

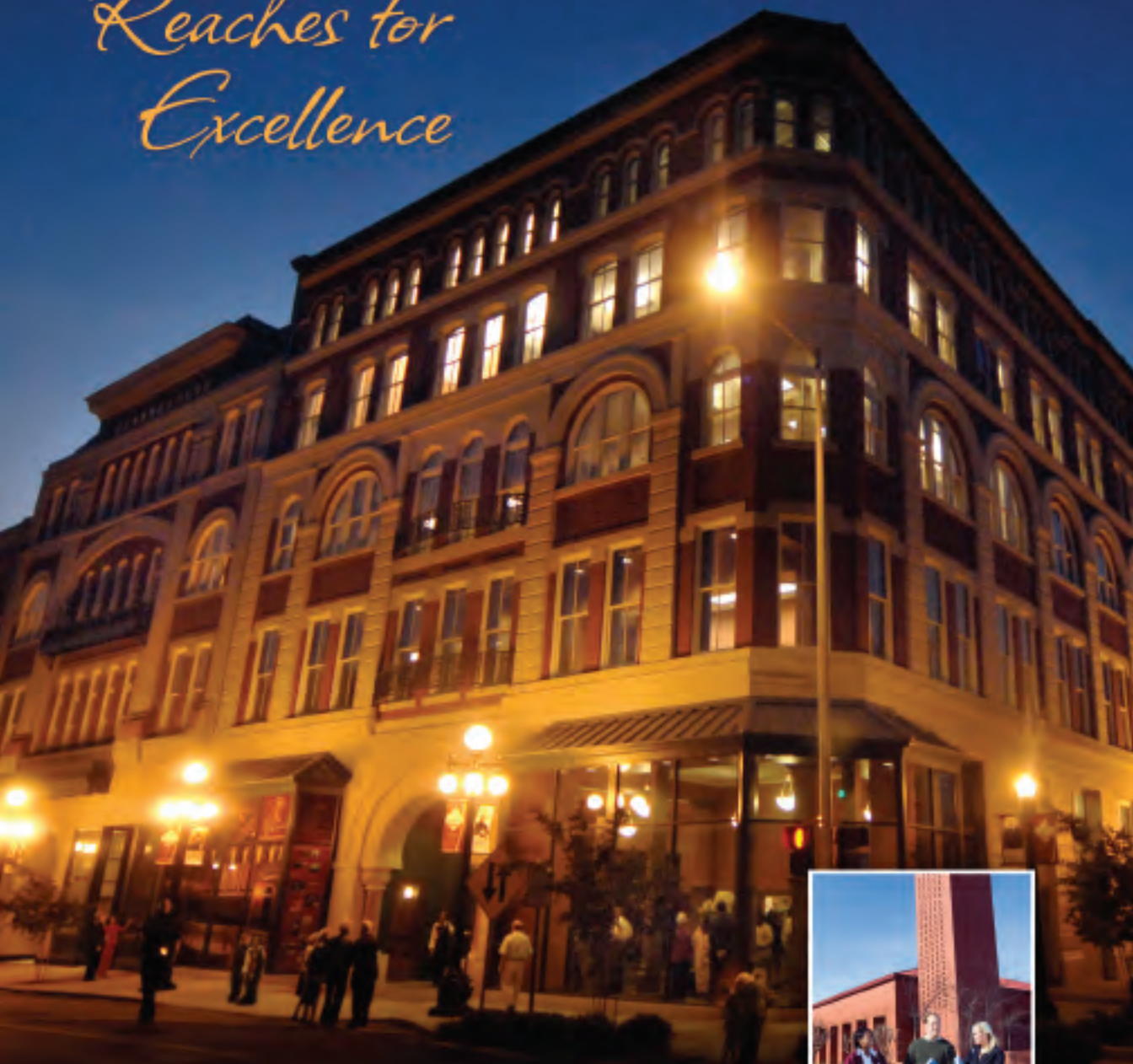
foundations

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A NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS OF THE MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION

MSU-MERIDIAN

*Reaches for
Excellence*



*New initiative seeks gifts for Meridian
scholarships and performing arts center.*



Keeping school ties

FORMER ARCHITECTURE FACULTY MEMBER
CEMENTS RELATIONSHIP WITH MSU

Robert and Freda Harrison (far right) visit with his former protégée Rachel McCann, an MSU architecture professor; and fourth-year students Sully Clemmer and Alanna Gladney

Robert V. M. Harrison of Madison has enjoyed a 30-year history with Mississippi State University's architecture school. As a retired architect and a former adjunct faculty member, he wants to ensure the school is structurally sound for years to come.

Many of the milestones of Mississippi State's architecture school can be linked to Harrison. He was instrumental in the school's founding in 1973. Harrison also helped to implement the fifth-year class program in Jackson and taught there for many years.

Today, Harrison continues to offer assistance and advice to Mississippi State and its School of Architecture whenever possible. It is a rewarding relationship he plans to continue.



Harrison with Bennett Evans, College of Architecture, Art and Design development director; Caleb Crawford, architecture director; and James West, college dean.

Harrison recently pledged the proceeds from the sale of 10 acres of commercial property in Jackson to a future endowment. Mississippi State will use the gift to create the Robert V. M. Harrison and Freda Wallace Harrison Endowed Fund for Excellence in the School of Architecture within the College of Architecture, Art and Design. The earnings from the endowment will continue the couple's sponsorship of a previously established lecture series as well. Any remaining earnings from the endowment will benefit the school's advancement fund.

At the age of 13, Harrison set his sights on becoming an architect. Since there was no architecture program in the state at the time, he enrolled at the University of Mississippi where he completed his pre-architectural studies. He later earned a Bachelor of Architecture from Tulane University and a Master of Architecture from the University of Florida. His final stop was Tulane University, where he received an MBA.

Early in his career, Harrison returned to Mississippi. After being named president of the state chapter of the American Institute of Architects, he assisted Mississippi State University with its quest to become the only university in the state with an architecture school.

Harrison became the first faculty member of the School of Architecture's first fifth-year class in 1977, serving as an adjunct member through 1990. MSU's fifth-year program was the first full self-contained off campus program in the country. During much of this time, Harrison also owned his own

architectural and consulting firm.

Harrison's personal commitment to the school grew stronger. In 1983, he established the first full-tuition one year scholarship for an incoming freshman in architecture at MSU. It was the school's first scholarship from an individual rather than from a business.

By the late 1990s, Harrison was involved in the school's fundraising effort to endow a library fund in honor of architect and mentor Joseph Pursell. In the early 2000s, Harrison rejoined the school's advisory council. During this time, he and his wife Freda decided to provide much-needed funding for the school's annual lecture series. The Harrison Visiting Lecture Series includes four to six lectures each semester from a broad range of nationally recognized architects, educators and artists, and visits with featured lecturers are scheduled to allow interaction with students beyond the formal lecture.

Through his commitment to the field of architecture, Harrison has amassed a long line of affiliations and accolades. But among his proudest moments, he says, is the realization that many of the students with whom he shared a commitment to leadership and professionalism are now owners and leaders in many professional firms throughout the South, including holding office with the Mississippi Chapter of the American Institute of Architects as well as some national organizations.

After participating in 12 accreditation site visits to schools of architecture representing all areas of the country, Harrison believes MSU's School of Architecture "is equal to the best, because of its outstanding university leaders, faculty, students and graduates."

Thanks to his investment in architecture education, he is helping to ensure the success of quality architects for generations to come.