

MAPP @50

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE,
PLANNING & PRESERVATION

1967–2017

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*Celebrating
50 years of
the University
of Maryland
School of
Architecture,
Planning and
Preservation*

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The School's Beginnings

ABOVE
Class of '72 Tunisia, 1970. Photo taken by Steve Parker.

OPPOSITE
Top: John Hill, Charles Moore and Roger Lewis plan out the School's inaugural study abroad trip; middle: Founding Dean John Hill; bottom: the class of '73, known as the "hole in the wall gang," for deconstructing a wall of DD, just to see its innerworkings.

In the early 1960s, the University of Maryland at College Park decided to consider establishing a program in architecture. The professional community strongly supported the initiative; at the time, no professional architecture degree programs were offered in the state. University president **Wilson Elkins** requested advice from the American Institute of Architects. Institute President **Charles Nes**, a Baltimore architect, formed an AIA advisory commission, with himself as chairman, and in 1964 the commission issued its recommendations to the University. Among them were that the proposed architecture program be located on the UMCP campus, and that consideration be given to organizing its curriculum as a non-professional undergraduate major in architecture coupled with a graduate program leading to the professional Master of Architecture degree.

The application required by the Maryland Higher Education Commission for approval of the new program, include a narrative outlining the

justification for the program, operating budget projections for the program, and the budget for planning new facilities. Charles Nes' firm, Fisher, Nes, Campbell and Partners, was selected to design the permanent building for the school. In the interim, the University designated Building DD, a temporary World War II building, as the first home for the School. By the time the School moved into its new building in 1971, our School's little home campus had grown to include Building DD and four additional temporary structures.

In the spring of 1967, after a national search, the University invited **John W. Hill**, an associate professor of architecture at the University of Kentucky, to accept the deanship. In order to ensure that he and the University were on the same page, Professor Hill wrote a white paper to the University outlining his thoughts about the management and growth of the program. The paper described the resources and components needed to ensure the program's quality, and proposed that it

be named and organized as the University's 'School of Architecture' ('school' implying an academic unit without separate departments).

It noted the need for visual aids (architectural slides) collection and an architectural library in the School, argued for the presence of a supply store and a coffee shop, and described a future in which academic programs in landscape architecture, urban planning and architectural historic preservation might also be offered. The white paper helped facilitate communication between the dean and the University as the program was initiated and grew. Vice President for Academic Affairs R. Lee Hornbake, to whom the dean reported, was notably supportive as the fledgling program began to spread its wings. He was instrumental in the School's achievement of its early successes.

*Excerpted from *The Foundation Years: Recollections of the Early Years of the School of Architecture, University of Maryland, 1967-1982*, by John W. Hill, FAIA. Hill was MAPP's founding dean and taught architecture at the school for 30 years.*



John Wiebenson's active civic-mindedness had as much of an impact inside the classroom as it did out; "John was beloved by many and a critical element in the success of the early years of studio," says alum Dennis Jankiewicz. (B.ARCH '73)



Resurrection City

The School was founded during a time of social and political upheaval in the United States. In 1968, with the ink barely dry on the curriculum offerings, the country was fully engaged in a foreign, unpopular war 8,000 miles away and, in April, **Martin Luther King, Jr.** was assassinated in Memphis. Closer to home, riots broke out throughout cities in a collective scream against the injustices of the undelivered promises of the Civil Rights Movement. Word soon spread of a peaceful "sit-in" in the works in Washington, D.C.: the Poor People's Campaign, which had begun developing months prior to King's assassination, would stage a visual and vocal protest against the government's blind eye on poverty and prejudice.

John "Wieb" Wiebenson was the people's architect; aside from designing buildings, he was a social advocate to the nth degree, whose personal mission was to impact the lives of the invisible. A founding member of the architecture faculty, Wieb subscribed to Dean **John Hill's** philosophy of "forces

for good"—using design skill to help those in need, an early and essential tenant of the school. Wieb was drawn to the idea of the Poor People's Campaign. Together with architect **Tunny Lee**, **James Goodell** of Urban America and Howard University's **Kenneth Jaden**, Wieb envisioned—and later fabricated on the National Mall, with a number of UMD students in tow—Resurrection City, consisting of A-frame structures suitable for shelter and part of a larger miniature city, with meeting spaces, dining, child care and more—a necessity for the extended period of protest. Despite a deluge of rain that month, Resurrection City housed around 3,000 people.

Resurrection City was one of a long line of community and social justice-centered endeavors by Wieb. His legacy and spirit remain as part of the School's mission to create an environment that builds advocacy, sustainability and economic and social justice. Fifty years later, as we face new challenges, we strive to humbly follow in his footsteps.

Time Out: How Sports Created Community at MAPP

UMD's School of Architecture got its start in two wooden temporary classroom buildings, DD and UU, located down in The Gulch. Nearby was a single outdoor basketball court with a single street light, where architecture students could blow off steam playing ball day or night, when an escape was needed from the loudly buzzing fluorescent lights and the sweltering indoor temperatures.

The new building was ready, after 4 ½ years, for spring semester, 1972. The new digs were so much better, but we were no longer near a basketball court. A resourceful student came up with a novel diversion for life in the new building, utilizing an 8' tall x 18" d. cardboard sonotube. This was born indoor basketball "in the round" out in the center space. This was short lived, as the University scheduled night school in the upper classrooms.

Bouncing basketballs and loud laughter could not coexist with classes, so the unique new sport was over.

The studio's next use was the first Beaux Arts Ball, with a band featuring drummer **Mark McInturff** '72, who some of you may have heard of.

Next, it was determined that badminton would be a quiet use of the center space that could coexist with classes and studio work. The court was laid out, lines were painted, eyelets for the net were set into the concrete columns, equipment was obtained and play began. It was a nice way to mix students from each studio class, and some faculty members, for a little fun amongst all the studio work. Sometimes betting was involved and competition was quite spirited. I believe the actual bet had been for Michelob in one epic match,

that was eventually "paid off" by a case of Old Maryland Beer. After the first can was opened and tasted, the rest of the case sat untouched in studio for a long time (not the usual brief lifespan of beer in studio).

Logan Schutz '73 was competing for his Sigma Nu fraternity in intramural badminton in winter 1972-1973 and won the little gold terrapin as Greek badminton champion. **Mike Shpur** '73 competed in the open or commuter division intramurals and won, beating **Bruce Hutchinson** '73 along the way.

It was then suggested that the School of Architecture should hold their own badminton championship in spring 1973 for fun, and Assistant Dean **Dale Hutton** not only endorsed it, but competed in it and convinced some other faculty to play as well.

I believe that **Dean Hill**, **Frank Schlesinger** and **Rik Ekstrom** all competed. Mr. Hutton often promoted fun activities that brought the students together outside of the classroom. Anyway, the school-wide tournament bracket lasted a few weeks and eventually paired Logan and Mike in the finals, which Logan won, cheered on by an enthusiastic crowd high and low around the center space. The center space made an excellent competition badminton court. I am not sure the original design architect envisioned its potential, but we discovered it. I think the court painters were **John Van Fossen**, Bruce Hutchinson, **Larry Root**, Logan Schutz and Mike Shpur, all members of 5th-year "Night Crew" that spent many hours overnight in the studio. My apologies to anyone left out.

The class of 1973 graduated, but not before the center space had also been used for a square dance, a rock 'n' roll dance and a show featuring Lupo and the Gassers, and the Beaux Arts Ball again. The court lines were eventually replaced by a painting of the street grid of Manhattan, but the net anchors were still there the last time I checked.

The spirit of the architecture badminton tournament lived on when graduates—and now apartment mates—Bruce Hutchinson and Mike Shpur, answering an ad from the Montgomery County Recreation Department, joined two older county citizens

as charter club officers and formed the Montgomery County Badminton Club, which continues play at several county locations to this day.

Another activity involving Mr. Hutton, students, competition and betting was golf putting along the top-level walkway around the center space. The original carpet was fast, and the concrete installers left some interesting breaks in the floor. Putting from the top of the steps to the door of what was the lounge at the other end gave a challenging 120' putt. It was up to 150' when we opened the library doors and putted across the slate bridge, to the consternation of Librarian **Mrs. Neal**. But, of course, we had political cover as the Assistant Dean was one of the golfers.

One afternoon we were putting upstairs when Bruce Hutchinson came running through the bridge and around the top, yelling, "IT'S OVER... IT'S OVER," meaning the Vietnam War. For those of us about to graduate with low draft numbers, Hutch (11), **Michael Dowling** (33) and Mike Shpur (51), this was life-changing news. Eventually, the three of us shared an apartment while working as architects at three totally different firms, until we parted and went our own ways with our significant others, having never chosen a military career, and still practicing architecture today.

Mike Shpur (B.ARCH '73) is an architect for Montgomery County Public Schools in Maryland.



Mapping of the World Through Experiential Study

One of my favorite books is *Persian Letters* by **Charles de Secondat**, the Baron de Montesquieu. Published in 1722, *Persian Letters* is a brilliant political satire that captures the adventures of two Persian noblemen, **Usbek** and **Rica**, during their long visit to France. The two travelers narrate their experiences in a series of letters, soaked with sometimes bitter, sometimes juicy anecdotes that reflect their astonishment at foreign culture and the people they meet. The traveler-narrators are themselves frequently the subject of mixed assessment, varying from marvel to complete misunderstanding, by their otherwise sophisticated and cosmopolitan French hosts. At one point, an innovative Rica experiments with the consequences of wearing European clothing to see whether he would remain the subject of marvel even as he tries to fit into the local context. He explains the reaction that followed: "I would immediately hear a buzz around me: "Oh, oh, is he Persian? What a most extraordinary thing! How can one be Persian?" (de Montesquieu, Charles de Secondat. *Persian Letters*. 1983 (1722). Translated by C. J. Betts. New York, NY: Penguin Books.)

In a sense, *Persian Letters* is the story of a study-abroad trip, albeit not organized by a university. The imaginary Usbek and Rica, just like our own faculty and students today, were driven by passion, curiosity, an insatiable desire for self-improvement and self-discovery and a dogged ambition to make sense of people's differences. In my view, the quote "I would immediately hear a buzz around me: Oh, oh, is he Persian? What a most extraordinary thing! How can one be Persian?" reflects Rica's despair when faced with total miscomprehension. The Frenchman uttering these sentences was not trying to be mean, offensive or dismissive to his Persian guest. He was probably curious, intrigued, even enthusiastic. He simply *could not imagine* how, in a world of familiar people and places, anyone/anything could be or become so fundamentally unfamiliar.

Universities champion their study-abroad programs so that all who participate—the students, the staff, the faculty, the alumni, their foreign peers and colleagues and the local communities they interact with—begin to think how *easy* it is to imagine that one can be Persian (or any other nationality or ethnicity, for that matter). Yes, it is different, perhaps cooler, perhaps not, but perfectly comprehensible and, in fact, rather marvelous to be Persian (or anything else)—but not marvelous as in "causing great wonder" so much as in *splendid and intriguing*; a thing to be learned from.

For 50 years, our faculty and students have undertaken countless journeys of discovery and self-discovery. They have travelled through history, geography and a mind-boggling variety of countries and cultures, by mobilizing all their senses, intellect, energy, experience, intuition and talents. Our students have, for years, used the latest in modern technology to excavate, document, analyze and imagine a future for the ancient seaside villas at Stabiae, Italy, which was buried by the same fiery wrath of Vesuvius that obliterated Pompeii and Herculaneum. They have explored the history of architecture, urbanism and landscapes throughout the United Kingdom, having the unique opportunity to immerse themselves in the architectural glories of the 17th-century country estate of **George Calvert** and **Cecil Calvert**, the 1st and 2nd Barons of Baltimore (and Charm City's namesake). Our students have wandered through the architectural and cultural mystique of Berlin, Copenhagen, Helsinki, Naples, Oslo, Paris, Reykjavik, Rome and St. Petersburg; they have dreamed, documented, analyzed, sketched, planned and, from what I hear, partied with unparalleled skill and sophistication. As a matter of fact, there have been three study-abroad trips focused on the form and function of English pubs, where objective analysis probably coincided with subjective assessment of beer. Belize, China, Greece, Egypt, Israel, Japan, Mexico, Peru, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tunisia and Turkey are all

countries that our students have explored and fallen in love with, time after time. Our newest long-term program is "Maryland-in-Florence," in which students have the amazing privilege of attending classes in **Leon Battista Alberti's** 15th-century masterpiece, the Palazzo Rucellai, over an entire spring semester. This year alone, we are exploring new relationships and new opportunities for student and faculty travel and exchange with colleagues from Brazil, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Russia.



For 50 years, our faculty and students have undertaken countless journeys of discovery and self-discovery.

Our hope as faculty has always been to inspire our students to learn more about other peoples, places and communities and other architectural, planning, preservation and development traditions, but also to learn to self-reflect. Through immersing ourselves in other cultures, we not only derive lessons on what could be possible and desirable in our own contexts, but we discover assumptions and biases we hold regarding others and ourselves. Perhaps more commonly than we think, we do not just learn to appreciate cultural differences, but discover the similarities that make us all human.

Sonia Hirt is Dean and Professor of the School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation.



MAPP's Home Across the Pond: Kiplin Hall

The Maryland Study Centre at Kiplin Hall has been a rich and memorable fixture for MAPP study abroad excursions to Europe for nearly 30 years. Situated in North Yorkshire, England, the 17th century manor house was the original home of the Lords Baltimore, founder of the Maryland Colony. In 1986, MAPP's **David Fogle**, an architecture professor, founded the UMD Study Centre at Kiplin in the adjacent stable and blacksmith house. Tapping the expertise of area historians, MAPP faculty and students painstakingly restored these outbuildings over several years, creating a

beautiful home and place of study for generations of students.

Later, Kiplin served as home base to several UMD study-abroad programs, most notably **Karl Du Puy's** study-abroad semester in the United Kingdom and **Don Linebaugh's** historic preservation study of English pubs. More recently, **Dennis Pogue** has brought students to Kiplin to work on a long-term survey of the former farm properties of the Kiplin Estate, most of which were sold off in the early part of the 20th century. Kiplin's central location allows students

easy access to Wales, Scotland, London and the throngs of spectacular sites around the English countryside. Kiplin even inspired a Maryland Public Television (MPT) documentary, "Kiplin Hall: Birthplace of Maryland." Fogle's efforts to bring Kiplin into the pedagogy also earned him praise from **The Prince of Wales**, who wrote to Fogle in 2013, "As you know, I am passionate about using the nation's heritage as a catalyst to regenerate and revitalize local communities, and it gladdens my heart that Kiplin Hall is being used as a means to educate and inspire countless students from all over the world."

"There is no substitute for direct, first hand experience of "site" visits, and these regular trips to Great Britain provide just that. Kiplin provides a home away from home for our students and faculty, allowing them the flexibility to travel, study, draw and thoroughly involve themselves in the cultures of England, Scotland and Wales."
-Karl Du Puy