

GLASS LAB



Fig. 1. The glass lab, 1995. The building is a single story, 44 by 92 feet of metal siding over a steel frame with a slab floor. It was probably erected in 1963 by the United Builder's Corporation to be used for lumber storage. [Author Photo, AP-47]

The first development of the land at Randall and Monroe Streets took place in 1914 by the Yawkey-Crowley Lumber Yard. The company went out of business in 1930 and the property was sold to the Gateway Lumber Company, organized in 1908. This company also failed (in 1963) and the property was sold to the United Building Center (UBC) of Winona Minnesota.¹

The United Building Center Corporation approached the University in 1968 about the purchase of the property. The University sought permission from the state to purchase the property in August 1968 for \$264,000. The property changed hands on October 31, 1968. Of the old buildings only the "steel clad warehouse" was recommended for retention. That building was probably built shortly after the UBC arrived in 1963. The other buildings were demolished for the construction of the new police and security building in the 1980s.²

Professor Harvey Littleton arrived at the University in the early 1950s with an established reputation as a potter. Littleton had grown up in Corning New York, and worked summer jobs at the local glass factories, and considered the possibilities of glass as an artists material. In 1957 after a visit to Europe he set up a small studio on his farm in Verona, and began to practice his technique. In 1962 with grants from the University Littleton began the formal teaching of art glass techniques as part of the art department. This was the first college course in glass blowing in the United States. The success of the course and the inconveniences of having the teaching facilities on a private farm outside Madison led the art department in the summer of 1970 to obtain the use and remodelling of the old lumber yard warehouse for Littleton's use.³

The building now abuts on its west end to the new police and security building. Its original address was 1429 Monroe Street, but after the construction of the new Police and Security building at that address, the glass lab's address was changed to 46 North Randall Street. Many Universities now teach glass blowing, and most have at least one ex-student of professor Littleton or his successors at the UW. The current professor of art glass is professor Stephen Faren.

1) City Directories; Dane County Register of Deeds.

2) Purchase papers in regent's vault, United Builder's Center file.

3) *Wisconsin State Journal*, November 25, 1962; *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine*, December 1966, p. 8; *Badger Herald*, March 18, 1971.