Dedication

The Liberal Arts Complex
May 4, 1968

Western Michigan University
Western Michigan University dedicates this Liberal Arts complex to the preparation of young men and women whose lives, we confidently anticipate, will be devoted to the service of their fellow men as well to themselves.

It is most fitting that these buildings pay honor to three former faculty members at Western, outstanding teachers who gave devotedly of their time and talents so that young men and women would be inspired to give unselfishly of their abilities and thus contribute to the betterment of their local communities, our State and our nation.

In the classroom and outside the classroom, Laura V. Shaw, William R. Brown and George Sprau embodied all the qualities which mark a superior teacher. Their contributions to higher education will be honored by these buildings which we now dedicate. It is the earnest hope of Western Michigan University that the students who use these buildings will become imbued with the spirit of those for whom they are named and will go forth into the world well suited to serve their particular professions and be of benefit to society.

James W. Miller
President

The dedication of an educational facility is an impressive occasion. It is an expression of our confidence in the future and our promise of opportunity to the generations to come. But, as we look forward with a determination that the world of tomorrow will see the accomplishment of the dreams of today, let us not forget the progress of the past which has made this occasion possible.

Dedicated men and women have in years past provided the foundation on which Western Michigan University is building for the future. On behalf of the University community of today and for the students, faculty and staff who have gone before, I express appreciation to Laura V. Shaw, William R. Brown and George Sprau for their contributions to higher education on this campus. May their examples be followed by all students who will use these fine facilities which we here today dedicate.

James W. Miller
President

Presiding
DR. RUSSELL H. SEIBERT,
Vice-President for Academic Affairs,
Western Michigan University

Greetings from the Legislature
THE HON. N. LORRAINE BEEBE
State Senator
THE HON. CYRIL H. ROOT
State Representative

Presentation by Contractor
MR. CAMERON L. DAVIS, President,
Miller-Davis Construction Company

Presentation by Architect
MR. THOMAS HEWLETT, Partner,
O'Dell, Hewlett & Luckenbach, Inc.

Acceptance by Board of Trustees
MR. FRED ADAMS, Vice Chairman

Acceptance and Dedication
DR. JAMES W. MILLER, President,
Western Michigan University

Acceptance by School of Liberal Arts & Sciences
DR. CORNELIUS LOEW, Associate Dean

Speaker
MR. CHARLES A. SMITH,
Associate Professor of English,
Western Michigan University

Dedication Prayer
REVEREND MELVIN BRICKER,
First Methodist Church

MAY 4, 1968
Open House following Program
Clustered around a spacious plaza with reflecting pool, fountains and the nighttime spectacle of colored lights, the Liberal Arts Complex demonstrates the growth of the Humanities, the Performing and Fine Arts disciplines at Western Michigan University.

Joining the first academic buildings of the Complex is the University Auditorium, giving a cultural aura to an educational center. The initial academic buildings of the Complex are the Laura V. Shaw Theater, the William R. Brown classroom building and the George Sprau office tower.

The aesthetic aspect of the Complex is enhanced by the attractive Dorothy Dalton Promenade, which provides a pleasant approach to the Auditorium and the educational buildings.

This first portion of the Complex serves to increase the number, size and range of facilities available to English, to the Modern and Classical Languages, to Speech and to the Theater. It makes possible the drawing together of departmental faculty who, for lack of suitable facilities, had been widely scattered. The proximity of faculty offices to classrooms effects a closer relationship between teachers and students, establishing an intellectual bridge over what, in some instances, had been a communication gap. It is a type of progress much to be desired.

These new buildings represent another step in a master plan which envisions the eventual grouping of all facilities within the Humanities, Performing and Fine Arts disciplines around the plaza or in the area immediately adjacent to it.

The Plaza
Dominating the academic portion of the Liberal Arts complex is the George Sprau faculty office tower, the first high-rise structure on the Western Michigan University campus. The tower provides office space for one hundred sixty faculty members associated with the three departments housed in the William R. Brown classroom building.

From the tenth floor, which is a faculty commons, there is a wondrous view of a growing campus, one where the physical growth is matched by intellectual growth. The ever-changing outline of the campus reflects the viability of a community intent on searching out new knowledge and imparting it to men and women eager to prepare themselves for a meaningful life, one that will reflect credit on themselves, their alma mater and be the personification of service above self.

On the first floor of the tower is a students' commons, a place for relaxation or study. Between the commons for students and the one for faculty are the offices. On each floor is a secretarial-reception area and a conference room. The building is serviced by two elevators and a double stairwell.

The tower is connected with the Brown classroom building at the basement level and at the second floor level, an arrangement which signifies that faculty interest knows no barrier and does not end with an exit from the classroom. It serves to show also that student interest may be pursued in the office of the faculty member, a process which is highly encouraged on this campus.

There are men for whom towers should be named. They give a unique quality to the landscape wherein they dwell. They present a clarity and stability against the sky, and ask us to look up. Such a man is Mr. George Sprau. As a scholar, a teacher, a colleague, he has left his mark on his time and his image against our sky.

Born of German-American parents on a farm near Millville, Ohio. George Sprau might naturally have followed his father in the operation of a farm, but a congenital nearsightedness, which made it difficult to follow the furrow and carry on the work of a farmer, drew him to schoolteaching and to the professional, scholarly life. He took his undergraduate work at Ohio Northern University and at Ohio University. While there he met Miss Frances Williams, also a student, whom he later married. Mrs. Sprau is a most genuine person, gifted in her own right, perceptive and warm. Their three children are Louise (Mrs. Richard O'Dell) of Marquette, Michigan; Dorothy (Mrs. Theodore Swanson) of New York City; and George W. Sprau of Kalamazoo.

It was during his first year in the graduate school at Harvard that Mr. Sprau met President Dwight D. Waldo who persuaded him to come to Western State Normal School in Kalamazoo instead of accepting a similar offer from the University of Maine. He came to Western in 1909 as a member of the English Department, and during his first sabbatical leave, 1915-1916, traveled independently in England and received his M.A. from Harvard in 1916.

Mr. Sprau has always been interested

Sprau Tower
in preparing good English teachers for the schools of the state. When he became department chairman in 1917, he not only broadened the offerings in English courses, but encouraged interested students to add their knowledge of subject matter by visiting courses they might not have time to elect, and especially those preparing to teach English to attend the newly organized “English Conference,” a monthly meeting with members of the staff to “discuss problems that confront the teacher of English.” In the fall of 1918 the Language Club was established at Mr. Sprau’s suggestion. The membership from the faculties of the departments of English and foreign language met once a month to hear and discuss a paper written by one of the members. The first meeting was held at the Sprau’s home and Dr. William R. Brown read the first paper.

As a teacher, Mr. Sprau was popular and admired, it must be said, with sincerity tempered with awe. His lectures were scholarly and concise, revealing to the student a depth of knowledge of the subject; but they were at times informal, too, laced with reminiscence, references to his family, his boyhood, his former students and associates. Though he allowed himself this latitude, he was formal and conservative in classroom relations. His address to his students and to his staff was always formal; there were no first names. His students and colleagues acknowledged and respected this reserve, but found in him a kindliness and concern for their wishes and for their good. Mr. Sprau was quick to recognize a scholarly aptitude in his students as well as the lack of it. The same insight could be felt by his colleagues. Quietly and even gently he let it be known that he did not suffer fools willingly. He could and did deflate the individual who, not having what was expected of him, showed a tendency to bluff it through. Yet, he had a great loyalty for those who lived up to the capabilities he felt to be in them. He, in his turn, was conscientious in fulfilling any commitments he might have made to his students or to the younger members of his staff. Indeed, the name of George Sprau is everywhere connected with the academic growth and scholarly quality of Western’s image from the early days. It is to be noted that Mr. Sprau in his foresight and genuine concern for excellence is largely responsible for the third and fourth-year plan for the curricula at Western.

Mr. Sprau is the author of two books, The Meaning of Literature (Scribner, 1925) and Literature in the Bible (Macmillan, 1932). He tells us in the preface to both works that he has addressed himself to young people. Both books have been used in his classes. However, this is a modest and limited estimate, for the volumes have a genuine appeal to the general, serious reader and reviewers have proclaimed them scholarly, original, and useful. In the “Dedication” to Twenty Years, a short history of Western State Normal School from 1904 to 1924, Mr. Sprau wrote:

“The essence of education is not buildings and grounds, neither is it found in any kind of physical equipment, nor in curricula; and while the founding of a school or institution of learning is always a matter of importance, it is so only in proportion as it is the attainment of a sincere devotion to the fundamental elements in our general notion of education. This may be defined briefly to be the inner urge and struggle towards human perfection as the finest imagination of the human race has conceived it and represented it in the form of concrete ideals.”

May Sprau Tower be such an attestation.
The William R. Brown classroom building is designed to meet the special needs of the Departments of English, of Modern and Classical Languages and of Speech. It serves as a link between the Sprau office tower and the Shaw Theater-Auditorium. Thus it serves in a particular way its academic functions without becoming a focal point.

In planning the building, attention was paid to the individual needs of each of the three departments it houses. To illustrate, let us consider the features included to meet departmental requirements.

The Department of Modern and Classical Languages, located on the first floor, has a double language laboratory, half of which holds the latest and best audio-record-playback equipment. Located across a hallway is a suite for production of language tapes for use in the laboratory. A small auditorium-classroom, with slanted floor and small stage, provides the Department with a facility for the staging of foreign language plays and the showing of films and slides.

The Department of Speech, located on the second floor, has facilities suited to its unique needs. These include a Creative Dramatics room which combines attractiveness, flexibility and efficiency; a mock broadcasting studio and control room—in use by students enrolled in radio and broadcasting courses. Two pairs of classrooms are divided by an observation room with one-way glass through which speech and discussion activities are taped in a manner which avoids interference with student performances. Playbacks of the tapes are providing an experiment in teaching technique.

The Department of English is located on the third floor which includes a sizeable conference room and an English studies center.

These special features emphasize the progress that has been made and continues to be made in curricula and are addittives to the regular classrooms.

This spring marks Western Michigan University's sixty-fifth year. During thirty-nine of those years, Dr. William R. Brown was a part of its life and growth bringing a lively imagination and sound scholarship to a young normal school and potential university. His background of experience, ranging across the country from Texas to Massachusetts to Michigan, brought a breadth of vision most welcome to a new school.

Born on November 7, 1886, in Leander, Texas, William Robertson Brown grew up in Austin, where his father, a public-school principal, set him a high example of integrity and learning. He graduated from the University of Texas in 1907. After teaching four years in the high schools of his native state, he turned eastward like other eager young men of his time to seek the challenge and the glamour of Harvard, where the English Department was endowed with a corps of brilliant and stimulating scholars, William Allan Neilson, F. N. Robinson, Charles Townsend Copeland, George Pierce Baker, George Lyman Kittredge were among his teachers; Chester Noyes Greenough directed his dissertation on The Rise of the Educational Novel. Harvard's libraries provided the substantial nourishment of scholarship. Boston's concerts and operas provided the excitement and solace which great music has always had for him. He received his doctorate in 1917; he would always keep these years alive in his memory.

It was at Harvard that he made one of the most significant acquaintances of his life. A fellow scholar named George

Brown Hall
Sprau was a member of Neilson's class; and a friendship and mutual respect began between the two men that led Mr. Sprau to invite his friend to join him in 1917 at the relatively new Western State Normal School in Kalamazoo.

It was in the East also that William Brown met Emma Wales, who had been a librarian in Newton and who became his wife in 1915. Emma Wales came from a venerable Massachusetts family tracing its heritage back to John and Priscilla Alden. More important, she possessed a warmth and dignity in her own person that fitted well with Dr. Brown's exuberant personality and brought hospitality and friendship to faculty and students alike at Western for many years. Her death in January 1968 was an irreparable loss to her friends as well as to him.

During the many happy years of their marriage the Browns made warm and welcome contributions to Kalamazoo as well as to Western. As members of the First Methodist Church, they participated whole-heartedly in parish activities; Dr. Brown, for several years played the organ and sang in the quartet. The Civic Theatre knew him as an actor. Once, he played the lead in Candida opposite his colleague, Laura Shaw. His reputation as speaker and book-reviewer was impressive, for he made literature live for laymen as well as scholars.

At Western his services extended beyond his classroom. His tact, his dignity, and his responsive personality brought grace and order to receptions and other social functions. For twenty years he was in charge of Commencement arrangements. He advised senior classes officially and seniors unofficially. The Language Club, begun by Mr. Sprau, flourished under his enthusiasm. The Browns' home was hospitably open to students, who came Saturday afternoons to drink tea and listen to operas broadcast from the "Met" and Sunday evenings to read poetry and drama together and enjoy Mrs. Brown's delicious suppers. Dr. Brown's very personality brought together in lasting meaning for the student the academic world and the world outside.

Such interest in young people led to the Browns taking six young men on the "grand tour" of Europe in 1929, a sabbatical in 1933-34 having prepared them excellently for their role as guides. More vitally, this interest led to their adopting two boys in 1925 to share their home: Edwin Brown, now of Winter Park, South Dakota, and Albert Brown of Odessa, Texas.

No man was ever more naturally a teacher than Dr. Brown. Through his many years as a member of the English Department, and as its head from 1946 to 1956, he taught a variety of classes. Countless students, now scattered over the country, remember his General Literature, his English Novel, and his Shakespeare classes, in which his splendid voice and natural dramatic ability gave such color and life to literature that it became an enduring part of them. Whether they became English teachers, football coaches, or lawyers, David Copperfield and Hamlet would henceforth have meaning, and Dr. Brown would remain their friend.

"A teacher affects eternity," wrote Henry Adams. "He can never tell where his influence stops." Surely it is the lengthened shadow of such men as Dr. Brown, extending through a university and the lives of its students, that determine its greatness and force. Nothing can replace great teachers, but the solid and graceful walls of Brown Hall will be a lasting reminder of one of them.
Shaw Theater is an instructional facility which provides an environment for curricular and co-curricular programs in the Theater area of the Department of Speech. In addition to serving as a "classroom," the theater provides our talented students with an opportunity to rehearse and perform dramatic works of all types in a theater that is among the finest on university campuses.

The theater has a convertible proscenium-thrust stage with related facilities including an experimental theater, seating 150; a scene shop; a costume shop and storage room; an attractive Green Room; two dressing rooms; a make-up room; and three large storage areas. The Shaw Theater has continental style seating for 600.

Theater that is most significant to man speaks the language of truth. Such theater is rooted in moral integrity springing from a sense of values, high standards and strong convictions. Laura V. Shaw believed in such a theater and for thirty-five years worked with students at Western proving its worth. It is fitting that the new university theater bears her name.

Laura V. Shaw was born in Clarksville, Michigan on April 8, 1891, of parents who were educators and also were ordained Methodist ministers. She was the fifth child of a family of ten, six of whom were boys.

While Laura was still a child, the family moved to Chicago and then to Grand Rapids where she graduated from Central High School in 1909.

Miss Shaw had as her teachers two pioneers in speech education: Robert Fulton at Ohio Wesleyan where she earned her Bachelor's degree and Thomas Trueblood at the University of Michigan where she received her Master's degree. Later she did advanced study in theatre at Provincetown, Breadloaf and Oxford University. She early became converted to the doctrines of Constantin Stanislavsky and his Method, and she studied under Madame Marie Ouspensky, Madame Tamara Dlybarkasina and Ivan Lazaroff (Chicago Art Theatre) all from the Moscow Art Theatre.

Her first teaching experience was at Illinois Women's College, later renamed McMurray College, where she taught speech for two years. After receiving her Master's Degree, Miss Shaw had taught one year at South East Missouri State Teachers' College when, in 1918, she was invited by Shaw Theatre
President Dwight B. Waldo to join the speech staff of Western State Normal School and "do" dramatics for State High. She later became head of the Speech Department and, except for one year in Japan where she taught at Tokyo Women's College, she remained at Western until her retirement in the spring of 1953.

It was not surprising to Miss Shaw that her teaching assignment included a course in story-telling, the usual fundamentals of speech and interpretive reading. It was a surprise that her extra-curricular duties included not only directing State High dramatics, but also coaching men's debate. What really surprised her though was to learn that she had been chosen as the first faculty sponsor for the Forum, the men's debate fraternity.

Theatre was Miss Shaw's first love. When she began her career the Little Theatre Movement was burgeoning. The influence of the Moscow Art Theatre was just beginning, and the Theatre Guild was dreaming dreams.

Theatre at Western meant Players, and Players meant Miss Shaw, for she served as faculty sponsor for the group during her entire career at Western. Players' activities were highlighted of the students' calendar: fall tryouts, pledge plays, the Homecoming Tea, the Midwinter play (which was the big dramatic event of the Players' year) and the Players' banquet.

The playhouse was Miss Shaw's academic home during the first twenty-four years of her tenure, the center of Players' and the lodestone for many a dedicated student. She loved the place as did every player and left it reluctantly to move to a new theatre building on Oakland Drive in 1942.

Players and her classes were Miss Shaw's major interest and concern. In 1937 another major interest was added—her house.

She built a home, and the Cape Cod sandstone house on Greenleaf Avenue became the setting for her loved antiques and oriental treasures. Here she generously opened her doors on many occasions to students who will never forget the good times they had there: the Players' Christmas parties; the spring picnics in the backyard for graduating Seniors; and the alumni breakfasts on Sunday mornings of Homecoming weekends.

The respect and esteem with which she was regarded by her students was expressed in the program at the recognition dinner given by the Players when she retired.

TEACHER
A sense of values / The right dramatic action / The courage of conviction

DIRECTOR
Finding the spark and fanning it to flame / Helping us to work together / play together / build a unity / Hold to standards / do our best, for nothing less can satisfy

FRIEND
Unceasing interest in us as individuals / knowing us as we are / Unfailing effort to help us become what we can be

OUR RESPECT / OUR GRATITUDE

OUR WARM AFFECTION TO LAURA V.

Her students, her colleagues and her friends recognized her as a woman of high ideals and indomitable will, one who despised falseness and superficialities, one who could not play politics and knew not the policy of expediency or compromise.

In years to come, may those who strive in this building to create the magnificent of theatre, speak as did the the language of truth. May their efforts be rooted in moral integrity springing from a sense of values, high standards and strong convictions.