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# **BULLETIN**

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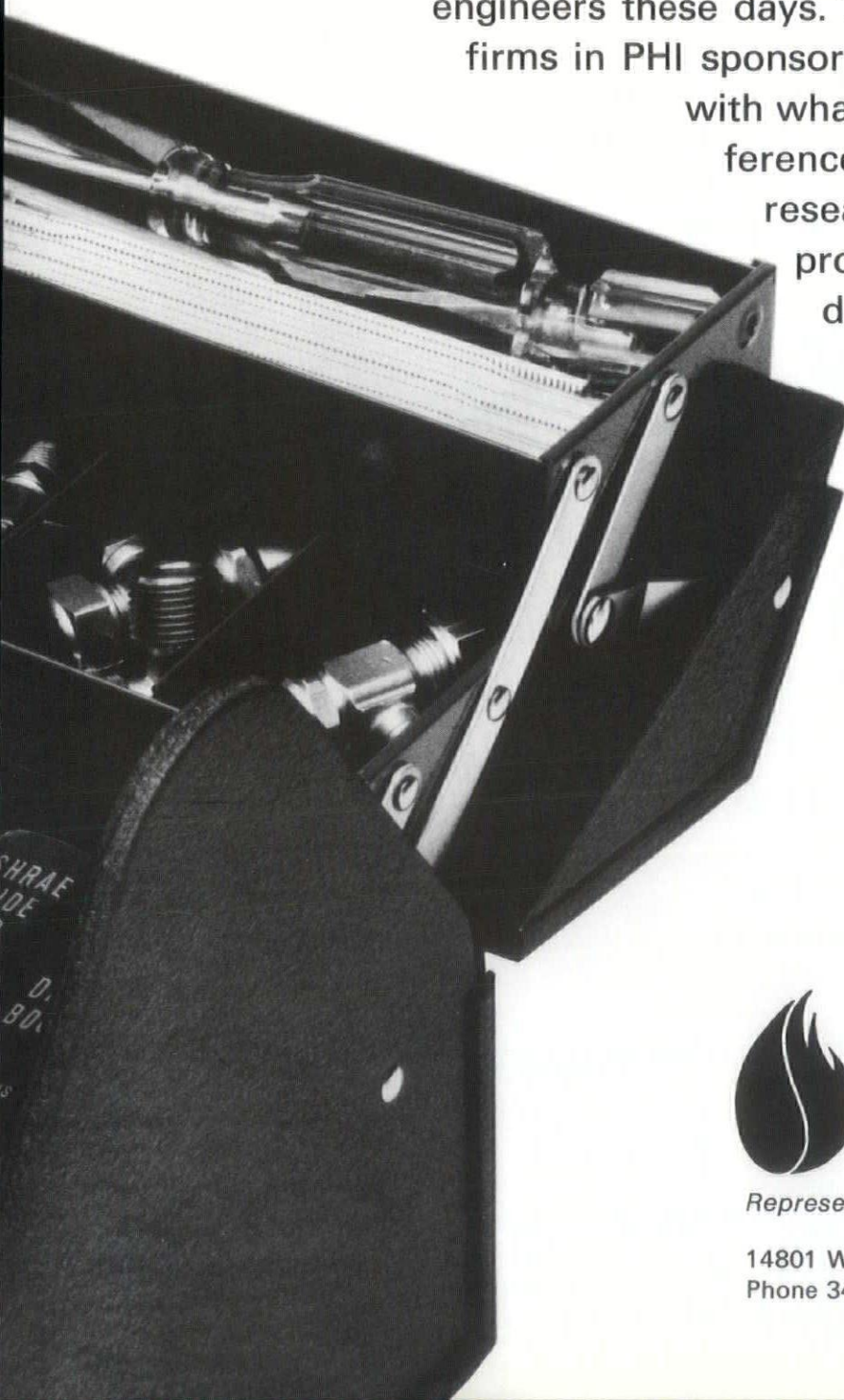
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# BULLETIN

Volume 47

Number 5

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In this issue the Bulletin presents an open discussion of construction industry problems, exploring the relationships between the design professional, the general contractor, the ceramic tile contractor, and the ceramic industry representative. This special article was produced in cooperation with the Great Lakes Ceramic Tile Council.

Prior to the meeting four general topics for discussion were issued for study by the participants.

Topic #1. What is an ideal working relationship between the architect, the general contractor, the industry representative and the ceramic tile contractor?

Topic #2. What information is necessary to better understand the nature of ceramic products?

Topic #3. Why are so many ambiguous specifications written for tile work?

Topic #4. Why has the designer been so quick to accept substitute materials in place of ceramic products?

## The Participants Are



**Richard Barrett;** Sales Representative, American Olean Tile Company; seventeen years architectural service based in the southeastern Michigan Distribution Center. American Olean is the largest domestic manufacturer of ceramic tiles; the introduction of four new products within the last three years underscores A-O's reputation as an innovator in the industry.



**Fred H. Blackwood;** President, Beaver Distributors, Inc., Royal Oak, Michigan; established in 1964, distributors of Florida and Summitville Tiles and other lines. Mr. Blackwood is a member and past president of the Michigan Chapter, Producers' Council and a member of the Construction Specifications' Institute, the Builders' Exchange, and the Metropolitan Detroit Builders' Association. He has been an architectural representative for eighteen years.



**Philip J. Meathe, F.A.I.A.;** President, Smith, Hinchman and Grylls Associates, Inc.; Detroit; as operational officer of one of the largest design firms in the United States, Mr. Meathe has direct control over all corporate divisions, disciplines and development. He has been president of the Detroit Chapter A.I.A. and a director of the Michigan Society of Architects and the American Institute of Architects.



**John Monahan;** President, Edward V. Monahan Company; Detroit; a long-established, general contracting firm specializing in institutional construction. Current projects include additions to Grosse Pointe's Bon Secours and Cottage Hospitals and St. John's Hospital in Detroit. Completed projects include the \$4 million dollar Temple Baptist Church and Sunday School in Redford Township and the new Bundy Tubing Office Center in Warren.



**\*E. C. Mularoni;** "Bud" is President of Boston Tile and Terrazzo Company, founded 1923 by his father, Hubert Mularoni. He is Vice President and a Trustee of the Great Lakes Ceramic Tile Council; a director and officer of the Detroit Ceramic Tile Contractors' Association and chairman of its Commercial Workmanship Committee; he also serves as Vice President of the Detroit Marble Association. Projects completed by Boston Tile include Metro Airport, the Oakland County Law Enforcement Complex, the Dearborn Veteran's Hospital, the Detroit City-County Building, and the Ponchatrain Hotel.



**Louis Palombit;** Owner, Plaombit Tile Company, founded 1935. Chairman, Board of Trustees, Great Lakes Ceramic Tile Council; Mr. Palombit has served as president and director of the Tile Contractors' Association of America and as president of the Detroit Ceramic Tile Contractors' Association; he is a director of DCTCA. Projects completed by his firm include the Northville State Hospital, the University North Campus, and the General Motors Technical Center.



**Louis A. Rossetti;** "Gino" is President and principal stockholder of Rossetti/Associates Incorporated; Detroit; a firm engaged in the fields of architecture, planning and engineering. Mr. Rossetti has served as executive architect and principal in the design of many large institutional, commercial and residential housing projects. Recent work includes the 18-story Robbins Tower in Southfield; Southfield Athletic Club; the Park Lane Towers, part of the Ford Fairlane Development in Dearborn; United Air Lines Reservation Center; and the Orchard Ridge Campus of Oakland Community College in Farmington. Mr. Rossetti is a member of the National Public Relations Committee of the A.I.A.; a member of the Union of International Architects.



**Dominic Rossi;** Vice President, Darin and Armstrong, Inc.; Detroit; in charge of Construction Operations for one of America's largest general contracting firms. He has served as president of the Detroit Chapter, Associated General Contractors, and continues as a member of the Board; he has been president of the Concrete Improvement Board and has been a director of the American Concrete Institute. He is a member of the Construction Specifications Institute and serves on the Construction Industry Advisory Board of Lawrence Institute of Technology as well as the Board of Trustees Institute for Construction Management of the Builders Exchange of Detroit.

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*Q. What is an ideal working relationship between the architect, the general contractor, the industry representative, and the ceramic tile contractor?*

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**ROSSI:** We have to consider the climate of our industry; there's a change of atmosphere, a change of attitude on the part of labor, a change of attitude on the part of the general contractor, the sub contractors and the architects. Today's labor realizes this, and, the contractor realizes that we're going to solve the problem of productivity and increasing wages by talking to each other rather than by standing on ceremonies.

The problems between the general contractor and the sub contractor involve the tile contractor. Because of certain grievances that affect our whole operation we have to find some ways and means by conversations and meetings to remove these grievances. What are these? Grievances about degree of performance, the schedules, etc. The sub contractors in turn have grievances because of the problem of back charges and a number of other things that have to be resolved before we can improve the climate.

There's a problem of the relationship between the architect and the contractor. We think that there is a number of inequities in existing specifications that have to be resolved. Until those things are resolved, the relationship will be somewhat strained. You're always arguing about different things and that's time consuming. That affects production.

I think that in our own association we have started something along these lines by meeting with subcontractors, by meeting with architects and trying to resolve these problems.



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*Q. What information is necessary to better understand the nature of ceramic products?*

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**MEATHE:** The working relationships basically are good. I think a breakdown can occur when any one of the parties, the architect, the general contractor, or the sub, tries to cheat on his responsibility.

**MODERATOR: HOW DO YOU MEAN THAT?**

**MEATHE:** By improperly planned specifications, improper supervision of the project, improper installation of the product.

**BARRETT:** So far this conversation has involved the architect and general contractor; I'm interested in the responsibilities of the industry representative. Some architects have given the impression that industry's representation has not been adequate, that reps in general are not technically attuned to the architects' problems.

**MEATHE:** We feel that many product salesmen are simply order takers. They're not technically qualified to speak about the product. Nor are they qualified to say when not to use the product. The tile contractors have an installation guide which should be referred to. You should make certain that the information given in this book is used.

**BARRETT:** The Tile Council develops this book (the Tile Council Installation Guide) in conjunction with the Tile Con-

tractors Association. Now, it may be that there is a lack of communication somewhere.

**PALOMBIT:** Cooperative development of this Guide between the contractors and manufacturers began in 1959; before that time it was impossible for a tile contractor to present his views. There have been many changes since then; now contractors can live with the Guide; it's a useful book! It's a good guideline for today's installations.

**BLACKWOOD:** This guide is updated every year; the Tile Council will accept for review any recommendations for change. It's the only Guide that we have in the industry; it's valuable at the architect, contractor and the manufacturer level. And it sure beats what is available in the Federal Specifications which so many specs are based upon today.

**ROSSETTI:** Let's review the first thrust of the question, asking what is the ideal working relationship? I don't believe the ideal working relationship between the architect and the ceramic tile contractor is any different than any other sub contractor. We expect industry representatives to provide accurate up-to-date information about the product, including advantages and disadvantages.

Mr. Meathe pointed to the disadvantages that most of us

the information which is provided to develop his contract document; following that, the contractor has his responsibilities to develop the contract document, reflecting economic advantages during bidding—hopefully; and product advantages during construction. Your question here is, “is the ceramic tile industry’s problem different from that of any other building product?”

**MULARONI:** Is there any way we can put “teeth” into these bidding documents to make them more binding?

**MEATHE:** How do you prevent a guy who has no more than a wheel barrow and a shovel from becoming a general contractor?

**MULARONI:** It’s difficult!

**MEATHE:** How do you prevent an apprentice from opening up a tile company?

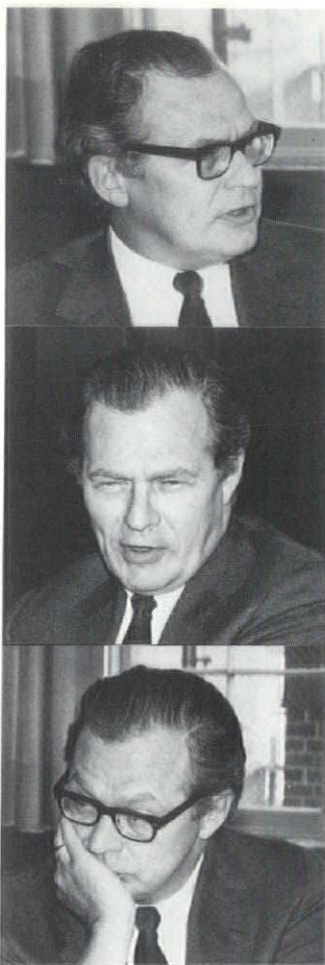
**MULARONI:** There’s no way. The only thing you can do is to set up certain standards whether they be in specifications or something else; as an architect, when you got that unqualified contractor in your job, its going to cost you much more time and effort to make sure that he does follow your specifications. But, close, accurate policing is the only way you can get him to improve his methods.

**ROSSETTI:** The undesirable may not be a newcomer.

**MULARONI:** I’ll admit that; oldtime contractors may have new management. But, once you’ve set up documents that spell out what you want, I think it should be enforced a little bit more that what it is now.

**ROSSETTI:** I agree with you; the architect should specify what he means and mean what he specifies.

**MULARONI:** And then, make damn sure he gets it!



**BARRETT:** One area all manufacturers representatives would agree on is that the architects should determine what they want from a job and stick to it. An architect should look at an “or equal” very carefully. The sub contractor should respect the architect’s specification of “equal” standards.

**MEATHE:** “Or equal” is a vital problem! Since ninety percent of today’s building projects are supported by federal money in some way, shape or form, it’s almost prohibitive to maintain a closed “spec”.

**BARRETT:** What you’re saying is that you have to name three or four manufacturers and accept anyone, or even an outside bid.

**MEATHE:** The only thing not built with federal money today might be industrial plants shopping centers or a speculative office building.

**MONAHAN:** You know, Phil, in point of fact, you might say this about contractors: with a bid list of eight contractors, they are supposed to be bidding equally, but no two of them are exactly equal in capabilities. When everyone says to the architect, “you have to keep these guys shaped up”, it’s an unfair burden to put on him.

**ROSSI:** In the drift of this conversation, do I interpret you to include the “final installation?”

**MEATHE:** We don’t have problems with good contractors; we don’t have problems with good subs; with these kind of people there are no major problems we can’t solve.

**ROSSI:** Let me throw this out: judging the quality of the work, how do you put in the confines of what is possible and what is impossible? How are you going to specify that quality? Even with some of our finest tile contractors, we’ve had problems to get the architect to accept the quality of certain work.

Consider the different methods of installation: mortar, thin-set, epoxy; there are many factors that determine whether that wall looks okay or not—such as lighting, and what else, and still, we are wrangling every time. How many times have I been called in to hear the architect say, “I’m not happy with this tile work?” The question always arises, “how can quality be spelled in the specifications?”

**MULARONI:** You’re right; many cases, it can’t be.

**PALOMBIT:** Right, there are many different methods to specify installations. Once there was only the mortar methods; right or wrong, there was only one proper method of installation. Then, along came the many different forms of thin-set: organic and inorganic, epoxies and various other types.

This creates many other problems. In certain situations where I have three walls of tile, some generals will give two perfect walls, and I have to say I don’t want the other one! It’s not

plumb; the previous trade hasn’t given me a proper surface on which to mount tile within the 1/8-inch allowed variation. But I can’t expect that the architectural firm has enough time to properly police the job. However, my trade finishes the job, if I’m off measurement, even if it’s not my fault, it becomes my problem.

Let’s talk about expansion joints. In our tile trade, our men are not qualified to put in expansion joints; they really don’t understand the principles; and yet, in almost every other specification we find an expansion strip, supposedly a polysulfide, or words that we don’t even understand the meaning of, let alone know the application!

**MEATHE:** Do you think expansion joints should be part of the structure?

**PALOMBIT:** We’re masonry contractors; expansion joints should be put into caulking specifications where they belong.

**ROSSI:** Louis, before you bid a job, you know whether this tile is going to be laid up against a cement block wall, or up against a finished plaster wall, or whatnot; would you say that when tile is laid up against a cement block wall, you’re not going to give the same workmanship you would if it was against a plaster wall? Then, if you don’t expect to give as good a quality, something has to be telegraphed to the architect that this condition exists!

**PALOMBIT:** It’s unfair. Why telegraph it to the architect when he expects a good job to begin with? Yet, you as the mason contractor on the job should recognize that it is your responsibility.



the market. We can't deny that. But, thin-set work as we receive job conditions today does not allow us to put the quality which is expected of a professional tile contractor using trained workmen. And that's downgrading the industry. I feel the manufacturers pushed thin-set because their product was not selling. If they could lower the price of installed tile, they were competitive, but they helped everyone lose their reputation as a quality finishing trade.

**BARRETT:** It's a little incongruous to make a statement like that; the manufacturers obviously want to sell tile. Now, if the ceramic tile trade was being priced out of the market because of material cost, the smallest cost was the labor factor. So, the manufacturers, in conjunction with the Tile Contractors Association tried to develop new methods whereby we would reduce the cost of the installation and still give a good job!

I believe the industry has done it!

**ROSSI:** Would you say that the industry has reduced the installation costs?

**BARRETT:** Yes, no doubt about it!

**Rossi:** Then, I'd like to ask the architects this kind of a question: thinking about the matter of quality, in the instance of putting thin-set tile against cement block against a finished wall. Tile has different purposes, you have tilework in factory buildings, and you have tilework in designer installations. Why doesn't the architect differentiate by expecting a certain degree of quality in a factory building, and, in the institutional building, a different degree of quality?

**ROSSETTI:** Louis, I take exception to that. Any tile job that I've seen on a block wall in this area is diaster! It should be in the interest of tile industry to make it perfectly clear to the architect what the shortcomings of thin-set installation on block walls are.

**PALOMBIT:** The architect should say in his specifications, whether it's a cinder block or cement block wall, that the wall must be "trued up", prior to the application of tile.

**MEATHE:** Well, why did we take the mud off the wall in the first place?

**MULARONI:** Simple; to reduce the cost. But, how can we show the architect and the general contractor that the method of thin-set rather than mortar does not provide the same quality of installation.

**MEATHE:** What have you done about saying it?

**MULARONI:** What have we done? We as contractors have fought against it. Thin-set didn't put any more work in the contractors' files.

**MEATHE:** Didn't it make more jobs available?

**MULARONI:** It didn't allow us to get into certain jobs where we were being priced out of

**MEATHE:** First of all, until today I haven't heard the tile industry say that I'm going to get a different degree of quality.

**MULARONI:** I think what Dominic and I are objecting to is having the burden of quality put on our masons and cement finishers. I don't think that's quite fair!

**ROSSETTI:** Let's go back to the discussion about changes in specifications. I can't speak for other offices, but many of the specification changes we make are unfortunately after we got a bloody nose.

The overriding statement for all the four questions that are posed to us today is that it is dependent upon the tile contractor to tell us what are the good and bad uses for the material. Tile is not a "serve-all" product for any number of things.

In industrial use there are definite applications that you would not write in your specifications unless you can back them up; applications that would be different from what is expected in an O.R. Suite in a hospital, for example. I think it is very important that the tile industry make it very clear what subsurface problems exist. Then, this refers to what Phil mentioned a little bit ago, there are too many people out in the tile industry selling tile that don't know what they're talking about.

**MEATHE:** In the February MSA Bulletin, there is an article about "tile over tile". Who recommends that? I'll bet that there are many architects who think that this is a new gimmick. Personally, I've heard too many tile men say you can never tile over tile. You have to remove the material and start all over again "from scratch". If I can get a guarantee that'll hold, I'll give somebody three bathrooms right now! Give me a guarantee for twenty-five years!

**MULARONI:** A twenty-five year guarantee!

**MEATHE:** I could get that guarantee on a mud job, if we take off the old surface and start again from the studs.

**PALOMBIT:** If you had a corridor of soft glazed tile in a school, for instance, and it was

marred and you wanted to dress it up; if it was even and didn't need bullnoses, the tileman could apply thin-set and give you a complete new corridor. But, it all depends upon the present installation. Without the knowledge of the condition of the present subsurface, it's impossible to give you a "twenty-five year" guarantee.

**MULARONI:** That article refers to tiling over a presently tiled surface, one that has been in for fifty or more years. Those walls are probably plumb and true; there might be some structural cracks, but the tile probably isn't falling off the wall. Under those conditions, a contractor could guarantee a tiling over tile installation. But, he can't guarantee any work over unsound walls.

**MEATHE:** Well, I think it's a marketing gimmick!

**BLACKWOOD:** I can't buy that.

**BARRETT:** The industry has installed untold numbers of tile over tile installations. Two large installations in Chicago come to mind—the Palmer House and the Conrad Hilton, and one in Detroit, the Hilton downtown; these are excellent successful examples of the technique. These prove that it's not a gimmick. It's a question of development of new type adhesives that will enable the job to be done.

What I think you're saying, Phil, is that you don't think there's a mastic that will hold the new tile on the old surface.

**BLACKWOOD:** There is absolutely no problem with today's mastics.

*Q. Why are so many ambiguous specifications written for tile work?*

**MEATHE:** Obviously, this question is directed at architects.

**BLACKWOOD:** Often tile contractors will describe specs to me that they've read, where they have to make take-offs. In one case they're told that tile shall be installed by "the mortar-method", and several phrases later, the directions read that tile, in the same area, "shall be installed by the thin-set method" as directed by the Tile Council Handbook!

Now, that's an ambiguity, isn't it?

**MEATHE:** If I were a representative of the tile industry and I read a specification that was wrong, or that could be made stronger, I'd say, "here's the proper wording that you should put in specifications".

It's SH&G's practice to ask different industry representatives to review our master specifications for inaccuracies. So, a lot of this "ambiguity" is an educational job on your part I've never seen an architect turn down helpful advice, if it's given in a helpful, constructive manner.

**ROSSETTI:** First, I know that architectural offices often are at fault for writing this type of a specification. But, too often, during bidding, the tile contractors know that there's a problem in the specs and they don't bring it up. I believe they hope to use it later as a gimmick to get out of or to get into something else.

I think for some offices it's a lack of knowledge of product application, or over confidence in the use of the old, standby materials; again, this is a changing industry. I think that there is a lack of concise reference handbooks that outline concise uses, that list advantages and

disadvantages and the economies. And, lastly, I think there is a lack of consistency in various manufacturers data. All of this, helps to bring about that "ambiguity", (plus some sloppiness on the part of our own profession).

**PALOMBIT:** At the same time, if a tile contractor calls your office, Gino, he doesn't talk to you, he talks to your specification writer. There are certain architectural offices that hold evening seminars. Representatives of various industries are invited to speak to the specification and design departments for several hours at a time, and then, to answer questions about technical qualities and installation problems. I don't want to act as an apologist, just because you're here, but it's an impossibility to expect an architect to know each and every detail. There must be many times during bidding when the documents are being read, that suggestions have been made to architectural offices and these suggestions were ignored. What really concerns me about these new methods is that almost every housewife can set tile now; and we have lost a bit of the quality along the way because of it.

**MEATHE:** If you look down the road five years, almost every architect's office in this nation is going to be using computerized specifications. If an unbiased legal representative of your industry would call on architectural offices and say, "we'd like to look at your specifications and update them for the computer", they'd be welcomed with open arms. When you ask the question about ambiguous specifications, I begin to wonder if you really are trying to do anything about the problem.

**MONAHAN:** What has the tile industry done to approach this problem? Have you attempted to reach the architects?

**BLACKWOOD:** This tile industry Handbook is one example. It's an insert in the Sweet's catalogs. It's generally accurate and is updated every year. Now, if the specification was written with the direction that the in-

stallation shall be made in accordance with "Section Number XXX" as written in the current TCA Guide, the architect would find that his spec has better teeth than if he wrote that the same installation shall be made in accordance with the simplified practice spec dated 1959 by the Department of Commerce. Those government specs are about as ambiguous as anything ever written.

Every architectural office should realize that the TCA specs may be copied.

**BARRETT:** These specs refer to established national standards.

**BLACKWOOD:** If the Handbook were followed, there would be a lot more accurate specifications written.

**MEATHE:** What has your industry done about seeing whether our master specs comply with it?

**BLACKWOOD:** We see your masters very seldom.

**MEATHE:** Why?

**BLACKWOOD:** That's a good question. Barrett and I, in our rounds, will give this Guide to specifications people, but they hardly ever refer to it. Very often when there's a problem, we hear the statement, "we'll correct our specs on the next job!"

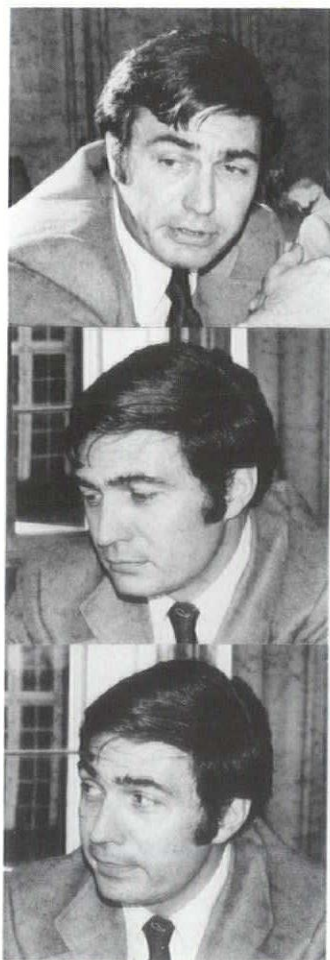
**MEATHE:** Do you stop there?

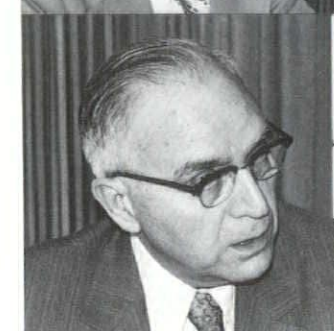
**BLACKWOOD:** Phil, we can't push too hard on our clients.

**BARRETT:** If you're not stand there, looking over his shoulder, you have to believe that when a spec writer says, "they'll be changed on the next job", the specs will be changed.

**MEATHE:** Let me ask you about our own specs. Are they correct?

**BLACKWOOD:** I'd say that the specs in most of the large firms are correct, although there are some notable exceptions. We have more problems with the medium and smaller-size firms; some keep grinding out the same old incorrect specification. That's a very real problem!





**MEATHE** Well, if our spec is wrong, and you have not brought it to our attention then you've done us a serious injustice!

**BLACKWOOD:** Then, every-time a spec is wrong we should call the president.

**MEATHE:** What I'm saying is that, if there is something wrong and you can't get it corrected through the normal course, you do me an injustice by not bringing it to my attention.

**BLACKWOOD:** I repeat, we can only push so hard on fellows who do not update their specs. Personalities are involved. Someone is liable to get his nose out of joint. Say, if Barrett called you up to suggest a correction, he might find that his product was taken out of the spec.

**ROSSETTI:** Certainly you have to use some judgement in getting this done, but I'll tell you, you'll get taken out of a spec faster if I think you know there's something wrong and still don't tell me about it.

**MULARONI:** Look at the sub contractor's problem: we're bidding the job and are under the gun to get these figures ground out and submitted to the general within the next few hours so that a finalized bid can be submitted. When we find an ambiguity in the spec, we'll call for clarification and get the typical response, "well, use your own judgement; do it the best way possible".

**BLACKWOOD:** Very few offices take the time to detail exactly what the pattern and color should be; very few take the time to write a concise specification. Put yourself in the place of the tile contractor. He reads "Floor tile shall be porcelain, 1 x 1, 1 x 2, or 2 x 2; colors and patterns to be selected by the architect".

At tile contractor's cost, this presents a range from forty-four to ninety-five cents per square foot! What's he going to select? A Group 2-2x2, or a Group 1-1x1 in natural clay?

**ROSSETTI:** Now, you're bringing up something that really rankles my socks. One of the biggest faults not only with your industry, but others as well, is that you don't pay any

attention to the project when it's in design. You may or may not show up during design, but you're always there at bid time. I have pleaded with all the product industries to come in during design and discuss the intent of the project. We'll rewrite anything, if we are wrong, or if we can make a better design for our clients. Maybe, by knocking out this "ambiguity" the cost range won't be forty-four to ninety-five, but we might make it forty-four to fifty-two cents per square foot.

Most often you come in after the fact, or during bidding with this "red-hot" information, and by then, you're the last person in the world we want to see. We have a lot more problems than to worry about what you're bringing up at this late date.

Some of my best friends will call up and say, "what's new?" I'll tell them what's new; who to see and why. They may or may not follow it up until it's on the shelf over at Builders' and Traders', and then they'll come in with some very intelligent remark.

**ROSSI:** Now, please, as architects and tile contractors, can you tell me what the general contractor can do to alleviate some of these problems?

**BLACKWOOD:** One thing that hasn't been touched on yet has a lot to do with the quality on any given job. In any trade, there's a renegade who jumps in and bids cheap, trying to make a fast buck and then get out. Don't you have a ready source of credit information for checking on contractors? The several commercially-oriented tile distributors in this area continually see cheap substitute tile pushed on the architect by guys that aren't going to pay for the material anyway.

How do some of these unqualified contractors get approved for some of the jobs they get? People that can't go to the commercial distributors to buy tile get approved by general contractors to do some of the very biggest jobs. How? Why? Can't you make credit checks to find out which tile contractors are responsible? I have had only one call in the seven years I've been in business! This causes annoying lapses in quality. The legitimate tile

contractor has to compete with the renegade.

**ROSSI:** I'd like to answer that in this manner: as far as financial responsibility is concerned, in our organization, even though we use a contractor that we haven't done much business with before, if he comes in with a low figure, in today's competitive market you can't afford to avoid that figure. We check his credit rating.

If it's alright, even though we don't know this fellow's reputation, we take a chance and we give him the job. Then, if we find that he doesn't give us the quality of work that some others have given us in the past, we're in trouble. We may be able to sell the job to the owner, or we may be able to get the tile contractor to tear it down and rebuild it.

**MULARONI:** Why give this guy the job the next time?

**ROSSI:** Again, it's because of the economics. He'll be substantially lower than the next bid again. Our estimator is out to get the job; he'll come in to me and say, "look, what do you think?" What am I going to say, "don't use that tile contractor, even if he's two thousand dollars lower". The estimator is liable to lose his job because we don't get the bid. I might say, "Okay, we know what kind of work this guy does, we'll just have to supervise him more carefully".

**PALOMBIT:** That never works!

**ROSSI:** It's just a matter of economics.

**PALOMBIT:** Is this situation of economics? Take the case of a tile contractor we all know about. His bid is accepted for a large institutional job where the installation must be set in epoxy with epoxy joints. He doesn't know how to use epoxy! He tries to do the job and finally, the architect, in desperation, throws him off the job and calls my firm in. At the same time, he's milked the job. He made money on it and now

he's out of it. Then, on top of this experience, the same unqualified contractor gets another institutional job—and the same thing happens! Another tile contractor has to be called in to finish the job! The general contractor calls up and says, "can you help me?" Now, there's a 25 thousand dollar overrun. Where's the economy?

**BLACKWOOD:** Don't you think a simple credit check will help prevent this from happening?

**ROSSI:** It isn't always a credit problem.

**ROSSETTI:** Let's talk about another problem, the matter of when the contractor places his orders for tile. Very often, in other products as well as tile, it happens at such a late date that the tile that is delivered is not the real "or equal". Where the designer had two or three options, now he has to face the problem of delivery.

He's dead. None of our clients like to hear us say, "well, the tile isn't the right shade of beige, and we'll have to wait four more weeks to get the right shade". They'll tell you very quickly what to do with your shade of beige. This happens over and over again with some subs that the generals use.

**ROSSI:** For instance, you require samples. Here comes the tile contractor with samples. The architect says, "this isn't what I had in mind". So more samples are submitted. That delays placement of the order, too. Then, once the order is placed, and the tile is delivered, the color coordinator says, "this isn't what I wanted!" But, the responsible general will see that as soon as selections have been made, the order is placed. We'll want the purchase order number and delivery date information from the tile contractor, and if we don't get it, we'll want to know why not! This is how we control the situation. Maybe someone can answer this question: why is the delivery of specials always late? And why are you always running short?

**MULARONI:** Why do we run short of corner pieces, coves and out-corners? It is a difficult situation. It's a problem in our industry. To send a man back to get one piece of tile is very expensive.

We can sit down and study your blueprints and order what we need, even considering breakage and loss, but damn it! when we come to do the job six months later, it isn't the same! There's

it unique. It allows a certain plushness, and discourages people from throwing cigarette butts on the floor.

**MEATHE:** Now, would you put ceramic tile in your living room!

**BARRETT:** I'll predict that within the next five years a lot more ceramic material will be installed in living rooms than you can imagine now. Not the old one-inch squares, but new

---

### *Q. Why has the designer been so quick to accept substitute materials in place of tile?*

---

a pipe chase thrown in here because "we couldn't fit it in anywhere else".

The tile contractor needs another twenty feet of bullnose, out-corners and cove. We have to contact the local representative and tell him I want x feet of such and such color to match the shipment of three months ago, and I want it right now! The factory has to make it. There's four weeks shot.

**ROSSI:** You're talking about specials, but why are you short on standard sizes?

**MULARONI:** (no comment)

**MEATHE:** There are new products resulting from scientific break-throughs that do make ceramic tile less desirable. The tile industry doesn't have a vested right in all walls, all floors, all countertops, all bathrooms!

Some of the new materials are better than tile, but, then, there are other cases where tile is the only product to use. Consider carpeting. Most of us know about the high school on the eastside that had to tear up their carpeting in less than four years after installation. And yet, the owners thought that the acoustical benefits they gained through its use were so great, they're putting carpeting down again!

**PALOMBIT:** What's the economic advantage of that?

**ROSSETTI:** Carpeting has an acoustical quality, and an environmental quality that makes

products, large-size units, now being introduced to the market. Look at the home and living magazines and you'll see feature homes with nothing but tile throughout using scatter rugs for accent.

Consider the help problem. Even the owner of a \$150 thousand home wants materials to be as maintenance-free as possible because his wife can't find acceptable domestic help.

**ROSSI:** What about the jurisdictional dispute between the tile setter and the brick layer for brick floors? It's been pretty well established that the tile layers method will produce a better floor.

**PALOMBIT:** The tile trade installs anything up to an inch and a quarter of thickness; after that, it's brick masons work.

**ROSSETTI:** We know some of the problems of failures caused by improper application of tile; in other words, the right material installed in the wrong place. Why doesn't the tile rep have enough courage to tell the designer he's making an improper application?

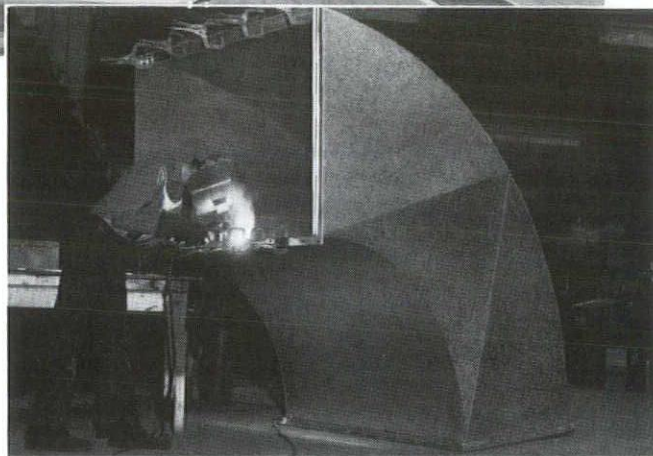
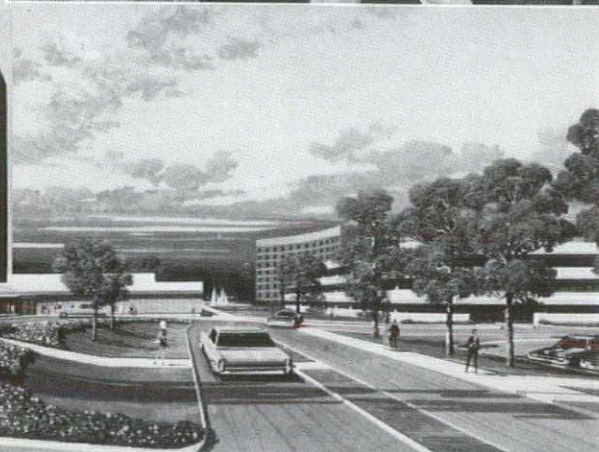
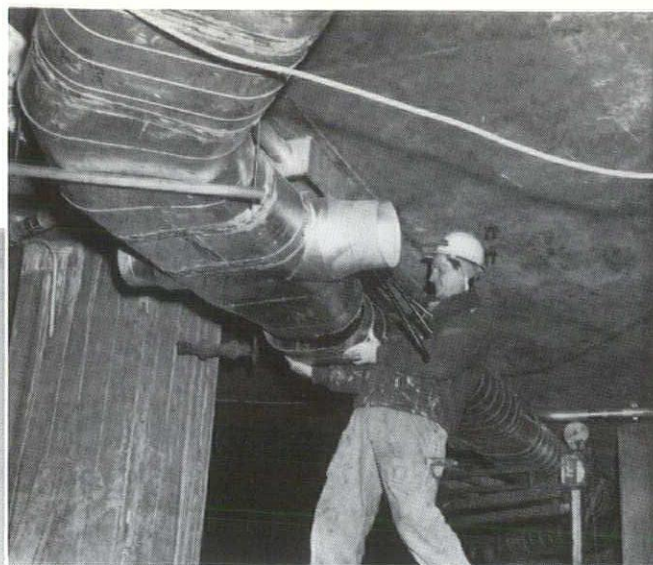
**BARRETT:** I believe Fred and I would.

**ROSSETTI:** All your brothers do not have the same conviction.

**PALOMBIT:** We've had a wide-ranging discussion here today. Hopefully, it will help all of us to understand the others' problems better.

Thank you all for participating.

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Architect & Engineers: Albert Kahn Associates, Detroit.



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## Ken Black on National Advisory Panel



Kenneth C. Black, FAIA, Lansing architect and Chairman of the Lansing Planning Board has been notified by Rod Kreger, acting administrator of the General Services Administration of the United States Government, of his appointment to a two year term on the National Advisory Panel on Architectural Services.

The Advisory Panel, on which there are twelve other architects from various sections of the United States, is chaired by A.F. Sampson, Commissioner of the U.S. Public Buildings Service. The duties of the Panel include advising the General Services Administration concerning criteria for the evaluation and selection of architects for Federal buildings; on details of contractual relationships between the profession and the government; and on design standards and procedures. It also assists the Administration in the selection of architects for the design of nationally significant buildings and makes recommendations to him with respect to the acceptability of designs proposed for individual Federal projects.

Black will bring his background of experience in such matters to his new assignment since he has previously served as president of the Michigan Society of Architects and as a national director to the American Institute of Architects, representing the architects of the states of Michigan, Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky. He was also a member of a national joint council of

architects and engineers which developed contract forms for use between the professions. He served for seven years as a member of the Michigan Planning Commission and has recently completed a three year term as a member of the Michigan Council for the Arts.

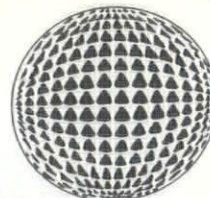
## Winners of 1972 AIA Honor Awards

Nine buildings, including two large performing arts complexes and two structures that convert old buildings into new uses, have been selected to receive the nation's highest awards for architectural excellence, the 1972 Honor Awards of the AIA.

The winners also include a fine arts center, a convention exhibition hall, a small day camp, a corporate headquarters, and a house. They were selected by a jury of five architects and a student representative from 470 entries.

The Honor Awards winners are (architects in parentheses): Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (Edward Larrabee Barnes, FAIA, New York City) Koerfer House, Lago Maggiore, Switzerland (Marcel Breuer and Herbert Beckhard, New York City); Alley Theatre, Houston (Ulrich Franzen, FAIA, Associates, New York City); Mummars theater, Oklahoma City (John M. Johansen, FAIA, New York City); McCormick Place On-the-Lake, Chicago (C.F. Murphy Associates, Chicago); New York State Bar Center, Albany (James Stewart Polshek & Associates, New York City); YM-YWHA Day Camp, Mt. Olive, N.J.; (Claude Samton & Associates, New York City); Weyerhaeuser Headquarters, Tacoma, Wash. (Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, San Francisco); Ice Houses I & II, San Francisco (Wurster, Bernardi and Emmons, Inc., San Francisco).

Jurors for the 1972 AIA Honor Awards Program were: Henry N. Cobb, AIA, Chairman, New York, New York; Antonin Aeck (ASC Representative) Atlanta, Georgia; Gerald L. Allison, FAIA, Hono-



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lulu, Hawaii; John G. Dinkeloo, AIA, Hamden, Connecticut; Harry M. Weese, FAIA, Chicago, Illinois; Harry C. Wolf, AIA, Charlotte, North Carolina; Milton L. Grigg, FAIA, Adviser (Chairman, 1972 Jury), Charlottesville, Virginia.

#### **AIA and Bricklayer's Union Announce Louis Sullivan Award for Architecture**

The "Louis Sullivan Award for Architecture" — a biennial award honoring a practicing U.S. or Canadian architect whose work in masonry exemplifies the ideals and accomplishments of one of America's greatest architects — has been established by the Bricklayers,

Masons & Plasterers International Union.

The award program accompanied by a \$5,000 prize will be administered by the American Institute of Architects.

This is the first national award memorializing Sullivan. Announcement of the award program is being mailed by the AIA to all registered architects practicing in the U.S. and Canada. The first winner of the Louis Sullivan Award will be announced this summer, with presentation at the BM&PIU convention in September.

Architects who wish to be considered for the award must submit photographs and data on at least

three and no more than five completed buildings or complexes in which masonry is a major element. Entry slips must be received by the AIA no later than May 30.

The award winner will be chosen by a five-man jury on the basis of the over-all architectural quality of the submissions, giving emphasis to the use of masonry as a design tool, and to the architect's ability to contribute through his buildings to the improvement of the man-made environment.

Three members of each Sullivan award jury will be chosen by the AIA, and two members will be named by the BM&PIU. Members of the first jury are: Chairman—William W. Caudill, FAIA, Caudill, Rowlett & Scott, Houston; Robert G. Cerny, FAIA, Cerny Associates, Inc., Minneapolis; Ulrich Franzen, FAIA, Ulrich Franzen & Associates, New York City; Statler Gilfillen (student) Kent State University; John T. Joyce, secretary, BM&PIU.

#### **3 Architectural Projects Win Bartlett Awards**

Three architectural projects, nationally honored for their excellence in design, have been selected to receive the 1972 Bartlett Awards in recognition of their accessibility to the physically handicapped. The joint awards of the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped and the American Institute of Architects will be presented May 7 during the AIA Convention in Houston. The architects will receive their awards from Leon Chatelain, Jr., FAIA, who is Chairman of the Committee on Barrier Free Design, a subcommittee of the President's Committee.

The Bartlett Award, named in memory of the late U.S. Senator E.L. Bartlett of Alaska, who successfully legislated for accessibility of Federally funded buildings, is given each year to those AIA Honor Awards winners which in the judgement of a separate jury offer to handicapped persons ease of movement in approaches, entrances, and interior space.

The three projects are: Weyerhaeuser Headquarters in Tacoma, Wash., designed by the firm of Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill, San Francisco; McCormick Place On-

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the-Lake, the fire-damaged lake-front convention center that was reconstructed according to the design of C.F. Murphy Associates of Chicago; and Houston's Alley Theatre, designed to accommodate its distinguished repertory company by the firm of Ulrich Franzen & Associates of New York, with Mackie & Kamrath of Houston as associate architects.

The jury, composed of members of the Potomac Valley Chapter, AIA, consisted of William Fox, AIA, James F. Hilleary, AIA, and Edward H. Noakes, AIA. Their report states, "The jury was pleased to find, in the three winning projects, a conscious effort to eliminate architectural barriers.

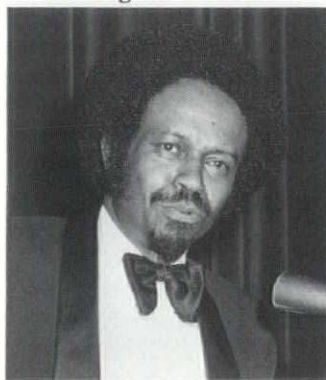
"The use of elevators and ramps and omission of stairs, where possible, allowed these buildings to be accessible to the handicapped.

"The provision of proper restroom facilities, public phones and drinking fountains also make these buildings usable by the handicapped. The efforts are a tremendous contribution to the betterment of man's environment."

This marks the fourth year of the

Bartlett Award program, which was created to bring attention to the environmental problems of architectural barriers faced by many handicapped, aged, and other persons with ambulatory difficulties. The Award, coupled as it is with the AIA Honor Awards, is intended to emphasize to the architectural community that barriers can be eliminated without detracting from excellent design.

#### Whitney Young Citation Honors Black Washington Architect



Robert J. Nash, a Washington, D.C. architect, has been awarded the first Whitney M. Young, Jr. Citation from the American Insti-

tute of Architects.

The citation, established in 1971, was presented to Nash for his significant contribution in initiation and directing the Institute's programs in the area of social concern. He was presented the citation in May during the 1972 convention of the 24,000 member organization in Houston.

Nash is currently serving his second term as national vice president of the AIA, the first black architect to be elected to national office by the organization.

#### Ann Arbor Architect Wins National Design Citation

Denis C. Schmiedeke, AIA, has received a Citation of Merit for outstanding design in the first national 1972 Plywood Design Awards program.

Sponsored by the American Plywood Association, the competition honors architects whose projects demonstrate outstanding structural or aesthetic uses of softwood plywood.

Schmiedeke's winning entry was his own two-story residence in Ypsilanti, Michigan. It was con-

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structed with plywood stressed skin panels, and all exposed surfaces were coated with light brown filter sand, mixed in a matrix of acrylic resin and pulverized glass.

The Awards Jury noted, "This pavilion-like house is axial, symmetrical—almost classical in form. It admirably demonstrates an almost total use of plywood as a structural material and as a base for some special finishes."

This is the second significant honor accorded to Schmiedeke residence. It won the Award of Honor for excellence of design in the 1969 Honor Awards Program of the Michigan Society of Architects.

#### New Field Director

The Michigan-Ohio Terrazzo Contractors' Association has appointed George Sigler as Field Director and Technical Representative. His responsibilities include the promotion and explanation of the qualities of terrazzo installations to architects, designers and other construction industry principals in both states. His office is located at 3829 Coolidge Highway in Royal Oak.

#### Seminars on Noise

Excessive noise or vibration from fans, boilers, cooling towers, refrigeration machines, transformers and other mechanical and electrical

equipment has caused lawsuits, loss of rent, disgruntled tenants and unhappy neighbors. Most of these situations could have been avoided with suitable noise control design when the building was still on the drawing board. Many noise problems can still be solved after the building is built; but it takes more detective work to identify the cause, and it usually costs more to fix it later.

Practical approaches and solutions to these problems are contained in a three-day course to be given in six U.S. and Canadian cities in the Fall of 1972 by Laymon N. Miller, Principal Consultant of Bolt Beranek Newman Inc., with over 18 years' experience in noise control of mechanical installations in buildings.

The course is designed for Mechanical and Ventilation Engineers, Architects and Plant Engineers. It includes noise level data of equipment, noise control procedures, room acoustics, sound transmission loss of wall and floors, vibration control procedures and materials, and ventilation system noise control, all illustrated with sample calculations and solutions. These lectures have been attended by over 800 engineers and architects in the last three years.

The course, entitled "Noise and Vibration Control of Mechanical Equipment in Buildings," is to be given in Detroit, September 13-15. A related course on "Noise in Manufacturing Plants" is also to be given for interested engineers and plant personnel. For a brochure describing both courses, please contact: Miss Gloria Cianci or Mrs. Carol Kelly, Bolt Beranek and Newman Inc., 50 Moulton St. Dept. B., Cambridge, Mass. 02138, Phone (617) 491-1850.

#### U of M Awards

A U of M architecture professor and five architecture students were honored at the annual awards dinner sponsored by the U-M architecture department and the Huron Valley Chapter of the AIA.

Receiving the Sol King Award for excellence in teaching was Prof. Lester Fader, a member of the U-M architecture faculty since 1956. The award carries a stipend of \$1,000.

Prof. Fader has done extensive


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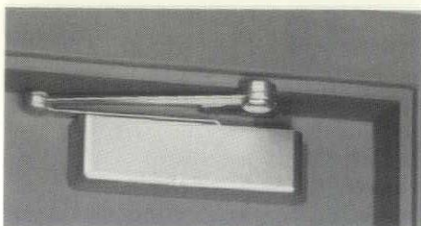
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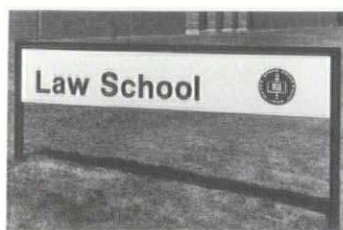
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research and teaching on the visual impact of architecture and the environment. His studies have included experiments in the use of holography (three-dimensional lenseless photography) in architecture, where photographic plates are used in place of conventional architectural models. His studies have also attempted to depict graphically the various stages in the construction of buildings.

The King Award, named for a U-M alumnus who is president of the Detroit architectural firm of Albert Kahn Associates, is given annually to a U-M architecture professor in recognition of "the ability to motivate students in the learning process, to impart inspiration and to encourage and aid development of the unique potential of each student."

The following students received awards:

Mrs. Marlene Berkoff of Watertown, N.Y. received the AIA Medal, which is given annually to the graduating senior with the highest scholastic standing. Mrs. Berkoff also received the Marian Sarah Parker Memorial Award, which is presented alternately by the U-M College of Engineering and the College of Architecture and Design to the outstanding woman student. The award carries a stipend of \$700.

Gordon Binder of Redlands, California, received the AIA Certificate, given annually to the graduating architecture student with the second highest scholastic average. Binder was also the recipient of the Alpha Rho Chi Medal, which is awarded by the national professional fraternity to a graduating senior in recognition of leadership, service to one's school and "promise of real professional worth."

Recipients of the AIA Foundation scholarships were Gregory Parston of Detroit and Richard Sorgen of Toledo. The scholarships were awarded on the basis of merit and need to a total of 83 students from around the country out of 265 applicants.

Michael Bednar of Eastview Terrace, Rensselaer, N.Y., was awarded the George G. Booth Traveling Fellowship, which carries a stipend of \$1,500. The award, made on the basis of the applicant's general record and architectural presentations, will be used by Bednar for travel to

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### Stirton Retires

Malcolm R. Stirton, AIA, is retiring from general architectural practice and will devote his time to consultation on special assignments with emphasis on the cemetery and mausoleum field.



For over 37 years Stirton has been associated with Harley Ellington Associates, Inc. He began as Architectural Designer and leaves

that firm from the President and Chief Executive Officer.

Educated in Detroit Public Schools and a graduate of Cass Technical High School, between high school and college he worked as a draftsman at the Otis Elevator Company for two years and saw many of Detroit's early skyscrapers take form. Stirton received his degree of B.S. in Architecture from the University of Michigan in 1932. At Michigan he achieved the highest scholastic record to that date, received the American Institute of Architects Medal for Scholarship and served as President of the Senior Class.

Winner of the Booth Traveling Fellowship from the University of Michigan in 1932, Stirton spent 12 months traveling through Europe studying and sketching.

Stirton has served his community and profession in many ways over the years. He has held offices in both the Detroit Chapter of the AIA and the Michigan Society of Architects. He was one of the original members of the Wayne County Planning Commission and served as its Chairman.

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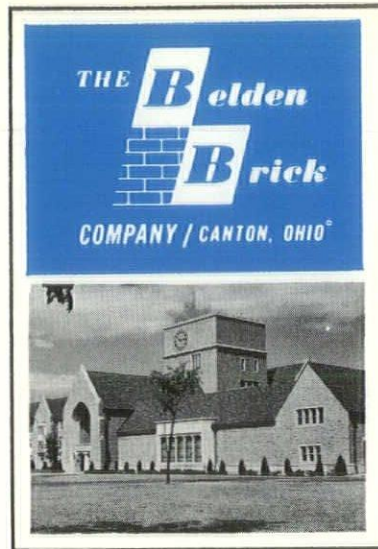
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