

- U.S. Army, U.S. Merchant Marines (South Pacific and Far East service), 1942-1946.
- Instructor, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1951-1952.
- Assistant Professor, University of Minnesota, 1952-1958.
- Associate Professor, University of Minnesota, 1958-1965.
- Chairman, Department of Architecture, University of Utah, 1963-1974.
- Dean, Graduate School of Architecture, University of Utah, 1974-1986. (In 1974, the Department of Architecture split from the Fine Arts College and became the Graduate School of Architecture.)
- Professor, Department of Architecture/Graduate School of Architecture, University of Utah, 1955-1989.
- Professor Emeritus, University of Utah, 1989-present.
- Honorary Member, Boston Society of Architects, 1950.

- member, Jefferson Chair Selection Committee, University of Virginia, 1980-1983.
- Member, Utah Museum of Art, dates unknown.
- Member, Metropolitan Museum of Art, dates unknown.
- Member, Walker Arts Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota (Bliss helped with the design of exhibitions), 1960-1962.
- Member, Urban Design Coalition, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1960s-1970s.
- Member, Minneapolis Museum of Art, Minneapolis, Minnesota (Bliss helped with the design of exhibitions), 1960-1962.
- Board Member, Minnesota State Art Society, 1956-1963.
- Historian, President, and Officer, Minneapolis Chapter of the AIA, 1957-1961.
- Board Member, Shorewood Planning Commission, 1957-1963.
- Executive Committee Member, Minneapolis Chapter of the AIA, 1961-1963.
- Board Member, Association of Collegiate School of Architecture, 1961-1963.
- Director, Architectural Program for the Peace Corps Training in Utah for Tunisia, 1964.³
- Director, Utah Heritage Foundation, 1966-1968.
- President, Association of Collegiate School of Architecture, 1967-1969.⁴
- National Committee Member, Education and Research for the AIA, 1967-1969.
- President, Utah Heritage Foundation, 1968-1970.
- Board Member, Salt Lake Art Center, 1971-1973.
- President, ASSIST Inc., 1971-1975. The purpose of this nonprofit organization is to provide architectural services for communities that cannot afford them.
- Advisory Council Member, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1971-1977.
- Consultant to Kuwait University School of Architecture, 1975.
- Committee Member, Salt Lake City Historic Landmarks Committee, 1976-1983.
- Board Member, Salt Lake Art Center, 1983-1984.
- Chair, R/UDAT Urban Design Committee, 1988.
- Secretary, Salt Lake City Chapter of the AIA, 1989-1990.⁵

SIGNIFICANT BUILDINGS W/ LOCATION

[\[SCROLL TO TOP\]](#)



Snowbird Ski Resort Site Plan
Snowbird, Utah
1967 (drawings, never completed)
Building Type: Variety of Uses - Monuments, Exhibition Halls & Etc.
[Click here for more information »](#)



Dalrymple Residence
Minneapolis, Minnesota
1961
Building Type: Residential
[Click here for more information »](#)



Jones Summer Pavilion
Wayzata, Minnesota
1959
Building Type: Residential
[Click here for more information »](#)



Douglas Dayton Residence
Orono, Minnesota
1958
Building Type: Residential
[Click here for more information »](#)



Stillwater Clinic
Stillwater, Minnesota
1958
Building Type: Medical Facilities - Hospitals, Clinics & Retirement Facilities
[Click here for more information »](#)

OTHER SIGNIFICANT PROJECTS

[\[SCROLL TO TOP\]](#)

Aluminum Chair
1988-1989
[Click here for more information »](#)

Furniture and Art Exhibit
1997
[Click here for more information »](#)

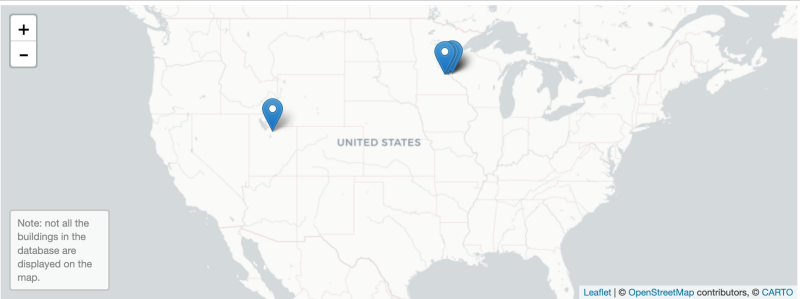
Lady Murasaki's Fan
1993
[Click here for more information »](#)

Metrex Exhibition System
1969
[Click here for more information »](#)

Slab Chair
1989
[Click here for more information »](#)

The Adult Deep Cradle Rocker
1991
[Click here for more information »](#)

The Baby Deep Cradle Rocker
1991
[Click here for more information »](#)



BIOGRAPHY

[\[SCROLL TO TOP\]](#)

In 1921, Robert Bliss was born in Seattle, Washington and he grew up on the Washington coastline during the depression years. As a child, Bliss expressed interest in Naval Architecture, which foreshadowed his eventual academic pursuits. During his college years, Bliss believed that large universities, such as the nearby University of Washington, were too impersonal and so he traveled to North Carolina to attend Black Mountain College, which at the time was a new and experimental school. While at Black Mountain College, Bliss studied under noted architect Lawrence Kocher. Kocher is known as the previous head of the School of Architecture at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York, and the editor of the *Architectural Record*. Bliss credits Kocher for helping to develop his deep love and interest for architecture.⁶ During this time, Bliss also gained hands-on experience working as a carpenter on new school facilities.

Bliss soon realized, however, that the personal schooling he craved was not suitable any longer for his career goals, so in 1942 he transferred to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston. After two semesters he set aside his education to enlist in the United States Army, where he served as a merchant marine during World War II, delivering cargo goods to the Marshall Islands and the Philippines. In 1946 Bliss received an honorable discharge and immediately returned to M.I.T. where he graduated with a Bachelors in Architecture in 1949. During his years at M.I.T., Bliss studied under and was influenced by William Wurster, Pietro Belluschi, Alvar Aalto, and Lawrence B. Anderson.⁷ His relationship with Anderson and Beckwith eventually led to a yearlong post-graduation apprenticeship in Boston.

In 1949, Bliss married Anna Campbell (later known as Anna Campbell Bliss). Shortly thereafter Bliss was honored with the Rotch Traveling Fellowship. This provided funding for architectural education through travel. Together, Campbell and Bliss bicycled throughout Europe during 1950, and they returned to Boston in 1951. Shortly after their return from Europe, Bliss and Campbell moved to the University of Minnesota. Bliss attributes his decision to move on to the steep career competition in Boston, which, as he remembers, "was filled with M.I.T. and Harvard graduates."⁸ Bliss remained at the University of Minnesota for 11 years where he served as a professor of architecture, worked as an architect with a variety of practices, and ultimately opened a small private practice with his wife in 1955, named Bliss & Campbell. Together, the couple's firm produced notable projects such as the Jones Summer Pavilion and the Stillwater Clinic. While in Minnesota, Bliss supported historic preservation and he was instrumental in saving the National Farmer's Bank of Owatonna, designed by Louis Sullivan. Additionally, Bliss led a campaign to save the Metropolitan Building in Minneapolis, Minnesota, but, unfortunately, the building was torn down in 1962.⁹

In 1963, Bliss left the University of Minnesota and moved to Salt Lake City, Utah, where he was hired on as chairman of the University of Utah's School of Architecture. During his time at the University of Utah, Bliss served as chairman (1963-1974), dean (1974-1986), and professor (1986-1990) of the School of Architecture. In his capacity as dean of the School of Architecture, Bliss was instrumental in the development of ASSIST Inc., a program that helped to provide technical support and architectural guidance to low-income persons and businesses. As dean, Bliss also shaped the academic goals for the Master of Architecture program. In a brochure for prospective students, Bliss wrote:

"The architecture profession has assumed leadership in the crisis of our environment. An architect must be educated, not merely trained; have a richness of background upon which to draw; originate projects not merely respond to the whims of others; accept responsibility and make the professional contribution that all of society has a right to expect.

The intent of the Utah program is to expand a student's perception, first gaining a depth of understanding in another field and then beginning a highly concentrated professional study. The student obtains an undergraduate degree in another field while beginning architectural coursework. Major studies in one of the sciences, technologies, the arts or humanities are all encouraged.

The professional program progresses from the fundamentals of visual awareness, through history, structures, materials, processes, natural and human forces, to the development of a philosophy and approach to design. The interdependence of disciplines in the study of environment is stressed. The single degree offered is Master of Architecture."¹⁰

In Utah, Bliss resumed his dedication for historic preservation and was instrumental in the preservation of Salt Lake's Gilgal Gardens, the David Keith Mansion, the Deveraux Mansion, and the Salt Lake City and County Building.¹¹ In 1966, Bliss founded the Utah Heritage Foundation along with several other preservationists, as Utah's first statewide organization devoted to historic preservation. The organization was created in response to the demolition of the Cosgriff Mansion in Salt Lake City to make way for the Steiner Building. Bliss was one of the original Trustees of the Utah Heritage Foundation beginning in the 1970s serving a 3-year term. Bliss is still involved with the foundation where he sponsors important events. For a short time, Bliss was also a member of the Salt Lake City Historic Landmark Commission.¹²

In addition to being an accomplished architect, Bliss is also a respected furniture designer and two furniture pieces – the Baby and Adult Deep Cradle Rockers – can be seen as part of the permanent collection of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. Both Bliss and Anna Campbell embarked on artistic paths aside from architecture: Campbell pursued painting, while Bliss constructed furniture. In 1997, Bliss and Campbell exhibited their art and furniture work together at an exhibit at the Art Barn in Salt Lake City. In line with his artistic creativity, in 1972 Bliss designed and won awards for the METREX display system – a system of modular stainless steel tubing used for exhibit displays.

As an educator for nearly forty years, Bliss profoundly impacted nearly two generations of architects and their work in Utah and beyond. Martin Friedman, Director of the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, MN, wrote in a letter of nomination that Bliss "is an unusually well-backgrounded [sic] individual, who conceives of architecture as a human force, as well as a profession. My observations of his teaching have convinced me that he is extra-ordinarily effective in communicating this to students. His views about architecture and its technique are attuned to evolving social conditions."¹³

Bliss retired from years of teaching at the University of Utah in 1990 and was honored as the Professor Emeritus. He resides in Salt Lake City, Utah.

SOURCES

[SCROLL TO TOP]

1. Robert Bliss, "Robert L. Bliss Resume," from Black Mountain College, December 6, 2011, accessed June 26, 2015, <http://www.blackmountaincollegeproject.org/Biographies/BlissRobert/resume.html>.

2. Robert Bliss, "Robert L. Bliss Resume," from Black Mountain College, December 6, 2011, accessed June 26, 2015, <http://www.blackmountaincollegeproject.org/Biographies/BlissRobert/resume.html>; Robert Bliss, "Resume," February 9, 2007, accessed June 26, 2015, <http://robertbliss.com/vita.html>.

3. "Digest of the Career and Achievements of Robert Lewis Bliss," in R. Lloyd Snedaker Papers, accn 1105, box 6, folder 6. From the Special Collections and Archives Department, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah.

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5. Robert Bliss, "Robert L. Bliss Resume," from Black Mountain College, December 6, 2011, accessed June 26, 2015, <http://www.blackmountaincollegeproject.org/Biographies/BlissRobert/resume.html>.

6. Robert Bliss. Interview by Everett L. Cooley, April 8, 1986. Audio Recording. Everett L. Cooley Collection, 909. Salt Lake City, Utah, University of Utah.

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8. Robert Bliss, "Robert L. Bliss Resume," from Black Mountain College, December 6, 2011, accessed June 26, 2015, <http://www.blackmountaincollegeproject.org/Biographies/BlissRobert/resume.html>.

9. "Personal Communication with Robert Bliss," in "Digest of the Career and Achievements of Robert Lewis Bliss" from the R. Lloyd Snedaker papers, accn 1105, box 6, folder 6. From the Special Collections and Archives Department, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah.

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11. "Lucybeth Rampton Award" Utah Heritage Foundation, accessed June 26, 2015, <http://www.utahheritagefoundation.org/tours-and-events/heritage-awards/2008ha/item/98-robert-bliss-salt-lake-city#.VY15kPIVhBc>.

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