

No Small Plan: An Entirely New Campus



◀ J. Erik Jonsson chats with students.



◀ President Wilson with daughter Kathy Sue at the groundbreaking.

▶ Board of Trustees Chair Josephine Young Case helps break ground for the new campus April 27, 1963.



By the time it was half a century old, Skidmore's growth had strained the campus at the seams, and its charming but antiquated collection of Victorian buildings in downtown Saratoga Springs was becoming obsolete. In 1960, as the College grappled with the challenging prospect of expansion and renovation, a miraculous—and risky—solution presented itself. The former Woodlawn Park estate, a 650-acre tract of land at the edge of the city, came up for sale. It was just this parcel that Lucy Scribner had hoped to buy for her school fifty years earlier.

Trustee J. Erik Jonsson challenged his colleagues to build a whole new campus, and he and his wife, Margaret, donated the money to buy the Woodlawn estate. After a year of study, in a historic move many now believe was the only hope for the college's continued health and survival, the board of trustees voted on October 28, 1961, to begin construction of what is now known as the Jonsson Campus.

The elegant and powerful words of Josephine Case, chair of the board of trustees, guided the new campus's development and continue to resonate today. Her

charge to the architects opened by saying, "You will design a campus which will provide for both student and teacher a feeling of freedom and wide horizon."

The first residence halls were completed in 1966, but there would be a decade of two-campus operation before the College's center of gravity shifted to the new campus, with the completion of Case College Center and Ladd Hall in 1974. And full realization of the Jonsson Campus would take close to two decades.

The Skidmore campus continued to evolve and grow in the years that followed with new facilities for academics, the arts, and athletics. In recent years, Skidmore renovated and expanded the library, athletic facilities, science center, and student center, and built the dramatic new Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery.

Today the Jonsson Campus encompasses 650 acres, with fifty buildings designed and arranged to blend with the wooded surroundings and to afford those views of wide horizon. ■



▲ The Jonsson campus under construction



The campus as it appears today ▶