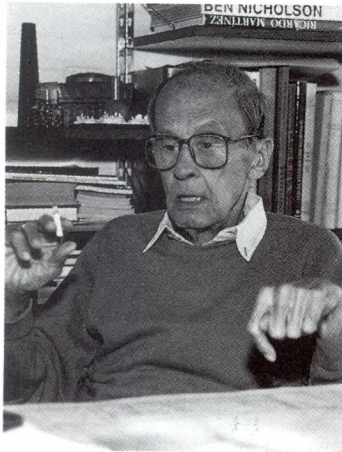
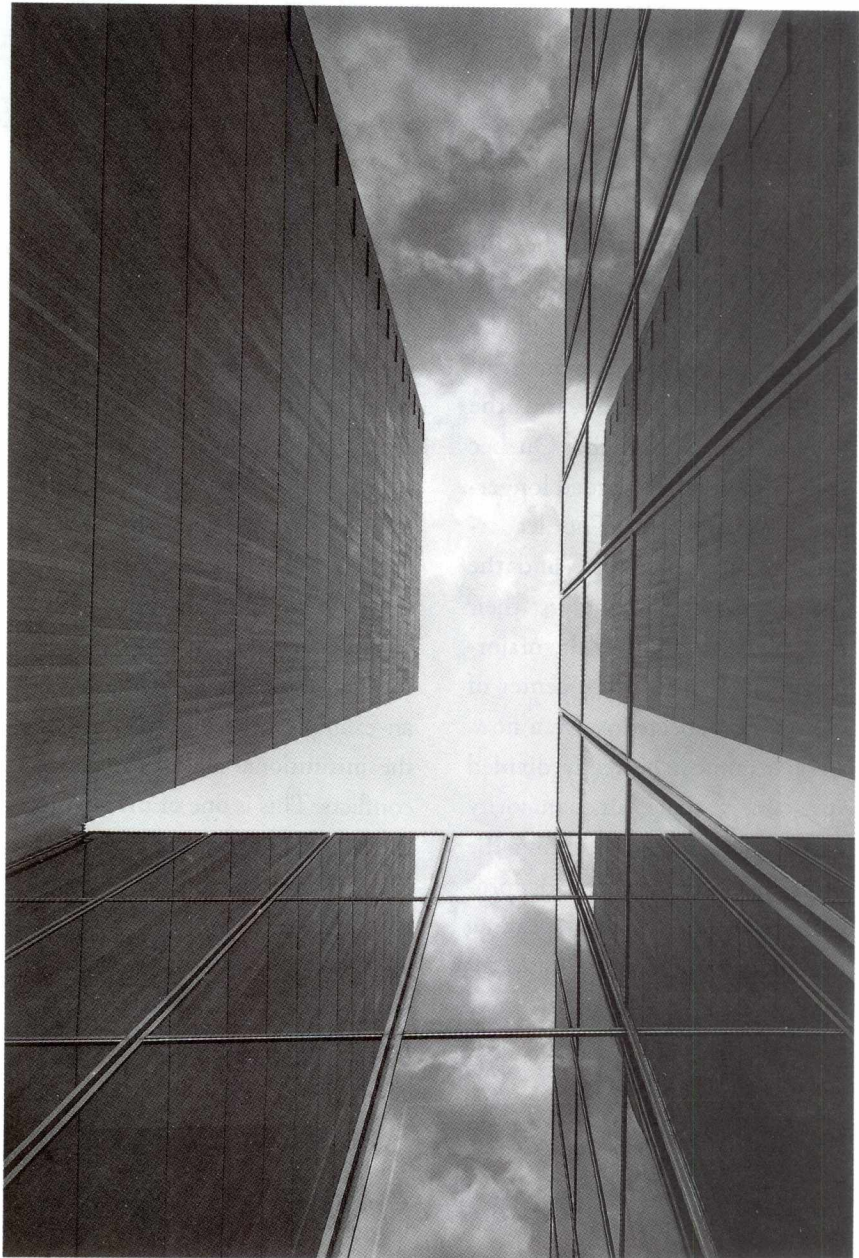


AUGUSTO H. ÁLVAREZ

A Classic of Architecture

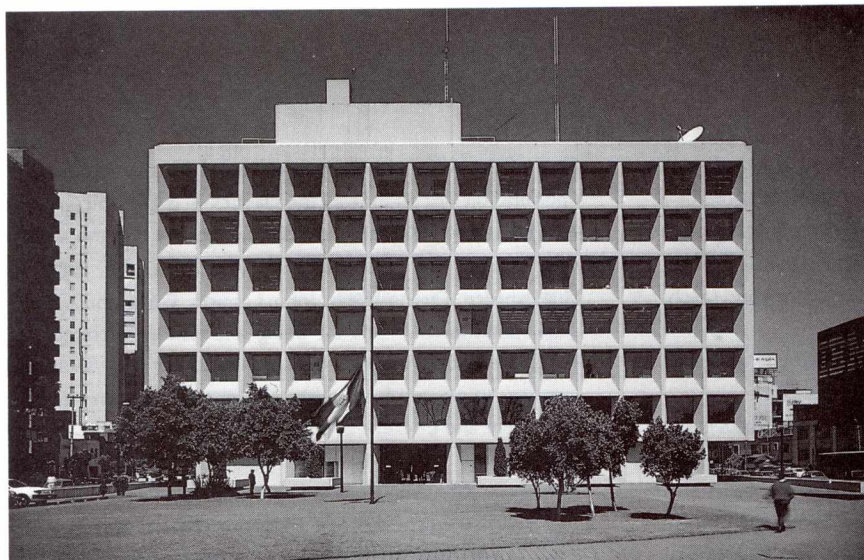


“Being a classic in architecture is being able to throw the user of a building into the abyss of creation...”



Photos: Augusto H. Álvarez

Jaysour Real Estate Company building.



IBM of Mexico building.

Álvarez always said that to be an architect “a great vocation for service is needed.”

“Being a classic in architecture is being able to throw the user of a building into the abyss of creation and deposit him, unharmed, in an unknown paradise.” This ability, according to Manuel Larrosa, was one of the main characteristics of the work of architect Augusto H. Álvarez, who died in Mexico City last November 29.

Born in Mérida, Yucatán, December 24, 1914, Álvarez always said that to be an architect “a great vocation for service is needed.” This conviction can be seen not only in what he built, but also in his teachings during the 40 years he was a professor of architecture.

Álvarez studied at the National School of Architecture of the UNAM (1933-1937). He began work on his own in 1940, combining it with his work as an academic. Between 1942 and 1970, he was a full-time professor of composition at UNAM’s National School of Architecture, a professor and director of the School of Architecture of the Israeli School and the founding director and professor of the School of Architecture of the Iberoamericana University in Mexico City. As a teacher, his main interest was the overall education of the student; he believed that projected spaces had to be conceived as a whole into which the architect integrated all the elements at his disposal, without losing sight of

the ends and uses for which those spaces were being created.

As a professional, he participated in projects and the construction of buildings for public use, like hotels, hospitals, schools, banks, office buildings, etc. Regardless of the material used—cement, steel, aluminum or glass—, his work always showed a reverence for order and cleanliness—a reflection of his own personality—as well as a clear mastery of geometry.

He earned innumerable prizes and distinctions both domestically and internationally. Among them are an Honorable Mention at the Sao Paulo, Brazil, Biennial (1961), the National Prize for Architecture (1983), Honorable Mention at the First Biennial of Mexican Architecture (1990) and First Place in the Mathías Göeritz Prize (1995). He also collaborated with distinguished Mexican and foreign architects in carrying out different projects and was both full and honorary member of several Mexican and Latin American societies of architects.

Álvarez was a good friend, partner and teacher to all who knew him, an example of openheartedness, elegance and solid thinking, true in word and deed. *Voices of Mexico* includes in this issue the eulogies of Don Augusto H. Álvarez by two outstanding Mexicans. With them, we join in the homage paid him by his colleagues. ❧