

Pei, Walter Netsch, Gordon Bunshaft, Eduardo Catalano, Pietro Belluschi, Jose Sert, the Architects Collaborative, Marvin Goody and John Clancy.

In 1948 Wurster was appointed to the National Capitol Park and Planning Commission and became a close friend and adviser to President Truman. He was chair of this commission until 1950 when he resigned as the dean at MIT and returned to California to become the dean of architecture at his alma mater. It was his friend Jack Kent, who had received an MCP degree from MIT in city and regional planning, who espoused Wurster's cause for the deanship. Their friendship went back to the late 1930s when Jack Kent, Vernon DeMars, Francis Violich, Corwin Mocine, and Garrett Eckbo, later to become important Berkeley faculty, were members of the Telesis group in San Francisco, an organization that was dedicated to improving the quality of life and architecture in the Bay Area. Wurster, although not a member, was one of its strongest advocates and supporters. Before he embarked on his eastern sojourn he had planned that when he completed his Harvard fellowship he would return to California and teach at the University, but MIT had reached him first. Now it was his feeling to return to the West and "have the University of California school become one of the leaders in doing things less in the shadow of the past."²¹

As dean, Wurster replaced his former teacher, Warren Perry, who had left the deanship after 23 years to go back to teaching. What Wurster inherited was an architectural school without much of a national reputation. Like MIT when Wurster arrived there, Berkeley was still a mirror of the Beaux-Arts system. What he built was an institution of international stature—the present College of Environmental Design.

In two short years from 1951-1953 under Wurster's guidance the School of Architecture, with its four-year curriculum, was completely revamped. The College of Architecture was formed with a five-year program, paralleling most other member schools of ACSA, and strong new faculty with "different slants" were brought to formulate the educational objectives of the college. Charles Eames, the internationally known designer, Jesse Reichel, a distinguished painter, and Philip Theil, who had studied with Kepes at MIT, developed the basic design program of the first two years. James Prestini, Joseph Esherick, James Ackerman, Rai Okamoto, Donald Olsen and others joined the faculty which included such architects as Eric Mendelsohn, Ernest Born, and Vernon DeMars. Those first few years of exploration were not without pitfalls and, as Wurster recalled, in about 1954-1955 confusion reigned, so they held a three-day symposium only to discover that everybody was trying to make a whole man and no one was teaching architecture.

It was during those tumultuous years that Wurster proved himself a "good administrator running fences for good teachers."²² Perhaps that might explain in some small way why Wurster had the knack of putting together such extraordinary faculties. He said, "I don't pretend to be a great teacher myself, but I know good teaching when I see it, and I can try desperately to make a surrounding for good teachers so they can do their work unimpeded."²³

Bill Wurster did not regard himself as a teacher. As a matter of fact he never taught a formal course at Berkeley, but knew what he thought should be taught and found the proper persons who could do it well. He had a vision of what beginning students should experience and three courses, which he considered the best of their kind in the country, were introduced. Arch 1N and 2N ("N" meaning new) under the direction of Eames, Reichel, Theil, and Prestini, he viewed as "aptitude tests



Architecture students with project from studio 1N, 1954. *Ark Annual, 1954, CED Records, Berkeley*