FROM THE BUILDERS OF Opus 91

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At three manuals and forty-five stops, Opus 91 was by far the largest instrument C. B. Fisk had ever created for a private home. The vision of Jacques M. Littlefield, the organ stood in a specially constructed concert hall adjacent to the Littlefield residence in Portola Valley, California. Mr. Littlefield, a Stanford University alumnus, was a donor of Opus 85 at Memorial Church, Stanford, and a great friend and supporter of our work. The original contract was signed in 1981 while Charles Fisk was still alive. The two men had extensive correspondence about the proposed specification and the details of the concert hall as it began to be constructed. When Charles Fisk died in 1983, before work had begun on the organ, Mr. Littlefield’s steadfast advocacy and belief that the remaining company could successfully conclude his project was a mainstay of support during a crucial transition.

His particular fondness for the sounds of Charles Fisk’s American Classic organ at Old West Church and the case designs of 19th century French organs inspired the design of this instrument. He and members of the Fisk staff made a study of these organs, including a research trip to France and Germany in 1986 before the final stoplist and tonal design were decided upon. While the stop nomenclature is entirely in French, the organ furthers the Fisk tradition of eclecticism, a careful blending of voices with diverse historical antecedents, creating a unified whole capable of playing a wide range of repertoire with authority and authenticity, perfectly suited to academic use. Opus 91 stands thirty feet tall in a case of quartered white oak and weighs fifteen tons. The organ's intricate curved panels, immense turned tower moldings, and the matchless walnut carvings of sculptor Morgan Faulds Pike make it the most challenging woodworking ever accomplished by our firm.

When Jacques Littlefield died in 2009 we were asked to find a suitable home for the organ and were pleased when Indiana University expressed interest in acquiring it. The organ was removed from Portola Valley in early 2012 and was in storage for a year awaiting modifications to Alumni Hall in the Memorial Union on the Bloomington campus. The organ was installed in March of 2013 and is the third Fisk instrument at the Jacobs School of Music, joining Opus 135 in Auer Hall and Opus 142, a practice organ in the Music Building. The members of the Fisk shop, especially those who knew Jacques Littlefield, are gratified that the organ has a new home at a leading university with such a distinguished organ faculty; we suspect that Jacques would also have approved.