

# Frank Lloyd Wright Project Stirs Controversy

By MARY ANN REESE  
United Press International  
TEMPE, Ariz. (UPI) — One of the last projects sketched by the late architect Frank Lloyd Wright stirs almost as much controversy as the designer himself.

The Grady Gammage Memorial Auditorium, to be completed by spring on the Arizona State University campus here, is both imposing and festive. It reminds of some of a giant carousel, with its slender colonnade facade curving around half the circular structure, a gold fringe draped from the top meeting red wing-

like portal arches. Gold arcs and circles cascade down gently sloping ramps on opposite sides of the building. The ramps extend to sub-level parking lots, enabling guests to walk directly from their cars to first or second levels of the building. The ramps continue inside the building up to a fourth tier.

**Prevails In Building**  
The circular motif prevails throughout the building, which is basically one great circle intersected by a smaller one. The larger sphere houses a 3,000-capacity auditorium, a tiered

main floor, a lobby which also serves as an art gallery, and facilities for music and drama instruction. The smaller oval is a stage large enough for any metropolitan opera production, and a backstage with ample workshop and rehearsal area.

The versatile stage front also can be used as an orchestra pit or elevator to carry equipment to and from the basement. A mechanical steel shell can be moved in place in a matter of minutes for symphonic purposes.

The proposed auditorium for Arizona State University brought storms of protest from some of the taxpayers and legislators who feared it would be too costly, and wondered if it was practical.

**Center Is Essential**  
However, a citizen's committee, headed by Lewis Ruskin and Walter Bimson, vigorously favored the building, believing a cultural center was essential for the campus, and convinced that the eminent Wright was the architect to design it, especially since his architectural school, Taliesin, was located only miles away.

So Wright agreed to work out some sketches. A few weeks after initial plans were completed, in the spring of 1959, the architect died.

One enthusiastic supporter of Wright's plan was Grady Gammage, president of ASU for 25 years. He also died, shortly after Mr. Wright. The auditorium is named in his memory.

**Project Is Approved**  
Eventually the state legislature and board of regents approved the project. The commission to complete drawings for the building was awarded to a leader of Wright's School of Architecture, William Wesley Peters and the Taliesin Associated Architects.

Those who believed Wright buildings were necessarily expensive have been pleasantly surprised. A survey was made of theater type auditoriums similar in size to ASU's, including those on Yale and Harvard University campuses. Unit prices ranged from \$25 to \$50 per square foot, indicating the necessary budget for the ASU project would be \$5-million. However, the latest cost estimate, according to Peters, is \$2.8 million, or \$17.68 per square foot.

**Biggest Test Is Due**  
Probably the biggest test of all will be the acoustics of the auditorium when the first official season opens next fall. Wright designed the balconies to be partially detached from the rear wall, permitting sound from the stage to travel freely to the most remote seats.

The entire summer will be spent experimenting with drama, orchestra and choral productions, attuning the acoustics. It will be determined whether more sound absorbing materials, such as curtains and carpets, are needed. Former chancellor and physicist of the University of California in Los Angeles, Dr. Vernon O. Knudsen, is assisting as acoustical consultant. Books published on acoustics by Knudsen have been standard texts in many universities.

Working with the Taliesin architects as chief consultant for the stage rigging and the lighting is Dr. George Izenour, head of the Yale University Laboratory of Drama.



**STIRS CONTROVERSY**—One of the last projects sketched by the late Architect Frank Lloyd Wright, the Grady Gammage Memorial Auditorium, shown in this recent picture, stirs almost as much controversy as the designer himself. The auditorium, part of the Arizona State University campus at Tempe, Ariz., will be completed by spring. (UPI)

## Three Tracts of Timber Are Sold

**KLAMATH FALLS**—Successful bidders at an oral timber sale conducted by the Winema National Forest this week were:

Greylock Sale, 9,500,000 board feet, Klamath district, purchased by Klamath Lumber and Box Co., Inc., at a high bid of \$193,225, an average value of \$20.35 per thousand.

Calamity Sale, 4,100,000 board feet, Klamath district, purchased by Brecount Brothers of Grants Pass with a high bid of \$65,700, an average value of \$16.02 per thousand.

Polthole Butte, 4,700,000 board feet, Chemult district, purchased by Thomas Lumber Co. at the high bid of \$82,495, an average value of \$17.55 per thousand.

Other unsuccessful bidders on the three sales were Medford Corporation, M o d o c Lumber Co., Burrill Lumber Co., Cheney Forest Products and Klamath Plywood Co.

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**McGinty Speaks at Surveyors Meeting**

Edward McGinty, member of the board of directors of Professional Land Surveyors of Oregon, spoke on the advantages of having such a local organization, at a recent meeting of Rogue Valley land surveyors and engineers.

McGinty listed the advantages of having a group organized for land surveyors of Medford, Grants Pass and Klamath Falls. The purpose would be to improve the standards of local land surveying.

Definite action was postponed by the group pending a study of the state group's constitution and by-laws. An interim group of officers elected included McGinty, president; Leland Lovejoy, vice president; and Robert M. Thompson, secretary-treasurer.

**Dr. Thompson Is Named Delegate**

Dr. William J. Thompson, Medford, was elected a delegate to the Northwest Council of Optometry at a meeting of the Oregon Optometric Association in Portland recently.

The regional council, created during the meeting, would pool funds, research and administrative procedures to better educate the public in protecting and enhancing vision, accelerate post-graduate educational plans and stimulate student enrollment at Pacific University's College of Optometry, Forest Grove.

The 1964 state convention of the association will be held May 15 through 17 at the Mark Antony Hotel in Ashland. Dr. Glenn M. Revel, Ashland, is heading the Southern Oregon Optometric Society's host committee.

**Skydivers Take Top Honors in Meet**

Members of the Southern Oregon Skydivers recently won top honors in the second annual parachute meet held at the Ashland Airport.

Pat Dunlevy and Larry Madrill won first and second place in individual accuracy. The team of Dick Zedicker, John Dille and Duane Cullop won first place in the three-man team accuracy event.

Practice jumps are held every Sunday in the vicinity of the Medford Municipal Airport.

Mort Gossett, a member of the local group, participated in tryouts recently for the U.S. Parachute team.

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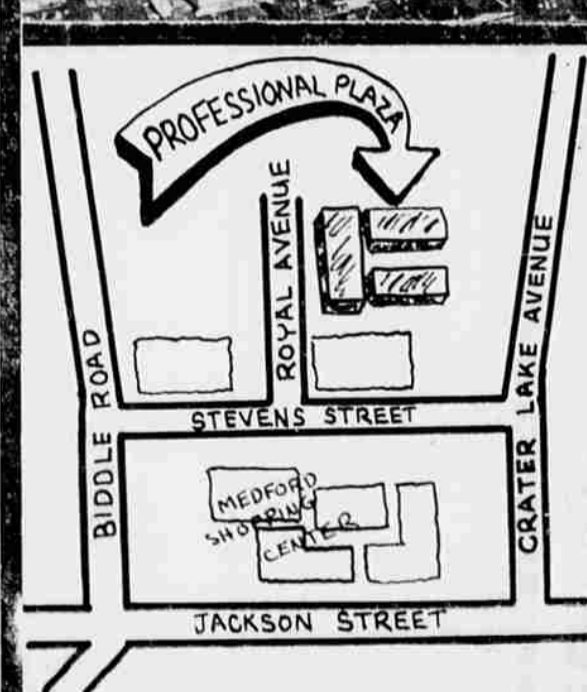
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