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COLLEGE & RESEARCH LIBRARIES

news

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Northern Illinois University Opens New Library Building

Located at the center of the campus, Northern Illinois University's new library opened its doors for the first time to the public on January 10, 1977, the beginning of the spring semester. The move into the new building began during the Christmas recess and was completed with the relocation of the last of its technical services departments, during the spring break in March. When the library opened, approximately 75 percent of the books and periodicals were on the shelves and all essential public services departments were staffed.

The new library has 293,323 gross square feet of space distributed among five floors. The entry level is on the second floor. The first floor, known as the "Lower Level," houses the technical services departments, staff lounge, main student lounge, and a photoduplication department. The entry level incorporates circulation and general reference services, the union card catalog, and shelving for a majority of the library's bound periodicals. Also on this floor is a room for the visually handicapped. Blind or partially sighted students are aided in their studies by equipment in this room, including a print enlarger, braille writers, tape players, braille reference books, reference materials printed in large type, and other facilities.

The three upper floors of the new library, named Founders Memorial Library, house the circulating book collections as well as such specialized departments as Current Periodicals, Microforms, Government Publications, and

Rare Books and Special Collections. Circulating books are organized in a "subject cluster" arrangement. There are ten subject clusters; besides circulating books, each incorporates a specialized reference collection and is staffed by a subject specialist librarian who acts both as a reference librarian and as a bibliographer.

The upper floors also include colloquium rooms which serve a dual function: either for seminars, involving library materials, or as group studies. Other special rooms include sixty-four faculty studies, smoking lounges, typing rooms, and "subject awareness rooms," the latter dedicated exclusively to faculty use.

Vertical transportation to all floors is provided by two elevators in combination with escalators capable of transporting 5,000 people per hour. A third elevator, at the rear of the building, opens onto the shipping and receiving area and is used for freight and by the library staff.

Occupation of Founders Memorial Library was delayed a full year as a result of lawsuits over the bid for the bookstacks. Three times over the course of a year the next-to-low bidder sued the State of Illinois in federal court, contending that the low bidder failed to meet bid specifications for the stacks. Finally, upon the plaintiff's losing his case a third time, the low bidder was allowed to produce and install the bookstacks. Because of the shortness of time between the installation of the stacks and the date set for moving, it was impossible to solicit bids

from professional movers. The move, therefore, had to be planned in its entirety by the library and then executed using library staff, students, and university employees and equipment. To everyone's relief, the massive shift of materials, furniture, and personnel into the new building was effected without serious incident.

Founders Memorial Library was named in honor of the four men in the community of DeKalb most responsible for the establishment, in 1895, of a normal school which later grew into Northern Illinois University. Founders is connected by a bridge to the old main library, Swen Franklin Parson. The Parson Library was opened in 1952 and twice expanded in the 1960s. In spite of the remodeling, which more than doubled the size of Parson, the library collections quickly outgrew the space. Further expansion of Parson appeared unfeasible; the building was already awkwardly long, causing a scattering of its collections. Library specialists called in to assess Northern's library needs recommended that a new main library be constructed and Parson turned into an undergraduate library. Their recommendations have been followed, except that less than half of Parson will be retained to house the undergraduate library, scheduled to open early in 1978. The balance of the Parson building is to be remodeled for other university functions.

Experience in living in the building for several months has uncovered no major flaws in its design. Library spaces are completely flexible, hindered by few permanent structural features other than those for the elevator-escalator core. All rest rooms are on the periphery of the floors. No atriums cut through valuable spaces on upper floors; in spite of this, the architects managed to achieve a dramatic change in level at the building's entrance lobby through the simple expedient of lowering part of the ceiling in one room on the floor below. Ceilings on all floors are nine feet, six inches high except the entry floor, which has a ceiling of eleven feet, six inches.

Interior finishes in the building incorporate many of the materials used on the exterior. Bearing walls are faced with cocoa-brown brick. The textured limestone used for the spandrels on the exterior is repeated in the escalator core. The entrance floor as well as the floors in the elevator-escalator core are paved with glazed brick. Approximately 80 percent of the library is carpeted. Offices and special-function rooms are constructed of clear-finished oak and polished glass.

Much of the library furniture is also constructed of oak, with a natural finish. Warm, autumn colors used in upholstery and other design elements create a cheerful environment for users, which is particularly welcome during the long northern Illinois winters. A mix of

reader tables, carrels, and lounge furniture provides a variety of seating and study areas for library users.

Architects for the library were Hellmuth, Obata, and Kassabaum. The firm has designed a number of other academic libraries, including those at the University of Denver, Southern Illinois University (Edwardsville), University of Wisconsin (Kenosha), and Western Illinois University.

Library Consultants, Inc., were the chief consultants for the library and assisted in all phases of the planning, commencing with a programmatic statement on library needs through the final execution of furnishing and equipping the building.

Dedication of the new library is expected to take place in late fall. ■■

Unordered Books

In addition to gifts, libraries occasionally receive unordered books "on approval" or otherwise accompanied by invoices.

Librarians vary in their treatment of such unsolicited shipments, but all should be aware of the legal standards that apply to receipt of unsolicited books.

These are found in the U.S. Code, Title 39, Section 3009 (August 12, 1970): *Mailing of Unordered Merchandise.*

News items for inclusion in C&RL News should be sent to John V. Crowley, Assistant Director of Libraries, Milne Library, State University College, Oneonta, NY 13820. Advertising (including classified ads) should be sent to Leona Swiech, Advertising Office, American Library Association, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611. Production and circulation matters are handled by ALA Central Production Unit, at the above address.

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Above left: circulation desk of NIU's Founders Memorial Library. Above right: inside library's main entrance. Below: daytime view of building's main entrance.



Evening view of main entrance, Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University.



Fact Sheet on Founders Memorial Library

Architects: Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum

Consultants: Library Consultants, Inc.

Gross Area: 293,323 square feet (5-story building)

Net Assignable Area: 204,139 square feet

Percent of Efficiency: 69.6% of gross area

Dimensions of Building: 213' wide x 252' long x 78' high to top of penthouse

Seating Capacity: 2,400

Shelving Capacity: 1,000,000 volumes (est.)

Costs:

Building Construction	\$ 9,995,000
Site Preparation	161,000
Architectural Fees	480,000
Equipment & Furnishings	1,700,000
Miscellaneous Costs	8,000
Grand Total	\$12,344,000

General Description:

Exterior Walls—Brick (Cocoa Brown Flash Colonials); spandrels of textured tapa-finish limestone.

Window Systems—Frames of medium bronze duranodic aluminum. Glazing of glare-resistant bronze insulated polished plate glass.

Interior Finishes—Core areas of brick used on exterior, other walls of dry wall construction, painted. Glass and frame

systems in natural finish red oak frames with clear polished plate glass or wire glass where code requires. Acoustical access-type ceilings. Floor coverings include carpeting, brick paving around cores, and vinyl asbestos tile in work areas.

Vertical Transportation—3,500-lb. automatic traveling elevators; escalators 75-90 feet per minute units, 32" (24" tread) wide, 5,000-persons-per-hour capacity.

Heating and Air Conditioning—Forced air system with supply and return through ceiling, using steam from the university's central plant. Central refrigeration system within building; cooling towers on roof.

Electrical—In general, fluorescent non-glare low brightness system providing lighting level of 85-90 foot candles.

Furniture and Equipment:

Bookstacks—Aetnastak

Reader Chair—Gunlocke

Carpeting—Lee

Office Furniture—Allsteel

Card Catalog Cabinets—Library Bureau

Tables, Lounge Furniture—Miscellaneous manufacturers

Carrels—National Products Display