

Mayor Wagner announces the Gift, September 23

I am proud this morning to announce a private philanthropic gift to the City of New York, which will help to meet one of the most critical needs of our City and Nation. I speak of the generous donation of Mr. Samuel J. Silberman, through the Samuel J. Silberman Fund, of a new, and specially-designed building for the Hunter College School of Social Work.

This gift will enable New York City's only public institution of professional social work to triple the number of trained social workers it graduates. An increasing number of young people from all walks of life will be able to pursue rewarding careers in this field. The School's research activities and its services to public and private agencies in all of our five boroughs will be expanded and increased.

At the present time, New York City is afflicted with a shortage of professional social workers, a shortage which is of the utmost seriousness. It holds back every social program. It is a severe handicap both to our Welfare Department and to our poverty program.

We look to our trained professionals to serve the disadvantaged—with special skills, and armed with com-

passion and concern for the disadvantaged. We look to these professionals for the answers which will help turn ghettos of despair into communities of self-respect and hope. They must be in the vanguard of our attack on poverty and discrimination. This gift—this new building—will help the social work profession to fill this great need.

I take this opportunity to extend the gratitude of the City and its citizens to Mr. and Mrs. Silberman. Their commitment to human welfare embodied in this undertaking is in the highest tradition of public service.

Mr. Silberman tells me that he hopes that construction on the building, to be located on 79th Street between Park and Lexington Avenues, will begin next year . . . with the building ready for use in 1967. A unique aspect of this project will be an adjoining tower of apartments, the income from which will be used to support the program of the Silberman Fund in the social work field.

We in the City Government have given our fullest support to this project. The Board of Higher Education and Hunter College have already been authorized to begin recruiting the increased professional staff which

"Quiet Philanthropist" was the title the New York Times gave, in the issue of September 24, 1964, to its profile of Samuel Joshua Silberman, donor of this unprecedented gift to Hunter.

Announcement of the gift was made at City Hall, at a meeting with Mayor Wagner, on the morning of September 23, which a distinguished group of leaders in civic affairs and social work, as well as members of the Board of Higher Education and College officials, had been invited to attend.

No one who heard Mr. Silberman speak in presenting his gift can ever forget the impression made. "Modesty is a way of life" with Mr. Silberman, as the Times said.

Mr. Silberman was born in New York City in 1915. When he was a year old his family moved to Hartford, Connecticut where he grew up. He went to Hartford public schools and then attended Harvard for two years. In 1934 he entered the family business. Today he is the chairman of the Board of the Consolidated Cigar Corporation.

During World War II he was commissioned in the United States Coast Guard Reserve, and remained on

active duty in the amphibious forces overseas for almost five years. He left the service with the rank of Lieutenant Commander.

In 1962 Mr. Silberman received the Who's Who in America Twelfth Biennial Citation for Exceptional Educational Philanthropy, for a gift to Fairleigh Dickinson University of which he is a trustee. In the same year he also received the Brotherhood Award of the Tobacco Division of the National Conference of Christians and Jews.

He is a Trustee-at-Large of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies. It is Dr. Maurice Hexter, Executive Vice-President of the Federation, who first drew Mr. Silberman's attention to the need to expand Hunter's School of Social Work.

Mr. Silberman's parents were active in civic affairs in Hartford and he says that this accounts for his own interest in social work. His philanthropic parents set the example, he diffidently points out.

No expression of thanks on behalf of all Alumni can prove adequate for Mr. Silberman's great gift and for the support for the proposal by Dr. Hexter and other friends of Hunter's School of Social Work.

will create an expanded institution of excellence. We also plan to develop one of the nation's outstanding libraries in the field, and to acquire other necessary equipment and material.

The building will be made available to the City on a long-term, rent-free lease with provisions for renewals.

This is a great beginning.

This School will assist many who could not afford the cost of two additional years of training to qualify for work in the field of social service.

This new facility will help to expand our horizons of a city dedicated to eliminating poverty—the horizons of young people who desire a career of service—and the horizons of the people whom they will serve. It will carry us further forward toward our goal of assisting our citizens to realize their full potentialities.

The Donor Speaks:

Before presenting the architect's rendering of this building showing its physical appearance, I would like to describe it in terms of its functions as I see them.

Six floors of this building will be devoted to the expanded Hunter College School of Social Work. The need for a dramatic increase in the number of trained social workers is well known, because the most hopeful programs, both public and private, can falter for lack of competent personnel. While The Samuel J. Silberman Fund is donating the facilities, the City is to be applauded for its willingness to underwrite the expansion of the School's enrollment and program.

It is my hope that these expanded facilities and staff will enable the School to achieve an important purpose to which it has committed itself—namely to assume a creative role in helping the City solve its social welfare problems—not only by training additional social workers, but by being available to the City for special consulting assignments, special research projects and special educational programs for people already functioning in this field.

Beyond the School's activities, this building will play another part in supplying funds to help find answers for problems that beset us in the City. The upper floors will have apartments to be rented commercially. The entire net income from these rentals will be used by The Fund for grants in the field of social work—to advance education and research, to make available scholarships, and to help implement experimental programs. These grants will be made by a special committee of people outstanding in their respective fields reflecting all sectors of the population. One of the apartment floors will be for use by visiting scholars and professors willing to do research and teaching in New York. The use of these apartments will also be granted by this committee, which, incidentally, is now in the process of formation. I would like to stress that grants by this committee will be available not only to Hunter College, but to all schools of social work in the metropolitan area.

And so this project is a contribution to the social welfare of our City in several ways: by encouraging an increase in the number of competent field personnel, by stimulating an enlarged role for the Hunter College School of Social Work in helping to deal with some of the problems of our community, by attracting outstanding minds to do work in and for our community, and by

Left to right, Dr. Gustave G. Rosenberg, Dr. John J. Meng, Mr. Jack L. Poses, Mrs. Samuel J. Silberman, Mayor Robert F. Wagner

