L. B. Ryons Give Rice Their Entire Estate For New Building

By GRIFFIN SMITH

Faculty and administrators of Rice have expressed astonishment and gratitude over the unprecedented gift of Professor and Mrs. L. B. Ryon, which will be used for construction of new civil engineering laboratories.

Dr. K. S. Pitzer, President of Rice, announced Saturday that the new building and its equipment are made possible by a gift of nearly $760,000—their entire estate—from the Professor Emeritus of Civil Engineering and his wife.

THE BUILDING, to be located in the engineering quadrangle, will be named Ryon Civil Engineering Laboratories in their honor.

In making the announcement, Dr. Pitzer said, “This truly magnificent gesture by a man who has devoted his life to teaching on the Rice campus is without parallel in the nation. Rice University and the entire community are deeply indebted to Professor and Mrs. Ryon for this wonderful gift which makes possible the initial step for providing badly needed additional facilities in engineering.”

Mr. Ryon has been at Rice for 45 years. He came to the University in 1917 as Instructor in Civil Engineering and was professor of Civil Engineering for 29 years before becoming Professor Emeritus in 1958.

UNDERGRADUATE marriages were a rare occurrence 45 years ago, but Mr. and Mrs. Ryon were married in 1916 while he was a junior at Lehigh University.

An honorary member of the Houston Engineering and Scientific Society, Mr. Ryon is also a non-resident Associate of Hanzsen College. He served as mayor of West University Place from 1923 to 1925.

The announcement was made at a small Cohen House luncheon for faculty and alumni, given Saturday by Dr. J. R. Sims, Chairman of the Civil Engineering Department.

DR. CAREY CRONEIS, Chancellor, remarked, “This is a marvelous case of ‘man biting dog.’ I know of few examples of an administration supported by the faculty.” He told Prof. Ryon, “You have supported us much more handsomely then we have supported you. And you have set a high mark for alumni.”

Professor Ryon had long hoped for an improvement in the Civil Engineering facilities, presently housed in the cramped Engineering Annex.

THE NEW BUILDING should admirably fulfill that hope. Tentative plans are for a building of some 60,000 square feet, housing not only the complete Civil Engineering labs, but also Mechanical Engineering labs and seminar-conference rooms for general use by the engineering faculty.

Areas of collaboration between the two departments, Dean LeVan Griffis explained at the (Continued on Page 4)
luncheon, will include hydraulics, fluid mechanics, stress analysis, and computer space.

The new building will also free space in Abercrombie Laboratories for the engineering department. Improvements are anticipated in all departments as a result of the change.

DR. GRIFFIS predicted growth of the C. E. faculty to twelve members and the M.E. faculty to fifteen after the new building is constructed. An increased undergraduate enrollment in C.E. is also expected.

Following the announcement, Professor Ryon was reluctant to personally address the Cohen Cohen House group, explaining, "I wouldn’t want to bore you."

HE DID SAY, however:

“My wife and I are deeply grateful—we came here without anything; what we have we made here in Houston. It’s all a product of Rice, and our association with Rice."

And why the gift at this particular time?

“We wanted this to be our life’s work; we wanted to see it while we were still here.”