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SHOULD YOUR SON STUDY ARCHITECTURE?

By Robert W. McLaughlin, Jr., Professor and Director, Princeton University's School of Architecture.

Editor's Note: The Educational Significance Of The Exhibition Which, On June 5, Will Highlight This Chapter's Fifth Competition For Awards Is Of First Importance. It Will Be Eyed With Particular Interest By A Number of Students Whose Aptitudes And Developing Skills Can Cause Some Qualified Potential Architects To Decide To Prepare For The Profession. For This Reason We Feel Professor McLaughlin's Analysis Of The Calling Is Especially Timely. Reprinted by Kind Permission Of The JERSEY ARCHITECT. 99

MY FIRST RESPONSE to the question which is the title of this article is to refer the query to the son. Certainly this is a matter that no father can decide, and the only proper basis for a decision lies within the potential architect himself. The more I see of embryo architects the more am I impressed by the primary importance of motivation. Unless a boy wants to be an architect and knows he wants to be an architect, he had better forget this particular profession.

Before coming back to the boy who is at the heart of the problem, it might be well to look at the profession of architecture from the point of view of opportunities lying within its ample boundaries.

Architecture stands in a key position in America's greatest industry. Building, including alterations and renovations, during the last year piled up the enormous value of sixty billion dollars in the United States.

Since our total gross national production came to about four hundred and forty billion dollars, we come to a realization that measured by dollar value, almost one-seventh of our total national production went into our building program. Quantitatively at least, this is very impressive. We have been, here in the United States, in the midst of the greatest building boom in the history of the world.

Architecture stands in a key position in this great building industry. Through the offices of architects flows a considerable portion of the thinking that determines the quality or lack of quality of the resulting construction. The extent of our participation is largely in proportion to our interests and efforts.

Within the profession of architecture lie the needs for varying talents. There are opportunities for all sorts of people. The practice of architecture is becoming more and more a matter of group participation. The technology of our profession has become so complicated that many sorts of knowledge and technical equipment are needed.

No longer can all knowledge about architecture be contained within one individual.

We need designers of architecture as always, but the practice of architecture involves the methods of business, and the orderly operation of an office is of great importance. The development of mechanical equipment has reached a point where the mechanical contracts of buildings such as hospitals and laboratories approach or exceed half the total construction cost.

In other words, an architect today is not just one sort of person. He is many sorts of person, and most successful practices combine people of widely varying talents. The opportunities are there, both in breadth and variety of jobs to be done.

Since the question posed is a personal one, we have to come back to the individual. Architecture is not an easy profession. There is no simple formula for making an architect. Indeed, I am quite sure that architects are not made but are born. Unless the urge, the motivation, the drive are there, education can do very little. Given those inner qualities, education can do much. A natural question that the hypothetical father will ask is how he can tell whether this urge, this motivation, is present in a boy.

A natural answer is that he will be told. A good test is for someone who is himself interested in architecture to learn what a boy has observed in walking, let us say, across a college campus or through a downtown urban area. If the boy is keenly aware of his visual experiences he is well on the way to being an architect; if his mind is off in other directions, the chances are against him in this particular profession.

And so it really is very simple to answer the question, "Should Your Son Study Architecture?" One has essentially to want to be an architect intensely, and many good things can follow. But it has to be the real thing—within the individual. ● ● ●

POTOMAC VALLEY CHAPTER OF MARYLAND
AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

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MEETINGS

First Monday of Every Month
at 12 o'clock noon

ELECTION MEETING

Monday, May 5
Stone House Inn, Silver Spring

the Executive Committee Has Made Its Nominations—
Two Candidates for Each Office

COME EARLY FOR ELECTIONEERING!

Photo of New Officers 1:30 P.M.

OFFICE PRACTICE COMMITTEE SPELLS OUT
CHANGES NEEDED IN AIA DOCUMENTS

AFTER ONE of the most intensive and comprehensive studies ever undertaken by a chapter group, our Office Practice Committee, chaired by Milton J. Prassas, last week recommended to the National AIA Office Practices Committee that the Institute's three owner-agreement forms not be released for publication in their present state.

The Documents Nos. B-131, B-211 and B-311, the Prassas committee reported, are (1) too wordy; (2) unclear in some explanations; and (3) unnecessarily binding on the architect in contrast to the existing AIA contract form.

It then proceeded to spell out in six pages of detail its recommendations for refining and simplifying each form before their submission to the chapters.

The AIA's national officers, it is believed, will join Potomac Valley's Executive Committee in congratulating our Office Practices Committee for a nationally important job thoroughly and well done.

Serving with Prassas in the survey, study and preparation of the recommendations have been Eric W. Andberg, William M. Blocker, Jr., Jack C. Cohen, Andrew V. Donnally, F. Leonard Slagle, Timothy Quinlan, Viola S. R. Prassas and Charles B. Soule, vice president and ex-officio member.

DEADLINE FOR COMPETITION
MAY 13!!!

POTOMAC VALLEY CHAPTER'S 5th AND GREATEST
Competition for Awards in Architecture

You know the requirements, that with more classifications and categories you have more opportunities to win.

NOW! YOUR EXHIBITIONS AND COMPETITIONS COMMITTEE PROUDLY ANNOUNCES THREE OF THE NATION'S MOST DISTINGUISHED AIA ARCHITECTS WILL FORM THE COMPETITIONS' JURY. THEY ARE:

Foreman: Thomas K. FitzPatrick, Dean, School of Architecture,
University of Virginia

Juror: George Matsumoto, Professor, School of Architecture,
University of North Carolina

Juror: Hugh Stubbins, world-known architect, Professor of Design,
Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

WE MUST DEMONSTRATE OUR APPRECIATION OF THEIR WILLINGNESS TO SERVE WITH 100 OR MORE ENTRIES. IS YOURS IN?

THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE

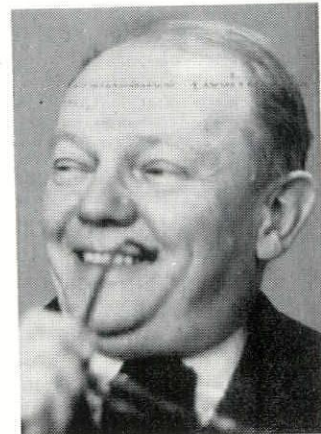
And a Word of Thanks

by Ted Englehardt, President

AT BALTIMORE, April 18-19, it was a case of "We're having an inspiring time. We wish you were all here." That's the way Ron Senseman, Jack Moore, Roy Bagley, Dave Daumit, with me, so keenly felt about it.

None of us can properly report this last Regional. I may try at the May meeting, but I will feel as if I were sending you a postcard from New York's all glass Schenley Building, as designed by Ludwig Mies van de Rohe. To appreciate and share a masterpiece one needs to be along in person.

Carefully built around the theme, "The Architect and Tomorrow's City," the conference was aimed above the heads of the small practitioner. Yet this was only to show the younger architect, as Professor McLaughlin does in our PVA today, what the field of architecture truly is, how very much the nature of the future depends on the profession. We were especially enlivened by the way the great urban developer, Herbert S. Greenwalt, wrapped up the meeting. He urged us, and I urge you, to make yourselves felt in the large program urgently needed to prevent and rehabilitate the decaying cores of suburban communities as well as of our old cities.



Ted—a hit every time at bat.

Now, what can I possibly say about the year that has meant so much more than any other in my life? Like many long-time architects these days, I've held, still hold, more than a few offices. But never have I been so honored as in being elected to head such an outstanding group of my own profession. You all know I'll continue to work with you and to enjoy my privilege of helping in every way I can.

OUR EXHIBITIONS AND COMPETITIONS COMMITTEE is patient. It sat good humoredly through half a morning while an amateur photographer flashed bulbs and shot yards of film trying to get a better picture of its handsome and distinguished group. But patience can be exhausted as entries are slow to come in for the Chapter's 5th and, presumably, greatest Architectural Competition and Exhibit. From left, Chairman John S. Samperton; Charles B. Soule, Vice President directing committee activities; Clark Harman and Secretary Stanley H. Arthur are shown reminding you the deadline for your entry is May 13—and not one day later!



SCHOOL BOARD APPOINTS ONLY FIVE MONTGOMERY ARCHITECTURAL FIRMS

LAST WEEK the Montgomery County Board of Education appointed the architectural firms for two new high schools costing \$5.5 million along with those for the remaining \$12 million construction program for 1958-59—a total of 24 jobs.

Fifteen of the jobs went to firms with offices outside the county, only nine to Montgomery County firms. The score for home firms was more discouraging than these figures reveal for of all qualified locals only five received appointments. Johannes & Murray was appointed for two including the \$2,490,000 Springbrook High; Philip Mason for three; Stanley H. Arthur for two and John H. Sullivan, Jr. for one. The Chapter's 67 AIA corporate and associate members were pleased at the last selection because, although only an \$186,000 elementary addition was involved, it was Sullivan's first school work.

With so many eligible, qualified tax-paying firms, our county AIA's cannot but register extreme unhappiness at their skimpy representation in school work. The few appointments come after a Joint Chapter Advisory Committee, formed at the request of the School Board, spent months deliberating on various questions of policy and professional activity posed by the Board. A particular question was on the "Criteria for Selection of Architects." A highly favorable report on the Committee's work was read at the March 4th meeting of the Board.

The subsequent inability of the Board to select more than five of our firms for school construction makes little sense to this Chapter.

COMING UP! A 16-PAGE AWARDS ISSUE PRESENTS REAL BUY FOR ADVERTISERS

THE PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE—Chairman Ben Elliott, Gene Delmar and Joe Dennison, after a special meeting last week, are right on the big job of producing a slick, magazine-type June issue of the Potomac Valley Architect with a special cover.

To be printed offset on best quality paper, the next issue will beautifully picture in large size each of award winning residences, public buildings (schools, churches, community buildings, etc.) apartments, group housing, remodeling and interior or exterior details as judged by a jury of nationally prominent architects. (See Page 2.)

Advertisers are signing up for the limited amount of advertising space at a fast clip, the committee reports. The Rates: Page \$100;

Half Page \$65; Quarter Page \$35. For more information call any one of the committee members named above.

Not ready for announcement is important civic work being done by Andrew (Van) Donnally for Bethesda-Chevy Chase. Van has drawn plans providing for the community's future growth including zoning, streets, etc., most pleasing to the B-CC Chamber of Commerce which has elected him a director. Johannes & Murray is opening a Florida office and will station George Haddox there as manager.

Secretary Stan Arthur is the Chapter's representative in the new drive for the Camp Echo Lake fund. He says any contribution will be helpful.

A group of Chapter voters in good standing was about to respond to Presidential nominee Ben Elliott's invitation to visit Ben's new house abuilding out Potomac way. He promised to open a keg of nails—until your snoopy editor found Ben meant just that, nails of the builders' variety.

AT CLEVELAND WE CAN TAKE IT EASY AGAIN

NO POTOMAC VALLEYER will ever forget the privilege we had last summer in sharing the responsibility of hosting the Institute Centennial Convention with its attendance of 4500. Now, however, we can eye Cleveland and plan to be there July 7-11, at the annual meeting where we can just be relaxed students and guests again.

This time it will only be a matter of having arranged for the few days away and traveling west with Secretary of the Treasury, Robert B. Anderson, who will deliver the opening address. You have the program and noted the practical tone of the 1958 Convention in its intention to help fit architects "to the new economic and living patterns emerging before us". The prospectus of the conclave will include discussions of financing, estimating, building types, building technologies, education, research and the renewed competencies, the architect must develop if he is to best represent his profession.

Start planning now to join our delegation to help carry out the theme "Architecture in a Strong America". Oh, yes, it will be a lot of fun too!

DANISH ARCHITECTURE DISPLAYED

The exhibition of post war Danish Architecture now at the Octagon is well worth your inspection, according to members who have viewed it. The showing will continue through June 1st.

