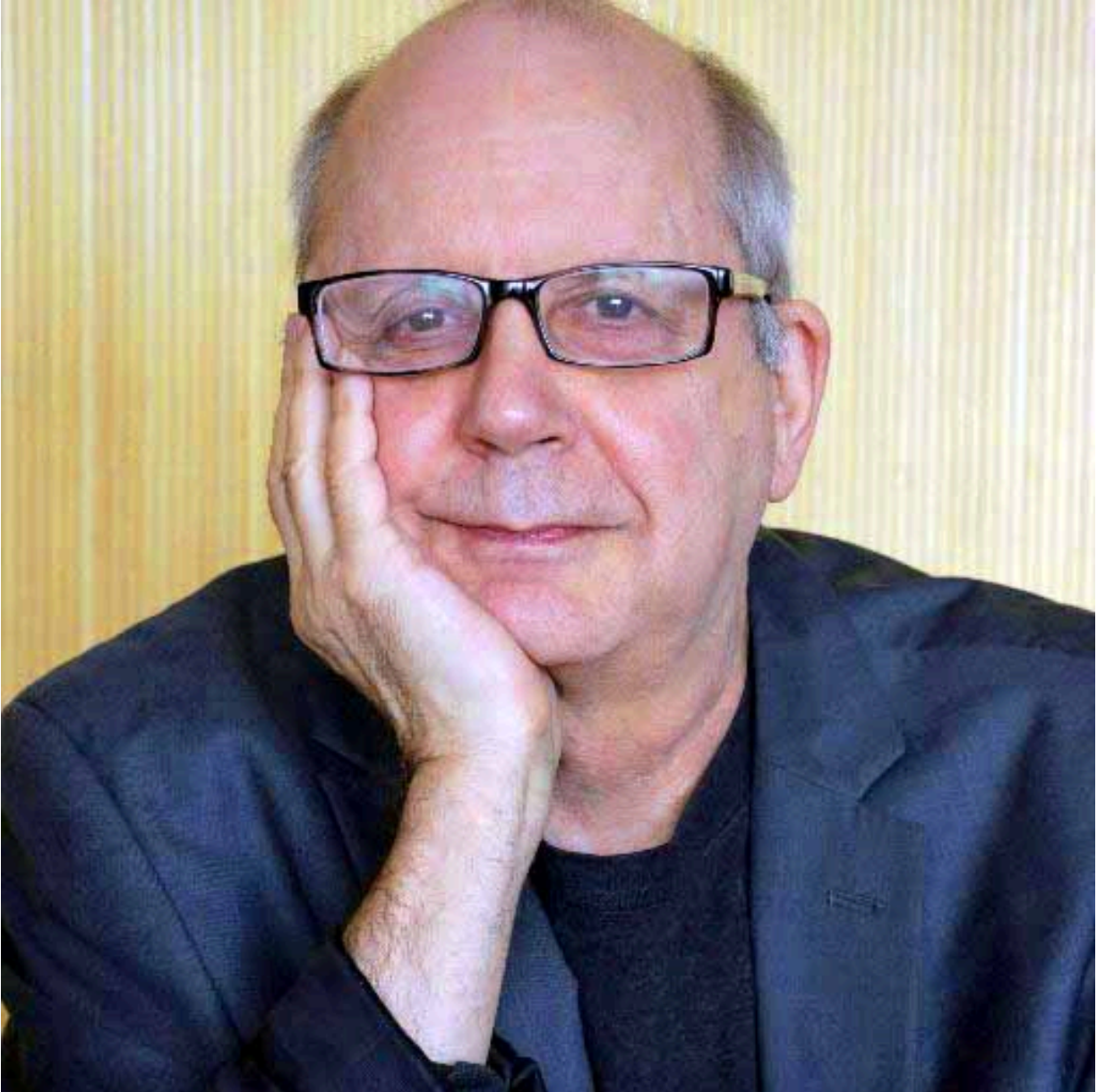


John Lobell: First a thank you to Mike Arlow for all the work he is doing creating and maintaining our class information, and a thank you to all who have organized past reunions and are working on our next.



Writing this little essay feels strange – are we now wrapping up our lives? Seeing how many of our classmates are no longer with us, one has to wonder. I graduated from architecture school at the University of Pennsylvania, and a third of my classmates there are gone, although a couple of my professors survive to join our occasional gatherings.

Looking back, my father Nathan Lobell grew up in the South Bronx, the son of Jewish immigrants from the Carpathian Mountains in a region that has passed through several nationalities. For those who might remember him, or whose parents might also hail from the Bronx, he wrote a memoir about his growing up, “Of Things That Used To Be: A Childhood on Fox Street in the Bronx in the Early Twentieth Century,” which is available on Amazon. My mother, Griselda Lobell (born Holzinger) grew up in Queens. Her family was of various Christian denominations and was from various countries but mostly Germany. I am now editing her memoir of growing up in Queens and will eventually publish it. My sister, Griselda Steiner (born Lobell) graduated in 1962 from Great Neck South and lives in New York.

My father went to City College and my mother went to Barnard. They met in Columbia Law School. My father graduated (my mother didn't) and both went to Washington to work in the New Deal. I was born in 1941. My father had become the director of the SEC (Securities and Exchange Commission) by the time they left

Washington, and we moved to Kensington in Great Neck in 1950. They bought our house for around \$30,000. I see online that it recently sold for \$1.7 million. Kensington had a pool and a great elementary school to which I could walk. My mother's parents, John and Florence Holzinger, lived with us. John was a mystery writer, and Florence ran the jewelry repair desk at Saks Fifth Avenue.

Since everyone reading this will have attended Great Neck high school, you all know how exceptional it was. Good teachers (some great) and interesting classmates some of whom came from families that were doing interesting things in entertainment, art, business, technology, etc.

I am voraciously curious, and pay a lot of money for a mini storage filled with my books. Today Amazon and rare book sites can find any book, and I wonder how we found books in the past. My family made weekly trips to Great Neck's main library (which is now a senior center that I occasionally visit when in Great Neck), and there was a bookstore on Middle Neck Road. They would order anything they did not have, and I recall obtaining Willey's Lay's "Rockets Missiles and Space Travel," Sherlock Holmes, lots of Tarzan books (they were pointedly not carried by the library), and Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer detective stories.

I went to college and architecture school at the University of Pennsylvania. It only became apparent while I was there that it was developing into one of the great 20th

century schools of architecture and some of my professors are important figures in modern architecture.

Center city Philadelphia is today one of our most attractive places, in large part due to one of my professors, the great city planner, Edmund Bacon. But when I was a student it was a place with no paperback bookstores, no foreign movie theaters, and no art scene. I came home a lot of weekends and became friends with some students from the class of 61, including Matthew Robbins, Dick Bass, Joel O'Brien, Larry Abzug, Tommy Weiner (whose mother taught English at the High School), Margret Corey (daughter of the comedian, Irwin Corey, who recently died at the age of 102), Lucy Brown, and others.

At the architecture school at Penn I met and married Mimi Comings, a year behind me at the school, and we moved to New York on graduating, working for prominent architects. We got involved in the New York art world and did some provocative projects. We were briefly culturally prominent, and Mimi became involved in women in architecture. Most of the women's movement was materialist and political. Her interests were in spiritual feminism. Mimi died in 2001, leaving behind a massive book on architecture and culture which I am finally preparing for publication. I was for a while an "environmental sculptor," doing a project at the Architectural League of New York. I later curated exhibitions there, some of which were important.

I remarried 10 years ago to Alissa Grimaldi, an opera singer and voice teacher. We live in Manhattan in the east 20s in Waterside Plaza, a great complex with four forty story buildings and a two acre plaza on the East River where I have been since 1976.

1968 saw upheavals at colleges, and the students at Pratt Institute's School of Architecture wanted me to teach there. I was hired in 1969 and I am still there. I have taught in many areas, but now I mostly teach the history and theory of architecture and the impact of technology on culture. Pratt has always been a very creative place, but suffered from poor leadership in the 1970s and 1980s. In the past twenty years it has blossomed and many of its departments are ranked among the top in the country. Our classmate Bruce Gitlin is chairman of the board at Pratt.

I have written a couple of books, including one on ecology, long out of print, and "Between Silence and Light: Spirit in the Architecture of Louis I. Kahn," which remains in print after almost 40 years. My latest book is "Visionary Creativity: How New Worlds are Born."

I don't feel my age, perhaps because I never had kids (by choice) and have not had a major illness. I don't feel much different than I did ten or twenty years ago. I enjoy my teaching and I continue to learn from my young colleagues who come from an academia very different from the one I came from.

I feel fortunate to have grown up in Great Neck. A few years ago I was doing a reading from my father's memoir, and I got a question about him being an exceptional person. Of course he was, but perhaps all of our dads were. But as I thought about it later, it occurred to me that many of our Great Neck parents were interesting and exceptional.

More about me at <http://johnlobell.com>

More about my recent book at <http://visionarycreativity.com/wp1/>

100+ of my lectures on my channel on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRKW4uxj26IDKosCSPbyqfA>

My lectures for cruise ships at <http://lecturesbylobell.com>

Hear my podcasts on PRN.FM at 10 AM Mondays, and back podcasts at <http://visionaries.podbean.com>

About my wife at <http://alissagrimaldi.com>

The Corey's for late night

The book store – for me Willey's Lay's Rockets Missiles and Space Travel, Sherlock Holmes, and lots of Tarzan books (they were banned from the library).