

The Legacy of Anna Hiss:
**Who Was That Building Named
For, and Who Are Those People Still In It?**

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Anna Hiss, the woman, long ago passed her name to Anna Hiss, the building. Only a small percentage of buildings carry the names of our women heroes, but we wholeheartedly accept this practice of assimilating flesh and brick, and presume that the memorial, unlike the person, is more or less permanent. In anticipation of inevitable collective amnesia, University of Texas regents in 1974 named their 1931 Women's Gymnasium in Austin for Anna Hiss, the person and its long-time occupant, following her death in 1972. In an institution that receives thousands of new freshmen, and sends other thousands of seniors and graduates along their way each year, it's understandable that most of today's UT population has no idea who Anna Hiss, the person, was. It's disturbing, however, for the institution's administrators by 1990 to forget who Anna Hiss, the person, was, and to dismiss Anna Hiss, the building, as merely an occupant of space needed for a new program in a new building to be named for a new benefactor. This paper and visual presentation place Anna Hiss, the building, into its architectural context as both an athletic facility and as part of a long-honored 1930s University of Texas master plan. Incredible expansion of the campus after 1960 rendered that plan and, in the eyes of administrators, older buildings like Anna Hiss obsolete. Thus the paper examines both the issues of facility management and master planning, and the values of institutional history and historic preservation for a university running toward the future with its eyes fixed on the ground just ahead. This paper therefore fits two lines of inquiry: Why and how we preserve buildings by extending their original purpose or adapting them to new uses? And, Why and how we honor our heroes through monuments intended to extend their names beyond their - and our - lifetimes?