STORY ABOUT THE PEGGY STRONG MURALS
IN THE STUDENT CENTER

A number of years ago, Peggy Strong, an artist here in the Tacoma area, was in an automobile accident and was paralyzed from the waist down. During the War, she painted the Paul Bunyon murals and they were placed in a special alcove in the depot to be an inspiration to the soldiers coming and going from Fort Lewis.

After the War was over, the murals were taken down and the Junior League secured them. They looked around for a place to put them and finally gave them to the University of Puget Sound, with the understanding that we would use them somewhere on the campus.

We knew that we would be constructing a new student center sometime after the War was over; however, how quickly it would come we were not aware. The murals were in storage and were exhibited from time to time in art shows and other things of like nature.

There was considerable pressure from the Junior League for us to use them in Jones Hall or some other place. I kept telling them we would have a place designed specially for them.

When we drew the plans for the student center, we designed the fireplace for the one mural and the west wall for the other one. These have had considerable recognition and have been very much appreciated and we were very happy to have them placed on our campus.

When it came time for the dedication and we had the Junior League
here and many special guests, the murals, of course, were covered with wrapping paper. At a strategic moment, they were to be unveiled for the public.

I had a haunting feeling that something was not right about the whole situation and so about an hour or two before the event, I went over to check out the details. Imagine my very great surprise when I lifted the wrapping paper which covered the mural which is 20 to 30 feet square and found another set of wrapping paper underneath, with the wording, "Welcome to Unveiling--Phi Delta Theta"! This would have been exposed at the unveiling if I had not found it. Of course, the mural was unharmed and inside the fraternity wrapping.

We pulled out the welcome from Phi Delta Theta and put it in the fireplace and burned it and replaced the outer wrapping.

Imagine the great consternation of a great many boys who had their cameras focused on the mural from the balustrade on the second floor when we unveiled the mural and their welcome sign was gone and only the mural was visible.

The boys never said anything about it nor did I --and I haven't to this day.

R. Franklin Thompson
circa 1970