

CHAPTER NINE - FAMILY AND COLLEAGUES

Introduction. To this point I have described activities and important colleagues and clients in relation to specific projects and travels. For readers with interest in the personal side of my activities, this chapter will have a family focus, including business colleagues I considered almost family. Picking up from Chapters Two and Three, which told my story through high school and university, here you will hear about homelife in four additional locations in three countries, as well as about business partnerships and office life.

College Life in Cambridge Massachusetts -1965. I arrived in Cambridge Massachusetts in February 1965. Having completed her Bachelor of Landscape Architecture degree at the University of California in Berkeley, Susan drove across the US and joined me in June of that year. She was hired by Olmsted Associates, the remaining firm of legendary Fredrick Law Olmsted, founder of our profession in the United states. Coming from Southern California, Susan and I had never experienced driving in snow and Susan's California car did not have a suitable heater. Nevertheless, in all seasons during weekends and holidays, we explored New England, camping in New Hampshire's White Mountains, Vermont's valleys and canoeing on Maine's Moosehead lake.



Figure 116. Left: Susan during our canoeing visit to Moose Head Lake, Maine. Right: together on the shore of Lake Louise in Banff National Park in 1966. We had no idea we would move to this area three years later.

Drive across Canada -1966. Trading open space and national parks for a prestigious Harvard University graduation ceremony, Susan and I overloaded her old Dodge Valiant and traveled north from Boston to Quebec. We then drove across southern Canada to Calgary, north through Banff and Jasper National Parks to Edmonton, west to Vancouver, south to San Francisco where we visited my parents. Susan continued south to San Diego to visit her family, a total distance of 6600 km or 4100 miles. We camped along the way and had a wonderful unhurried adventure after the academic pressure of Harvard and urban crowding of Boston.

Our Wedding. In September 1966 we returned to New England to begin our Peace Core Volunteer training, described in the previous chapter, at the Center for International Studies in rural Brattleboro Vermont. Upon completion of training and being accepted as Peace Core Volunteers, we were married in a quiet ceremony at the Center.



Figure 117. Wedding in Vermont and wedding reception at Susan's parents' home in San Diego 1966. The Peace Corps made me shave off my beard, saying I looked too much like Fidel Castro. I grew it back soon after arriving in Brazil.

Our brief Return to the USA. The Vietnam war was continuing when we returned from our Peace Corps and South American adventures. My many draft referrals during my studies and Peace Corps service meant I could be drafted for another three years. Overall, we were ready to settle down with more normal occupations, but not yet ready to reside in the USA. I had contacted two classmates from our student days at the University of California, Berkeley, James Taylor, and Cameron Man, who had opened the landscape architecture office of Man Taylor Muret in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. They were happy to hire both of us to help staff the office they were then opening in Calgary Alberta. We were moving from the tropics of Brazil to the prairies and mountains of Alberta. After visiting Susan's relatives in San Diego and mine in San Francisco, I flew to Calgary, started work, found an inexpensive apartment, and was joined by Susan a week later. We lived there for four years and my work there is described in Chapter 5.

The Canadian Phase - Calgary Alberta 1969-1973. Calgary is cold in winter. When temperatures dropped below -35C (-30F) car tyres became too stiff to drive and we walked, heavily bundled, for about 40 minutes to work. It required almost as much time holding hot mugs of coffee in the office for our hands to warm enough for productive work. On one memorable New Years Day, visiting friends in Edmonton, the temperature dropped to -45C (-50F). We took a rapid walk around the block so we could brag about this experience. We also found that deciduous trees lose their leaves well before the best autumn weather arrives and remain bare during lovely spring weather. This bare season was very long and discouraging.

We used this opportunity for summer backpacking and winter ski touring in the nearby Rocky Mountain National Parks of Banff, Lake Louise, and Jasper. A favorite lake campsite requiring a day-long hike during summer could be reached and returned from on skis across the frozen lake in only half of a short, cold winter day. My hiking speed was much more rapid than Susan's. She solved this by putting something from her pack into mine every time I got too far ahead. Our speeds some evened out.



Figure 118. Backpacking in the Canadian Rockies with Man Taylor Muret coworker Don Sigsby, who immigrated to Australia thirty-four years before we did. I recall heavy packs at high altitudes.

I became active in the National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada. Representing them at a public hearing on future development of the Rocky Mountain National Parks, I gave a presentation so novel it was reported in the Canadian edition of Time Magazine. I also worked with a group which successfully blocked development of an international high-rise ski resort development proposed for Lake Louise in Banff National Park. During this time, our office designed an alternative ski development outside the park which much later became the site of the 1988 Winter Olympic Games. I also helped to coordinate an international conference titled 'The Dynamics of Change' held in Banff which included discussions of global population projections based upon the 1972 Club of Rome report: "Limits to growth". We are still discussing these very real global concerns 50 years later. I recall a particular event at this conference held at the prestigious Banff Springs Hotel. As conference organizers, we invited representatives of the local Nakoda people (then called Stoney Indians) of the Crow Nation to participate in our program and to perform traditional dance ceremonies for us. Today this would be common respectful practice. It was not common during our conference and hotel management refused to serve our first Nations participants at our conference banquet, claiming they were simply entertainers. Eventually they were served last of all. In quiet protest, all one-hundred-and-twenty other attendees refused to eat and sat while their expensive banquet plates cooled in front of them until our First Nations quests were served.

We purchased our first house, a modest California-style bungalow on a small lot on a lovely inner-city street near the Elbow River. We fixed it up ourselves and later sold it for 3 times more than we paid for it. Calgary was a boomtown. We also purchased two basenji dogs, an ancient, semi-domesticated breed from the Central African rainforest. For our first dog, we took a mid-winter drive south to visit the breeder in Logan Utah, where I was born. The second we purchased in Calgary. Susan and I began attending dog shows, which soon became her primary interest. From this small beginning she has become a world expert on the breed, and we enjoy being a basenji household to this

day. Later we drove back to California visiting saluki breeders and got Red, our first saluki.

In 1970, with three other couples, we purchased a 57 Ha (140 acre) abandoned farm in the Rocky Mountain foothills east of Red Deer, a town midway between Calgary and Edmonton. During many weekend visits we slept on the floor of the windowless old farmhouse, repaired the spring, grew Indian corn and squash, harvested native blueberries and bucket loads of saskatoon berries (serviceberry) for pie and wine making. I especially recall our wonderful group Thanksgiving turkey dinners cooked in a woodburning oven and stove purchased at a local country auction. We also visited on day trips when the land was covered with fresh snow. During bright cold mornings, while we waded through knee deep snow, the dogs scampered lightly over the frozen surface. By late afternoon, the dogs crowded behind us as we broke pathways through wet snow.

I was still vulnerable to the US army draft, so I went to a Canadian Forces doctor to have an old ankle injury x-rayed. I had (and today still have) a screw in my right ankle from fracture repair surgery. He wrote a letter to my draft board with the x-ray stating that in his medical opinion I was now unfit for service. I never received a response from my US Army draft board in Southern California. Perhaps they had finally given up on drafting me.

Calgary work. Man Taylor Muret (later renamed Lombard North Planning) had three specialties: environmental planning, regional park planning and site planning for low-income housing. Environmental planning was headed by geographer Claude Muret, an expert in air photo interpretation. This skill in 3D viewing of aerial photos showing landforms and vegetation, supported by 'ground-truthing' site visits, informed the planning of rural areas including highway construction. Our work focused on the identification of possible environmental impacts of proposed development. This was long before modern satellite-based Global Information Systems (GIS) or Global Positioning System (GPS) were available. Today most cars uses GPS to tell exactly where we are on planet earth.

Return to the USA – Bainbridge Island WA. During 1973 Susan and I decided it was now time to move on from Calgary. She had retired the previous year and I had finished my design responsibilities with Lombard North Planning described in Chapter 5. Grant Jones and Ilze Jones, a couple of outstanding architects and landscape architects I had met while at Harvard and who visited us in Brazil had opened an office in Seattle the year before and were happy to hire me. We flew to Seattle to meet them and were directed to an old farmhouse on 1.9 ha (4.6 acres) on Bainbridge Island, a thirty-five-minute ferry ride across Puget Sound from Seattle. This old farmhouse and property was ideal for our back-to-the-land aspirations but needed major renovation. We purchased it at once and moved there soon after.



Figure 119. Top row: Susan and I with our baby daughter Alyssa outside our home on Bainbridge Island in 1973, with Alyssa about 1975 and me pruning my small apple orchard with my father Francis and daughter Alyssa in 1979. Francis was 78 years old at the time, which I then thought remarkable. Now I'm 84 and still climbing my orchard trees for pruning. Bottom row: Alyssa naturally followed her mother Susan in dog showing as she grew up.

Back-to-the-land days. In September 1973 our daughter Alyssa was born. At first the home only had a wood burning heater and the waterline from a spring on the property was subject to freezing. Raising an infant in a construction site wasn't easy for Susan while I tried to balance home repairs with work in Seattle. We milked our two goats twice each day, rain, or shine (mostly rain in Seattle), and raised sheep, chickens (Araucana chickens from Southern Chile), turkeys, ducks, and rabbits. We had a large veggie garden. Susan made yogurt and tried to make cheese from the goats' milk. I learned to shear the sheep and slaughter and butcher sheep and poultry. I loved commuting to Seattle on the ferry, chatting with friends and having coffee. It was a short walk from the Seattle Ferry Terminal to the Jones & Jones office in Pioneer Square. We lived on the other side of Eagle Harbor 6.5km (four miles) from the Bainbridge Island ferry terminal in the small town of Winslow. Susan needed our only vehicle, often traveling to distant dog shows on weekends. I purchased a motor scooter to commute to Winslow and the ferry, but use was weather dependent, not good on winter icy roads as I discovered when finding myself lying in a ditch one winter morning. I also hitchhiked frequently and sometimes walked, especially coming home at night. My favorite form of travel was crossing Eagle Harbor to the Winslow ferry terminal with a kayak I built from a kit with

my brother Phil's help during a visit. At low tide I waded barefooted into the cold mud to launch it, but paddling home on a dark night and seeing phosphorescent glows in the water disturbed by my paddles was magical. Without realizing it we had settled at the same 45-degree latitude and same wet temperate forest as the Chilean and Argentine Lake district we had traveled through and admired.

Susan's profession now became editing the US Basenji Magazine which she purchased from the retiring founder. This was a monthly national dog breed publication for lovers of the basenji breed throughout North America. Publication then required laborious manual layout long before computers made self-publishing relatively easy. She also bred and showed basenji dogs, gradually becoming a top basenji breeder in the US and internationally.

I joined a local poetry class led by an experienced poet and found I had success in this form of communication and in some short fiction I had written for Susan's Basenji Magazine. Eventually, I completed over seventy short poems, mostly related to travel experiences around the world, especially in wilderness areas. Some poetry editors I sent examples to responded that these were not poetry, but poetically composed descriptive narratives, lacking compelling meaning or message. I thanked them for their judgement but chose to believe they simply missed the implied irony or reverence my poems expressed because they were unfamiliar with such experiences. My goal was to communicate with fellow naturalists and nature lovers rather than academic poets. In this I have not been successful. I found one receptive audience. In the winter of 1991, while living in Philadelphia, I was invited by a literary group in Rochester, NY to do a poetry reading for them. They flew me up and I did the reading in the classroom of a new polar bear exhibit we had designed at the Seneca Park Zoo. Unfortunately, it snowed heavily that night and only a dozen or so listeners braved the weather, but the polar bear seemed to enjoyed my presentation.

Jones & Jones. Working with Jones & Jones architecture, landscape architecture and planning firm in Seattle was a delight and highlight in my career. Now, over fifty years later I think of them as old friends. Ilze Jones' designs for historic Pioneer Square triangle and nearby Occidental Square were deserved award winners celebrating Seattle's heritage and providing humane habitats for residents and tourists alike. Grant Jones, my Harvard classmate, continued his work in landscape planning, inventing new fields like visual resource management to guide the locations of state and federal highways. He did a study showing how to locate nuclear power plants to minimize their visual impact. I illustrated Grant's article in Nuclear Technology Journal (published April 1975). This was my first publication as a co-author soon after joining the firm. A landmark study Grant completed before my arrival was a comprehensive analysis of the natural and cultural landscapes of the Nooksack River in northern Washington. In all these studies Grant was very ably assisted by landscape architect Brian Gray, who also excelled as an astrologer. Other well-remembered colleagues and personal friends included Peter Harvard, and David Walters, both generalists, and Kazuto Makami, with

a wonderful talent for working out essential construction details. While we worked hard and later travelled extensively, Jones & Jones provided an excellent working environment, gave great parties and were generous to their staff. J&J had a strong moral compass. We were in the old area of town near missions for people who were homeless and had alcohol addictions, including many Native Americans. While the city government wanted to keep these people out of sight to increase tourism, J&J designed park benches to be comfortable places to sleep. Later, when the firm had the opportunity to win a profitable contract designing facilities for the new Trident Nuclear Submarine Base, J&J declined out of respect for the objections of pacifists in the firm. In 2003 the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) awarded Jones & Jones with its highest honor, as the first recipient of the Firm of the Year Award.



Figure 120. Left: I'm having coffee at Jones & Jones. Centre: Grant Jones was a "Virgo" and a worrier, so I drew this cartoon for his 37th birthday. Right: Ilze Jones struggled mightily to convert the old Sand Point Naval Air Station into a park. When her plans were finally approved in 1976 I drew this cartoon of Ilze as a Sagittarian Centaur warrior shooting down her opponents.

I led or participated in ten zoo-related projects in my ten years with J&J, including my first wildlife project Northwest Trek and the trend-setting planning and design work at Woodland Park Zoo described in chapter 7. In addition to the zoo projects, I also prepared master plans for Esther Short Park in Vancouver, Washington, Washington Park in Portland, Oregon, Battle Point Park on Bainbridge Island and Gene Coulon Memorial Park in Renton Washington. On a larger scale I led or participated in two regional environmental impact or restoration projects in Alaska and two large nature parks in Washington State described in Chapter 5.

Move to Philly -1983. In about 1979 Professor Ian McHarg, then Chairman of the Department of Landscape Architecture, Graduate School of Fine Arts at the University of Pennsylvania, a highly rated Ivy League university, began offering me a teaching position in his department. At this time, I was enjoying working with J&J. I was now a junior partner, and not keen on leaving our rural Bainbridge Island lifestyle. As Westerners, we had no interest in relocating to the US east coast. However, I eventually became interested in university teaching and Ian McHarg was internationally respected in the field of ecologically based regional planning from the sales of his influential book

Design with Nature. As an environmental planner, he wanted me to bring this ecological emphasis to teaching at the project design level. As a historical footnote, it was Grant Jones' Harvard regional planning thesis presentation, which Ian attended, which stimulated Ian to hastily publish his own book before others like Grant or Phil Lewis beat him to it.

Ian tried to recruit me annually and by 1983 I decided to accept this full-time university teaching position. Jones & Jones were moving away from the zoo work, and managing partner Ilze Jones once instructed me sternly when returning from project travel, 'Don't bring back any more Midwest zoo work!' While I enjoyed the city park and national park design, the zoo field was in much greater need of improvement. Still, I didn't want to break ties with Jones & Jones, who had become a second family. So, when I left Seattle for Philadelphia it was on a medium-term basis. I agreed to teach for only four years, and I returned to work with J&J during the following summer.

I flew ahead to begin the semester, leaving Susan and daughter Alyssa, now a ten-year-old, to rent our property, arrange transport for our belongings, and drive across the country with our four dogs. The Penn Fine Arts Department, which included architecture, landscape architecture and city and regional planning, owned an art retreat estate near the Delaware River in historic New Hope, Pennsylvania. We were given a small secondary residence rent-free in return for its upkeep, until we could find a suitable new home. This was a lovely area but was at best a one-hour drive each way to the university. We lived in New Hope about one year before finding a larger house on an .8 ha (2 acre) property with open space around it on two sides in Newtown, Bucks County PA. While not quite large enough to obtain a legal kennel license, at least we could keep our growing number of basenjjs out of sight. Susan soon became emersed in the east coast dog showing world, which offered her far more opportunities than she had in the Pacific Northwest. Susan's book, *The Basenji, Out of Africa to You*, which she had researched and written on Bainbridge Island, was published in 1984. It has been updated and republished twice more, becoming the standard reference on this remarkable dog breed.



Figure 121. Left: Susan and I with our basenjis after moving to Newtown Pennsylvania in 1984. Middle: Susan at a family reunion in the same year. Right: Susan and I with eighteen-year-old daughter Alyssa and the dogs at home in 1991.

Our daughter Alyssa developed an interest in archaeology and attended two summer programs at the Crow Canyon Archaeological Center in Southwestern Colorado while she was in high school. She graduated high school in 1991 with excellent grades and wanted to study archaeology at university. The University of Pennsylvania where I taught had a noted archaeology program where she could study at faculty discounted rates. However, Penn's program specialized in Mayan prehistory and Alyssa wanted to study the archaeology of the American Southwest. She entered the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque with a scholarship, avoiding higher out-of-state tuition. Alyssa had always been independent and self-sufficient, so moving to New Mexico seemed her natural choice. After two years of study Alyssa realized that employment opportunities in the fieldwork she enjoyed were limited. She decided to change to a more practical and high demand profession, nursing. Susan and I helped celebrate her nursing degree graduation in Albuquerque in May 1997. Alyssa went on to become a specialist chemotherapy nurse in Southern Illinois and later in San Diego California, and still later, Australia.

Coe & Lee. In 1984, soon after we settled into our home in Newtown PA, I was contacted by my old firm Jones & Jones about a master planning project at Turtleback Zoo in New Jersey. J&J was not interested in the work but thought I might be. I contacted Gary H. Lee, who I had enjoyed working with at J&J and had recently left to open his own architectural office in Oregon. Gary agreed to fly out and collaborate on the Turtleback project. This was a small zoo with limited resources and our plan was not especially noteworthy but for one thing. It led to our founding the firm Coe & Lee Associates in my Newtown homes' garage.



Figure 122. Gary Lee and I collaborating. Photo: CLRdesign.

Gary Hang Lee. Gary is Chinese American, born in Hong Kong of Cantonese descent. His undergraduate architecture degree was from the University of Oregon and his Master of Landscape Architecture from the University of Pennsylvania. I mentioned Gary earlier in relation to our collaboration on the J&J Pardisan project in Iran and later the award-winning Beaver-Otter exhibit in Oregon. Gary is the most talented and innovative designer I've ever worked with and an accomplished cartoonist and illustrator. He also had a business background from growing up in and later managing his family's Chinese restaurant. Gary was an early adapter of technology. I recall traveling with Gary and his first portable computer, about the size and weight of a heavy suitcase. Gary recruited computer savvy recent Penn graduates such as Rapheal, a Basque from northern

Spain, Arif Wiriadunata from Indonesia, Jon Steffensen from Iceland, and Aditya Pal from India. I especially enjoyed long conversations with Adit, who had been very well educated in India about the history and culture in his homeland. We have stayed in touch for over forty years. This international group provided a rich flavor to our office community and assured us we always had the newest and best computer software and gear.

During our twenty-year partnership Gary and I divided roles into complementary areas. Gary had an Ivy League look, played golf and tennis, spoke business lingo, and fit in well with zoo directors, board members and donors. He also mastered the business skill of appealing to socially dominant clients (we called them 'silverbacks' referring to dominant male gorillas) as a non-threatening court jester. He beguiled them with his ever-ready cartoons, golf matches and in other informal venues, including numerous African Safaris with zoo director cliques who became his lifelong friends. Gary produced amazing, illustrated travel journals for all participants. These contained his cartoons of everyone in the safari group as well as wonderful animal and ecological sketches.

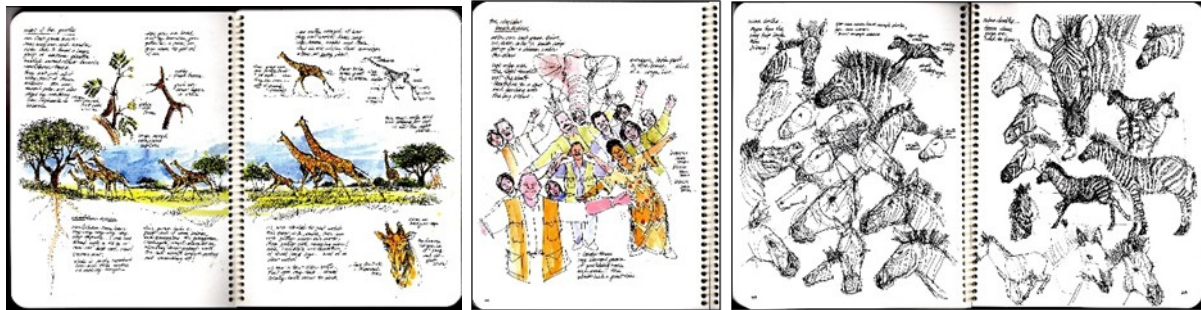


Figure 123. Examples for Gary Lee's Safari Sketchbook from his 1999 Botswana safari with Toledo Zoo Director Bill Denler and his family. Gary prepared such sketchbooks on a dozen safaris, providing them pro bono to all participants on each safari, including many zoo directors and board members. This was a unique and amazing marketing strategy as well as a deep personal connection to all the safari participants. What a talent!

Gary also stage-managed our business encounters at zoo conference cocktail parties, ensuring his friend's and client's drinks were refilled. He had the ability to read peoples' characters, identify their motivations and frame relationships accordingly. For example, he soon learned I appreciated praise and provided it in suitable and well targeted ways. I soon became aware of his subtle manipulations of both me and others but had no objection because we all benefited. I got what I wanted, less business time and more time and scope for design. Our clients received tailored, attentive service and award-winning project outcomes. Gary received more control of business management and projects.

Gary believed, perhaps with good reason, that some establishment zoo directors were put off by my hippy beard, often greater zoo biology knowledge and radical ideas. I got along with the progressive workers, animal caregivers, and hands-on curators. Gary encouraged me to be the voice of our firm, giving most conference presentations,

magazine, newspaper, and TV interviews about our work. Gary managed from the background. Ironically, the radical ideas I published often originated with Gary himself. Ideas like animals rotating through multiple zoo display areas (“animal rotation”, Gary calls these “flex exhibits”) or following constructed trails through the zoo, either originated with Gary or from our joint brainstorming conversations. I then developed these concepts and published them with conference presentations and academic publications.

At the beginning of our partnership, we collaborated in designing zoo projects exploring and refining these opportunities, enabled by talented and generally experienced staff. As time passed Gary and I began dividing the work, each with our special interests and clients.

Coe & Lee becomes CLRR and then CLRdesign. Soon after opening our two-person office in my garage, I began getting calls from east coast zoos, beginning with Philadelphia Zoo, where I contributed to the design of their Carnivore Kingdom exhibit in 1984. After about a year Gary Lee tired of flying back and forth and we opened an office on Cherry Street in the Chinatown area of Philadelphia. Gary brought in two additional partners, classmates of his from the University of Pennsylvania. Landscape architect Rodney Robinson lived in Delaware with a specialty in high-end garden design and botanical gardens. Architect Geoffery Roesch had a small office on Union Square in New York City. We became Coe Lee Robinson Roesch, or CLRR, with two offices.

Key early staff included Mr. Larry Dame, an excellent overall designer and genius at working out complex mechanical details like cable-driven animal gates, but also naturalistic landscape details such as caves and cliffs. I have not known anyone better at picturing something in his or her mind and mentally turning it to visualize every angle. Other notable early staff included Ms. Julie Marquart, now artist and photographer at Marquart Creative, and landscape architect Robert Levy, a very able and enthusiastic design assistant. Landscape architect Nevin Lash was a top project manager as well as a capable designer, also providing an essential service in overseeing construction quality. Nevin later opened his own office, Ursa International, in Atlanta in 1994. He and his wife Gail resettled in Belize in in 2022 and he remains a great friend. Landscape architect Sally Coyle joined us in 1987, worked with Nevin on the Zoo Atlanta and with Bob Levy on the Staten Island work and later formed her own firm Coyle & Caron with her partner, excellent exhibit design, fabricator, and artist Quentin Coyle.

Ms. Barbara McGraw headed our education and graphics work. Barbara was notably skilled in developing kid-friendly features as well as handsome and user-friendly interpretive graphics and for several years she managed two other zoo interpretive specialists and graphic artists, Ms. Alice Domert, and later Ms. Polly McKenna-Cress. Later Barbara completed her career heading the graphics and exhibits department at Philadelphia Zoo and Polly still teaches museum exhibit design at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia.

I enjoyed working with and learning from them, doing everything from copy writing to illustrating interpretive graphics, in addition to my general work organizing and writing project proposals, master plans, detailed construction specifications and legal contracts, all in collaboration with outstanding colleagues. We had the first full-service zoo design firm in the world, I believe, combining architecture, landscape architecture and graphic/educational design, with collaborating animal behaviorists, ecologists, and engineers on call.

In 1994 CLRR had serious financial difficulties, The Philadelphia office did well, but the New York office, with high overhead costs and less work, was operating at such a loss it was sinking both ships. We made the difficult decision to cut Geoffery Roesch's New York office and staff free, giving them all their clients and other transitional benefits. We felt we were being generous, but it was heartbreaking to lose our loved, talented, and respected New York friends and colleagues. During this change Rodney Robinson left to open his own firm in Delaware specializing in estate and botanical garden design. Urban planner and architect John Rogers, another of Gary Lee's classmates, became our new managing partner. John oversaw the management transition and set us on a financially sustainable and rewarding footing. We three partners became Coe Lee Rogers simplified into CLR design. During the twenty-year period I was with them CLRdesign designed over ninety project for forty-three zoo and botanic garden clients, winning six exhibit awards in various categories from the American Zoo Association. The firm retains this name and a dominant presence in the field to this day, over thirty years later.

Deciding to Move to Australia 1999. My wife Susan and I began considering if it was again time to move on. CLRdesign was well positioned for my retirement. Partner John Rodgers' excellent business planning assured a smooth ownership transition. I was professionally discouraged by the multiple spurious yet serious lawsuits we had been hit with and expected more in the future. Susan and I both were concerned with the polarization of American politics. I believed deeply in collaboration and compromise, both in business and in politics. However, since the Regen Administration moderates had been cast aside by what I called "the warrior caste" on both political factions. Susan's dog showing and breeding business was at a point of inflection as well. But if we were to leave, where should we go? The USA was becoming too crowded. Breeding show dogs required living in the peri urban fringes with endless commutes. Australia seemed the reasonable destination. The language and culture were unique and yet similar. Geographically, Australia is about the same area as the lower 48 US states but with less population than Southern California. Financially, the favorable currency exchange rate meant that everything in Australia we purchased with our US dollars, including property, would be discounted by one-third. I had already made three working visits to Australia and enjoyed what I had seen and people I had met and confirmed I could find exciting work opportunities.

During my second visit to work at Taronga Zoo on their Elephant and Coastal Precinct Exhibits we arranged for Susan and daughter Alyssa to join me during a break between design sessions. After showing them around Sydney we drove south along the coast, turned inland visiting Mt Kosciusko, Australia's highest peak, of 2,228 meters (7,310 feet). We also visited Canberra, the national capital, and the Gippsland lakes. Our destination was to visit the Healesville Wildlife Sanctuary northeast of Melbourne. This is a native animal park operated by Zoos Victoria. I had read about it thirty-four years earlier when working on my university thesis. I had friends there including David Hancocks with whom I had collaborated on the Woodland Park Zoo Long-Range Plan.

On Thanksgiving Day, 25 November 1999, we drove into Healesville Victoria and happened to park next to the Brown Real Estate Office. Glancing at their window displays we saw an interesting-looking property being advertised. On a whim we entered and met with sales representative Ms. Jill Olive. The six-acre hillside property looked promising, and we decided to visit it with Jill. After exploring the property, enjoying the wrap-around mountain views into Yarra Ranges National Parks and the comfortable residence, Susan and I decided to purchase it on the spot. Daughter Alyssa concurred. The next day we visited a local lawyer, confirmed non-citizens could purchase property and commenced the financial and legal paperwork. I then flew back to Sydney to complete my consulting at Taronga Zoo and Susan and Alyssa drove back to Sydney visiting nature parks and then flew back to the USA. While in Sydney I negotiated the final cost of the property with the owner. The sale was completed even though we had no assurance we would be granted permanent resident visas by the Australian government. Since we would not be able to even attempt to emigrate for some years, the real estate office managed the property for us as a rental, with excellent tenants.

Australian Immigration application - 2001. During my visit to Sydney, I utilized the services of an Australian immigration lawyer. The first step was to apply for a Permanent Residence Visa. An Australian citizenship application could be made four years after becoming a permanent resident. Government immigration visa policy favored active professionals and self-employed small business operators, but only those under the age of 45. Financially self-sufficient retired people were welcome but could not be employed or self-employed. The government feared older people would take advantage of the excellent public health system without having paid for it during their working lives. There was only one category I might qualify for, "Distinguished Talent". This was intended for those of proven superior ability in fields not well represented in Australia. Was I confident enough to apply as a distinguished talent? It was the only immigration opportunity for us. While Australia had excellent landscape architects, there were few qualified to design cutting-edge zoos, as proven by my recent history of being imported to do Australian zoo projects. I prepared an impressive portfolio of work and media coverage and gratefully received letters of support from three leading Australian zoo directors. Importantly, Hassell Architects, who frequently sponsored foreign architects as employees, very kindly agreed to sponsor me as "an eminent person" even without

being employed by them. Of course, I enjoyed many later collaborations with Hassell both before and after receiving their support. There were two other required steps. Susan and I must pass health tests which could be completed in the USA, and we must pass a national security evaluation by the FBI. We had all the required material in the immigration lawyer's office in early August, just before he went on a four-week holiday. He submitted our application for the FBI report on Sept 18, one week after 9/11 New York World Trade Center attack. The FBI was inundated with priority security check requests. We received FBI clearance about nine months later and our Permanent Resident Visas arrived about a year after filing.

Leaving CLRdesign - 2003. John Rogers, CLRdesign managing partner, began to worry about transitioning our firm's management as we founders reached retirement age. His study began in about 1998. John researched past examples and hired a strategic planner in this field. This expert interviewed all twenty or so employees, asking each of them who in the firm they would look to for future firm leadership if partners Gary Lee, John Rogers and I together were hit by a bus and were suddenly gone. Each employee answered "No one!", showing we had installed followers rather than leaders in our senior management positions.

John's expert noted there were two common architectural business transition models. In one, architects who are good at business and marketing hire good designers, who may come and go, to develop their practice. The second model is for charismatic young designers to leave larger firms to open their own design firms. This describes our firm. We have hired good managers and technicians to support our designs rather than promising young designers who would compete with us. This meant that to replace ourselves we needed to advance mid-level designers with leadership potential over senior level managers who did not show strong design and business leadership qualities. We accomplished this with John's guidance over a six-year period and were very sad to lose the passed-over staff whose dedicated and effective service we deeply appreciated. I tell you this now as a lesson learned for future designers planning to open their own firms. Business decisions can be hard and successful transitions take time. I have often observed this among our client organizations and we experienced it firsthand.

I officially left CLRdesign in 2004 and John Rogers retired soon after. I am pleased to say that now, twenty years later, our process has been successful. The present version of CLRdesign is headed by co-founder and senior advisor Gary Lee, with Mark Beauchamp, Greg Dykstra and Gregg Leicester. The firm we founded in 1983 is prospering and remains a leader in the zoo design field four decades later.

Leaving America in 2004 involved fixing up and selling our property and vehicles, arranging shipping and quarantine for our three dogs, and shipping household goods. Susan managed all of this for us while I sold my interest in CLRdesign, finished projects, and required road trips, and traveled to Japan for the SAGA International Primate Conference.

Saying goodbye. My return travel from Japan took twenty hours. When I arrived in Philadelphia I stayed in a downtown hotel because Susan, as planned, had sold our house while I was gone. She was attending out-of-town dog shows. I returned to the CLRdesign office for a few days to finish work and enjoyed a wonderful farewell party. Geoff Roesch, my old New York partner, and his wife Marcia travelled down from New York to see me off. What a pleasure it was to see them again.

The next day I flew to Pittsburgh and visited the zoo with Director Dr. Barbara Baker. I was pleased to see how well our exhibits had matured since they were built twenty-two years earlier. The next morning, I attended my final meeting with the Phipps Conservatory staff where my colleague Jeff Sawyer presented our detailed exhibit model.

At 12:30 in the afternoon I said goodbye and met Susan, who had driven there from her dog show circuit with our three basenji dogs. We began our twenty-two-day cross-country farewell drive to California on our way to Australia.

We organized our tour to visit past projects enroute, and to drive through the only two US states I hadn't yet visited, Alabama and Mississippi. I could then brag that I had visited all fifty US states. Stops along the way included Louisville Zoo, and Chimp Haven (then under construction in Louisiana), as well as the Grand Canyon. We then drove to Los Vegas to see the aquarium in the Mandalay Bay Casino, which was closed when we stopped by. Entering California, we stopped in the Los Angeles area for our dog's final physical examination. We left them with our shipping agent to fly to Melbourne the next day and begin their required six-week Australian quarantine upon arrival. We then visited Aqua Caliente, my favorite desert oasis near Palm Springs on our way to visit my older brother David Coe in Twenty-Nine Palms. Next we drove north across the Mohave Desert where I hiked and camped as a child, to visit my sister Emily Diggles in Lake Isabella. We visited the giant Sierra redwoods, combining family farewells with favorite landscape farewells. Finally, we drove south to San Diego to visit Susan's family and our daughter Alyssa and have a last look at San Diego Zoo.

On 17 December 2003 Alyssa drove us on a leisurely and scenic drive up the Pacific coast to Los Angeles. We then flew to Auckland (crossing the Date Line) on New Zealand Air and on to Melbourne, arriving the evening of the 19th.

The Australian Phase. Here we were at last. Exhausted, we slept at an airport hotel. The next day we rented a car and drove to the empty house we had purchased four years earlier in Healesville. Our kind neighbor, Mr. Frank Orenshaw, greeted us at the back fence. We met when we surveyed the property and corresponded from time to time, informing him of our progress. Knowing we would arrive too late in the Aussie spring to plant a vegetable garden. Frank had added several rows for us in his own garden. Frank was a retired diesel truck mechanic, lumber jack, masseuse, wood worker and pilot. He had traveled widely in Australia and subscribed to Australian Geographic Magazine. Frank taught me how to use and sharpen a chainsaw and

helped me buy my old ute (Aussie pick-up truck). I couldn't have found a better guide to rural life in Australia.

During the weeks we waited for our furnishing to arrive from the USA we had the carpeted floors replaced with local sandstone paving, planted an orchard, and began building our gardens, beginning with a vegetable patch. Since Susan and I were both garden designers, we divided areas of design responsibility. I took the long entry drive, areas in front of the house and the large open paddock and woodland areas (about two hectares, five acres). Susan oversaw the 0.6 hectare (1.5 acres) intensively developed garden below the house. I quickly fenced much of the property for our three basenjis and Susan soon joined the local basenji club and resumed her dog show career. She continued to support the American club with breeder information and training and annually traveled back to join her friends in dog show circuits in the USA.





Figure 124. Upper image: property when we purchased it in 1999. Middle image: view of oval lawn in 2022 from about the same area but looking farther to the left, after over twenty years of our design, construction, and maintenance work. Lower image: recent aerial view of our property from Google Earth.

We set up my Jon Coe Design (JCD) consulting business in a spare bedroom and Susan managed the paperwork to get the company incorporated. I purchased my first computer and Susan instructed me in its use. I had been one of only two professionals at CLRdesign without computer skills. I had put off learning because I could produce work so much faster freehand, and I had a secretary to do my typing and spell checking. This was the time to catch up. Now, twenty years later, I can do basic computing, but I ask Susan for help frequently and she does technical work like publishing and designing my website.

My Jon Coe Design business plan was simple. I would spend one-third of my time working on planning and design projects, one-third on communications, including emails and publications, and one-third of my time gardening. These divisions certainly did not work out on a daily or weekly basis. For example, during my work with the United Nations in Afghanistan described earlier, I worked fourteen-hour days for four to six weeks each visit. But then I would return to work in the garden and on communications for several weeks. Over the past twenty years this three-way allocation has been very satisfactory.

AZA & ZAA. My long relationship with the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA, previously AAZPA) was uncomfortable. Membership was limited to those professionally employed in a management role in a member zoo. Zookeepers had their own active national organization, so a clear separation between management and labor was and remains recognized. Commercial members like me were not allowed to hold positions in the organization or to vote. We were often treated like underclass purveyors by many old-school members. We were expected to pay very high fees to have product display booths in the commercial hall and buy drinks and host dinners for real members. I refused to play this expected underclass role. Fortunately, newer members like Dr. Terry Maple and many of our clients supported me and my ideas. I was allowed to present a paper at my first conference in 1983, only the second commercial member ever allowed to stand at the speaker's podium. Every year at annual national and regional conferences I presented technical papers, careful to avoid any commercial appearance and developed a following which filled meeting rooms. Later I organized panels of speakers around an important topic, but, being only a commercial member, was then forbidden to moderate the panel I had organized. Gradually, more commercial members, consultants in academic fields such as education, were welcomed as speakers. Today the AZA even has an optional annual award recognizing the contributions of an outstanding commercial member. Gary Lee was deservedly so honored eventually.

After relocating to Australia, I attended my first Zoo and Aquarium Association (Australasia) ZAA meeting held in Christchurch NZ. As a commercial member I still couldn't vote or hold office but was made completely welcome. I happened upon a group of members during a lunch break working on important and controversial regulations requiring accreditation inspections. These were to be introduced in the upcoming business meeting. I was invited to join the discussion and several of my suggestions were included in their amendments. A similarly important discussion among AZA members would have been held in the backroom and certainly not open to commercial members. In 2005 I was invited to be a member of the annual ZAA exhibit awards jury, which has occurred four times since. I've also given many ZAA conference lectures.

Daughter Alyssa joins us in Australia. One year after our arrival daughter Alyssa also emigrated to join us. Being a highly qualified chemotherapy nurse, she was on the

Immigration Ministries desired occupations list and she had already been hired by a major Melbourne hospital who sponsored her. She continued her education, earning her master's degree in nursing. Aalyssa later resettled in Brisbane as a project manager for a software firm working with hospitals around Australia installing systems for integrating and managing chemotherapy data.

Black Saturday Bushfire - 2009. Our home in Healesville, Victoria, like much of Australia, is in a very fire prone landscape. Australian climate is influenced by the interplay of the El Nino climate oscillation in the Pacific Ocean, and the Indian Ocean dipole. It has two climates: "The Dry" (less than 550 ML per year here) and "The Wet" (over 1000ml per year here). In 2009 we had endured twelve years of "The Dry." On February 9th, after five days in the mid-40's C (113F) the temperature was 46C (116F), warmest day ever recorded here. Strong winds were gusting out of the northwest. Wildfires started by powerline failures rushed towards us in ember-spreading leaps 10 kilometers long, hilltop to ridge, often jumping over valleys. The fire was so directed, it resembled a conveyor belt of flames, very fast, very hot and not very wide. Unstoppable. Hardened by generations of bushfires, many Aussies "stay and defend" their properties. This works for some rural properties in some fires, but the intensity of this fire was off the scale. I was wetting down our property when chard leaves and twigs began to rain down. Then a 5m (16.4 feet) long warm ribbon of chard eucalyptus bark spiraled down in front of me. The bounding flames had reached the western edge of town. I watched it alight in the distance from our hilltop location. We were packed to leave when a neighbor told us that only one of the five roads out of Healesville was still open. The others were already blocked by the fire.

I realized the future is more important than the past. It is more important to save ourselves and our futures than to save our things, our past acquisitions, however memorable. We escaped on the remaining backroad, and it was also closed soon after we passed the last checkpoint. Just as we were leaving around 6 pm the driving northeasterly wind turned ninety degrees toward the northwest. Healesville was saved. Kinglake, Marysville, and several smaller hamlets were destroyed. 272 people lost their lives on Black Saturday 2009. Close to our home, The massive pyrocumulonimbus clouds towering above the fires caused lightening to set fire to Mt Riddell, the high ridge only a kilometer from our property. But the fire, now burning north, was moving away from us.

We stayed two nights with a friend in the suburbs, returning each day to check on conditions. For the next ten days the fire, now formed in a broad but less intense band, moved into the national parks, watershed forests and timber properties in the ranges beyond us. Nevertheless, I rose several times each night and climbed a ladder onto the roof of our large shed for a territorial view to assure myself the wind had not reversed the fire back toward us. When a cool change came with light, drought-breaking rain, 400,000 hectares (nearly a million acres) were burned. The climate change augmented Black Saturday bushfire was so intense that a new higher category, "catastrophic", was

added to the fire severity rating scale. Top-down fire management systems were turned upside down, with on-the-ground teams leading local decision making. Soon after these events the Dry turned again to the Wet for the last fourteen years. Now, with dense regrowth vegetation everywhere, we await the next big fire as we enter a new dry period.



Figure 125. Black Saturday bush fire as seen from our Healesville property about two kilometers (1.2 miles) away.

Alyssa and Mark's New Zealand Wedding - 2015. Life and travel were not all work related. Our daughter Alyssa took up endurance sports, starting with long-distance swimming and graduating to Iron Man Triathlon competitions. These include an open water swim of 3.9 km (2.4-miles), plus a 180.2 km (112 miles) bike ride and a 42.2 km (26 miles) marathon, a total of 226.3 km (140.6 miles), as a continuous twelve-hour event. Alyssa completed all nine of the trials that she entered. Susan and I went with her to events followed by recreational travel in northeast and southwest Australia, South Africa, and New Zealand, as well as attending locally held competitions. As a result of this arduous passion Alyssa met Ironman champion Mark Smoothy, who has now completed over fifty-five Ironman-length competitions. Mark proposed marriage to Alyssa at mile-20 of the marathon stage at the Melbourne Ironman in 2014 and they were married at mile-20 of the marathon stage Ironman at Lake Wānaka on South Island New Zealand.





Figure 126. Upper row from left: daughter Alyssia completing the marathon leg of the 2012 Ironman Triathlon in Busselton Western Australia. Formal wedding photo of Mark and Alyssa at Lake Wānaka, NZ as father of the Bride, I am “giving away” Alyssa dressed in her special bridal-designed running outfit after just completing the first 204 km of the Ironman competition. How can she look so fresh! After the ceremony the now-married couple and their friends finished the last 22 km of the marathon run. Upper right: Susan radiant as both Mother of the Bride and Bridesmaid. Lower photos: I’m enjoying my speech of fatherly advice at the wedding banquet, as if they needed any instructions on living a full life. Alyssa with baby granddaughter Estelle. Estelle growing up actively. She will be an athlete like her parents. This year Alyssa and Mark reconfirmed their marriage vows during the 2025 half-Ironman again held at Lake Wānaka, NZ.

As a sad conclusion to this chapter, Susan died of pancreatic cancer in 2025.

