COMMENCEMENT BAY CAMPUS

With the coming of heavy enrollment in 1968 and 1969, the University had many more students attending than could be housed on the campus. While searching for additional housing, it was discovered that the old Fredrick Weyerhaeuser home on the bluff overlooking Vashon Island was available for rent. For some time after the Frederick Weyerhaeusers were deceased, the house had remained unoccupied. At the time it was available for rent, it was owned by one of the Catholic orders as a home for its sisters and only six sisters lived there: one who served in the kitchen, one in the library, one to take care of the rooms and three more very elderly sisters. These sisters were all moved to Issaquah when we entered into an agreement to rent the home for $1000 a month plus the upkeep.

We called it the Commencement Bay Campus or CBC, and it provided housing for approximately eighty students. About that time, we had the Honors Program, directed by Dr. Robert Albertson, which was very successful. The decision was made to house the honor students at the Commencement Bay Campus. This arrangement worked out very nicely and the students had some of their classes at CBC and some of them on the main campus. The Commencement Bay Campus had a very excellent dining facility, a huge walk-in refrigerator in the kitchen, a library, and a separate hall for the classrooms. This housing arrangement provided a kind of unity among the Honors Students and a spirit of an educational adventure.
While we were not at all abashed by the rental fee of $1,000 a month, the upkeep was another matter. We found the upkeep amounted to somewhere between $4,000 and $5,000 a month, because the lead pipe in the plumbing was in very poor condition as well as the heating and many other aspects. We became anxious to return all of the students to the main campus as soon as we could, so we began to plan for additional dormitories.

The Weyerhaeuser home is a copy of Haddon Hall in England. Mrs. Weyerhaeuser had had it copied fifty or seventy-five years before. It was a unique structure. In the interim between the time when the Weyerhaeusers owned the home and the Catholic Order rented it, it was owned by a man who had a series of grocery stores. He had two sons and his wife was mortally afraid that the sons might be kidnapped because they lived in the house. She had some secret doors and secret stairways installed. Of course, it was a great lark for the students to knock on panels and open secret doors and go down secret stairways into unusual passages, which was the escape route.

The Catholic Order wanted to sell the property to us and wanted $75,000 for the house. They had built a chapel for which they wanted $100,000 and a hall named St. Paul's Hall which had classrooms, a library, kitchen and dining room; the total amount asked was about $650,000. We thought the value was more like $100,000.

When the Sisters said they wanted $650,000, I told them we would give $100,000 cash for it, right now. The Sister nearly fainted but I told her
the University was the only one who could buy it.

The home now houses an unaccredited Baptist seminary but I do not know any of the fiscal arrangements.

This was an unusual facility in a beautiful location and the students who stayed at the Commencement Bay Campus will always remember it as an unusual adventure in their educational career.

R. Franklin Thompson
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