



Lesley and George Winning c.2004 (courtesy Angela Fowler)

George Alexander Winning (1934-2023) was born 4 April 1934 at Nurse Midwinter's Hospital, South Perth to Scottish-born architect Alexander Barr (1892-1963) and Dorothy Vivien (nee Major) Winning (1901-1980). Alex and Dorothy had married at the WA goldfields in 1923, and they had three children - Olga Patricia (Patty) born 1924, Ian Stewart Barr born 1926, and George.

George attended Wesley College at South Perth from 1942-1951, and entered the relatively new School of Architecture course at Perth Technical College (PTC) in 1952 under the directorship of William (Bill) H. Robertson (1905-1953). Robertson had assisted to launch the architectural course at PTC in 1946. At PTC George was involved with the affairs of the Architectural Students Association, including organising hockey matches - one of his preferred sports, along with swimming and sailing. The close-knit architectural community was shocked when Bill Robertson died in March 1953, aged just 48 years. The course then came under the directorship of Francis 'Senior' Bolland from mid-1954. Bolland applied a more definite emphasis on design in course teaching than his predecessor, and this was reflected in George's life-long design strengths.

Established in 1904, the prominent architectural practice Hobbs Smith & Forbes was re-titled Hobbs Forbes & Partners in 1932 when Alex Winning, Athol Hobbs (1899-1979), and others were admitted as junior partners. By the end of 1934, the two senior partners J.J. Talbot Hobbs (1864-1938) and W.J. Waldie Forbes (1869-1939) were semi-retired. Alex Winning and Athol Hobbs formed the core of the office; and seeking greater independence, they founded the firm of Hobbs & Winning in January 1938. With post-Second World War (1939-1945) building activity starting to improve despite crippling material shortages, in late 1945 the highly-talented architect William (Bill) Leighton (1905-1990) returned from service

and joined with Hobbs and Winning, initially in association, hence practicing from 1946 as a partner in a new firm titled Hobbs, Winning & Leighton (HW&L). HW&L practiced prolifically and with distinction - eventually for over five decades. At the very end of the twentieth century, the business was absorbed by the Woods Bagot company.



George Winning as a PTC architecture student working on a town planning exercise for Kojonup with lecturer Allan Douglas (1915-1992). (*Daily News*, 31 August 1953, p.19).

Whilst studying at PTC, George worked with his father at HW&L during 1954-1960 as a draftsman-architect, and Athol Hobbs became another mentor to George. In 1958 George Winning and Lesley Haworth Lamb were married, and the couple went on to have three children - Andrew, Mary, and Angela. Also in 1958, George graduated from PTC, and he registered with the Architects Board of Western Australia (ABWA reg no 335) in February 1960.

George moved to work with the practice of McDonald & Whitaker from 1961-1970 as an architect and then partner. Ean McDonald (1918-2011) had completed the architecture course at PTC in 1951, along with the somewhat younger Edwin Whitaker (1928-2013). They formed McDonald & Whitaker (M&W) in the later 1950s, with the firm running until around 1976. M&W were successful in the growing WA economy of the 1960s, and in 1965-1974 the practice's registered office was at 17 Ord Street in West Perth.

Illustrating the way M&W capitalised on the growth of the State in the period, the State Records Office of WA holds files on various government works by the firm. During the period during in which George was involved with the firm, these include: 1967 Offices at Three Springs; various projects at schools including in 1968 at Rossmoyne Primary School, 1969 East Coolbellup Primary, 1969 North Beach Primary, 1969 Koongamia Primary, 1969 Rossmoyne Primary, 1969 Marmion Primary, 1970 North Lake (East Coolbellup) Primary, 1970 Darlington Primary, and in 1970 Hamersley Primary.

George took a working holiday in the USA during June 1969 to June 1970, visiting at three separate firms. Returning to WA, he formed the White Winning Partnership with Gordon Michael White (1935-2008) and the business operated in the decade from 1970 to 1980. Gordon White (ABWA reg no 376) had also worked at M&W as a partner in the practice at a later stage.

George cited a number of projects that he was proud of from this time, including the Moline House retirement village at Karrinyup of 1975; the Woodman Point Wastewater Plant of 1978 – incorporating innovative construction; and the Woodlawn Wines office laboratory at Tarago NSW in 1979.



1975 Moline House retirement village at Deanmore Road Karrinyup (Google 2025).

George worked as a sole practitioner 1980-1987 on smaller projects, winning a Housing Industry Award in 1983. In 1984 the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA) membership list notes George at 781 Canning Highway Applecross; and in 1988 at 37 Ord Street West Perth. George's professional qualities were acknowledged by the conferring of the honorific titles Associate of the RAIA in 1960, and Fellow of the RAIA in 1986. His vast experience by this

time ensured that he was well-placed to serve as an ABWA examiner from 1980-1990, assisting with the oral examinations of potential registrants in the State. George was asked to return to assist the old family firm (then operating as Hobbs Winning Australia) during 1987-1990, but experienced some resentment from the junior partners, and returned to sole practice again in the 1990s.

From 1965-1996 the Winnings lived at 84 Stoneham Road in Attadale, and in later years George and Lesley lived at Durdham Crescent in Bicton. In retirement, George and senior architect friends would meet on the first Monday of each month at the Albion Hotel in Cottesloe. George's recreational enjoyments were recognised with Life Memberships of both the Como Swimming Club and the Wesley South Perth Hockey Club. He was a Paul Harris Fellow of Rotary International. Following a fulfilling family and working life, George Alexander Winning died 1 September 2023 at Bicton, aged 89 years.

Powerful contributors to WA's built heritage, the Winning family is well-represented in the architecture of the State throughout the Twentieth Century. With George's work at Hobbs Winning & Leighton, McDonald & Whitaker, White Winning Partnership, Hobbs Winning Australia, and on his own account, he produced significant high-quality designs. But as a 'quiet achiever', George is one of the less visible of the more than 120 Western Australian architects who graduated from PTC between 1950 and 1967, when the course was transferred to the Western Australian Institute of Technology.

References:

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- 'Directory of Architects and Buildings in WA 1945-96', questionnaire completed by George Winning for Simon Anderson at UWA in 1996.
- Pers comm George Winning 21 July 2003, JTA Talbot Hobbs file 001/03 B7.
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- Pers comms George Winning 23 August 2013, JTA architect bio A-Z files.
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- Heritage Committee review: 20 November 2025 Last updated: 20 November 2025

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