

DEDICATION SPEECH

Merrell Hambleton

Bennington College has never been a place for ceremony, but a dedication ceremony is different. Dedication is something Bennington knows about. Another kind of dedication has made Bennington the kind of college it is. It has made the Arts Center a reality - the dedication of many individuals--especially faculty and trustees--over a long period of time from the planning to the completion. They deserve and have our thanks.

I would particularly like to remember today my friend--fellow student, Trustee, parent--Sarah Jane Troy Schiffer--who as a Trustee DURING the planning years for the building brought energy, wisdom, humour and dedication to her work--but above all humaneness. It seems appropriate that she should be honoured in the naming of the Sarah Jane Troy Schiffer Green Room - a place for performers to gather, to prepare for performance, to greet their friends - a warm place. Sarah Jane would have liked it.

To the architect, Robertson Ward, we are indebted for a magnificent building. He spent a good part of two years on the campus discussing and planning with faculty and students for their needs in each area. He understood Bennington. He built from the inside out. His building belongs here. It enhances the campus. We are grateful as well to all the other people involved in this building project; and in particular, to Timothy Smith, ^{resident} local project manager, and finally to Bob Woodworth and Fred Wohnus who have ^{and Granger Contracting Company,} unloaded trucks and monitored the completion of the building in his usual persuasive way.

This Arts Center will develop a life of its own in the community. It will shape and influence what happens inside it. Artists, dancers, actors, musicians will create differently because of it. Bennington faculty and student artists have always made a virtue out of lack of adequate facilities.

Working in what were makeshift theatres and studios with too little space, they have continued to make exciting exciting art. The creative experience has flourished. Now they have the new challenge of making this building work for them, of moulding it to their needs, of finding its special virtues for their work. So we must dedicate it to the future of the arts at Bennington.

That future is more secure because of the dedication of Acting President, Joseph Iseman who, by dint of incredible energy, has in four months tackled every problem at the College from power failure and parking problems, to budgets and burst boilers and has won the admiration and confidence of the entire community. Joe, more power to you!