



# Paul R Williams, Architect

*Karen E. Hudson*

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## **Paul R Williams, Architect** Karen E. Hudson

One of the most important Los Angeles architects, Paul R. Williams' prolific career extended from the 1920s to the 1970s. His vast body of built work stretches across the world from Paris and Colombia to Washington, D.C., New York, and Memphis. However, the Los Angeles area was his personal and professional focus. Overcoming incredible prejudice in an all-white field, Williams became the first African American admitted to the A.I.A and designed over 3,000 projects, including the Jetsons-like theme building at Los Angeles International Airport, Saks Fifth Avenue and W. & J. Sloane's department stores in Beverly Hills, the famous Beverly Hills and Ambassador hotels, and renowned celebrity haunts, such as Chasen's and Perino's restaurants. He also designed mansions for Frank Sinatra, Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz, Tyrone Power, William "Bojangles" Robinson, Lon Chaney, and other entertainers. While Williams had extraordinary facility with the historical styles popular in southern California at the time, he was equally adept at modern design, as seen in his work for Fisk and Howard universities, Saint Jude Hospital in Memphis, and several banks, churches, and country clubs. Karen E. Hudson, a third-generation Angeleno, is the granddaughter of Paul R. Williams and director of his archives. She chronicles the African-American experience in Los Angeles in writings and photographs. David Gebhard, the renowned historian, was a professor of architectural history and Curator of the Architectural Drawing Collection of the Art Museum at the University of Santa Barbara. Call-out: The first architectural monograph of Williams' extraordinary and inspiring achievements.

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