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THE FOUR ELEMENTS OF TRANSFORMATION

Bryant’s physical transformation is not just a single story — it is many stories. Each building has its own origin story, and each building has changed lives in ways that create many more stories.

This chapter explains how Bryant’s Smithfield, RI, campus and facilities evolved in the last 30 years. You will see in the pictures how incredible that transformation has been. And you won’t just note impressive, new buildings and scenic grounds. You will appreciate the work that went into creating a campus that inspires those who live and work there.

There are four elements in successful building: vision, planning, capital, execution.

Here’s a preview of how Bryant’s leadership made the most of those elements in conceiving, designing, funding, and constructing the campus facilities and landscape.

VISION

In the early part of this 30-year history, only new student housing was built on campus. Bryant then experienced a decline in student enrollment. Five dorms were empty. The decline was part of a national trend, but that didn’t make it any less discouraging. Like most colleges, Bryant had to consolidate its resources, rather than expand. There was little enthusiasm, and no real confidence in the future.

A new Bryant president arrived in 1996, Ron Machtley, a former congressman and graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy. He had ambition, energy, and determination.
Machtley was the catalyst for transforming Bryant. Under his leadership, the college developed a vision for growth; plans for design; capital campaigns to finance expansion; and a commitment to executing Bryant’s new strategies.

Back then, the campus was largely the Unistructure, and the road onto the campus went right to its front. “It looked like you were driving to an insurance company building,” recalls Machtley. “There were no trees. And a swimming pool inside the Unistructure made the whole building smell like chlorine.

“I read a lot about the purpose of a college campus, and reflected on my time at the Naval Academy. I read about the great institutions of our country, and what Thomas Jefferson considered when he was designing the University of Virginia.

“Brian Britton, who has been our head of Building and Grounds for 40 years, gave me a book, The Campus as a Work of Art. It helped us figure out how to develop a campus in a way that was thoughtful and coherent – where the form of buildings would match the mission of what one intended to do.

“We spent a lot of time contemplating: what are we doing here? What is our mission? We brainstormed about moving the cars out and creating an open space for students to relax and socialize. We wanted certain new buildings constructed around this open space, reflecting the mission of educating the whole person.”

Through the years, President Machtley and his leadership team developed three strategic plans that propelled Bryant to greatly expand its facilities and improve the landscaping of the campus.
We had a Boston architect, Mr. Stubbins, help us produce a master plan,” Machtley recalled. “He was terrific. In 1997 he designed a campus plan as to how we should build — if we were going to build anything. We decided that the first building should be a library. When you look at great campuses, the library is usually more visible than classroom buildings. Yet our library was hidden in the Unistructure. You could hardly find it. We wanted to have it prominently seen so when people visited, they’d say, ah, this is an institution of higher learning.

“We also wanted our people to be physically fit, to not make the mistake of thinking that fitness was unimportant at a business school. The reality is, when you go out into business, they want you to be physically fit. We didn’t want to impose a standard of being skinny, but we wanted to encourage taking care of yourself. So we wanted to build a facility for exercise and athletics.

“Ultimately we also wanted to build a chapel. So that would then give us the three buildings we needed for educating the whole person — mind, body, spirit. That was our vision.”

Britton recalls that the new plan had a basic organizing principle for the campus layout — an area for residence halls, another for academic buildings, and another direction for athletics.

Change didn’t just involve buildings and grounds. Change was required in roads, walkways, and parking lots too.

“The entry road went up just to the left of the pond,” Machtley explained, “right up to the front of the Unistructure, in a circle. And everything to the north of the circle was cement parking lot. Later, in 2006, with a plan developed by a great design firm, Sasaki Associates, we spent $5 million to blow out the space, make it grass, and move the parking much farther out. But wow, it was a shock. It took over five minutes to walk from the farthest parking lot to the Unistructure. There was plenty of free parking, but it was a hike. We explained to everyone: we’ve got to walk; that’s the deal. And everybody went along with it.”

With an exciting vision, and a master plan for design, building new facilities seemed like an increasingly realistic goal. But there was another essential element in this success story.
Soon after his arrival, President Machtley fulfilled the Board of Trustee’s request for a strategic vision. He developed the New Century Plan for Excellence. Bryant’s leaders understood that the college could not afford to accept the status quo of stagnation, but all agreed that its heritage should not be discarded either.

“As I looked at the history of Bryant since 1863,” said Machtley, “what we’ve done really well is enable our students to go out and be successful. And it became clearer and clearer to me that if our students became great, then Bryant would become great. And so it became our mission in 1996 to be a student-centered college, focused on excellence, to ensure that every student would achieve his or her personal best in life and in business.”

Funded in part by the college’s first comprehensive capital campaign, the New Century Plan called for new academic and athletic facilities, cutting-edge technology, and more scholarships.

With a new executive team, Machtley carried out the five-year plan two years ahead of schedule.

That made possible the first cycle of construction in the new era.

A few years later, in 2000, it was time for even bolder ideas for growth. The Vision 2010 plan was adopted. It had five strategic pillars, and one was to build new facilities. Bryant announced a $50 million expansion plan to create both exceptional buildings and beautiful green space.

Transformation of the campus was well under way.

In 2014, the Board of Trustees approved the launch of a historic $75 million capital campaign, “Expanding the World of Opportunity: The Campaign for Bryant’s Bold Future.” One of the key goals was to build “facilities to inspire excellence …creating a campus for success.”

Machtley and university officers toured the nation to help raise funds from alumni. David Wegrzyn ’86, Vice President for University Advancement, explained: “In higher education, universities take quantum leaps at critical times, and Bryant is poised for another right now.” This capital campaign has also been extraordinarily successful. And we wouldn’t see an amazing building like the Academic Innovation Center without that success.

“President Machtley credited the success of this capital campaign to “a team of trustees, senior administrators, faculty, alumni, and others who are invested in trying to improve Bryant every day. We’re at the point where we have to raise money – like all the great universities do – to continue to grow. It's vital to invest in strategic improvements in academics, student life, technology, and facilities.”

“...every building on the campus has been built with the same Belden brick. It’s a brick made by a factory in Canton, Ohio. It’s very durable, so even the original dorms haven’t had to be repointed.”
It's one thing to imagine the kind of building one desires; it's quite a different matter to actually construct it in a way where it is affordable, functions efficiently, and is easy to maintain.

In this chapter you'll learn that some construction challenges have been quite severe. Bryant has had major facilities being built at the same time, right next to each other. And other buildings have been renovated to change their purpose.

While Bryant often used different architects and design firms, the university has had remarkable success in making sure that most building projects have been completed on time and on budget.

"The question was, how can we have a campus that is bigger and better, yet still feels the same?" said President Machtley. "We wanted new buildings, but wanted them to feel like New England. We didn't want to change the basic architectural style."

One answer to that question was in a small detail: every building on the campus has been built with the same Belden brick. It's a brick made by a factory in Canton, Ohio. It's very durable, so even the original dorms haven't had to be repointed. Many people can't believe it's the same brick in buildings that look distinctly different, but, examined up close, one sees that the only difference is the mortar.

With so many new buildings under construction, old things had to be moved to new locations. The tennis courts had to be relocated to make room for the new Academic Innovation Center. And removing that swimming pool in the Unistructure? It took 45 truckloads of cement to fill it in. And in that space, there is now an attractive, welcoming atrium.

During the Machtley years, the university built more than 500,000 square feet of new facilities, and renovated almost every existing facility. But the administration made sure there was always plenty of space between buildings, with connecting walkways and beautiful gardens. The ponds have always been there, but now the landscaped pedestrian area is bigger than Harvard Yard.

Yet with all the change on campus, some things are the same. The stone wall along the right side of the pond is the original wall. Walls that came later were built to carry on the tradition of its New England style. And acres of woodlands and wildlife are carefully protected. The campus has been transformed, but much of its scenic beauty is natural and enduring.
The gateway entrance was redesigned to make a more appealing first impression.
“The globe also symbolized Bryant’s commitment to be a strategic leader in the global marketplace.”

Changing the look at Bryant’s front gate was the first new facility change by Ron Machtley, the new college president.

The previous sign was a logo with a rusted motif, and was cantilevered into the ground. That rusted look was popular back then, like buildings made of only cement. But while it seemed contemporary at first, it later projected a negative image: rusting in the sense of deterioration.

The new signage featured a symbol of ambition and confidence: an impressive, six-foot globe sculpted from painted black steel; encircled by two polished brass electronic arcs representing the speed with which technology was spreading worldwide. The globe also symbolized Bryant’s commitment to be a strategic leader in the global marketplace.

The globe sits atop a 25-foot long granite pier, incorporating Westerly Red granite from a local quarry and Cambrian Black.

And a new slogan expressed Bryant’s bold mission: “Expanding the World of Opportunity.”

Bryant’s new entrance look was designed by a Providence firm, Malcolm Greer Associates, a top-notch graphic arts agency. Joel Greer has created a lot of Bryant signage over the years.

Brian Britton, Bryant’s long-time Buildings and Grounds Superintendent, recalls the time a freshman decided he would get inside the globe to have his picture taken. Unfortunately, he couldn’t get out. The Fire Department had to come rescue him.
The new entrance landmark: President Machtley and trustees unveiled the front gate sign, symbol, and slogan on October 31, 1997. Many students and staff came for the ceremony, and a musical band helped make the occasion a festive, memorable event.

The Entry Control Center is visitor-friendly in 2018: The current center is comfortable for the public safety officers inside, and visually appealing on the outside thanks to the conscientious landscaping and maintenance crew.
President Machtley and his family had been happy with their old house on campus, but Bryant Trustees wanted to build a larger residence that would allow more space for hosting university dinners and events.

The architect was Paul Weber. He understood that one of the objectives was to have a dining space that could seat sixty people and have enough space for people to be able to socialize before dining. The house was built by Woodmeister Master Builders, Inc.

Brian Britton, Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds, said the Callahan House was an interesting project because it was a different kind of architecture; almost a shingle style. That was quite different from the old presidential house, which was more of a stark modern design.

“We needed space between the two houses, so we had to work to find a good site for it. We moved it up, into the woods. During the building we had a problem: a nest of red tail hawks was in a large tree, right in the middle of the site. Because they are a protected species and hadn’t fledged yet, we couldn’t cut the tree down. So, throughout the early course of the work, as builders were pouring foundations, the mother hawk would occasionally dive-bomb workers. The project manager, Lisa Laliberte, told me that the guys would run, squealing. But they had their hard hats on, so, while there’d be occasional contact, nobody got hurt. Finally, the babies were fledged and could fly away, and the tree came down. We were all set after that. It had held us up a little, but it was mostly just an annoyance. An artist, painting in the house, immortalized the hawk -- you can see it painted on the wall in a downstairs bathroom. There’s kind of a mural.

“The house came out beautifully. It’s a real asset to the university, and event after event is held there – either in the house or on the lawn surrounding it.”

Machtley says it’s been a remarkably successful house in terms of hosting. They serve dinner to about 1,500 people in a year, and there are a lot of university activities held at the house.
When the Callahan House opened in 2008, there was a big Open House — for two days. The Machteys invited everyone on campus to go through it, and they welcomed hundreds.
CONATY PARK

Baseball and Softball Complex opened in 2000 and was rededicated as Conaty Park in 2012.
Conaty Park is probably the best baseball/softball complex in New England, and one of the best in the country," said President Machtley. "It is positioned well, meticulously maintained, and it’s just a great field."

But this “field of dreams” didn’t just suddenly appear in the northeast corner of the campus. It was a product of design and evolved over time.

“Ben Mondor, who owned the Pawtucket Red Sox for 33 years, used to be on our Board of Trustees, and he was a good friend of mine,” Machtley recalls. “I invited him to visit in 1999, and said, ‘Ben, you’ve got to help us. We’re going to move our baseball field.’

“The field used to go a different way. Ben said: ‘it’s all screwed up. You’ve got to make sure you understand where the sun is …’ He helped us lay it out in the correct way. And his guys with the Red Sox organization came here with their builders and actually built the mounds for us. I didn’t realize that it required special soil and has to be a certain height.’

The baseball field was built and first played on in 2000.

“Over the years, we kept upgrading,” said Machtley. “A generous gift from Bill Conaty allowed us to improve the whole complex. We used to have moveable stands; we’d move them in for baseball season, then move them for football season. And they were falling apart. We installed permanent stands. And we used to have just a table behind home plate. We added press boxes.”

The facility has bleacher seating for 500 spectators, including 200 chairback seats, and a state-of-the-art press box for all in-game operations and broadcasts. It is equipped with step-down dugouts and bullpens down each line. A hitting cage area was added in 2008, which included two batting tunnels, four tee/drill stations, and a storage area for field screens and equipment. The complex boasts full irrigation, excellent drainage, and a digital scoreboard. And in 2016, the Bulldogs baseball team enjoyed the comforts of a renovated locker room within the Conaty Indoor Athletic Center.

Thanks to the generosity of alumnus Bill Conaty ’67 and his wife, the baseball/softball complex transformed into a first-class Division I facility.

Originally called the Bryant Baseball and Softball Complex, it was rededicated as Conaty Park on April 28, 2012, before a game against Fairleigh Dickinson. Bill Conaty was captain of Bryant’s 1967 baseball team, and he was inducted into Bryant’s Athletic Hall of Fame.

Conaty Park is home to the Division I Bulldogs throughout the year, for both fall and spring sports seasons. It is located next to Sutton Field, which was formerly the summer home of the New England Patriots.

In addition to hosting several Northeast-10 Conference Tournament games, Conaty Park hosted the NCAA Division II Northeast Regional Championship, which was won by the Bulldogs.
EARLY ATHLETIC FIELDS
Athletic field construction in 1999 helped prepare Bryant for competition in a new century.

When Bryant decided to add new teams, it wasn’t just a challenge to build a football stadium and other facilities. Constructing athletic fields was also part of the challenge.

In 1999, new competition fields were under construction — in the new stadium for football, soccer and lacrosse; men’s baseball and women’s softball to meet NCAA criteria for those sports; plus, three fields for intramural sports.

Existing fields had been in terrible shape. The track behind the football field was in disrepair. The baseball team was angry with the poor condition of their baseball field. “If you were at home plate,” recalls President Machtley, “there was a six-foot drop to the center field. So, you could only see the center fielder from the waist up.

“They had scooped all the topsoil, so there was a drainage problem. The right field was always under water. When I went to my first game, the right-fielders wore plastic bags on their feet so their shoes didn’t get soaked. And we had a snow fence for an outfield fence. It was all pretty primitive. Baseball players were ripped; understandably so. But I said, ‘look, we can’t do it all at once. After we do the football field, we’ll make a new field for baseball and upgrade everything.’ And we did.”

Athletic Director Dan Gavitt said at the time, “Bryant College has made a commitment to provide the very best athletic and recreational facilities among our major competitors. These brand-new fields will broaden and enhance the athletic facilities for the entire Bryant community. They bring us into NCAA compliance in men’s baseball and women’s softball, provide a professional-quality competition field for other varsity sports teams, and give intramural and club sports much more space to practice and play.”

Jeff Parker, Project Manager for the field construction, said the college chose a plan to strip the fields of their existing loam, which was shipped off campus and mixed with sand to come up with root-zone mix growing medium. He said that method created a “hydroponic laboratory system for grass to grow,” which is why an extensive irrigation and drainage system was created.

Sod was installed on the competition field in time for the October 1999 Homecoming Weekend, when the Bulldogs played Mount Ida College.

While the project was substantially complete by then, fields weren’t ready for use until the spring of 2000 to allow the grass to grow properly. As student-athletes of that era remember, it was well worth the wait.
JOHN H. CHAFEE CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS
John H. Chafee Center for International Business helped Bryant go global.

The original site of the Center for International Business evolved over many years, from humble beginnings. Decades earlier, when the college first moved in, the building was much smaller — for the old farm, it had been a milking shed, with two-foot thick rubble stone walls.

Bryant transformed the building into the Small Business Development Center, then the Export Assistance Center in 1988. The college put a large addition on it in 1998, doubling its size.

At that time, the college’s computer operations center in the Unistructure was having problems with the expansion work then going on, so they were relocated to the lower level of the Chafee Center. That way the college was able to design a suitable environment with the cooling and isolation needed to protect the computer systems.

Groundbreaking for the new Center was held on World Trade Day on June 11, 1998. It represented the expansion of Bryant’s successful international business outreach and academic programs. It incorporated the Export Assistance Center building and its programs: the International Trade Data Network (ITDN), the World Trade Center, and the new Country/Industry Program.

Creation of the expanded facility was funded by Bryant and through grants from the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Economic Development Administration and the R.I. Human Resources Investment Council.

The center was named after U.S. Senator John H. Chafee a month after he died: On June 14, as part of World Trade Day 2000, the late senator’s daughter, Georgia Nassikas, and his widow, Mrs. Virginia Chafee, stand with President Machtley after unveiling the sign dedicating The John H. Chafee Center for International Business.
The campus hasn’t just been transformed by the construction of new, impressive buildings. Returning alumni are surprised to find beautiful green space where they expected to see asphalt.

There’s now a grassy quad, with a reflecting pool — the Hassenfeld Common — where there had been a parking lot. The quad is anchored on two corners by older buildings, the Unistructure and the Bryant Center (now the Michael E. ’67 and Karen L. Fisher Student Center), and on the other two by the new George E. Bello Center for Information and Technology and the Elizabeth and Malcolm Chace Wellness and Athletic Center.

“Our students, faculty, and staff take great pride in Bryant’s beauty,” said President Machtley in welcoming remarks at a recent Student Open House. “Spring has arrived early this year and our campus will soon be ablaze in colorful flowers. There will be frisbees and intramural softball games. It’s an idyllic scene we don’t take it for granted. Many people work hard to keep the quality of our buildings and grounds in perfect shape, not just today, but every day. You won’t find litter spoiling the view, and the grass and shrubs are regularly trimmed.

“It’s part of the culture here; both inside and outside the classroom. A parent once said to my wife, Kati: ‘I just told my husband, if Bryant takes such great care of the grounds and facilities, imagine how much more care they will take in their care of our son.’ And it’s true. This is a special place to live and study, work and play, in a safe, beautiful environment.”

Recalls Brian Britton, the Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds, “With the new layout, at first there was some concern about people having to walk farther from the periphery of the campus, from the parking lots through an area that used to be the parking for the Unistructure. But, surprisingly enough, because the atmosphere created was so pleasant, people adapted to it very well. I never hear a complaint about it these days, even though occasionally we have some rough weather here in New England. Generally speaking, I think the trade was well worth it for that transformation.”

President Machtley says of the quad, “We really set a standard for building out this space, but also for maintaining it. When parents come here, they say it’s just so beautiful — it’s like Monet’s Garden in Giverny. It’s so well-maintained. There’s no graffiti; no one drops paper. It’s a culture. Students help take care of the property. We take pride in keeping the grounds clean. We want to preserve our environment because we all share it.”

THE GEORGE E. BELLO CENTER FOR INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY

The George E. Bello Center for Information and Technology opened in 2002
Bello Center, with its Stephan Grand Hall and Krupp Library, were the centerpieces of a bold expansion drive.

The George E. Bello Center for Information and Technology opened in 2002, and it was the most ambitious facility built on campus since the Unistructure in 1970-1971.

The $27 million facility was 72,000 square feet. It was home to the new Douglas and Judith Krupp Library, which combined the traditional resources of a premier library (over 140,000 books at that time) with cutting-edge technology.

The facility also contains the C.V. Starr Financial Markets Center, a mock trading room floor, and the Walter and Heidi Stepan Grand Hall, a space for lectures, receptions, and exhibitions. In addition, there are two classrooms, study/breakout rooms on the second floor, and a café.

The Bello Center was an early highlight of the physical transformation of Bryant’s Smithfield campus, and it was made possible by the success of The Campaign for Bryant, the institution’s first comprehensive capital campaign.

“Prior to that time, I think Bryant had the flavor of a commuter school,” recalls Brian Britton, Superintendent of Building and Grounds. “A sea of parking lots surrounded the Unistructure. We wanted to create more space within the Unistructure for other purposes. And one of the larger entities we thought we could remove was the library, which was then contained in it. We could free up about an acre of space in the building by moving the library out.

“In 1998, we began early master planning with Stubbins Associates for dramatic change to the campus. We wanted the Unistructure as one of the anchors to this area, and we were going to place the new library in such a way that it started to enclose the pond area and form sort of a quad of a campus green. We thought further about it and knew that, at some point, we were likely to expand the gymnasium and the MAC to create a wellness area. So, as pieces got moved around, it logically fell into place that we’d continue to move athletics in the direction they were, add a Wellness Center to the athletic center, and enclose another side of the quad with the library. Plus, we’d leave another area open for, at some point, a chapel.

“President Machtley and the architect liked the thematic idea of mind, body and spirit as being the enclosing elements of the quad. And that’s pretty much how the campus took shape in the years that followed.”

“We decided to make the library the first new building in our strategic plan,” recalls President Machtley. “We knew revolutionary technology was coming, and we had started giving all the students laptops, so we didn’t want it to be just a library. We called it the George E. Bello Center for Information and Technology.

“We never had a really big space for dinners and meetings, so we decided the facility should have a lot of space. And, trying to envision the future, we asked ourselves: how is technology going to be integrated? I got a committee together, and they went around the country looking for the best libraries and thinking about how technology was being integrated.
"Opening the Bello Center felt like an historic occasion. Students loved exploring the new building. It was like walking into the future...into our future."
“That was in 1996, and we had no money — we had not started a capital campaign. But I said to our Board that we’ve got to demonstrate that we are going to build something; that we have the confidence to build. We’ll borrow the money. In the early stage, we estimated it would be something like $17 million. It turned out to be substantially more as our plans grew, but it didn’t really matter at that point because we had no money for it anyway.

“As I often say, luck is better than brilliance. I went to see George Bello. He was a Bryant alum, Class of ’58, and had become a top exec at the New York-based insurance company, Reliance Group Holdings, Inc. His office was designed by Gwathmey Siegel, and he was friends with Charlie Gwathmey. I said, these guys are going to design this building for us, and we need a donor who will step up; would you be that donor? He wasn’t sure. I kept going back. Finally, he said: ‘I’ll do it.’ I said, $5 million. He said OK. That was the biggest gift we ever had, and it really gave us confidence that we could build this library. George Bello chaired our first comprehensive, successful capital campaign, and served as a Trustee too.

“The library won a lot of awards. We had plugs for laptops at every seat, so you could hardwire into the system and not have to go with Wi-Fi, which was just starting. If we hadn’t done that back then, we’d have to go back and retrofit the whole building. So, it worked out really well.

“Students went to the library to study; it was a friendly, comfortable, sociable place. Here we are 12 years later, and it’s still in great shape. No one has ever carved their initials in a desk. And the award-winning Herman Miller chairs still look like they’re brand new. We have made almost no change to the original building.”
Chace Wellness and Athletic Center was built in 2001, and greatly expanded in 2016.
In 2001, construction was under way for a 31,000 square-foot Wellness Center, to augment the existing gymnasium and Multipurpose Activities Center (known as the MAC) with state-of-the-art workout facilities.

The Wellness Center contained 9,000 square feet of new fitness equipment and weights; a six-lane, 25-yard swimming pool, comfortable locker rooms, and an aerobics and martial arts studio with sound systems and video equipment.

Explained Dan Gavitt, Bryant’s athletic director, “We need to ensure that all our students — not just varsity athletes — develop both the right intellectual skills and healthy life habits.”

The Wellness Center opened in January 2002, and it was named after Malcolm and Elizabeth Chace in a ceremony on September 12, 2003. The couple was praised at the dedication for their leadership and generosity in contributing to the transformation of the campus and its programs. In addition to supporting Bryant’s first comprehensive campaign, The Campaign for Bryant, for years they supported a variety of initiatives — for facilities, scholarships, and senior class gifts.

Designed by the architectural firm Stanmar, Inc., the $7 million Wellness Center was an immediate hit. Students and staff appreciated that it truly provided the resources necessary to balance intellectual and personal growth with physical and emotional well-being. Said President Machtley, “This is a facility that is consistent with our plan to keep giving Bryant students every opportunity to be successful — inside and out.”

Mike Carosotto was Project Manager for the expansion. Sasaki Associates was the design team.

In early 2016, a new wing was added to the Chace Wellness and Athletic Center for a Sports Medicine and Training Center. A two-story, 6,700 square-foot addition, and a 3,400 square-foot renovation along the east side of the existing Multipurpose Activities Center (MAC) was completed. A Training Room was expanded on the Center’s first floor, and new office space was constructed on the second floor for Bryant’s Division I football program.
THE KOFFLER CENTER AND COMMUNICATIONS COMPLEX
The Koffler Center and Communications Complex evolved in identity, purpose, and look.

The Koffler Center was built in 1976 as a new Student Center. It was named after the founder of American Tourister Luggage, Sol Koffler ’70H, a generous patron of Bryant. He was a Bryant Trustee and a member of Bryant’s Jubilee Club. The student center was dedicated in honor of Koffler’s family on October 19, 1978. And the iconic rotunda in the Unistructure is also named after him.

The Student Center was renovated and expanded to become a technology center in 1986, and on September 22, 1987, rededicated as the Koffler Technology Center. It created a new world of communications and technology for students, faculty, staff, and regional businesses.

“We proceeded to build an exact replica of the Channel 10 studio – the very same size. And we learned as we went along about such things as the importance of soundproofing and the challenge of installing power lines.”

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In the summer of 2013, the Bryant Center and the Koffler Communications Complex had extensive renovations, inside and outside.