The fiftieth anniversary, celebrated on Monday, October 8, 1979, occurred in a most favorable period in the life of The Institute of Optics. It was now well established and fully occupying its own very fine building on the River Campus. When in 1976 Brian Thompson was appointed Dean of the College of Engineering and Applied Science he had already arranged for the Fifty-Year History to be prepared in time for the Jubilee Celebration in 1979. Nicholas George, who succeeded him as Director in 1977, continued the advance planning for the anniversary. Further, the Optical Society of America had planned that the Society hold its 1979 Annual Meeting in Rochester in recognition of the fiftieth year of The Institute of Optics, with Nicholas George appointed chairman of the local arrangements committee. Finally, the University granted the Institute the use of the Hartnett Gallery in Wilson Commons for the month of October, thereby ensuring that the whole River Campus shared in the anniversary celebration. The appointed day of celebration, Monday, October 8, had been planned immediately to precede the meeting of the Optical Society.

The Hartnett Gallery. The Hartnett Gallery exhibit was entitled “Fifty Years of Optics in Rochester” and was designed to attract the attention and interest of the learned and unlearned, the young and the old on the River Campus, as well as visiting alumni of The Institute of Optics. Rare books and small exhibits occupied a few glass cases, photographs and portraits and scientific pictures covered the walls, and there were two pieces of standing apparatus, the Munsell “color tree” and a fine hologram which attracted great attention. Conger W. Gabel, a member of the faculty at the time, undertook the arduous job of collecting and setting up the exhibit.

Open House at The Institute of Optics. Formal activities on Anniversary Day began with Open House all afternoon at the Institute’s new home on the River Campus. Faculty
members were at home in their offices, with graduate students and research associates in
the laboratories to explain the work in hand. Informal tours were given hourly throughout
the afternoon. Tours were also arranged to the Laboratory for Laser Energetics.

Alumni Dinner. The Alumni dinner on October 8 was a remarkable witness to the
strength of The Institute of Optics and the loyalty of its alumni and supporters. A cocktail
hour in the May Room of Wilson Commons preceded the dinner in the Frederick Douglass
student dining hall. Well over 500 were present, including alumni, past and present fac-
culty, present students, and friends from civic life and industry. The University President
Robert Sproull was in the chair and addressed the meeting in his usual clear and direct
style. Dean Brian Thompson also spoke and messages were read from a number of absent
friends. Unfortunately, Brian O'Brien, the first Director, was unable to be present but was
represented by his son (class of 1944) who was invited to say a few words.

Fifty-Year History of The Institute of Optics, 1929–1979. Elegant copies of the history, writ-
ten by Hilda G. Kingslake, were passed out as everyone left the dining hall.

The 1979 Meeting of the Optical Society of America. Students and faculty of The Institute of
Optics presented no less than 30 papers at the meeting. A luncheon which filled the large
hall of the Chamber of Commerce in recognition of the Jubilee Celebration, was planned
by the local committee of the Optical Society.