Waldo Library Expansion

What brought Diether Haenicke, Carol Waszkiewicz, Harry Gast, Charlene Renner, Thomas Gabriele, Robert Self, and Carl Reinke together on April 21, 1989? The groundbreaking ceremonies for the $19.3 million Waldo Library addition and remodeling and the $7.6 million Computer Center at Western Michigan University. For some of you who may not know all of these people: Diether Haenicke is the President of WMU, Carol Waszkiewicz is the Chair of the Board of Trustees, Harry Gast is the State Senator from St. Joseph, Charlene Renner is the Dean of Libraries, Thomas Gabriele is the Director of the Academic Computer Center, Robert Self is the project architect for the WBDC Group of Grand Rapids, and Carl Reinke is the President of Carl J. Reinke and Sons, the general contractor of South Bend.

This addition to Waldo Library is the second since the building was first constructed in 1958. The original building was designed to house 500,000 volumes and provide study space for 2,000 users. The 1967 addition increased the space to 145,000 square feet, which has long since been filled to overflowing. The present collection contains 1.7 million print and non-print items but seats only 800 users. The second addition will add 105,000 square feet of space to the building, providing housing for a rapidly growing collection and 1,900 study spaces.

The new addition to Waldo Library will be off the south and west sides of the existing building. This section will be completed and library services will have to squeeze into this space while the existing building is remodeled. Since remodeling will increase usable space, the figure of 105,000 square feet of added space is actually somewhat understated.

The Computer Center will be constructed immediately to the west of Waldo Library in space formerly occupied by Maybee Hall, the old music building. The Library and the Computer Center will be joined on the second and third levels by a pedestrian bridge which will include a clock tower, a student study area and lounge, and a conference room. Under the pedestrian bridge will be an entrance to a landscaped plaza surrounded by Waldo Library, the Computer Center, Kanley Chapel, McCracken Hall, and a new pre-cast concrete colonnade. The exterior of both buildings will be buff/tan structural glazed tile and bronze reflective glass for the windows.

When completed the new Waldo Library will have five levels. The main entrance will be on the west side of the building. This entrance will lead to a rotunda featuring an interior atrium open on three levels with a circular skylight. The walls of the rotunda will repeat the glazed tile of the exterior of the building; the floor will be a special four-color terrazzo design. The walls throughout the building will be white to reflect as much light as possible. The carpeting and furniture will be red, gray, and black.

In addition to the usual library service areas—Reference, Circulation, Technical Services, Reserves—the new Waldo will include a rare book room, an exhibit room, special study areas for visiting scholars, and a copy center. The Institute for Cistercian Studies Library will be merged with Special Collections and the two will be housed in the new rare book area. Since the Haworth College of Business will be housed in a new building on the West Campus, the Business Library collection will be merged with the general collection in the new Waldo.

How much will this new facility cost? Not counting furnishings, $19.3 million. Of this total, $15 million is provided from state funds and $4.3 million from private sources. All of this money will have been spent by spring of 1991, or to put it another way, the building will be completed in the spring of 1991.