

# OLD WARF



Fig. 1. 1995. The old WARF building, built in 1947 it is three stories of concrete and steel over a full basement. It is skinned with face brick and granite trim. [Author Photo, AP-26]

The founding of the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation (WARF) can be regarded as one of the most significant acts in the history of the University. Set up in 1925 by professor Harry Steenbock and others as a mechanism for handling the administration of patents generated by University researchers, its first significant role was in handling the patents resulting from Steenbock's vitamin research in the 1920s. Through the 1920s and 1930s the corporations offices were located in modest rental space at 770 Langdon Street. In 1946 WARF decided to erect a building of their own. The site selected was on the far west edge of campus on University land just east of the Forest Products Laboratory (FPL).<sup>1</sup>

The plans were drawn by the respected local architects Law, Law, Potter and Nystrom in the fall of 1946. They define a building 53 by 94 feet, three stories high over a full basement. The building was built by the J. J. Flad company. The exact date of construction is not known, but it was WARF's official address in 1947. The building contained offices, a board room, a library and laboratories. Although the new WARF building was erected in 1969 and WARF's offices were moved into the new building, WARF continued to occupy the old building, and two other smaller buildings until 1974. In 1974 the planning for the new University hospital complex required that the University acquire a parcel just to the south of parking lot #60. In a complex three way trade with the University and WARF, the FPL gave up that parcel, made a cash payment of \$973,000 and received the land and the three old buildings belonging to WARF. Beginning in 1974 the buildings on the site, were leased by the FPL to the University for use by the medical school's department of preventative medicine. This arrangement is periodically updated, and will run at least until the year 2000.<sup>2</sup>

1) Curti and Carstensen, *A History of the University of Wisconsin*, vol. II p. 413; Madison city directories;

2) Plans in the files of the department of planning and construction; Regent's Minutes, June 10, 1977, June 10, 1983, August 3, 1973 September 6, 1991.