



PAUL STAMAN:

A MID-CENTURY CONTRACTOR WITH STAYING POWER

Carly Hanson

Paul Staman sat in his living room next to his wife, Pauline, as he reminisced about his 48 years in the construction industry. “The fact that I can remember all this stuff...I think it’s pretty good,” he chuckled, after revealing his 100th birthday is in December. Staman started on the con-

struction scene building homes alongside prominent developer David Murdock. He went on to work as a partner in Staman, Fields & Co., which developed luxury residential buildings in Phoenix in the 1950s and 1960s.

Staman was born in Aliquippa, Penn-

sylvania, in 1919. He graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1941, then enlisted in the Army during World War II. After the war, he and his sister were advised to relocate their father because of health complications. They traveled to

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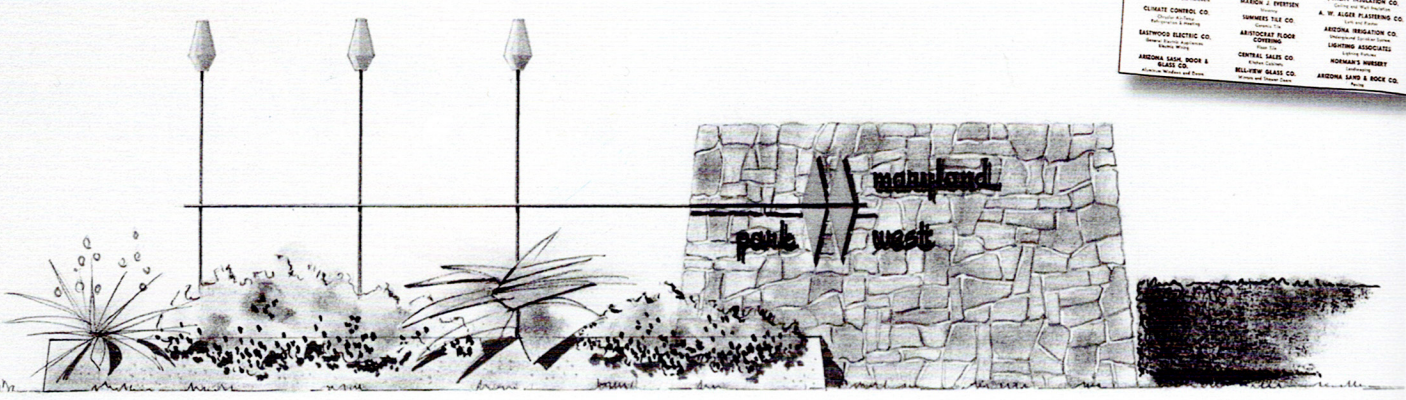
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Images courtesy of Arizona Contractor & Community





Phoenix and bought a house in 1946. His father died, however, before they could move him. Still set on living in Phoenix, Staman moved with his mother and sister and met Pauline a few years later in Tucson.

David Murdock was another reason Staman came to Phoenix - they worked on construction projects together before Sta-

man obtained his own contractor license in 1950. "He said, 'Paul, why don't you leave there and come into business with me?' So, we built two houses together, on the south side of Edgemont over the Encanto Golf Course," Staman said.

Their first spec home was in Pyle Estates near Seventh and Orangewood



avenues, and requests soon came in for more work. When the real-estate market collapsed in the 1960s, Murdock moved to Los Angeles seeking other opportunities and invited Staman to come along. He declined. Murdock later purchased Castle & Cooke, owner of what's now known as Dole Food Company.

Top: Rendering for Chateau De Ville, 129 E. Palm Lane, 1963.
Above: Paul and Pauline Staman, 2019.
Left: Staman family, 1958.
Right: Staman & Fields concrete brass plaque, 1961.

Staman had a close childhood friend, Bell Surber, who lived with him after her parents died. She grew up to marry Ed Fields, who would become Staman's business partner. "My parents took her home right from the cemetery...she met Eddie, and they got married in our home," Staman said. The newly married couple moved to West Virginia, where Fields had a scrap business. "Many, many years later, Ed gave up the scrap business and moved to Arizona and went into business with me."

Staman and Fields developed the Martinique Apartments near 32nd Street and Camelback Road, where Staman lived with Pauline and their three children for about two years. "People on the second floor could oversee the mountains. There were some duplexes and some individual units... the kids loved it," he said.

One of Staman's personal favorites is The Pierre on 5th, an apartment complex on Fifth and Whitton avenues in Midtown Phoenix. "It's a three-story elevator building with huge apartments, maybe 2,000 square feet, and big balconies...what a beautiful project," Staman said.

The only project he loved more than The Pierre was Chateau De Ville on East Palm Lane near the Heard Museum. "That was one of the nicest projects I ever built," Staman said. "It had old brick, white shutters, and the apartments were about 1,500 to 1,600 square feet, with beautiful artwork and balconies."

A solo project of Staman's was Maryland Park West near Third and Maryland avenues, the first condominium in Phoenix. "It was a two-story unit overlooking the mountains. There was no such thing as a condominium at that time," Staman said.

Some of Staman's favorite memories from the construction industry are the people he had the chance to work for. "Most of my customers were very nice," he said. "I remember a custom home I built on the mountainside for a man who worked as a comedian, and it was so much of a pleasure building for him. Anything I suggested, he'd say, 'Whatever you say, that's fine,' and he invited Pauline and me up for wine."

Fields, who died in his 60s, is another warm memory for Staman. "Ed was such a wonderful person," he said. "He had an unbelievable personality, and all the kids loved him. They called him 'Uncle Yeddie.'" Staman also talked about Mary Ellen McGinn, a real-estate agent who provided him with free office space when he was in the process of salvaging a struggling business.


Staman retired at age 75 and now lives

in an assisted-living facility in Phoenix with Pauline. The couple has been married for 68 years. "We're so busy, and it's really wonderful. We go to dinner, to the theater...you have to pick and choose. Life is good, and as long as we stay well, that's all that counts," Staman said.

Two of their three children live in Phoenix, but Staman said they have the pleasure of speaking with all three frequently. After he moved to his current facility, the homeowners of his last development, Taliverde Patio Homes at The Biltmore, gifted him a crystal plaque for his contributions that


reads, "To Paul Staman, Builder and Long-time Resident, From All Your Friends and Grateful Patio Home Neighbors." ☺








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