



Jay Pritzker Pavilion at Millennium Park. Image © Jose Fuste Raga/Corbis

Shapers of the New City: Cultural Institutions and Universities

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Robert Campbell

This is the second in what may turn out to be a series of symposiums on this same general topic.

We started in Cambridge, Massachusetts, by asking the question of who today is doing city planning. City planning, as a profession, was created largely for the purpose of implementing the urban design legislation of the 1950s. The federal government poured a great deal of money into Boston, as well as into many other cities. Professional planners came into existence to administer that money. That's a great simplification. But it doesn't seem so simple when you consider the fact that today planning departments in almost every city are "impoverished, powerless, and toothless." I'm quoting words people used when I asked them. So the question then becomes, "Who today does urban design? Who does city planning?"

Living in Cambridge, we noticed that Harvard was about to virtually double its size by moving into Boston. Columbia, meanwhile, is

expanding up Broadway to occupy another large piece of city land. Expansion, then, is one way in which universities are becoming urban designers. The university acquires a significant piece of the city and redesigns it.

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This is much more than an academic exercise, much more than merely building labs, classrooms, and dorms. Harvard, for example, has found that it will have to build new housing and other facilities for the neighborhood it wishes to expand into, in order to gain permission to proceed. And certainly that will be true of Columbia too. It's more than university planning. It's city planning and urban design undertaken by private universities.

Besides expansion, there is a second kind of city planning by universities. This is the regeneration of the neighborhood that surrounds the institution. In many cases, these neighborhoods had declined seriously.

At our symposium in New York we had the Vice President of Penn, Omar Blaik, as well as the President of Columbia, Lee Bollinger, talk about these two types of planning. In the case of Penn – and I think you could say it of Yale and Ohio State and some others, but certainly of Penn – the university was actually worried about whether it could continue to exist on its site. It was ringed by disinvestment, crime, poor-quality housing, and many other problems. It was difficult to attract faculty, especially faculty with children. So Penn began not an expansion but a regeneration, another kind of city planning. And that's been true of other schools as well.

After our New York meeting, I wrote a short article about our topic, and as a result I received many interesting emails. Here is one from Pam Delphinic, a planner who used to be at Princeton and is now at Yale. She writes, "The University of Chicago has developed a whole school district, charter schools, and other university-supported schools for the neighborhood surrounding it. The University of Chicago also has partnered with the city to redevelop vast sections of the blighted South Side of Chicago as well as to restore

the F. L. Olmsted-designed park system in South Chicago." That's the kind of thing that we're seeing at Ohio State, at Penn, at Yale, and at many other universities.

Barbara Ryder, Senior Campus Planner at Washington State, wrote, "I read your article about universities as the new city planners and could not agree more. Washington State University is taking the lead because the city planner is tied down with permitting. Apparently he has no staff to do anything but issue permits. Without staff he can barely keep up with basic planning functions in his office of public works." That's the kind of situation, the kind of public planning vacuum, into which other institutions are moving.

So we thought we would come to Chicago and broaden the concept from universities as city planners to universities *and other cultural institutions* as city planners. We chose this topic because we saw what's been happening at Millennium Park, with the expansion of the Art Institute and the involvement by other institutions.

That's as much general framing as I'd like to do. Columbia is the smallest university in the Ivy League in square feet per student, yet it is the third-largest landowner in New York City. That's the kind of scale at which these institutions are working. Only the Catholic Church and NYU, another university, possess more New York land than Columbia. Penn is the largest employer and the largest landowner in Philadelphia. These and other cul-

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tural institutions, today, are like the Dukes of Bedford and the other great landholders who created such neighborhoods as Bloomsbury in London around the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. They are private people doing public things.



John Bryan

Throughout my rather long business career in Chicago and during the past five years of my retirement, I've devoted most of my extracurricular time supporting cultural activities, principally the arts and principally here in Chicago. And so I have been able to witness over that time what I have termed a veritable 'explosion' of infrastructure and cultural offerings. Over the past fifteen years, Chicago's art and cultural offerings have flourished as never before. Now I know a comparison is often made with another time, about a century ago, when in 1893 the World's Columbian Exposition was the great catalyst for the first art-and-culture boom in our city. Several of our museums in Chicago were born in the atmosphere of that exposition. And, of course, Daniel Burnham's Orchestra Hall came about at that time. But I can tell you that much more is happening in our time. Chicago has truly dedicated itself to the notion that culture and arts are essential to maintaining an increasingly vibrant city. This has been our strategy, an especially appropriate one for this postindustrial age in which we live.

Our new golden age began in 1991 with the opening of Chicago's new public library, a \$140 million building that according to the Guinness Book of Records is the largest public library building in the world. The opening of our new library had an added significance because it gave a home to the Chicago Cultural Center, which is now housed in the beautiful old library building down the street from here. Incidentally, the old library was erected in 1893 and was the first building of the Art Institute.

This new era has seen a lot. New theaters and performing arts venues have sprung up all over Chicago. All of our remarkable mu-

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seums have built new facilities. And more are under way and in the second stage of such building. During this time Navy Pier, with its New Shakespeare Theater and Children's Museum, was created; our extraordinary Chicago Humanities Festival was born; and Millennium Park was created. Gardens and flowers have also sprouted all over Chicago, enhancing our beautiful streetscape.

All of this has happened in a relatively short period of time, and it's continuing. The attention to the cultural life in Chicago is certainly one of the most important elements in redefining our city. Today no one talks about Al Capone and all that "bang, bang, shoot 'em up" that we used to hear about. Today Chicago proudly is the city that works. Chicago is the beautiful city on the lake bursting with activity. Chicago has been called the most livable large city in America. Chicago has, in fact, spawned a new love of urban life, for construction cranes and giant condominiums are going up all over the city. Chicago is not just a great place to visit; it is also a great place to live.

People often ask why this has happened. There are a lot of general reasons, some having to do with our economy. But if I could be specific I'd like to point to three reasons. One, I think considerable credit belongs to Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs. A cabinet-level department that Harold Washington created in 1984, it is solely dedicated to providing arts and cultural services to the people of our city. It is the nation's only free municipal cultural center. It dispenses arts and cultural services not only at its center on Michigan Avenue; it sponsors about a thousand different programs throughout the city. You hear about them in particular throughout the summertime: musical festivals – gospel, blues, jazz. Tonight there is an example of one: the parade marking the lighting of the holiday lights on Michigan Avenue. The Cultural Center also sponsors the Grant Park Symphony, making Chicago the only place in the entire United States – perhaps

the world – that offers free classical music to the public in its summer season.

I could go on and on. Chicago's Cultural Center is very meaningful to the life of our city. As you may not know, the Mayor's wife works there every day. She is the Chair of the Chicago Cultural Center Foundation, which leads me to the second reason for Chicago's lively cultural dimensions today. I think it would be impossible to overstate the importance of one individual, namely Richard M. Daley, the Mayor of Chicago for sixteen years. Rich is extraordinarily passionate about every aspect of Chicago, particularly the beauty of our city and how it looks. It's true that he has never seen a tree or flower he didn't like. And he is not the least bit passive. He has an idea every minute for new infrastructure, or new cultural programming, for Chicago. Though he occasionally suffers the slings and arrows of our local press, Mayor Daley is widely recognized throughout the country for his accomplishments in Chicago and his great determination to advance the cultural life of our city.

Third, Chicago has the most extraordinary private sector, one that is intensely proud of its city. Given our inherent competitive instincts, we all want our city and the institutions that define it to be the best they can be

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– in fact, to be better than other places. So we in Chicago shamelessly wrap the civic cloak around our community endeavors, and again and again Chicago's private sector responds.

To perhaps best illustrate the value of having a city government dedicated to culture and a united and responsive private sector, I have to tell you a little about the creation of Millennium Park. Our Mayor first envisioned the project as one to develop parkland space on the top of a parking garage. He proposed building it on the site of those deserted railroad tracks on Michigan Avenue. To create

the enhancements for the park, the Mayor invited Chicago's private sector to join him in a major private-public partnership – certainly one unparalleled in the history of our city. And so this twenty-six-acre lot of abandoned railroad tracks has been transformed into a free park for the people of Chicago at a cost, not of a billion dollars, but only \$500 million. It has been, in every sense, a joint venture, a joint undertaking by the city and the private sector, as represented by a not-for-profit group called Millennium Park, Inc. Ultimately, the city paid for about half of the park and the private sector paid for the other half.

To develop this unsightly and underused space into a culturally uplifting park, we employed the best architects, designers, and artists the world had to offer at the beginning of the twenty-first century. And it worked. Once again we've seen the power of art and architecture make a difference, in providing a lot of excitement and pleasure for a lot of people. But Millennium Park has had other consequences, perhaps less expected. The park has ignited a total revitalization of the central part of the city – the business and the cultural area – what we call the downtown area. And those economic benefits are just beginning. Also more than we imagined, Millennium Park has reinforced Chicago's reputation as the world's best city for modern architecture. I'll not take the time to defend that distinction. But just know that it's undeniably true. At the very least, Millennium Park has provided new icons to advertise our city: we have some new postcards these days.

But even with all this, I must say the most satisfying and perhaps the most surprising dimension of Millennium Park is something that speaks to the livability of the city of Chicago. Millennium Park has become Chicago's meeting place. Some have called Millennium Park a social mixing chamber, a place where people of all income levels and ethnic origins really enjoy coming together. Unfortunately, we often spend a lot of time trying to separate ourselves by where we live and shop and play. But Millennium Park celebrates diversity. It is a warm, welcoming, and friendly place. It has lifted the spirit of Chicago, and it's certainly made the city a more livable place.



Richard Franke

In the middle of the 1980s, I served on the boards of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Lyric Opera, and the University of Chicago. The two musical organizations, along with the other major museums in Chicago, enjoyed international reputations of excellence. But they were concerned about attracting new audiences in the future. Protective of their respective membership, these institutions had grown insular and had a limited ability to engage with and learn from one another.

At the same time I also served as Chairman of the Illinois Humanities Council. We were charged with the responsibility of bringing a broader understanding of the humanities to the public. Recognizing that humanities programming in Chicago was somewhat uninspiring, I looked for a new way to engage the public in ideas. Based on discussions with their board members, I knew that most major cultural institutions had similar needs for

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new members, but had not yet developed strategies to attract new audiences. The situation demanded an approach that would engage both cultural institutions and the public in exciting programming. I specifically wanted to attract new visitors to the respective institutions and offer audiences new ways of engaging with their programming and collections.

The first Chicago Humanities Festival, held on November 11, 1990, at Orchestra Hall and the Art Institute of Chicago, was a new idea born of that search. Eight thoughtful yet accessible programs from four sponsoring institutions addressed the theme *Expressions of Freedom*, including a memorable keynote address by playwright Arthur Miller. Inaugurating what was to become one of Chicago's most culturally rich annual events, the first Festival proved that very different cultural institutions can come together to explore an abstract subject such as freedom through art, music, text, and performance.

I offer a brief history of the beginnings of the Chicago Humanities Festival not simply to recount our early success but to indicate how important the support of the city's cultural institutions was and continues to be to the Festival. After sixteen years of involvement with the Festival, I now view it as a form that harnesses the vast cooperative resources of Chicago's cultural institutions. With 130 programs and over forty thousand Festival attendees this year, we had forty-five sponsoring organizations as partners. It is this spirit of collaboration that I wish to address today.

Specifically, how was the Festival able to tap into this incredible potential in Chicago? It started with a spirited group of civic and business leaders who were well organized and capable of raising money from individuals, corporations, and foundations. In seeking partnerships with other institutions, we sold the benefits of collaboration, including exposure to new audiences. Because the Festival is not a bricks-and-mortar institution, we did not present a threat to partnering organizations. In other words, the Festival does not take one visitor away from our partners. On the contrary, it brings many new customers through their doors. But above all else, the success of the Festival begins and ends with an idea: to extend the riches of the humanities to everyone. It is an idea that reminds collaborating cultural institutions and community funders of their responsibility to the public and one that rekindles a civic idealism unique to Chicago.

What is it about Chicago that nurtures a spirit of collaboration and civic idealism? How did the city foster an unproven enterprise? In *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville observed a uniquely American capacity to form civic organizations in order to meet the needs of an expanding popula-

tion. Combined with a daily influx of new citizens and a fierce sense of pride about its place in the world, Chicago took this organizational capacity to uncharted territories in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. After the fire of 1871, Chicago quickly rebuilt itself as the most advanced industrial capital of the world. But the children of the founding generation of the city were eager to prove that Chicago was a tastemaker as well as a hog-butcher. Emboldened by the city's opti-

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mism, commercial leaders such as Hutchinson, Armour, Field, Palmer, Ryerson, and McCormick committed themselves to the business of bringing culture to Chicago. Born of the fire's catharsis and a sense of possibility as limitless as the prairie horizon, this civic idealism founded Chicago's most venerable cultural institutions and culminated in the collaborative effort necessary to put on the Columbian World Exposition of 1893. The individual patronage of the nineteenth century then gave way to the more familiar corporate support of the twentieth century. Providing both the funds and the people to serve on boards, corporations continue to support and serve cultural institutions in the same spirit of civic generosity and cooperation that founded the city.

The Chicago Humanities Festival thrives on the notion that democracy demands an informed citizenry and that the most important ideas are best understood when considered from different perspectives. Because of broad-based financial support, we have been able to keep the cost of Festival events down to \$5 per ticket. As a result, people often refer to the two-week Festival as an Open University, which was exactly our intention. By providing a context through art, law, philosophy, history, music, and lit-

erature, it is our hope that the curious individual can then enter more fully into the public conversation about the issues affecting us all. From a modest beginning as a one-day program, the Festival has used this hope as a catalyst for cultural institutions to collaborate with us and with each other and, most importantly, to engage the public in a spirit of democracy. Chicago has responded magnificently and, in the process, nurtured a new kind of institution.



James Cuno

I am going to talk about the Art Institute and our desire to add to our current facilities and, in the process, to reinvest in the cultural ecology of the center of the city. I will speak not just about adding square footage to our buildings, but about advancing our mission as the city's encyclopedic museum – and how this expansion contributes to the civic life of the city.

I like to think that the core mission of an encyclopedic museum like ours is to serve as an instrument for the dissolution of superstition and ignorance by encouraging unfettered inquiry of works of art from all periods of history and from all the world's cultures – how they were made and how they manifest the ineluctable truth of the interrelatedness of cultures. We have this particular obligation and this particular opportunity to engage our visitors on these terms. This work is all the more important today when nationalistic ideologies conspire to divide the peoples of the world, one against another.

It is therefore the mission of the Art Institute of Chicago to provide people a space to engage with works of art that comprise an im-

portant part of the world's shared artistic legacy, and which we hold in trust for the public and *their* artistic legacy.

One of the great decisions our founders made in the service of this mission was to place the museum on Michigan Avenue, in the center of the city. After the 1893 World Columbian Exposition, our founders had an opportunity to house the museum in one of the exposition buildings, a few miles south of the city's center. But they chose not to.

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Instead, they chose to put the museum in this building – an administration and conference building for the Exposition – at the nexus of all the modes of transportation into the city. Here people could walk to the museum or arrive by trains, elevated and otherwise, or by bus. Now, of course, they can ride bikes or cars or motorbikes to the museum too. And they would come here because the public library was just down the street, major hotels and businesses were nearby, and the city's government was just down the road. Soon the Symphony would open Symphony Hall just across the street, theaters would multiply throughout the area, and parks would proliferate behind the museum, along the lakefront. In our founders' vision, the museum was meant to be central to the life of the city.

I have been here myself nearly a year and a half now. But when I would come to the Art Institute before moving here, I always felt among its visitors a palpable sense of regard for the museum, as if it were not only a civic institution held in high esteem, but as if it were *their* museum and played an important role in the life of the city and its citizens. When I got here I realized that, in fact, it does. I used to think that this sentiment existed because the Art Institute had done a really good job over the one hundred years of its existence to make sure that it did have

a place in the life of the city. But then I realized that, while the Art Institute of Chicago *has* undoubtedly done a really good job for a very long time, it's also just in the nature of Chicago and its citizens to engage in their civic institutions and support and respect them on those terms, so long as the civic institutions maintain that public trust and work on behalf of the city's citizens. We are the Art Institute of Chicago, and by sitting us here on Michigan Avenue, in the center of the city and just a few steps off the street, our founders made sure we'd forever be so.

For those of us who have inherited this great advantage, it is our obligation to reinvest in this location and further enrich the cultural capital of the city's center.

Over the years, we have expanded throughout the block between Michigan Avenue and Columbus Drive, and between Monroe and Jackson Streets. And now we are building a new Modern Wing (for our modern and contemporary collections), designed by Renzo Piano, on the northwest corner of our block, just opposite the new Millennium Park and on the same axis as the Frank Gehry-designed Pritzker Pavilion. Not long ago, and throughout our first century, the Millennium Park site was mostly a rail yard and then also a parking lot.

So eighteen months ago, when Millennium Park became an instant and palpable success, we committed ourselves to building the project Renzo Piano had begun designing five years earlier. It was obvious that we needed additional space. But it was equally

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obvious that the city needed us to complete the development of these central blocks by finishing our block and by connecting to the park's block via a bridge across the street. Because Millennium Park is not a sylvan glad – it is more like a pachinko parlor or a pinball machine. People are constantly in

motion, moving in and out and through the park, considering its sculptural and architectural attractions, attending concerts, and admiring the views of the facades of Michigan Avenue or out to the lake. We anticipate that these mobile visitors to the park will inevitably walk up and across our bridge, to the third floor of the western pavilion of our Modern Wing to look back on the park, the city, and the lake; get refreshments in our restaurant; and descend into the museum to complete the circuit: from Michigan Avenue through the park to the museum through the museum and out again onto Michigan Avenue (and, of course, in reverse too).

Thus, the purpose of the new Modern Wing is to present our modern and contemporary collections, engage with Millennium Park, and complete the 'cultural circuit.' In this way, it is an investment in the city's center. Our new building will expand our gallery square footage by some 33 percent, affording our curatorial departments and Department of Museum Education more space for their collections and programs. We will also be able to reinstall all of our collections and render more coherent presentations of them, emphasizing the interrelatedness of the cultures they represent. At the same time, we will be investing in the city's center and broadening our footprint where it matters most in Chicago – on Michigan Avenue at the city's center. This puts our encyclopedic collections, comprising an important part of the world's shared artistic legacy, where millions of people live, work, and gather every year, and where Chicago represents itself to the world.

Our mission drives our expansion. Our mission is simply to preserve and share our collections for the citizens of Chicago and all who come to this great city. We are building our new Modern Wing for just this reason.



Don Michael Randel

If you were to look at the boards of directors of some institutions and the people who brought them into being, you would see a remarkable set of intersections and overlapping groups – that private sector to which John alluded and which was powerfully important in bringing this great modern city and these great cultural institutions into being. The city and its cultural institutions formed then, as they form now, a powerful fabric, a result of the realization on the part of the community's leading citizens that you could not have a great city without these great cultural institutions.

If we skip forward to today and you look at the boards of directors or trustees of the Art Institute, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Lyric Opera, the Public Library, the University of Chicago, and so on, you see a similar picture. We have it instanced for us here: both John and Rich belong to the board of the University of Chicago as well as serve on the Art Institute or the Symphony, and so on. Here again what we see is the private sector, that is to say, the community's leading citizens, creating an extraordinary spirit – one that doesn't exist in any other city of this size – by serving together on the great institutions that give the city life, engaging the humanities, the arts, and its general intellectual life. We would not be the city we are if it weren't for the intersections in this community that make it strong.

Let's talk about the University of Chicago's role in particular. If we think about universities' relationships to the cities that surround them, it must be said that, especially in the great cities, the universities that have most strongly engaged their communities, the world immediately around them, have been, in the main, universities that at some point

had a gun to their head. That is, engagement was often a matter of – or perceived to be a matter of – survival in the face of very difficult urban problems. Engagement was also to some degree a matter of self-defense, sometimes leaving behind a terrible bitterness on the part of the community. If you follow the affairs of Harvard or Columbia or Penn, you will know that to this day there is substantial controversy about the degree to which they wish to acquire land beyond their borders. The University of Chicago, too, at one point had a gun to its head. When the collapse of the South Side took place, a flight of well-to-do families and a great migration from the South of African Americans resulted in an economic decline that led the University to consider whether it could survive in its neighborhood.

That is the first chapter, but not the only chapter, in the relationship between the University of Chicago and this city. In those days the University acquired a certain amount of property purely as a defensive activity. It was deeply involved in the first great wave of ur-

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ban renewal, with benefits and deficits that we now understand very much better than we could have foreseen. But we are now in a second chapter, at least, of the relationship with the community. And it's a very different kind of relationship, one that derives from the spirit that created the University and the city's other cultural institutions. It derives from a wish to be an important part of the community and to contribute notably to the betterment of the city as a whole, in particular to that part of the city that surrounds us.

How do we think about doing this? For a start, we must bear in mind that the University's principal product is ideas. How can we put ideas to work? We don't have vast resources that we are able to invest or commit

to these things in general – unless in the defensive mode. But we do have powerful ideas that can be brought to bear on the great urban problems of our time. This furthermore is a problem of a kind that University of Chicago faculties like very much to tackle: the Big Problem that crosses many boundaries, what I typically describe as the mother of all interdisciplinary problems. If you think about the problems of urban centers, they entail the question of housing, the question of schools, the question of safe streets, the question of economic development. None of these problems can be solved in isolation. We can invest in housing, but nobody will want to live in that housing if there's not a decent school nearby. But nobody will want to live in that housing and send their kids to that school if the streets aren't safe. And nobody will want to live in that community and send their kids to that school if the streets are safe but there's no place to earn a living and no place to buy groceries.

Our realization then is that what we must do is put ideas to work to solve these problems in concert with one another and in concert with other city institutions that are working on them. The result is a deep engagement with the public schools in the city of Chicago, with the Chicago Housing Authority, and with the local community structures that enable one to work effectively in those communities. We certainly learned a long time ago that one does not do community development by showing up and giving orders, or even simply voicing great pronouncements built on powerful ideas. One must work with local community organizations, and so we are deeply engaged with large churches immediately to the south of us and with other institutions working in these communities. Furthermore, we have made and abided by an agreement that we

will not seek to purchase land in the neighborhood immediately beyond our borders. This agreement has been very important to a community that has sometimes thought of us in the past as rapacious and interested in driving out poor people, and in more modern times as gentrifying out poor people. So we have a very clear understanding with the community that we're not buying land there,

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but we are helping to create schools that will strengthen the ability of people in those neighborhoods to go on and enjoy a better life. One of the ironies of this is that we, the brainiest institution of them all in the view of some, perhaps even in the view of ourselves, have a very large police force. If we ask our neighbors, what can we do for you, they don't say, send us a Nobel laureate in economics. They say, send us your police force. The University's police force, working with the city police force, covers from 64th Street all the way up to 39th Street, well beyond the boundaries of our academic buildings or any property that we happen to own. Again, this is for the sake of solving problems in concert with one another, to create safe streets so there will be a place where people are willing to live, where housing can flourish, where schools can flourish.

We don't propose to take over the Chicago school system. Although the Mayor would love to have us do fifty charter schools, the fact is we are on a path to do five charter schools. Those schools will not only benefit the kids who will attend them but also be a test bed for the ideas generated by our faculty about how you can teach the most disadvantaged kids how to read as well as anybody. We are now more deeply engaged than ever, but the schools project has been going on for quite some time; my predecessor Hugo Sonnenschein, a member of this Academy with us tonight, gave it the first great impetus, and we are pleased now to see it truly flourish. The effort with the public schools has attracted substantial resources from, once again, this community of citizens in the city of Chicago. People who are not our alumni or who might otherwise have no connection to us have been very generous in providing resources to support the University's Center for Urban School Improvement. The result is a picture somewhat different from those you may read about at other institutions. We believe that, as one of the city's biggest employers and one of its biggest economic entities, we have a responsibility to be responsible citizens, to contribute to the improvement of the life of the city as a whole and also to the communities immediately around us. We do so by contributing what we make best, namely, good ideas. We do so in collaboration with institutions, both public and private, across Chicago. And we do so because we want to be an important part of the long-term future of what is, we all agree, the greatest city in America. ■

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