



**ESTATE
LIVING FOR
75 YEARS**



**4777 AVION WAY
EASON RESIDENCE
CLIFF MAY, ARCHITECT (1966)**

Clifford Magee May (1908-1989) was a sixth-generation San Diego native and a descendant of the pioneering Estudillo family. He is considered the originator of the California Ranch style of architecture. He did not have formal architectural training, but learned his craft on the job, finding inspiration in his detailed knowledge of the region's Spanish Colonial architectural. The Eason Enterprises residence was historically designated in 2012. It features May's design principal which aimed to blur the lines between inside and outside. It has a prominent side and cross gabled roof, sheathed in wood shake shingles. A wide roof overhang shows exposed rafters and finished end-tails. It is one of only two May-designed homes in San Diego to feature roof-ridge skylights, which run the length of the great room. Grape stakes are on the walls, including the bar. This was an architectural nod to May's famous design of the Robert Mandavi Winery in Napa Valley, also in 1966. Large exposed beams continue from inside to outside, connecting the spacious interior living area with a patio lanai and pool. Positioned in the center of a U-shaped floor plan, the pool is set beneath an open-air structure. The entire area is covered by the same gabled roof of the house. Between the two spaces, are floor to ceiling walls of glass and 13 over-sized doors. This is an iconic Alvarado Estates' home by the "Father of the California Ranch House."



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ALVARADO ESTATES
5149 MESQUITE ROAD
AMINOFF RESIDENCE

DESIGNED BY:
RICHARD GEORGE WHEELER (1956)

Richard George Wheeler (1917-1990) was the son of Master Architect William Henry Wheeler and father of James Wheeler, also an architect. The second of three generations of San Diego architects, Richard Wheeler graduated from San Diego High School before attending San Diego State College (now SDSU). After completing three years, he transferred to UC Berkeley where he earned his degree in Architecture. Returning to San Diego, he first worked for his father, and then upon licensure, started his own firm in 1947. He eventually employed 40 architects, engineers and support staff to operate one of the largest architectural firms in the County. He is said to have designed over 400 residences, apartments, banks, hotels, medical buildings and other commercial projects. The Fred and Gertrude Aminoff Residence, where they raised two daughters, is one of several homes Richard Wheeler designed in Alvarado Estates. The Aminoff's owned three women's retail stores named Anell's. The builders of their home were Richard Mabie and Ted Mintz. Mintz was the Aminoff's brother-in-law, married to Gertrude's sister. Both the Mabie and Mintz families also resided in Alvarado Estates. Among Richard Wheeler's other projects were the Westgate Plaza Hotel, Fashion Valley Shopping Center East and the building at 101 Ash Street, which was constructed in 1968 as the San Diego Gas & Electric Headquarters. The building was recently purchased by the City of San Diego! The Getty Research Institute has among its collections, images by famed architectural photographer Julius Shulman of Wheeler's 101 Ash Street and other projects. In 2021, Allen and Daniela Voigt became the third owners of 5149 Mesquite Road and have worked to restore and sensitively remodel it in an effort to help preserve Richard George Wheeler's legacy.

AE Anniversary Home Tour: 75 Years of Architectural History & Preservation (1948-2023)

- In architectural circles, the home is considered a Custom Ranch design.
- A low hip roofline with exaggerated overhangs shortens direct sunlight and minimizes rain directly on the window.
- Dormers, projecting from the roof, have an Asian/South Pacific influence which was popular in San Diego from 1955-65.
- An original, architectural "water fall" spills into a small pool provide which creates a unique entrance to the front door.
- Upon entering, original stones flank the entry wall at one end and surround the fireplace at the other. New up-lights in the floor provide subtle illumination of the natural stones to better accentuate this historic design element.
- Originally, the main hallway had rice paper Shoji Screens to separate it from the sunken living room, as well as a privacy door which separated the private living spaces from the main hall and living room.
- Original floor to ceiling glass doors and clerestory windows are a classic MCM design feature, connecting inside and outside.
- Original elements and new Mid-Century Modern styling has modernized the lounge & bar area and kitchen.
- An expansive garden, including the original kidney-shaped pool and pool room, provided the perfect outdoor setting for get-togethers with neighborhood friends in the 1950's, just as it does for a 75th Anniversary event with neighbors in 2023!

James Wheeler

After receiving his Architecture degree from the University of California, Berkeley (1987), James moved to San Diego and began working with his father, the late Richard George Wheeler. Upon his father's retirement in 1989, James went to work for architects Lorimer-Case, where for 2 decades he worked with the late David Lorimer, a mentor and close personal friend.

In 1992, James Wheeler founded his own architectural practice. A small firm providing full service design by affiliating with specialists in various disciplines. Starting with residential remodel projects, James was soon designing and building custom homes.

He has direct experience in all phases of architectural practice on a wide range of project types. His experience includes facility and program planning, master planning, project management, site selection, construction documents, and construction administration/observation.

In 1994 he began providing design services for Health Care Group (now ActivCare Living), a company that builds, owns, and operates senior living facilities nationwide. In association with ActivCare Living, James has developed an award winning prototype memory care facility. Two decades later this business relationship continues, with James having designed senior living campuses of all sizes. jameswheelerarchitect.com

Keith York

A native San Diegan, Keith used to split his time between producing for KPBS and teaching in the SDSU School of Communications. Now, Keith is synonymous with Mid-Century Modern architecture. For two decades, he has published about it, given lectures, moderated forums, curated shows, and more recently became a licensed realtor, representing buyers and sellers of one-of-a-kind homes. Keith is an advocate for preserving architecturally significant homes and is the go-to source for information about our region's noted MCM architects and architecture since the end of WWII. For more on Keith's work and MCM archive, go to modernsandiego.com and agentsofarch.com



Meet "Vicky" The '56 Ford Fairlane Victoria

Bethany Heintz has lived in the El Cerrito neighborhood of College Area since 2002. She has been in the biotech industry for over 25 years and is an Executive Manager for a life science consulting and investment firm. In 2021, she received this stunning 1956 Ford Fairlane Victoria as a gift from her dad, Joe, a retired Command Sergeant Major who served in the Army for 30 years. Joe was Vicky's second owner, having found her in a 1978 San Leandro, CA newspaper ad. The original owner bought her brand spanking new at the local Ford dealership. Over the years, Joe put a lot of love and work into her, including bodywork and her current, beautiful blue and white interior and exterior. She still has her original V-8 engine and some added safety features.

Vicky is well traveled! When Joe left for Europe on a military assignment in 1982, she went "to visit" relatives in L.A. In 1985, he drove her to Oklahoma through rain and snow, putting on chains for the first and last time! Driving to North Carolina for his next assignment, they traveled through Mississippi, stopping at Graceland to tour Elvis' mansion in Memphis and then Elvis' birth place in Tupelo. Guess Joe's an Elvis fan!

Joe and Vicky were again separated during Desert Storm, until 1992, when Joe was able to return to his home in Guam. Vicky was shipped to Guam and stayed there until 2018 when she made her way back to the States as a gift to Bethany. With pit stops in L.A., Las Vegas, and now at home in San Diego, she is still frequently visited by Joe.

Vicky, in a professional photo shoot by local photographer Jennifer Wingrove.

We greatly appreciate James Wheeler for taking time to tell us about his family of noted architects. Thanks to Keith York for sharing his extraordinary knowledge of MCM history and architectural design in San Diego and Alvarado Estates. Our thanks to Bethany Heintz for sharing her spectacular vintage car with us. It was the perfect iconic welcome to this event. This Home Tour was brought to you by the 75th Anniversary Committee: Angela Adu-Badu, Karen Austin (Chair), Elaine Boland, Susan Davey, Carolyn Housman, Whitney Lowe, Jeff MacGurn, Eric Poliak, Kathy Valverde, Allen Voigt, Tammy Wall and David Wiles.



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ALVARADO ESTATES
4545 YERBA SANTA DRIVE
JOHN & BETTY MABEE RESIDENCE

DESIGNED BY ARCHITECT:
WILLIAM LUMPKINS (1963)

The Mabee home, located at 4545 Yerba Santa Drive, is a single-story residence designed in the Custom Ranch style by architect William Lumpkins (1963). The 5,216 square-foot house overlooks Mission Valley and sits on a triangular lot at the corner of Palo Verde Terrace. In 2000, this home became SDSU's first presidential house, purchased by real estate mogul Malin Burnham and other benefactors, including then-Padres owner John Moores who then transferred ownership to the university. The first resident was Stephen L. Weber, who was the 7th President (1996-2011). He and his wife Susan resided in this home until Elliot Hirshman, his successor, resided in the home during his tenure from 2011 to 2017. In 2017, Aztecs Shops (a non-profit university auxiliary) purchased the Alvarado Estates home at 4811 Yerba Santa Drive to house presidents. In 2018, the Mabee Residence was purchased by the third and current owners, Miguel and Maggie Espinosa, who were subsequently awarded a Mills Act Program agreement in 2019 to help preserve this now historically-designated house for future generations. To be designated a historical resource by the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board, a home must have significance under one or more of six criterion (A-F). This home is deemed significant under Criterion B (Identified with persons or events significant in local, state or national history), as it was commissioned as the primary residence of notable San Diegans, John and Betty Mabee. It is also significant under Criterion C (Embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period or method of construction or is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship), for its distinctive characteristics of the Custom Ranch style of Mid-century Modern architecture, including horizontal massing wide to the street, prominent stone chimneys, a gabled roof, and expansive use of glass.

AE Anniversary Home Tour: 75 Years of Architectural History & Preservation (1948-2023)

- In architectural circles, the Mabee Residence is considered a Custom Ranch design.
- The house has horizontal massing and features a sprawling "U" shaped floor plan that wraps around a central patio and pool.
- It is composed of an east wing and west wing that connect at the garage.
- The wings feature prominent, low-sloped gabled roofs with composite roof shingles and deep overhangs.
- The garage has an intersecting Dutch gable roof with the same composite shingles.
- Exterior walls of the house are composed of a thin stuccoed upper portion, covered by the roof overhang.
- Lower portions of exterior walls, which rise from the foundation, are made of painted wood board-and-batten siding.
- The south side features the porte cochere and main entrance, both of which are centered between two fieldstone chimneys.
- The same material is used for the expansive interior fireplaces, which also incorporate extended seating.
- Vaulted open-beam ceilings and large panes of glass sliding doors and windows accentuate indoor and outdoor living.
- A large primary bedroom suite has views of the interior patio and pool, incredible closet storage and views of Mission Valley to the west from a grand spa bath retreat.

William Lumpkins

William Lumpkins was born in 1909 near Clayton, New Mexico. The son of a pioneer family, he studied art with mentors Peter Hurd and Neil Hogner in the 1920s. He went on to receive his degree in architecture from the University of Southern California in 1934, returning to NM to work for the Works Progress Administration. After World War II, Lumpkins lived and worked as an architect and painter in La Jolla. He produced drawings for numerous homes in California and the Southwest and published a book in 1946 entitled, *Modern Spanish Pueblo Homes*. This book established him as a leading expert on contemporary adobe-based construction techniques. Over the next decade, he continued to explore adobe as a form and as a material, while also designing residences, commercial and civic buildings featuring a more modern influence. His 1961 book *La Casa Adobe* became the notable book on the subject. In 1962 he designed the AE Mabee House, which was completed in 1963. Other significant works include the Athenaeum Music & Arts Library addition in La Jolla (1956) and the William and Ruth Black Residence (1949-52) at 9630 La Jolla Farms Road (now UCSD Geisel House/Chancellor's Residence). In 1967, Lumpkins returned to Santa Fe, NM, where he continued to pioneer efforts in passive solar design. In 1985, he cofounded the Santa Fe Art Institute and was presented with the Governor's Award for Excellence and Achievement in Architecture. He was named a

Santa Fe Living Treasure in 1998. By the time of his death in 2000, William Lumpkins had designed or contributed to the design of over two thousand buildings in and around the Santa Fe area.

Jim Newland

Jim has spent 28 of his nearly 35-year career as a historian with the California State Parks Department. He has served as a historian, planner, project manager, construction manager and park superintendent, and is currently Chief of the Planning Division. He is a double graduate of SDSU with a Master's Degree in Public History. His interest in local and community history began when he and his wife, Jennifer, and daughter, Lindsay, lived in nearby Rolando. In the late 1990s he started the College Neighborhoods Project to compile source material about surrounding College Area communities, including Alvarado Estates. After moving to La Mesa in 2004, he served on the City's Planning and Historic Preservation Commission and became involved with the La Mesa History Center. He is the current past president and helps lead the organization's annual home tours and conducts research for property owners on the history of their houses. Three of his four published books are on the greater La Mesa area. He and his family moved to Kensington in 2022. Their home is a 1928 historically listed property with a Mills Act Program agreement.

John C. & Betty Mabee

John Couchman Mabee was born on August 21, 1921 in Seymore, Iowa. After marrying Betty Murphy in 1941, the couple moved to San Diego and bought a small grocery store. In 1943 they welcomed a son named Larry, their only child. Their grocery business grew into the Big Bear Supermarket chain, which by 1969 was the largest independent supermarket chain in San Diego County history. The Mabees purchased their first two thoroughbred horses in 1957. In 1970, John Mabee cofounded the Del Mar Thoroughbred Club and served as its president from 1978 to 1990. In 1972, the Mabees started the Golden Eagle Farm, a 560-acre horse racing and breeding business. This farm became nationally recognized and produced a number of stakes winning racehorses. The most prominent among them was Best Pal, who retired in 1996 as the all-time earnings leader among California-bred horses and was voted into the National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame. John and Betty Mabee were named California's leading breeders ten times between 1990 and 2001, and were inducted into the Hall of Fame of the California Thoroughbred Breeders Association. They also won the National Thoroughbred Racing Association (NTRA)-sponsored Eclipse Award for Outstanding Thoroughbred Breeder in North America in 1991, 1997 and 1998. John Mabee was also founder and president of the Golden Insurance Company. John Mabee passed away in 2002, Betty in 2010 and Larry in 2012. Their legacy in AE carries on!

This flier was prepared by Karen Austin by referencing the Historic Designation Report by Lone Stiegler Architecture, Keith York's Modern San Diego and other internet resources.

We greatly appreciate Miguel and Maggie Espinosa for sharing their home and its six-decade legacy. Many thanks to James Newland for his talk about Mid-century Modern architectural design, the history of Alvarado Estates and this Mabee home. This Holiday Party & Home Tour on December 17, 2023, was organized by Miguel and Maggie Espinosa and the 75th Anniversary/AE History Committee: Angela Adu-Badu, Karen Austin, Elaine Boland, Susan Davey, Carolyn Housman, Whitney Lowe, Jeff MacGurn, Eric Poliak, Kathy Valverde, Allen Voigt, Tammy Wall and David Wiles. Thanks also to Geri Sander.