History of Buildings at Stony Brook University
Presentation for the Renaming Buildings, Spaces & Structures Committee
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Part I: Creation of a Campus

My presentation has two parts: the first part discusses the early years of Stony Brook University (SBU) through 1983 when the footprints of the west and east campuses were established. The second part is focused on the primary ways the university has named buildings over time.

This aerial photograph presents a north-facing view of the west campus taken circa 1962.

Nicolls Road is pictured at the bottom right of the photograph and the Long Island Sound is pictured at the top left. The arrow points to the original library which was expanded between 1969 and 1971.
New York was the most populated state in 1947, yet was the only state lacking a public higher education system.

The State University of New York (SUNY) was founded in 1948.

Demand for higher education opportunities was spurred by the GI Bill, more people of college age, higher graduation rates, and increased part-time enrollments.

In 1960, 7,000 students from New York sought degrees outside of the state due to a lack of classroom space.

In response, SUNY took action to acquire previously established schools across the state including specialized teachers, agricultural, medical, and technical colleges.
Until the opening of SBU, there was only one SUNY operated school on Long Island (Nassau and Suffolk counties): an agricultural college in Farmingdale.

There were no community colleges yet on Long Island. Suffolk County could be characterized as sparsely populated, underdeveloped, and rural. Options for traveling to this geographic area were limited. There was a Long Island Rail Road station, but Nicolls Road spanned only a few miles, and the Long Island Expressway did not extend beyond Nassau County.

Essentially, SUNY set its sights on Long Island because it lagged in the provision of higher education opportunities.
SUNY Board of Trustees recommended the establishment of a new state-supported and operated college on Long Island in 1955. In 1956, SUNY announced plans to establish a permanent “Teachers School” in Stony Brook, on land gifted by Ward Melville, but to first open in temporary quarters on the former estate of the late William R. Coe near Oyster Bay, about 30 miles to the west.

Teachers College Opens on LI in Fall

Albany—Clases will start next fall—a year earlier than expected—at a four-year teachers college in Oyster Bay to be known as the “State University on Long Island.”

Gov. Harriman said today the new college would open in September in temporary quarters at Planting Fields, the former William Coe estate. The college originally had been scheduled to open in 1957.

The college will specialize in teacher-training courses in mathematics and sciences. It is expected to move to permanent quarters at Stony Brook in 1962.

Rev. D. Oiler of Delmar, assistant to State University President William J. Carman, for Long Island developments, was named dean of the new college. Oiler was graduated from the University of Chicago in 1956 with an MA degree. He is a Naval Reserve lieutenant commander and former instructor-director of a liberal arts program for adults at the University of Chicago.

Prospective students will be able to apply at the Oyster Bay campus after April 1. College offices will be open then.

The new college is not part of the four-college plan offered Long Island by the State Board of Regents. Their proposal calls for three two-year community colleges and one state-funded senior college. Under that plan, the counties would pay one-third of the cost of building the community colleges and two-thirds of the operating costs.

Both Nassau and Suffolk have been hesitant in accepting the regents’ plan. The State Senate yesterday passed a bill authorizing Nassau to establish a seven-man commission to study the county’s community college needs. Assembly Majority Leader Joseph Caruano said he expected the Assembly to approve the bill.

To open the new college at Oyster Bay, Harriman said he would request a supplemental appropriation of $135,000 from the present legislature. A State University spokesman said both Republicans and Democrats favor the program and are expected to approve the appropriation.

The college’s temporary site includes a 66-room mansion, which will provide administration quarters and classrooms. Adjoining buildings will be converted to a dormitory and dining hall. The Long Island Agricultural and Technical Institute will continue to use greenhouses and orchards on the estate. The state was given to the state for educational purposes by the late William Coe.

By 1962 State University officials hope to move the college to a permanent 749-acre site at Stony Brook. The site was donated by shoe manufacturer Ward Melville. The first class at the Oyster Bay site is expected to number 150. Succeeding classes will be the same size. However, when the college moves to a permanent site, the entering freshman class will be about 600.
Ward Melville’s gift of land to SUNY was instrumental to the establishment of the campus. He was heir to the Melville Corporation and a founder of the Thom McAn shoe chain. His contribution was incremental donations of more than 800 acres of land in Stony Brook to SUNY.
While plans were being developed for the Stony Brook campus, the first day of classes commenced in Oyster Bay at the tuition-free State University College on September 17, 1957.
148 students were enrolled in classes. Administrators were served with the mandate to "prepare teachers of science and mathematics for secondary schools and community colleges."

Later that year, the State Board of Regents proposed that a science and engineering college be established at SBU, expanding the original mission of the school.
April 8, 1960: Governor Nelson Rockefeller (second from left) and Ward Melville (third from left) participated at groundbreaking ceremonies in Stony Brook. As per the 1960 SUNY master plan, the new campus was designated a university center on June 6, 1960, and renamed the State University of New York, Long Island Center, with the mandate to develop undergraduate and graduate programs.
Back at Oyster Bay, 1961 was a year of firsts as 30 students were conferred degrees at the inaugural commencement ceremony.

It also showcased ingenuity and creativity, with the installation of several geodesic domes to alleviate space constraints - they served as classrooms, faculty offices, and the bookstore.

Left: First graduating class, 1961.
In September 1962, the campus opened in Stony Brook. The university was officially renamed the “State University of New York at Stony Brook.”

This is an early map of the campus. Many buildings are named with letters and there is an emphasis on facilities with notation of the heating plant, electric substation, etc.

The focus then and for the decades that followed was building the university with minimal thought or time invested in the naming of the buildings.

Map of “State University of New York at Stony Brook,” c. 1962
The first buildings constructed were the Humanities and Chemistry Buildings, and a single, corridor-style dormitory named “G Dorm,” comprised of two wings connected by a cafeteria.
Aerial photographs of the Stony Brook campus, c. 1964
“Mud and Scaffold Years”
Dr. John S. Toll
President of Stony Brook University, 1965-1978

Building and development of scientific programs were central to his planning activities.
With the appointment of John Toll as president and geneticist H. Bentley Glass as academic vice president, SBU had the leadership to attract a large number of new faculty. Researchers and scholars recruited during this period included Nobel Laureates C. N. Yang and Paul Lauterbur.
Construction on the Stony Brook Campus, c. 1967.
A large pedestrian bridge was designed to connect Fine Arts, the Student Union, and the Library. It was named the “Bridge to Nowhere” because it did not connect to the Fine Arts building for nearly 10 years after ground was broken. It opened in 1977.
In 1964, construction was underway on the Stony Brook Union, a hub for student activities. It was constructed of concrete and dark glazed brick.
Architect Ervin Galantay designed the expansion of library which today is one of the largest structures on campus. Additions around the perimeter and an atrium to connect the original building to them was completed in 1971. Today, the building is named the Frank Melville Jr. Memorial Library in honor benefactor Ward Melville’s father.
In 1963, New York State Governor Nelson Rockefeller commissioned the report “Education of Health Professions” also known as the “Muir Report.” This document was important for Stony Brook, as it recommended the creation of a Health Sciences Center and an academic hospital on Long Island. Planning began in 1965 under the leadership of professor of medicine Dr. Edmund Pelligrino.
The design of the Health Sciences Complex on the east campus was the work of architect Bertrand Goldberg.

Pictured left to right: University Hospital (1980), Clinical Sciences Tower (1976), and the Basic Sciences Tower (1978).
In 1966, New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller visited SBU and addressed several thousand people at ground-breaking ceremonies for three new buildings, marking another $50 million dollar expansion project.

The governor’s visit signaled the official start of construction on the Earth and Space Sciences building, and buildings for graduate engineering and computer science.

Rendering of the Earth and Space Sciences Building, c. 1965
Left: Chemistry building  
Right: Physics building  

Chemistry building
A park preserve was dedicated in memory of Dr. Ashley Schiff (1932-1969), a beloved professor of Political Science and an avowed naturalist.

The Ashley Schiff Park Preserve is located between Roth Quad and the Marine Science Research Center.
By 1969, enrollment reached 8,000. Over the next few years, the brick-faced graduate Mathematics and Physics buildings, Life Sciences, Engineering, Computer Science, and Social and Behavioral Sciences were completed along with two undergraduate dormitories today known as Kelly Quad and Roosevelt Quad.
Architects contributing to the design of campus buildings included Richard J. Roth of Emery Roth and Sons, who planned the dorms in “Roth Quad.” William Kessler designed the large windowless lecture hall later named at the suggestion of students in honor of U.S. Senator Jacob K. Javits.
By the time John Toll left the university in 1978, enrollment had grown from 1,800 to 17,000.

In this article published in Newsday, he is referred to as the master builder of Stony Brook University.
Dr. John H. Marburger III became the third president of Stony Brook in 1980. The beginning of his presidency coincided with the opening of the University Hospital.
The footprint of the west and east campuses in Stony Brook was established by 1983.

New construction essentially ceased due to diminishing financial resources.

The three major construction projects completed between 1976 and 1991 were the Health Sciences Complex, the Long Island State Veterans Home, and Chapin apartments.
Part II: Naming History of Buildings
7 Primary Categories

1. Function or Discipline
2. Campus Architects
3. New Yorkers
4. Place Names & Cardinal Directions
5. Honor
6. Donors
7. Inherited
Part II: Naming History
1. Function or Discipline

Many of the buildings are named by function or discipline. Examples include Administration (top left), Mathematics and Physics (left), and Chemistry (above).
Part II: Naming History
2. Campus Architects

Kelly Quad: Hugh A. Kelly

Roth Quad: Emery Roth and Sons

Tabler Quad: William Tabler
Part II: Naming History

3. New Yorkers

In 1967, a plan to name dormitories after New Yorkers was underway. Clockwise: Irving Langmuir College, Benjamin Cardozo College, and Othmar Ammann College.

Colleges Named for NY’ers

JN - Irving Langmuir
GS - Washington Irving
GN - Eugene O’Neill
North Hall - Othmar Ammann
South Hall - Asa Gray
Ruth 1 - Benjamin Cardozo
Ruth 2 - Walt Whitman
Ruth 3 - George Gershwin
Ruth 4 - Joseph Henry
Ruth 5 - William Mount
Tabler 1 - Theodore Dreiser
Tabler 4 - Charles Steinmetz
Tabler 5 - Frederick Douglas

The Dorms have been named! As of Sunday each dorm will bear the name of a distinguished, deceased New Yorker and will be known as the College of that name. For example, “H” dorm is now Benedict College and South Hall has now become Gray College. The new names should be used by students as part of their mailing addresses. The following is the list of names for all the existing colleges including names for three colleges in the unfinished Tabler quad.

H - Ruth Benedict
JS - Henry James
Part II: Naming History
4. Place Names & Cardinal Directions

Putnam Hall, South Campus

Shop Red West (located at the northeast corner of the Melville Library)

West Apartments

East Side Dining
Part II: Naming History

5. Honor

Top, left to right: (Jimi) Hendrix College, (C. N.) Yang Hall, (Senator) Kenneth P. LaValle Stadium
Bottom, left to right: (Senator) Jacob K. Javits Lecture Center, (Cesar) Chávez and (Harriet) Tubman Residence Halls, (Paul) Lauterbur Hall
Part II: Naming History

6. Donors

Charles B. Wang Center (top)
Frey Hall (bottom)

The Avram Theater at Southampton (top)
Staller Center for the Arts (bottom)

Simons Center for Geometry and Physics
Part II: Name History

7. Inherited: original building names retained

Left: original (top) and present (bottom)
Sunwood estate, Setauket, NY
Above: Amagansett residence hall, Stony Brook Southampton
## Part II: Naming History

Inventory of 180 buildings on West, East, South, Research & Development, and Southampton campuses

Access via the website of the University Archives at: [https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/libspecial/archives/index.php](https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/libspecial/archives/index.php)

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<tr>
<th>Campus</th>
<th>Name of Building</th>
<th>Name Reference</th>
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<tr>
<td>SBU SH</td>
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<td>Future Development Site</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Administration</td>
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<td>Facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBU R&amp;D</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBU SH</td>
<td>Amagansett</td>
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<td>Residence Hall</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBU EAST</td>
<td>Ambulatory Surgery Center</td>
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<td>Facilities</td>
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<td>SBU WEST</td>
<td>Ammann College</td>
<td>Ammann, Othmar (1879-1965)</td>
<td>Residence Hall; Mendelsohn Quad; formerly North Hall</td>
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<td>SBU WEST</td>
<td>Arena, Island Federal Credit Union</td>
<td>Island Federal Credit Union</td>
<td>Facilities; Corporate sponsor</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBU SH</td>
<td>Art Studio</td>
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<td>Avram Theater and Gallery</td>
<td>Avram, Morrell and Maria</td>
<td>Academic; Donor</td>
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<td>Benedict College</td>
<td>Benedict, Ruth Fulton (1887-194 Residence Hall; H Quad)</td>
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