

TILE HERITAGE FOUNDATION

P. O. Box 1850, Healdsburg, CA 95448

Robert J. Jones, Chancellor
Swanlund Administration Building
601 John Street
Champaign, IL 61820

July 10th 2024

Dear Chancellor Robert J. Jones,

I am the Executive Director of the Tile Heritage Foundation, a member supported, non-profit, charitable organization. The mission of the Foundation these past 37 years is as a major national voice in the preservation of existing installations of rare and unusual ceramic surfaces.

We are asking you to intercede in the University's plan to demolish buildings with unique ceramic works of art, namely the two magnificent, near-identical, TECO murals (1915-1916,) installed on the Shelford Vivarium, which is being proposed for demolition. The 80" by 40" murals are among some of the most impressive ceramic surfaces in America today. They are deserving of preservation for posterity. Ideally one mural will remain on campus and one would be offered to a major American museum with extensive decorative arts and Arts & Crafts holdings. There are professional de-installers who can be consulted to achieve this goal.

We appreciate that the University must expand to embrace current space needs. However, we strongly suggest that you invest in the preservation of the TECO murals. The American Terra Cotta & Ceramic Company, the parent company of TECO, was founded in 1881 in Crystal Lake, IL. Compelling circumstantial evidence points squarely at American Terra Cotta's chief in-house sculptor at the time, Fritz Albert, as the originator of the fish-and-wave design of the murals. TECO loved the design! ***The Vivarium murals are the design's fourth and only surviving iteration.***

On behalf of the members and governing board of the Tile Heritage Foundation, I ask that you please give this petition your fullest consideration.

Sincerely,



Sheila A. Menzies
Executive Director
Tile Heritage Foundation

The Tile Heritage Foundation, founded in 1987 as a nonprofit charitable organization, is dedicated to promoting an awareness and appreciation of ceramic surfaces in the United States. The Foundation serves the need for a historical perspective regarding all ceramic surfacing materials, both past and present. In addition to aiding in the education of the public about the rich and varied history of tile, the organization is a major voice in the preservation of existing installations of rare and unusual ceramic surfaces while enhancing the visibility of contemporary tile work as well.

Phone: 707 431-8453 Fax: 707 431-8455 Email: foundation@tileheritage.org
www.tileheritage.org