

A black and white aerial photograph of the Chicago skyline, including the Willis Tower, is presented within a circular frame. The image is set against a solid red background. The text 'Rebirth of the Human City.' is overlaid on the left side of the circle, following its curve.

Rebirth of the Human City.

5th CITY

CHICAGO

Some people abandoned



Homan and 5th Avenue, Chicago.

the inner city...



Chicago's near west side

1952—18% black

1962—70% black

1972—98% black

Chicago Area Data Book 1970

A few decided to stay and



The Beginning

By 1962 most whites had left the inner city. But seven families decided not to give up. They located the Ecumenical Institute in an abandoned seminary on Congress Parkway, in the middle of one of Chicago's most desolate neighborhoods.

Common concern for the neighborhood drew together a group of community residents and these new neighbors. They began meeting together every Tuesday night in a dilapidated basement, patiently covering blackboards with lists upon lists of the community's problems and the possible solutions. They hoped to discover ways of reversing the trends of the city's deterioration.



Some of the first people were Sally Bell, Fred Buss, Helen Eskridge, Ray & Lillie Fox, Frank Hilliard, David McCleskey, Gene Marshall, Joseph Mathews, Lela Mosley, R. Lee McMullen, Joseph Pierce, Mildred Robinson, Joseph Slicker, Tom Washington. And many, many others joined them over the years.

build a 5th City 1962-1964.

"This day I make you a fortified city, a pillar of iron, a wall of bronze, to stand fast against the whole land."

Jeremiah,
Old Testament

The Name—5th City

These people sensed that their "city" was going to be entirely different from the four socio-geographic "cities" that make up the modern urban complex: downtown, inner city, neighborhoods, suburbs. This new community was going to be based not on geography, but on the sheer decision of its citizens. It would be a "5th City," built to bring hope and renewal to cities everywhere.

The Symbol—Iron Man

The decision to build 5th City gave birth to songs and rituals and to the Iron Man. The Iron Man is the real hero of 5th City. He is any man who has decided to drive his very life, like a stake, into the ground of the city and take responsibility for its rebirth.

The Decision—Iron Man Covenant

5th Citizens met in a town meeting and called it their first 5th City Congress. At the close of this Congress, 200 people stepped forward, singing "Men of Iron, We March Together." One by one they knelt to receive the 5th City Black Beret. Then they rose to their feet and recited the Iron Man Covenant, a proclamation of their dreams and their practical plans.



IRON MAN COVENANT

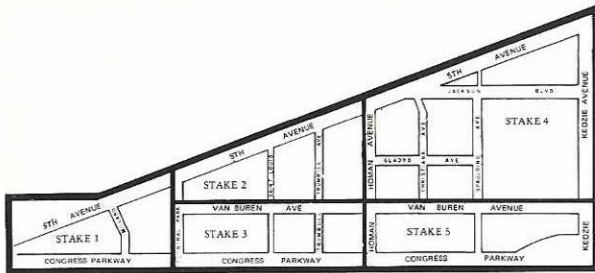
We, the Iron Men of 5th City, commit ourselves to the reformulation of 5th City on behalf of all men. We bring to this task the gifts of our blackness and the promise of a new urban life style. We give ourselves freely that all the cities of the world might realize their greatness, that all men might have new possibilities for humanness, and that all mankind might participate in creating the 20th century.

TO THIS END WE COMMIT OURSELVES:

1. To give every 5th Citizen the opportunity to decide to create the future.
2. To meet one night every week to plan, decide, and act in Stakes and Guilds.
3. To recruit and train 200 Iron Men.
4. To gather knowledge and do research for the rebuilding of 5th City.
5. To take the 5th City Model to the world.

Their first steps were

“The future of our cities is neither something which will just happen nor something which will be imposed upon us by an inevitable destiny. That future will be shaped to an important degree by choices we make now.”
(Kerner Commission Report on Civil Disorders, 1968)



5th Citizens took the first practical step when they created the 5th City grid. They determined clear boundaries in which they could work effectively. They divided the 16 square blocks (5000 inhabitants) into “stakes,” which handle specific neighborhood issues. Volunteers canvassed each stake house by house and they put the data on computer decks, to help stake leaders keep track of the people’s needs. They divided the stakes further into “quads” and then into “units” with one family assuming responsibility for eight families.

Amateur artists hung from 3-story scaffolds to paint the mural above the patio next to the “Node,” or community nerve center. Sheet metal workers also constructed a 10-foot statue of the Iron Man.



With new songs, hard work, and festivities, 5th Citizens celebrated the fact that they lived in 5th City.

Community workdays cleaned streets and built playlots.

The price of admission to a barbeque in 1966 was one chicken. While 400 chickens sizzled, 400 people danced and sang.



CHICAGO IS A WONDERFUL PLACE

Tune: Washington Square
Chicago is a wonderful place,
The West Side’s where we live;
Chicago is a wonderful place,
The West Side’s where we live.
So sing, all you people,
Life is here to love.
So sing, all you people,
Life is here to live.
Oh, Chicago is a wonderful place,
The West Side’s where we live.
Chicago is a wonderful place,
The West Side’s where we live,
The West Side’s where we live,
The West Side’s where we live,
Yeah!



dramatic 1964-1968.



The Preschool was the first 5th City structure. It made sense to begin with the Preschool, because it could deal directly with the fundamental problem of the inner city. That problem is the “victim image”—the self-understanding of many ghetto residents that they are the helpless victims of social forces beyond their control.

Like every other Preschool activity, field trips were designed to explode a victim self-image and encourage a responsible self-image.

The first Preschool field trip was an airplane ride over Chicago. For many children it was the first time out of the inner city, and it gave them a radically new view of their home.



Since then the Preschool has made a yearly trip to the airport. O’Hare comes to a standstill when 200 kids in bright red capes march along the concourses, singing at the top of their lungs, “When Iron Men Go Maching In” and “We Are On Our Way to Impact the World.”

“**Little Boy, Who Are You?**” asked the important official from HEW.

“I’m the greatest!”

“Well, where do you live?”

“In the universe!”

“Oh, ah . . . well, what do you want to do when you grow up?”

“I’m going to bend history!”

The startled official wondered just how to report this part of his Preschool visit. What he didn’t know was that his questions had triggered the responses of the noon ritual.

“How overwhelming must be the frustration of this young man—this young American—who, desperately wanting to believe and half believing, finds himself locked in the slums, his education second-rate, unable to get a job, and seemingly powerless to change his conditions or shape his future.”

Robert Kennedy, *To Seek a Newer World*, 1967

PARENTS SAY:

“She’ll probably be a leader—she’ll know how to decide.”

“They tell the kids they’re ‘great’.”

“The curriculum helps broaden their minds and teaches them to think.”

“They taught her to eat by herself.”

“The parents decided on red uniforms for the children. I am in on the parent meetings.”

“The school has helped enlighten us all.”

“I have been able to work full-time.”

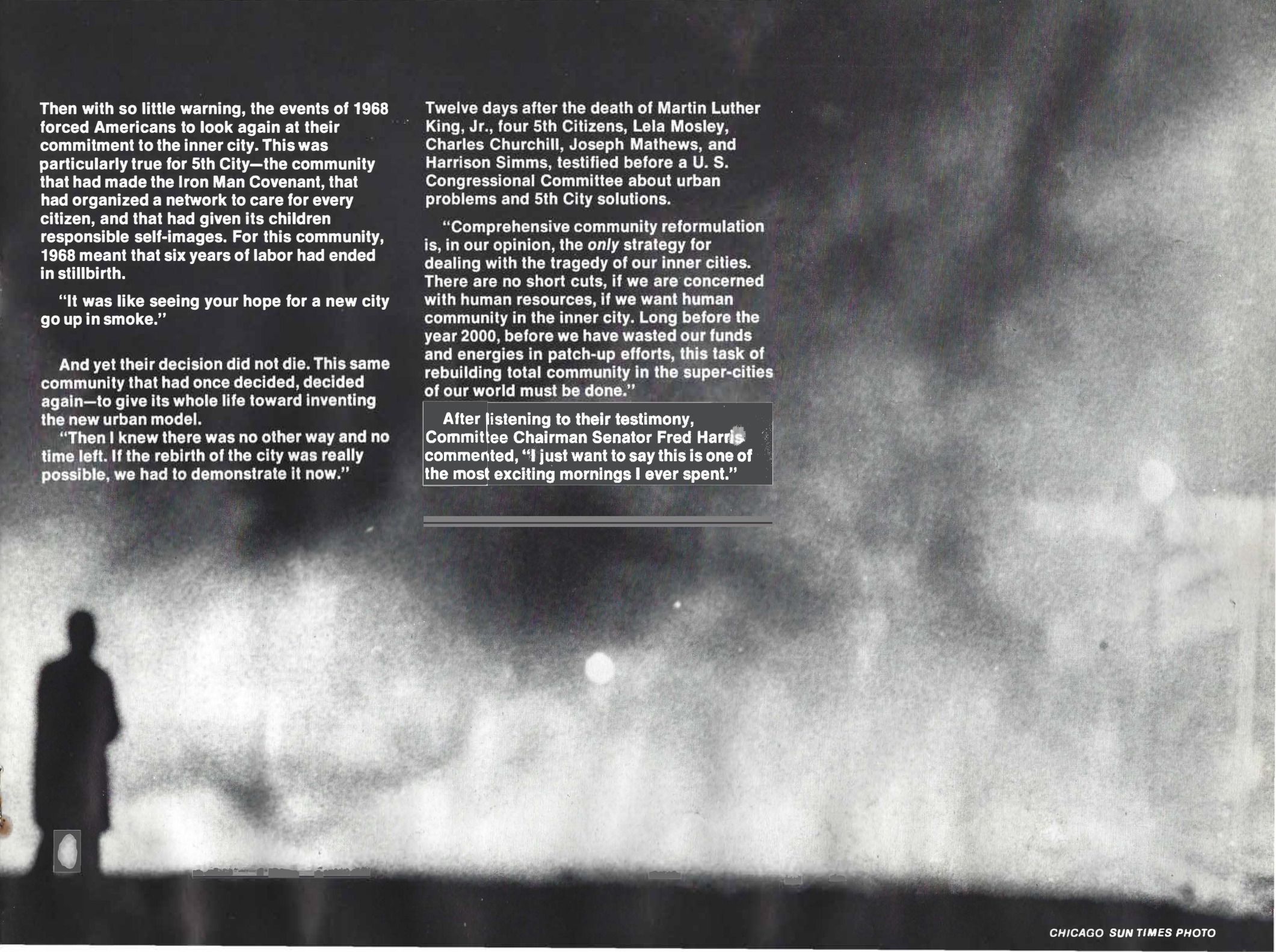
(In 120 of the 189 families, all parents living at home were working.)



A grainy, black and white photograph of a street scene in Chicago. The image is dominated by a vertical line, possibly a streetlight pole or a building edge, which divides the frame. In the foreground, the silhouettes of several cars are visible, appearing dark against the lighter background. The overall atmosphere is somber and historical, with high contrast and a textured, almost halftone-like appearance.

**1968 tested their decision
and deepened their resolve.**

Homan and 5th Avenue, Chicago.



Then with so little warning, the events of 1968 forced Americans to look again at their commitment to the inner city. This was particularly true for 5th City—the community that had made the Iron Man Covenant, that had organized a network to care for every citizen, and that had given its children responsible self-images. For this community, 1968 meant that six years of labor had ended in stillbirth.

“It was like seeing your hope for a new city go up in smoke.”

And yet their decision did not die. This same community that had once decided, decided again—to give its whole life toward inventing the new urban model.

“Then I knew there was no other way and no time left. If the rebirth of the city was really possible, we had to demonstrate it now.”

Twelve days after the death of Martin Luther King, Jr., four 5th Citizens, Lela Mosley, Charles Churchill, Joseph Mathews, and Harrison Simms, testified before a U. S. Congressional Committee about urban problems and 5th City solutions.

“Comprehensive community reformulation is, in our opinion, the *only* strategy for dealing with the tragedy of our inner cities. There are no short cuts, if we are concerned with human resources, if we want human community in the inner city. Long before the year 2000, before we have wasted our funds and energies in patch-up efforts, this task of rebuilding total community in the super-cities of our world must be done.”

After listening to their testimony, Committee Chairman Senator Fred Harris commented, “I just want to say this is one of the most exciting mornings I ever spent.”

Determined people



"The 5th City project is an outstanding example of what a comprehensive community-developed program can do in solving urban problems. It provides some striking contrasts to the piecemeal approach... What is most impressive is the total involvement of the community."

William J. Sahlein,
HEW Assistant Secretary,
October 13, 1969

"The 5th City Social Model is designed to weave a new social fabric. It is not designed to set up a grassroots welfare state, doling out the same services decade after decade. 5th City is designed to reverse the trends by reshaping the structures of society." Lela Mosley, Coordinator of 5th City Programs

Community Organization

The 5th City Board of Managers and staff work at the Node. They begin each day with an hour-long collegium and the ritual:

"Today our life is poured out."

"Let us build, shape, construct order."

The Presidium which hires the Board, continues to meet voluntarily every Tuesday night, as it has since 1962. It holds stake captains accountable for seeing that each and every human being in 5th City has contact with needed services, and it holds guild leaders accountable for seeing that each service agency is providing what is needed.

What Does an Iron Man Look Like?

Tom Washington had served in General Patton's tank corps, and he had been a postal worker and a valet at the Millionaire's Club.

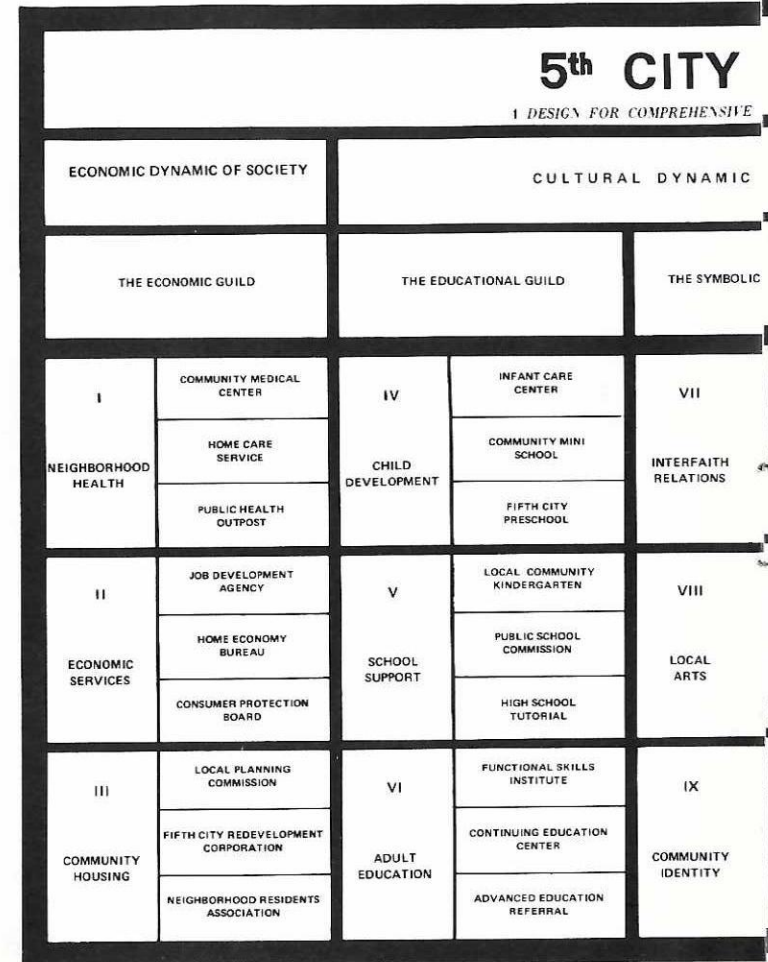
"We all knew Tom Washington was the guardian of 5th City. Up every morning at 4 a.m., he walked the perimeter of 5th City, perhaps just to give people pride in where they lived. Then he went over to the Node and

set everything up for 8:00 collegium. Even though it wasn't his responsibility, Tom had the coffee on, and the floor waxed, or the sink fixed, before anyone else arrived.

"Tom was the Manager of Urban Services. He knew the condition of every building, lot, and car. He was the one who went to court on the building code cases; he was the one who had the abandoned cars and garbage hauled away; he was the one who organized community workdays and rehabilitation parties for private homes.

"Tom Washington knew every kid by name. He made sure the Jets got their after-school snack. He knew all the gang members and what they were doing. He knew when there was going to be trouble, and after he'd shooed us all home, he would walk into the middle of it himself and talk the thing out of steam.

"The night before he died, he called the heads of all the guilds to his house. When we got there Tom was lying on the couch in the living room, asleep. We sat down. He never woke up and we left after an hour. But just sitting there next to him was enough. It was clear you were being held accountable."

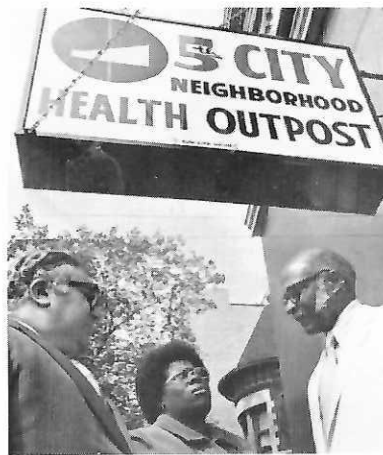


make the model work.

Youth Development

The Jets have fun when one of them momentarily forgets he's an Iron Man and says something like, "I can't color this thing right." Then Jets teacher James Mosley puts on his "I Can't Man" disguise and shuffles around mumbling, "I can't color. I can't do nothin' right. I can't live my life—and neither can you!" Before long, the Jet who thought he couldn't color finds himself yelling back, "Yes, I can! I can build the new community. I can build the world."

Their parents got in on the fun when a "duel" was held in the Great Hall during the Thanksgiving festival. I Can't Man came out and said his lines—and the audience enthusiastically played the part of Iron Man, shouting Iron Man responses. In the end, I Can't Man decided he could live his life, after all, on behalf of the future.



Neighborhood Health

Just ordinary folks making the model for a community clinic? It seemed a bold but promising scheme. Cook County Hospital agreed to furnish supplies and laboratory work. As a result of the clinic, hospital patient loads were dramatically cut. Now the hospital has decided to start five other neighborhood clinics—patterned so exactly after 5th City's Health Outpost that they get even the same number of bandages that 5th City requests.

School Support

5th City has sent hundreds of high schoolers to live for a year with suburban families in other states. Wardell Brent, one of the very first emissaries, later graduated from University of Connecticut Law School and returned to 5th City to offer legal aid.

"I would like to extend my sincere congratulations . . . Your preschool is one of ten in the nation selected by the Office of Economic Opportunity as particularly suitable for a demonstration project."
W. David Warner, ABT Associates, independent researcher for HEW, June 17, 1971



Community Identity & Elders

People have been sent out from 5th City countless times to teach black heritage courses, to lead preschool teacher workshops, to testify before experts.

Something funny happened on their way to Mexico in 1970. Everyone was disappointed when doctors said 65-year-old Mildred Robinson was too weak to take the long bus ride. Were they ever surprised when she met them at their hotel in Mexico City with a casual "What took you so long?" (American Airlines heard the story and offered a free ticket.)

Since then, Mrs. Robinson has gone with a dozen others around the world on a "global odyssey," visiting replications of 5th City on several continents. She shows her slides and comments, "I know my life is important. I have lived to see the dream become a reality here and abroad."

SOCIAL MODEL

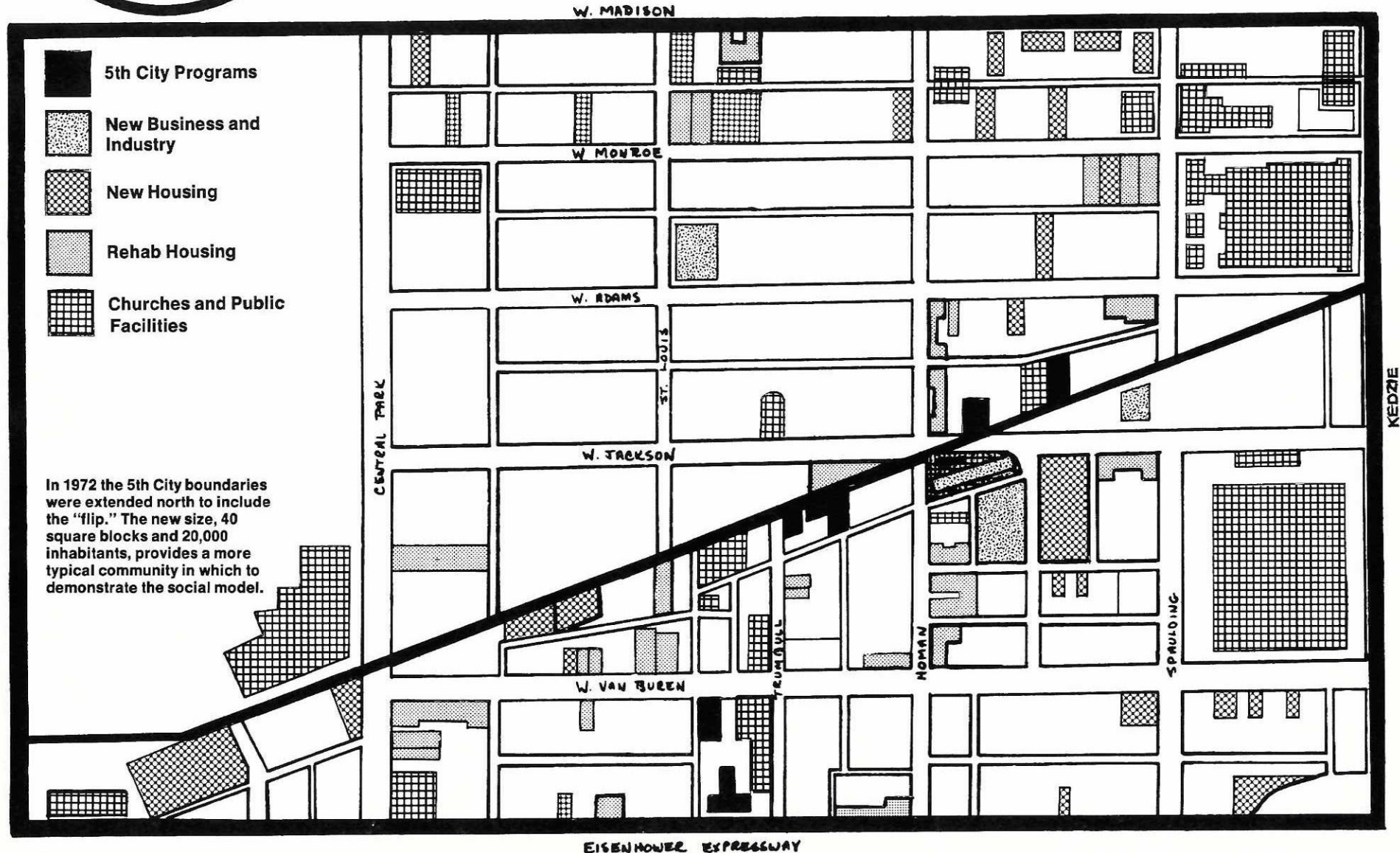
COMMUNITY REFORMULATION

OF SOCIETY		POLITICAL DYNAMIC OF SOCIETY		
GUILD	THE SOCIAL GUILD	THE POLITICAL GUILD		
COMMUNITY CLERGY COLLEGIUM	X YOUTH DEVELOPMENT	ELEMENTARY JETS CLUB	XIII CIVIL RELATIONS	LEGAL AID CLINIC
LOCAL CONGREGATION INTERCHANGE		HI-SCHOOL STUDENT HOUSE		GOVERNMENT RELATIONS BOARD
PARISH ACTION COUNCIL		YOUNG ADULT LEAGUE		PROBLEM SOLVING SEMINAR
COMMUNITY ART CENTER	XI SOCIAL SERVICES	EXCEPTIONAL CARE AGENCY	XIV PUBLIC SERVICES	URBAN SERVICES OFFICE
NEIGHBORHOOD TALENT MART		FAMILY DEVELOPMENT BUREAU		COMMUNITY INFORMATION CENTER
VISITING ARTISTS SERIES		COMMUNITY ELDERS ASSOCIATION		LOCAL SECURITY COMMISSION
LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD	XII COMMUNITY CARE	NEIGHBORHOOD STAKE SYSTEM	XV COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION	LOCAL GUILD NETWORK
COMMUNITY EVENTS COUNCIL		HUMAN RELATIONS CENTER		COMMUNITY MANAGERS BOARD
GLOBAL RELATIONS COMMISSION		FIFTH CITY PROMOTION BUREAU		FIFTH CITY CITIZENS CONGRESS

"Your outfit has the best pedigree and track record of any rehab in the Midwest!"

FHA Chicago Area Director
John Waner, 1973

The dream and the work



become visible.



Physical Reconstruction Begins with Housing

A deserted building which barely escaped demolition became the first building that 5th City rehabilitated. Community plans had been made for this building to be in Pack I. When a bulldozer arrived, twenty or thirty 5th Citizens stalled all day, while others went to City Hall to save it.

When construction began on Pack I, the community celebrated with a steak and champagne dinner. Later they marched to this site for the unveiling of the plaque.

Eugene Beasley and other local men were hired as carpenters. They were also part of the volunteer security force. Nothing was stolen, no windows broken. The community took care of the property. The Node once got

a call from a worried 5th Citizen, suggesting someone go over to the playlot next to one of the rehabs. Some kids were playing ball and she thought they needed to move home plate to the other side where the balls wouldn't come so close to the new windows.



5th City Redevelopment Corporation

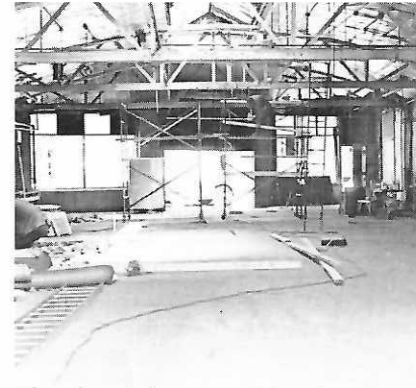
Pushing through three years of hard work and red tape, 5th Citizens learned how to put together a successful rehab package, from initial feasibility studies to final closing. Because of the success of Pack I, HUD and two mortgage bankers offered to finance Pack II and Pack III before 5th City made a request.

Pack I—1971: 8 buildings, 102 family units
Pack II—1973: 4 buildings, 58 family units
Packs III and IV—under selection

5th Citizens have kept the rehabs fully occupied and well cared for.



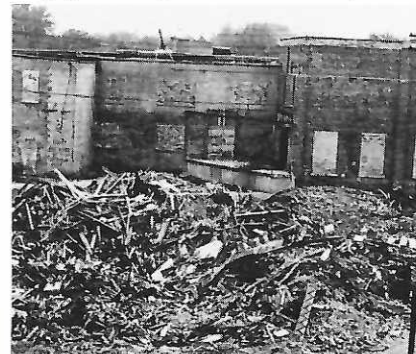
Storefront Node becomes Community Center.



Abandoned sheet metal shop becomes preschool.

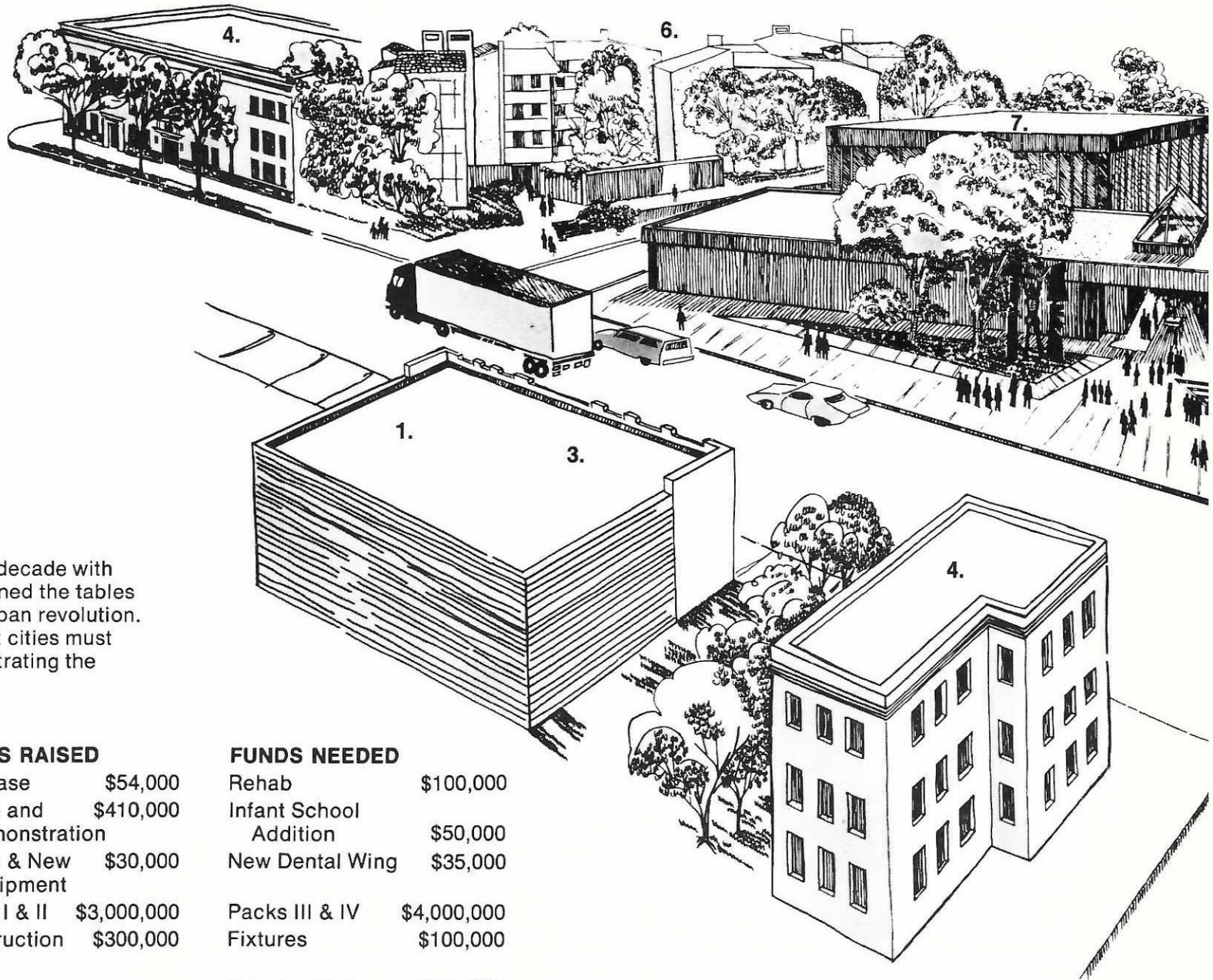


Empty building becomes rehab apartments.



Burned-out stores become shopping center.

Entering the Decade

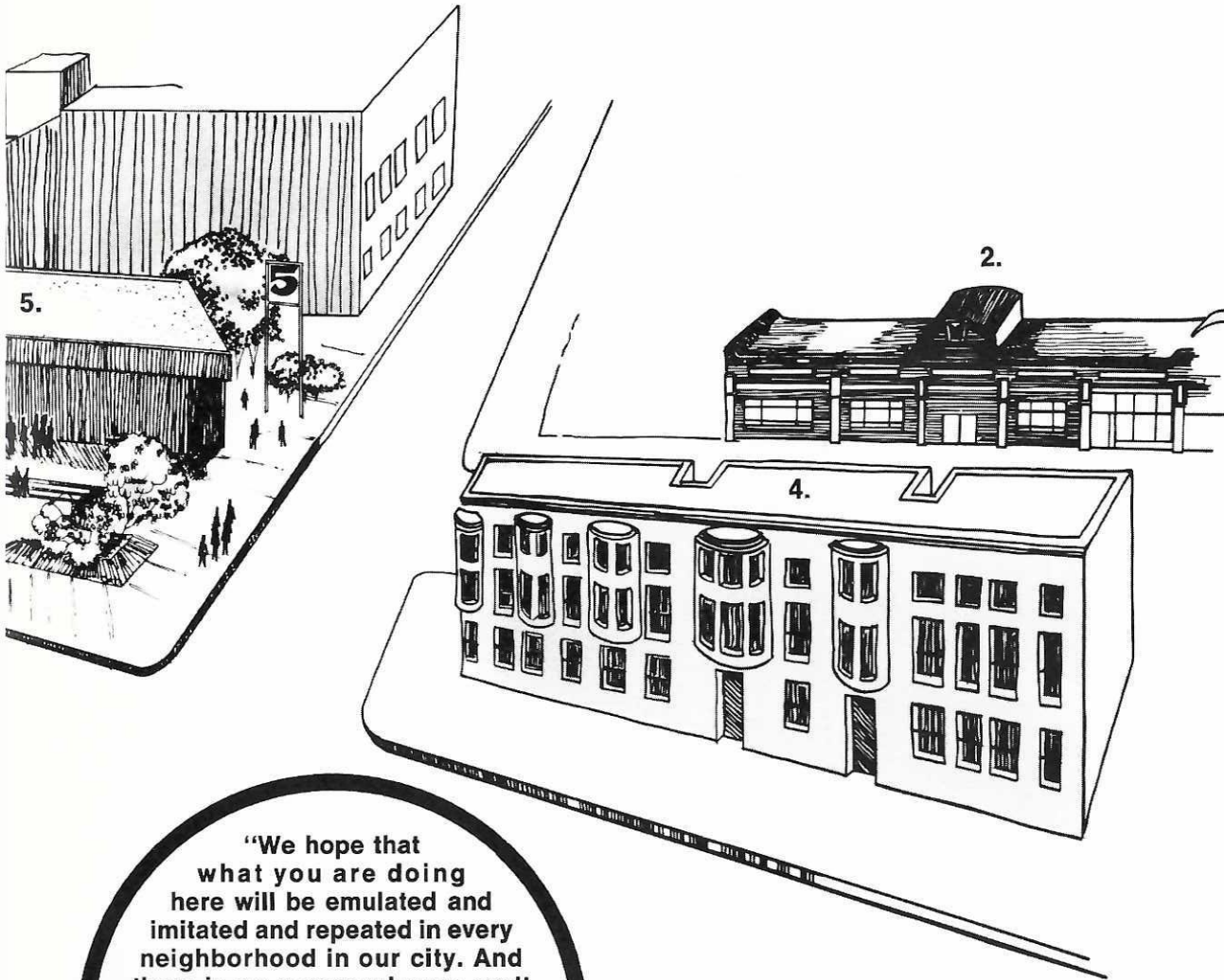


5th City has entered its second decade with hope and confidence. It has turned the tables on the negative trends of the urban revolution. It is moving in the direction that cities must go. And now 5th City is demonstrating the rebirth of the human city.

	FUNDS RAISED		FUNDS NEEDED	
1. Community Center	Purchase	\$54,000	Rehab	\$100,000
2. Preschool	Rehab and Demonstration	\$410,000	Infant School Addition	\$50,000
3. Health Outpost	Rehab & New Equipment	\$30,000	New Dental Wing	\$35,000
4. Rehab Housing	Packs I & II	\$3,000,000	Packs III & IV	\$4,000,000
5. Shopping Center and Mall	Construction	\$300,000	Fixtures	\$100,000
6. Condominiums			Construction	\$900,000
7. New Light Industry			Construction	\$200,000

Homan and 5th Avenue, Chicago.

of Demonstration.



"Our Foundation has made grants to 5th City. They have developed the most workable comprehensive community reformulation methodology that I know of . . . All of us feel extremely good about those grants. We feel we have gotten as much for our money out of those grants as we have from anything we've done in the last few years."

**H. Rhea Gray
Executive Director, W. Clement Stone Foundation
January 14, 1972**

Abbott Laboratories
Alberto-Culver
Alexander & Alexander
Allied Mills
Allied Products
Allstate
American Medical Association
American National Bank & Trust
Avon
Beldon
Borg-Warner
Leo Burnett
Cambridge Coffee
Chicago Bridge & Iron
CNA Financial Corporation
Central National Bank
Chicago Community Trust
Chicago Roller Skate
Commonwealth Edison
Consolidated Foods
Darling
Elgin-Honey Hill
Fastener Corporation
Guardian Electric
W. F. Hall Printing
Hawthorne-Mellody

Illinois Bell
Imoco-Gateway
Johnson Products
McDonald's
Mobil Oil
M. S. L.
Nalco
Oscar Mayer Foundation
Otho S. A. Sprague Memorial Institute
People's Gas
Quaker Oats
Regensteiner
James H. Rhodes
Rickard-Circular Folding
Rockefeller Foundation
Schwinn
Sears Bank & Trust
John Sexton
Shell Oil
Signode Corporation
Standard Oil of Indiana
W. Clement Stone Foundation
Sunbeam
Vapor
Warwick Electronics
Weil Pump Company
Western Electric

"We hope that what you are doing here will be emulated and imitated and repeated in every neighborhood in our city. And there is no reason why we can't do in the next ten years what you've done in ten years . . . because when we improve the neighborhood, and we improve the community, then we improve the city. Congratulations again from a grateful city."

**Richard Daley, Mayor of Chicago,
at the celebration of 5th City's
first decade, December 15, 1973**

Rebirth of the Human City.

5th CITY

5TH CITY: CHICAGO
3350 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, Illinois 60624