



THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

1741 NEW YORK AVENUE, N. W. WASHINGTON 6, D. C.

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FOR RELEASE SUNDAY, JANUARY 12, 1947

The Gold Medal of the American Institute of Architects for 1947 will be awarded to Eliel Saarinen, well known architect of Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, James R. Edmunds, Jr., president of the Institute, announced today.

The medal is awarded in recognition of outstanding service to the profession of architecture and is the highest honor the Institute bestows.

"Mr. Saarinen has been designated to receive this honor by unanimous vote of the Institute's Board of Directors in recognition of his outstanding achievements in the practice of architecture and inspiring leadership in the field of architectural education," Mr. Edmunds said.

"He is known throughout his profession as an architect of great talent, as a creative artist, and as a leading town planner.

"A native of Finland, where he received his early training and experience, Mr. Saarinen first gained international acclaim for the designing of the Helsingfors railroad terminal, which had a pronounced effect on the trend of architectural design throughout the world. He came to the University of Michigan as a visiting professor in 1923, and in 1933 he received the honorary degree of Doctor of Architecture from that University. He is now a member of the faculty of the Cranbrook Academy of Art.

"Mr. Saarinen designed the Cranbrook Foundation project at Bloomfield Hills, which is regarded as one of the outstanding educational plants in the country, from an architectural viewpoint. He won the Competition for the addition to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D. C., not yet erected.

"The medal will be presented at the Institute's annual convention to be held later this year."

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The Gold Medal to

ELIEL SAARINEN

1947

To Eliel Saarinen, FAIA, of Cranbrook,
Michigan; Guide, Philosopher and Friend:

You have brought to your chosen profession of architecture a rich dower of understanding and talent. Through the individuality, logic and quiet beauty of your work, you have exerted a marked influence on the architecture of your day and have made a profound contribution to contemporary cultural enjoyment.

By precept and example, and by friendly counsel, you have instructed and inspired your fellow architects and the many students entrusted to your mentorship.

In recognition of your impressive accomplishments and your leadership in the field of architecture, education and civic design, the Gold Medal of The American Institute of Architects is gratefully bestowed.

WEDNESDAY EVENING

April 30, 1947

...The Annual Dinner was held in the Ballroom of the Pantlind Hotel, the President, James R. Edmunds, Jr., presiding...

PRESIDENT EDMUNDS: Mr. Mayor, fellow members and guests: The American Institute of Architects is pleased to welcome you to its Annual Dinner of the 79th Convention.

We take this opportunity to honor some of our members with the degree of Fellowship. To that end I am pleased to turn over this meeting for the moment to Mr. Edgar I. Williams, Chairman of the Committee of Fellows. Mr. Williams. (Applause)

MR. EDGAR I. WILLIAMS: Fellow members, ladies and gentlemen: This is always a very happy and pleasant occasion, one of which The Institute is always proud.

I am going to ask the new Fellows if they will come forward as I call their names, I will read the Citation, the President, President Edmunds will present the certificate of Fellowship and I am going to ask each of the Fellows if they will stand until all have received their Fellowship and



I would also ask you not to applaud until all have received their Fellowship.

First I want to ask the three other members of the Jury of Fellows who are here, Mr. Ashton, Mr. Chandler, and Mr. Ditchy, if they will kindly stand at the end of the platform to receive the first Fellow. I don't think I need introduce any of these gentlemen, they are known to you.

(Applause)

You all have your programs but we will deviate from the program so we shall not give preference to anyone or any Chapter. These Fellows will come in alphabetical order.

...(Mr. Edgar I. Williams then read the Citation of members of The American Institute of Architects advanced to Fellowship effective March 18, 1947..See Appendix , Paper No. 13)...

PRESIDENT EDMUNDS: The Institute is also pleased on this occasion to make the highest award in its power. I certainly have no intention of taking or giving you any advance information even from the point of the name. Suffice to say he is a citizen of Michigan. The Secretary will now read the Citation.

SECRETARY ROBINSON: To Eliel Saarinen.



...(The Secretary read the Citation to Mr. Eliel Saarinen, on the occasion of the Presentation of the Gold Medal of The Institute. See Appendix , Paper No.15)...

...(Applause and assembly arose)...

...(Nothing omitted, continue next page.)...



MR. ELIEL SAARINEN:

President Edmunds, Your Honor Mayer Welsh,

Members of the Institute, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am deeply grateful for the honor bestowed upon me today.

I am happy, because this honor indicates that I have done a pretty good job of my profession.

By the same token, however, I might suspect that someone else has done a much better job and might have deserved the honor better than I do. Really, I am inclined to feel so.

But I am not the judge.

You have been the judges, and you have judged the honor upon me and, as said, I am deeply grateful. I take this honor as an obligation ... an obligation to continue for the rest of my life to do the best I can, for the benefit of the Institute, our profession, and the country.

Speaking about obligations, my obligation starts right here, because you probably expect something from me just now. The grapevine has told me that you expect from me some thoughts of mine about architecture.

That's a tough job, as I see here architects by the thousands sitting all around and, surely, each one knows



his onions.

Therefore, I am going to be cautious and short.

And I am going to do only the skimming.

Short of one year, I have been in this country a quarter of a century. During these years ... happy years, I should say in this great country... I have witnessed a gradual, decisive and thoroughgoing metamorphosis of architectural understanding, architectural thinking, architectural education, and architectural practice. It has been a metamorphosis from stylistic understanding of architecture to organic understanding of architecture; a metamorphosis from imitation to creation.

There is no need for me to go deeper into this matter. Everyone knows what has happened in this respect during the two past decades. It has been a great and continuous progress toward the sensing of the architectural form of our time. And this is true insofar as the designing of the individual building is concerned.

The same is true insofar as the scope of the field of architecture is concerned.

During the depression days, when jobs were scarce, I had a visit of an architect from some of the southern states.

"Mr. Saarinen", said he, "do you know how to get more work



for the architects?" "That's easy", I said, "the architects have been dealing only with plans and outside aspects of buildings, but as for the inside...furniture, furnishings and the like...they have done nothing and if they had they had doubled their field of action. Moreover, if they had been concerned with the planning of communities, towns and cities, they would have more than trebled their field of action."

Said the Southerner: "But, Mr. Saarinen, how could the architects trespass the boundaries of the interior-decorator and the engineer-town planner. It would not be fair."

"My dear friend", I retorted, "the problem of architecture is to house man, and that holds true whether we consider the room, the home, the neighborhood, the town, or the city. In short, the provision of all the spaces where human life and work goes on belongs to the realm of architecture. So must architecture be understood. And because architecture has not been so understood, is the reason why things have gone astray."

So it was then.

Since then, however, we have another story to tell, for the architects have gradually become aware of these facts. The architects have become increasingly busy in designing fur-



niture, interiors, communities and towns. And a new era seems to be dawning in architectural practice. Indeed, there has been a healthy forwardlooking and decisive progress along all the phases of architecture.

Meanwhile, the producer has brought forth an increasing number of all kinds of building materials and construction methods, often novel to the utmost. Thus... it might happen...that when someone today intends to building something super-modern by using hyper-modern materials and methods, his structure might be caught obsolete tomorrow, for after tomorrow there might be already new materials and methods.

So it goes.

And one begins to wonder whether it goes with this constant race for the new. Therefore, it becomes necessary to speculate in the future and to stake out the course in order to proceed on a safe basis.

Well, I do not know where we are heading. I have no predictions to make.

The only "dope" I could possibly refer to... if this after all is a dope... is the fact, so I have been told, that one of the General Motors directors began to wonder where all this rapid scientific progress in producing ever new materials, devides and technicals details is going to lead



human living. He surely knew what the trend was in his Corporation's extensive research laboratories and elsewhere. Sensing this, he began to speculate what the human dwelling of 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990 is going to be... or should be. And... surprisingly enough... his speculation resulted into a log-house with a field-stone fireplace.

Well, I wonder whether he was fooling around, or whether he was serious.

Perhaps he felt that the constant mechanization of architecture was going to lead to an increasing longing for a more human atmosphere... in the cozy-corner of the log-house.

Whatever his intention or sentiment, after all, here is something to think about. A memento! And we do well in pausing to deliberate, ourselves too, about this human atmosphere versus the constant mechanization of the human dwelling. And for that purpose we must ask ourselves what architecture, fundamentally, means.

Is architecture a technical art-form for the sake of producing the most perfect structural result?

Isn't this rather the means?

And isn't the end of architecture to produce an atmosphere of constructive happiness so as to foster and protect the best in man... in the room, in the home, in the town,



in the city?

Surely, it is.

Surely, architecture, fundamentally, is a human art-form. And the architect's mission is to tune his rooms, homes, towns, and cities, into resounding accord with the inhabitants of these places.

Then... when thus understood... architecture is close to music.

Music is vibration of rhythm of tune and time.

Architecture is vibration of rhythm of material and space.

Musical vibrations of tune and time...at best... go deep into the human soul giving birth to constructive cultural aspiration. Similarly, architectural vibrations of material and space... at best... go deep into the human soul with corresponding influences.

As such, both music and architecture...and true art in general, for that matter... have a deep cultural significance.

But there are more parallels between music and architecture.

The violin-player's first concern must be to know his instrument and to learn to handle it with skill and with



perfection of technique.

But that is not enough. The violin-player must also learn to handle his instrument in group performances of all kinds and all grades, ending with the largest orchestra; he must learn to read the composer's thoughts and the spirit of his orchestration, and he must learn to adjust his playing to the sinking and rising modulations of the conductor's baton.

Similarly, the architect's first concern must be to design his building.

But that is not enough. The architect must also learn to correlate his building into its environment, into the landscape, into the neighborhood, into the town, into the city; and he must learn to sense the spirit of the community and its organization, and he must learn to adjust his design to the town-planner's layouts and indications.

When we speak about music as rhythm of tune and time, time in this connection means beating of time.

But "time" in music has even another meaning: time distance, historically speaking.

When we listen to Palestrina's music, our mind is readily brought to his time. We need only to hear a few harmonies of Bach and Handel, and we feel the pulse-beat of Bach's and Handel's time. The same holds true with regard to



Mozart's clear rhythm and Beethoven's sublime music.

This historical time distance is manifest even with regard to architecture.

The mediaeval cathedral is not a mere ingenuous stone-organism in infinitesimal terms, it is also... both inside and outside... an instrument that broadcasts its silently sounding messages, conveying its tales of those distant times in much clearer terms than any written document could do.

But when the town grows and more buildings are added, the silently sounding messages become richer and more varied. In this manner, during decades and centuries, the town grows into an architectural symphony of material, space and time; it has its symphonic movements of various character: street-sceneries, plaza-formations, skyline, and the setting into the landscape.

So is architecture, at best, when understood in "orchestral terms".

But note! this is true only when architecture is honest, creative and genuine... as it was in olden times.

As soon as architecture became a dead replica of bygone times, and these dead replicas accumulated along the sterile street pattern of gridiron order, buildings, streets



and plazas have lost their resounding quality. The atmosphere has become hollow and lifeless.

And the city is doomed to decay... just because architecture has become imitative, and the art of building cities has become a lost art.

Now, as said, we have progressed a long and sure road of creative architecture along all of its phases. So, then... as our urban communities must be rebuilt and new urban communities must be born, it is the proper time that the architects, in corpore, take the lead of things in their hands.

And in this lead it is of highest importance that all architects, each individually and all together, learn to understand the significance of, if I may say so, "Symphonic Architecture."

And so, again, I wish to express my deep gratitude for the honor bestowed upon me today.

...(Nothing omitted, continue next page.)...



KENNETH C. WELCH...ARCHITECT
MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

1340 MONROE N.W.
GRAND RAPIDS
MICHIGAN

May 5
1947

Mr. Henry H. Saylor
Editor of the Journal
The American Institute of Architects
1741 New York Avenue, N. W.
Washington 6, D. C.

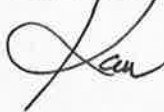
Dear Henry:

Enclosed find some of the prints that I took at the convention, which are untrimmed.

I am also enclosing a list of the names of the people appearing in them as far as I know them. I have, however, left some blanks and you can probably fill these in. I think you are familiar enough with all of the names and the people to do this with the pictures you are interested in using.

It was certainly nice to have you here in Grand Rapids.

Sincerely yours,



Kenneth C. Welch

KCW-gg
Enc:16

Journal of The A. I. A.

MAY 7 1947

May 8, 1947

Dear Ken,

The photographs are grand,
and I'm making good use of most of
them in the June Journal.

Our visit to Grand Rapids will
long remain a pleasant memory,
particularly for the hospitality of you
fellows up there.

By the way, for your own informa-
tion, the lady you failed to identify
in #12 is Mrs. Edgar Williams. I'm
sorry to say that I cannot tell you
who the lady is in #9. Could it be
Mrs. Clair Ditchy?

Cordially yours,

Mr. Kenneth C. ~~Welsh~~
1340 Monroe, N.W.
Grand Rapids, Michigan

HRS/EGP

*With unused
slips.*

<u>Picture No.</u>	<u>Description</u>
1.	Presentation of gold medal.
2.	R. Allen, Mrs. and Mr. Edmunds
4.	Mayor Welsh, Edmunds, R. Allen.
5.	John Richards, Kemper - "Junior" - Checking in dinner tickets.
6.	Mr. and Mrs. Saarinen, R. Walker.
9.	P. Gerhardt, Jr., _____?, R. Koch.
10.	Mayor Welsh, Mr. and Mrs. Eliel Saarinen.
11.	Mrs. R. Ashton, Mrs. Kenneth Welch, President-elect Orr, Kemper.
12.	Mr. and Mrs. Saarinen, J. Leland, _____? Cellarius
15.	E. Williams, E. Purves, R. Walker
16.	Paul Gerhardt, Jr., Gamber, Justement.
17.	C. A. Crowe, Junior Frantz.
18.	Edmunds, Mayor Welsh, Mr. and Mrs. Saarinen.
28.	Dinner, left to right: Purves, Edmunds, Kaelber, M. Manley, L. Segoe, Justement, Ashton, Haskell, D. Orr, Mrs. Edmunds. H. Churchill, Cellarius, Mrs. Kenneth Welch, J. Leland, W. Wurster, R. Koch, Mrs. Ashton, A. Robinson.
31.	Kump, Katzman.
104	Orr - Publish only with Mr Orr's permission - Sent to H. Saylor, only. (Suggest trimming if used.)

Journal of The A. I. A.

MAY 7 1947

