STUDENT CENTER

After the war pressure had ended, it became quite obvious that we were going to have a great many more students and the very outstanding need was for a food service facility on the campus that could take care of the students who were in dormitories and also the students who commuted.

On April 1, 1957, Richard Dale Smith wrote a letter to me stating that with the coming of the new Junior College bill in the State Legislature it was obvious that we would need to add to our residence dormitories and also our food service. In a conference later on, he strongly suggested that we have as large a student center as possible and change the study currently underway from "Food Service Building" to "Student Center". There was also a genuine agitation on the part of students about standing in line too long to be served and a feeling that the Kittredge Hall facility had been completely outgrown.

I called a committee together to discuss the possibility of a new student center. The committee was composed to Mr. William W. Kilworth, Chairman of the Board, Mr. Silas Nelsen who was the architect, Cindy Engebretsen, who was student body representative, and Richard Waterman who was student body president; also Dr. Sprenger who represented the faculty point of view and Richard Wasson who was Chairman of the Building Committee of the Board of Trustees. Dick Wasson is an
alumnus who had spent a great deal of time in the development of the University. He had been on the Board of Trustees for many, many years, and has been genuinely dedicated to the development of the University. He not only served as Chairman of the Building Committee for the student center but for many other buildings during his long career as a trustee.

Out of the study committee came certain recommendations for the specifications of the student center. There was a very genuine and sincere hope that there would be adequate seating for the entire student body at one time. Allowing for three seating luncheon and two seating dinner, this could be done with 800 seats. The design was such that the area which is now called the "Great Hall" would take care of the major portion of the 800 and then the north side which has a large dining room would take care of those who were commuting and were not under the aegis of standard meal tickets for the semester.

There were also requests for sorority rooms in the building; for offices for the Associated Student officers, offices for the Dean of Students, for the Chaplain’s office and for other offices which would ultimately house such activities as the radio station KUPS, etc.

We made application to the Housing and Home Finance Agency for a project number and also for working plans. The number received was 45-CH-27(S) and after a considerable amount of discussion as to the size
of the student center, the Housing and Home Finance Agency disallowed our plans and said that they were much too large, that they thought it was a third, if not fifty percent, larger than the University needed. There was some confrontation on this and I finally said to the Agency people that we would outgrow the proposed plan in ten years, which has been true.

I also told them not to cut back on the amount of the loan which we would receive (at three percent to be amortized over forty years) and that the University would guarantee to raise the difference between what we anticipated our size would need to be and the amount of loan that they felt they could allocate.

On the 22nd of September, 1958, they decided that they could allocate $958,566.33 and they suggested that the basement not be finished. However, the Building Committee was staunchly of the opinion that the basement should be finished to provide storage space for food, overflow for the bookstore, a meeting room, snack bar which has been called by the students "Cellar X", sorority rooms and rooms for the publications (Trail, Tamanawas), game room and, for awhile, the University medical services. However, the medical services were moved after a short while.

There were many concomitant factors, because the building was designed as large as it was. In the first place, it was decided to make it the modified Tudor design, fulfilling all the aspects of the kind of architectural style which the campus has. However, it was made a little more domestic than
the strong modified Tudor because it borders on the residential section.

There was the problem of securing the vacation of the alley which would bisect the building if it were not vacated, and after appealing to the City Council, this vacation was allowed on the 25th of November, 1957.

The bids were opened on the 25th of November, 1959, and the low bid was $928,095.00, and Strom Construction Company received the bid. The total was $1,042,100.00 counting the extras and, of this, the University of Puget Sound had promised to raise at least $400,000. The total amount which was required of the University of Puget Sound was $370,000.

The students were very eager for this building and assessed themselves $5.00 a semester until $90,000 had been paid. The vote on this was 19 to one in favor of the assessment.

The color consultant was Mr. Arthur T. Norman of A. T. Norman Company and he was also the consultant on the furnishings. George McMaster was Clerk of the Works.

In the total design of the building, I constantly reminded the architects that the building had to have modified Tudor aspects, it had to have beauty both inside and out, and I was very eager that the larger dining room be in the form of a "great hall". I was also very eager that the building have color and imagination to make it beautiful. We spent considerable time, for instance, on the design of the chimney of the giant fireplace which is located in the "great hall". Also, it has the tradition of being like the castles in Eng-
land.

In the bidding, Strom Construction Company had put in a primary bid of $637,460.10; Addeo Plumbing had bid $162,377.60, and Connors Electric bid $135,854.77. These contractors were good people with whom to work.

There was considerable adjustment ultimately in the air conditioning and also in the heat, because evidently the controls were very sophisticated and it was six months before we actually got them adjusted properly.

I recall that just about ten minutes before the bid opening we received two very urgent telephone calls--Anderson Construction Company had left out $88,000 of kitchen equipment. I knew John Anderson very well and he was very eager that their total bid be deleted. The Bay Company had left out $79,341 of mechanical controls which they had forgotten to put in. Both of those bids were disallowed and action taken by the Board of Trustees to authorize this.

In the allocation of space, we planned an upstairs lounge which had 6510 square feet in it with the understanding that small meetings of students and town meetings could be held there, as well as certain receptions by the Alumni Association, etc. This has proven to be very satisfactory and helpful.

We had been visited by Saga, a food service organization, and they very frankly wanted to handle our food service. We investigated this possibility at some length and found that one of the ways they handled the service was to
tell how much the cost of board would be each year and the University would lose control of that factor, so we decided we would do our own pricing and we could probably manage it as well as Saga. However, in the negotiations, Saga people said they had been used as consultants in the construction of many student centers and would be happy to be the consultants for our student center without fee. We asked them to design the student center kitchen and they did this. They designed an island surrounded by the dining rooms and they recommended 7135 square feet. I am not sure that the Saga design was the best that we could have secured, although we talked to a good many specialists in the food service business. We had the fine work of Mrs. Chessman, who was our food manager at that time. She had been a professional in her own right.

We had a faculty dining room of 2000 square feet. Later it was made into the area for student services and counseling and the Dean of Students offices.

We conferred at length with the sororities and had each one design the interior of their room and choose the colors they would like, screens, carpeting and other components of their room. They have seemingly enjoyed these rooms very much through the years.

When the student center was being built, it forced the University to make certain other decisions; for instance, we found that we were on six or seven major transformers all over the campus--when a building had
been built a new transformer had been put in and we were charged for
a service at each transformer. We went to the City and asked to be allowed
to have one major transformer and one billing charge for the entire Uni-
versity rather than six or seven. This took considerable negotiation and
we finally got an E2 rate and we have saved about $7,000 to $8,000 a year
on electricity ever since. It was necessary, however, for the University
to pay $16,300 to buy from the City all their electric equipment which was
on the campus.

It also forced the University to think in terms of a heating plant. We
had expanded the heating plant previously by putting in a larger boiler
in the boiler room in Howarth Hall. When we added Tenzler Hall and the
student center in the same year, it was necessary for us to add another
boiler, a high pressure boiler, to take care of these two extra buildings.
The estimate to revamp the heating plant was $104,000 but actually, when
it was completed and the new lines installed, it cost $181,000.

In order to get proper and adequate water supply, we also had to
revamp the water connections. There had been many water connections
and again there was a charge on each meter making the cost excessive.
We decided, then, through the Building Committee and the Executive
Committee of the Board of Trustees and the best engineering advice we
could get, to put in a water grid which would come in off of Eleventh Street
and then go into a square, so that it would cover all phases of the University for its future.

There was a hill off of Eleventh Street which reached down into the then football field area and a master meter was installed there, which since the leveling off of the hill is probably 15 to 20 feet below level, although if I remember correctly the City put an extension on so that the water meter can be read without too great a difficulty.

This grid went straight north from in front of the field house, past the athletic field, past the Women's Gymnasium, tied into the swimming pool, then branched to the right and also to the left, picked up the men's dormitories, to Howarth Hall, past McIntyre Hall, the girls' dormitory quadrangle, over to the music building, past the area of Thompson Hall and into the area of the President's Residence. This was a six-inch line so the pressure would be excellent in all buildings.

When the President's residence was built, a two-inch line was taken off this water line into the residence and that is one of the reasons for excellent water pressure there.

It was installed so that the addition to the library could be added, as well as the chapel and the additions of Langdon and Schiff Halls. It also gave very fine pressure at the student center and at Kittredge Hall. There is adequate amount of pressure for any number of future buildings
the University might have.

All of these things—the street closing, electrical development, water and heating development—were all spinoffs of the fact that we had reached the absolute ultimate capacity in these areas so that it was necessary for some basic renovation. I never have stopped to figure what it cost but it must have cost at least a half million dollars to structure the utilities. This was, of course, before we kept adding buildings and before it was necessary to take the heating plant out of Howarth Hall and build the heating plant building south of the field house.

**Peggy Strong Murals**

Several years before we talked about building the student center, Mrs. Walter Walkinshaw came to me and said that the Junior League had the Peggy Strong murals—The Blue Ox and Paul Bunyan—and wondered if there were any place at the University where they could be displayed. Peggy Strong had been commissioned by the Junior League to paint the murals for the depot. They had been displayed there during the War for the benefit of the soldiers.

Peggy Strong had been a student of Mrs. Gordon Alcorn (Rowena) and she was considered to be an outstanding artist. While a young girl on her way east to study art, she had a serious accident when a tire blew out. Miss Strong was so severely injured that she was paralyzed and spent the rest of her life in a wheelchair. For the painting of the murals at the railroad
station, a special scaffold was built so that she could be raised and lowered.

When we were ready to design the building, I asked the architect to design a place for the Peggy Strong murals, so the Blue Ox was located over the door leading out of the "Great hall" and the painting of Paul Bunyan was hung over the fireplace. These are very beautiful murals and they lend a considerable amount of atmosphere to the Great Hall because of the "logger" motif of the University.

When we were ready to unveil the murals at a special ceremony on February 7, 1960, by some strange quirk of circumstance, I felt that I must check everything. The murals were covered, to be unveiled at a designated moment in the program. On checking the murals, I noticed that under the first covering was a second covering, which must have been put there during the night. Here was a big sign which read, "Welcome, Phi Delta Theta." We removed the second covering and left the original one there. When the ropes were pulled and the murals unveiled, many of the Phi Delta Thetas, who were on the balcony with their cameras, could not conceal their disappointment! We never said anything to them and they never admitted anything to us, but it was an interesting sidelight!

On the program for the unveiling, Dr. Harold Long gave the invocation, and the Madrigals sang. Dr. William Tolley, President of Syracuse and my mentor many years ago when I first started in university administration, gave the main address. (Vice President Nixon had been invited but could not come.)
The base log was brought in which was a Yule log and a branding iron was used to burn in the freshman class year. The students asked me to light the first fire, which pleased me very much, but I deferred to the men of Todd Hall.

Each year since that time the freshman class at the special Christmas ceremony has branded its class number in the log and the men of Todd Hall have performed the ceremony of bringing in the log and lighting the fire, carrying on the tradition. Dick Waterman was Student Body President at the first ceremony and he was very much interested in establishing traditions in connection with the student center.

Mrs. Rod Titcomb was chairman of the committee to select the furnishings. She and the committee, working with Art Norman, rendered outstandingly fine service. The furnishings cost $35,000 the first time around, and we have added to the furnishings on many occasions after its dedication on February 7, 1960. Mrs. Titcomb was a member of the Board of Trustees at that time and ultimately left the University $100,000 for its development fund.

We had some ticklish situations that had to be worked out. There was a question of whether or not the tax commission would force us to pay basic taxes and we had to sign a statement that the student center would operate for the University only.

The student center has been of great service to the University.
It has been used for receptions, meetings, banquets, annual conference and the Council of Bishops of the Methodist Church in special session, student campaigns and elections, and a myriad of other meetings. I do not know how we could ever have existed without it. It is a beautiful building, with a sense of dignity; yet it is practical. It was exceedingly wise that we did not scale down the building, as suggested by the Housing and Home Agency because it would have been too small when we moved in.

I had always anticipated that we would add a dining room that would have considerable window space in it in the area of what is now the parking lot. We bought the house next to it and tore it down so that we would have parking space and if necessary we could add a wing on the student center to make a much larger dining facility. It was also our thought that if we got an option on the house owned by Reverend and Mrs. Niwa and on the one built by Mr. Gary Thompson, ultimately, we could finish out the block and allow us room for an expansion factor.

It was a joy to work with Richard Waterman, Miss Engebretsen, with the Building Committee, and, of course, Richard Wasson rendered outstanding service as Chairman of the Building Committee.

It is a pleasure to have the Student Center in modified Tudor in keeping with the architecture of the campus and to have its beauty, usefulness and its potential.

R. Franklin Thompson

May 23, 1978