



Wisconsin Gossellers

Feb 2019 Newsletter

A black architect designed Duke University 37 years before he could have attended

https://www.curbed.com/2017/12/6/16743328/julian-abele-black-architect-of-duke-university?fbclid=IwAR1KBTZQdUY9W3A0OgLJmNSeCOUfMXk0FsywKAlbIPqxxdFgv1_k9clhP5A

In 1902, when Julian F. Abele graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a degree in architecture, he was the school's first-ever black graduate. The debonair Philadelphia-born architect went on to design hundreds of elegant public institutions, Gilded Age mansions, and huge swathes of a prestigious then-whites-only university's campus.

Yet the fact that an African-American architect worked on so many significant Beaux Arts-inspired buildings along the East Coast was virtually unknown until a political protest at Duke, the very university whose gracious campus he largely designed, was held in 1986.

Abele's contributions were not exactly hidden—during that era it was not customary to sign one's own designs— but neither were they publicized. When he died in 1950, after more than four decades as the chief designer at the prolific Philadelphia-based firm of Horace Trumbauer, very few people outside of local architectural circles were familiar with his name or his work.



Julian F. Abele. *Courtesy Duke University Archives*

In 1942, when the long-practicing architect finally gained entry to the American Institute of Architects, the director of Philadelphia's Museum of Art, a building which Abele helped conceive in a classical Greek style, called him "one of the most sensitive designers anywhere in America."

The protests at Duke that ended up reviving his reputation had nothing to do with Abele's undeserved obscurity; they were protests against the racist regime in apartheid South Africa. Duke students were infuriated by the school's investments in the country, and built shanties in front of the university's winsome stone chapel, which was modeled after England's Canterbury Cathedral. One student (perhaps majoring in missing the point) wrote an editorial for the college paper complaining about the shacks, which she said violated "our rights as students to a beautiful campus."

Unbeknownst to even the university's administrators, Julian F. Abele's great-grandniece was a sophomore at the college in Durham, North Carolina. Knowing full well that her relative had designed the institution's neo-Gothic west campus and unified its Georgian east campus, Susan Cook wrote into the student newspaper contending that Abele would have supported the divestment rally in front of his beautiful chapel. (article continues on the next page)



Wisconsin Gossellers Feb 2019 Newsletter

Black Architect page 2


The protests at Duke that ended up reviving his reputation had nothing to do with Abele's undeserved obscurity; they were protests against the racist regime in apartheid South Africa. Duke students were infuriated by the school's investments in the country, and built shanties in front of the university's winsome stone chapel, which was modeled after England's Canterbury Cathedral. One student (perhaps majoring in missing the point) wrote an editorial for the college paper complaining about the shacks, which she said violated "our rights as students to a beautiful campus."

Unbeknownst to even the university's administrators, Julian F. Abele's great-grandniece was a sophomore at the college in Durham, North Carolina. Knowing full well that her relative had designed the institution's neo-Gothic west campus and unified its Georgian east campus, Susan Cook wrote into the student newspaper contending that Abele would have supported the divestment rally in front of his beautiful chapel.

Her great grand-uncle, who in addition to the chapel designed Duke's library, football stadium, gym, medical school, religion school, hospital, and faculty houses, "was a victim of apartheid in this country" yet the university itself was an example "of what a black man can create given the opportunity," she wrote. Cook asserted that Abele had created their splendid campus, but had never set foot on it due to the Jim Crow laws of the segregated South.

This was the first time that Abele's role in designing Duke, a whites-only university until 1961, had been acknowledged so publicly. Many school administrators were hearing about him for the very first time. Cook's claim that Abele had never even seen his masterwork up close was devastating. (Accounts differ, however. In 1989, Abele's closest friend from UPenn, the Hungarian Jewish architect Louis Magaziner, recalled being told by Abele that a Durham hotel had refused him a room when he was visiting the university. A prominent local businessman also remembered Abele coming to town).

(article continues on the next page)



BLACK INVENTORS

<u>PRODUCT</u>	<u>INVENTOR</u>	<u>DATE</u>
Air Conditioning Unit	Frederick M. Jones	1949
Almanac	Benjamin Banneker	1791
Auto Cut-Off Switch	Granville T. Woods	1839
Auto Fishing Device	George Cook	1899
Baby Buggy	William H. Richardson	1889
Biscuit Cutter	Alexander P. Ashbourne	1875
Blood Plasma Bag	Charles Drew	1945
Chamber Commode	Thomas Elkins	1897
Clothes Dryer	George T. Sampson	1971
Curtain Rod	Samuel R. Scottron	1892
Curtain Rod Support	William S. Grant	1896
Door Knob	Osborn Dorsey	1878
Door Stop	Osborn Dorsey	1878
Egg Beater	Willie Johnson	1884
Electric Lamb Bulb	Lewis Latimer	1882
Elevator	Alexander Miles	1867
Eye Protector	Powell Johnson	1880
Fire Escape Ladder	Joseph W. Winters	1878
Fire Extinguisher	Thomas Marshall	1872
Folding Bed	Leonard C. Bailey	1899
Folding Chair	Nathaniel Alexander	1911
Fountain Pen	Walter B. Purvis	1890
Furniture Caster	David A. Fisher	1878
Gas Mask	Garrett Morgan	1914
Golf Tee	George T. Grant	1899
Guitar	Robert F. Fleming, Jr.	1886
Hair Brush	Lydia O. Newman	1898
Hand Stamp	Walter B. Purvis	1883
Ice Cream Scoop	Alfred L. Cralle	1897
Insect Destroyer Gun	Albert C. Richardson	1899
Ironing Board	Sarah Boone	1887
Key Chain	Frederick J. Loudin	1894
Lantern	Michael C. Harvey	1884
Lawn Sprinkler	John H. Smith	1897
Lemon Squeezer	John Thomas White	1893
Lock	Washington A. Martin	1893
Lubricating Cup	Elijah McCoy	1895
Lunch Pail	James Robinson	1887
Mail Box	Paul L. Downing	1891
Mop	Thomas W. Stewart	1893
Peanut Butter	George W. Carver	1896
Pencil Sharpener	John L. Love	1897
Record Player Arm	Joseph H. Dickinson	1819
Rolling Pin	John W. Reed	1864
Shampoo Headrest	Charles Orren Bailiff	1898
Spark Plug	Edmond Berger	1839
Stethoscope	Thomas A. Carrington	1876
Straightening Comb	Madam C. J. Walker	1905
Street Sweeper	Charles B. Brooks	1890
Phone Transmitter	Granville T. Woods	1884
Thermostat Control	Frederick M. Jones	1960
Traffic Light	Garrett Morgan	1923
Tricycle	Matthew A. Cherry	1886



Wisconsin Gossellers Feb 2019 Newsletter

Black Architect page 3

Either way, the fact that by the 1980s most people had never even heard of the history-making architect, who designed an estimated 250 buildings while working at the well-known Trumbauer firm, including Harvard University's Widener Memorial library and Philadelphia's Free Library, was even more shocking. Cook's letter led to something of a reckoning. Today, there's a portrait of Abele hanging up at Duke, and the university is currently celebrating the 75th anniversary of the basketball arena he designed, the Cameron Indoor Stadium, which opened this week in 1940.

Raised in Philadelphia as the youngest of eight children of an accomplished family, Abele had excelled in school since early childhood, once winning \$15 for his mathematical prowess. But Abele's years at UPenn—first as an undergraduate and then as the school's first black architecture student—took place in a climate that, while not as restrictive as the Jim Crow South, was still very racist. In addition to segregated seating in theaters and on transport, most campus gathering spots and sports teams were closed to African-Americans, and the dining hall and nearby restaurants refused to serve them.

It was an isolating atmosphere, and friendships could be hard to come by. "You spoke perfect English but no one spoke to you," wrote a woman of color who graduated from UPenn nearly two decades after Abele did. Yet, during his senior year at the university, Abele was elected president of the school's Architectural Society, and he also won student awards for his designs for a post office and a botany museum. His professors evidently thought highly of him: five years after Abele graduated, the head of the school's architecture program tried to lure him away from his firm for a job in California. (article continues)



The indoor stadium at Duke University. Courtesy of UPenn



Wisconsin Gossellers Feb 2019 Newsletter

Black Architect page 4

Abele's employer at that time, Horace Trumbauer, refused to let him go. He had become invaluable. Trumbauer had hired Abele in 1906 to be the assistant to the Philadelphia firm's chief designer, Frank Seeburger. When Seeburger departed in 1909, Abele ascended to his position. The young architect worked well with Trumbauer, who was self-conscious about his own lack of formal education—he learned the craft of architecture through apprenticeships and avid reading—and who built his firm by hiring very competent underlings.

Abele, a serious man who dressed in impeccable suits, spoke French fluently, and reveled in classical music, was exactly the technically gifted architect, proficient in Beaux Arts building styles, that Trumbauer needed for his team. "I, of course, would not want to lose Mr. Abele," Trumbauer brusquely replied when he was asked, in 1907, to release Abele from his contract. Many accounts describe the firm's artistic vision as Abele's, although dealing with clients and bringing in commissions fell to Trumbauer.

One such client was James Buchanan Duke, the tobacco millionaire who commissioned the Trumbauer firm to design vast residences in New York City and in Somerville, New Jersey for his family (and their 14 servants). The white-marble mansion in Manhattan was modeled on a 17th-century French chateau, and when it was completed in 1912, the New York Times declared it the "costliest home" on Fifth Avenue. By 1924, the Trumbauer firm was hired to transform and expand an existing college in Durham, North Carolina into a well-endowed university named after its patron.

Abele would spend the next two decades creating a magisterial campus for a university that he was not even allowed to attend. All his creations were done under the name of the firm. "The lines are all Mr. Trumbauer's," Abele once said. "But the shadows are all mine." But after his boss died of cirrhosis in 1938, the talented architect signed his name to one of his own designs for the very first time. It was for Duke's chapel, the same structure that played a part in reviving his reputation 48 years later.





Wisconsin Gossellers

Feb 2019 Newsletter

<http://www.wisconsinfolks.org/alwan1.htm>

Abdulhamid Alwan

Arabic Percussion
Milwaukee, WI

Beat & Rhythm, Arab & Muslim

Have you ever thought two words meant the same thing, only to find out later that they don't? For instance, many people use *beat* and *rhythm* to mean the same thing, but technically their meanings are different. Rhythm is what you hear, or what you dance to. Beats are the sounds that make up the rhythm.

Tap your hand once on the desk. That's a beat. Now count "one, two, three and four," and tap the desk when you say each word. That's a rhythm.

Two other words that people sometimes think mean the same are *Arab* and *Muslim*. Like beat and rhythm, they actually mean different things. *Arab* refers to a cultural group, and *Muslim* to a religious one. A Muslim is a person whose religion is Islam. An Arab is anyone from an Arabian country, a country where Arabic is the main language. Not all Arabs are Muslim, and not all Muslims are Arab.



Abdulhamid Alwan. Photo by Louie Holwerk.

It Was Already Perfect

Abdulhamid Alwan is an [Arabesque](#) artist living in Milwaukee. He was born in Baghdad, [Iraq](#) in 1938, and came to the United States to study engineering when he was a teenager. He became interested in [Arabic percussion](#) and began to make traditional Arabic drums called *tabla* or *doumbek*.



Today, Hamid makes many types of drums,

but the tabla is still the one he makes most often. Tablas are the most popular drum used in Arabic music.

When Hamid began making tablas, he experimented with different drum shapes.

"I wanted to reinvent the Arabian tabla," he says.

But the more tablas he made, the closer he came to the traditional design. The tablas he makes today are similar in shape and size to tablas he saw growing up in Iraq.

Hamid doesn't just make the drums. He plays them and teaches others how to play. He is considered a master traditional Arabic percussionist, one of the most knowledgeable Arabic percussionists in the world. He knows over one-hundred traditional Arabic rhythms.

Hamid and his wife Kim own a store in Milwaukee. That's also where Hamid makes his drums. Let's go visit the store and see Hamid make a tabla!





Mission Statement: To bridge cultural divides and touch souls through the transformative power of gospel music

Vision Statement: A world where God's love triumphs over that which divides us.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Lunch by</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Sat Mar 21st (3rd saturday of the month)	10am-3pm	Congregational UCC 1511 Nicolet Blvd, Neenah, WI 54956	altos	Rehearsal
Sat Apr 18th (3rd saturday of the month)	10am-3pm	Olivet UCC 313 W Prairie St, Columbus, WI 53925	Tenor & Basses	Rehearsal
Sat May 9 2020	10am-3pm	Cedar Ridge 113 Cedar Ridge Dr West Bend WI 53095	sopranos	Workshop & concert
Fri Jun 5 -Sun Jun 7, 2020	Fr 7pm warm-up Sat rehearsal Sat concert??	Green Lake Conf. Center W2511 WI-23, Green Lake, WI 54941	Green Lake Center	Rehearsal & concert
Jun 28-Jul 7 2020	Gospel & More Choir from Germany visits	Various churches throughout wisconsin	n/a	Rehearsal & concerts & touring
Sun Aug 9, 2020	Sun 10am Service 11:30am Picnic	Folk Song Farm (Faith UCC picnic) 4811 Pioneer Rd., Richfield, WI	Faith UCC	Rehearsal & Worship

Music-based assignment for the month

Practice Witness & work on memorizing

Practice "Nothin' Gonna Stumble"

Mission-based assignment for the month

There is a Arab-American music/culture show on 89.9 in Madison (Higher Ground) Give it a listen and see what you think.

If you aren't in the Madison area, try listening to a different culture radio station or podcast.