

MAY 16, 1957
SHERATON HALL
WASH DC

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PRESIDENT CHATELAIN: Thank you, Skid.

We have a double wonderful honor to do tonight.

A few months ago when we told Ralph Walker that he been chosen to receive the Centennial Medal of The American Institute of Architects, Mr. Walker did a characteristically human thing. This medal was to him the ultimate recognition of a life time of public service. He went to the little stone study near the house on Roaring Brook Road in Westchester County, New York, where he has lived for thirty-four years. The honor attached to the Centennial Medal was great, and Mr. Walker had some rearranging to do to make ready for it. There in the calm of his library he regrouped the medals tacked to the natural-finished wood panel above his fireplace. When he had finished there was an open place on the panel among the medals of the Belgian Order of the Crown, the French Legion of Honor and the symbols of the other singular honors that had been bestowed upon him. And the open place was the place of honor, in the center of them all. Mr. Walker thus became ready for the highest award of his career.

Ralph Thomas Walker is unique, and it appeared

to the Board of Directors of The American Institute of Architects that his unique contributions would be recognized most fittingly through the creation of an award to be given only once - on the occasion of our Centennial Celebration. Mr. Walker was chosen for the unstinting use of his talents and energy in many fields of public service. If I were to read you the full list of this man's activities outside the field of direct architectural practice, you would be astounded that so much could be done in a single human life time. And the wonder of it is that Mr. Walker is still moving at top speed. But this is no ordinary man; this is a man who cannot stand still: he has been in Paris thirty times in the past decade, for example. He has been known to fly from New York to Chicago for no purpose other than to keep a luncheon date.

Ralph Walker is all that an architect should be: he is a designer - and a notably successful one, a planner - his name appears on the roster of planning groups from the township level where he lives to the national level where he lives. And he's a humanist. For example, he is a fellow of the Pierpont Morgan Library, an Honorary member of the Bricklayers Masons and Plasterers, International

Union, - and the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the New School for Social Research in New York City.

And he is an inventor. He was co-inventor and first president of the Vitarama Corporation, now known as Cinerama, Incorporated.

You all know him best, perhaps, as the senior partner of the architectural firm of Voorhees, Walker, Smith and Smith. The scope of that firm's work and the roster of its clients and its projects, especially in the field of research facilities are familiar to all of us.

It is to Ralph Walker, the man that we give our Centennial Medal. Ralph, here it is, for that special place on your library wall.

... (Applause and audience arose)...

PRESIDENT CHATELAIN: I should like to read the Citation.

ANNO DOMINI MCMLVII

THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS
ON REACHING A MILESTONE MARKING ITS FIRST
HUNDRED YEARS IS MOVED TO AWARD A SPECIAL

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CENTENNIAL MEDAL OF HONOR

TO

R A L P H W A L K E R F. A. I. A.

ARCHITECT, PHILOSOPHER, HUMANITARIAN

IN THIS YEAR WHEN THE INSTITUTE FEELS ENTITLED,
THROUGH REACHING AN ESTABLISHED MATURITY,
TO EXPRESS UNASHAMEDLY ITS AFFECTION FOR A
FAVORITE AND GIFTED SON, THIS TOKEN OF ITS PRIDE
NEEDS NO FURTHER WARRANT.

IT IS OFFERED TO ONE WHOSE PATH THROUGH THE YEARS,
IN TIRELESS DEVOTION TO THE IDEALS OF HIS PROFESSION
HAS LED ALWAYS IN THE DIRECTION OF GREATER SERVICE
TO HIS FELLOW ARTISTS AND TO A FULLER LIFE FOR THAT
PORTION OF MANKIND THAT HIS WIDE RANGE OF TRAVEL
AND THOUGHT COULD REACH.

THE BRILLIANCE OF HIS CONTRIBUTION TO THE INSTITUTE,
IN ITS PRESIDENCY AND IN ITS RANKS, WILL BRIGHTEN A
LONG SPAN OF THE CENTURY THAT BECKONS.

Edward F. Wilson
Secretary

Leon Chatelain, Jr.
President

BIOGRAPHY OF RALPH WALKER

1949

WALKER, Ralph Thomas, architect; b. Waterbury, Conn., Nov. 28, 1889; s. Thomas I. and Marion A. (Shipley) W.; prep. edn., Classical High Sch., Providence, R. I.; Mass. Inst. Tech., 1911; Rotch Traveling Scholarship, 1916; m. Stella Forbes, Aug. 30, 1913.

Began practice at N. Y.; associate mem. firm McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin, 1920; mem. Voorhees, Gmelin & Walker, 1926; mem. present firm Voorhees, Walker, Foley & Smith, 1938; firm architects for New York (N. Y.) Telephone Bldg.; Irving Trust Co. Bldg.; Western Union Telegraph Bldg.; Brooklyn Edison Office Bldg.; telephone bldgs. in N. Y., N. J., Washington, D. C. and vicinity; Travelers Ins. Bldg. (Hartford); several bldgs. New York World's Fair; Bell Telephone Labs. (Murray Hill, N. J.); Prudential Bldg., Newark, N. J.; bldgs. for U. S. Navy in Brooklyn and Scotia, N. Y.; Standard Oil Co. Labs., N. J., Louisiana, Maryland; Firestone Tire & Rubber Co. Lab. Akron, Ohio; Ford Research and Engineering Center, Dearborn, Mich.; du Pont Experimental Station Expansion, Wilmington, Del.; Columbia University Cyclotron Lab., Irvington, N. Y.; Library, Mass. Inst. Tech., Cambridge, Mass.; United Nations Hdqrs., Hunter College and Lake Success; the firm, during World War II, designed the packaging of Road Equipment for the U. S. Corps of Engrs., and redesigned the packaging for the Signal Corps; won in competition on Roger Williams Memorial, Providence, R. I., and George Eastman Memorial, Rochester, N. Y.; Ralph Walker architect in charge of design and city planning, Govt. project for Army Defense bases in Caribbean at Trinidad, St. Lucia, Antigua, British Guiana; town for Nicaro Nickel Co., Cuba; Argonne National Lab., Chicago.

Served as 2nd Lt. Engineers, Camouflage Sect., U. S. Army, World War I; consultant to Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs in 1942; invited by British Minister, Mr. Brendan Bracken, to visit England in 1943 to observe postwar planning; trustee and v. p. Fred L. Lavanburg Foundation (Housing); v. p. Northern Westchester Hospital; pres. Chappaqua Library, Chappaqua, N. Y., 1945-1948; wrote Zoning Ordinance in 1927

and was Chmn. Bd. of Appeals (1935-40) and mem. Planning Comm. (1946-48), Town of New Castle. Appointed mem. Architectural Comm. of Chicago's World's Fair Expn., 1933.

Fellow Am. Inst. Architects; Chmn. Comm. on International Congress of Architects, A.I.A.; Delegate of Dept. of State of U. S. A., The Am. Inst. of Arch., and Am. Inst. of Planners, the VI Pan-American Congress of Architects, Lima, Peru, Oct. 1947; rep. Am. Inst. of Arch. at Reunion Internationale Des Architects in Paris, Jan. 1948; delegate of A.I.A. to 1st Congress of International Union of Architects, Lausanne, Switzerland, June-July, 1948; v. p. L'union Internationale Des Architects; past pres. N. Y. Chapter, A.I.A.; Architectural League of New York (past pres.), Beaux Arts Inst. of Design (mem. bd. trustees 1933-41), Municipal Art Soc. (past pres.), Am. Inst. of Planners, Citizens Housing and Planning Council of N. Y. (Bd. Dirs., past v. p. and Treas.); member Mayor's Comm. on City Planning, 1933; Multiple Dwelling Law & Real Property Inventory, N. Y. C. 1933-37; consultant to N. Y. C. Housing Authority, 1933; consultant to N. Y. State Dept. of Housing, 1943.

Awarded gold medal Archtl. League of N. Y., 1927; on Honor Roll, The Nation, 1927; Honorary Member B. M. & P. I. U. of America; Honor Roll Citation of The Am. Artists Professional League, 1947; allied professional mem. National Sculpture Society; associate, National Academy of Design 1948; mem. National Institute of Arts and Letters 1949.

Author: "London 1943", "Humans + Materials = Architecture"

Editor: "Convenience for Research"

copyers read

Walker, Ralph Thomas, architect; born Waterbury, Connecticut, ~~November 28, 1889~~; son Thomas I. and Marion A. (Shipley) Walker; preparatory education, Classical High School, Providence, R.I.; Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Class of 1911; Rotch Traveling Scholarship, 1916; married Stella A. Forbes, August 30, 1913.

Served as 2nd Lt. Engineers, Camouflage Section, U.S. Army, World War I; and was assigned to French Camouflage Section at Bar le Duc; consultant to Co-ordinator of Inter-American Affairs in 1942.

Invited by British Minister, Mr. Brendan Bracken, to visit England in 1943 to observe post-war planning. Lectured and privately printed a book "London-Winter 1943."

Began practice at New York; associate member firm McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin, 1920; member Voorhees, Gmelin & Walker; Voorhees, Walker, Foley & Smith; member present firm Voorhees, Walker, Smith & Smith

Designer of:

Office Buildings

- Headquarters Building, New York Telephone Company, N. Y. C.
- Headquarters Building, New York Telephone Company, Brooklyn, N. Y.
- Headquarters Building, New Jersey Bell Telephone Company, Newark, N. J.
- Irving Trust Company Building, N. Y. C.
- Western Union Telegraph Building, N. Y. C.
- Brooklyn Edison Office Building, Brooklyn, N. Y.
- Travelers Insurance Building, Hartford, Conn.
- Prudential Building, Newark, N. J.
- United Nations Headquarters, Hunter College and Lake Success
- Mene Grande Oil Company, Office Building, Venezuela
- General Foods Offices Building, White Plains, N. Y.
- Belgian Chancellery, Washington, D. C.
- Union Carbide and Carbon Corp. Office Building, Westchester County, N. Y. (Studies)
- A. F. L.-C. I. O. Headquarters Building, Washington, D. C.

Town Planning and Tropical Architecture

- Caribbean Army Bases, British West Indies
- Town for Nicaro Nickel Company, Cuba
- Colony for Aswan Fertilizer Plant, Aswan, Egypt
- Study for development over Illinois Central Tracks, Chicago, 1930

Laboratories

Bell Telephone Laboratories, Murray Hill, N. J.
Standard Oil Company Laboratories, N. J., La., Md.
Argonne National Laboratory, Chicago, Ill.
International Business Machines Research Center, Poughkeepsie, N. Y.
General Foods Research Center, Tarrytown, N. Y.
Owens-Corning Fiberglas Research Center, Granville, Ohio
Koppers Company Research Center, Monroeville, Pa.
Bethlehem Steel Company Research Center, Bethlehem, Pa.

Libraries and College Buildings

Montclair Library, N. J.
Charles Hayden Memorial Library, M. I. T., Cambridge, Mass.
College of New Rochelle - Library and Dining Hall - New Rochelle, N. Y.
Loyola Seminary, Shrub Oak, N. Y.
Fordham University - Student Faculty Center, Bronx, N. Y. C.
In-Town Center, Manhattan, N. Y. C.

Memorials

Roger Williams Memorial, Providence, R. I. (won in competition)
George Eastman Memorial, Rochester, N. Y. (won in competition)
Luxembourg American Cemetery, Hamm, Luxembourg

New York World's Fair

Petroleum Industries
General Electric Co.
Borden Company
A. T. & T. Co.
American Radiator Co.
Equitable Life Assurance Co.

Consulting Architect to the American Telephone and Telegraph Company

Co-inventor and first President, The Vitarama Corporation (now Cinerama, Inc.)

Memberships

Architectural and Art

American Institute of Architects - Past President and Fellow, First
Chancellor of College of Fellows
New York Chapter, A.I.A. - Past President
Architectural League of New York - Past President
Municipal Art Society - Past President
Union Internationale des Architectes - Vice President
Advisory Board on Design of Foreign Buildings, Department of State
1954-56
U.S. Delegation to UNESCO International Conference of Artists,
Venice 1952
Building Research Institute (National Academy of Sciences) -
Executive Committee

Housing and Planning

American Institute of Planners
National Association of Housing Officials
American Society of Planning Officials
Lavanburg Foundation (Housing) - Vice President
Mayor's Committee City Planning (N. Y. C.) - 1933-37
Multiple Dwelling Law and Real Property Inventory (N. Y. C.) -
1933-37
Consultant New York City Housing Authority - 1933
Consultant to New York State Department of Housing - 1943
President Eisenhower's Committee on Housing Programs - 1953
Mayor's Committee For Better Housing (N. Y. C.) - 1954-55
Mayor's Advisory Council - Subcommittee on Housing and
Redevelopment (N. Y. C.) - 1954
American Council To Improve Our Neighborhoods (ACTION) Director
Town of New Castle - Chairman Board of Appeals 1935-40
Planning Commission 1946-48
Regional Plan Association, Director

Awards and Memberships

Gold Medal, Architectural League of New York, 1927
Gold Medal of Honor, New York Chapter and Philadelphia Chapter, A.I.A.
Honor Roll, The Nation, 1927

Awards and Memberships - Continued

National Institute of Arts and Letters

Member ~~Academician~~, National Academy of Design

Chevalier, Legion of Honor of France

Fellow of Pierpont Morgan Library

Honor Roll Citation of The American Artists Professional League, 1947

Corresponding Member: Philippine Institute of Architects

El Instituto de Urbanismo del Peru

Royal Institute of British Architects

Bund Deutscher Architekten

Allied Professional Member, National Sculpture Society

Chappaqua Library Association (Life Trustee)

Honorary Member Bricklayers, Masons and Plasterers International
Union of America

Design Board, Century of Progress, Chicago 1933

New School for Social Research - Chairman Board of Trustees

Benjamin Franklin Foundation (Chairman) for construction of a

Congress Hall in Berlin under the aegis of the State Department

Contributor to architectural journals; author of "Humans Plus Materials Equals Architecture;" "Vidi - These Small Beginnings" (Poetry); editor of "Convenience for Research;" designed book for National Sculpture Society - "Enduring Memory;" Associate Editor - Pencil Points (Architectural Magazine) 1936 to 1938.

Began the study and practice of architecture at Hilton and Jackson's office, Providence, R.I., in June 1907.