

# The 1970s

## NCAR and UCAR through the Decades



### The Dawn of Supercomputing

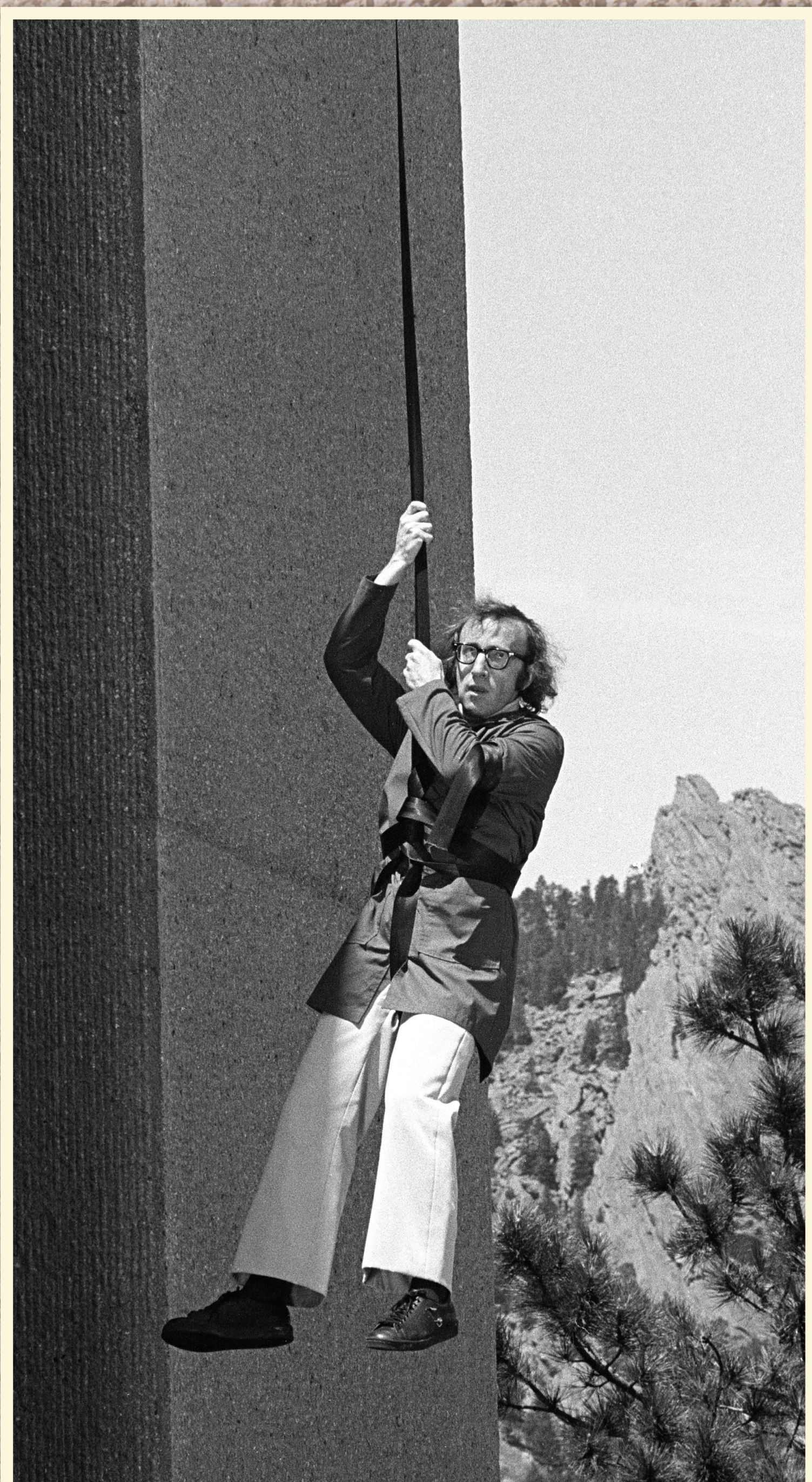
In 1977, NCAR became the first official customer for a CRAY-1A supercomputer, ushering in a new era in high-performance computing. The CRAY-1A was particularly adapted to the needs of the scientific community, permitting advances in studying climate and severe storms. It was decommissioned in 1989, after 12 years of service.

◀ Left: The CRAY-1A on the computing room floor in 1978.

▲ Above: Output from early general circulation models was stored on magnetic tapes. Shown here, Akira Kasahara, who with Warren Washington developed NCAR's first GCM.

### A Boulder Landmark

In its first decade, I.M. Pei's NCAR Mesa Laboratory became a Boulder landmark. In 1973, the building gained international visibility when Woody Allen came to town to film scenes for his sci-fi comedy *Sleeper*. A number of NCAR staff appeared as extras in the film. As NCAR has grown, other facilities have been added including two campuses in north Boulder.



### Research on Storms

In the 1970s, NCAR helped organize a number of major national and international programs that sent scientists around the world studying storm systems. One particular focus was on how hailstorms formed and whether they could be prevented.

▶ Right: Residents of rural Missouri collected hailstones in the spring of 1975 for Project Dustorm, a field program to examine thunderstorms and hail formation.

▼ Below and bottom right: In a laboratory cold room, scientists trained polarized light on thin slices of hail. The resulting kaleidoscopes of color revealed information about changes in temperature and moisture at the time the hailstones formed.

