



Youngstown
State
University

William E.

Bliss Hall

Fine and Performing Arts Center



William E. Bliss

(1886 – 1968)

One of the founders and the board chairman of the Standard Slag Company of Youngstown, Mr. Bliss was the last of the “big three” of L. A. Beeghly, William H. Kilcawley and Bliss, all founders of Standard Slag and all prominent industrial and community leaders.

Born in Bloomville, Ohio, Mr. Bliss met Messrs. Beeghly and Kilcawley when all three worked for the France Company, Bloomville’s one industry, which owned and operated stone quarries. The three friends organized France Slag Company, an offshoot of the parent company, and in 1914 founded the original Standard Slag Company in Ironton. Mr. Bliss came to Youngstown in 1916 as vice president and general superintendent of the company.

Always active within the community, Mr. Bliss was named a trustee of the Youngstown YMCA in 1922, served as president, and was instrumental in the workings of the Youngstown Institute of Technology, the forerunner of Youngstown State.

He was a member of the Youngstown Area Chamber of Commerce, on the executive committee of the Community Corporation, and a trustee of Youngstown University, Ohio Wesleyan University, St. Luke’s Hospital and the Youngstown Citizens’ Council. On the executive committee and treasurer of the Youngstown Educational Foundation, Mr. Bliss was also a director and on the executive committee of the Mahoning National Bank, a guarantor of the Northeast Ohio Opera Association, an advisor to the Youngstown Players, and a contributor to the Youngstown Committee on Alcoholism.

One of Mr. Bliss’ great interests was his church where he served as a district lay-leader of Methodism and president of the Federated Churches. He led in raising \$108,000 within the Trinity United Methodist Church for a Methodist Theological school in Ohio and was named the Church’s “Man of the Year.”

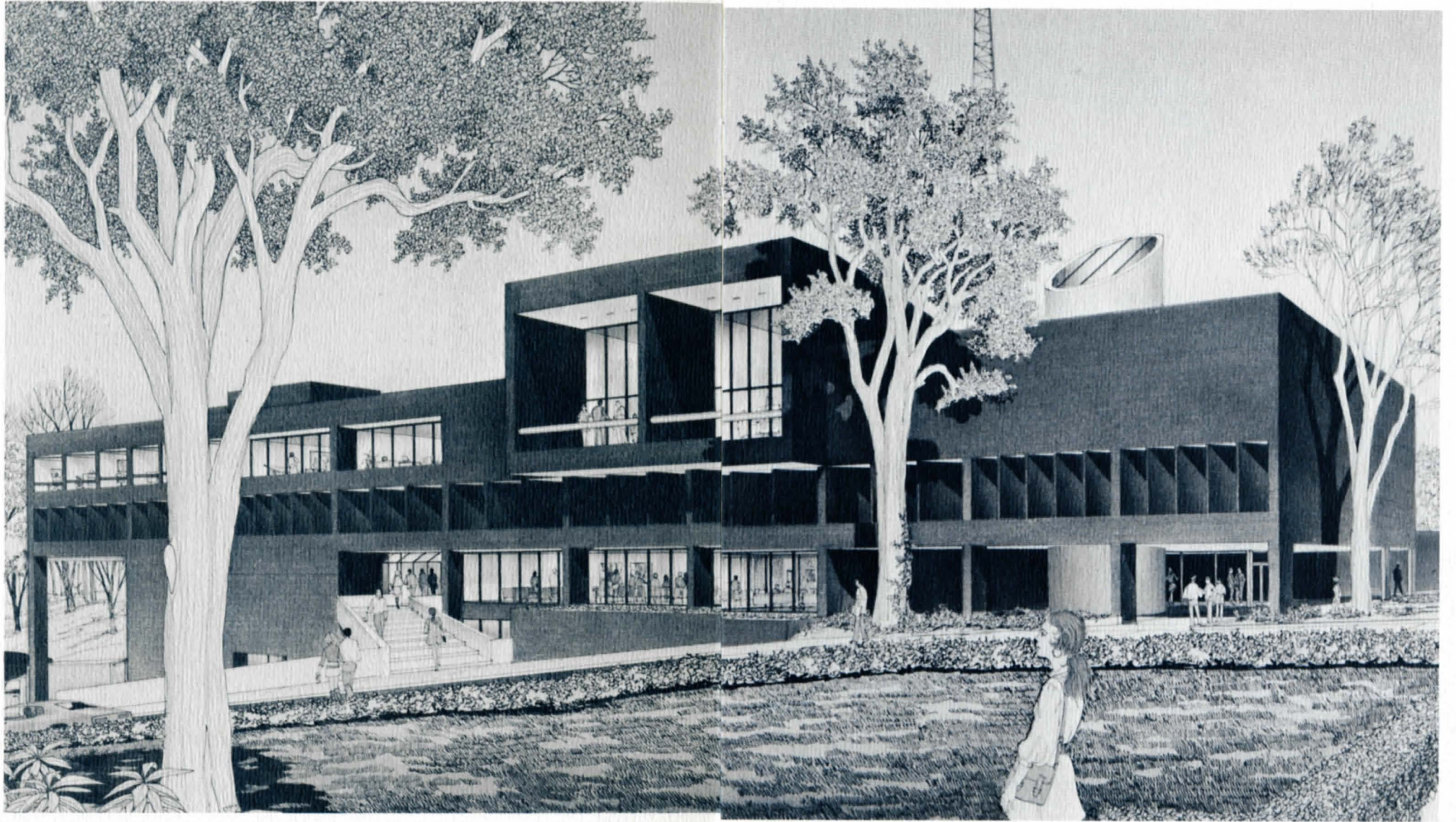
He continued his interest in the community with the Mental Health Center, the Greater Hospitals Campaign and the Mahoning County Society for Crippled Children.

The recipient of an honorary doctoral degree from Ohio Wesleyan, the Youngstown YMCA named Bliss Chapel after him.

Mr. Bliss was on the board of the Goff-Kirby Company, president of the Marcus-Paulson, Inc., director of Pinney Dock and Transport Company and Portsmouth Trucking Company, plus serving in unofficial capacities with numerous companies affiliated with Standard Slag.

It can be said of Mr. Bliss that all his life he followed his father’s advice . . .

“always do more than
is expected of you.”







Youngstown State University took the first step towards consolidating its College of Fine and Performing Arts into one cohesive unit in 1973, when ground was broken for the \$6.3-million facility Bliss Hall, an exciting and dramatic center for all the arts at Youngstown State.

For the first time, all those departments which share a concern for creativity and performance — art, music and speech communication and theatre — are housed under one roof. Programs and faculty which before had been scattered around the campus in a multitude of buildings, now have their own complex devoted to the arts.

Named in memory of the late W. E. Bliss, a prominent area industrialist, prime features of the structure are a 409-seat auditorium, a large art exhibition gallery with an unusual viewing area, and a 237-seat recital hall.

The first phase is a four-story 129,390 square foot building which presents a unique facade to both Wick Avenue and Spring Street, extending all the way down an incline to Wick Oval.

The Dana School of Music, which had been housed at five separate campus locations, occupies approximately 26,471 square feet, with 31 offices and studio-offices, including the director and faculty, instructional laboratories and 66 practice rooms.

The art department, formerly housed in both Rayen and Clingan-Waddell Halls now occupies some 27,333 square feet with nine offices, gallery space and nine instructional laboratories.

The department of speech communication and theatre has 19,776 square feet for offices and instructional laboratories. The auditorium, named Ford Auditorium in honor of the Ford family, will house productions of the University's highly acclaimed Spotlight Theatre.

Erected on the former site of Ford Hall, a gift to the University in 1951 from the late Judge John Ford and his sister, Mrs. Benjamin Agler, the building is constructed of reinforced concrete with a faced brick exterior.





Facilities

- Experimental theatre with flexible seating for up to 150
- Seventy music practice rooms, 62 equipped with studio or grand pianos
- Eighteen Steinway pianos
- A Schlicker performance organ and two Flentrop studio organs
- Approximately 27 faculty office/studios in music which can be used for instruction
- Band/orchestra practice room with library
- Photography studio with 17 enlargers
- Crafts studio with 18 weaving looms
- Drawing, advertising art, printmaking, sculpture and painting studios fully equipped
- Complete shop with heavy equipment for working in three dimensional design
- Faculty office/studios
- Materials center with collection of 5,000 LP's, 2,000 historic performances on 78's, 2,000 volumes of musical scores and 43,000 art slides
- Dean's office with adjacent conference/seminar room



Ford Auditorium



Judge John W. Ford
(1888 – 1968)

A native of Youngstown and the grandson of Joseph G. Butler, Jr., the founder of the Butler Institute of American Art, Judge Ford was a member of the Ohio Bar for more than 50 years, serving 20 as Mahoning County Common Pleas Judge. His vast experience with the law started as an associate with the Youngstown firm of Hine, Kennedy and Manchester; vice president and president of both the Mahoning County Bar Association and the Ohio Common Pleas Judges' Association; more than a decade as one of the three Ohio commissioners of the National Conference on Uniform State Laws; a member of the American Bar Association; and an associate and later consultant with the Youngstown firm of Manchester, Bennett, Powers and Ullman.

A trustee and honorary doctor of letters degree recipient from Youngstown State and a trustee and honorary doctor of laws candidate of Kenyon College, Judge Ford was also a trustee of the Ohio Independent Colleges.

It was said of Judge Ford that "he scorned delights and lived laborious days."



Mrs. Benjamin L. Agler

The widow of Benjamin L. Agler, founder of the Agler Insurance Agency, the former Josephine Ford was born in Youngstown January 18, 1893, and attended Rayen School.

Mrs. Agler has been honored by the Mahoning County Republican Women's Club for her more than 25 years outstanding service, which included serving as chairwoman-at-large for 10 years. Financial secretary and treasurer of the Monday Musical Club when it was first organized, Mrs. Agler was active in the Red Cross and the Society for the Blind, where she served as a driver, and CONTACT, a local program to help women after their discharge from mental hospitals.

Following her husband's death, Mrs. Agler gave a 93-acre tract of land to the YMCA for Camp Fitch, along with funds to build Agler Lodge. The family contribution to the community was the maternity wing at North Side Hospital as a memorial to the Butler and Ford families.





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