

The background of the cover is a photograph of a tall, modern building with a curved facade and many windows. The building is light-colored and stands against a clear blue sky. In the foreground, there is a lower, white building with a sign that reads "PHOENIX FINANCIAL CENTER".

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BULLETIN

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CASHING IN ON MODERN BANKS

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WEBSITE ON
BANK DESIGN

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BENEDICTINE MILITARY SCHOOL & PRIORY:
A MODERNIST LANDMARK ON
SAVANNAH'S SUBURBAN SOUTHSIDE



CLINTON GRAVELY RESIDENCE. Greensboro NC, designed by Clinton Gravely.



Triangle Modernist Houses Honors Pioneering NC Black Architects

BY KIM WEISS

Triangle Modernist Houses is no stranger to RPPN readers. This award-winning, non-profit organization and its website, www.trianglemodernisthouses.com, is the single largest archive of modernist residential design in the nation.

Earlier this year, in preparation for February's national celebration of Black History Month, TMH founder and director George Smart began a series of profiles on African American design professionals active in North Carolina before 1970. What he found was both inspiring and disturbing.

"African American men who followed their hearts into architecture before 1970s did so despite great resistance from both society and their own industry," he said. "Today there are many minority architects in North Carolina, but before 1970 it was another story, and not a nice one. The field of architecture made choosing the profession nearly impossible for minorities. In North Carolina, there were almost none for decades."

The series, entitled "Pioneering Black Architects in North Carolina," continues to expand and attract sponsors and fans. According to Smart's research, only two black architects were registered in North Carolina in 1950. By 1980, the number increased to 65.

The series features seventeen professionals active in NC architecture before 1970, including:

- Robert Robinson Taylor (1868-1942), a native of Wilmington, NC, and the *first* professionally trained black architect in the United States.
- Chatham County native Gaston Alonzo Edwards (1875-1943), the first black architect licensed in North Carolina and the only one for many years.
- William Alfred Streat, Jr., AIA (1920-1994), who served as professor and chair of the Architectural Engineering Department at NCA&T University in Greensboro from 1949 until he retired.
- Clinton Eugene Gravely, AIA, born in 1935, one of the first black architects to work in a white-owned office.
- Arthur John Clement, the first black student accepted into the North Carolina State University School of Design in Raleigh.
- Henry Beard Delaney (1858-1928), who designed Saint Augustine's Chapel in Raleigh in 1895, now the only surviving nineteenth century building on the campus.
- William W. Smith (1862-1937), a mason, contractor and architect in Charlotte, NC, who designed the 1922 Mecklenburg Investment Company building and Afro-American Mutual Insurance Company building (1911).
- Calvin Esau Lightner (1877-1960). Lightner designed many houses and buildings in southeast Raleigh and Durham, N.C., including the first headquarters for North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance, the oldest and largest insurance company in the nation founded by African Americans. Lightner's son, Clarence Lightner, became well established as a business, civil rights, and community leader and served as Raleigh first black mayor.



J. KENNETH LEE HOUSE. Greensboro, designed by Blue Jenkins.



MAJOR SANDERS HOUSE. Brown Summit NC, designed by Major Sanders.

Smart says there will eventually be about 20 profiles, and notes: "There are no women on TMH's Pioneering Black Architects in North Carolina archive because there were no female black architects before 1970. In fact, it wasn't until 1994 that Patricia Harris became the first black woman licensed to practice architecture in North Carolina. She received her training at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and was one of the first 30 black women architects in the entire United States."

Among the many prominent black architects practicing in North Carolina today are Loeb Fellowship winner Phil Freelon, FAIA, founder and principal of The Freelon Group in Durham and the 2009 recipient of the AIA Thomas Jefferson Award for Public architecture, and Harvey Gantt, FAIA, principal partner of Gantt Huberman Architects in Charlotte who also served as the Mayor of the City of Charlotte from 1983 to 1987. The Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts + Culture in Charlotte, designed by Phil Freelon, is named for this accomplished North Carolina architect and humanitarian.

Mechanics and Farmers Bank, The Michael Okoli Agency, architect Arthur Clement, The Freelon Group, and Gantt Huberman Architects have provided generous financial support for the series, which can be seen at <http://trianglemodernisthouses.com/ncblack.htm>.

According to George Smart, this series is a sequel to "Pioneering Women Architects in North Carolina" featuring women architects who struggled to make a place for themselves in the male-dominated profession before 1970. "Pioneering Women Architects in North Carolina" can be viewed at <http://trianglemodernisthouses.com/ncwomen.htm>.

Triangle Modernist Houses (TMH) is a 501C3 nonprofit established in 2007 devoted to archiving, preserving and promoting modernist architecture in the Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill "Triangle" region of North Carolina. It has since grown to feature modernist houses and their designers statewide and includes an archive of national and international modernist architects.

TMH continues to catalog, preserve, and advocate for North Carolina modernism by hosting popular modernist house tours several times a year, giving the public access to the Triangle's most exciting residential architecture, past and present. These tours raise awareness and help preserve these "livable works of art" for future generations. TMH also sponsors an architectural film series, workshops, presentations, dinners and other social events to enhance its advocacy of modernist residential design. To learn more about TMH, visit the website at www.trianglemodernisthouses.com. ▀