JULIE COMPTON, AB ’85, JD ’88, recently finished her third, not-yet-published novel, Keep No Secrets, which is a sequel to her first, Tell No Lies. Both Keep No Secrets and Tell No Lies are legal thrillers. The following is a short passage from Keep No Secrets in which the protagonist, Jack, shortly after receiving some devastating news, arrives at Washington University’s new law school to see his wife, Claire, a law professor there. Before Jack goes into Anheuser-Busch Hall, he reminisces about the old Mudd Hall where they attended law school together.

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And yet, he longs for that ugly building. In the same way his throat closed watching the first wrecking ball attack the old Busch Stadium, he felt an acute sense of loss when the university chancellor announced plans to tear down the old law school and build a new one on the opposite side of the campus.

The new school is beautiful. Claire’s office is beautiful, too. But he can’t help but think that something more than walls and carpet was permanently lost the day they brought down the old school.

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Julia Mariani, JD ’99

“I have many, many memories of Mudd Hall, but my favorite one (and it’s a leaking story) is this: My first encounter with Mudd Hall was not as a law student, but as a sign language interpreter. One morning I was interpreting in Professor Greenfield’s Contracts class, sitting in the front of the class, next to his desk, facing the students. From my vantage point, I could see a thin stream of water leaking from the ceiling into a student’s backpack. While interpreting, I tried valiantly to get the attention of the student so I could let him know of the violation to his backpack! I was already flailing around in the front of the class, signing, and could not—hard as I tried—get the student’s attention!”

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Here’s **Mudd** in Your Eyes and Nose!

FOR THOSE OF YOU not so fortunate as to have Mudd in the eye of your memory and who don’t want to rely on B&W photos, there are a few places on the planet that will transport you back to the neo-Brutalist architectural style of Mudd Hall, immortal for its modesty and majestic for its proletariat flair.

**FIRST STOP:** St. Petersburg. Concrete, communal apartments still ingloriously stand in preeminence to the Romanov’s glittering spires and Fabergé eggs. Like the chilly grey skies above, Leningrad’s urban acres of Mudd Hall-look-alikes define with their bleakness the glamour of the Winter Palace like Mudd Hall did the collegiate Gothic architecture of the Hilltop Campus.

**SECOND STOP:** Renmin University [a/k/a/ The People’s University], Beijing. This “home to Mao’s crazies” during the Cultural Revolution sports not just a single building that looks like Mudd; they all do. Indeed, while so much has changed in China, the role of concrete hasn’t. Throughout China, it flows like water below its national bird—the construction crane.

**THIRD STOP:** Wurster Hall, home of UC Berkeley’s College of Environmental Design, on which Cal’s famed Campanile casts its shadow in the mid afternoon. Wurster still stands. It’s just as ugly [some would say edgy] as Mudd was. It sticks out just as badly—the sore thumb of an otherwise gorgeous, gargoyle-festooned campus.

**FOURTH STOP:** Chicago’s Daley Center Plaza. For those of you who can’t remember the riveted, rusting-steel-abstract-winged sculpture in the concrete courtyard outside Mudd, Picasso’s “bird” sculpture may prove evocative.

Visual memories of Mudd may calcify like a cataract, but one sensation can’t be erased—Mudd’s DNA-staining smell of fresh concrete. Like few other odors in this world, it gets hardwired into your olfaction. Mudd’s moist and musty nail-in-the-nose musk never leaves your cranial smell box. As for Mudd also smelling like a decaying, urine-scented Manhattan subway in the ’70s at rush hour, I disagree. A BART station, built around the same time, would yield the contemporary equivalent.

If you’ve ever built a house with a basement, you know what Mudd was like. When the plywood framing into which wet concrete is poured is removed, you’ve got Mudd. The big difference from your house and Mudd was that not only the floors and walls were concrete, so were the ceilings. So if you’ve lived in an unfinished basement, sorry, you’ve only experienced a fraction of Mudd’s solitude.

Mudd Hall walls had feelings, too. Unlike a driveway or showroom floor, which is smooth, Mudd’s walls, inside and out, were dimpled where the wrought iron was clipped, and full of ridges where the framing boards met and concrete oozed out and permanently dried. No concrete sanders were put to work on Mudd Hall. It stood naked to the world, hairy warts and all.

Despite all the Mudd memories to be forgotten, as a former editor-in-chief of *Student Life*, I feel compelled to note that Mudd had paved the way for lasting concrete configurations on campus. Most notably, still standing is SUPAC—the Student Union and Performing Arts Center. When it was opened in September 1973, it was described as “Mudd Hall done right.” So it wasn’t a foregone conclusion that Mudd would be made a memory so soon after it was built. Had Mudd only been graced with some concrete curves, some inlaid brick, wide corridors, more windows, some softness instead of steel supplements, and functioning toilets, it could still be the apple of my eye. I III

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Paul C. Gerber received his Master of Juridical Studies (MJS) from Washington University School of Law in 1980 and AB from WU in 1974. Following an editorial career with health care magazines, he is now president of Patient Communication Advisors, publisher of the book Patients Love to See You Smile, and a senior advisor to Stanford University’s Rural Education Action Project’s eye care initiative in China.