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Throwback Thursday: Monarch Life

As originally seen on the [Winnipeg Architecture Foundation website](#):

The Monarch Life Building was originally designed to be the head office and flagship branch of the Monarch Life Assurance Company. A giant on Canada's business scene, the insurance company was one of the largest, and earliest, businesses to relocate to Broadway, in the area's post-war evolution towards its status as Winnipeg's pre-eminent business row.

Internationally recognized as one of Winnipeg's landmark Modernist buildings, the Monarch Life Building was constructed amid much public interest and took its place among a growing number of modern buildings on both sides of Broadway and along the intersecting streets.

Building Characteristics:

- Defines two important intersections and contributes to the streetscape of three major downtown arteries.
- At the time of construction, Monarch Life represented the largest contract and greatest use of stainless steel in Western Canada. Some 50 tonnes were used in the manufacture of the curtainwalls, doors, partitioning, check counters, stairs, window frames, baseboards, radiator covers, and window mullions. The contract was valued at over \$250,000.
- Wildlife Artist Clarence Tillenius painted a series of 95 wildlife oils titled, "Monarch of the Wild", a trademark collection that was widely circulated on calendars, prints and promotional materials. This work is now located at the Assiniboine Park Gallery at the Pavilion.
- Monarch Life Insurance Company, one of the city's leaders, occupied this office building until its amalgamation with North American Life Assurance Company in the 1980s. The new company remained in this location until the 1990s. Other space in the building was occupied by federal and provincial government departments, law firms and banks. The building is now occupied by Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba.
- Constructed of concrete (precast and cast in place) and steel. Originally clad in granite.
- Building cantilevers 13' over foundation.
- 2 years to design; 20 months to construct.
- 5'8" square module construction.
- 1960, Cost of construction: over \$4 million.

Original Bird scrapbook images:



MONARCH LIFE BUILDING, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Designed by Smith, Carter, Searle. "Prestige" was the by-word of the design. It was the most expensive building square footage-wise to be built in Western Canada at that time. Imported granite was used for facing and was hung from steel. Charile Brown was masonry superintendent on the job.

