

PRESIDENT'S HOUSE



Fig. 1. 1997. The President's house, with new garage at left.. The remodeling included not only bringing the house up to modern building codes, but the construction of a garage with living quarters, and sun room. [Del Brown photo, AP-79]

Built by the Brittingham family in 1916 as a summer home, this house was given to the University in 1955. It was renovated in 1968-1972, and became the official home of the president of the University system.

Lumber baron and longtime benefactor of the University Thomas E. Brittingham Sr. built this house, designed by Frank Riley, as a summer home for his family in 1916. Brittingham Sr. died in 1925, leaving most of his estate in trusts to benefit the city and University. His family continued to use the house on the west side into the middle 1930s.¹

In 1955 the family donated the house and property to the University. On October 1, 1955 the regents accepted the house and the fifteen acres on which it sat. At first the house was unused. From 1960 until 1968 the house was used as office space by the UW Geophysical & Polar Research Center. In the late 1960s during visits to Madison from their east coast homes, the Brittingham family asked that it's gift be restored to a reasonable condition, and used as the University president's house. They agreed that the Brittingham foundation would donate the money for the renovation. The estimate for the renovation was \$160,000. The state building commission in February 1968, gave permission to remodel the house for the \$160,000 estimate. The contracts were let and the work begun in 1968. The general contractor was John Dahl of Madison. It was clear at an early date that the estimates had been too low.

The Brittingham foundation promised another \$40,000. For political reasons, the work came to a halt and the house stood empty through 1970 and 1971. The Brittingham foundation finished the work itself. In April 1973, the first official function was held at the Brittingham house, hosted by Mrs. Edwin Young. The Brittingham estate has been the home of the UW system president since that time. The fifteen acre estate includes the main house, the new garage, a squash building, a carriage house and swimming pool.²

1) Milwaukee Sentinel September 27, 1967; *Capital Times*, July 10, 1967;

2) *Wisconsin State Journal*, April 14, 1970, January 16, 1971, January 13, 1957, February 16, 1972; *Capital Times*, April 23, 1973; *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine*, November 1955; *Regent's Statement*, May 8, 1970; *Regent's Minutes* January 15, 1971;