

# SKYLINES



MAY 1955

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## SKYLINES

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EDITOR	Frank V. Grimaldi 3543 Broadway Kansas City, Missouri
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# Skylines

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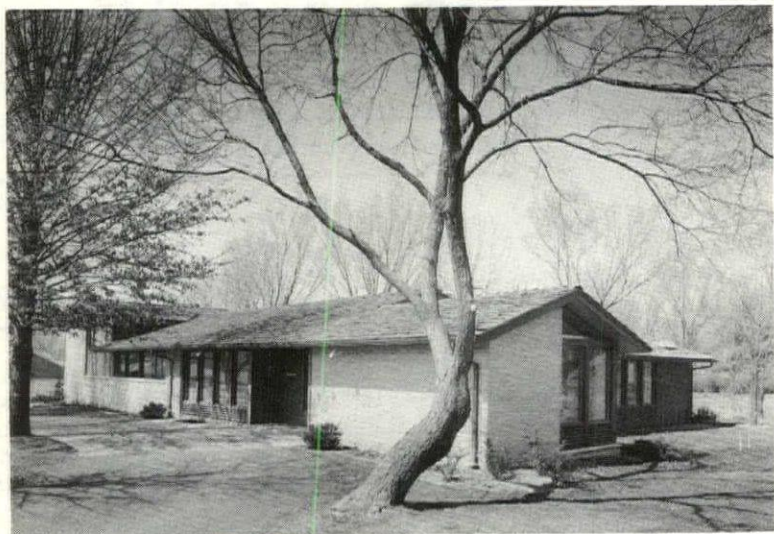
**NEXT CHAPTER MEETING:** Tuesday, May 17. Consult the regular meeting announcement for details.

**LAST CHAPTER MEETING:** Medal awards program. A memorable evening at the University Club with Harold Spitznagel of the awards jury present and eminent architect Victor Gruen giving the address.

Pictures of the award winners are on the following pages and Mr. Gruen's talk is presented on pages 10 to 14. This year's medal awards program was an outstanding success. Twenty-three buildings were presented for judgment by twelve firms. Comment by the jury was brief: "While only two Medal Awards were selected, along with two Special Awards, the projects were not only interesting solutions architecturally, but indicated a willingness on the part of clients to appreciate and encourage better architecture."

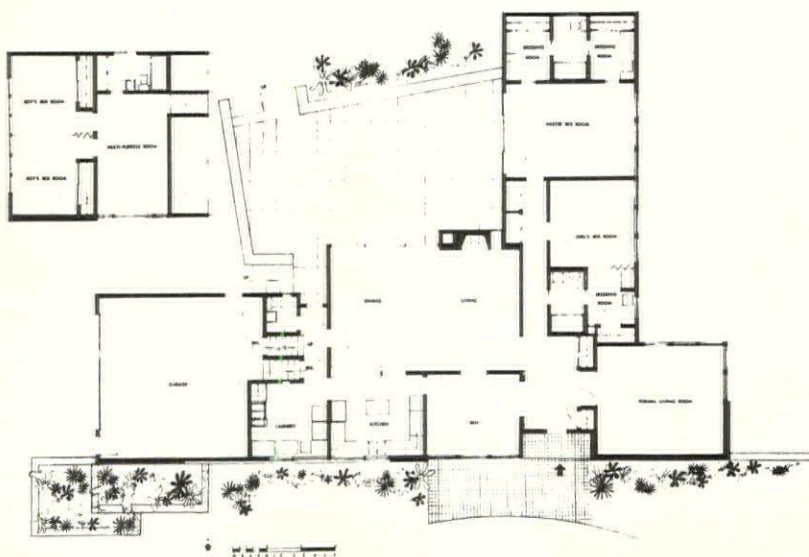
The mounts of this year's entries already have been exhibited at the annual meeting of the Missouri State Association of Registered Architects. Further exhibitions are planned for the department of architecture at the University of Kansas and at the Nelson Art Gallery.

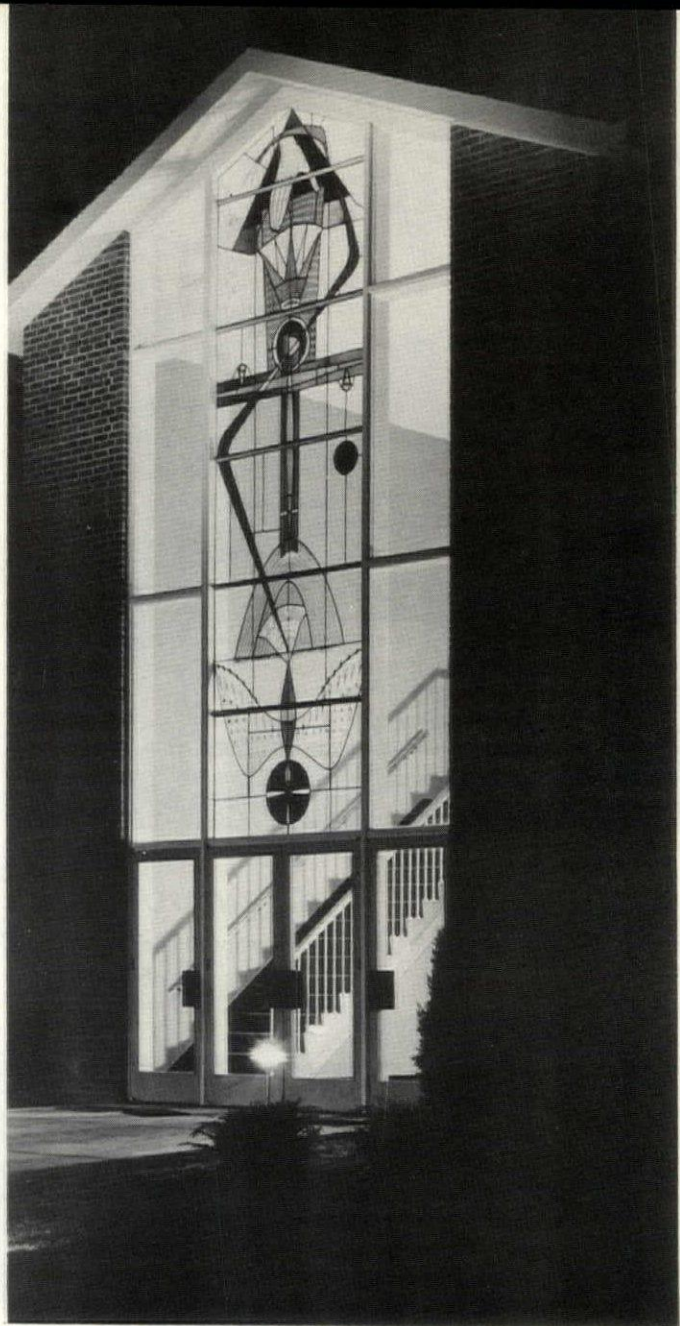
The success of this year's program has brought suggestions for greater results in future arrangements. It has been suggested that the medal awards dinner be dramatized, possibly done as a formal function, with city officials and others invited as guests.



## MEDAL AWARD

R. O. Stenzel Residence, Kansas City, Missouri  
Kivett & Myers, A.I.A., Architects  
Angus McCallum, A.I.A., Associate

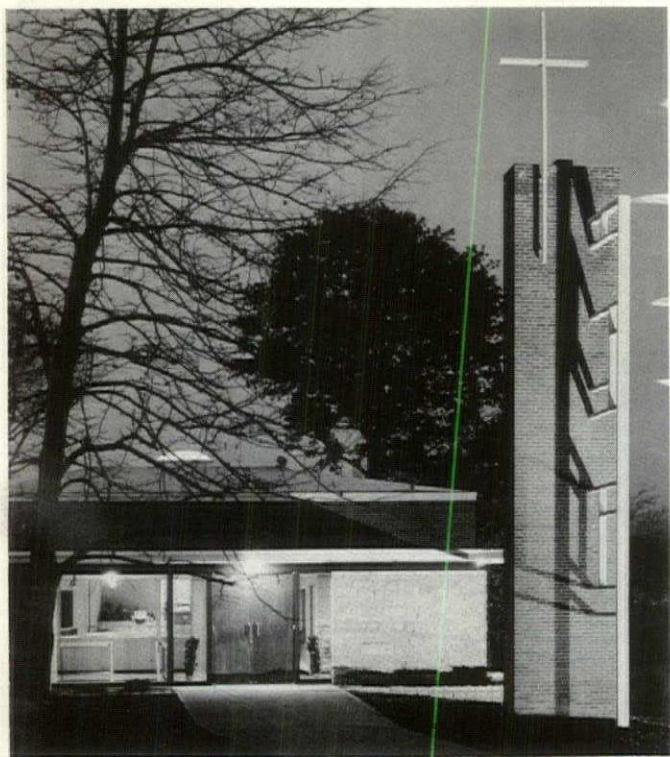




## SPECIAL AWARD

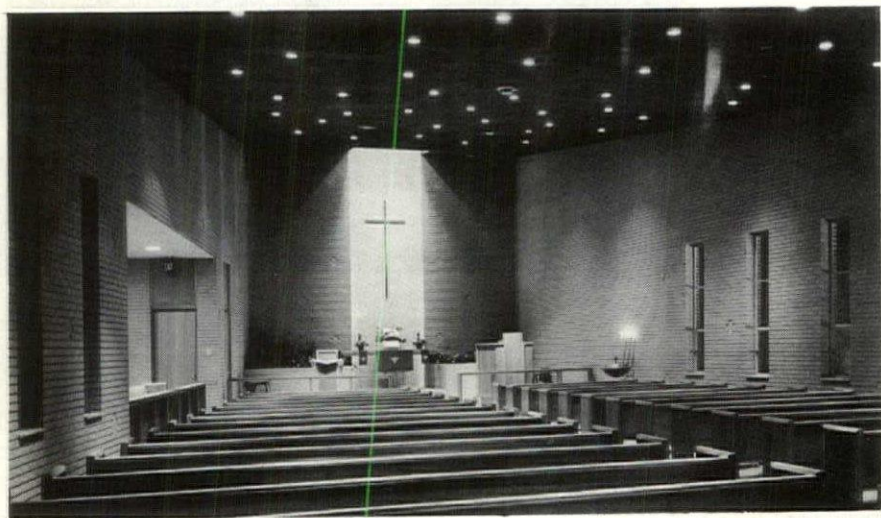
Entrance Detail  
American Lutheran Church  
Gothenburg, Nebraska  
Donald R. Hollis, A.I.A., Architect  
Emil Frei and Robert Harmon, Stained Glass Designers





## MEDAL AWARD

Immanuel Lutheran Church  
Kansas City, Kansas  
Donald R. Hollis, A.I.A., Architect





## SPECIAL AWARD

Living Room

J. B. Shaughnessy Residence, Johnson County, Kansas

Shaughnessy and Bower, A.I.A., Architects

Henry End, A.I.D., Decorator

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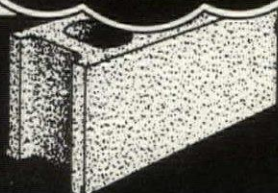
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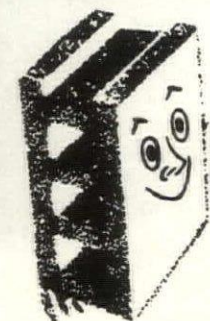
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# VICTOR GRUEN SPEAKS

## TO THE MEDAL AWARDS DINNER MEETING OF KC CHAPTER AIA

This is an Honor Award Dinner and the most obvious thing to do would be to talk about the honor awards. That would be easy.

On second thought, that is exactly what I will do. When I came in this afternoon on the plane from Los Angeles, I was lucky enough to sit next to a very talkative gentleman and it didn't take me very long to find out that he was a "How to Writer." He is just now working on a book entitled, "How to Write How-To Books." Pretty soon he inquired what I was doing. I was telling him and he said, "What a lucky coincidence! I wrote a book 'How to Win an Architectural Honor Award.'" He gave me a copy (\$2.50) and I thought I would give you a few excerpts from the book.

The first step in winning an Architectural Honor Award, it says, is to select an appropriate client. This is simplest done by looking up the yellow pages of your phone book under clients. As soon as you find a candidate, you should interview him and find out if he is truly a good client.

A good client should be generous, wealthy, and about to take an extended trip to Europe.

Now with the major obstacle to your design removed, you can start with the wonderful feeling that the only one you will have to satisfy is yourself—and the jurors.

Nothing stands between those virginal rolls of drafting paper and the award.

All you have to do is to apply the principles of contemporary design (some people claim contemporary design is dead so don't use contemporary design). Well, just apply "good design." (I just found out that "good design" applies only to home furnishings.) — Well just apply design!

Now you should know what not to do—that makes for a good beginning!

Don't be symmetrical, monumental, formalistic, dramatic, forced, and most of all don't use cliches (except those which are not yet known well in your area).

The roof should, of course, not be sloping (on the other hand, I hear lately that they shouldn't be flat, that is modernistic). Well, maybe you shouldn't have any roof. How about a thin shell concrete dome. Let us say, supported on three points—or let us say on two points.

If your project is a 10 story office building, the shell dome might not work too well and might be regarded as being "forced." As to the exterior of your office building, try something original. Let's say all glass. (I understand this has been done once.) What would you think of no glass at all and no windows. Then choose an original facing material. Aluminum (Was already done once!). Stainless Steel (That, too!). Something new: Wood Shingles! Too romantic?

Wake up! Wake up! The whole thing was a dream. You don't have the ideal client and he is not in Europe. He is right here and he has a budget and in accordance to the budget you don't have to worry about exterior material, brick and standard windows are the only possibility. Where are the days without budgets? Where are those wonderful clients of the pre-contemporary architecture?

The Pharaohs who ordered assorted pyramids, instructing the architect not to worry about cost as they had the labor problem licked, the Caesars who commissioned our colleague with middle sized colosseums, remarking that they don't mind if there was derivatory, the medieval city officials who ordered a wall with 15 towers to go around the city and instructed our colleague to make it romantic because that scared the enemy, the kings who ordered a dozen castles and said it could be anything, even Barock, the Emperor who ordered 50 miles of boulevards in any style as long as they were grandiose. Where are those wonderful clients?

Here we are strait-jacketed by economic factors, treading the thin path between experimentation and clichés.

Are you bewildered? Do you want to give up?

Don't. Follow the example of tonight's winners.

Most of them worked without self-consciousness following the simple rules of Vitruvius. Architecture must show: Strength, Utility, Beauty. Keep in mind that it must have all three and that it must have them to the fullest possible degree.

There are many ways, many forms of expression fitting the environment, the purpose and human needs. Some projects have integrated art with architecture without worrying too much of whether it is "real art," "true art," "pure art," and "the right art" and that is how it should be. If we will ask too many questions, art and architecture will remain separated forever. Today's winners have proceeded with professional integrity and created good buildings. And yet we should not be satisfied. Even when we have built a livable house—we built only half a house, if the inhabitants are plagued by ugly vistas and smog.

Even if we built an outstanding office building, we built only half an office building if the employees suffer under the noise created by traffic outside their windows. Even if we have built a child-loving school, we built only half a school, if the children when entering or leaving are endangered by speeding automobiles. Even if we have built a smoothly functioning hospital, we built only half a hospital if the patients can't sleep because of the racket created by a nearby factory. Even if we built a functional factory we only built half a factory if the workers coming and leaving are stalled for hours in traffic.

We have been robbed of the chance of creating perfect architecture in individual buildings. The complexity of our civilization, our technical progress, the mechanization, of our life, the millions of automobiles, smog, fumes and noise have moved in on us stealing the fruit of half of our efforts making our buildings half buildings—our work half architecture.

We may lose that half too if we don't turn around and fight back.

The time is ripe for integrated planning. Our cities are disintegrating in



the middle and stretching out in all directions of the periphery. In doing so they destroy the countryside and create suburban cultural deserts.

The time which we are saving, thanks to the 40 hour work week in factories, shops and offices, gets consumed in long drives and traffic jams.

Places of cultural and educational enrichment become inaccessible. Our ability to communicate and cooperate with others becomes problematic. There is no space for men. There is hardly enough space for cars.

Poorly placed factories breathe poisonous smoke into our lungs, slums grow like festering wounds. Millions and millions of hours are wasted in the transporting of goods and of people.

As we are building we are overextending the hardening arteries of our city—and our city's heart dies.

Is there no solution? Shall we—the architect and planners sit by and watch with frustration how the fruit of our work rots away.

In approaching any of our big cities by car one drives over miles and miles of highway and roads flanked on both sides by commercial slums, shanty towns, rows of one story store buildings, used car lots. From time to time the eye rests on a building designed by a good architect.

It is not effective but only serves to emphasize the squalor of the others.

The excellency of a single individual performance is utterly defeated in the morass of disorderliness, ugliness, mediocrity.

We have to drain that morass. We have to unscramble the melee of

flesh and machines, men and automobiles. We must end the encroachment of damaging uses on our living area. We must end the feudal era of building! We must start the age of democratic architecture!

In our democracy, the rights of the individual are holy and must be protected including the right for the pursuit of happiness. We must recreate our city so that these rights will be respected. We must protect the homes, the schools, the places of work and the places of culture and

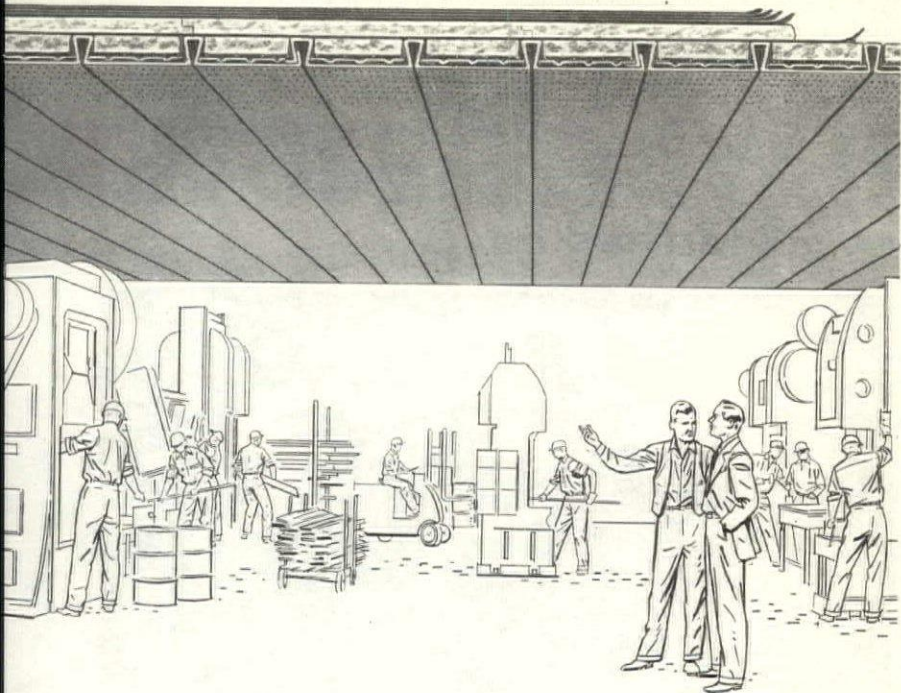
spiritual enlightenment and education. We must protect our time, our opportunities to mingle freely with others, our physical and spiritual health. We must construct our environment for a free democratic society.

What can we as architects do?

We can lead—coordinate—plan and design as it is our function. We can exercise our influence in every individual project, small or large. We can help to widen the horizons of our clients to see the potential of large scale and long range planning. We must insist in every individual project on integration with its surroundings. We must closely cooperate with and influence the members of the building team—owners, builders, contractors, financing institutions, realtors. We must press for comprehensive planning in city or planning commissions, zoning commissions.

Twentieth century Architecture cannot find its fulfillment in a few sleek glass towers peeking out of the smog of the decaying city.

And, gentlemen, we don't have to cry over the loss of those clients of the past; of the Pharaohs, the kings, or even the late tycoons—if we understand that the client of 20th century architecture is society as a whole—the people.



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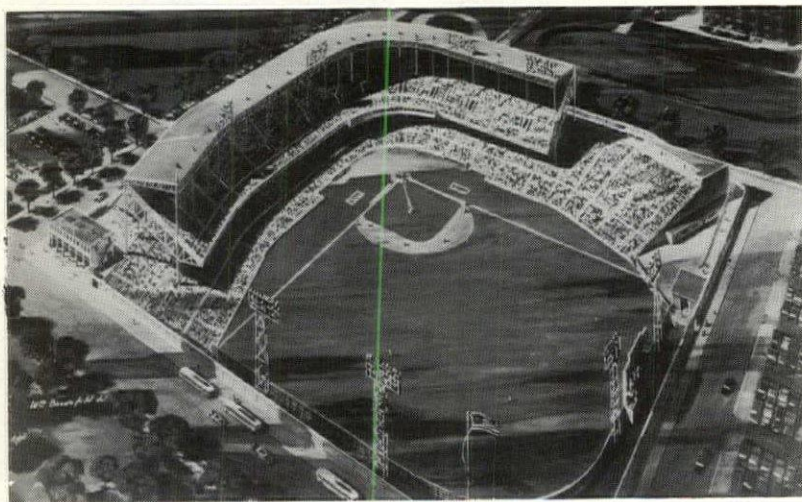
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MR. ERNEST BROSTROM of the Committee on Preservation of Historical Buildings presented the following resolution at the April Chapter Meeting and it was unanimously approved:

Relative to a bill numbered S-1335 introduced by Senator Frank Carlson in the United States Senate, and

WHEREAS the Kansas City Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, in regular meeting assembled, concurs in considering the Huron Cemetery, ancient burying ground of the Wyandotte Indians in Kansas City, Kansas, a sacred area, of more than local interest, national in its historic significance, and worthy of proper preservation;

BE IT RESOLVED that we join with others in respectfully asking the Congress of the United States of America and the Department of the Interior to take appropriate action toward establishing the tract as an historic national monument under the National Park Service.

**ARCHITECTS** John C. Monroe, jr., A.I.A., and George Fuller Green have been named to the Kansas City Park board by Mayor H. Roe Bartle. Monroe is treasurer of the Kansas City Chapter A.I.A. He is also on the board of directors of the Missouri State Association of Registered Architects, and is a partner in the firm of Monroe & Lebefvre. The chairman of the park board is Frank A. Theis, a grain company executive.

WELCOME to new SKYLINES advertiser: Buildex. Their first message to the architects and contractors of this area appears on page seven of this issue.

THERE ARE FOUR Kansas City Chapter members on national committees at the last count: David Mackie—Awards & Scholarships; Frank Slezak—Centennial Observance; Joseph Shaughnessy—Joint A.I.A. & A.S.C.E.; Lloyd Roark—Chapter Affairs. We hope sometime to present personal reports from these men concerning the activities of these various committees.



## in the news

ARCHITECTURAL NEWS FROM KANSAS is abundant: Paul Weigel has retired as head of the Kansas State department of architecture and allied arts after 31 years in that position, and a scholarship fund called the Paul Weigel Foundation has been established by former students in the department. Emil C. Fischler has been named new head of the department. He comes from Ohio State University where he has been in charge of senior design. He holds an M.S. in Architecture from Columbia University. In Topeka, Dwight C. Brown has been named state architect, succeeding John A. Brown, no relation.

### NEW CORPORATE MEMBER

Edward Lawhon, Chief Draftsman, Neville Sharp & Simon. Born, Knoxville, Tennessee. Attended Central High, Kansas City; K. C. Junior College; K. C. Art Institute, and Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.

Has won many prizes for sculpture at Midwestern Artists Exhibitions.



### NEW JUNIOR ASSOCIATE MEMBER

Leslie Duane Roenigk, with Curtis and Cowling. Born, Clay Center, Kansas. Graduate Maplewood High, St. Louis; B.S. Architecture ('51), KU.



# A.I.A. RELEASES FILM REPORT ON CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE

The American Institute of Architects has announced the release of **Architecture—U.S.A.**, a sound presentation of 14 color slides showing current architectural trends in homes, schools, offices, factories, churches, and other building types.

The film is the work of Ralph E. Myers, A.I.A., of the firm of Kivett and Myers, Kansas City, Missouri. In collecting photographs for the film, Myers travelled more than 5,000 miles and edited more than 10,000 color photographs by some of the nation's top architectural photographers.

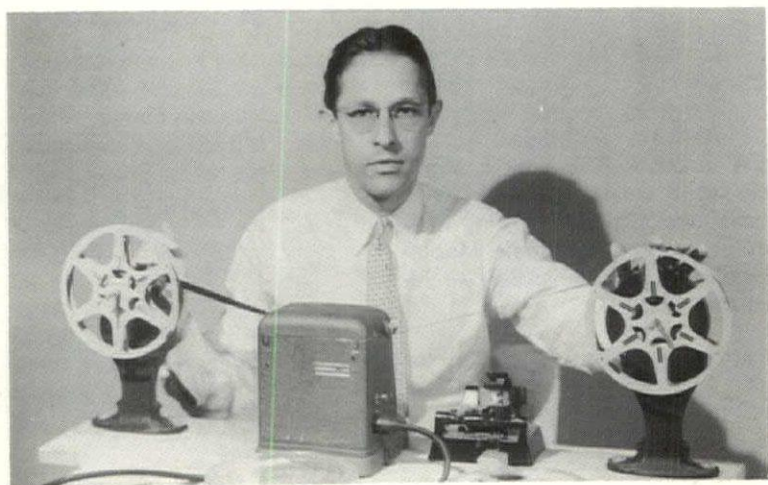
Initial impetus was given to the project by a grant from the Arnold W. Brunner Scholarship of the New York Chapter, A.I.A., for "advanced study in a specialized field of architectural investigation."

**Architecture—U.S.A.** has a running time of 26 minutes and may be shown on standard 16 mm. sound movie equipment. It has been planned for presentation before service clubs, school assemblies, women's groups and similar organizations.

Sixty-two top architects and architectural firms are represented in the film.

The film's running time has been planned to make it suitable for presentation on television. All material has been cleared for television use.

**Architecture—U.S.A.** will be available for general use in June, 1955. Distribution of the film will be handled by the 117 A.I.A. chapters through national headquarters at The Octagon in Washington, D.C.







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