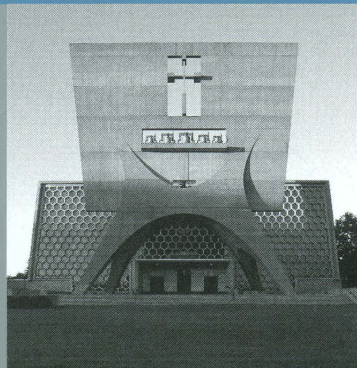
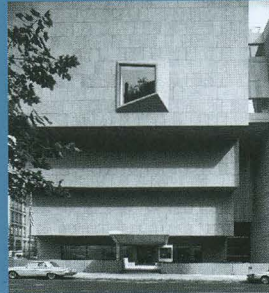


# Breuer

Saint John's  
Celebrates  
Marcel Breuer,  
Architect



Marcel Breuer  
at Saint John's



Top: IBM Boca Raton

Left: Whitney Museum  
of American Art

# Saint John's Celebrates Marcel Breuer

In recognition of the achievements of world-renowned architect Marcel Breuer, Saint John's Abbey and University are hosting a celebration commemorating the 100th anniversary of his birth. As teacher and architect, Breuer has influenced generations. His best-known works include the UNESCO building in Paris, the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City and the Saint John's Abbey and University Church in Collegeville, Minnesota.

## **Breuer Centenary Events**

### **40th Anniversary of the Dedication of the Abbey/University Church, October 24, 2001**

Featuring afternoon tours and an evening presentation by architects, contractors and members of the monastic community who were involved in the design and construction of the Church.

### **Lecture: "Remembering Marcel Breuer," November 14, 2001**

Architect Robert F. Gatje will deliver the first Breuer lecture, based on his

23-year association with Breuer.

Gatje's book, *Marcel Breuer A Memoir*, was published in 2000.

### **Lecture: "Art, Architecture and Sacred Space," April 24, 2002**

John Wesley Cook, President of The Henry Luce Foundation, will present the second Breuer lecture. Prior to becoming president of the foundation, Cook was the director of the Religion and Arts Program at Yale.

### **Breuer Centenary Exhibit Opening, May 22, 2002**

Opening at Saint John's Art Gallery on

the 100th anniversary of the birth of Marcel Breuer, the exhibit features photographs, models, drawings and furniture.

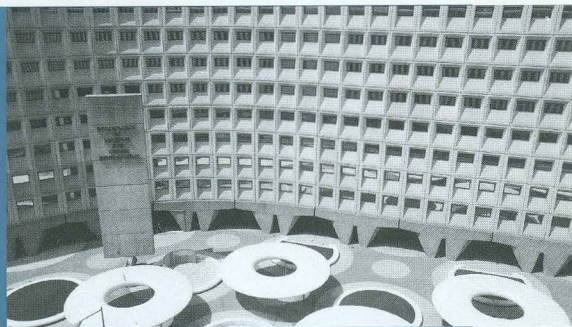
### **Breuer Architectural Symposium, June 20-23, 2002**

This symposium, planned in cooperation with the Minnesota chapter of the American Institute of Architects, will include presentations by architects, authors and scholars, as well as the posthumous presentation of the *Colman J. Barry Award for Distinguished Contributions to Religion and Society* to Marcel Breuer.

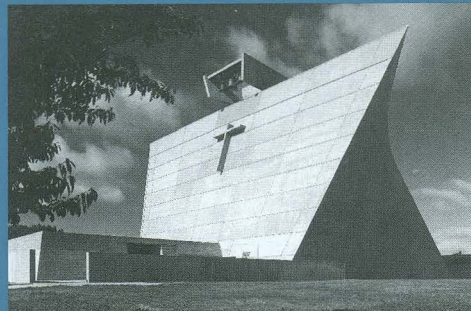




(Above)  
Hôtel Le Flaine



(Above right)  
U.S. Department of Housing  
and Urban Development



(Left)  
Saint Francis de Sales Church



# Marcel Breuer 1902-1981

A brief biographical note by Robert F. Gatje

Marcel Lajos Breuer – Lajkó to his friends – was born on 21 May 1902 in the provincial city of Pecs, Hungary. His early study and teaching at the Bauhaus in Weimar and Dessau in the twenties introduced the *wunderkind* to the older giants of the era of whom three – Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, and Walter Gropius – were to have life-long influence upon his professional life.

By the time he left Germany in 1935 to join Gropius in London, Breuer was one of the best-known designers in Europe. His reputation was based upon his invention of tubular steel furniture, one big residence, two apartment houses,

some shop interiors and several competition entries.

Two years later, Gropius asked him to join Harvard's architecture faculty. During WWII their partnership revolutionized American house design while teaching a whole generation of soon-to-be famous architects.

On his own in New York in 1946, Breuer saw a practice that had been essentially residential finally expand into institutional buildings with the UNESCO Headquarters commission in Paris in 1952 and the first of many buildings for Saint John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota two years later.

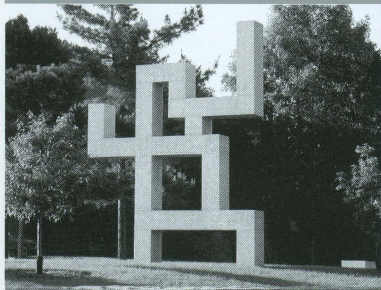
His New York-based firm moved through three ever-larger offices, with a branch in his beloved Paris to handle work in seven European countries; he



gathered five young partners in the process. By 1968, when he won the AIA's Gold Medal, he could look back on such world-famous monuments as New York's Whitney Museum, IBM's La Gaude Laboratory, the headquarters of the Departments of HUD and HEW in Washington DC, and Flaine — an entire ski-town in the French Alps. In that same year, he won the first Jefferson Foundation Medal that cited him "among all the living architects of the world, as excelling all others in the quality of his work."

He retired in 1976 and died on the 1st of July 1981 after a long illness.

Saint John's:  
(Below) "The Athlete"  
(Right) Alcuin Library





# Saint John's

## Collegeville, Minnesota

Saint John's is a uniquely special and multifaceted place. From its early beginnings, it has been home to Saint John's Abbey and University, the School of Theology and Seminary and the Preparatory School. Over the years, Saint John's has also become home to a number of other renowned institutions including: The Liturgical Press, the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library, the Episcopal House of Prayer, the Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research and the Interfaith Sexual Trauma Institute.

Saint John's Abbey is a Benedictine monastic community of men who follow the 1,500-year tradition of worship and

work through daily prayer and service in ministries that include education, parishes, chaplaincies and missions. *The Rule of Saint Benedict* places a strong emphasis on community living and hospitality, with common prayer at the heart of the day. The strong sense of community and hospitality strengthen the mission of the University and permeate the daily activities of the entire campus.

Saint John's University is one of the oldest institutions of higher education in the Midwest. From its inception, the University has valued the liberal arts as a preparation for careers of leadership in

church and society. Saint John's University for men and the nearby College of Saint Benedict for women are partners in liberal arts education, providing students the opportunity to benefit from the distinctive offerings of two nationally recognized Catholic undergraduate colleges. Together they challenge their 3,800-plus students to live balanced lives of learning, work, leadership and service in an ever-changing world.

Located on a 2,400-acre tract of land, the Saint John's campus is remarkable in both its natural and architectural beauty. It includes an extensive pine and

hardwood forest, an oak savanna, a restored prairie, restored wetlands and several lakes. The buildings at Saint John's date from the 1860s and are arranged in a series of quadrangles and courtyards to the north of Lake Sagatagan. At the center of the Saint John's campus is the Abbey and University Church, one of ten buildings on the campus designed by Marcel Breuer. With its soaring bell banner and three-story wall of stained glass, the Abbey Church and University is among the most striking pieces of twentieth-century architecture.



# Breuer at Saint John's

In December 1950, Abbot Baldwin Dworschak, OSB, newly elected sixth abbot of Saint John's, made a bold and visionary decision resulting in what one art historian has called "a milestone in the evolution of the architecture of the Catholic Church in this country." He contacted twelve prestigious architects, among them Marcel Breuer, asking them to submit a comprehensive building design for the second century of Saint John's. As part of his specifications, Abbot Baldwin required a design for "building a church which will be truly an architectural monument to the service of God." He explained, "The Benedictine tradition at its best chal-

lenges us to think boldly and to cast our ideals in forms which will be valid for centuries to come ..."

Saint John's chose Marcel Breuer and on January 28, 1954, he brought the drawings, models and books for the comprehensive 100-year plan before a meeting of the monastic community. Shortly thereafter, it was announced that an addition to the monastic quarters

would begin in the spring of 1954 and a church would follow. The plan was featured in many magazines in the U.S. and abroad and the models were displayed in several U.S. cities. After the completion of the monastic wing in 1957 – the close of the Saint John's Beñedictine's first century in Minnesota – the Abbey and University Church was immediately begun. Construction lasted from May

19, 1958 to August 24, 1961.

After the Church came the construction of Saint Thomas Hall (1959); Alcuin Library (1964); Peter Engel Science Center (1965); three additional student dormitories – Saints Bernard, Patrick and Boniface Halls (1967); the Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research (1968); and the Bush Center for the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library (1975). The original Breuer designs set the style for a creative complex for Saint John's Preparatory School (1962) and the Warner Palaestra Recreation Center (1974), designed and modified by architect Val Michaelson, former associate of Marcel Breuer.

"He struck us as being not only an outstanding architect, but a simple, straightforward, sincere and rather humble person."

– Abbot Baldwin, commenting on the selection of Breuer as master planner.

**Breuer architecture at Saint John's:**

Breuer Monastic Wing, 1955

Saint Thomas Aquinas Hall, 1959

Abbey and University Church, 1961

Alcuin Library, 1964

Peter Engel Science Center, 1965

Saint Bernard Hall, 1967

Saint Patrick Hall, 1967

Saint Boniface Hall, 1967

The Institute for Ecumenical and  
Cultural Research, 1968

Bush Center for the Hill Monastic  
Manuscript Library, 1975

"The Athlete," Sculpture,  
Warner Palaestra Recreation Center



Saint John's:  
Alcuin Library  
(foreground),  
Abbey and  
University Church



# Breuer Centenary Honorary Committee

**Constance Breuer**

Chair, New York City

**Patrick Alexander**

CEO and Chairman,  
Cold Spring Granite

**Abbot John Eidenshink OSB**

Seventh Abbot, Saint John's Abbey,  
Co-chair of Building Committee

**Thomas Fisher**

Dean, University of Minnesota  
College of Architecture &  
Landscape Architecture

**Gregory Friesen**

Partner, CSNA Architects

**Robert F. Gatje**

Architect and Author; Breuer Partner,  
Manager of Breuer Office in Paris

**Beverly Hauschild-Baron**

Hon. AIA, Executive Vice President,  
American Institute of Architects of  
Minnesota

**Isabelle Hyman**

Breuer Scholar;  
Professor, New York University

**Frank Kacmarcik ObISB**

Liturgical Design Consultant,  
Saint John's Abbey

**Abbot John Klassen OSB**

Abbot, Saint John's Abbey

**Evan Mauer**

Director and President,  
Minneapolis Institute of Art

**Valerius Michelson**

Architect; Breuer Associate;  
Clerk of the Works and Abbey  
Church Project Representative

**Larry McGough**

President and Chairman,  
McGough Companies;  
Contractor for the Abbey Church

**Dietrich Reinhart OSB**

President, Saint John's University

**Hamilton Smith**

Architect; Breuer Partner;  
Assistant Architect on Abbey Church

**Lee Tollefson**

Architect; Partner, Rafferty,  
Rafferty, Tollefson, St. Paul






“... architecture must reflect life  
and serve human needs ...”

**Marcel Breuer**

University of Mary



# Breuer Centenary

Saint John's Abbey & University • Collegeville, Minnesota

PHOTO CREDITS Marcel Breuer (cover): Tamas Breuer. Hôtel Le Flaine: Yves Guillemaut. Breuer at Saint John's: Lee A. Hanley (Saint John's Abbey Archives). Saint John's Church/Library, Alcuin Library: Bill Hedrich, Hedrich-Blessing, Chicago, IL (Saint John's Abbey Archives). IBM Boca Raton: IBM Corporate Archives. St. Francis de Sales Church: courtesy St. Francis de Sales Parish. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development: Courtesy HUD. Breuer portrait: Unknown (Courtesy Annunciation Monastery).