Communications

Readers' comments, ideas, and opinions

Past Glories

Editor,

Thank you for the informative focus on the history of the SU campus (*Alumni News,* Spring 1984). Don Akchin's article was enjoyable to read and the illustrations were great!

When I graduated from SU in 1978, I was pretty much indifferent to the architecture of the campus. The enthusiasm I felt when seeing and discovering all the sights during freshman year had withered away by my senior year to the inattention one gives a well-traveled route.

When I attended graduate school at the University at Albany, I was surprised to find myself missing the same SU campus I had taken for granted. SUNY/Albany is a modern marvel of straight lines and right angles designed by Edward Durell Stone. It was produced in the late 1960s as a single harmonious piece, including high rise dorms and all classroom and library facilities under a continuous flat roof. It is an architectural "statement"—a grand design—and it was built as a completed piece, never to be modified, updated (after all, how can you update Modernism?), or otherwise sullied.

Upon returning to SU for a visit, I found myself enthusiastic once again, as I had been as a freshman. I had to find my way through the new buildings and renovations, and discover the campus all over again. I realized that the ever-changing architecture adds a vitality to the campus which is missing at SUNY/Albany, and that the visual display of widely different styles placed among one another provides an energy that is missing from those harmonious and coherent grand designs.

I think that the richness and complexity (or maybe the chaos of the clashing styles) of the architecture adds a certain vitality to the SU environment—there's always something going on. Grand designs can be stifling, whereas SU is built on a human scale, and the diversity of styles mirrors the diversity of the people who inhabit it.

Thank you for the opportunity to enjoy the campus again.

Hugh MacNiven '78
Slingerlands, N.Y.

Editor,

It is always a delight to receive the *Alumni News,* but the Spring 1984 edition is the best ever.

It is an edition that I shall always treasure. I have already leafed through it many times. Each time is a new discovery of a renewed, cherished memory.

Thanks, and keep up the good work. It is appreciated.

Phyllis Cromwell '51
Lynchburg, Va.

Editor,

Your grand history on Syracuse University neglected to mention in particular, during "Explosive Expansion 1942-1969," the Manley Field House—perhaps not an architectural wonder, but surely it did help lay a foundation of rapid financial development for the University.

H. William Smith Jr. '47
Norwich, N.Y.

Editor,

Your spring issue covering the architectural history of Syracuse was superb, but it completely omitted mention of one structure, no longer in existence, that I recall with warm memories. It was in front of the Hall of Languages and probably was intended to be a flagpole. It was a steel structure, looking somewhat like a skinny oil derrick with a pole sticking out of the top. Because of the cross bracing, it was relatively easy to climb.

Many were the evenings that Johnny Courtenay '48 (forestry) and I, returning to our rooms from a visit to the Orange Cafe, decided that nothing would top off the evening better than a little fresh air at the top of the tower.

One time, I got to the top only to find that a coed had gotten there before me. In the years since then, I have forgotten a large percentage of what I learned at SU, but I do remember that her first name was Kelly. I wonder if her grandchildren know that she used to be a tower climber.

Lawrence "Larry" Barnes '43
Peterborough, N.H.

Editor's response: Try as we might, we could not discover the purpose of the tower to which Mr. Barnes refers; the prevalent hypothesis is that the tower supported a weather station. As the photo below proves, however, such a tower did exist (between roughly 1915 and 1959, according to photos in the Onondagan).

Editor,

It may well be that the count of compliments flowing to you from readers of the Spring 1984 issue of *Alumni News* will reach a new high. Be that as it may, as an alumnus of the Chancellor Day era who has read countless chronicles emanating from the University, it strikes me that this issue has to be rated tops for all times. The clarity of the concisely-written highlights of University history, together with the supporting campus photography—not overlooking the magazine's cover—are truly superb.

For those who have given of their time and talent to attain the level of excellence here depicted: magnifique!

Earle S. Corey '18
Tequesta, Fla.

Editor,

I enjoyed the spring issue very much but missed seeing credit given to Professor Fred R. Lear, who was associate architect of Archbold Stadium and Lyman Hall when he was on the faculty at Syracuse University. He graduated from Syracuse in 1905 and then was on the faculty of architecture for 41 years until he retired because of ill health. . . . Many of his papers, drawings, etc., are in the University's archives. His daughters, who also attended Syracuse University, gave this to the University.

Nancy Sharp might be interested in this if she is writing a history of Syracuse University architecture.

Roma Lear Loren '38
Tucson, Ariz.

This tower stood for 40-plus years, but what was it for?

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