

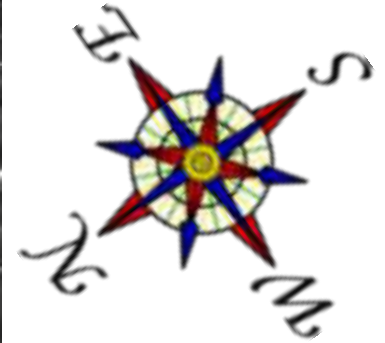


An historical look at Axinn Library

Let's go back in time to the 1960's.



In 1963 the
Mitchel
Field Air
Force Base
closed and
soon
afterwards
Hofstra
received
110 acres of
property on
the North
Side of
Hempstead
Turnpike.



John Cranford Adams, (left) who had been president since 1944 decided to retire and did so in 1964. Clifford Lord (right) became Hofstra's next president.



It had been noted that a new library building was necessary as the old library was overfilled and inadequate. Ellsworth Mason was hired as the library director. He was formerly at Yale and Colorado College and he was asked to have input into a new library building. This building was to be the heart of the academic campus.



The acreage on the north campus would allow Hofstra to expand not only its academic pursuits but to entertain the idea of residence halls for the first time.



A series of talks and informal gatherings were held to discuss the different needs of the commuter student and the *new* resident students.

Margaret Mead was invited as a guest speaker and through these discussions it was decided that it would be advantageous to link the north and south campus to allow both commuter and resident students to get to the heart of the academic area of the University in the same manner.





The architectural firm of Warner, Burns, Toan and Lunde was tasked to create a library, a bridge and **two** residence halls.

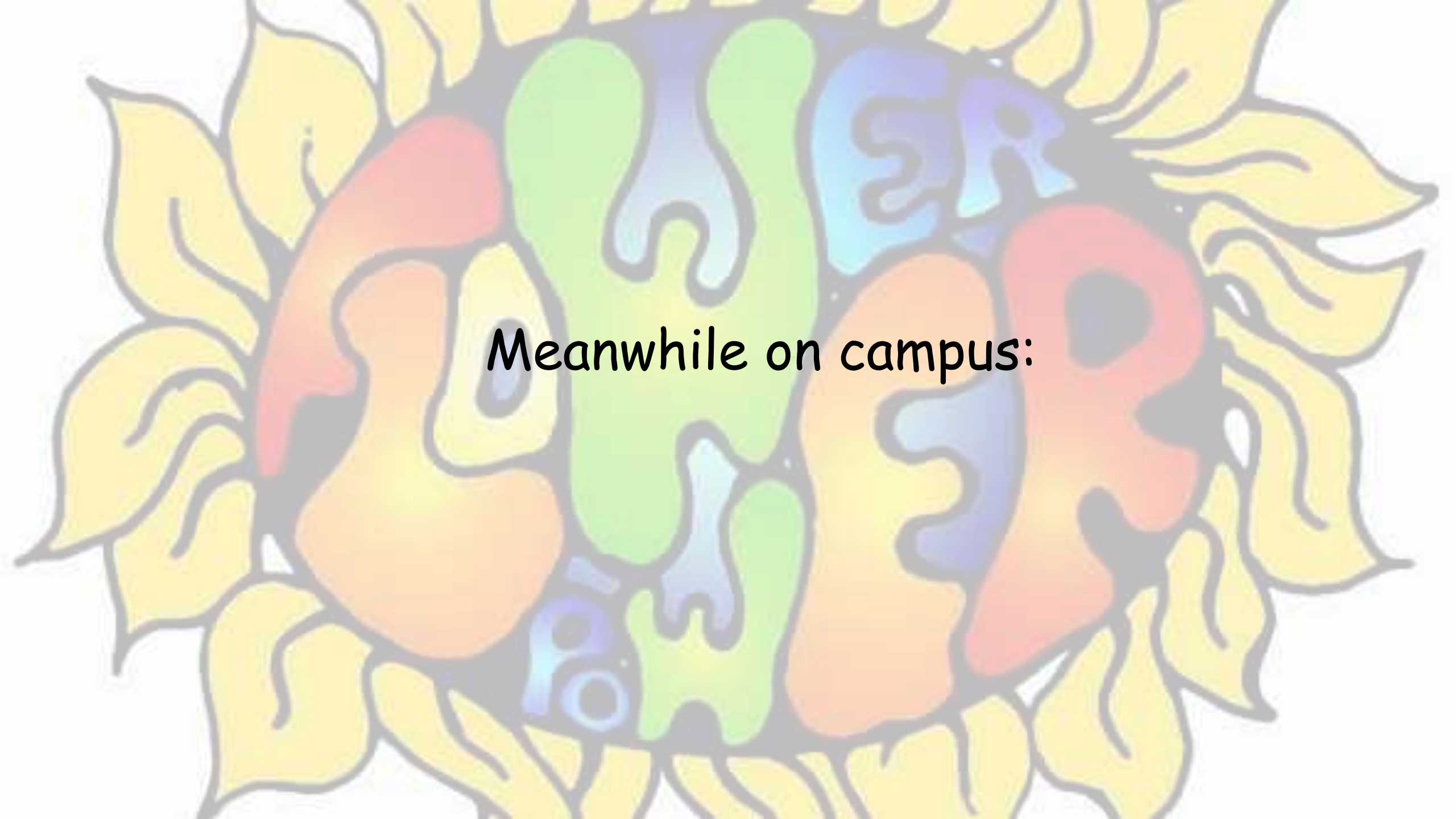
Danforth W. Toan, founding partner of the firm, designed numerous libraries and academic buildings and was said to have “changed the course of library design in the U.S.”

Toan was also among the first architects to work on designing long-term living quarters for astronauts in space.

Clifford Lord (left), Danforth Toan (center) and Ferdinand Castagna, contractor.

A groundbreaking ceremony for the library building was held in 1964 and construction was to be completed in 1966.



A vibrant, stylized graphic of a sun or flower. It features a central circular area divided into several irregular, organic shapes in shades of green, blue, orange, and red. This central area is surrounded by a ring of yellow, pointed petals or rays, each outlined in black. The overall style is reminiscent of mid-century modern or bohemian art.

Meanwhile on campus:

The men's basketball team
was the NCAA Eastern
Regional Champions in 1964.



The 1965 General Electric sponsored *College Bowl* with television host, Bob Earle, featured Hofstra University versus Lycoming College of Pennsylvania.



Hofstra University welcomed Martin Luther King, Jr. as the commencement speaker in 1965 and Hofstra students marched on Selma.



By 1966 Hofstra University had an enrollment of over 12,000 students.

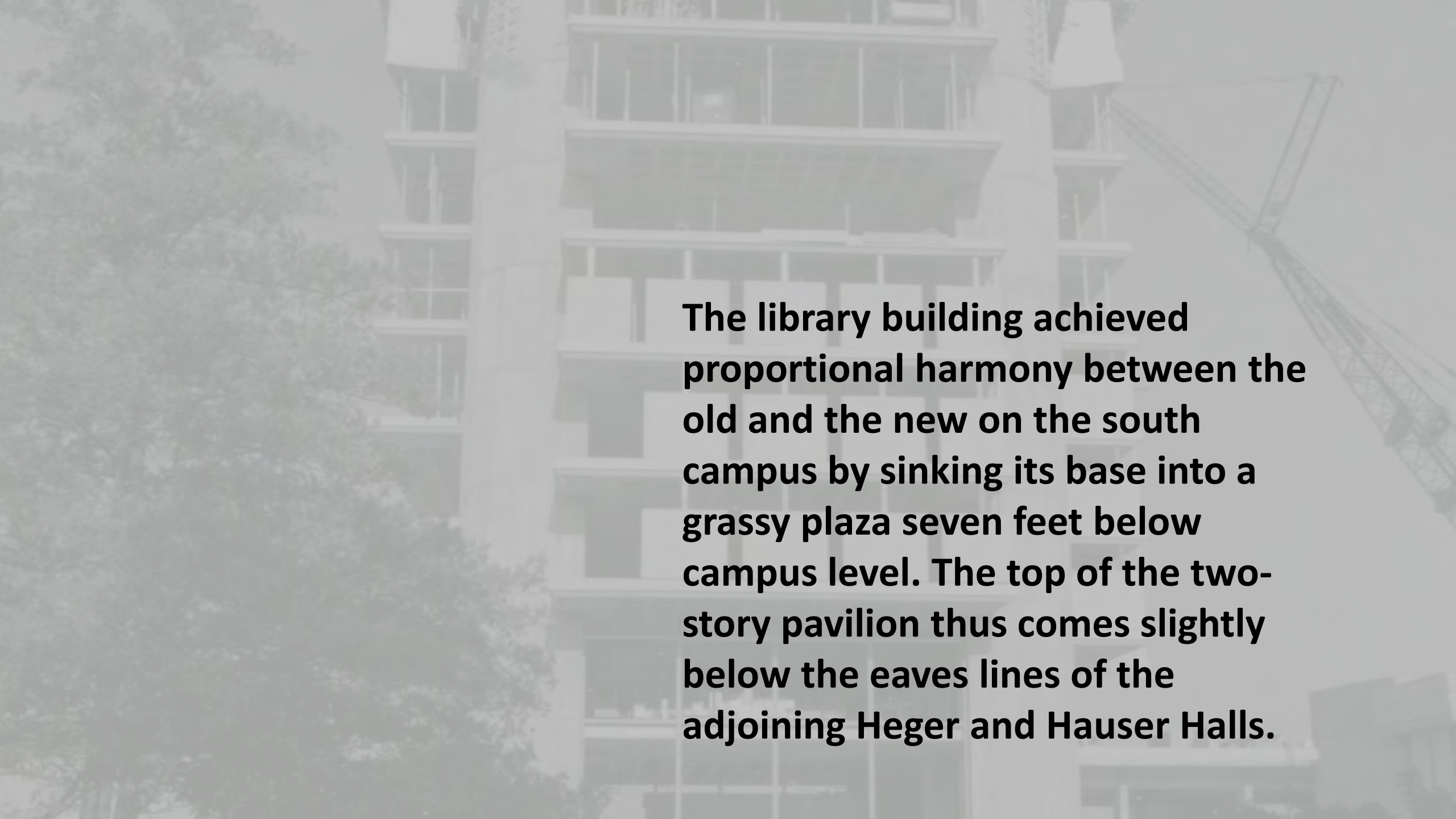


A recent Hofstra graduate Eleanor Greenwich, went on to both record songs as well as write them for Phil Spector (The Ronettes recorded her “Be My Baby” and the Dixie Cups recorded her “Chapel of Love”.) In 1965, she met Neil Diamond who recorded “Cherry Cherry.” and she became known across the nation.



And all during this time, construction of the new building was taking place.





The library building achieved proportional harmony between the old and the new on the south campus by sinking its base into a grassy plaza seven feet below campus level. The top of the two-story pavilion thus comes slightly below the eaves lines of the adjoining Heger and Hauser Halls.



The Library, Unispan, Student Center, and two residence halls were now well underway. The Library's tower structure, a miraculous design is built around four hollow, poured-concrete pylons at each corner. These support the weight of the tower floors and also use a cantilever system that juts out eleven feet on all four sides of each floor. There is not one interior column on any of the tower floors!



The “topping off” ceremony was held in January of 1966. That’s Ellsworth Mason pouring the champagne! Sometimes referred to as a “topping out” this ceremony marked the point in construction when either the last brick is embedded or the roof is put on.

In early photographs of the student center you can see that the central area does not have a roof. This open design was reconfigured about 1985 and a roof was added.



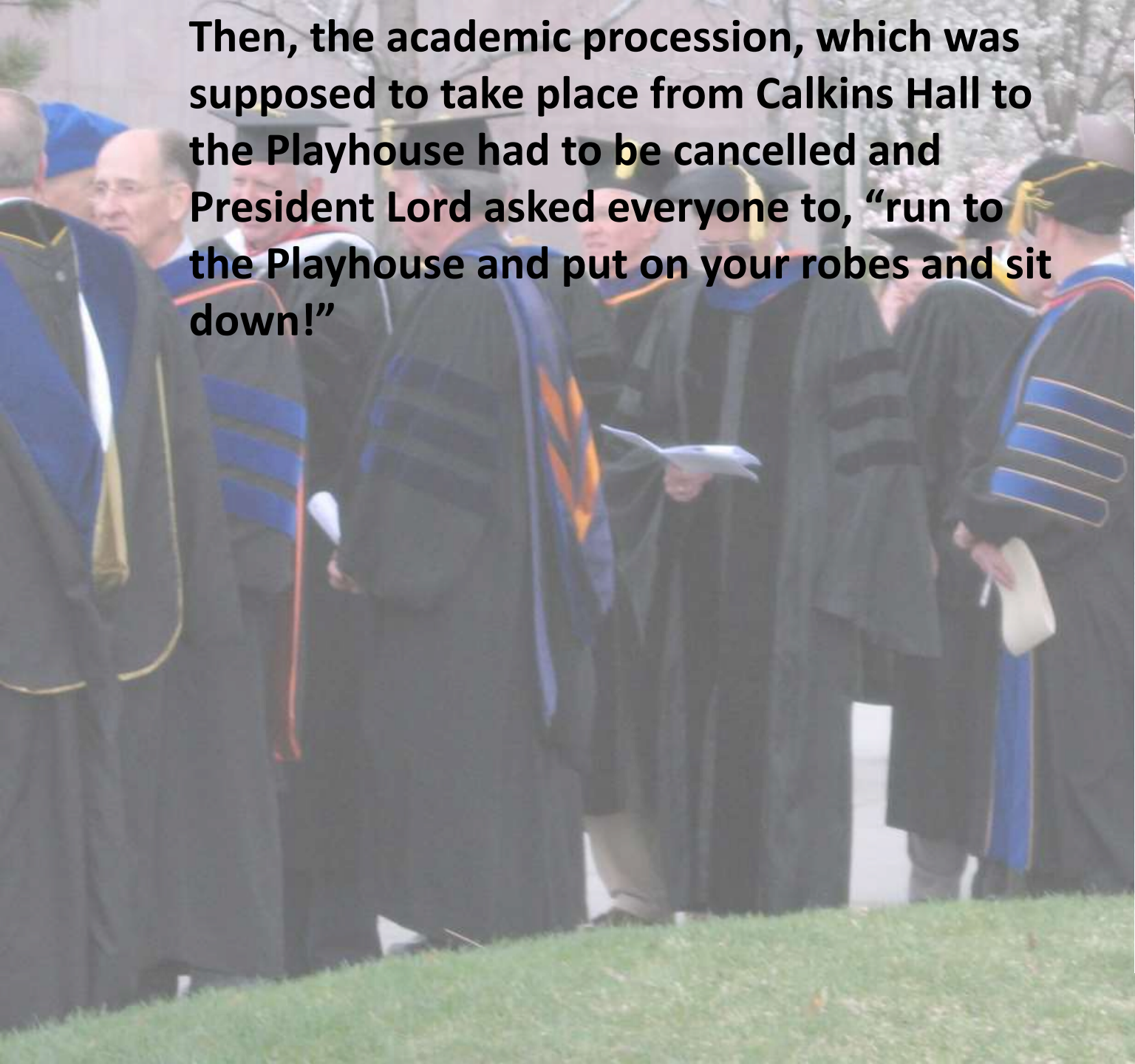


HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
HEMPSTEAD, NEW YORK 11550

Once the library building was completed it was opened for study. The dedication ceremony happened *after* students had already been studying there for a few weeks!

The Dedication Ceremony:

The big ceremony was to take place on May 5, 1967. Several things went wrong from the beginning. First of all, it was raining. Not just a little rain, it was pouring!



Then, the academic procession, which was supposed to take place from Calkins Hall to the Playhouse had to be cancelled and President Lord asked everyone to, “run to the Playhouse and put on your robes and sit down!”

HOFSTRA LIBRARY DEDICATED IN RAIN

Heckscher Is Speaker at
Long Island Ceremony

Special to The New York Times

HEMPSTEAD, L. I., May 6—
Hofstra University dedicated its \$5-million library here today, but without a formal academic procession because of the rain.

Then it was discovered that the roof of the new building leaked in various places. Buckets needed to be strategically placed so that the floor didn't flood!



Then, there was a ceremonial pair of gold plated scissors that was supposed to be used to cut the ribbon for the dedication.

Somehow, they were misplaced! A quick thinking Student Council president had a pocket knife and the ribbon was cut.





A concert that was supposed to take place making use of the newly installed carillon bells also needed to be cancelled because of the rain.



The Library, residence halls and Unispan won the Concrete Industry Board Award in 1966. William Barnum, an architect who was the chair of the awards committee said, “the best in conception, originality and applicability of concrete, both in design and in construction.”

An additional set of residence towers was contracted for in 1967 and another two in 1968, bringing the total of residence towers to six; all in the Brutalist style.



The Unispan is a unique feature on our campus and is 360 feet in length. It is so structurally strong that it can withstand being hit by a truck, which happened when a garbage truck hit the span in 1981!



And while not everyone saw beauty in these new brutalist structures, they saw the usefulness of the concept.

“If there is one thing Hofstra University knocks you down with, it is logic. At a school where a busy thoroughfare splits the campus, the obvious thing to do was build a pedestrian overpass to save lives. It is called the Unispan.” *Newsday*, Sept. 30, 1972.

By 1968 all six towers were completed. The north campus and the south campus were joined by the Unispan, which emptied into the lobby area of the library.



And Margaret Mead's ideas did bear fruit, as commuter students parked on the north side of campus and walked through the student center along with the resident students and then across the Unispan to the academic side of campus.



The library has been home to many different celebrations, dedications and renovations including:

The one-millionth volume celebration which took place in 1983.

The 9th and 10th floor renovations in 1984, enclosing the terraces and creating windows that looked out over much of Long Island and New York City.

The theater, created in 1984.

Computerization of the library through various grants begun in 1986.

The building, itself, was dedicated to Joan and Donald Axinn in 1987.

The Reference area of the library was dedicated to Harold Yuker after more than 45 years of service as faculty, provost and scholar in 1995.

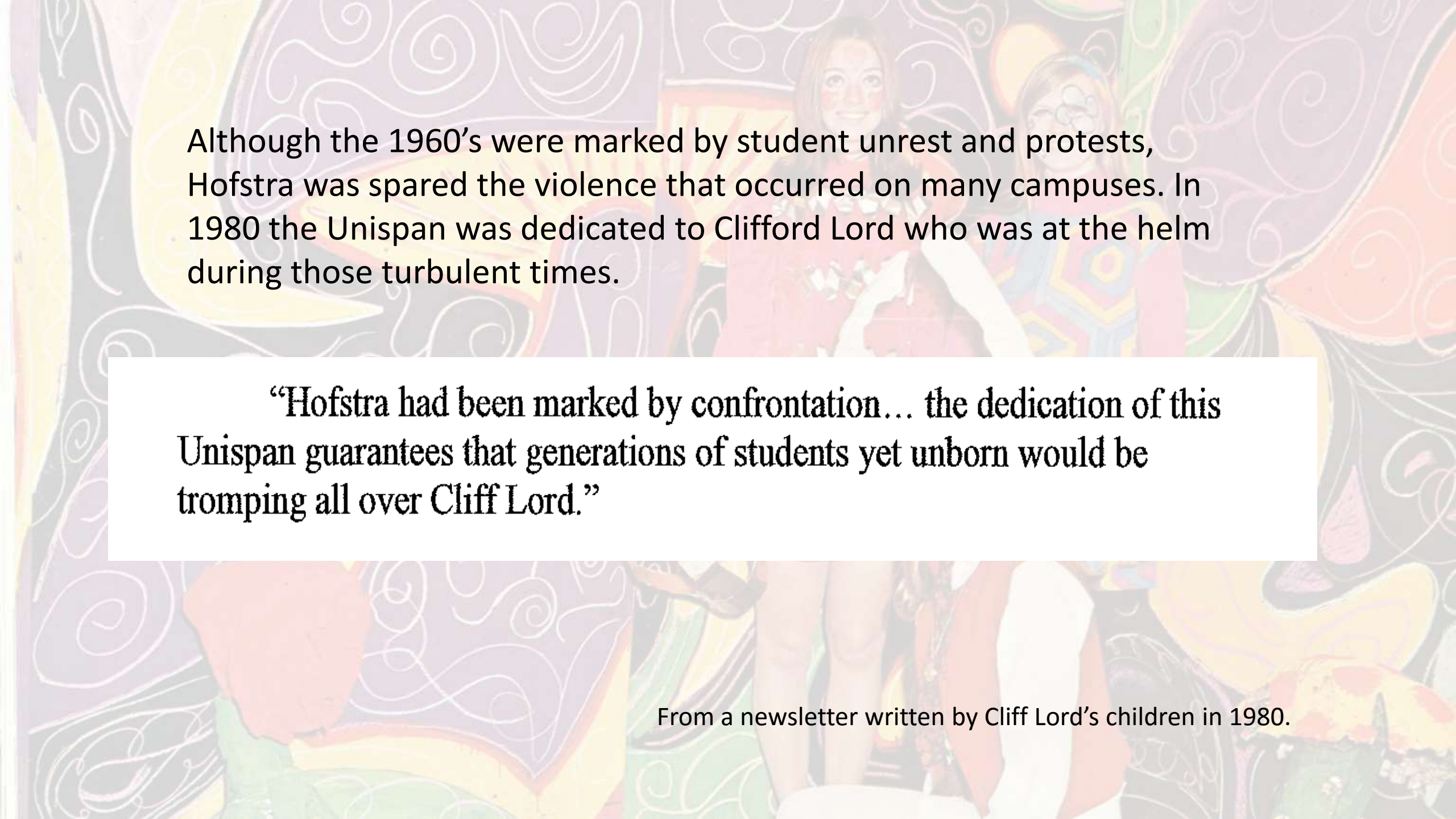
The ground floor lounge, technology updates, and second floor learning center were completed in 2014.

The third floor renovations include the Center for Academic Excellence which was completed, summer 2017.



In 1987 the library was dedicated to Joan and Donald Axinn. Donald was a former chair of the Board of Trustees, an Associate Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the Director of the Institute of the Arts at Hofstra.





Although the 1960's were marked by student unrest and protests, Hofstra was spared the violence that occurred on many campuses. In 1980 the Unispan was dedicated to Clifford Lord who was at the helm during those turbulent times.

“Hofstra had been marked by confrontation... the dedication of this Unispan guarantees that generations of students yet unborn would be tromping all over Cliff Lord.”

From a newsletter written by Cliff Lord's children in 1980.

Many have had their “close up” with Axinn Library!



Geoff Manthorne from Charm City Cakes at Hofstra's 75th Anniversary.



Joe Namath, Jets quarterback practices on the north campus with Axinn Library in the background.

Princess Margriet of the Netherlands shakes hands with Hofstra president James Shuart on 10th floor of the library.



Maureen Reagan greets students in the library during the Reagan Conference.



**Interior view of staircase skylight
when Axinn Library was first
opened in 1966.**



On the occasion of Hofstra's 50th anniversary, William Sexton a *Newsday* columnist remarked:

"You ought to know what's going on at Hofstra these days; it's probably the Island's biggest success story of the 1980's. One consultant on higher education considers it on average the best educational institution on Long Island..."

It's true, the doggerel penned by an irreverent student back in 1977...'Oh, Hofstra,' he wrote, 'not bad for an old airport.'"

