Vilas Communication Hall
Dedication Ceremony
University of Wisconsin-Madison
September 20, 1974
DEDICATORY CEREMONY

September 20, 1974
Thrust Theatre
3:00 p.m.

Chairman
Luke F. Lamb, Dean
Division of Educational Communications,
University of Wisconsin-Extension

Presentation of the Building
Frederick W. Haberman, Andrew T. Weaver
Professor of Communication Arts
Department of Communication Arts

Acceptance of the Building on behalf of The
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Edwin Young, Chancellor
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Acceptance of the Building on behalf of The
University of Wisconsin System
John C. Weaver, President
The University of Wisconsin System

Remarks by Representatives of
The State of Wisconsin
The Federal Government
The William F. Vilas Trust Estate
Donors

Presentation of the Speaker
Harold L. Nelson, Director
School of Journalism
and Mass Communication

Dedication Address
“The Secret of Communication”
Edwin Newman, Correspondent,
NBC News

RECEPTION
Immediately following the Dedicatory
Ceremony, Stage of Thrust Theatre

DRAMATIC PERFORMANCE
The Department of Theatre and Drama
production of “An Evening of Pinter:
The Dumb Waiter and Two Revue Sketches,”
Experimental Theatre, September 20,
1974, 8:00 p.m.

GUIDED TOURS OF THE BUILDING
Saturday, September 21, 1974, 9:00 to
11:00 a.m. Tours commence at entrance,
Park Street and University Avenue.
DONORS

The University of Wisconsin-Madison and University of Wisconsin-Extension departments housed in this building are deeply grateful to the men and women who have given of their time, their talents, and their financial resources to make Vilas Communication Hall one of the finest communications facilities in the country. We acknowledge particularly the contributions of the following:

Mrs. Hazel S. Alberson

The Class of 1921

Family and Friends of Harold A. Engel

Family and Friends of Harold B. McCarty

Family and Friends of Kenneth F. Schmitt

400 Journalism School Alumni and Friends of Ralph O. Natziger

Friends of Fredrick A. Buerki

Friends of Henry L. Ewbank, Sr.

Friends of A. Matt. Werner

The Journal Co. of Milwaukee

Public Relations Society of America, Madison Chapter

Public Relations Society of America, Wisconsin Chapter

James A. Schwalbach

The Sheboygan Press

Mrs. Anneliese Steppat

Mrs. Frank (Virginia) Thayer

WHA Listeners and Viewers

The Wisconsin Daily Newspaper League

The Wisconsin Press Association
AN HISTORICAL NOTE

Vilas Communication Hall houses the Department of Communication Arts, the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, the Department of Theatre and Drama, and the University of Wisconsin-Extension Telecommunications Center (WHA Radio and Television).

The effort to obtain this home for these departments began in 1957 when representatives of Journalism, Drama, Communication Arts, and WHA Radio and Television met to formulate a request to the campus administration. They presented a large-scale study in 1958, a larger one in 1959, and ever expanding ones until 1961 when their proposal was placed on rung forty-one of a ladder-like building list for the 1961-63 biennium. The building moved up several rungs in the next biennium and finally in the 1965-67 biennium was funded.

Action now supplanted talk. The committee appointed by the University to plan the building began its work by cutting approximately one-third of the original request so that the money available and the space it would buy could be brought into equilibrium; the University Department of Planning and Construction took the building through concept and program stages in the next ten months; John J. Flad & Associates had detailed architectural drawings ready in 1968; and a sympathetic Legislature responded to inflation's rapid erosion of purchasing power by voting a supplementary appropriation. Then, with money available, plans ready, and shovels poised, the building committee found in 1968 that the University did not have clearance for the site. A year passed. In mid 1969, affairs moved rapidly. The University procured the site, requested bids in July, opened them in September, discovered they were $1,500,000 over, cut $400,000 one rainy morning, and, in the nick of time, obtained the balance of $1,187,000 from the Vilas Estate.

The equipment and the 240,000 gross square feet of space in Vilas Communication Hall were paid for by the taxpayers of Wisconsin ($11,485,000), by the taxpayers of the United States ($1,021,000), by the William F. Vilas Trust Estate ($1,187,000), and by other private donors (about $150,000).

The departments housed in the Vilas Communication Hall hope to merit the trust which these sums of money imply. Every week in the Vilas classrooms, Journalism, Drama, and Communication Arts teach more than a thousand classes; from the radio and television studios, WHA and WHA-TV send instructional programs to pupils in the elementary and secondary schools and make educational and cultural programs of all sorts available to more than five million people; in the theatres great plays of all lands and of all eras are being performed; from the research laboratories come contributions to our understanding of that marvelously complex phenomenon called human communication.
The Department of Communication Arts has the most advanced means for teaching and research. For instruction in the media there are two television studios—equipped with both color and monochrome cameras, audio film recording and ancillary equipment capable of meeting current national broadcasting standards—and three radio studios—two equipped stereophonically and one monaurally. A special Instructional Media Center has thirty listening-reading booths, some containing videotape recorders, for the study of media techniques and applications. In addition to film production and editing facilities, the department has audio-origination and duplication equipment for teaching audio production and mixing, and for recording and duplicating media programing, including motion pictures.

Implementing instruction in communication and public address is the unusually well-appointed and equipped Parliamentary Room. Here students can learn the theory and practice of deliberative speech and train for effective participation in the many decision-making bodies of society.

To conduct its research program in the scientific study of communication, the department has established the Center for Communication Research. The Center has three fully integrated research areas in Vilas Communication Hall. One is media-oriented, one is designed for interpersonal and group research, and the third is equipped with individual rooms that have videotape computer-assisted capacities for research in the psychology of communication.
For the first time in almost seventy years, the School of Journalism and Mass Communication is well equipped to meet the needs of instruction and research.

Faculty members provided specifications and helped design the reporting laboratories; two newspaper editing labs, one of which opens onto an adjacent reporting lab; fully equipped photojournalism darkrooms; a radio and television newsroom laboratory; and advertising instructional rooms.

Enhancing the academic program is the Nieman-Grant Reading Room, a superbly furnished library of current newspapers, magazines, learned journals, and reference and required reading books. Graduate seminars and small advanced-reporting classes meet at the large round table of the Seminar Room. The Naiziger Conference Room provides the School with a spacious and comfortable place for guest lectures, small conferences of professional journalists, meetings of student organizations, M.A. and Ph.D. oral examinations, and faculty meetings.

Vilas Communication Hall also houses the School's Mass Communication Research Center. There are now ample facilities—most particularly a computer and a CRT editing terminal to support the research activities of the staff and graduate program.
Consider the situation of the University's theatre and drama program during the 1960s: directing was taught in Bascom Hall; acting, wherever instructional space could be found; and design, costuming, and stagecraft in a converted garage at 2201 University Avenue. The costume collection was housed in the Memorial Library. Major productions were performed in the Union Theater. A renovated bus transported scenery and equipment back and forth from the scene shop in the "garage" dozens of times a year, frequently breaking down along the way. Because faculty members were housed in four buildings around campus, they saw each other only at meetings; students got together mostly on production nights. These widely scattered activities affected instruction, to be sure. It was difficult, if not sometimes impossible, to provide laboratory training for craft courses. Rehearsals, scenery and costume construction, and setups had to fit in and around all other scheduled events in the one available theatre facility. More important, courses in dramatic theory, literature, and criticism could not be fully integrated into the production program.

Today, the Department of Theatre and Drama has splendid facilities of its own: the 311 seat Thrust Theatre; the flexible Experimental Theatre; a fully equipped scene shop; a costume laboratory; and rehearsal rooms. And because these facilities are housed in one building, that much desired proximity of classroom work and laboratory production is now a reality. Dramatic literature and performance are mutually dependent; the unification of the two forms is the study of the department.
In 1914, hand-blown radio tubes glowed in a physics laboratory on campus to generate 2000 watts and transmit coded weather information that was heard 475 miles away. In 1954, the University of Wisconsin Television Laboratory, with its one-kilowatt transmitter, sent a children's program into a few pockets of Madison as part of an experiment. Today, WHA Radio and WHA Television are implementing the Wisconsin Idea far beyond the dreams of its originators.

The two stations now operate as the University of Wisconsin-Extension Telecommunications Center, which has as its home, Vilas Communication Hall. The new facilities include nine radio studios and control rooms, two large television studios, a graphics design center, film processing equipment, and a videotape recording and master control complex. Administration, public affairs programing, musical offerings, announcing—in short, the entire educational and cultural activities of the Center—have been enhanced by these resources.

The Center is thus able to provide highly professional and superior technical support for statewide communication projects, as well as exceptional radio and television resources for the faculty and students of the University of Wisconsin. In addition, the Center can offer programming on an area, regional, state, midwestern, national, and international basis.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

John J. Flad & Associates: Architect

Orville Madsen & Son: General Contractor

Bureau of Facilities Management,
State of Wisconsin

Department of Planning & Construction,
University of Wisconsin-Madison

University Building Committee
for Vilas Communication Hall

Ronald C. Bornstein

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James V. Edsall

Frederick W. Haberman (Chairman)

Harold L. Nelson

Past Members

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