Dr. Chillman's Lectures Are Peppered With Dry Remarks

By FRANK DENT

"Now this is a painting of the meeting of Solomon and The Queen of Sheba painted in the fifteenth century. Notice how all the characters are portrayed dressed in the Florentine manner. They are portrayed in a gay, somewhat artificial mood . . . sort of like Rondelet."

"Compare the strong lines of the Colleoni equestrian statue to the perfectly good bronze but sagging Sam Houston in Hermann Park." These are only two of the dry remarks that pepper every history of art lecture by Dr. James Chillman, Professor of Architecture at Rice.

Dr. Chillman was born in Philadelphia and attended the University of Pennsylvania, receiving his B.S. in 1913, his M.S. in 1914. From 1915 to 1916 he attended the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. In the meantime Rice, only five years old, decided to hire another instructor in architecture.

"Rice Picked Me"

After being recommended by the University of Pennsylvania and approached by the Institute, Dr. Chillman accepted the position. "In a sense, Rice picked me." He came to Houston, moving into old South Hall in a room near J. Newton Rayzor. Lovett Hall, the Campanile and old Mechanical Lab, The Physics building and South hall and the Commons were the only buildings on campus, though West Hall was soon finished.

Roaming In Italy

In 1920 Dr. Chillman received an opportunity to study at the American Academy's Department of Architecture in Rome. He did work on the classics, roaming Italy investigating buildings of the Renaissance. For work completed there, he was made a Fellow of the American Academy (similar to a PhD degree).

Then in 1923 he returned to Rice, this time with Mrs. Chillman, who he met in New York.

At The Museum

In 1924, Dr. Chillman was appointed Director of the Houston Museum of Fine Arts, at the time when the first wing of the museum was being constructed. Dr. Chillman says he has been there for "Twenty-nine plus" years. At the present he is Director Emeritus of the Museum of the newest wing Dr.

DR. CHILLMAN

Chillman said: "It is an impressive gateway to Houston Culture, a modern classic that will become more and more effective."

Art Classes

The museum itself sponsors a tuitioned art school with classes in painting and sculpture. Classes in art appreciation are offered to interested private groups. Each year the high sixth and high seventh grades of all Houston schools are given tours of the museum by specially trained guides.

Carl Schurz Award

Among his other achievements, Dr. Chillman was also awarded the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation Fellowship for study in the German-speaking countries of Europe. He was a member of the staff of art lecturers for the Bureau of University Travel, spending nine summers in Europe.

Designing Rice Building

At Rice he took part in helping to design the new buildings. The Chemistry building in particular was a problem. One of the Chemistry professors wanted to use a lot of symbolism in the design... witness the alchemists symbols plus the intricate relief panels on the building. "I've even forgotten what it all means," says Dr. Chillman.

To Catch The Breeze

In designing the chemistry building, consideration was given to the climate. Since air conditioning was unheard of, the two lab wings of the building were brought out to catch the southwest breeze. For unity, modifications were made in the style of Lovett Hall and the Physics Building. "This same search for unity is visible in the more recently constructed buildings in the use of similar materials... brick and stone... even as far away as the stadium."