

The following “Postcard” article by Crawford firm partner Stacey Jones appeared in the April 2007 issue of *Architecture Bulletin*, a publication by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects.

Stacey Jones

Today I’m in the lobby at the Arizona Biltmore Hotel, 25 years after my infatuation with Prairie School architecture first brought me to the United States. Widely believed to be designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, the hotel commission was actually family patronage bestowed upon one of his former students, Albert Chase McArthur. Albert brought FLW in as a design consultant, but Frank so coveted the project that he started calling himself the architect until a lawsuit threatened to resolve the conflict – typically ‘Wrightian’.



Stacey Jones pictured at the Biltmore Hotel with wife, Myra, and two children, Samantha and Jake.

Like Albert Chase McArthur, I was once a young architect, but that’s where our similarities end. In the early ’80s, about to graduate from Newcastle University and desperate for a job in the US, I wrote 50 letters, one to each of the state AIA chapter presidents asking help in seeking a job. I got three replies: 1. sorry can’t help at this time, 2. look me up when you’re coming through Maine, and 3. sure we’d love to have you, there’s a job waiting. Bingo! I didn’t wait around to see if any more letters came. I was on the next flight to Ottumwa, Iowa, home of M.A.S.H. character Radar O’Reilly.

Fast forward 25 years and I have the same feeling I did years ago in the presence of architectural greatness. Today, it’s not so much due to the inspiring architecture because I can see that while Frank obviously had a hand in its creation, his heart was elsewhere – the Biltmore is not one of his best works. My inspiration today comes as I show my American wife, Myra Karasik, and two kids, Samantha and Jake (born in Sydney, now living in Kansas City), around the lobby, share with them the genesis of my relationship with America, see the interest in their eyes and know that I’ve come full circle.

Stacey Jones is a partner of Crawford Architects, Kansas City & Sydney