

Architects

THOUGHTFUL DESIGN FOR



John Michael Welton, Architecture and Design Writer (1951-2025)

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NOVEMBER 19, 2025 ✕ **by Mike Welton**

Writer John Michael Welton, who established *Architects + Artisans* in 2010, died on Tuesday, November 18. He was 74.

His wife, Ann Mabey Welton, said Mr. Welton died after an unspecified illness. He is survived by their son, Cleland Burwell Welton II of New York City, N.Y.; their daughter, Lucy Welton Vago (Lisa) of Raleigh, N.C.; and their grandson, Lucas Felix Rios Welton.

Also surviving him are his sisters, Sharon Conway Welton Parker (Joseph) and Diana Scott Welton, both of Richmond, Va., and Jessica Wheat Welton (John) of Aiken, S.C.

He was predeceased by his father, Francis Conway Welton, and mother, Catherine May Murphy Welton, both of Richmond.

Mr. Welton was a writer whose work on architecture, art, and design appeared in regional, national, and international publications, including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Interior Design*, *Architectural Record*, *Architectural Digest*, *Metropolis*, *Dwell*, *Ocean Home*, *Landscape Architecture*, *The Assembly*, *Virginia Living*, and *The Virginia Sportsman*.

Architects + Artisans

He served as architecture critic for *The News & Observer* in Raleigh from 2015 to 2020, and as editor and publisher of the digital design magazine *Architects + Artisans* since its inception in 2010. He also conceived, developed and wrote the definitive text for the Douglas House website (www.douglashouse.org), detailing the creation and restoration of that iconic modernist home designed by Richard Meier and Tod Williams in 1973.

He got his start in journalism as editor of the Langley Air Force Base *FLYER* in Hampton, Va. in 1975, then as managing editor and executive editor of *The Commonwealth Times*, the student newspaper at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond. In 1977 and 1978, *The Commonwealth Times* was named “Best Student Newspaper in Virginia” by the Virginia Intercollegiate Mass Communications Association.

Mr. Welton was born in Richmond in 1951, into a family of Virginia architects including his father and his paternal grandfather, Courtenay Sommerville Welton. His grandfather’s last design was for White Memorial Presbyterian Church in Raleigh; his father was its project architect.

Mr. Welton began writing about architecture while employed in the corporate communications department at Richmond-based Best Products Co., Inc. There, in addition to contributing to programs of media and investor relations for the \$2 billion retailer, among his duties was to interpret its commitment to cutting-edge architecture in showrooms across the nation, as well as the company's corporate headquarters.

From 1984 to 2005, Mr. Welton worked in public relations, corporate communications and crisis communications for advertising agencies across the nation. His primary clients were Fortune 500 firms engaged in the banking, aviation, and transportation industries.

In 2005, he rededicated his career to journalism, and more specifically to work by nationally known architects and landscape architects.

In 2015, Mr. Welton wrote, edited, and published a book on architects who draw by hand titled **"Drawing from Practice: Architects and the Meaning of Freehand"** (Routledge, 2015).

Also in 2015, with the Town of Wake Forest and Wake Forest Downtown, he helped organize an **architectural charrette** to study the White Street retail district, bringing in 12 Raleigh architects to develop a master plan and address eight specific projects identified by the town. A number of those plans have now been implemented.

In 2018, he worked with the City of Raleigh and the Triangle Chapter of the AIA to organize a **three-day charrette** to study the redesign of an 81.2-acre site between Dix Park and downtown Raleigh. He was instrumental in selecting New York architects and landscape architects to work with local designers on that project.

An appreciation of his life will be shared at The Corner and Meeting House of Wake Forest on Sunday, January 25 at 2:00 PM. For more information, email annwelton11@gmail.com.

In lieu of flowers or donations, please consider purchasing a copy of **"Housing the Nation: Social Equity, Architecture, and the Future of Affordable Housing,"** edited by Alexander Gorlin and Victoria Newhouse.

Photograph by Christi Reeves Tasker

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