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Thomas Roland

Thomas Roland Hickman and Ruth Hickman were born on November 6, 1932. With twelve-year-old self absorption, I enjoyed a reflected glory from my relationship with twins - none of my friends had twins in their families! As Mother's helper, along with my younger sister, I soon regarded those adorable babies with maternal pride. Their development through the fascinating stages of babyhood kept me absorbed in their growth, although looking back I can see that they weren't so much my responsibility as I fondly believed at the time. Nevertheless, they were my special pets even when, at age two, they painted my wallpaper and white dressing table with my cherished lipstick, brand new, never used. I regarded them with equal fondness and special love as they progressed into quite differing personalities.

The first any of the family knew of Roland's ambition to be an architect came when he was twelve: he came home triumphantly from a trip downtown with a job! He had gone to the public library where, in a telephone booth, he had torn out the yellow page that listed all the architects in Dallas. Armed with that information, he systematically visited the offices of the architects, seeking a job, willing to do almost anything in order to be in an architect's office. He didn't have to ask at many doors before he found a sympathetic young architect who set him to copying the basic floor plans of residences for his FHA applications. Because that was actually more than he had hoped for, he was very pleased with himself. Mother and Daddy were torn between their admiration of his successful ingenuity and their feeling that defacing the telephone book in a public building was not justified by the result. Roland kept his job throughout the summer. The twelve-year-old boy and the young architect developed a relationship that continued through high school, providing Roland with summer jobs and also with a mentor.

That relationship grew through that summer and continued through high school and into college, with Roland learning more and making more substantial contributions to the business of the office. He became acquainted with other architects in Dallas and used their collective advice to help him choose a college. He entered the University of Oklahoma because he was attracted to the strong, innovative faculty.

The principal influence there was a professor who espoused the principals of Frank Lloyd Wright. Not only was he devoted to the ideas of his professor, Bavinger, but he soon found himself helping build Bavinger's highly original home outside Norman. (describe house and Life Mag. feature)

(From internet: Bavinger house in Norman (since torn down): No interior walls.)



