

When World War II ended and the GIs returned home, the “baby boom” and suburbia were launched. As the economy picked up steam and the population grew, demand flourished in the Philadelphia area for new communication, transportation, and healthcare facilities.

More and improved educational facilities were required for the veterans returning to school, while modern home goods and furnishings were sought after by consumers, resulting in an increase in retail construction.

In this climate of growth, Irwin & Leighton built for the local telephone companies and emerging institutions and corporations such as The Pennsylvania State University, Singer Sewing Machine, Cornell University, Jefferson Hospital, the University of Pennsylvania Hospital and The Reading Company, a railroad leader.

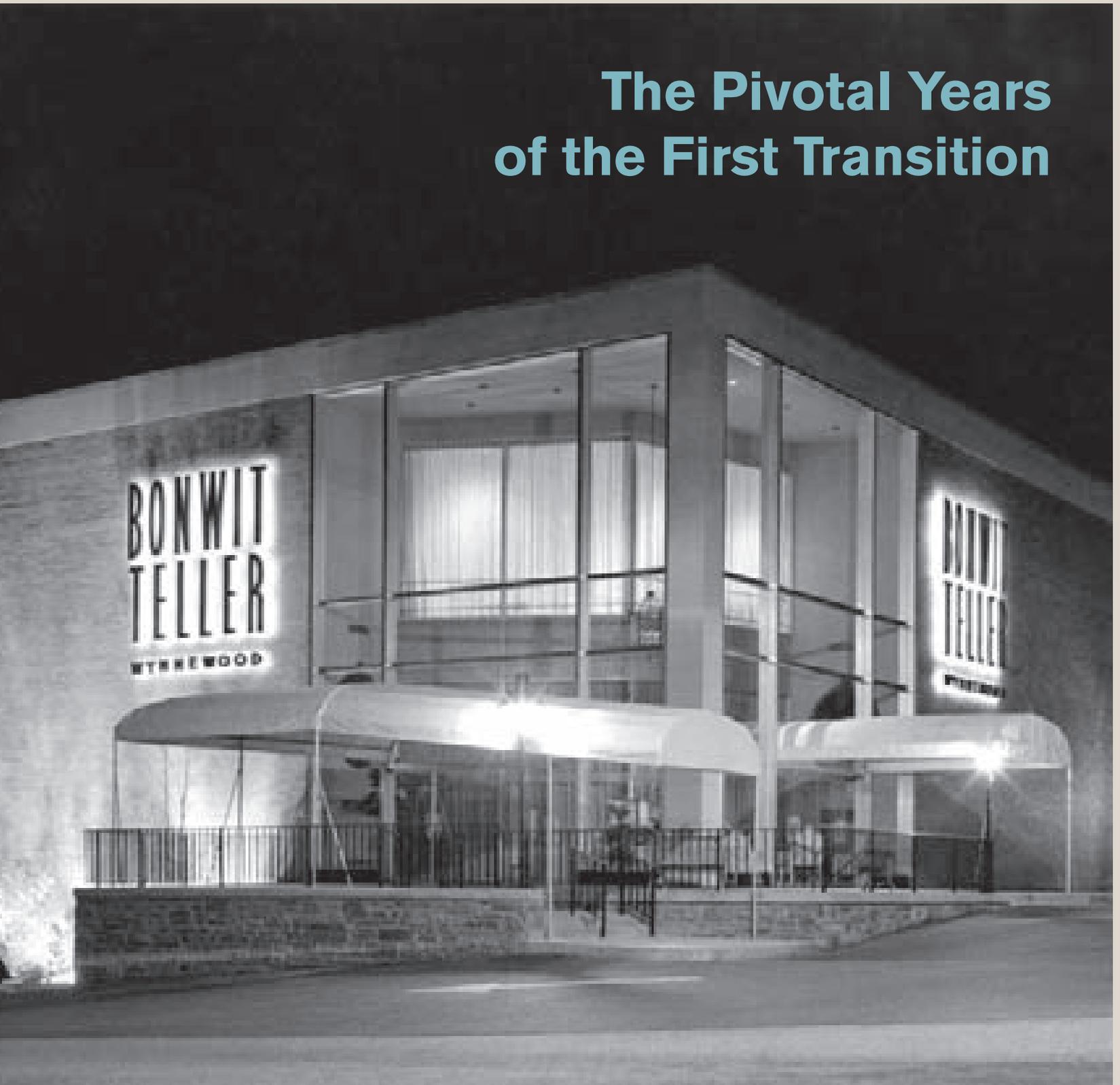
The company also remained very active in the retail sector through its ties with Sears, Strawbridge & Clothier and other emerging leaders such as Bonwit Teller and John Wanamaker.

The central story of the 1950s for Irwin & Leighton was its first management transition in 1955. Successfully accomplished through the foresight and appreciation of the Founders – Mr. Irwin and Mr. Leighton – and through the determination and vision of the new leadership team headed by Bill Olmstead, the transition created a new, employee-held organization and cleared the way for the continuance of valuable traditions and dynamic growth in the future. 1955 was truly a pivotal year in Irwin & Leighton’s story of success.



1950-1959

The Pivotal Years of the First Transition



1953 ▾ **RETAIL STORE, BONWIT TELLER**

Wynnewood, Pennsylvania • Architect: Wallace & Warner

Expansion and Transition



1953 DEPARTMENT STORE AT LOGAN SQUARE, , SEARS, ROEBUCK & COMPANY

Norristown, Pennsylvania • Architect: Herbert C. Anderson



1951 NEW DEPARTMENT STORE, STRAWBRIDGE & CLOTHIER

Wilmington, Delaware • Architect: Albert D. Lueders

Sears, Roebuck and Company

Strawbridge & Clothier

After World War II, rapid growth and development meant that the already established Main Line was a prime location to build new homes. The majority of the large estates in the Lower Main Line suburbs closest to the city of Philadelphia were broken up and developed. The last remaining 160-acre tract in Wynnewood, the former estate of N. Parker Shortridge – Philadelphia banker and director of the Pennsylvania Railroad – was parceled off in 1945. Upon this tract were built 360 homes and three garden apartment complexes.

On the last remaining parcel along East Wynnewood Road, a shopping center was built to accommodate the peaking population. The anchors of the high-end, high-convenience Wynnewood Shopping Center were satellite stores for New York-based ladies retailer Bonwit Teller, a prominent founder of the carriage trade on Fifth Avenue, and Philadelphia's own giant, John Wanamaker, a department store known primarily for its high level of service and ethics.

Irwin & Leighton was hired to build both these large, broad-faced stores, as well as the nearby Stouffer's restaurant; these were all designed with a forward-thinking elegance that spoke to contemporary ideals and the "New is Better" mentality that fueled American society during the era.



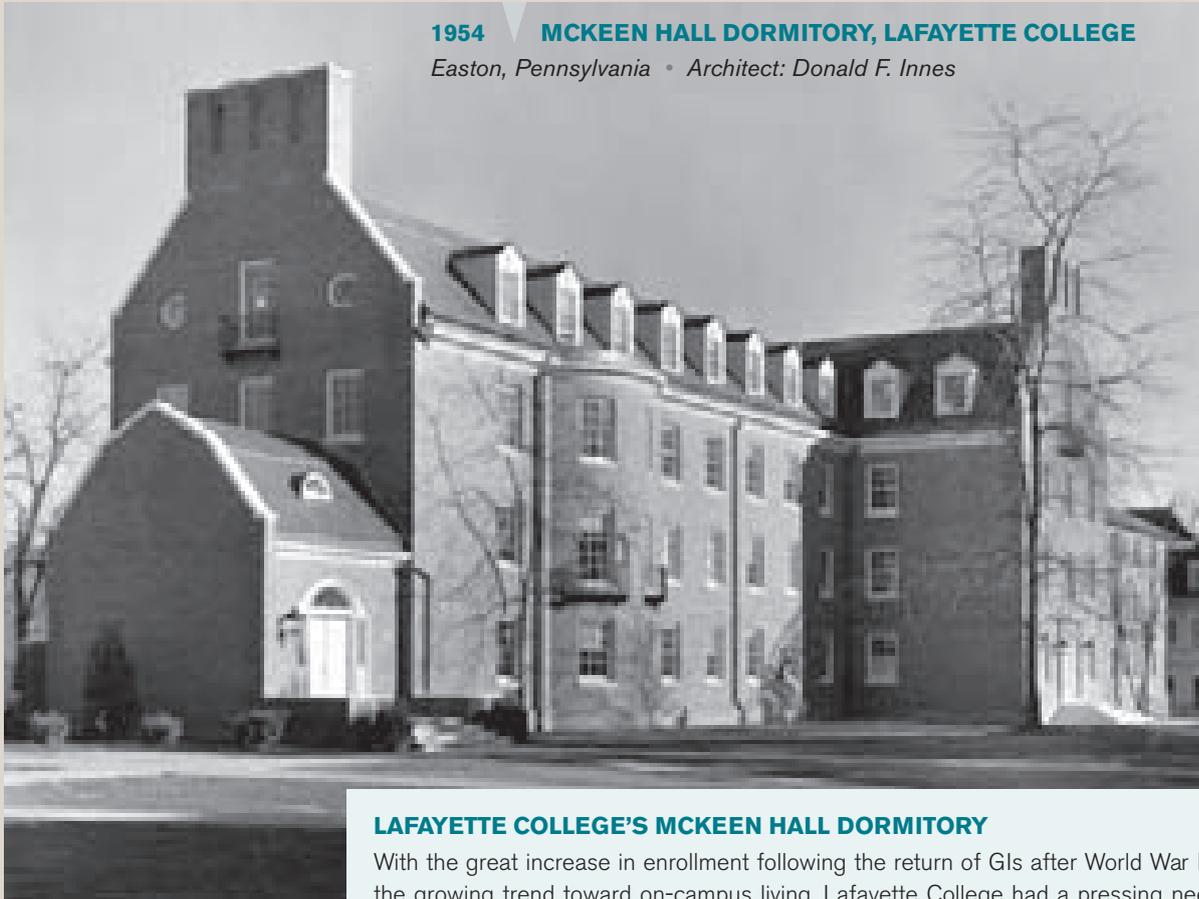
1954 ▼ **DEPARTMENT STORE, JOHN WANAMAKER**

Wynnewood, Pennsylvania • Architect: Wallace & Warner



1954 ▼ **RESTAURANT, STUFFER FOODS CORPORATION**

Wynnewood, Pennsylvania • Architect: Crane, Kiehler & Kellogg



1954 **MCKEEN HALL DORMITORY, LAFAYETTE COLLEGE**

Easton, Pennsylvania • Architect: Donald F. Innes

LAFAYETTE COLLEGE'S MCKEEN HALL DORMITORY

With the great increase in enrollment following the return of GIs after World War II, and the growing trend toward on-campus living, Lafayette College had a pressing need for residential and other buildings on their bucolic campus in Easton. The first building Irwin & Leighton built on the campus, McKean Hall, is a large dormitory named for the family of Elizabeth McKeen Cattell, wife of College President William Cassady Cattell and mother of James McKeen Cattell. Today, more than fifty years after completing McKean, Irwin & Leighton has been honored to complete many major projects for Lafayette.



Olin Hall of Science was Irwin & Leighton's second project for Lafayette. Built to house the chemistry, physics, mathematics and graphics departments, it was funded by the Olin Foundation.



1957 **OLIN HALL OF SCIENCE, LAFAYETTE COLLEGE**

Easton, Pennsylvania • Architect: Rogers & Butler

Construction on the College Campus



1957 **BEARDWOOD, PAISLEY AND STAUFFER HALLS, URSINUS COLLEGE**

Collegeville, Pennsylvania • Architect: Bond & Miller

Educational institutions in the 1950s were experiencing an influx of students, many of whom were returning GIs. The climate was one of optimism and advancement; young men and women with a mind to achieve great things had seemingly endless opportunities. The Cold War was fueling scientific study while the stirrings of a cultural revolution loomed in modern literature and politics. This was the final decade of a purely patriarchal academic

system, a time in which anti-communism was potent enough to suppress the emerging issues of Civil Rights that would eventually and truly revolutionize academia.

In this exciting atmosphere, Irwin & Leighton constructed many buildings on college campuses. Among them were state-of-the-art facilities for learning and research, as well as modern dormitories. The buildings, though they vary in architectural style, reflected the optimism of the era and signified the start of great relationships for Irwin & Leighton with Cornell University, Lafayette College, Princeton University and Ursinus College.

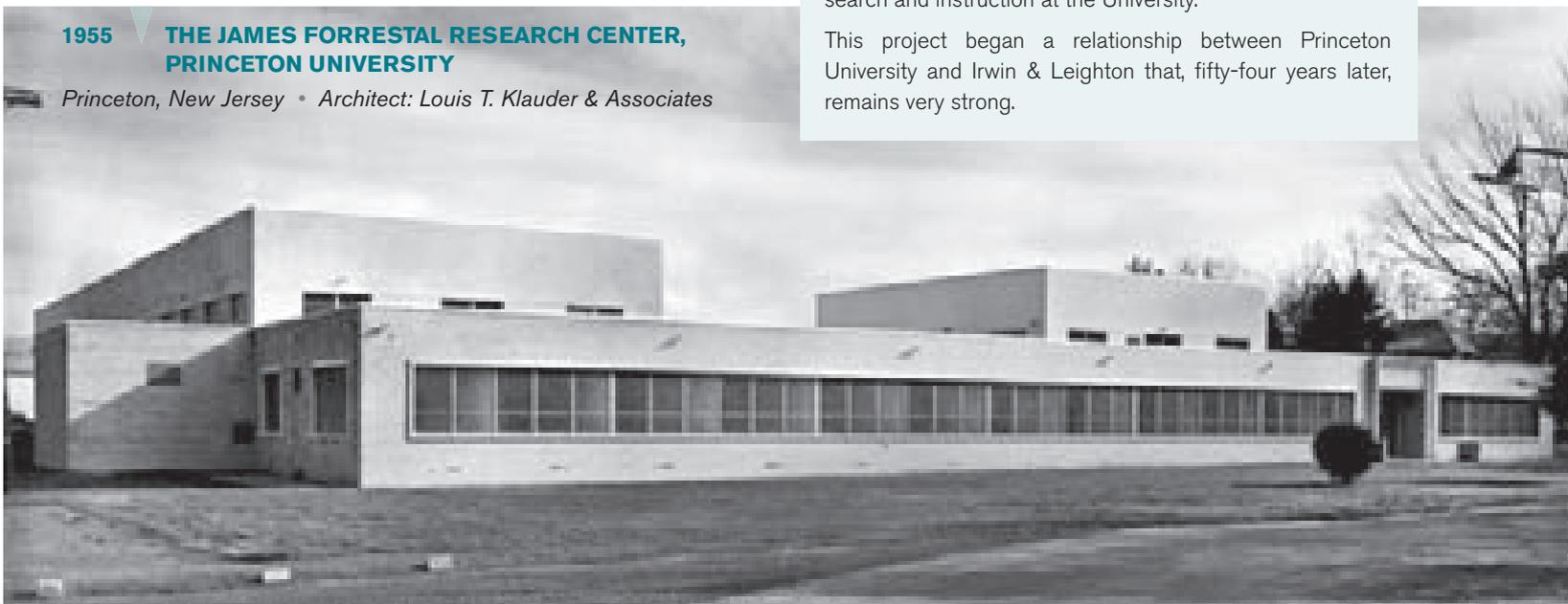
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY'S FORRESTAL CAMPUS

The first building Irwin & Leighton built for Princeton University was at its new Forrestal Campus. Purchased and developed beginning in 1951, the campus was the former location of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, located 3 miles from the central campus along Route 1. The 825-acre site would house the aerospace engineering and mechanical engineering departments, fostering both research and instruction at the University.

This project began a relationship between Princeton University and Irwin & Leighton that, fifty-four years later, remains very strong.

1955 **THE JAMES FORRESTAL RESEARCH CENTER, PRINCETON UNIVERSITY**

Princeton, New Jersey • Architect: Louis T. Klauder & Associates



Ursinus College

Princeton University



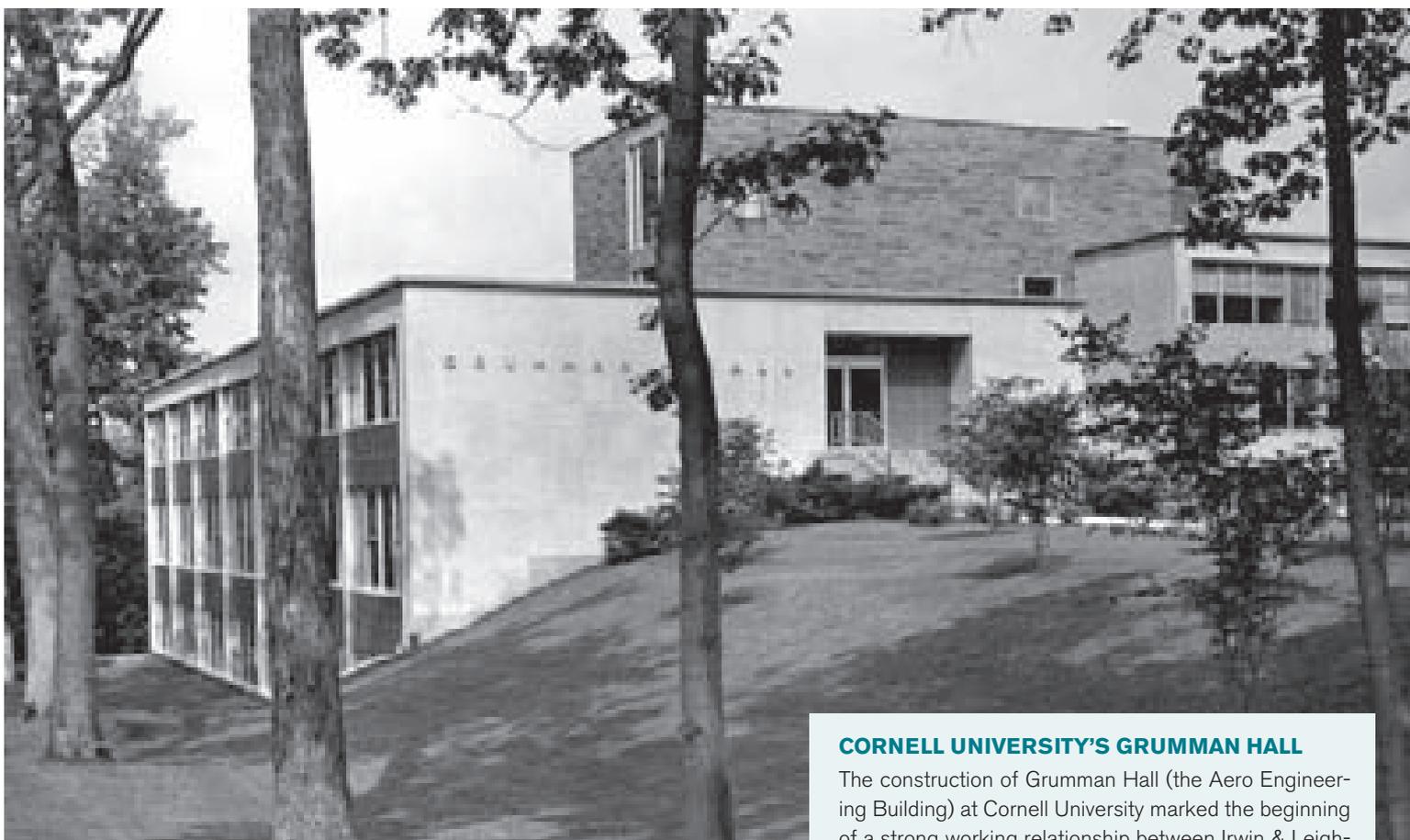
1952 ▾ **HETZEL UNION BUILDING, THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY**

State College, Pennsylvania • Architect: Harbeson, Hough, Livingston & Larson



1952 ▾ **NITTANY LION INN ADDITIONS AND RENOVATIONS, THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY**

State College, Pennsylvania • Architect: Hart, Jerman & Associates



1957 GRUMMAN HALL, CORNELL UNIVERSITY

Ithaca, New York • Architect: Perkins & Will

CORNELL UNIVERSITY'S GRUMMAN HALL

The construction of Grumman Hall (the Aero Engineering Building) at Cornell University marked the beginning of a strong working relationship between Irwin & Leighton and the University which would span nearly twenty years. 1957 also marked the true beginning of the 'Race to Space' between the Soviet Union and the United States. When Sputnik 1 was successfully launched on October 4, 1957, the earth-orbiting satellite caused a crisis for American scientists who were hurriedly attempting to master the theoretical use of the satellite for launching missiles. In response, the nation's finest institutions were rapidly building facilities to accommodate the education of the next generation's great minds in Aerospace Engineering. Cornell itself commissioned an entire quadrangle of engineering buildings between 1955 and 1965.



1957 HOLLISTER HALL, CORNELL UNIVERSITY

Ithaca, New York • Architect: Perkins & Will

Cornell University



1959 ▼ **RECORD MANUFACTURING PLANT,
COLUMBIA BROADCASTING SYSTEM, INC.**

Pitman, New Jersey • Architect: Minoru Yamasaki & Associates



1950 ▼ **WAREHOUSE AND DISTRIBUTION CENTER,
SCOTT PAPER COMPANY**

Chester, Pennsylvania • Architect: Charles T. Main, Inc.



1958 ▼ **OFFICE AND WAREHOUSE, FISHER SCIENTIFIC COMPANY**

King of Prussia, Pennsylvania • Architect: The Ballinger Company



The Boom of Industry



1959 ▾ **SUBURBAN RESEARCH CENTER,
PHILCO CORPORATION**

Blue Bell, Pennsylvania • Architect: The Ballinger Company

The 1950s marked a return to the workforce for a generation. Manufacturing grew as technology soared, and the economy expanded as people moved to suburban developments and began to build families. During this time, Irwin & Leighton built industrial facilities and administrative offices for large steel companies and other manufacturers, expanding their capacities so they could meet the demands of the growing population.

As the popular music industry changed formats, Irwin & Leighton was once again directly connected to the trends in American entertainment media, as it had been in its early days when working for the Victor Talking Machine Company and RCA. In 1959, the company built the CBS Record Manufacturing Plant in Pitman, New Jersey, a site they would return to over the following decades in order to convert and modernize the facility for the production of cassette tapes and, later, the revolutionary compact disc.

1959 ▾ **TELEPHONE BUILDING,
BELL TELEPHONE COMPANY**

Hammonton, New Jersey

Architect: Voorhees, Walker, Smith & Smith

