1973

UA68/1/3 Ivan Wilson Center for Fine Arts

WKU Potter College of Arts & Letters

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The dedication and placing into service of the Ivan Wilson Center for Fine Arts is another landmark in the life of Western Kentucky University. The beauty and design of the building are in keeping with the programs it houses, representing excellent blending of aesthetic and utilitarian qualities. The Fine Arts Center is tangible manifestation of Western’s commitment to provide quality facilities that enhance the educational programs and support the academic endeavors of students and faculty.

The magnificent structure will not only be a valuable asset to the students and faculty, it will also provide cultural enrichment opportunities for the citizens of our region.

This building has become a reality through the combined efforts and the dedicated cooperation of large numbers of people. It would be impossible to list all of those who contributed to the Fine Arts Center; but on behalf of the Board of Regents, the faculty, the student body, and the alumni, I express Western’s gratitude and deepest appreciation.

We extend a warm welcome to all who attend the dedication ceremony and who participate in the events scheduled as a part of the Arts Festival. We invite you to return to the campus on frequent occasions.

Dero G. Downing
President
Ivan Wilson has achieved a wide reputation for his excellence in watercolor techniques, and his vivid colors have brought visual pleasure to thousands of art lovers. Founder and first head of the Department of Art at Western, he has left his mark on the lives of the University students of four decades. Gentle and soft-spoken, Mr. Wilson has become known and loved for his compassion for fledgling artists, in a measure which parallels his talents as a painter. Mr. Wilson's original works have been shown in many galleries and art exhibits—in New York, New Orleans, and Kansas City in this country, and abroad as far away as Paris.

Joining the faculty of Western in 1920, for 25 years he was head of the department. Near the close of his tenure, Mr. Wilson requested reassignment to devote full time to teaching and, in 1958, he retired. He holds the bachelor's degree from Western [and a life certificate from the Normal School], as well as the master's from George Peabody College.

Mr. Wilson now lives in retirement in his hometown of Hazel, Ky., in company with his beloved wife, Emma. His present health has interrupted the painting which has absorbed his energies for so many years. But the world—the portion of it which knows Ivan Wilson—now comes to him, in token recognition of the indelible imprint which he has made on the lives of so many Westerners, neighbors, and friends.

Russell Hale Miller died in 1968, at the age of 63, having made a permanent imprint upon speech and the dramatic arts as a professor at Western Kentucky University. He was a dedicated person who demanded much of his students, devoting his entire life and energies to his profession, with obvious delight in the progress and growth of others. A native of Water Valley, Miss., he received the bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Mississippi, and the doctorate from Columbia University. Dr. Miller came to Western in 1947 after serving a number of years on the faculty of the former Bowling Green College of Commerce and Business University. He was instrumental in establishing strong interest in programs of speech and debate in many of the secondary schools of Southern and Western Kentucky, and influential in founding the Western Players and the Western Debate Associates on campus, and establishing community theater in Bowling Green. Designating the new theatre in the Ivan Wilson Center for Fine Arts in honor of Dr. Miller recognizes the mountainous contributions of his life and career.
Potter College of Arts and Humanities is a grouping of eight academic departments whose special concern is an informed and disciplined reflection upon man, his cultural heritage, and his aesthetic achievements. The college consists of the Departments of Art, English, Foreign Languages, History, Mass Communications, Music, Philosophy and Religion, and Speech and Theatre.

The humanities trace the adventures of the human spirit in its quest for an understanding of man and the arts give aesthetic expression to his creative nature. Together the arts and humanities share the fundamental purpose of expanding the student's powers of reason, judgement, communication, and imagination. They provide the uniquely human core to the disciplines of higher education.

No one can say quite when the fine arts had their beginnings, perhaps in a simple line drawing scratched on the rock wall of a cave, or in the exotic sound of a windblown reed. In any case, for all of recorded time, man has created the arts to express the range of his inner nature.

The progress of the arts tell the story of man and his culture. The masterpieces mark the way. The Potter College of Arts and Humanities is committed to placing Western students in direct contact with those pivotal contributions of the arts and humanities which have long inspired greatness and a desire to create a better future for the family of mankind.

→ Office of the Dean

Department of:
1↓ Speech and Theatre
→ Foreign Languages
3↑ Music
4↑ Art

IVAN WILSON CENTER FOR FINE ARTS
The curriculum of undergraduate and graduate instruction in speech and theatre is designed to contribute to the general instructional objectives of the University. It intends to provide a thorough introduction to man's cultural and intellectual heritage; to create habits of logical reasoning; to develop versatility in oral and written communication; to instill a passion for intellectual achievement; and to encourage individual dramatic artistry.

Three departmental undergraduate majors are available. A well-conceived curriculum of undergraduate and graduate instruction services the increasing number of students desiring to major either in speech or theatre, or a combination of the two.

Specifically, the department offers major and minor programs in rhetoric and public address, oral interpretation, speech education, theatre, speech pathology (pre-professional), and communication theory. It supports the general education programs of the University through a variety of appropriate courses. The department presents student dramatic productions, and supervises intercollegiate debate and forensic programs.

The Department of Speech and Theatre is dedicated to perpetuating the intrinsic and extrinsic values of studying men "adjusting ideas to people and of people to ideas." Intrinsically, the study, criticism, research, teaching, and application of speech communication and dramatic principles prepare the students to understand themselves more adequately as they assume the various roles which life requires. Extrinsically, it prepares them to become citizens useful as speakers, critics, and artists required by business, industry, and other sectors of society.

DEPARTMENT OF SPEECH and THEATRE

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Studying a foreign language provides the opportunity to appreciate a different culture and to learn a new set of skills, two of the basic aims of higher education. The student of a foreign language soon discovers that language is not only the medium of communication, but also the verbal expression of another culture, through which he learns that other peoples have different and interesting ways of thinking. The student also gains new perspectives on his own language and way of life.

Having command of a foreign language has definite advantages in a variety of career fields, such as foreign trade and international diplomacy, and many other technical and professional vocations.

Undergraduate majors in French, German, Latin, and Spanish (and a minor in Russian), together with introductory courses in numerous common and exotic languages, provide satisfying opportunities for language students at Western.

All programs in the department are supported by a system of language laboratories and related audio-visual learning aids. A unique facet of the new teaching facilities is a classroom-laboratory complex connected with the University dial-access system, where activities ranging from traditional teacher-student discussions to highly individualized learning programs can be accommodated.

Opportunities for foreign study are available through a junior-year-abroad at the University of Montpelier, France. At the University of the Americas in Mexico, and on selected campuses in Italy and Canada, consortium arrangements provide Western students other opportunities to integrate foreign study experiences into approved degree programs.
Music reflects the wide and varied range of human emotions in an artistic medium of sound and rhythm. The mastery of musical skill requires diligence and commitment. The continuous demand for qualified performers, composers, scholars and educators has encouraged Western to build over the years a solid faculty of skilled musicians and a progressive curriculum.

The Ivan Wilson Center for Fine Arts provides excellent facilities for the study and performance of music. In the electronic piano laboratory students learn piano by the latest methods. An extensive practice wing is equipped with upright and grand pianos and organs. A modern Recital Hall with a seating capacity of 230 is actively scheduled with student recitals and University concerts.

All phases of music receive attention at Western. In the vocal program are several University choruses and choirs. Students interested in grand opera or Broadway musicals receive training in the Opera Theatre. Those preparing for band positions in high school have ample opportunity to participate in the various University bands. Townspeople, faculty, and students perform with the University-Community Orchestra.

Vocal and instrumental groups from the department have taken tours in this country, Europe, and the Caribbean. The state choral, instrumental, and marching band festivals bring thousands of high school musicians to Western to participate in musical competition.

Outstanding clinicians, composers, teachers, and performers are brought to the campus for workshops which attract musicians and educators from Kentucky and nearby states.

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

DEPARTMENT OF ART

As far back as the primitive origins of culture can be traced, the arts have played a prominent role in the development of the aesthetic dimensions of human existence. Historically, they have been an integral part of a liberal arts education.

At Western Kentucky University classes in drawing extend back almost to the beginning of this century. In 1924, under the imaginative and quiet leadership of Mr. Ivan Wilson, the Department of Art came into being.

The five major studio areas presently offered by the Department of Art are ceramics, painting, printmaking, sculpture, and weaving. Students taking an area of concentration in art, who plan to teach on the elementary or secondary level, develop a working knowledge of all five studio areas, and advanced expertise in at least one. Those planning to teach art learn instructional techniques appropriate to a field which draws upon the creative capabilities of children. Students completing this program receive the bachelor of arts degree and qualify for certification as art specialists for grades 1-12.

Students preparing for careers as professional artists follow a course of study wider in scope designed to develop a larger appreciation of all the facets necessary for the artist's professional growth.

Regular monthly exhibits in the new Art Gallery featuring the work of artists of regional, national, and international reputation, serve not only the University, but the surrounding community as well.
The architectural aspects of the Ivan Wilson Center for Fine Arts have been carefully coordinated to balance sound, modern design with the environment appropriate for the study and enjoyment of the arts. The curving contours of its concrete exterior blend with the landmarks which have been retained on the site of the former Western Stadium. The historic Colonnade and the permanent seating of the stadium have been renovated and will now be preserved as parts of the Outdoor Theatre serving the Fine Arts Center.

Erected at a cost in excess of $4 million, the structure provides permanent housing for the Departments of Art, Foreign Languages, Music, and Speech and Theatre. It provides a total of 174,000 square feet of floor space, including a four-story central portion, and contains 41 class and lecture rooms, an art gallery, 85 faculty offices, 30 studio offices, six seminar rooms, and numerous art studios, language and music laboratories, and music practice rooms.

The two-story east wing contains the 320-seat Russell Miller Theatre and supporting facilities such as dressing rooms, a scene shop, and off-stage areas. The single-story west wing encloses a 230-seat Recital Hall and a band rehearsal room.


Architect: Ryan Associated Architects, Louisville, Kentucky
Engineer: E. R. Ronald Associates, Louisville, Kentucky
Contractor: Melson Contractors, Shelbyville, Tennessee
Electrical Contractor: Speakman Electric, Bowling Green, Kentucky
Mechanical Contractor: James E. Smith Company, Louisville, Kentucky
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