
"Mr. Stein received many awards for his architectural designs, but Waterbury residents are the recipients of the benefits of his extensive artistic productivity."
- Waterbury American, August 17, 1977

Joseph Stein was born June 2, 1916, the son of David Stein, an immigrant from Lithuania, and Julia Grossfield Stein, a native of Poland.

He graduated from Dartmouth College in 1938 as a member of Phi Beta Kappa and received his master's degree in architecture from Harvard Graduate School of Design in 1941 - at a time when Harvard was the only American university to embrace the Modernist movement.

The Modernist movement was fomented by the German architect Walter Gropius, who had directed the Bauhaus (School of Building) in Germany in the 1920's and 30's before teaching at the Harvard design school. Members of Harvard's Gropius circle, which included early modernists Edward Larrabee Barnes, Philip Johnson and Marcel Breuer, bonded in the shared pursuit of a pure and "rationalist" architecture driven by technology and function.

Stein's career was delayed by World War II, in which he served as a first lieutenant in the 117th Combat Engineers Group, seeing action in Holland, France and Germany. He was awarded a Purple Heart in 1942 as a survivor of a freighter which sank after it was torpedoed by a German submarine off the New England coast.

Stein opened an architecture firm in Waterbury in 1948, designing homes and such notable buildings as the Alumni Building at the University of Connecticut, Storrs; Waterbury's Bureau of Water, Gilmartin and Regan schools, MacDermid corporate headquarters, religious and academic institutions, libraries, commercial and office buildings, and public housing projects.

He was cited for his designs of the Mattatuck Animal Hospital and the Middlebury branch of the American Savings and Loan Association. He received the American Institute of Architects and the American Library Association awards for the design of the Silas Bronson Library in 1964 and the Connecticut Building Congress Merit award for the library and the Waterbury Club. *Institutions* magazine honored him for interior designs of both buildings.

Some other projects of his firm are the Beth El Synagogue Religious Schools, the Buckingham Garage, the Bunker Hill Library, the Cheshire Fire Station, the Mount Olive AME Zion Church, the North End Recreational Center, Plaza on the Green, the Plaza Station Post Office, Prospect Towers, St. John's Lutheran Church, St. Margaret's-McTernan School Science Building, the Savings Towers Apartments, the Shelton Public Library, Temple Israel, Watertown Medical Center, and the Western Connecticut Jewish Community Center.

Joint ventures with architect Louis Fucito include Waterbury Superior Court and the city's three middle school complexes.

Stein served as president of the Connecticut Society of Architects (CSA) and represented the CSA at the first meeting of the Human Resources Council of the American Institute of Architects (AIA). He was a delegate to the first joint international convention of the AIA and the Royal Architectural



Institute of Canada. He was also a director of the Greater Waterbury Chamber of Commerce and a quiet benefactor of the community.

One of Stein's partners noted that Joe Stein thought that people's lives could be enhanced by the quality of the space they occupy, a belief that underscored his commitment to working on his affordable housing projects, libraries, schools and private homes. One of the hallmarks of the Stein style was the architect's firm belief in the collaborative process, which was the essential underpinning of the Bauhaus approach. Stein's approach to design was direct and succinct. The logic of the underlying construction was made visible through the structural elements and materials. One client stated that the way a Joe Stein house was designed made it stay new, which is an essential attribute of "buildings that are good backgrounds for living."

Joseph Stein was also an accomplished sculptor whose work appears at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and New York University. He donated copies of his Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. bust to King's widow, Mrs. Coretta Scott King, and the Silas Bronson Library.

He was married to Helen Grossman Stein with whom he had three children. His son Michael Stein is a distinguished architect who practices in Connecticut.

Joseph Stein died on August 16, 1977.