

OF76_82_clip2 – Laying the OU Library foundation stone 1973

From video Open Forum 76: Campus on Camera

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Walter Perry: And I think it was with acclaim in every section of The University that it was agreed that the Library should be called The Jennie Lee Library. And it is therefore with very particular pleasure because Jennie holds a special place in all our hearts that I invite her to lay the foundation stone this morning.

Jennie Lee: Vice Chancellor, fellow students, fellow dons, fellow workers all, before I show my skill as a bricklayer, I would just like to say this: coming down here recalls for me – as it does for many others – the mud right up to your eyebrows of those first years, and I know that around here today there are pioneers or pioneers. There are some of you of course who came on later, you've had it easier, but it really is wonderful to come to a university which has very much its own distinctive ambiance, and I don't know whether it's an accident or good luck that the men who have been doing the actual building always seem to be so helpful. And you know, nobody loves my friends Jane Drew and Maxwell Fry more than anything but Jane's a bit of a dictator, that's why we were so delighted that Jane and Max should be in charge of the architecture because as you know, we were fighting time, we were really fighting time to get to a certain stage, so it was really wonderful to be able to come here and say thank you to architects, to builders, to staff, students of every kind. And I think all my life has been marked by libraries that I've loved, and I hope that the Library now beginning will give great happiness, great excitement, great sense of intellectual and aesthetic adventure to every kind of student who'll be using it. I thank you very much Vice Chancellor, it's a very special honour for me to be here today and to have the privilege of now seeing how good a bricklayer I can be.