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DISTRICT 18

Arizona House of Representatives Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Dr. Robert C. Robbins, President
University of Arizona
Old Main, Room 200
1200 East University Boulevard
P.O. Box 210021
Tucson, Arizona 85721-0021

October 16, 2023

Subject: Preservation of the University of Arizona Cancer Center Chapel

Dear President Robbins:

I'm writing to you today in my capacity as an Arizona State Representative from Legislative District 18 and as a passionate advocate for preserving our state's cultural and architectural heritage.

This weekend, a concerned constituent brought to my attention a pending UA plan to dismantle and, as I understand it, ultimately destroy the University of Arizona Cancer Center Chapel, a site of notable cultural and architectural significance.

In 2018, I had the privilege of visiting this remarkable space. This meditative chapel isn't just a testament to human creativity; it's a tribute to the genius of Paolo Soleri, an innovative and visionary architect of international stature. As you may know, among many other honors and accomplishments in Arizona and elsewhere, Mr. Soleri received the National Design Award for Lifetime Achievement from the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum in 2006.

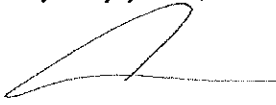
The University of Arizona's decision to commission this masterpiece and unwavering dedication to its preservation over the past four decades stands as a testament to the importance it holds in our state's cultural heritage.

I was alarmed to learn there are plans in place to bring about structural changes to the chapel, involving the complete removal of elements and their integration into a new building. I believe this proposed course of action not only threatens to undermine the historical and architectural essence of this state-owned asset but risks substantially eroding its spiritual significance.

I respectfully request that you and others in a position to do so reconsider this proposed reconfiguration and initiate a comprehensive dialogue with all stakeholders who share a vested interest in preserving this historical and architectural asset. I'm confident that through such a discourse, alternative solutions can be explored which will respect the chapel's rich heritage, maintain the sanctity of its space, and pay homage to the enduring architectural legacy of our great state. Moreover, this type of collaborative effort would serve as a shining example of responsible preservation.

I appreciate your prompt attention to this pressing matter. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Very truly yours,



Christopher Mathis
Arizona State Representative, District 18

CC:

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