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# IRCHITECTURE

RICE UNIVERSITY



*The method of teaching which approaches most nearly the method of investigation is incomparably the best, since, not content with serving up a few barren and lifeless truths, it leads to the stock out of which they grew.*

*(Burke)*

# ARCHITECTURE

AT RICE UNIVERSITY

DESIGNATES A SERIES OF REPORTS  
ON THOUGHTS AND INVESTIGATIONS  
FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ARCHI-  
TECTURE. IT IS PUBLISHED IN THE  
BELIEF THAT THE EDUCATION OF  
ARCHITECTS CAN BEST BE ADVANCED  
IF TEACHERS, STUDENTS, PRACTITION-  
ERS, AND INTERESTED LAYMEN SHARE  
IN WHAT THEY ARE THINKING AND  
DOING.



## THE ALUMNUS CRITIC PROGRAM

A program initiated by the Rice University, Department of Architecture, Houston, Texas, and the Rice Architectural Alumni Association.

MORTON L. LEVY, JR.  
President  
Architectural Alumni Association  
Rice University  
Houston, Texas

1 APRIL 62

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## F O R E W O R D

Before my appointment to head the Rice Department of Architecture, I knew very little about Rice University. I found the situation full of surprises. The biggest surprise of all was the discovery of a very active architectural alumni association. This was as frightening to me as for a new coach to find he had to please an overzealous Monday noon quarterback club. I did not relish the idea of having a hundred or so architects telling me how to run my business. Nevertheless, I did muster enough courage to encourage the Rice Architectural Association rather than ignore it and hope it would die a natural death. I could not have made a better decision.

The Rice Architectural Alumni Association, under the most capable leadership of Morton L. Levy, Jr., has given strong impetus to the department. President Levy has established five active committees whose aspirations are to help the architectural staff make Rice one of the leading schools of architecture in the Nation.

My faculty and I are most grateful to Morton Levy and the alumni for helping us teach.

BILL CAUDILL

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<http://www.archive.org/details/alumnuscriticpro05levy>



#### EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

President	Morton L. Levy, Jr.
Vice President	Edmund Langwith
Secretary	Elaine Maas
Treasurer	Benson Ford
Directors	Harold Calhoun Hermon Lloyd Thompson McCleary Ralph Anderson

THE RICE ARCHITECTURAL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION hopes to give the student the benefits from the criticism and advice of experienced practitioners who have a special interest in Rice and who feel a professional obligation to the training of the student architect.





## THE PROGRAM

A rising sense of urgency has been expressed by the leaders of the architectural profession for a broadening of the educational base in architecture. In 1960 the American Institute of Architects Committee on the Profession issued a report which made several recommendations:

"The Committee feels that there is a real tendency in the schools of architecture...to be isolated from the reality of architectural practice. We feel that the ideal climate for the teaching of architecture is for the profession to consider the teacher as a fellow architect who is teaching, and for the teachers to feel that their fellow architects may be called on as necessary or desirable."

The profession should create a climate of consolidation, rather than isolation between school and practice. Since the Rice Architectural Alumni Association and the Rice staff agree that the development of architecture in the school and office should be a joint venture, they organized this Alumnus Critic Program. Students, teachers and practitioners can better develop their capacities, talents and sense of responsibility if they can work together on a realistic exchange program.

Although focused on the design process, this program will make the students aware of the "total" architect as visualized by Walter Gropius:

"A coordinator -- a man of vision and professional competence -- whose business is to unify the many social, technical, economic and artistic problems which arise in connection with building."

(Scope of Total Architecture, 1954.)



This broadening of viewpoints by diversity of personal contact is the keynote and reason for being of the Alumnus Critic Program.

This is a program in which Rice architectural students go to the offices of Rice architectural alumni for specific design criticisms. It involves students above the sophomore level and alumni volunteers from the Houston area. Each alumnus participates in only one criticism a semester, and each semester the student is assigned a different critic.

The criticism takes place in the office of the critic. This places the student in a realistic simulation of practice. The student presents his ideas strictly on their own merits and through his own communicative abilities. This is in sharp contrast to the classroom situation in a familiar environment and by communication with instructors who are closely associated with the project.

The student visits his alumni critic when his design problem is at the eighty per cent completion stage, i.e., almost ready for translation into presentation drawings. At this time the student is familiar enough with his project and has enough awareness of its strengths and deficiencies to intelligently seek constructive advice.

The aims of the program are self-evident:

1. To expose the student to an alumnus practitioner.
2. To convey, through criticisms of the student's current design problem, some of the realities of practice.



3. To give the student a sampling of the environment in which the alumnus works.
4. To make the student feel he is a part of the profession.
5. To give the student the benefits from the criticism and advice of experienced practitioners who have a special interest in Rice and who feel a professional obligation to the training of the student architect.

The Rice Architectural Alumni Association and the Rice Department of Architecture set up ground rules for both the students and the alumni critics:

#### STUDENT GROUND RULES

1. The student makes his own appointment with the critic. This appointment is scheduled to suit the convenience of the critic. The critic should be aware of the student's deadline.
2. Personal appearance must be appropriate to the situation. Promptness is also a major factor.
3. Thoughts should be organized before the meeting. The critic has no advance knowledge of the program; therefore, the student has to explain (1) what the problem is and (2) the approach he has taken. The student's presentation should be clear enough that a written program for the problem is not necessary, but one should be available upon request by the critic.
4. Both words and pictures are to tell the story. Drawings should merit pride. They should not be crude sketches that demand apologies when presented.
5. The presentation package should include all materials needed for a complete explanation of the project.
6. Students are not to bring only answers, but questions, also. They should be specific in asking for help when it is needed.
7. The critic is not a school teacher; his orientation is often far removed from that of the student. Thus the student should especially note the way the critic approaches a criticism. An appreciation of the diversity of viewpoints that exist in architecture is one of the greatest benefits to be derived from this





program

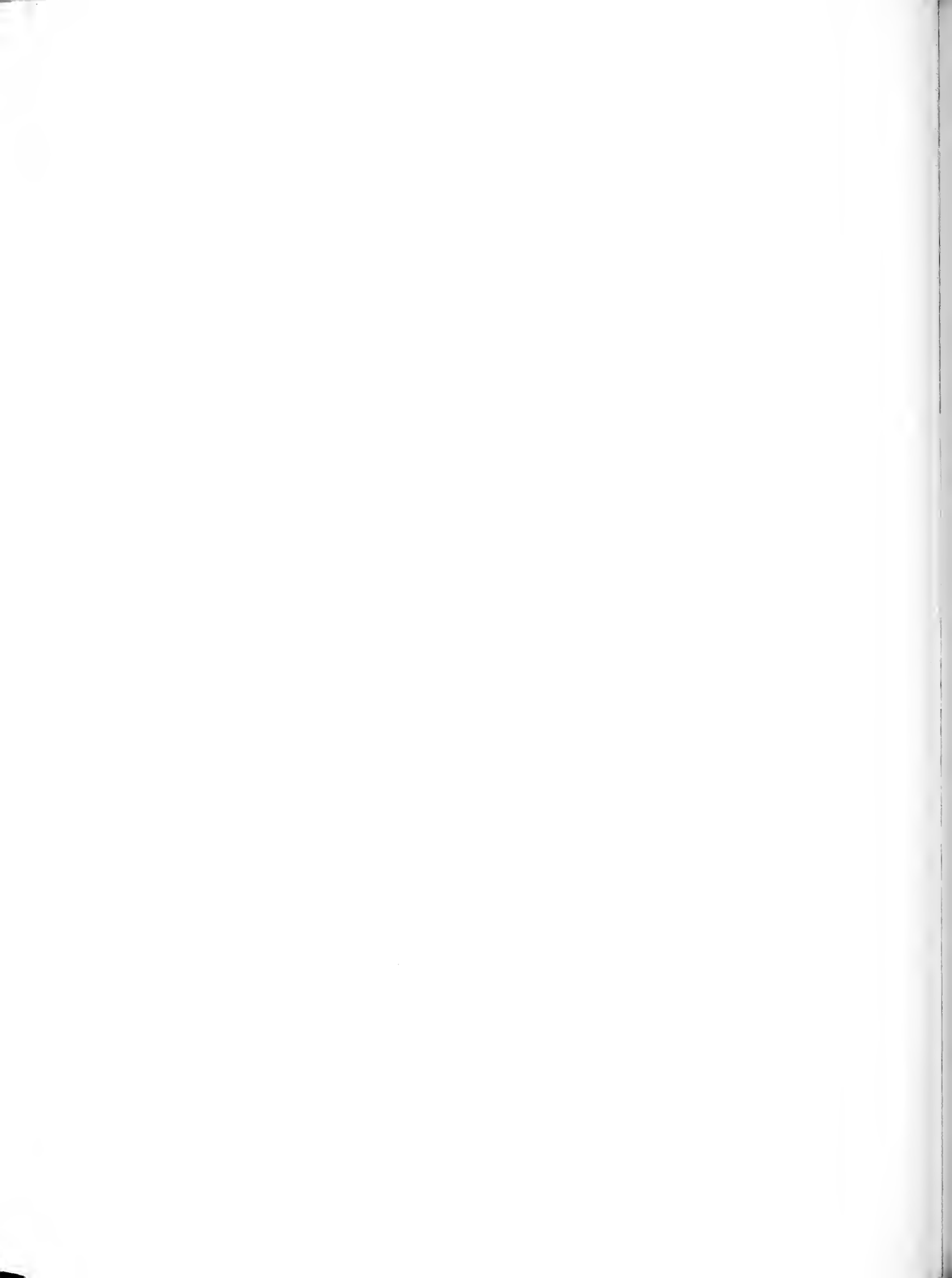
8. The students are to always remember that they do not visit their critic for a justification of their solutions or the approach they took to the problem. The mission is to broaden the understanding of the ramifications of the problem, to absorb new ideas, to seek answers to old questions, and to discover new questions.



The student should be specific in asking for help when it is needed.

#### CRITIC GROUND RULES

1. The critics devote a minimum of two uninterrupted hours to this session. Four hours is the maximum. The meeting is treated with the same respect as any important conference in an office, i.e., proper environment for concentration, no phone calls except for emergencies or new, two million dollar commissions, and start and finish on mutually agreeable schedules.
2. No special advance preparation is required. The student is approximately eighty per cent through his



problem. He is to "read" the critic into the problem. The critic should not accept an incomplete explanation.

3. There is no reason for the critic to approach this situation in any manner other than his usual, individual manner. In other words, the critics are told, "Be yourself." The alumnus critic is to remain a practitioner and not become a college professor.
4. The student is to be helped to understand the areas in which he is most in need of help. As a practitioner, a critic deals constantly with problems of structure, materials, equipment and costs. If appropriate to the particular problem, the critic should shed a little light on some of these considerations and point out items that would take the hardest selling job to a real client.
5. The critic should be especially critical of presentation methods and explain how the student could have done a more professional job.
6. Other architects in the office are to be invited into the meeting for short periods of time to answer specific questions or to explain a similar problem the office has faced.
7. The criticism is to be finished in time to allow the student a few minutes for a tour of the office. The student should see some of the design sketches and presentations and become aware of a few of the architect's unsolved problems. The critic should introduce the student to his fellow professionals.
8. Critics and students participate in this program once each semester, and each student is assigned a different critic each semester.

The Rice design professor responsible for the assigned problem makes the student-critic assignments. At present 33 architectural students and 44 architectural alumni participate. The selectivity of the participants happens naturally, because it is felt that any architect who volunteers has thus proved his interest in architectural education and recognized his responsibility.



Rice University has graduated approximately 450 students with a degree in architecture. In just the local area around Houston, there are approximately two hundred active members of the Rice Architectural Alumni Association. When the Alumnus Critic Program was organized and the alumni were asked to volunteer as critics, within a short period forty-four architects had accepted. Not one alumnus contacted turned down the opportunity to work with the students.

In the fall of 1961 Professor William W. Caudill, Chairman, of the Department of Architecture at Rice University, and President Morton L. Levy, Jr., of the Rice Architectural Alumni Association collaborated to produce the Ground Rules. Thus the Alumnus Critic Program was put into effect on October 23, 1961.

The list of alumni participants for this program shows a great diversity of practice. It includes the principals of several of Houston's major firms, representatives of one-man operations and "teams" from larger organizations. The participants represent architects of all ages, from the Class of 1916 to the Class of 1961.



PARTICIPANTS

CLASS FIRM

Ralph A. Anderson, Jr.	1943	Wilson, Morris, Crain & Anderson
T. F. Arner	1953	Don Tomasco & Associates
James R. Berry	1955	Golemon & Rolfe
Raymond H. Brogniez	1940	Raymond H. Brogniez
Benjamin E. Brewer, Jr.	1955	Hamilton Brown & Associates
Charles S. Chan	1941	Charles S. Chan
William J. Condon	1948	Travis Broesche & Associates
Symond E. Doughtie	1943	Doughtie & Porterfield
Lenard Gabert	1916	Lenard Gabert & Associates
Fred H. Goree, Jr.	1958	James A. Bishop
Benjamin F. Greenwood, Jr.	1935	Ben Greenwood
G. Allen Heidbreder	1951	G. Allen Heidbreder
Melvin L. Hildebrandt	1955	Golemon & Rolfe
C. A. Johnson	1925	C. A. Johnson
Arthur E. Jones	1947	Lloyd, Morgan & Jones
David M. Keeper	1943	Stokes-Adair Company
Joseph D. Krakower	1942	Joseph Krakower
Neal T. Lacey, Jr.,	1953	George Pierce - Abel Pierce
Morton L. Levy, Jr.	1955	Golemon & Rolfe
Hermon F. Lloyd	1931	Lloyd, Morgan and Jones
Charles B. Marshall	1931	Charles B. Marshall
Robert W. Maurice	1945	Robert Maurice & Associates
Thompson H. McCleary	1932	Thompson McCleary
B. Burke McGinty	1946	Milton McGinty
Jack McGinty	1956	Milton McGinty
Milton B. McGinty	1927	Milton McGinty
Harvin C. Moore	1927	Harvin C. Moore
S. I. Morris, Jr.	1935	Wilson, Morris, Crain & Anderson
Stayton A. Nunn, Jr.	1949	Golemon & Rolfe
Abel B. Pierce, Jr.	1930	George Pierce - Abel Pierce
Julius L. Pryzant	1950	Welton Becket & Associates
Tom M. Rainbolt	1930	Humble Oil and Refining Company
Ted Richardson	1957	Milton McGinty
Adrian S. Rosenberg	1953	Adrian S. Rosenberg
George H. Smart	1942	Smart and Whitehead
James T. Swanson, Jr.	1931	James T. Swanson, Jr.
Robert W. Talley	1929	Robert W. Talley & Associates
Terry Tengler	1961	Caudill, Rowlett & Scott
James B. Thomas	1955	Caudill, Rowlett & Scott
Gilbert W. Thweatt	1951	Welton Becket & Associates
Mace Tungate, Jr.	1938	Wirtz, Calhoun, Tungate & Jackson
Bruce W. Wallace	1954	Cameron Fairchild & Associates
Conrad G. Walton	1951	Welton Becket & Associates
Donald E. Williams	1949	Donald E. Williams & Associates
F. Talbot Wilson	1934	Wilson, Morris, Crain & Anderson
B. Magruder Wingfield, Jr.	1951	Larson & Wingfield
Hirschell R. Winslett	1941	Hirschell R. Winslett

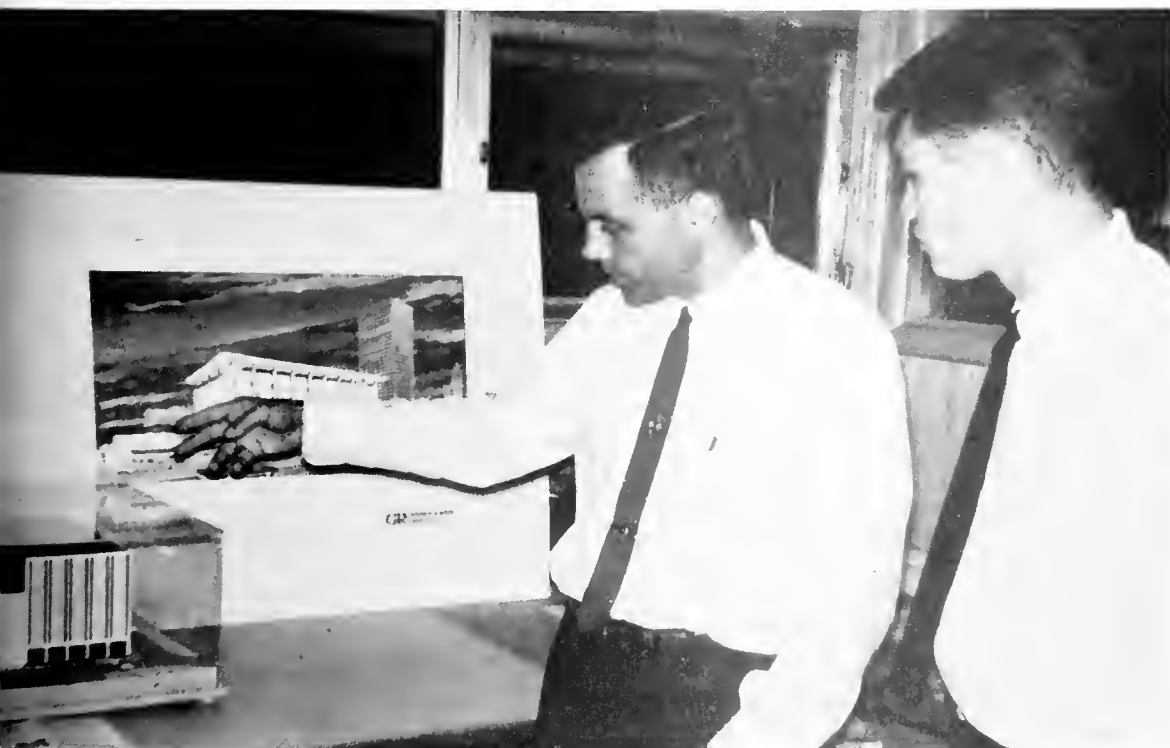


Alumnus Critic Berry becomes a skeptical client.

Some presentation techniques are explained.



Mike inspects the samples  
of building materials.





## THE PROGRAM IN ACTION

A sample case was selected to study the Alumnus Critic Program in action. The alumnus critic, James R. Berry, Class of 1955, and student, Michael Buckley, Class of 1963, met in the offices of Golemon & Rolfe.

The current problem for the junior class was "Design in Detail for a Unit of a Speculative Housing Group." The vital second stage of architectural production -- detailed development of a preliminary design preparatory to commencement of working drawings -- was the focal point of this session.

After the amenities were over, architect-to-be Buckley made his formal presentation. He had to treat his project in the same fashion he would had he been addressing a layman client. He was responsible for the approach taken in the design, and he had to substantiate his architectural concepts. Critic Berry, in turn, familiar with selling a design to a client who has to pay the bill, brought up questions that needed answers.

Then student and critic settled down to a practitioner's view of the problem in which new design, structural and detailing questions were brought to light. Then, architect-to-be Buckley asked the questions. In some cases the questions fell into specialty fields, and Critic Berry called in other members of the Golemon & Rolfe staff. Such a repartee opened new doors for new questions and solutions. Some of these questions



required library research, some called for digging into the samples of building materials, or more interviews.

After this session, Jim Berry escorted Mike Buckley around the architectural office, showed him some of the current projects in various stages of development, introduced him to some of his fellow professionals in practice, and explained some of the behind-the-scenes problems of practice, such as economics, office management, and unsolved problems.

Jim Berry, whose responsibilities in the office of Golemon & Rolfe include supervision, design in detail, and specifications writing, felt that the afternoon's efforts probably solved very few of Mr. Buckley's specific problems, but did give him an insight of how one architect approaches such problems.

Some of the other alumnus critic and student sessions have included visits to projects under construction, dips into office research libraries, and rather hard-nosed practical discussions of building costs. There is an unlimited variety of experiences available for the students. Each practitioner has something to offer. Each experience gives an awareness of the realities of architectural practice.



## THE CRITIQUE

Each participant in the program is asked to write an evaluation of the architect or student with whom he worked. Evaluative letters from the students and alumni indicate a great enthusiasm. More important, the evaluations of the strengths and weaknesses in the educational program at Rice were brought out.

Student criticisms all focus on what seems to them to be too much attention to detail and on a disappointing passivity of reaction to major concepts. It is gratifying that students have written that their critics found too little fault with their work. They appear hungry for mental exercise and the challenge of new questions.

For the most part, the alumni have submitted quite detailed evaluations of the students and their work. Also, their specific criticisms were probably already obvious to the faculty critics. Their general criticisms may be of value in defining weaknesses in the degree of architectural awareness that the students have achieved. The negative side of the ledger includes such items as:

- Over-simplification of communication techniques

- Inadequate background in engineering and its considerations, cost analysis, and economics

- Lack of spatial feeling in design

- Lack of attention to detailed study

- Lack of research

- Failure to properly appreciate the emotional and spiritual needs of people.





The variety represented by these items represents a sensitivity to the essence of architecture on the part of the practitioner that established quite clearly the value of his participation in the educational experience.

While student reactions to their first exposure to this program were not unanimous in bestowal of unqualified praise, the reactions very definitely indicate realization and appreciation of a positive boost to their development as architects. They made such comments as these:

"My first contact with the alumnus critic program was extremely rewarding, if not downright exciting."

"He made the point that most architecture had been very well researched and studied by some very smart individuals, and there is nothing wrong in looking at their answers."

"His cordial willingness to devote so much time and thought for my benefit showed a determination, on his part, to make this program significant, and I could not help but reciprocate."

"He made me realize that I had just begun to investigate this problem and the possibilities of my own parti."

And so it is with the alumni. They realize that they have just begun to investigate the implications and adventures of participation in architectural education and have only the first blush of understanding of the possibilities for service to architecture.

This is a program not to be entered into lightly, but with a sense of dedicated responsibility, ever mindful of the admonition of Henry Adams:

"A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops."



The alumni participants have expressed considerable interest in extending their involvement beyond the one afternoon per semester. They definitely want to see the finished problems and have suggested that all participants -- students, teachers and alumni -- in a particular problem get together after its completion for a general critique and exchange of opinion. Such sessions will come in the near future.



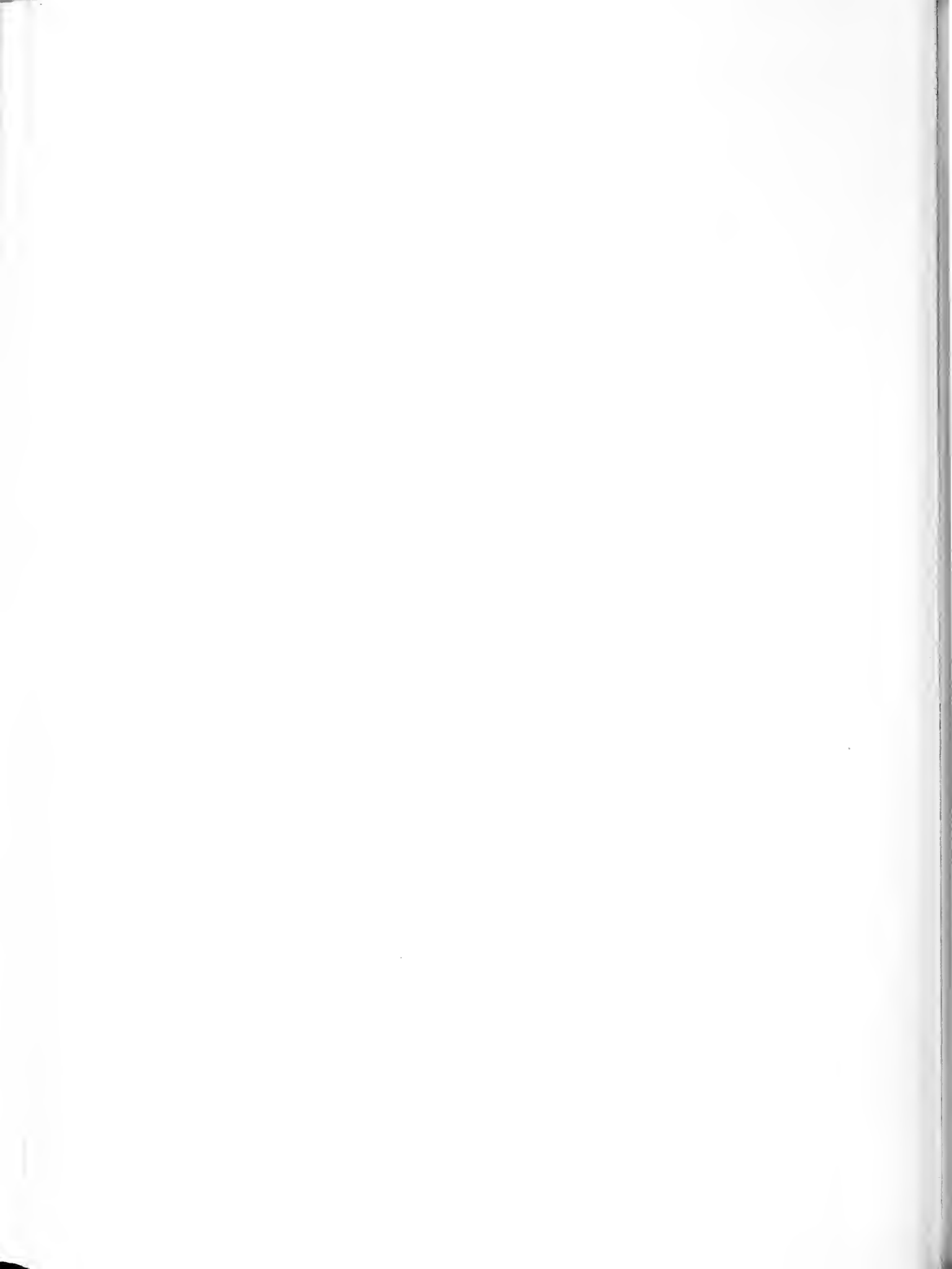
## APPENDIX

### NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

This report concerns the Rice Architectural Alumni Association's Alumnus Critic Program, but the editor wishes to acknowledge other projects sponsored by the architectural alumni. The following committees were organized to further and strengthen architectural education at Rice:

1. Library Committee. This committee has encouraged alumni to contribute to the departmental library. The library, started two years ago, is operated independently of the Fondren Library and is adjacent to the drafting lab in Anderson Hall. It allows students to have ready access to all types of research material, current publications, and files of building materials. It includes a reading lounge and a rapidly growing collection of books. (James Thomas, Chairman, Ted Richardson, Jim Berry, John Joiner)
2. Islands Committee. This committee was established to organize, finance, and construct "islands" within the department which will serve as examples of outstanding architectural design. The islands will consist of such facilities as the library, reception area, office space, exhibit hall, etc. (B. Magruder Wingfield, Chairman, Neal Lacey, T. F. Arner)
3. Art Exhibit Committee. This committee has solicited art exhibits from the Houston area for showing in the department. So far the exhibits have included architectural renderings, ceramics and paintings by alumni and other Houston artists. (Robert Talley, Chairman, Lelia Gadvois, Fred Goree, James Thomas)
4. Motivation Brochure Committee. The purpose of this committee is to publish a brochure for general distribution in public schools to encourage students to study architecture. (Jack McGinty, Chairman, Bob Maurice, Terry Tengler, Robert Talley, John Joiner, Mrs. Thomas McCleary)
5. Alumnus Critic Committee. Committee responsible for this project.

Another influence has been exerted by the alumni on Rice students. Various alumni have designed buildings on the Rice campus. These buildings provide the backdrop for the architects-to-be. These buildings speak highly for the architects who designed them and highly for Rice as the school which produced them.





Chapel, Rice Memorial Student Center  
Harvin C. Moore ('27), Architect

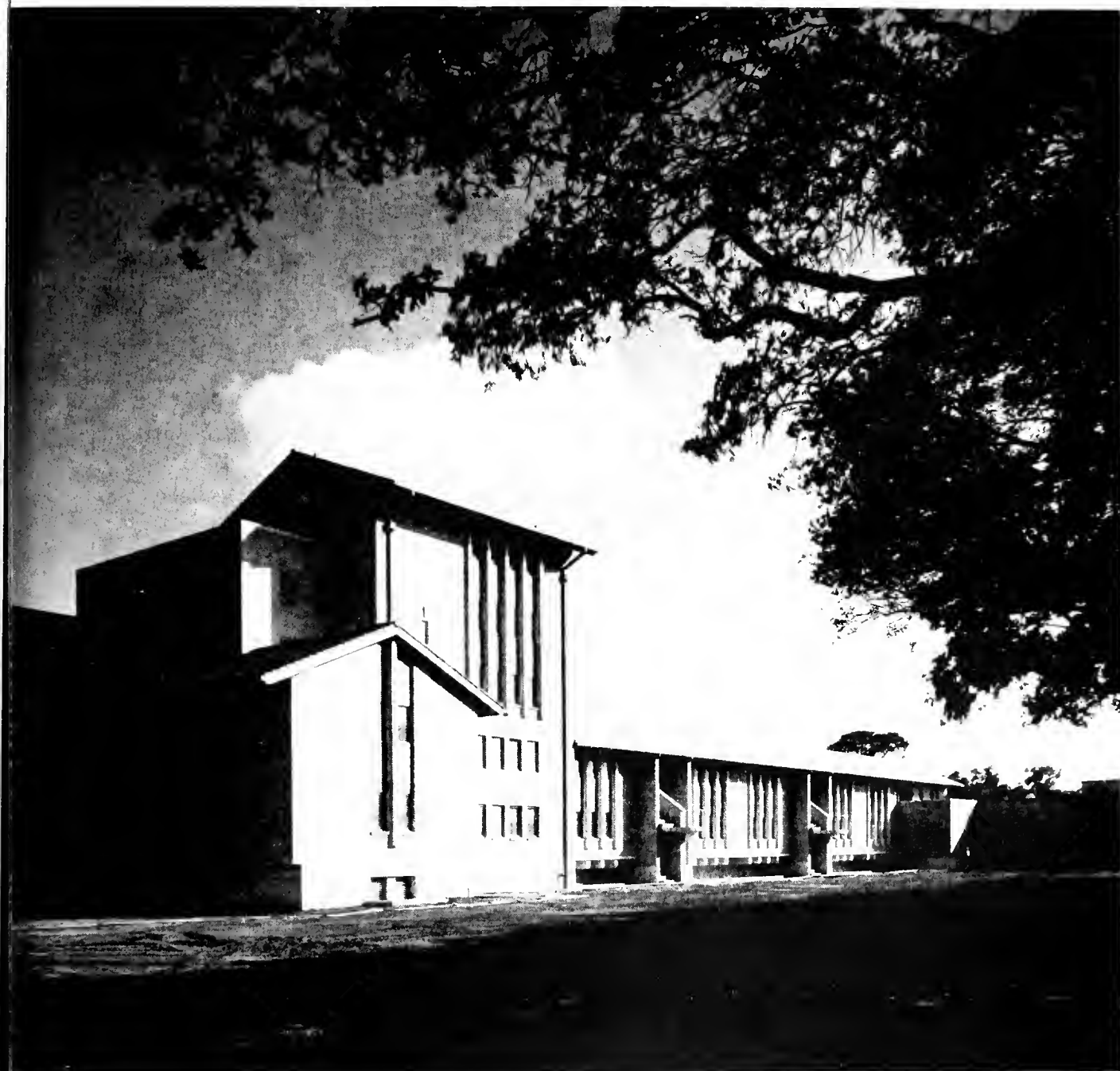






The Rice Stadium  
Hermon Lloyd ('31), William Morgan ('27), Milton McGinty ('27),  
Architects





Men's Residence Hall, Rice University  
F. Talbot Wilson ('34), S. I. Morris, Jr. ('35), B. W. Crain ('43),  
Ralph A. Anderson, Jr. ('43), Architects





Biology and Geology Laboratories from portico of Hamman Hall  
George Pierce ('42) and Abel Pierce ('30), Architects



ARCHITECTURE AT RICE SERIES

Number	Title & Date	Author
1	ON PEOPLE AND THINGS 20 September 1961	William W. Caudill
2	THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE NEW SOURCES OF ENERGY (CONFERENCE DES NATIONS UNIES SUR LES SOURCES NOUVELLES D'ENERGIE) 30 October 1961	Paul Jacques Grillo
3	RICE PRECEPTORSHIP PROGRAM 10 December 1962	William W. Caudill
4	THE ARCHITECTURE OF FINLAND AND ALVAR AALTO 1 March 1962	Scott D. Hamilton, Jr.
5	ALUMNUS CRITIC PROGRAM 1 April 1962	Morton L. Levy, Jr.

CORYL LaRUE JONES — Editor of the Series

