

June 13, 1969

Mr. C. D. Eaton
University of Illinois Foundation
224 Illini Union

Dear Mr. Eaton:

In accordance with our conversation of June 11, here is a summary of the ideas involved in the design for the Memorial Fountain in the Lincoln Hall Theatre Court.

Since this is for the Classes of 1918 and 1919, the major consideration is the significance of the war years which involved these classes; consequently, the pattern begins at the base with the dates of World War I, proceeds upward through World War II, the Korean War and the inconclusive dates of the Vietnamese War at the very top. The pattern of these dates is not as casual as it might at first appear. The year 1917 softly stated at the bottom is symbolic of the relative lack of disturbance as the war began. The 1918-19 years above it were broken and assembled in reverse to symbolize the disruption of these two classes due to the war. The dates of the wars above World War I are likewise symbolically confused to indicate the impact upon succeeding classes.

The style of the numbers is also a significant factor in the design. The styles begin at the bottom with the carefully drawn, elegant numbers of the early 20th Century. They proceed through simplifications of style culminating in the computerized number which is now mechanically reproduced. The symbolism of these digital numbers in the top line is important. They proceed from the approximate beginning of that war as a sequence with no end. Whether that war ends or not, other wars will continue the sequence. Also, in contrast with the care involved in the style of number in the early 20th Century, the present numbers seem to suggest a parallel in the consideration given to people today. A computer transmitting war statistics somehow doesn't convey the grief really involved.

Several other symbols are used in the design. Obviously, the motif of the guns explains itself. Not quite as clear may be the indication of helmets which we talked about. They are inverted and will serve as basins from which water will drip. In the 1918-19 numerals there are V-like forms at the bases of the one numerals. These are to be plow shares in conjunction with a symbolic sword which I felt had considerable meaning in reference to the Mid-west farm lands from which many of the class members came.

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These are most of the basic considerations which led to the design as it is presented. I will be anxious to hear any comments that you receive about this.



Donald J. Molnar
Site Planner

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