



# Burnham Block Furniture/Cabinet Making

Tuesday, May 10, 2022, 1-3 pm

**This is a Zoom class, online only**

The Burnham Block is a collection of six Frank Lloyd Wright designed; American System-Built Homes built in 1916. The homes are part of a series of homes meant to be mass-produced.

In a 1901 speech entitled, “The Art and Craft of the Machine,” Wright outlined his vision of affordable housing. He asserted that the home would have to go to the factory, instead of the skilled labor coming to the building site. Between 1915 and 1917 Wright designed a series of standardized “system-built” homes, known today as the American System-Built Homes. By system-built, he did not mean pre-fabrication off-site, but rather a system that involved cutting the lumber and other materials in a mill or factory, then bringing them to the site for assembly.



This system would save material waste and a substantial fraction of the wages paid to skilled tradesmen. Wright produced more than 900 working drawings and sketches of various designs for the system. Six examples were constructed, still standing, on West Burnham Street and Layton Boulevard in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Other examples were constructed on scattered sites throughout the Midwest with a few yet to be discovered.

*See back page for more information and presenter's bio.*

**Questions?** Contact Linda Campeau at [lcampeau@wi.rr.com](mailto:lcampeau@wi.rr.com)

**Fee:** \$7 for Member and \$14 for Guests

**Register by:** 5/5/22

Please register online with a [Credit Card \(click here to pay with card\)](#) OR mail checks payable to UW-Parkside/ALL, [click here to print a registration form](#). Once your registration is complete you will receive a confirmation email. Then a few days before the class, you will receive an email reminder with instructions.

## **Adventures in Lifelong Learning**

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### **Our presenter:** Nicole Atkinson

Nicole has been a furniture engineer, furniture builder and millwork project manager for the past 35 years. After graduating with an associated degree in mechanical design, Nicole started her career as a product engineer at the Buckstaff Company in Oshkosh Wisconsin. The Buckstaff Company manufactured solid wood institutional furniture. While at the Buckstaff Co., Nicole started building furniture with the help of the skilled craftsman in the shop.



Nicole worked for Techline/Marshall Erdman and Associates. The Techline factory manufactured furniture and cabinetry. Because of Marshall Erdman's connection to Frank Lloyd Wright, Nicole developed an interest in everything Frank Lloyd Wright and especially his furniture designs. Nicole has built 33 pieces of furniture for a Frank Lloyd Wright duplex in Milwaukee. She has also built furniture for other Frank Lloyd Wright sites in Chicago and Atlanta.

Nicole also attended 13 semesters of woodworking at Madison College. Nicole has been designing and building furniture in her own shop for over 40 years. Nicole also had a cabinet refacing business and remodeled over 75 kitchens. She has also flipped 8 homes by remodeling the kitchen cabinets and updating the millwork. Nicole went back to school in 2013 to learn SolidWorks a 3D modeling software.

### **Nicole's Introduction to the project:**

I saw a post that the Burnham Block on Facebook, they were looking for volunteers to guide tours. Once introduced, I was quickly installed into the interiors committee. This group was in charge of the furnishings for the Burnham Block including the museum house and the future Air B&B.

### **Research:**

We visited several houses that were built during the same time frame to measure the beds so we could match the mattress and bed frame sizes at the time of construction.

- The Meyer May house in Grand Rapids MI 1908
- The Dana Thomas House in Springfield Illinois 1902 - 1904
- The Stockholm house in Mason City Iowa 1908

Frank Lloyd Wright drew many birds-eye views of the floorplans that included the furnishings. Mr. Wright intended to build and sell the furniture the ASBH owners.