



40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION of
UNIVERSITY CITY HIGH SCHOOL
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University City: Brainsville on the March

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Leo Molinaro likes to draw two large circles separated by an arc to depict his dream of Philadelphia's future. One circle, east of the arc formed by the Schuylkill River and Expressway, represents the center city. The other, west of the Schuylkill, represents University City. Leo's love is the latter.

He feels that its development should give Philadelphia a fine, overall balance of activities, and he should know. As the energetic executive vice president of the West Philadelphia Corporation he has helped create a new concept of this area. Sometimes tagged Brainsville, U.S.A., it stretches west from the River to 52d st., and south from Haverford ave. to the Media line of the Pennsylvania railroad.

"East of the Schuylkill," he points out, "you have a concentration of business, finance and transportation. West of the Schuylkill you have one of the greatest concentrations of educational, medical and research facilities in the nation."

This in-the-round concept gains strength from statistics. University City's major institutions, the University of Pennsylvania, Drexel, the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy, Presbyterian Hospital, the Institute of Pennsylvania Hospital, the American College of Physicians, Philadelphia General Hospital and the Philadelphia Divinity School, employ more than 16,000 persons. Their annual payroll is over \$65,000,000. Other firms in University City have some 20,000 additional employees with an annual payroll of \$125,000,000. Together these businesses and institutions have spent or plan to spend more than half a billion dollars for capital improvements.

These are just a few of the impressive figures connected with Leo's west-of-the-Schuylkill circle. Others show that the area covers 2000 acres, holds about 100,000 people, represents \$200,000,000 in real estate values. In 1960 it had 175 acres devoted to institutional use. Now it has 275; ten years hence it should have 425 acres devoted to institutional use.

Four years ago, just about the time the West Philadelphia Corporation got well under way, only ten percent of the faculty members of these institutions lived in University City. Now 25 percent live there, and by 1970 the Corporation hopes the figure will be 50 percent.

These last figures emphasize the Corporation's chief aims. Established as a non-profit corporation in 1959, it tries to attract as many campus-type families back to the area as possible. It encourages the development of its institutions, tries to get others to locate here. And currently its highest priority is the University City Science Center. Initially, this will spread from 34th to 40th sts., and from Filbert and Warren sts. to Ludlow. It will cover 22 acres, hold more than 2,000,000 square feet of floor space, and include restaurants, hotels, motels and multistory buildings for independent research firms.

The Science Center eventually may add as many as 10,000 jobs to University City. At a modest average of \$8,000 a year, this would represent an added payroll of \$80,000,000 a year. In the same period in which this growth may be expected (generally 1964 to 1974) student enrollment in the area's educational institutions should top 40,000. The University of Pennsylvania alone expects to spend some \$150,000,000 for physical expansion in this period.

But, as Leo likes to point out, the expansion of institutional buildings isn't enough to change the character of an area. University City must have attractive residential areas, adequate schools, churches and recreational facilities. Too, many of its sections are sliding toward slumhood. Too many others are cluttered with battered commercial buildings. A 1960 survey of some 1300 dwellings in the heart of University City showed that almost half of them were either deteriorating or dilapidated. Heavy traffic and inadequate parking space pose additional problems.

The West Philadelphia Corporation is tackling these problems in a variety of ways. "We can't go out and buy acres of homes and recondition them," Leo explains. "We can't build new schools and new parking garages. Our budget is necessarily limited. We are a non-profit corporation supported by contributions from institutions, business enterprises, and foundations. We keep our staff at a minimum, and work with and through other agencies."

A good example of this is the Spruce Hill Home Improvement Center. The Corporation joined with the Spruce Hill Community Association to provide this clearing house for all matters related to home improvement. Homes in the area are purchased and renovated by private developers. The Corporation-sponsored Center breaks down costs for prospective buyers, gives them advice, and helps to arrange favorable financing.

In other sections of University City the Corporation has encouraged the construction of apartments and town houses, and the renovations of individual homes. Last year 28 new town houses were built, and another 26 were nearing completion. In all, the Corporation has helped add some 60 new housing units to the area, representing an investment of almost \$2,000,000. Too, it has encouraged renovation of hundreds of homes.

In the field of better education for University City, the Corporation-sponsored Motivation Program stands out. Started in West Philadelphia High School in 1962, this program seeks out students

with academic potential and helps them toward higher education. The University of Pennsylvania, for example, put up 15 scholarships. An anonymous donor gave \$50,000 for the program. Neighboring universities provide tutoring. And, as one happy result, the number of pupils on the School's honor roll already has jumped by 500 percent.

Area universities also work with the Corporation and the Board of Education on a program at the Lea Elementary School. This universities-related program has introduced curriculum improvements, in-service training, reinforcement of community-school relations and other educational improvements.

These are just a few of the ways in which the West Philadelphia Corporation has worked to push University City toward its potential. Pennsylvania's President, Dr. Gaylord P. Harnwell, who heads the Corporation, realizes that there is a vast amount of work still to be done. But he calls the prospects "encouraging on every hand." "Not since the build boom of 40 years ago," he says, "has there been so much construction and renovation activity in University City."

[Picture caption: Penn's Laboratory for Research on the Structure of Matter nears completion at 33d and Walnut sts.]

[Picture caption: Another Penn project is a new parking garage.]

[Picture caption: View is from 32d and Sansom sts., looking southwest.]

[Picture caption: Town house construction is encouraged. This is University Mews on Spruce st., near 45th st.]

[Picture caption: Spruce Hill Home Improvement Center advises residents. It is housed in 448 S. 43d st., an old dwelling it renovated to show how it can be done.]

[Picture caption: Another University City institution, Presbyterian Hospital, recently built its Medical Sciences Research Laboratory on 39th st. below Powelton ave.]

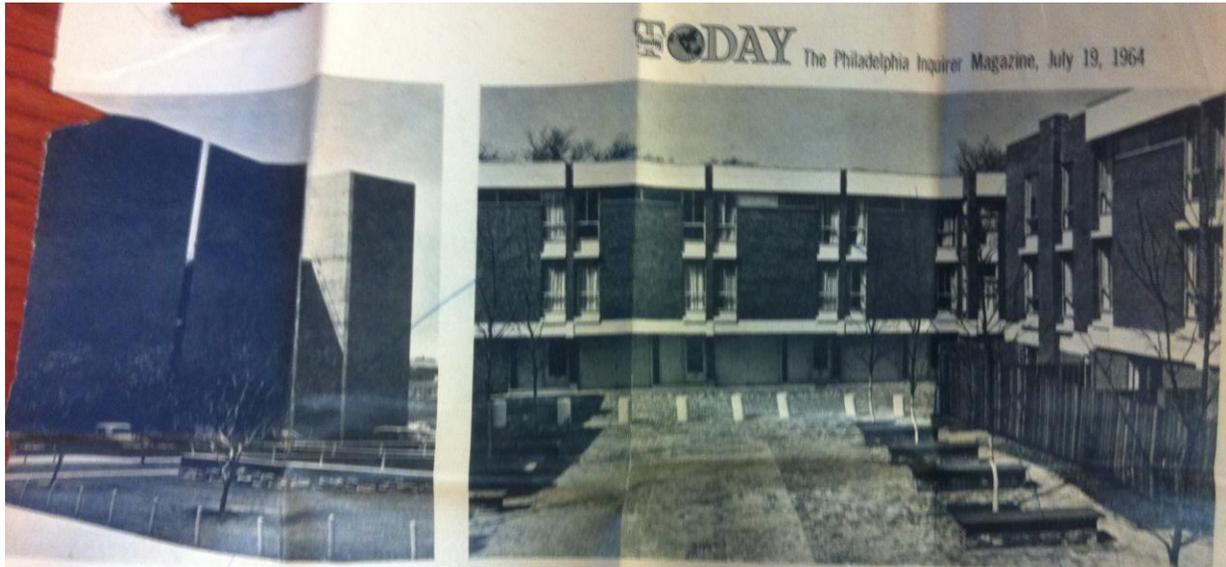


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