

# Chillman Traces Rice Architectural History

By KEN DESSAIN

"Is the architectural heritage of the Rice campus predominantly Italian Renaissance?" Dr. James Chillman, Jr., beginning the Alumni Association's Distinguished Scholar Lecture Series last Wednesday night, emphatically opposed this popular conception.

"Actually it is more a combination of the twelfth and thirteenth century Byzantine, Romanesque, and Venetian Gothic," he said.

**THE TRUSTEE** Distinguished Professor of Fine Arts, who first joined the Rice faculty in 1916, outlined the history of Rice buildings, "not with idea of expanding architectural theory, but rather to show the creative forces and styles which have affected the design of our campus structure."

Dr. Chillman emphasized that the "modern view" in 1910 was to choose an historic style, and the architectural firm chosen by President Lovett in 1909 were devoted medievalists. He added that there was still some question as to the motif of the new halls of learning.

"The reasons for choosing a style suggestive of medieval Venice seemed at first obscure, but before Rice's four hundred acres were drained, some connection was apparent," commented Dr. Chillman.

**OF COURSE**, the medieval design of the old Rice buildings made them no less functional. Lovett Hall and the Chemistry

Buildings, constructed before air conditioning, were originally made one room thick to take advantage of the cross ventilation afforded by the famous gulf breeze.

In the '20s and 30s architects abandoned the historical bias and concentrated instead on forms as beautifully designed as possible. This, said Dr. Chillman, is the reason for the lack of total consistency in all buildings of the campus.

Dr. Chillman maintained that the different styles "do not conflict but rather complement each other . . . All campus buildings, with the exception of one of the later ones, measure up to standards of utility and function, and of beauty and permanence."

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