36. The Wilmot Building

*Hilda Kingslake*

The problem of space had been serious most of the life of The Institute of Optics. In recent years it had become acute, a real problem for Brian Thompson to solve if he could.

One research group from The Institute of Optics working with Kenneth Teegarden was accommodated in the partially occupied Space Science Center. This fact no doubt gave rise to the thought of moving the whole Institute into that building. In 1976 the Administration announced that The Institute of Optics would be moved into the Space Science Center. Interestingly enough, the building roughly agreed with the dimensions of the fantastic plan for the proposed Institute of Applied Optics outlined by C. E. K. Mees in 1919.

Nicholas George, successor to Brian Thompson as Director of the Institute arrived just in time to plunge straight into the great move from the fourth floor of Bausch & Lomb Hall to the Space Science Center. The move was a nice problem for both the moving company and the responsible faculty. The weather was Rochester winter’s very worst. Duncan Moore, at that time a young Assistant Professor, already known for his work on gradient-index materials, and now very recently appointed Director of the Institute, was to try his hand at planning and directing large-scale moving. Several thousand pieces, varying from heavy equipment to sensitive apparatus in current use, to bundles of reprints and small desk sets, were moved. One bundle of reprints was apparently lost but turned up a year later in the wrong office.

The building was later dedicated to James Peter Wilmot “In recognition of his services as Trustee and his generosity as a benefactor of the University of Rochester.” The

*Wilmot Building, the new home of The Institute of Optics.*
building, situated among the complex of science buildings on the River Campus, received one of three awards made in 1970 in the “Laboratory of the Year” competition sponsored by Industrial Design magazine.

Nicholas George, in reply to a question for *Optics News*, said “Our new facility has added greatly to our spirit of cohesiveness, and I think I can reflect the feeling of everyone at the Institute when I say what enormous pride we have in our new optics building.”