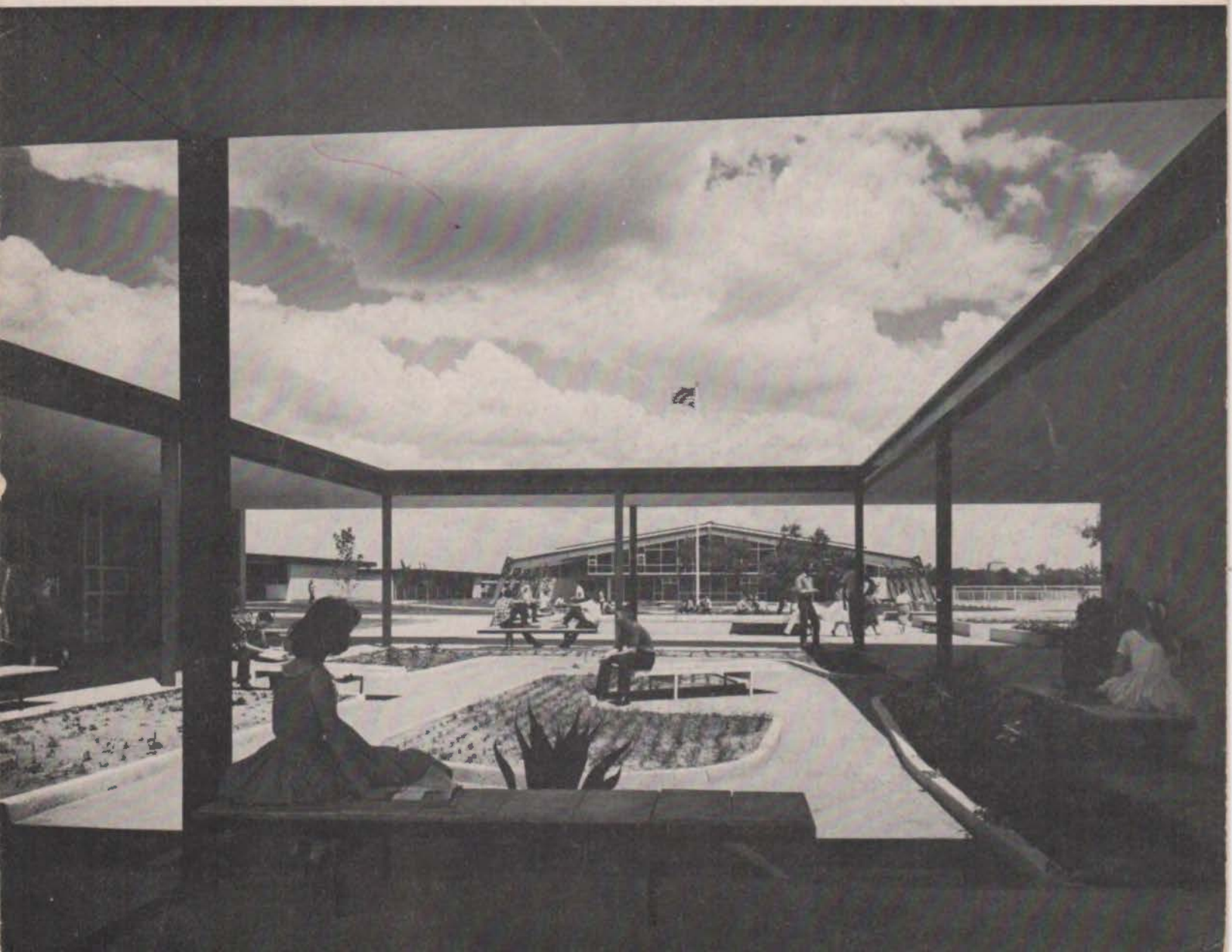
TEXAS ARCHITECT

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE TEXAS SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTS

JANUARY
1959

PRIDE OF SAN ANGELO



The President's Letter

By

Robert

P.

Woltz, Jr.

President,
Texas Society
of Architects

GREETINGS! I believe that is the way a President's letter is customarily started. I sincerely trust that the year of 1959 will bring health and prosperity to each of you the like of which you have never experienced before.

The TSA is launching into some new experiences which it has not heretofore encountered. The organization will operate under a completely new set of officers, namely, a President, a 1960 President-Elect, a Past President, the AIA Regional Director, 3 new Vice-Presidents, and a Secretary-Treasurer. As President, I have assigned work to the three Vice-Presidents that will tie these Officers, which form the Executive Committee, closer to each Chapter.

It is my feeling that each Chapter Director working hand in hand with one of the State Officers will develop the feeling in each individual member that his Chapter and State Organization is doing its best to assist him in every way possible. Vice President Joe Smyth will be concerned with this phase of our work during the year of 1959. I sincerely hope that each Chapter Director and Chapter Secretary will work very closely with Joe, giving him the reports he is requesting. I am firmly convinced that the transmitting of any necessary information from the state level to the Chapters and back will develop interests heretofore unrealized by the membership at large.

Another new experience for the TSA will be the publication of the TEXAS ARCHITECT. This has been placed in the hands of the Board of Directors of TSA, headed by our able Public Relations Chairman, Harold Calhoun, as Editor. Vice President "Skeet" Pitts is working with Harold Calhoun, trying to create a real magazine representing our profession and one of which every member will be proud.

Vice President "Woody" Brown is working with Louis Southerland, our 20th Anniversary Convention Chairman, in developing what we hope will be one of the greatest Conventions ever experienced by TSA Members. "Woody" has already requested of each Chapter President that he appoint a local Chapter Convention Chairman so that he will have one person in each Chapter responsible to him for transmitting and receiving information about the annual Convention at the local Chapter level.

Secretary Arthur Fehr will undoubtedly be contacting each of you Chapter Treasurers from time to time regarding the collection of dues and back dues, forwarding them to Austin as quickly as possible. This year's budget is expected to surpass all previous budgets and we are going to try to do this without raising dues. A great deal, however, will depend on you Chapter Treasurers collecting 100% of your Membership dues and getting them to the State Treasurer.

As for President-Elect Jack Corgan, he will continue to receive Committee Chairman reports which will be presented at the Board Meetings, as well as to advise with me on all matters concerning TSA.

This may sound as though I were trying to delegate all the work to someone else but I can assure you that with this being a legislative year, I have not lost sight of the fact that there are going to be many things coming up during the year which are going to fall on my shoulders. As a matter of fact, several things which I expect to discuss in future letters have already come to my attention which will require a goodly portion of my time. I am expecting a great deal of cooperation from you TSA members and if the cooperation which I have already received since the San Antonio Convention is any indication of what I can expect, I feel doubly confident that this, the 20th year of TSA, will be one long to be remembered.

I want to work toward this end but it is going to take your help to make it.

Robert P. Woltz Jr.

THE TEXAS ARCHITECT

Vol. 9 January, 1959 Number 11

Meet Bob Woltz . . .

By Leonard E. Mohrmann

THERE are things about Architect Robert P. Woltz, Jr. which hit you right off. First, there is his wavy, graying hair to match his immaculate attire. Neat. Precise. Then there's a deeply creased forehead, steadily piercing eyes of determination and sincerity.

When you've talked with him a few moments you are aware of his deeply vibrant voice in studied conversation, of his intense interest in his topic. It could be about architecture or one of his hobbies on which he wishes he could devote more time . . . say growing camellias, woodwork, photography or a musical interlude in hi-fi or stereophonic sound.

"One of the society's most dynamic years lies ahead. Especially in the field of public relations," the new president of the Texas Society of Architects will tell you. Bob, as he is known throughout construction circles over the state, elaborates before you can find an ash tray for your low-burning cigarette. The program, he adds in resonant follow-through, includes a seminar on education for the practicing architect as to what should be incorporated in plans and specs, plus a good briefing on what the services of an architect should include, etc.

"Another dynamic thing happening now," Bob will say on developments of the moment, "is that Governor Price Daniel has appointed a group of architects as an Architectural Advisory Committee for all state buildings in the future." To help promote the Capitol Master Plan Development, the TSA has underwritten a "Slide Show" to give visual educational force to the project. It makes sense to Bob Woltz. It is good for architecture, he will say, and good architecture is good for the taxpayer.

It adds up that Bob would be one to see the prospects for mutual good in teamwork with the State Building Commission. As he talks about the Capitol Master Plan, for instance, you might recall that this man of varied interests who likes to work with his hands, coupled two of his hobbies into a going business.

Although he has enjoyed doing quite a few commercial buildings and schools in the area, Bob's credo is, "Anybody who can design a good residence can design anything." Bob stepped out on his own in his home town in 1936 after a year with George L. Dahl on the Texas Centennial project, an association with Hubert Hammond Crane, 1933-35, and seven years of scholastic preparation at Texas A & M College and The University of Pennsylvania, where he received a degree in architecture.

BOB is almost as much at home at a TSA convention as he is at 3433 Dorothy Lane with his wife, Frances, and their 13-year-old daughter, Francie. Bob has missed only two TSA conventions in his active participation in TSA. Illness derailed him from attending at Bandera and at Galveston. Yeoman service? Yes. Bob is a charter member of TSA and his home town chapter, American Institute of Architects. In 1950, he served as secretary-treasurer for TSA, under the presidency of Edward L. Wilson. He is past-president of the Fort Worth AIA chapter.

During any week in Fort Worth you might find Bob, when away from his office or hobby-business shop right next door, at the Kiwanis Club, at a meeting of the Camellia Society, at The Breakfast Club, the Fort Worth Club, and on Sundays at the Trinity Episcopal Church. He and C. O. Chromaster collaborated on the design of this church.

If not at an earlier meeting in TSA work, you can find this precise, talented and serious-minded man with great ambitions for TSA at the next convention. It's a date.

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TEXAS ARCHITECTURAL FOUNDATION
327 Perry-Brooks Building, Austin, Texas

Pride of San Angelo

Here's how beauty, efficiency and economy were all wrapped up in one school package

"THIS is fabulous," the businessman said to the tall, gray-haired man on his left as the throng slowed at the entrance to the circular building with its unique roof. "I'm glad my wife forced me to come over here – but I'm having so much fun it's a shame to spoil it with a speech that will probably be dull."

"It is a shame," said the tall man, "and I know the speech will be dull. But I've never seen such an exciting school!"

A few minutes later, the tall man –Dr. Lawrence G. Derthick, United States Commissioner of Education – stepped onto the stage of the Sarah Bernhardt Theater, an intriguing auditorium which is one of twelve buildings comprising San Angelo's Central High School.

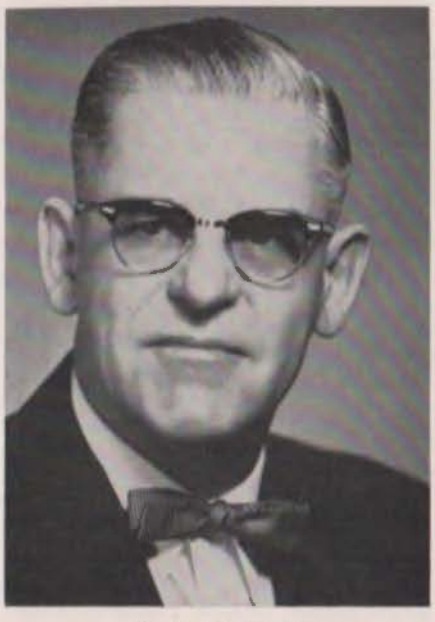
"I'm so thrilled and excited," he said, "I think I'll throw away my prepared speech."

More than 10,000 other people were equally thrilled and excited on that day last September when Dr. Derthick dedicated this ageless, versatile school.

The same reaction has been shared since by hundreds of other visitors from all over the United States, from Canada, Mexico and even Russia. They are still flocking to San Angelo at the rate of about fifty a week to visit this unique school with its 30-acre campus.

Visit San Angelo for any purpose and your host, even though he may have no official connection with the school, is likely to take you on a tour of this beautiful campus with its storybook-type surroundings. The vast majority of the City's taxpayers are just as proud of this fascinating educational palace as are the educators and architects who teamed up to design it.

During the four-year planning process, G. B. Wadzeck, San Angelo's fast-moving superintendent of schools, became something of an authority on architecture. By the same token, the architects—Caudill, Rowlett & Scott – gained more expert knowledge on such subjects as school curriculum and needs.



G. B. Wadzeck

Working together, this team produced an air conditioned, truly functional high school with enormous possibilities for expansion. It's a showplace that makes the taxpayers proud of their surprisingly-low $3,500,000 investment in it; but it is much more than that – it is a model of efficiency which stunned even the Russian educators who visited it.

"I went into a classroom to see what was going on," said one of the Russians, "and I was amazed by the mathematics problems on the blackboard. They were much more complicated than the ones our children study at the comparable level."

The entire school, combining widespread use of plate glass (in many cases as partitions between halls and classrooms) with solid brick walls, is permeated with an atmosphere that makes students want to study. That was the goal which dominated planning, from the start; it was carried out with repetitive construction and mechanized erection techniques that gave top value for every dollar spent.

"We don't stick to tradition on

anything," says Wadzeck, in a classic understatement. He is rapidly revolutionizing educational techniques and raising educational standards. The new Central High School is merely a means to that end – such an effective one that he receives an average of about fifty inquiries each week from all parts of the country.

WADZECK is a man who believes in eliminating meaningless frills, educating all children to the limit of their learning capacities and providing education which meets fully the needs of the community.

For instance, the huge swimming pool in Central's Babe Didrikson Gymnasium is not a costly, unnecessary frill designed to promote a country club atmosphere. It plays a vital role in physical education to fulfill a specific need.

"We have a large lake near San Angelo and another one is being built," Wadzeck points out. "The people around here are becoming water-conscious and they're taking full advantage of the lake recreational facilities. For that reason, we think it is important to teach our children to swim – and to do so safely."

Every student at Central takes swimming lessons in physical education classes unless his parents specifically request that he be excused from that requirement.

And the cost?

"Most schools this size have two gyms – one for boys and one for girls," said Wadzeck. "We found that we could rotate the classes, letting boys use the gym part of the day and girls use it part of the day, and get by with one. We saved enough money to build the swimming pool, by handling it that way."

The air conditioning is not a luxury, either.

"We installed air conditioning for efficiency and economy, not just for comfort," said Wadzeck. "It saves us $27,000 a year on janitorial services alone and the engineers estimate it will increase our utility bill only about $10,000. That means a saving of $17,000 a year."

Each building resulted from a specific educational need. Separate buildings house facilities for sophomore courses, junior courses and senior courses, with others devoted primarily to science, vocational training, fine arts and so forth. The minimum traffic flow achieved through careful grouping increases educational as well as maintenance efficiency.

Snack bars, courtyards, pleasant walks, planting areas, benches – all were woven into the campus to serve functional as well as esthetic purposes.

"We like to keep our kids on the campus at noon," Wadzeck said, "but we didn't want to make staying on the campus mandatory. After all, we're trying to help these youngsters make the transition to college – and we're trying to teach them to accept the responsibility for planning their own affairs. Along with our cafeteria, we built a snack bar where they can get a hamburger and a malt without leaving the campus. It's working out fine."

APPROXIMATELY 1,500 students are now enrolled at Central but it was built to handle the future as well as the present. It can accomodate 2,500 easily – and it is designed for easy, economical expansion.

For instance, there are no weight-bearing walls, interior or exterior, in any of the buildings. Vertical steel beams handling the weight-bearing function will make it simple to knock out the exterior walls and construct additions when necessary.

The entire plant demonstrates Wadzeck's belief that a school building – or buildings – should be designed to operate at equal effi-

(Continued on Page 10)

Pleasant surroundings make school delightful for students of Central High School — and also for San Angelo taxpayers, who are proud of the educational dividends they are reaping.

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SO YOU PLAN TO BUILD . . .

A HOUSE

Consider:

SIMPLICITY, by eliminating the cost and clutter of "false" architecture such as fake shutters, unusable birdhouses, etc., so often found in tract houses.

FUTURE EXPANSION, by allowing for additional building that will not destroy the integrity of the original design.

CHOICE OF SITE. Architectural possibilities and building materials can be lost on a poor site. If possible, consult an architect before actually buying the lot you think you want.

FUTURE CONVENIENCES, such as music systems, appliances, pool and patios can be easily and economically installed later, but only if thought about and planned for in the original design and building of the house.

FADS in design, ten years hence, may be an oddity rather than an "original".

A CHURCH

Consider:

ADEQUATE LAND. Plenty of land means plenty of parking facilities, room for expansion. If the future proves you have more land than needed, it can usually be sold for a profit and for controlled uses.

YOUR CONGREGATION. Inadequate public address system, cooling or heating equipment, drafts, glaring lights on uncomfortable pews will result in small, uncomfortable and distracted attendance and reduced financial support.

PURPOSE. Spiritual inspiration is enhanced by inspired design and by such items as stained glass windows, carefully engineered acoustics, and choice of materials.

EXPANSION. Besides the land, there should be long-range planning in order that the design will lend itself to orderly and integral growth.

FUNDS. Without sufficient money and the faith that will bring it, the best conceived plan cannot be realized.

A SCHOOL

Consider:

LAND. Acquire plenty, and far in advance of need. It is much cheaper that way, and will allow proper planning and avoidance of costly crash programs of building.

QUALITY vs. COST. There's an intangible comparison that cannot be determined by the square foot. A building designed for education will produce results that transcend the monetary considerations.

DURABILITY. Good materials and design result in inexpensive maintenance; in the long run this is where true economy lies, not in initial cost.

ESTHETICS. The psychological effect of a child's environment is a factor that cannot be safely ignored when planning a building wherein the formative years of his life are spent. Architectural design and cultural environment can affect his whole life and his relationship to society.

FUNCTION. A school building's function is not limited to providing a space for a child to learn; it must also provide the atmosphere for him to learn and for the teacher to teach.

TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES. Greatest possible use of new, improved and more economical materials and methods of construction can only take place if the public and school board permit the alert architect to use them in up-to-date design.

SOCIOLOGICAL CHANGES. Population growth, new educational demands and techniques should be planned for.

A PUBLIC BUILDING

Consider:

ACCESSIBILITY. A public building has to be accessible to appropriate segments of the public, and usually a "coming and going" public.

COMMUNITY PRIDE. Architecture, particularly public architecture, reflects the quality of the people it serves. This involves both the building and its setting.

FUTURE EXPANSION. Changing sociological and technological factors—growth, increasing functions, accumulation of records, wiring for communications, etc.—must be considered in the planning stage to avoid obsolescense even before the building is erected.

WORKERS NEEDS. An uncomfortable, crowded, inadequate environment will reduce employee efficiency and ultimately cost more than the savings made on cheap construction and poor design.

. . . ANYTHING

Consider:

RISING COSTS. Delay in property acquisition and actual construction may cost you far more than if you were to borrow money and proceed now.

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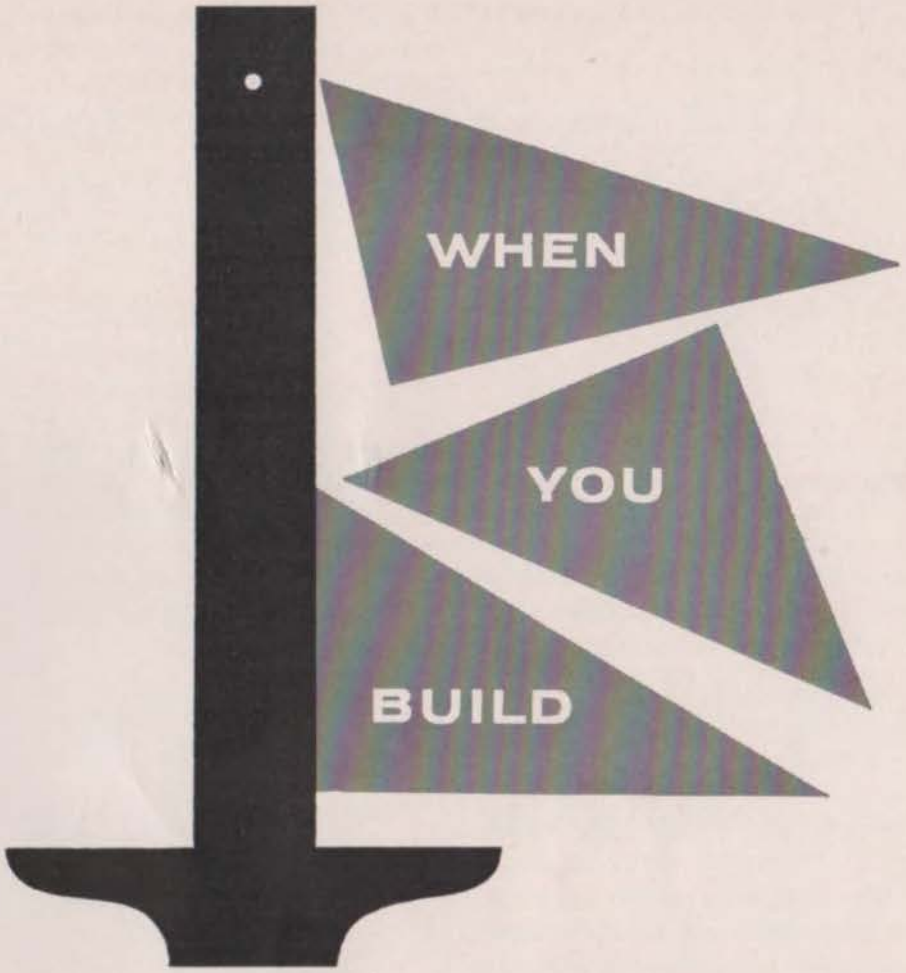

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(Continued from Page 5)

ciency twenty-four hours a day, any day of the year.

"We may no longer be able to afford the luxury of only using our buildings for six class periods a day, nine or ten months out of the year," Wadzeck believes. "We may soon have a longer school day or a longer school year."

Wadzeck already utilizes a staggered schedule to promote more efficient use of facilities. One group of students goes to school from 8 a.m. until 3 p.m., another from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Plans already prepared will put some students on a 10-to-5 schedule when the need arises.

Such things as this were taken into consideration in the initial planning, which started when Wadzeck sent a questionnaire to 3,000 school people asking their opinions on high school needs.

"Generally, the ones in small schools pointed out the advantages of small schools," Wadzeck grins, "while those in large schools cited the advantages of large schools. We decided there was something to be said for both sides, so we tried to combine the best points of each. As I told a school conference in Atlantic City, we decided to build 'schools within a school.' "

This required, Wadzeck explains, grouping according to ages about half of the time and grouping according to educational levels and interests the rest of the time. He found that this could be done either with one massive building that included separate wings for various groupings or through separate buildings, which would help establish a small school atmosphere.

San Angelo's mild climate and the availability of a suitable site led him to adopt the latter approach.

"Architecturally," he said, "we wanted facilities for top efficiency in our educational program but we also wanted to stay within a reasonable dollar expenditure. This called for architects with imagination who were not so sold on any given approach to the problem that they could not create different approaches to meet the problem.

"In the first place, they had to be willing to strip the building of any unnecessary expenditures for monumental purposes. In order to air condition the facilities, we needed close coordination between the architects and engineers to remove things which were not necessary. And to stay within the educational dollar, we had to save money through better use of materials and equipment plus the elimination of unnecessary building procedures which require heavy labor expenses."

After four years of planning (including the construction of a working model which Wadzeck praises as having "saved us a lot of grief") and two years of construction, the results are amazing.

The students have been pleased as much as their taxpaying parents have been. They, too, are proud of this remarkable school – and they take excellent care of it.

Perhaps the most important testimonial, however, came from a youngster who was all but carried away with the educational opportunities of Central High. Last fall, he took to Principal Minton L. White a detailed schedule of the courses he wanted to study during his entire high school career. He had chosen them carefully, selecting those he felt would be absolutely necessary to prepare himself properly for college. They included several years each of such courses as physics, chemistry, advanced mathematics, French and Latin.

"This is fine," said White, "but you will have more than enough credits for graduation long before you complete all of these courses. To take all of these, you would have to stay in high school at least an extra year."

"That's okay," the youngster grinned. "I like it here."

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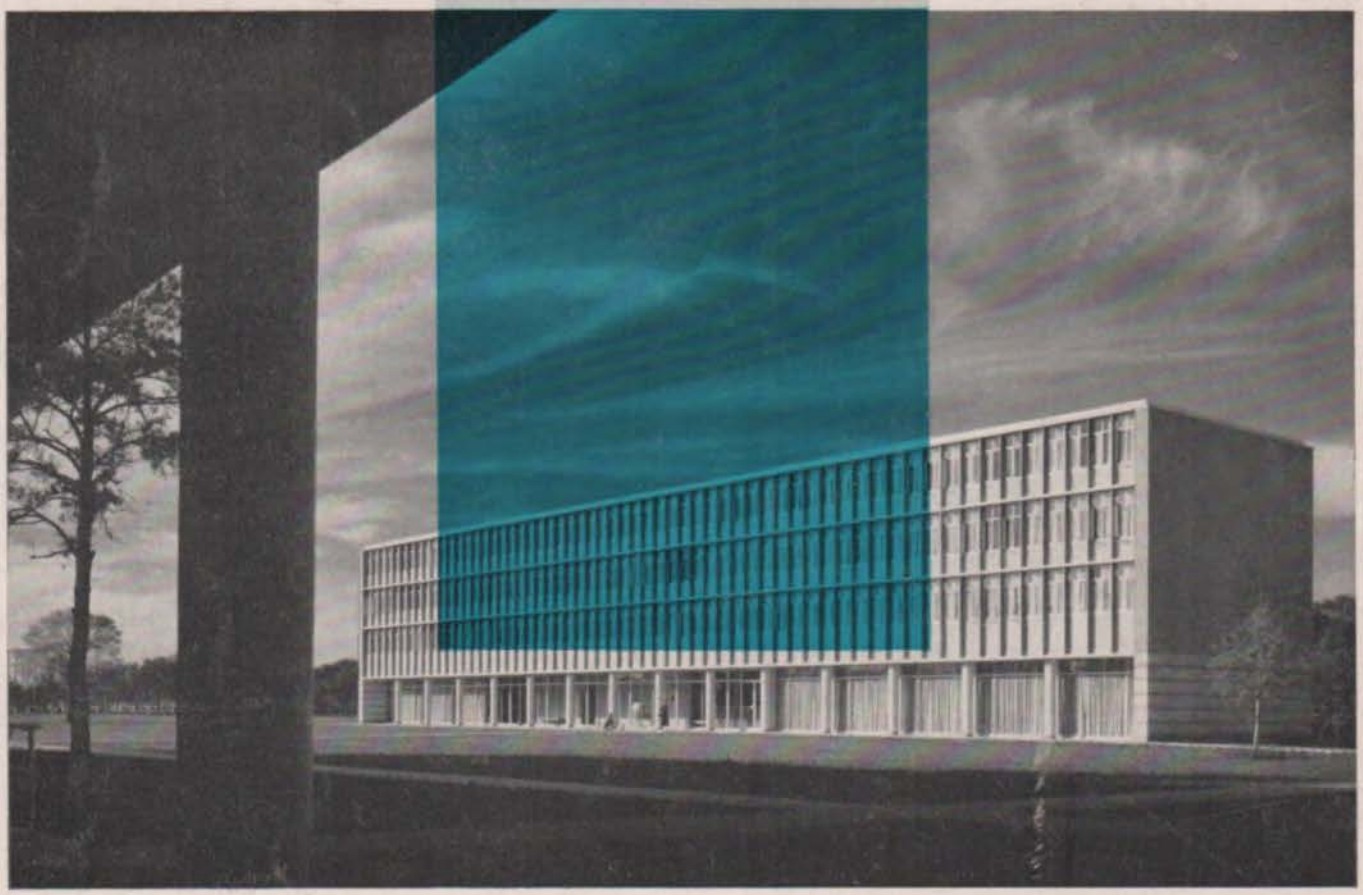

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