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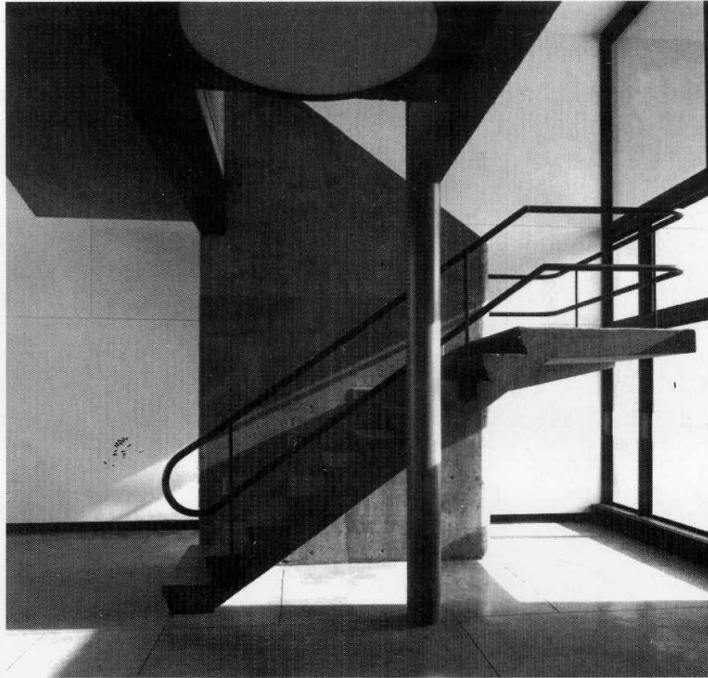
Michael Dennis, Henry Steck, Alan Chimacoff, Randall Korman, Jeffrey Klug, Arthur McDonald, Steven Alexander, Bruce Coleman, Franz Oswald, Colin Rowe, and Bruce Abbey

Memorial Service for Werner Seligmann

Distinguished Professor of Architecture

Hendricks Chapel, Syracuse University

December 6, 1998 1:30 p.m.



Program

**String Quartet Op. 59 no. 3,
3rd movement, Beethoven** The Allegro Quartet

Opening Remarks Dean Bruce Abbey

Recitation of the Kaddish Vice Chancellor
Gershon Vincow

Remarks by Friends and Colleagues

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Massachusetts Institute of Technology 1

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Farewell, Brahms School of Architecture
String and Vocal Ensemble

Bruce Abbey, Dean

Professor of Architecture
Syracuse University

Good afternoon and thank you for coming to this special occasion. On behalf of the family of Werner Seligmann and the faculty, staff and students of the School of Architecture I welcome all of you to this memorial service and celebration of the life of Werner Seligmann. Werner, as you know, was Distinguished Professor of Architecture at Syracuse University, a member of the faculty from 1976 and dean of the School of Architecture from 1976 to 1990.

This event may not be an easy task but it is one that is most deserving of our presence today. I was privileged, like many of you, to have had Werner as a teacher, career supporter, and ultimately as a colleague and friend. Which is to say in its totality, as you might imagine, our relationship became a bit complicated at times, but I would not have wished it otherwise. We shared this deanship, as well, and no one should be under any illusion as to the origins of the excellence that this school represents today. It is in my mind his finest legacy. It was also most appropriate that he received the ACSA/AIA Topaz Award for his contributions to architectural education last March. I do know how pleased he was and how pleased you, his colleagues, were for him.

That there is a lot of talent gathered here this afternoon is a most fitting acknowledgement of the extent of his influence as a teacher and as an architect. We all know that Werner had a passion for architecture that somehow challenged all who knew him. And we are certainly here today because he instilled by example the conviction that the act of teaching and the education of future architects was a high calling and one that deserved utmost respect and dedication.

But there was also his love of music and I shall remember best those moments with him and Jean at the Heinz Holligger concert in Zurich and the summer opera at Glimmerglass. Good food, good music, good conversation and of course inevitable discussions about architecture and always the direction of the school. His was a fully engaged life.

Those who wish to honor Werner Seligmann's memory with a gift may make a contribution to the following organizations:

Barbara Copp Cancer Research Fund

CARE OF:

Dr. Bernard J. Poiesz
Regional Oncology Center
SUNY Health Science Center
750 E. Adams Street
Syracuse, NY 13210

Temple Brith Sholom

CARE OF:

Eleanor Vollweiler
P. O. Box 944
Dryden, NY 13053

**Syracuse University School of Architecture
Werner Seligmann Endowment Fund**

CARE OF:

Katryn Hansen
103 Slocum Hall
Syracuse, NY 13244-1250

I shall leave the telling of tales to the other speakers today. But in closing I can only imagine Werner giving crits to his other now departed architecture colleagues, about space, "schlotzs" and the inappropriateness of crossed corners. What might Corbu, Wright and Palladio be thinking of all that energy? Surely, he made a difference.

Godspeed Werner, we miss you.

Bruce Abbey
December 6, 1998

Michael Dennis

Professor of Architecture
Massachusetts Institute of
Technology

Dear Jeannie:

This is one of the hardest things I have ever had to do. In fact, I realized the only way I could possibly cope was to write you.

In thinking about today's memorial service, I literally had to force my mind to imagine life before, and after, Werner.

I first knew Werner in 1956 in Texas, when I was nineteen years old — which surely must have been about his age when he first came to the USA. I believe my accent has diminished since then, however, whereas his only seemed to get progressively worse.

Thus, I knew Werner for about forty-two years and two months. He was my first architecture teacher; he gave me my first real "architecture" office experience; and, later, arranged my first major architectural commission.

Nowadays, most of us are so familiar with concepts like *schpace*, *schlitz*, *schlotz*, *schvares*, *schleup*, hierarchy, *elevazio*; San Michele, Van Doesburg, Mozart, opera, pate, and of course le Corbusier, that it is hard to imagine life before these things.

It did exist, however — for me as an almost endless succession of angst-free days filled with blue suede shoes; chopped and channeled Mercury coupes with 26 coat rubbed metallic blue paint jobs, dual pipes with cutout valves, and white sidewall tires; girls; Fats Domino; and an unbelievable longing to get laid. Little did I know.

When I went to the neighboring (working class) town of Denison, Texas to ask Jerry Wells what it was like in architecture at The University, Jerry said: "Boy, they're mean sons-a-bitches down there, and there's not a one of 'em got an American name — there's names like Slutzky and Hejduk, Hoesli and Seligmann — and they're all mean."

Thus, it was a surprise to look over sixty or so seated apprehensive students and see such a young head bobbing down the aisle of our first year design studio. The tie was a giveaway that this was a teacher, and he looked innocent enough. He went immediately to the blackboard, drew a square, and began drawing and talking about "ze properties of ze *schvare*." I had just encountered Werner Seligmann, and I knew my life was about to change profoundly. The least of it was trading my blue suede shoes and jeans for desert boots and khakis (I was a pushover.).

For the rest of that year spots and dots, planes and *schvares*, *schpace* and *schlitz*, and especially "ze cube," swirled in a melange of wondrous trial and error. Like a room full of monkeys randomly typing on typewriters, we kept cutting and pasting — hoping to hit the right, but elusive combination and hear: "Ja, good, now zis is an idea."

This was also the beginning of a lot of intertwined lives. Many of us would pass through Werner's architectural office because, for us, architecture was practiced there on the plane we expected it to be, but so rarely found in the rest of the real world — insightful, rigorous, and passionate. As the intensity of the office increased, however, so did the antics. Werner's passion, accent, and humor made him an easy mark. Alan Chimacoff set an exceptionally high standard of deception — usually involving a Brooklynized version of a renaissance persona, such as Mike

Bonarotti or Bruno Laski, and a new and unsuspecting secretary.

Not to be outdone, however, and knowing that Werner's secretary had never seen me since I was supervising the Willard Administration Building from Ithaca, I stopped by the office unannounced one day.

"Howdy there little lady. Is Warner Siegleman here?"

"Well, yes, Mr. Seligmann is in; may I tell him your name and company?"

"Sure, gal, tell Siegleman that Rosloe Fartwell is there from the Aluminum Sliding Door and Window Company."

"I'm sorry, what was that name again?"

"Fartwell, Rosloe Fartwell, but in the trade they just call me Rosie."

She then went into the drafting room to tell Werner. I followed right behind her and listened to her explain to Werner and Hanseuli Jorg that a Mr. Rosie Fartwell was there to talk about aluminum windows and doors. Werner and Hans both looked up at me, then at her, and then each other, and exploded in laughter. Hans pointed to me and said: "Why don't you have Mike Dennis meet with him?" The poor woman then just wandered off with a dazed look on her face. Werner's secretaries tended not to last very long. I'm sure we contributed.

Werner's office was an inspiration for a lifetime for a young architect. There, you realized that it was actually possible to do extraordinary things. You also got a preview of the abuse you have to learn to cope with in order to be able to do those extraordinary things. In retrospect, this may have been the most valuable lesson from Werner's office. For those of us who practice, it is with us every day.

Of course, many of us wish that Werner had continued to build. But he, himself, came to be more interested in the culture of architecture and life, and felt he could have more influence through teaching than building. Perhaps he was right. He made Syracuse into a world class school of architecture. He promoted his friends and colleagues from around the world (including a major architectural commission for Fred Koetter and me) — and he railed against the enemy.

No one deserved the Topaz Award more than Werner.

If it is better, as they say, to light one candle than to curse the darkness, then Werner was surely the master of the torch (God knows, he lit my candle more than once).

Of course, no one every explained to Werner that this concept was originally intended as an *either/or* proposition — i.e., either you curse the darkness, or you light the candle.

But for him this would be absurd. It was a *both/and* opportunity. Obviously you light the candle and you curse the darkness. And to his credit, he never stopped raging against the darkness wherever he imagined it.

Unlike the good Jesuit who admonished that "one should never lie, but one is not always obliged to tell the whole truth", Werner found it impossible to resist sharing the whole truth as he saw it, and in the same instant that it formed in his mind. In one of our last phone conversations he said: "Mike, I saw your building in the magazine. It looked terrific. (Pause) I didn't like that drawing on the cover." "That's okay Werner, we didn't make it." "Yeah, I didn't like it."

As for life after Werner: he will continue to be a conscience for all of us — a measuring standard of excellence in both the quality and quantity of life. He had very simple taste — nothing but the very best, and as much of it as he could get. We should continue that tradition. But above all, we should extend his unwavering optimism — his belief in the goodness of man and his possibility of achievement. Perhaps his optimism and belief is because he knew the possible depths of darkness we can also achieve.

I thank him, and I miss him.

Much love,
Michael

Henry Steck, Ph.D.

State University of New York
Distinguished Service
Professor

Professor of Political Science
SUNY, College at Cortland

I want to talk about a friend and a life.

Werner Seligmann was a friend, an important and close friend. As fellow academics, we were colleagues — he the architect and I the political scientist.

But we shared much more than a common profession. For thirty-five years, Werner and his family — Jeannie, Raphael, Sabina and more lately Dana, Nicolo, and Lenny — have been closer to us than family. Today these bonds have been renewed in the generation of our children with the same resilience and warmth. As an architect, Werner built handsome and elegant buildings; as a teacher he taught others how to see, how to learn, how to build; as an academic and intellectual he had a sense of standards that today we might regard as old-fashioned. As a person he built strong connections and the strongest of these — for he was an architect of human connections as well as spatial meaning — are his friends, his home and his family. And we particularly respected the deep partnership he and Jeannie shared and the importance of that for his work and the family.

Across the years of friendship as our families grew closer, there were the long — not to say legendary — Thanksgivings and Rosh Hashanah dinners, walks on beaches, casual evenings, trips together and through them all, endless noisy arguments about politics, art, academic life, raising children from kindergarten to graduate school, the decline in our culture, the twists and turns of our lives. With our late friend Jerry DiGiusto, a great sculptor who also taught in the Syracuse Architecture School, and his wonderful family, we were both family and community.

Now, long after the candles are out and the wine bottles empty, I remember those conversations. Werner was not shy about his opinions: he was insistent, stubborn, but invariably insightful. What little I know of architecture, I learned from him. I admired the pride he took and the intelligence he showed in his work — his designs, his competition entries, the architecture school he built here. Long ago, I ceased being surprised when he produced new projects that were as astonishing in their simplicity as in their creativity.

Friends gossip. As a fellow academic, I delighted in being a spectator to his work at Cornell and his institution building at Syracuse. I relished the play-by-play, blow-by-blow account of his labors here at Syracuse and at Cornell. He returned the favor by listening with humor to my tales of trials and tribulations at my own institution. He displayed a passionate determination about his work as Dean, a rock-hard self-confident pride in the accomplishments of his colleagues, and a fierce ambition for the school — so much so, that I was disbelieving when he once confessed that he was often kept awake by the unpleasant and difficult decisions a Dean is inevitably required to make.

There was, of course, another side to Werner. His father was, as you know, a distinguished musician and this endowed Werner with a passion for music — how many evenings did the phone ring with Jeannie asking if we wanted to join them for a chamber music concert or an opera.

These family roots gave him an abiding belief in the transcendent power of art and it is no surprise at all that Sabina is an architect and Raphael a student of literature as well as an accomplished musician. Werner was a generous friend — generous to a fault. He was generous with his knowledge, with himself and with his time. As Janet and I prepared one year for a summer trip through Northern Italy, we casually asked Werner for suggestions of additional sites we should visit. The result was a spectacular July week during which the four of us chased through the Northern Italian countryside — Werner at the wheel, of course — tracking down every Palladio villa and palazzo and then some. Werner: always the teacher — impatient with slow learners, to be sure, but always learned, passionate, and insistent on excellence.

Although his work took him elsewhere, he was generous to the Cortland community where he made his home. You know that he built several wonderful structures in Cortland: our synagogue, the science building on my campus, the gate to the Jewish cemetery where we bid him a final farewell. In the rigor of their design, the clarity of their aesthetics, the not-so-sly wit and humor, these structures embody the essence of his personality.

Werner brought with him a larger history that gave his life a special meaning that we would do well to study and to learn from. He was one of that remarkable generation of intellectuals who fled Europe for a safe haven in the United States and then

contributed so much to American intellectual life. While he came at a young age after the war — making Central New York a home he would not leave — he was nonetheless part of that exodus. In his years as an American — but never too long away from Zürich or Florence — he managed to balance and even fuse the old world with the new. I simply could not understand, still can't, his attachment to small town life in Cortland and, even more quixotic, his affection for Syracuse University football. Aharon Appelfeld writes that "a Jew in Europe was always in exile." I should like to believe that Werner never felt himself in exile here.

Now, with some difficulty, I want to reflect on something else, something that continues to be, more than anything else, profoundly affecting to me about Werner in ways I cannot adequately define.

Werner was a Survivor. I do not use the term in our commonplace American manner. I use it in a more somber sense. He was a Holocaust Survivor — a survivor of the horror that sought to eliminate Jews everywhere and, for that matter, all civilized values. For my generation Survivors are touched in ways that none of us can fully comprehend. It is a place we cannot enter — a sacred space that is beyond our understanding.

We could spend long days speculating on the meaning of this experience for Werner, his work, and his presence as a colleague, friend, husband, and father. As far as I know, he did not speak of it — would

not speak of it. When once I obliquely approached the subject, he fell uncharacteristically silent until the conversation moved on.

Once there was a flash, a moment that came as an epiphany to me. It was during the 1960s when I had been carrying on critically about the "rationality" that led to the Vietnam war. I spoke quite agreeably, and sympathetically, I recall, of the Romantic and "feeling" side of the counter-culture. Werner lashed out at me, defending with great agitation the enduring value and capacity of human reason. Clearly, this was about something else. It was about why and how his aesthetic choices were moral choices and not just a matter of taste. He seemed to be saying to me in that conversation or at least this was how I understood it, that beyond the folk music lay the folk, and beyond the folk lay the camps.

I understood then and since how the emphasis on rationality that defined his commitments in his work and his preferences in music had been ineluctably shaped by his experience of the irrational that had led straight to the Holocaust. It was about standards — that much abused word — and standards not just as a matter of intellectual or aesthetic judgment, but standards as a barrier to the barbarism he had survived.

As what is known as secular Jews, Werner and I did our shared bit over the years for our little Temple in Cortland. (He designed our synagogue — a wonderful small gem

of a building.) Our participation in the life of our Temple was a form of bearing witness and of standing in for those who had been lost. For more than thirty years, I watched him as he took his turn with the Torah, with his rumpled hair and a focused gaze that seemed to look past us to another time and place. Was he, I wondered for many years, there? — was he back there?

Finally, this is what I believe about Werner.

I believe that this experience endowed him with a special life force. I believe that we here cannot begin to understand the strength, tenacity, and courage that brought him as a child of eleven or twelve through the Holocaust experience. If we sometimes found him difficult to deal with, I believe that we were experiencing the tenacity and stubborn refusal to bend that brought him through the camps and as a refugee to the little town of Groton and from there to the professional and personal success he achieved.

I believe that it was this tenacity and discipline that he sought to impose on us all — colleagues, students, friends, family. Whether we are conscious of it or not, it is the silent mark of his desolate, ineffable, and life-affirming journey through the inferno of evil that is the source of the love we have for him.

It is this same tenacity, strength, wit and courage that we saw in his battle against the cancer that killed him. About that illness, we need to understand: he never lost his optimism. When Janet and I would visit him in the hospital or in his little Italian garden at his home in Cortland, he was inevitably, despite the pain, at work on something new: learning to live with a computer, drawing with his felt-tip on a delicate piece of paper, deciding what he would teach in the spring semester, devising a new program that would lift Syracuse even higher, preparing a new project of scholarship. He certainly did not go gentle into that endless night.

As we age, we will be called upon often to bear witness to the loss of good friends and of loved family members. For those of us in the university community we will lose good teachers and good colleagues who, like Werner, refuse to compromise with the imperfections and the mediocre of so much of the world around us.

As we approach the end of this most terrible of centuries, few of us will again have the privilege to have our own lives so profoundly informed by an individual whose moral core and whose work and life so informs and guides our own lives and work.

Henry Steck
December 5, 1998

Alan Chimacoff

Principal, Director of Design
The Hillier Group

"Whoever heard of a Texas Ranger with a German accent?"

One riot; one ranger! That's their slogan; that's all they deem necessary to quell any riot.

With Werner, that's all that was needed... to quell an architectural riot (of course the greater likelihood is that he had created the riot himself — and then gone on to quell it).

5'8" Tall...

150 pounds...

lover of music...

player of soccer...

German accented...

Texas Ranger.

One riot; one ranger!

In the past three weeks, wherever architects go, I guarantee you...:

Le Corbusier has learned a thing or two about himself from his mentor...

Frank Lloyd Wright finally understands what Fallingwater and Johnson's Wax are really about...

Mies Van der Rohe has learned that less might not be more...

Alvar Aalto began drinking heavily when he learned he'd been bumped to 5th place...

Lou Kahn is simply in a daze at the Dervish whirling about him...

Mozart, only a little bit concerned that the music is frozen, is learning about spatial interpenetration...illusory depth in the facade of Villa Garches..and the music of the "Ondulatoires" of La Tourette...

Handel, 'tho a bit slow, is playing goalie...

Pele, on the other foot...

And Brunelleschi, Bramante, Alberti, Michelangelo, Mansard, Schinckel, Hawksmoor, Soane, MacIntosh, and a host of others are all wishing they'd lived in the 20th century and gone to Syracuse or Cornell...

The point, of course, is that Werner, ever the teacher, no doubt still is and ever will be.

Who among us has not been taught by Werner Seligmann? Directly or indirectly, willingly or not, tormented? Perhaps traumatized? Not unlikely... but TAUGHT, surely, certainly, passionately!!!

There were some, of course, who even Werner couldn't influence. There's a very successful lawyer in Princeton – successful enough to be about to retire at age 56 – to whom Werner said in 1961, “ Mr. (V)Wallach, you're za most ill-equipped person in zis draughting room!” Mr. (V)Wallach was subsequently counseled to The Law by Burnham Kelly, then dean of architecture at Cornell (if only Werner had been able to turn his energies toward architects earning money... just think how rich we'd all be.)

Werner Seligmann transformed Institutions!

When he came to Cornell in 1961, he was thirty-one. The school was populated by a relatively smart, talented, intuitive, but thoroughly non-intellectual faculty... from whom one might, at best, learn a little bit... from the vaguely facilitated exposure to architecture they considered “teaching.”

Along with Lee Hodgden, Werner brought a structured, discursive basis for understanding architecture. It was the language of Texas and Oregon – mostly Texas because that's where it originated. But it was Werner's intensity and indefatigability that electrified the entire school and, the following year, brought Colin Rowe and John Shaw to Ithaca.

The Texas Rangers... We named them. There was an energetic maniac – in all the best senses of the word – with a German accent, a bearded intellectual from Kansas with a curious connection to Bucky Fuller, an elfin intellectual Englishman whose words only a few understood, and a shy, soft-spoken, Southerner...

These were the Texas Rangers?

Among them:

It was Werner who always seemed to be everywhere in the school;

And it was Werner who, spontaneously, impromptu, and unofficially, began the teaching of Architectural Theory at Cornell;

And it was Werner who brandished the banner of Architecture, and chastised whoever would not salute it;

It was truly Werner who energized and transformed the place!

One riot; one ranger.

Werner Seligmann transformed Institutions!

As Dean here at Syracuse, with the seeming speed of light, Werner made this school one of the greatest undergraduate schools of architecture that ever has been, building a faculty of extraordinary talent, intelligence, and potency, and all that goes with it.

One riot; one ranger. (Thankfully, this legacy continues.)

When earlier this year Werner received the Topaz Medallion, the award given each year by the AIA to the architect-educator whose teaching best exemplifies the highest values, aspirations and accomplishment of the profession of architecture, he enhanced an already distinguished list that included Colin Rowe, Jean Labatut (of Princeton), and Charles Moore (of just about everywhere)...

I'd like to read from the letter of recommendation I wrote a year ago in support of Werner's candidacy:

November 24, 1997

AIA Awards Department
Attn: Topaz Medallion
1735 New York Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20006

Re: Recommendation for WERNER SELIGMANN for the Topaz Medallion

Werner Seligmann is the purest of pure architect/teachers. He is brilliant, talented, lucid, sharp-focused, erudite, demanding, and fair. About him it can (almost) truly be said that he eats, sleeps, lives and breathes architecture... with a capital "A." He is indefatigable and relentless in pursuing architectural quality.

For Werner the making and teaching of architecture are bound together as they are for few others. As an architect his achievements, though relatively few in number, are strong, clear, inventive, imaginative and didactically focused. And, while they explore within a purposefully limited range, there is a rare intensity of purpose and belief that is highly consistent with the thrust of his teaching. As a teacher his incredible knowledge and erudition are in a constant "dialogue" with his passionate intuitions. He can be a brilliant critic to any project exploring a legitimate architectural theme... once the passion is triggered, the purity of an architectural being takes over... intellect, intuition and emotion are in full symphonic activity... he can't control it..., only content exists..., architecture is elucidated..., characteristics and potential of the work become clear. It is a wonder to behold... a joy to experience.

In both making architecture and teaching it, his knowledge, intellect and intuition serve and nourish one another in uncommon ways that enable him and students to learn and achieve, learn and achieve... establishing the basis for self-understanding and self-education.

In 1976, when Werner became Dean of the School of Architecture at Syracuse University, the best that could be said of the school was that it was a journeyman's training center, solid in the intent of its programs but intellectually and academically unremarkable. With speed and certainty, under his leadership the school became undeniably first-rate, one of the few best undergraduate programs in the nation. He developed and energized the school with an excellent faculty of gifted architects, theorists, historians, and technologists. Today, built upon the powerful foundation he laid, the School continues to develop as one of the very best.

Werner was my first great teacher, my first professional employer, my first true mentor. It was from him that I learned what an architectural idea is. It was from him that I first learned to see analytically, to think critically and to draw purposefully. It was from him that I learned the inextricable relationship between architectural technology and architectural ideas. Most significantly, it was from him that I learned the critical importance of self-education to one's personal growth and success.

There are perhaps thousands of others for whom the influence of Werner's brilliance would not read quite so much a personal memoir as my own... but upon whom his influence has been equally profound. Generations of architects and architecture teachers will acknowledge that the seed of their maturity and wisdom was planted or cultivated, directly or indirectly, by Werner Seligmann. It would be fitting for him to be this year's recipient of the Topaz Medallion; his presence would enhance an already distinguished list of past recipients.

*Sincerely,
Alan Chimacoff
Principal, Director of Design.*

To conclude:

When Fred Koetter and I worked together in Werner's office, we nicknamed him "The Eagle," because nothing — and I mean NOTHING — escaped his eye. Microscopic drawing errors... one crossed corner on a 30" x 40" drawing... one misplaced mullion out of a thousand in an enormous elevation... it didn't matter. The EAGLE would detect it instantly.

Where we are now, sadly, one might be tempted to say, "The Eagle has landed."

Today I prefer to say, as I am certain do all the heavenly architects of generations and centuries past who, for the first time, have the opportunity to learn from Werner Seligmann,

"The Eagle soars."

Randall Korman

Professor of Architecture
Syracuse University

I want to thank Jean Seligmann for this opportunity to speak.

I've known Werner Seligmann for nearly twenty-five years now. I came to Syracuse because of him. I confess it was not an entirely rational decision. At the time, I had a perfectly good job teaching at Carnegie-Mellon University. I left this behind along with a small, but growing practice and a girlfriend. I didn't come to Syracuse because of the reputation of the School or the University or the city and certainly not because of the weather. I came because of Seligmann. If there were more time, I would like to tell you about some of the many ways he made a great difference in my life. But, instead, I thought I would read to you a letter that I wrote to him this past summer. At first, due to circumstance and later due to my concern that he might interpret the letter as a farewell, he never did receive it. I'm now sorry that he didn't, but grateful that I have this opportunity to share it with you. I must apologize in advance for a couple of grains of salt in the prose. It is, after all, a personal letter between two old friends who also happened to be two old guys.

Dear Werner,

Enclosed is the final draft of the *Foglio* article. Although it's too late for another edit, I'm still interested in (and a bit anxious about) your reaction. As a first attempt at putting some of these ideas to paper, it owes a lot to your influence and encouragement. I hope it measures up. Please be brutally honest. But, then again, I know you will.

I've been thinking about you a lot lately. It is most certainly your illness that has focused my mind, but it has also been this writing exercise that has caused me to reflect back on our years together. The article, in fact, had its genesis nearly twenty years ago when you shipped me out to Italy to start up the Florence Program. You will recall that originally my posting was to be England and for many months I had been making preparations in that

direction. I remember my disappointment the day you told me that you had decided to cancel the School's exchange agreement with the AA and, instead, we would send our students to our own program in Italy. After three years of working long days (and some long nights, too) in the freshman studio, I was looking forward to the semi-sabbatical assignment to London. But this was not to be. You had decided that the AA was much too expensive and not nearly rigorous enough. And, besides, according to you, except for perhaps Hawksmoor and maybe Vanbrugh, English architecture was merely imported Italian goods without the balls. I will always remember that micro-mini-history lesson.

Anyway, this decision to move a major segment of the curriculum from London to Florence was made just about eight months before the start of fall classes. This meant that we had to make arrangements for a studio, buy desks and other equipment, find faculty to teach history and Italian, negotiate all this with DIPA (in those days it was a much easier thing to do) and, oh yes, find enough students to make it fly. On top of this I had to somehow learn Italian, learn about Italian architecture and learn how to get about the Italian countryside with fifteen or so archi-tots in tow. When I expressed to you my concern about all this you replied, "Randall, don't worry. We'll make a poster and then in the spring we'll go to Firenze and organize everything." Of course, I was greatly reassured by this.

Well, we did make a poster and, during Spring Break, we did fly together to Florence. And, it was a flight I will never forget.

You may recall that, at the time, PanAm was experiencing some financial difficulties and, as a promotional measure, they were offering discounted tickets to Europe (this was just before PanAm went belly-up). Mike Calo or Nirelle Galson or somebody at DIPA saw it as an opportunity to save some money, so they booked us on an economy flight out of JFK. Of course, you wanted business class, but reluctantly agreed to coach on the condition that the plane had to be a jumbo jet. At the check-in counter I remember you specifically asking the ticket agent three separate times for assurance that the plane would absolutely be a jumbo jet and, on the third instance, there came her noticeably strained reply, "Yes, Mr. Segalman, I can assure you that the equipment will be a 747." Well, you will remember, that at boarding time an announcement came over the PA system saying there would be a delay. We waited and waited and then an hour later there came another announcement of yet a further delay. With that you became just a wee bit agitated and stormed back to the counter inquiring after the problem and suspecting subterfuge. You were told that due to mechanical difficulties there would be a "change of equipment," but were assured that it would still be a jumbo jet. You were skeptical, but because the boarding area had no windows and we couldn't see what was

happening outside, we had to take them at their word.

Well, after some further delay, we finally began boarding only to discover that the "equipment" was not a Boeing 747 after all, but rather a somewhat antiquated and frayed 707 that had been stretched to accommodate more people. Worse yet, the seats were configured for a discount charter. Thus, what should have been a comfortable, half-full jumbo-jet flight to Rome, had transformed into an econo-cattle car about to wing its way to tourist hell.

Now... I don't remember which pissed you off more, that the airline had apparently lied to us, or that you now found yourself in substandard physical surroundings, crushed in with people from places like Far Rockaway or Bayside, all on one of those "seven city/seven day" Euro-tours. I'm sure they probably never went to the Opera, but I do remember that you went slightly ballistic. To this day, I can see you charging up and down that narrow, crowded aisle, trying to get the attention of one of the flight attendants, insisting that "This was supposed to be a chumbo jet! They promised me a chumbo jet!" When you finally cornered one, the already harried attendant patiently replied, "Sir, please take your seat. The captain won't be able to taxi the plane until everyone is seated." Hearing this you responded with a regal, "Actually, I want to talk to the captain, myself!" More than slightly distressed, she said, "Sir, that's not possible. Now, will you please sit down?"

Well, by this time, I had been around you long enough to recognize a characteristic expression that began to rise from your face like those slow motion shots of an erupting Mount St. Helen's. And it was then that I began to worry that you might do something we would later regret. It seems that when your eyebrows find themselves confronted with an untenable circumstance, they tend to knit up into this fantastic nest that projects forward in the most remarkable way, threatening to impale anyone standing directly in front of you. Seeing this, I thought that the poor attendant was in for one of your classic verbal drubbings. But no, more to my horror, you simply pushed your way past her and headed for the cockpit. She quickly followed and I after her. We all arrived together at the door to the flight deck with her demanding that you immediately return to your seat and me pleading with you that it wasn't worth the trouble, fully expecting at any moment the arrival of a sky marshal to escort us off the plane at gunpoint. You ignored us both and were about to knock on the entrance to the cockpit when the door to the adjacent toilet opened. Standing there and calmly observing all this commotion was none other than the captain. With a slightly puzzled look on his face he said, "Howdy folks, what seems to be the problem?" Without hesitation you said, "PanAm promised me a chumbo jet. I bought a ticket for a chumbo jet. This is not a chumbo jet." In his best right-stuff, West Virginia accent the pilot replied, "I'm truly sorry sir, but the scheduled equipment had mechanical problems and this was the

only other plane available. Now if you will kindly return to your seat, we can get under way and... I'll tell you what... drinks are on the house."

Hearing this, your eyebrows miraculously unknitted themselves, your face receded to one of benign disdain, and, incredibly, you said, "Well, in that case, ok." So, we returned to our sardine-can seats and, shortly thereafter, the plane was airborne. Within an hour, we were far over the Atlantic and, as I desperately tried to find comfort with my knees jammed somewhere up around my ears, next to me you sat, happily sipping your third Beefeater martini (viss three olives, please) regaling me with stories of Mike Angel, Al Berti and Bruno Leski.

Anyway, as you know, the trip went very well and the rest, as they say, is history.

And what a remarkable history it has been. The great lesson of that trip, and of all the years we spent working together, was... when you go, always go first class (or at least business class). Your characteristic unwillingness to settle for anything less than the best, is the hallmark of all that you've done and all that I've aspired to do. I will always be indebted to you for that. I look forward to more history and more lessons.

And, thanks for the memories, buddy.

Talk to you soon.

With great affection, Randall

Jeffrey Klug

Adjunct Assistant Professor
of Architecture
Yale University

F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote in a letter to H. L. Mencken: "...[this] has been the greatest 'credo' of my life ever since I decided that I would rather be an artist than a careerist. I would rather impress my image (even though an image the size of a nickel) upon the soul of a people than be known except insofar as I have my natural obligation to my family — to provide for them. I would as soon be as anonymous as Rimbaud, if I could feel that I had accomplished that purpose — and that is no sentimental yapping about being disinterested. It is simply that, having once found the intensity of art, nothing else that can happen in life can ever again seem as important as the creative process."

Werner was driven by the creative act to a degree that most of us would not think possible. This aspect of his personality alone is enough to make his passing a painful and dulling absence in the lives of those people and institutions he came into contact with, but in Werner's life this intensity shared an equal if not greater part with the desire to see others experience and acquire this same passion. His methods to instill this passion were many and varied; his students will never forget the clarity, concision and gravity of his drawings and anecdotal illustrations, and never cease to be amazed that the same mind could create the circuitous and complex almost riddle-like arguments in lectures. His colleagues will remember the challenge presented by his sudden presence on a review and the unqualified support for and contributions to their academic endeavors. But along with the talent of the architect, the wisdom of the pedagogue and the drama of his persona was a Werner far more subtle and no less profound — the orchestrator of human chemistry.

I never worked in Werner's office and never taught at Syracuse University. Yet, two years ago while talking with Werner in Chatham I realized the degree to which my values, not merely my architectural values, had been formed by the opportunities that Werner had put in place at a time long before I would have the privilege of calling him

Arthur McDonald

Professor of Architecture
Syracuse University

my friend. I was also amazed at how conscious and proud he was of the impact of those opportunities. I am in this respect typical of my generation of people that came into contact with Werner; profoundly, almost insidiously influenced by him and only marginally aware of the calculation and generosity associated with the many opportunities that he made possible. Werner's direct support of his associates is well known; one need only mention an application for an award, fellowship or position; the response was immediate — a letter of recommendation as well as clandestine supportive phone calls. This support even extended to generosity with architectural commissions, a tradition barely alive in this day and age. But his influence on a broader scale, though less obvious, was equally generous; one need only think of the number of people — teachers and students — that went through Syracuse University and on to Florence and the degree to which the body of knowledge intimated by this passage influenced an entire generation of contemporary architectural educators. In European architectural circles Syracuse University was seen as a friendly harbor whose commerce was the exchange of ideas and values.

I recently heard Mike Dennis give a toast at an event that had nothing whatsoever to do with Werner Seligmann, that went something like: "I was the teacher of many people here but there was only one person who was the teacher of every single person here" — everyone instinctively turned to Werner. As a matter of fact many people there did not have Werner directly as a teacher, including myself. However, Mike's toast describes the family tree that most people unconsciously construct which is the clearest metaphor with which to describe Werner's effect as an orchestrator of human chemistry.

The West Indian banyan tree reaches outward with tremendous limbs. These limbs extend so far from the trunk that they grow branches down to the earth to support themselves. These vertical branches eventually grow their own roots and make a network which can extend for acres and is in itself a small forest. When the mammoth original tree eventually disappears the organization of the network is no longer obvious. The limbs however, continue to live and to thrive and remain intertwined. The banyan tree has always presented a conundrum to modern biological models of life because it is difficult to say whether the original tree ever dies.

We all learned from Werner Seligmann what extraordinary effort and sacrifice it takes in life to achieve a high level of excellence in one's work. Few could equal his energy, dedication, and passion for their work as did Werner, and even fewer could claim an equal desire to communicate to students and often a few professionals what the standards of good architecture are really all about.

When Werner started his tenure as Dean of the Syracuse University School of Architecture he was very concerned with the transformation of this School so that it could stand among the schools of architecture at the very best institutions of higher learning in the land, especially those in the northeast. The work of the students of this School had to achieve the very highest standards that Werner and the faculty would set, in order for the quality of the program to improve. As a faculty we were continuously reminded of the extraordinary effort and sacrifices we would have to make in order to achieve these standards. Werner was also keenly aware of how important it was that the School receive the recognition from the architectural community for its quality and its high standards. Werner was always acting as the representative of the school. Whether he was at another institution lecturing or on a jury of student work, to many Werner was the school. Werner was always "on", exhibiting in his delivery his knowledge of architecture and his standards of excellence. The reputation of the School was on the line and no sacrifices were too great when the opportunity arose to show the academies what standards were really all about.

I'll give you an example of the extraordinary sacrifices we made to communicate to others our quality, and standards. It's one of my favorite "Werner" stories, and as we know there are many. This is told here with good-hearted humor. It's the mid-1980's, the scene takes place in a taxi heading from Boston's Logan Airport toward Cambridge to deliver Werner Seligmann, Randall Korman, and me to

Harvard University's Graduate School of Design to participate in the reviews of student work. As the taxi dashed through traffic, Werner was giving us both advice on how we should critique the students' projects and in particular on how not to be to "soft" with our criticism, but uphold our standards. If the work is bad, let them know, and how surprised we are that their standards are not higher. In other words, be fair but tough. It was at that very moment when Werner was finishing his words of advice when one of us... Randall or I, I can't remember... said... "Hey, it's still early, let's have a nice lunch before the student reviews". To which Werner responded... "NO LUNCH — WE GO IN HUNGRY"! That day we sacrificed for the maintenance of high standards.

In 1961, just about when Werner began his professional practice, Le Corbusier received the prestigious Gold Medal Award from the American Institute of Architects for his life's achievements, and in his remarks following the presentation, Le Corbusier said something about the creative struggle and himself that I think

also describes Werner's sense of a working model for life. Le Corbusier started out by saying:

"Dear friends, there is no 'wing of victory' in this room. There is no 'wing of victory in life'. Great things are made out of a multitude of little things, and those little things are daily, successive, without end from morning to night. Daily life is made of perseverance, courage, modesty, and difficulties."

And Le Corbusier ended by saying something we could have heard from Werner describing himself. Le Corbusier went on to say,

"I am going to make my definitive confession: I am living in the skin of a student."

Thank you Werner for making us all better students.

Arthur McDonald, graduate teaching assistant, employee, colleague, friend and always a student.

Dear Jeannie, Raphael, Sabina, family members and distinguished Guests:

It's a privilege and an honor for me to be allowed to say a few words in tribute to Werner Seligmann. Werner, himself, would undoubtedly look at me with a tilt of his head and a look of disbelief: "What's the fuss, what's so special", he would say, "I've has a wonderful life with my wife, children, and my profession: but it's nothing out of the ordinary."

Here I will suggest that Werner's life was anything but ordinary when we gauge a life by the impact it's had on others.

Much of Werner's youth was spent in a fight for survival. This story itself speaks volumes but it is a topic that Werner never spoke about. He was born in Osnabrueck, Germany, not too far away from the Dutch border. His family abounded in musicians: his father was a professional violinist as were two of his uncles. Werner himself tried his own hand at playing an instrument, but his father insisted that he learn a "REAL Profession". And so it happened that he developed an interest in architecture even as a young teenager. In fact, he began his studies in the city of Muenster, and a lifelong passion was kindled.

In 1949, he was 19 years old and left Germany as a Displaced Person on a U.S. Army troop ship bound for New York harbor. From there, he came to Groton, New York, a village just outside of Cortland. His uncle, a physician, had settled in Groton during the years America was bereft of doctors who were away serving in the armed forces. So it was that Werner reached this country on Thanksgiving Day 1949 — one year short of 50 years ago this past week. Shortly after, he enrolled in the School of Architecture at Cornell University, and it was here that the Seligmann legend began — when he

assumed the role of teacher and motivator among his classmates. This love of teaching was the core and the essence of Werner.

My personal connection to Werner and Jeannie goes back to my childhood. I grew up in Homer — a small southern tier village that Jeannie would label a suburb of Cortland. My roots were also based in Germany and as fate will have it, we both returned to Europe in the late '50's. Jeannie and Werner lived in Zürich while I was in Basel and I remember exchanging visits during that time. Looking back over the years, I remember that Werner had a lifelong passion for music: especially Chamber music and Opera. And, fittingly, this ardor was transmitted to his son, Raphael. Raphael doesn't really remember me but we first met in the living room of his grandfather Lieberman's home in Cortland. The year must have been 1963 when I dropped by to see Jeannie and Werner and found young Raphael sitting on the floor listening to the record player. Not really knowing how to begin a conversation with such a young child, I self-consciously asked him his preference of music. No hesitation on Raphael's part when he answered "Opera". It's not everyday that I find myself discussing favorite operatic arias with a 3 year old but I went ahead anyway and started to hum...(la ci darem la Mano). Well, Raphael, I asked in a very patronizing

tone of voice: do you happen to know where the florios aria comes from? He didn't hesitate, looking at me with disbelief for asking such an obvious question, he answered,; "Don Giovanni". This story is absolutely true and I remember looking at this young cherub on the floor with absolute wonderment.

Finally, I'd like to share an insight given by a former Brandeis Professor named Morrie Schwartz: he spoke to a sports-writer named Mitch Albom, who subsequently published a series of conversations he had with Mr. Schwartz in a best selling book called "Tuesday's with Morrie". Morrie Schwartz was a wise man as was Werner and somehow I can hear them speak in a very similar way.

And I quote:

It's natural to die..the fact that we make such a big hullabaloo over it is all because we don't see ourselves a part of nature. We think that because we're human we're something above nature..We're not. Everything that gets born, dies..and there's the payoff..here is how we are different from the plants and animals.. You live on — in the hearts of everyone you have touched and nurtured.. and (I would add, taught).

Death ends a life.. not a relationship.

Bruce Coleman

Professor of Architecture
Syracuse University

"It was 1962 when I walked into the freshman drafting room at Cornell, a newly minted architecture student. Werner was apparently also recently arrived, although I didn't know that at the time. We came from backgrounds that were as different as one could imagine. I was from the suburbs in Ohio. All I knew of him at the time was that he was a part of something they called the Texas Rangers, many of whom are here today. It was there, in that awful basement of Sibley Hall, that I encountered the tornado that swept up me, and a lot of others, and carried us on a journey that none could have imagined, and that we will all certainly remember — forever.

In his own way, Werner made you feel as if you were a part of something special, something important, and thus that you were special, that you could join him in a tireless effort to do no less than make a better world. It is possible to view the world as many worlds, each with its own geography and boundaries, its own sense and logic. These worlds may be separate or overlap, they may complement or collide. The entirety may be riddled with contradictions, or at least puzzles that are difficult to fathom. But if you are ready to accept that these worlds can exist simultaneously, contradictions and all, then one can move on.

In a way, there were many Werners, sometimes contradictory, often puzzling, always fascinating. I had the good fortune to know him for 36 years, first as a student, then as an employee, then as a colleague and a friend. I have known many Werners.

There was always, of course, Werner the teacher. In this case, I think of Werner the patient teacher. I remember watching him in a review with a group of freshmen, perhaps four weeks into their first semester. I saw my own dean on my freshman convocation and next at my graduation five years later, so the mere prospect of the dean of the school spending endless hours with freshman was something extraordinary in itself. One had made a draft-

ing mistake, a minor error in profiling a section. Most of us might let it go, knowing they would catch on soon enough. But not Werner. He launched into a 15 minute dissertation on the significance of the profile line, its importance as the definer of architectural space and since space is the medium of architecture it made all the difference in the world, between a drawing about a building and a drawing about architecture, about the difference between a draftsman and an architect. Then he "drew" with his finger a line, a profile line, that crossed the chair, outlining every part, and across the floor, and up around a person, and down along the floor again and up the wall... It was a masterful display. The students were transfixed. He was so patient, so gentle. When he was done, those students not only understood, they would remember it — forever.

When I was a student of Werner's, he seemed to know everything there was to know about architecture, he had been to more buildings in more countries than most of us will in five lifetimes. He knew more about music, politics, history, wine, the things that made a cultured individual, than one could imagine. Overall, he was supremely self-confident, always the picture of self assurance.

When I joined the office in December of 1969 I was confronted with a very different Werner. Suddenly here was a Werner who seemed never to be sure, was always uncertain about design decisions.

Werner never designed alone.

When he was in the office designing, I never got any work done. It was always "Come here Bruce, take a look...", or "Bruce, come here, I need you".

Most architects move projects from the design phase into the production phase. We converted the production phase into a design process. We converted the shop drawings into a design phase and you might be amazed how many design decisions can be deferred into the construction phase. It caused much chaos, and many gray hairs for those around him.

It was not for lack of ideas. Indeed, he had so many ideas, it was like dealing them off the top of the deck, one after the other, so many that to commit to one was almost terrifying. You never knew but what the next idea might be better, and the one after that, better yet. Perhaps it was because he had seen such destruction, such ugliness and impermanence as a youth. I don't know. But I do know that he just wanted it to be right, because to build is to make something permanent — forever.

There is one particular story from the office that I would like to tell, for it shows yet another Werner, a man of great force. I have only told this story to a very few people.

I was with Werner in the office in Cortland for ten years. The average person in the office lasted around two. One lasted eight hours. For the first five of those years the office was a busy place, full of projects and people, but for the last five years it was often just the two of us.

In any event..

One day, I was working at my drafting table and Werner was on the phone. And he was upset. We all know that Werner could get upset from time to time. Actually, he was angry, he was mad, to put it bluntly, he was furious! It wasn't the first time I had heard him angry so I wasn't paying much attention. He was talking to a contractor who had botched something on the job site. He wasn't really talking, he was screaming! At some point, and to this day I don't know what it was, I looked over at him. At the same instant he looked over at me, and... he winked. The man actually winked at me! And there was quick flash of a smile. And the diatribe continued, without missing a beat. It's not that it was an act, because he was indeed mad, and had good reason to be. He was trying to make it clear that this mattered, it was important, it was not just another project.

It's just that he was driving the point across in a way that the contractor will remember — forever.

Over the past summer, as Werner and I sat on the terrace of the house down in Cortland, working on the monograph, the table strewn with photographs, drawings,

notes, sketches, and books... he was reading books about the history of the synagogue, and he was insistent that I read certain of them. We had long discussions, lessons actually, about the history of Judaism, of the synagogue, why the ark had to be where it was in relation to the bema. It was Werner the teacher, still very much at work.

And I came to realize, perhaps for the first time, that what made Werner such a great teacher was that he was such a great student, with a willingness to look, explore, read, analyze, travel, and an insatiable appetite for more information and ideas.

So there was Werner the patient teacher, Werner the not-so-patient seeker of the perfect design solution, the confrontational Werner driven by the powerful force of his convictions and Werner the student.

In closing, I have never had the opportunity to publicly acknowledge and thank Werner for all that he has done for me.

I do so now.

For such a little man he caused big waves, made big things happen, and touched a lot of lives. I take some comfort in knowing that he did succeed in making the world a better place, in ways that we will all remember — forever.

"Thank you Werner."

Franz Oswald

Professor of Architecture
Swiss Federal Institute of
Technology (ETH) Zürich

Allow me to read you a letter that Werner Seligmann could not receive:

Dear Werner,

The landscape of Tuscany, its people, its cooking have affected you again and again. You felt at home in its culture and in its history. Unforgettable remains our trip together from Cortona to San Sepulcro. We wanted to see the birthplace of Piero della Francesca and his Madonna della Misericordia. On the way we discussed how a landscape reflects itself in the human soul. Or was it the other way around: how the human soul reflects itself in a landscape? I have no safe answer to this question, so I want to discuss it with you.

When we arrived at the Pinacoteca in San Sepulcro we stood surprised and almost unbelieving in front of the truly great Madonna painted by Piero. First you hesitated to give in to the protective silence emanating from this piece of art. But then, with increasing surprise and without words you regarded the painting. And smiling, with relaxed ease you turned away. Only after you had parted from the picture of the eternal mother you met your companions' eyes and let us know that you had perceived inner values which you wanted to develop yourself and hand on in your life. You never lost your belief in the good and the beautiful in man and you were a living example that the demands for ethical and aesthetic quality are inseparable. Do not be embarrassed when I say this, Werner; didn't you have to experience the contrary as a youth, the evil and the ugly, and derived from this traumatic experience your never tiring energy, your passionate power of convincing, your missionary enthusiasm for the other?

For me San Sepulcro is the key metaphor of your biography. The landscape and the memory of Tuscany were a nutrient soil for you as a human being, a teacher and an

architect. Did you love, travel, discover Tuscany also because it was a source of inspiration to the young Corbu? You were always curious for the genesis of ideas, for the mental and material history of buildings. Did you discover the origins of Corbu in order to better measure, internalize, teach the meandering paths that lead to his architecture? His architecture you loved. I assume the white Corbu appealed to you more directly, is that true? I know that you often visited the house Mandrot, many buildings from later periods of his work, La Tourette, Carpenter Center, and you saw Chandigarh. But still, you became passionate when a building offered at the same time the experience of purity and materiality, transparency and density, simplicity and monumentality, clarity and contradiction. It seems to me that you experienced this particularly in the white Corbu.

Zürich, the German speaking metropolis of the Swiss Alps, became another point of reference for you. In 1959 you were my first teacher of architecture, a year later also Monika's. Ever since we could witness in close friendship how this city and its landscape became for you and for Jeannie an important stage in your biography. Coming from Braunschweig you arrived in Switzerland. Bernhard had convinced you that, after the University of Texas in Austin, the ETH in Zürich was highly qualified as another missionary outpost for Modern Architecture. Your son Raphael was born there. Later you kept coming back for shorter and longer stays

in Zürich. You remember that some time later most of my older colleagues in Zürich gained their first experiences in teaching architecture, thanks to you, here in Syracuse. Only in the constant alternation between vicinity and distance, Zürich could offer you the vital tension which you needed between your place of origin and your place of action. The continuous experience of the memory and the future of the Old World and of the New World was a driving force for you, Werner, evoking your criticism and your recognition. In Zürich you could present yourself as the German speaking American and ask why we did not learn more from the progress and the mistakes made in America when we rebuilt our continent. In Upstate New York you were the English speaking European who enjoyed demonstrating examples of quality of German culture, e.g. Volkswagen, Mercedes, soccer. Based on your knowledge of the European and the American counterforts you built a bridge from America between these two worlds that belong together. For me you thus proved your loyalty to the culture and the society that allowed you as a young man to build up your full personality and your work. That is the way I always knew you: loyal to yourself and to your family, your friends and colleagues, your students and your work. We always could rely on you and found your support.

Your personality has impressed me with exceptional human qualities: bitterness or jealousy I never saw. If you experienced ill-will or failure you tolerantly adjusted.

The good luck and success of others were a genuine pleasure to you. You considered them an encouragement for your own work. If I were a play-writer I would take you as my model for the philanthropist, in spite of your well-known bursts of righteous anger. Your lightning and thunder left gentle traces in us because they came from a man who loved other people and their works above all.

Added to Tuscany, nurturing soil of your mental images and source of your creativity, to Zürich, manifestation of your argumentation between the Old World and the New World, between the past and the future, were Syracuse and Upstate New York as the third landscape which shaped your way of life. Others will talk about your praxis and poetics in this place. From here your influence radiated in many directions. Here you created lasting works, memories

giving new impulses, and, supported by many, you laid the foundations for future developments. In recognition you received high awards. All of us, from far and near, took pleasure in this together with you. Shortly afterwards the spirals which you drew between the three places of your life, accelerated. Time and space became narrower. In October when we last talked on the telephone, your voice was clear and strong when we discussed your plans, joint projects which we wanted to realize after your medical treatment. And you did not forget to ask as always, even under the threat of death: 'How are you and what are you working on?'

Yes, this is you, Werner. I thank you. I may also do this in the name of your and Jeannie's friends in Zürich, your colleagues and your students at the ETH. Thank you.

29 November 1998

Colin Rowe

Professor of Architecture,
Emeritus
Cornell University

Let me begin by recalling that Chimacoff-Schumacher song of 1962, from whence derived the myth of the Texas Rangers:

Oh the Rangers come from Texas
There's Werner, John and Lee
And Colin's come from Cambridge
No Texas Ranger he!

This is a specimen of what I still think of as New York Jewish wit and, if it intimated a pedagogical program which, so far as I was concerned, did not exist, it rapidly acquired a legendary dimension. And, of course, it referred to the last days of that academical Pompeii, the architecture school at the University of Texas, circa 1954 to 1958 or '59.

Now, if it is possible to speak of the young Turks of Texas, I was certainly one of them, fired by the senior faculty along with Robert Slutzky, John Hejduk and Lee Hirsche after the resignation of Harwell Hamilton Harris. And it was this same senior faculty who, hoping to restore what they conceived to be normality, then appointed in our places Werner Seligmann, John Shaw, and Lee Hodgden. But all of this has been described by Alex Caragonne (not to mention myself) and those acquainted with these long ago politics are well aware that the faculty old guard did NOT secure their objective of a quiet well-regulated school, a school without animation and only refrigerated by the kiss of death.

Rather, what they imagined to be fever and sedition just didn't go away and their new faculty came rapidly to operate as an active coalition gathering around the infectious teachings of Bernhard Hoesli.

This is something of a precis of the "old, unhappy, far off things, and battles long ago" which Wordsworth presumed to be the possible "plaintive" song of his "solitary Highland lass" (who no doubt herself was an imperson-

ation of liberty): but, further to this, it is a necessary preface to my first encounter with Werner, which took place in Ithaca in the late summer of 1958 when I was visited by the original trio of Chimacoff and Schumacher's Texas Rangers. And, by that time, Texas was again disturbed. Being recognized as a carrier of insidious germs, Hoesli had already been dismissed in 1957 and had returned to Switzerland, ultimately to take up an appointment at the E.T.H.; and, as for me, after spending the academic year '57 to '58 at Cornell, I had received an invitation (which seemed to be full of hope) to go to teach at the University of Cambridge, where I remained for four years of increasing disappointment.

And so, in August '58, just what were Werner, John, and Lee doing up in Ithaca? By their own admission yet another massacre of junior faculty was impending at Texas; and, by my own interpretation they were prospecting for an escape route, with Werner as leader and guide. But what I do vividly remember of the occasion was a question of Werner's; and he asked it in a manner which was somewhat aggressive, partly accusative: from student drawings he could see no trace of my influence. And was it not my duty to indoctrinate? And, for heaven's sake, after a presence of two semesters, just why was I leaving without having produced any visible impact?

This was my first meeting with Werner and I remember the place. I had been living in Eddy Street, in that house built by William

Henry Miller in the 1880's which had been bequeathed to Cornell the year before, and we were sitting in a swing seat in that green-painted side porch. And, on a very hot day, I tried to explain my failure; but I don't think that I had too much success. I told him what Henry-Russell Hitchcock had told me at Yale: that Cornell was the most relentlessly retarded of pseudo-Beaux Arts institutions and that (though this might have been New Haven — as usual — badmouthing Ithaca) there was still a degree of truth in what Hitchcock had said. Possibly Cornell was not impenetrable but its points of view would only fall as the result of a protracted siege. But, characteristically, Werner was scarcely able to accept such an excuse. Though a graduate of Cornell himself, in Texas he had been subject to a glaring illumination as to the virtues of hard line drawings.

In terms of the discriminations provided by Isaiah Berlin in his famous essay *The Hedgehog and The Fox* — "The fox knows many things, the hedgehog knows one big thing" — Werner was a hedgehog, the immortal type of Mies Van der Rohe and Palladio; and, hence, the curiosity of his enthusiasm for Le Corbusier, the most prominent super-fox known to modern architecture. But Werner was consumed by a messianic passion, and, to me, this was one of his more engaging ambiguities. With an almost adolescent enthusiasm, he really did believe — I think — that modern architecture was going to redeem the world, this long after the available evidence had begun to suggest otherwise; and it must have been this rather boyish

impetuosity which, when he was absent, often led me to underestimate his physical size. When he was absent I recollected him as a small boy, pocket edition; and then, when he was present, he was apt to become something of a miniature Farnese Hercules. He was easily shocked and he could be stubborn. When I once told him — this was rather a long time ago — that the latest slogan at the A.A. in London was "Long Life. Loose Fit. Low Energy" he was typically pained: this seemed to him to be a betrayal of all that he had ever believed. But, little or big, he himself was certainly a ball of incorrigible, hyperthyroid energy; and he conveyed this energy to almost everybody. As they say of practitioners of the high jump, he "raised the level" — he was always raising it — and, in doing so, he elevated the student's self esteem, and his or her ambition. In an entirely compassionate way he was impatient: or, if you like, "His patience rooted in impatience stood"; and with Werner's death a small but steady light has been removed from the world.

I remember him over a period of forty years and I see him in the sharpest focus always in a Italian setting — most clearly during two consecutive days in March 1981. I had come up from Rome, where I was teaching at Notre Dame, to be on a jury in Florence — and this was when the Syracuse outfit was in that rather shabby and exiguous apartment over on the other side of the river, with a rather nice antique shop almost next door and a rather painful little restaurant across the way.

What we judged I *don't* recollect; but I *do* remember two very outstanding drives. On the one occasion we went to Cerreto Guidi and also took a look at Vinci (I think it was Vinci) to see a little museum with models of Leonardo's machines. And, on the other, we drove to Montepulciano, a difficult town where, in spite of splendid palaces, the streets never seem to arrive at what ought to be their pre-ordained destinations; and it was here that I became infinitely amused by the predicament in which Werner soon became involved. His car was large (a Mercedes Benz or a big BMW?) and, trying to get down the hill from the piazza, he decided to take what he supposed to be a shortcut. He quickly found himself in an almost inextricable labyrinth of acutely angled intersections, clumsy little corners, and narrow little alleys, some of which turned out to be dead ends. This is the sort of crazy urban texture that Matt Bell calls "cracked mud"; and needless to say his vehicle could scarcely negotiate it. So, reversing and twisting, but just not scraping, we finally got out of it; but I can't believe that he was at all pleased by what he must have known was the slightly malicious, *I told you so* look on my face, and I am sure that he was only too happy to put me off at Chianciano to take the train back to Rome.

Coming here, with Matt and Cheryl, from Washington, D.C. yesterday, we stopped in Binghamton to take a look at Werner's synagogue, which is no longer too Wrightian for my taste; and I regret that we have not been able to refresh our eyes

with the building for the mental institution at Willard — a very respectable mini-version of Corbu at Brazilia (even though said by its architect to derive from a local barn); and then, of course, there is Center Ithaca, which I have always admired and which has still not yet been sufficiently praised — as one of the very few modern buildings which are fully engaged with an urban context.

So there is Werner; and I say IS because I can only think of him as STILL alive, an indefatigable and quite excessive, bouncing ball, forever on the road between Cortland and Ithaca and then between Cortland and Syracuse...When he left

Cornell it was the end of an epoch and I would have dearly liked to have left with him. Because, when Werner left, a languor descended, the noise level became less, wisdom became diminished to a remnant, and conversation became fatigued. But I believe that you have to take the rough with the smooth and I, for one, must be one among the many who can only feel profoundly privileged to have known Werner Seligmann.

He was self-conscious; he enjoyed his work; he was not a technocrat. It was a good life and it is a consolation to have witnessed it.

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Syracuse
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