

Brian spent four years as a full-time consultant for BP Australia, which led to his involvement working on projects with potentially explosive or hazardous environments. At the time his architectural practice was the only one in WA that had professional indemnity insurance extended to include work on sites with fuel-related activities and possible explosive atmospheres.

As RAIA (WA) Chapter President during 1989-1990, Brian met RAIA National President Robert Caulfield in 1990, and they remained friends from that time. Caulfield noted that Brian had a 'niche practice designing service stations for BP and Mark Quackenbush [Gull and Peak Petroleum], as well as specialised industrial buildings'. An example is the Peak outlet at Great Eastern Highway in Mundaring of 2008, both a convenience store and fuel retailer. Promotional material for the practice in later years noted that: 'Brian Wright Architect specialises in the design of service stations, transport depots, heavy vehicle workshops and any other facility that has a fuel related component. Brian Wright trained with BP and is an accredited dangerous goods consultant. Brian has worked on all types of projects ranging from the smallest service station development through supermarket convenience store to the largest freeway sites and truck stops.'



BWA logo (<https://topauarchitects.com/brian-wright-architect-pty-ltd/>)

Of his times in Brian's company, Caulfield recalls with great joy the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA) National Convention held in Perth and Kuala Lumpur during October 1990. The conference, themed *Architecture in Isolation*, was organized by a WA Institute team led by Brian, Peter Parkinson (1925-2014), and James Taylor (1937-2022) – working with their counterparts from Pertubuhan Arkitek Malaysia (PAM), including David Teh – later to become an International Council member of the Australian Institute.

Robert Caulfield: *One of the events that the profession runs every year is the Australian architectural convention. It's generally a mix of professional training, notable speakers and fun events with usually about 800 people attending. When we were both presidents, Brian and his team decided to run a convention to end all conventions. They came up with a concept of joining with the Malaysian Institute of Architects and run three days in Perth, then get everyone onto a plane and spend another four days in Kuala Lumpur. Imagine the logistics of coordinating 800 people or so for an event like that. It was such a success and*

*such a great event, people still talk about it 35 years later. Architects from many other countries usually attend and that year was no different with presidents from the United States, New Zealand, UK, Japan, India and many other countries attending. ... Brian's team made sure that everyone was looked after and they carried off a flawless event that has not been matched since. We all had such a good time then and Brian didn't stop smiling.*

Continuing his outstanding service to the profession, Brian served on the Architects Board of Western Australia 1993-2006, including as chair 1999-2006, and as President of the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia c.2003-2007. Through the 1990s and well into the 2000s, he was known to his fellow examiners of potential registrants within the Architectural Practice Examination process to be sympathetic, kind, and very willing to share his extensive knowledge of professional matters. Brian was made a Life Fellow of the RAIA in 2004 for “consistently promoting the virtues and contribution of the architectural profession and, through his actions, enhancing the standing and respect for the profession.”

Brian was presented with the State's most prestigious architects' award, the Architects Board of Western Australia Award, in May 2005. In delivering the award, Housing and Works Minister Francis Logan noted that ‘the award recognizes architects who are registered in WA and whose attitudes and personal contributions to the profession and the community have enhanced public confidence in the standing of the profession’. Minister Logan said that Brian was widely respected in the profession and had been instrumental in the development, drafting and eventual passage through State Parliament of the ‘new’ *Architects Act* of 2004, replacing the version first drafted in 1921.



Obverse: ARCHITECTS BOARD OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA/(stylised swan left on stand)/Architects/Act/2004

Reverse: (1) (wreath)/SHERIDAN-PERTH  
(2) BRIAN F C WRIGHT/Board Chairman/1999 - 2006/(wreath)/SHERIDAN-PERTH

Size: 46.4mm Metal: Antique Silver Designer: n/k Mintage: 50 Mint: Sheridan's.

Medal presented to the inaugural members of the ‘new’ Architects Board (JNAA, vol.28, p.17)

Brian was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 2012, recognized ‘for service to architecture through leadership roles in professional organizations and contributions to the establishment of standards for the education of architects and the practice of architecture’.

Brian passed away from pancreatic cancer on 27 June 2025, survived by his wife, children and grandchildren. Of Brian’s family, his father Basil had died in September 1980 aged just 56 years; his mother Violet died in July 2012 aged 85 years; and brother Gordon passed away in September 2020 aged 74 years.



Brian Wright in later years (AIA WA)

Brians’ family noted that along with his passion for architecture, he had many other interests, and was a life-long sailor. ‘He began sailing the Pelican class when just five years old at the Perth Flying Squadron, and later at Mounts Bay Sailing Club, where his father served as Commodore. He became both Club and State champion in multiple classes—Pelican, Flying Ant, Cherub, and Javelin [with Guy Grant, son of Monty Grant]. Brian’s Flying Ant named ‘Bri-ant’ [the first of its kind in WA], is now housed at the Western Australian Maritime Museum. In his adult years, he was a proud member of Royal Perth Yacht Club, where his Farr 727 yacht named ‘Bananas’, dominated its class. Brian also had a deep love for cars—Triumphs, Jaguars, BMWs, [Toyota] Supras, and the renowned Subaru WRX. He was also passionate about music—The Beatles, Fleetwood Mac, The Bee Gees, Queen—and could quote almost every line from his favourite British sitcoms. He was also a collector—of gadgets, tools, games, records—just about anything with a story.’

**References:**

'Top architect named', 2005 Architects Board Award - <https://www.wa.gov.au/government/media-statements/Gallop%20Labor%20Government/Top-architect-named-20050519>

Walter R. Bloom, 'Royal Australian Institute of Architects - WA Chapter award medals', Journal of the Numismatic Association of Australia, Vol 28, 2017, pp.1-18.

'Architecture On The Roll', published in conjunction with the award of the PAM Gold Medal 2022 to David Teh, <https://www.pra.com.my/publication>

Eulogies delivered by siblings Byron, Christopher and Alyssa; Robert Caulfield; and Merv Hodge at St Peter's Church Inglewood, 16 July 2025.

Pers comms, Guy Grant, Kevin Palassis, 28 July 2025.

Heritage Committee review: 21 August 2025 Last updated: 21 August 2025

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