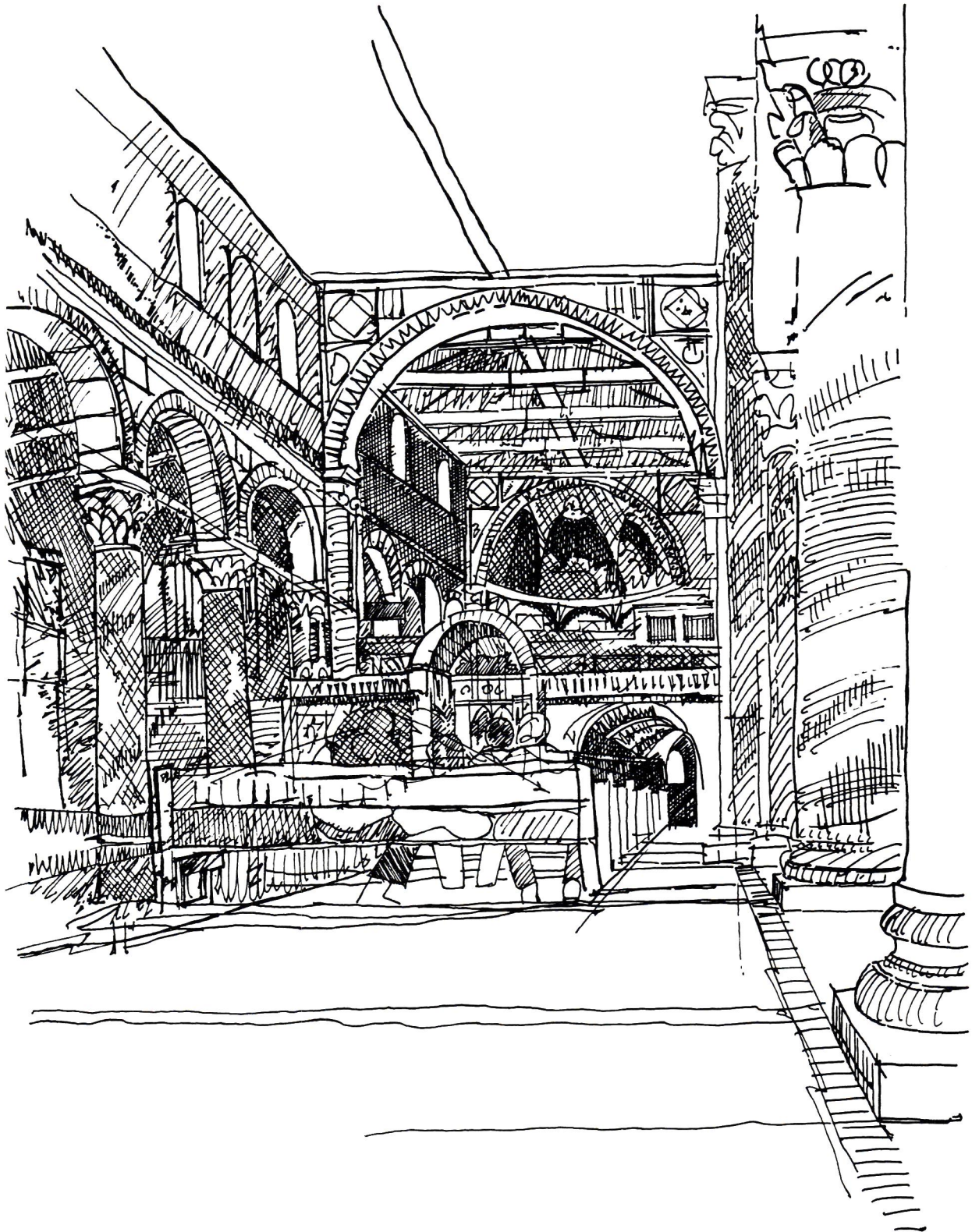


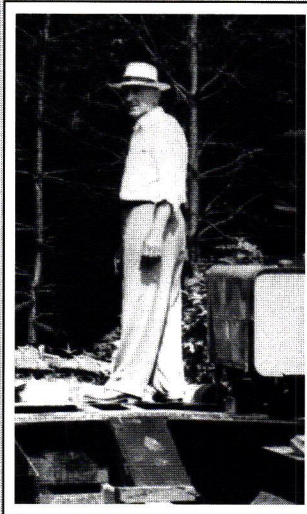
# C O L U M N S





# A seventy-five year commitment to craftsmanship

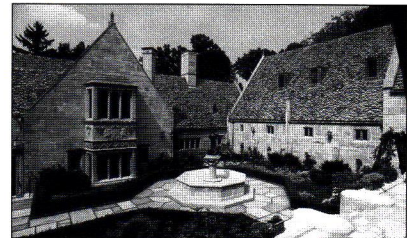
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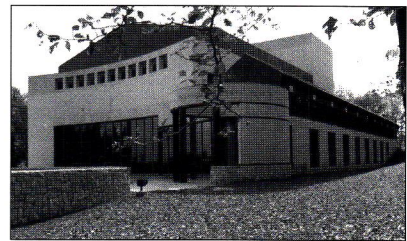
*John Deklewa, Sr., founder of the firm that bears his name, could be found checking the job progress. This same attention to detail has become a tradition on all John Deklewa & Sons, Inc. projects.*

applies state of the art construction techniques and a sense of fine craftsmanship.

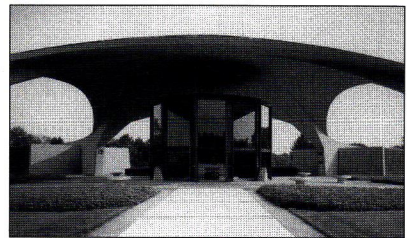
We are proud to have been a part of the Western Pennsylvania construction industry for the past seventy-five years and as we step into the future, we keep one foot in the past.



*"Elm Court" a 9-acre private estate located north of Pittsburgh involves unique additions and renovations, including an underground theater.*



*"Pasquerilla Performing Arts Center" situated on the University of Pittsburgh's Johnstown campus, contains a 1000 seat proscenium style main theater, and the 200 seat "Black Box" theater.*



*St. Lazarus Oratory is one of the largest clear span post-tension concrete structures in the tri-state area, requiring the special skills of John Deklewa & Sons, Inc..*

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# A Capital Excursion by Michelle Fanzo, Editor



*The Pentagon was designed in one weekend by the same man who would later lead the super secret Manhattan Project in New Mexico. Construction of the 29 acre building took 16 months.*

## Summertime. Vacation time. I asked AIA staff

and some friends recently what I should write about for this end-of-summer issue of *Columns* and everyone kept saying, 'something about your vacation.' *What* vacation? Just because I'm sometimes not in town, I reminded them, doesn't mean I'm on vacation. (To be truthful, I will be taking a break from daily life as soon as I get this issue to press.) I kept muttering about needing a vacation the whole time I was receiving expressive travel sketches from our membership for this issue's Travel Sketch Portfolio. For the last two months, as I sat sweltering in my unair-conditioned office, delicate ink and pencil drawings of Rome, Florence, Venice, Jerusalem, and the Yucatan Peninsula were delivered to my desk. (Talk about taunting.)

Travel, vacation, architecture, summer: I kept trying to think of something to write that would fit these themes. My inability to travel was directly tied to my taking two graduate courses this summer. I was forced to spend the season in the library trying to grasp the history of American national security, and those elusive squiggles that comprise the nightmare that is macroeconomics. Somehow I failed to see how this would tie-in to anything architects would want to hear—until I went to Washington. Myself and a few other students traveled to DC for two days of briefings at the State Department, the Pentagon and for an audience with a member of the National Security Council in the Old Executive Office Building.

Bingo! Travel, summer (it was quite hot), architecture and studies about foreign places all came together on this trip. The event even tied-in to another topic in this month's *Columns*, a follow-up on last May's AIA-sponsored Reshaping the Region charrette. For anyone still skeptical about the impact of the built environment on people, let me say a few things about our country's capital.

Much has been written about Pierre L'Enfant's often amended masterplan for the city on the Potomac. The District's architecture still reflects a stately elegance intermingled with the more modern stateliness of glass and

concrete. However, a recent inside view of some of the city's most famous buildings produced a mixed reaction. My first stop was the Old Executive Office Building, a Beaux-Arts behemoth that looks like it should be perched atop a craggy cliff but instead sits as the somewhat macabre neighbor to the pristine White House. It is so hideous it's actually attractive. Formerly the home to the Navy, War and State Departments, today the building serves the Vice President and economic and budget entities. The gate and yard are appropriately grand but the entrance—a single glass door, like the kind you find adorning your local convenience store—seemed bizarrely out of place. "Security," explained the guard inside the door. The interior retains much of its elegance, marred only by fluorescent lighting, bland paint in the wide hallways, and a few curious wallpaper choices in the upper floors. The brass doorknobs engraved with our national bird and many intricate carved moldings created a sense of honor and control, even if the air conditioning in the building was creating an Arctic monsoon. Heavy wooden tables, green leather chairs, a hush in the hallway, all projected a respect for the old government haunt.

Then there is the State Department. Entering before regular hours at the side entrance, the unassuming low-slung mass of brick and glass made me think of my high school—same flooring, same paneled walls, same metal lettering, just more flags. We were shuffled into one of what seemed hundreds of windowless square rooms off white windowless hallways. "Security," said our chaperone. The building was obviously built in the 1950s, and looked like it needed some paint. Generally, it was presentable, but wear and tear was visible and the uniformity and bleakness of the main hallways suggested the epitome of institutional design. To be fair, the main entrance had its charm: lots and lots of state and national flags. After walking through those bleak corridors this profusion of color was almost blinding. Cutbacks at the State Department have obviously included infrastructure and maintenance, and

*(continued on page 5)*

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Members have captured the elegance, quirkiness, solitude and grandeur of architectural spaces around the globe. A portfolio of travel sketches brings these spaces a little closer to home.

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**On the cover:** The interior of a church in Rome by Robert H. Tarasovich, AIA. Tarasovich saw the context of the interior as an opportunity to explore structure as a way to define space, as columnar, planar or a combination of these elements.