

Rifkin Hall

The Dedication



September 14, 1990
3:30 p.m.
Wilkes University

Rifkin Hall

*Given by
Sandy and Arnold Rifkin
in 1989*

*Dedicated to their
Lantz, Rifkin and Brusilow
Children and Grandchildren*

*With the hope that they,
Together with young people everywhere,
Will live in freedom in a peaceful world.*

Welcome Thomas B. Hadzor
Vice President for Development

**Greetings from the
Board of Trustees** Richard M. Ross, Jr.
Chairman of the Board

Comments Kristin Malitsky
Resident Assistant

Reflections Christopher N. Breiseth, Ph.D.
President

Plaque Unveiling Richard M. Ross, Jr.

Response Sandy and Arnold Rifkin

*Light refreshments and tours of Rifkin Hall
will be available following the ceremony.*



WILKES UNIVERSITY







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Comments The R.A. *Kristin Malitsky*
R.A., Rifkin Hall

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Response The Rifkin Family

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file

August 24, 1990

Dear Friend of Wilkes

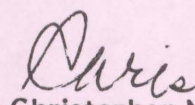
You are cordially invited to join with the University community as we celebrate the dedication of Rifkin Hall, 80 South River Street, Wilkes-Barre, on Friday, September 14, at 3:30 p.m.

The generous gift of Arnold and Sandy Rifkin, this newest addition to the University campus will serve as a dormitory for approximately 40 students.

The program will give special friends of Wilkes the opportunity to participate in the brief ceremony and tour this handsome South River Street mansion. Light refreshments will be served. Limited parking will be available in the lot directly behind the Jewish Community Center.

I hope you will be able to join us.

Sincerely,


Christopher N. Breiseth
President

Rifkin Hall Protects Future, Preserves Past

By LIBBY BRENNAN
Staff Writer

With the acquisition of Rifkin Hall at 80 South River St., the fourth of a cluster of historic and elegant houses have been added to the Wilkes University campus, creating not only a significant addition to the educational complex but completing a quartet of building which reflect the history of Wyoming Valley.

The dedication of the three-story, 115-year-old Gothic stone structure, will take place Friday as part of the Wilkes University Board Weekend.

The presentation of the structure was made to Wilkes by Arnold and Sandy Rifkin of Wilkes-Barre. The former has been a member of the Wilkes board for the past 10 years. The Rifkin family has a two-generation association with the university.

Rifkin Hall becomes the latest dormitory on the South River St. campus and accommodates 43 students.

Wilkes' Newest Dormitory To Be Dedicated Friday

The Rifkin family has had strong ties with Wyoming Valley. The patriarch, Abraham Rifkin, came to the United States from Russia 100 years ago. He settled in White Haven and went into farming. His three sons, David, Jack and William, came to Wilkes-Barre where they began to manufacture overalls which they sold to the local population at one dollar a pair. Thus, A. Rifkin and Co. began.

In 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt declared "A Bank Holiday." The brothers were approached to make bank bags which they added to their clothing lines. The bags became so important after World War II that

the company turned exclusively to this item selling not only nationally but internationally.

David Rifkin's wife, the mother of Arnold, was a member of the Freeman family who had migrated to America from Austria in 1840 and were among the handful who founded Temple B'nai B'rith.

Arnold Rifkin is the third generation of his family to become associated with the business. He is president and his son, Michael, is vice president of operations and management. His son-in-law Paul Lantz is vice president of finance.

As the business was expanding so was the Rifkin family's dedication and service to community life in Wyoming Valley.

After graduating from Coughlin High School, 18-year-old Arnold Rifkin went on to the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania where he met his future wife, Sandy, also a student at the College for Women. His college work was interrupted during his military service. He returned to Penn and received his degree in 1948. The young couple came to Wyoming Valley where their first home was at 80 South River St., a third floor apartment. Little did they think that within 40 years, they would be presenting the expensive structure to Wilkes.

"Our involvement with Wilkes began upon our return. My wife started courses in education there," Rifkin explained. "Our children Michael, Kathy Lantz and daughter-in-law Margery German Rifkin attended Wilkes."

Sandy Rifkin recalls the building which was originally the home of the Ricketts family, pioneers of Wy-



GOTHIC MANSION — The former Ricketts-McLean House at 80 South River St. has been purchased and presented to Wilkes University by Arnold and Sandy Rifkin to become a dormitory for 43 students.



MISSION ACCOMPLISHED — Arnold and Sandy Rifkin smile as they see Rifkin Hall become part of Wilkes University.

oming Valley who became coal barons and built the structure. Later it became the home of the late Judge William McLean. When the house was built it became part of "The Streets of the Coal and Financial Magnates" — River and Franklin Streets.

"When we lived there, it had already been purchased by the late Moses Griffith and converted into apartments. However, the 40 rooms became 23 apartments. The ceiling seems to extend to the sky because of the height. The wood paneling, the magnificent floors, the stone fireplaces, the winding staircase were all reminders of the opulence of the Victorian Age," Sandy Rifkin

reflected.

The Rifkins purchased the house in 1988 from the heirs of the Griffith Estate.

"It was always something close to us and we realized that it should be preserved but must be utilized and what would be more beneficial than completing the Wilkes complex while providing much needed dormitory space," Rifkin stated.

The old mansions are expensive to heat and during the years the ceilings have been lowered and interior alterations made to make the structure economically sound. However, none of the exterior has been changed including the hooded brick segmented arches over the windows.

the slate roof, the unmelted-down wrought iron in the rooms. The architect of the original building is not known.

Friday at 3:30 p.m., when the formal dedication ceremonies get underway, Arnold and Sandy Rifkin, son-in-law and daughter, Paul and Kathy Lantz and their three children, David, Darcy and Daniel; Margery and Michael Rifkin and children Laura, Julie and Adam, and Jody and Lance Brusilow and daughter Genevieve will be present.

"This community has been so good to my parents, grandparents and my children, that I hope we can return something to it," Rifkin said. The family is involved. Rifkin is a member of the Sordani Art Gallery Board, and has served as president of B'nai B'rith. His wife's boards include Domestic Violence, SPCA, JCC, Jewish Family Service, Ethics Institute, Kirby Center for Performing Arts.

Through the generosity of the Rifkin Family, the future of the young and the preservation of the past have been cemented.

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Putting something back: Rifkins give Wilkes gift

By JENNIFER FRIEDLAND

Times Leader Staff Writer

WILKES-BARRE — When Sandy Rifkin was young, her grandmother would give her the same two pieces of advice every day.

The first was to get a good education. And the second was a reminder to contribute to society. "What did you put back into the world today?" her grandmother would ask.

On Friday, Rifkin probably would have made her grandmother very happy.

Rifkin and her husband, Arnold, donated the first building they had ever lived in together to Wilkes University.

Rifkin Hall now houses 43 university students.

The university, previously called Wilkes College, holds special memories for the Rifkin family.

Sandy Rifkin and her children — Michael and Kathy Lantz — as well as her daughter-in-law, Margery German Rifkin, attended Wilkes.

"This is the largest gift I have ever given," Arnold Rifkin said Friday before the half hour ceremony in their honor.

The Rifkins moved to the majestic, three-story white house, located on South River Street, soon after they graduated from the University of Pennsylvania more than 40 years ago.

They rented an apartment on the third floor, started their life together and become involved in their community.

Since the 1950s, both have served on several prestigious community boards. Arnold Rifkin has been a member of the Wilkes University Board of Trustees and the Sordani Art Gallery. Sandy Rifkin participates in the SPCA, Jewish Community Center, Jewish Family Service and the F.M. Kirby Center for the Performing Arts.

The Rifkins bought the house in 1989 from the heirs of the Griffith Estate. The 115-year-old building was recently renovated.

And according to Rifkin Hall's



TIMES LEADER/DON CAREY

WILKES GETS NEW DORM — Sandy and Arnold Rifkin speak at the Friday ceremony marking the gift of their one-time home on Wilkes-Barre's South River Street to Wilkes University

Resident Assistant, Kristin Malitsky, "It's the envy of all the residential students."

Most Rifkin Hall residents are juniors and seniors and are not prone to partying the way some underclassman are, says Rifkin resident Jeff Stauffer.

"It's a great place to live."

The Rifkin family owns and

operates A. Rifkin Company in Hanover Township. The firm, which manufactures bank bags for national and international clients, has been in the family for three generations.

Arnold Rifkin is the president of the company, and his son, Michael, is vice president of operations and management.

4:30
Thursday

Wilkes U. dedicates Rifkin Hall

A 115-year-old Gothic stone mansion in Wilkes-Barre will become the newest dormitory at Wilkes University.

Rifkin Hall, 80 S. River St., was formally dedicated Friday in ceremonies which officially opened the mansion as dormitory. The building was a gift to the university from Arnold and Sandy Rifkin, long-time supporters of Wilkes University.

The Rifkins are former residents of the mansion when they rented their first apartment in the building in 1948 on their return to the Wilkes-Barre area. Also taking root at the time was the couple's involvement and support of the college. The Rifkins two children and daughter-in-law attended Wilkes.

The large home originally was the home of the Ricketts family, valley coal barons who built the structure. It later became the



Ross and Breiseth stand near plaque

home of the late Judge William McLean.

The Rifkins purchased the home in 1988 from the heirs of the late Moses Griffiths. "It was always something close to us and we realized that it should be utilized and what would be more beneficial than completing the Wilkes complex while providing much needed dormitory space," Arnold Rifkin said.

Interior alterations were completed, making the building more economical to heat and maintain but the exterior has not been changed and continues its grand period look. The grounds surrounding the building have been groomed by David Whitkowski and his firm, Northeast Ground Maintenance, Mountaintop.

Tom Hadzor, Wilkes vice president for development, opened the



Sandy and Arnold Rifkin offer remarks

ceremonies and greetings were offered by Richard Ross, chairman of the board of trustees. One of the student resident assistants, Kristin Malitsky, offered her comments.

University President Christopher N. Breiseth offered some reflections on the occasion and a plaque was unveiled by Ross, formally dedicating the building as Rifkin Hall.

Tours were available following the program.

Arnold and Sandy Rifkin were joined at the dedication ceremonies by son-in-law and daughter, Paul and Kathy Lantz and their three children, David, Darcy and Daniel; Margery and Michael Rifkin and children, Laura, Julie and Adam, and Jody and Lance Brusilow and daughter Genevieve.

Wilkes University

News

Mark Davis
Office of Public Relations
Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania 18766
(717) 822-8413

MEDIA ADVISORY

WHO: WILKES UNIVERSITY

**WHAT: DEDICATION OF THE UNIVERSITY'S NEWEST
DORMITORY, RIFKIN HALL. THE 115-YEAR OLD
STRUCTURE HAS BEEN RECENTLY RENNOVATED AND
NOW HOUSES 43 STUDENTS.**

WHERE: 80 SOUTH RIVER STREET, WILKES-BARRE

WHEN: FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 14TH, 1990 AT 3:30PM

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT MARK DAVIS
OR JANE MANGANELLA AT THE WILKES UNIVERSITY PUBLIC
RELATIONS OFFICE, 822-8413, OR 824-4651, EXT 4770.**

Wilkes University

News

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WILKES UNIVERSITY DEDICATES RIFKIN HALL

WILKES-BARRE-- Rifkin Hall, Wilkes University's latest dormitory was formally dedicated Friday afternoon. Purchased by Arnold and Sandy Rifkin, the 115-year gothic stone mansion at 80 South River Street was presented to the University as a gift. Part of Wilkes-Barre's historic district, the building was recently rennovated and now houses 43 Wilkes students. Arnold Rifkin has been a member of the Wilkes University Board of Trustees for the last ten years, the Rifkin family has been associated with the University for two generations.

The Rifkin family owns and operates A. Rifkin Company in Hanover Township, which manufactures bank bags for national and international clients. Arnold Rifkin, the third generation of his family to operate the business, is the President of the company and his son, Michael, is Vice President of Operations and Management.

One of the apartments at 80 South River Street was Arnold and Sandy Rifkin's first home in the Wyoming Valley when they returned here after college in 1948. "Our involvement with Wilkes began with our return. My wife started education courses here," explains Rifkin. "Our children Michael, Kathy Lantz, and daughter-in-law Margery German Rifkin attended Wilkes."

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1ST ADD WILKES UNIVERSITY DEDICATES RIFKIN HALL

Rifkin Hall was originally the home of the Ricketts family, pioneers of the Wyoming Valley who became coal barons and built the structure. Later it became the home of the late Judge William McLean.

The Rifkins purchased the house in 1988 from the heirs of the late Moses Griffiths. "It was always something close to us and we realized that it should be utilized and what would be more beneficial than completing the Wilkes complex while providing much needed dormitory space," reflected Rifkin.

During the years the ceilings have been lowered and interior alterations made to make the building more economical to heat and maintain. The exterior has not been changed and continues its grand period look. The grounds surrounding the building have been groomed by David Whitkowski and his firm Northeast Ground Maintenance of Mountaintop.

Tom Hadzor, Wilkes University Vice President for Development opened the dedication ceremonies, greetings from the University Board of Trustees were offered by Richard Ross, Chairman of the Board. One of the student resident assistants, Kristin Malitsky, then offered her comments.

University President Christopher N. Breiseth offered some reflections on this important occasion for the University. A plaque was then unveiled by Richard Ross formally dedicating the building as Rifkin Hall.

Tours of the building were available following the ceremony.

Arnold and Sandy Rifkin were joined at the dedication ceremonies by son-in-law and daughter Paul and Kathy Lantz and their three children, David, Darcy and Daniel; Margery and Michael Rifkin and children Laura, Julie and Adam and Jody and Lance Brusilow and daughter Genevieve.

"This community has been so good to my parents, grandparents and my children I'm glad we can return something to it," concluded Rifkin.