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visited

An Invitation to Learning and Enjoyment

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After seven years of planning, the State Teachers College at St. Cloud, is to have its long-needed library building this summer.

In both exterior and interior design, the building reflects the wish of all who have so eagerly awaited it. It is inviting, easy of access, friendly and comfortable in arrangement, colorful but simple in decoration. It provides for the needs of different individuals and makes possible the free, immediate use of the materials of the library as tools of learning and enjoyment. Finally, its structure and planning are flexible enough to allow for changes to meet the needs of future times.

The site on the bank of the Mississippi River has contributed much to achieving a building which will attract faculty and students. Each of the three floors has large windows overlooking the river—19 feet 8 inches in width and 6 feet 9 inches in height on the east and on most of the north and south sides. Since the ground slopes away at the front of the site, there is direct entrance to the middle or main floor, with either the upper or the lower floor only a short flight of stairs away. The grade has made it possible also for the lowest floor to have as fine an outlook up and down the river as have the other floors.

The firm of Louis C. Pinault of St. Cloud were the architects. The building, including equipment, will cost \$775,000. The main portion, north and south along the river, measures 215 feet in length and 92 feet in width, providing approximately 55,000 square feet of floor area. It is built in contemporary style of reinforced concrete faced with variegated red brick to harmonize with the buildings on either side. Cut Indiana limestone has been used for the trim.

Modular construction, consisting of modules 22½ feet square, has been employed. The typical and uniform spacing of structural columns provides for flexibility in the placing of the shelving and furnishings. Book shelving, display cases, or planters containing greenery divide reading areas, re-

ducing the number of permanent partitions and contributing to the flexibility of interior arrangements.

The ceiling, formed of acoustical asbestos tile, is 9 feet 2 inches in height. The lighting is a recessed, troffered fluorescent type of 50 foot-candle power or more where needed. There is forced ventilation with a change of air six times per hour. The central heating plant of the college furnishes the steam, which is supplied from concealed fin-type radiators located around the outside walls. The floor to floor height of 12 feet 1 inch allows space above the suspended ceiling for the recessing of the lighting, for ventilation ducts, and for other mechanical equipment.

The library has room for 135,000 volumes and seats over 500 readers, besides those accommodated in special sections such as the Memorial Recreational Reading Room, the listening room, the curriculum laboratory, and conference rooms. Future expansion can be acquired by the addition of a wing on the northwest.

The floor plans differ sharply from the traditional scheme of separation of book stacks from reading rooms. The reader passes through the aisles between shelves of books in order to reach the reading spaces, which are along the entire window walls of the river side. With such free and easy access to the shelves, the student is led to consult more than the required references. And, since books and readers are in constant association, titles may be found that will generate new thinking and enriched living.

The exterior of the entrance points up the architectural lines of the building with an effective arrangement of window planting, polished rainbow granite, large full-length glass windows and doors. Through these doors and the glass partitions of the vestibule and lobby the very first view is one of the books and bright modern furnishings of the Recreational Reading Room, set against a magnificent and unobstructed view of the Mississippi River.

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The walls of the vestibule are of polished yellow Kasota limestone. Entrance may be made through the vestibule, directly from the outside, or from a tunnel which connects the library with other buildings on the campus.

The lobby has a welcome all its own, in the warm soft tones of the oak-paneled walls, attractive rubber tile floor, and points of light recessed in the green ceiling. Recessed in the wall of the lobby is a lighted display case in which attractive material will be shown. To the left of the foyer is the circulation desk. Louvered lighting in an aluminum grid over the desk provides even illumination and contributes to a friendly reception.

At this central desk all records of outgoing materials drawn from the library are checked, except those borrowed through the Reserve Room. Books are returned in the vestibule through special windows. A student rushing to class may find these quite convenient! A receiving trough carries the books along to a depressible book-truck. Discharging is done behind a screen back of the circulation desk. Delivery of materials from one floor to another is facilitated by a book-lift which connects this desk with the upper and lower floors.

On the west side, just back of the circulation desk, are the administrative offices. Adjoining them is the cataloging room directly opposite the card catalog. The catalog includes pamphlets and pictures as well as books. Rotary tables make it easy for staff and patrons to consult the large volumes of the Cumulative Book Index and other bibliographic aids. An exterior loading dock and an elevator opening into the catalog room are labor-saving devices pleasing to draymen, janitors, and staff.

Separated from the administrative and technical areas by glass partitions are the reference, periodical and reading areas with lighting from the north and east windows. The natural colored bamboo curtains, hung vertically from traverse rods, may be drawn to shut out sunlight without obstructing the view. Natural finished white oak has been used for all the woodwork and furniture on this and on other floors. Light oak shelving and the modern lines of the tables and chairs contribute much to the beauty of this part of the library. To introduce variety

into the lay-out, round, rectangular and individual tables were chosen. Comfortable chairs will be added for those who wish to relax with a restful view of the river, or for those who work best away from the formal study table.

In the reference area the books are shelved mainly in counter-height shelves, making supervision possible from the reference librarian's desk. Special consulting tables are found at convenient locations.

An office is included so that patrons may confer with the reference librarian without disturbing readers.

To provide for secluded, uninterrupted study, individual desks are a feature of the periodical area on the north. Unbound issues of periodicals in Princeton steel files are shelved with the bound volumes. This is a welcome change for students and faculty members who for so long have struggled with files in separate places and on separate floors. Since all issues of periodicals are easily available on "open" shelves, independent searching for materials should be developed.

The Memorial Recreational Reading Room, seen immediately upon entering the building, may well prove to be the most popular area. This room is dedicated to former students, graduates, and faculty members, with special recognition of those killed in World Wars I and II. The furnishings are modern in style to harmonize with the low lines of this room. Attractive lounge chairs, benches with cushions, informal chairs, plastic molded chairs in iridescent green and red, soft hangings of orlon, and green rubber tile flooring create the "eye appeal" desired for this part of the library. The dark color of the west wall is in effective contrast with these colorful furnishings and the light oak woodwork and shelving. The over-all effect should attract even those who have thought of libraries as dull, austere, and uninteresting places.

Choice titles in all fields, special editions of favorites, and many beautiful books will be found here. Some of these will be gifts of two alumni of the college—the Cambell sisters—Bessie, who always loved books, and Gertrude, the librarian, who guided the library in the early years, 1893-1913. Through the generosity of a former faculty member, Miss Clara L. Stiles, the "Great Books" col-

lection will be made available. The attractive volumes, shown in a convenient and bright setting, may challenge students to look into these treasures. Other gifts in memory of faculty members and students will further enrich this collection.

Special cases provide appropriate settings for displays and the showing of new titles added to the library. Current issues of the library's newspapers and magazines are displayed on the north side of this room.

Near this room is a small pantry for serving refreshments when groups meet here to develop appreciation of books. Since this part is shut off from the Reference Room and the lobby, no one will be disturbed.

Opening from the Recreational Reading Room is the literature area. Here alcoves lined with shelving are fitted with small tables and chairs of modern design in keeping with the neighboring room.

The main stairs on the left of the lobby take the reader to the upper floor. On the south is the reserve stack room. Here books may be borrowed and used any place in the building, eliminating the need for a separate reserve reading room.

There are two special features on the upper floor. On the west of the lobby are two attractive small lounges—one for men and one for women—where smoking is permitted. Opening from the reserve stack room, there is a room, furnished with comfortable chairs, a couch, and kitchen facilities. This is provided for the convenience of the staff.

On the east side of this upper floor, the reader passes through aisles between the social studies and science shelves to the reading areas near the great windows. The steel shelving of hunter's green harmonizes with the green of the walls and the green flecks in the black rubber tile of the flooring.

Individual study desks occupy most of the space on the north. To add to the comfort of the reader, there are arm chairs for the tables and a few lounge chairs. The west side is devoted to a curriculum laboratory, a large conference room which can be divided by a sound-proof folding partition, several small study or typing rooms, and space for the micro-card and micro-film readers.

On the lowest floor are books in the fields of industrial arts, physical and health education, business education, art and music.

Additional areas are reserved for the two collections of children's and high school literature studied by the college classes. The juvenile library will remain in the old library building until quarters are available in a new campus school.

Two classrooms, separated by sound-proof partitions, are located next to these two book laboratories. These rooms may be used by library science groups, by classes in children's and high school literature, or by classes wishing to discuss books found in the other areas on this floor.

Bright colors have been used on this floor. The walls are yellow and the floor green. Harmonizing colors are found in the lounge chairs and in the leather backs of the chairs about the round tables. Light oak wooden shelving contributes a warmth of tone to this area.

There is a surprise waiting in the screened reading porch adjoining the book laboratories on the south. Here are comfortable chairs, suitable for the outdoors. Seats may be at a premium, especially on beautiful spring and summer days!

The northeast corner of this floor is occupied by the Listening Room, designed for the use of small groups wishing to hear music, languages, poetry, or other types of records. Several listening booths are included for the student who wishes to try out special records. The green asphalt tile and yellow walls make a pleasing background for the semi-lounge chairs covered with yellow Naugahyde.

Since modern libraries are now "materials" centers, the building includes an audio-visual center at the north end of this floor. Dr. Richard Mitchell, the Audio-Visual Director of the college, has been responsible for the planning of this area and will have complete charge. Dr. Mitchell describes it as follows:

"Information seekers will find in the College Library a center for pictures and sound-recorded learning materials and their use. Thus, both audio-visual materials and the traditional printed collections will be available in one place to those who wish to use the most efficient tool, whatever the medium of communication in which it may have been prepared.

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ual Methods of Education and other classes of the college. One of these classroom units will have simple but helpful arrangements for film production, while the other classroom will be designed to serve not only as a classroom but as a sound-recording studio. The center office has windows facing each of the classrooms so that the office may be used as a radio or recording control booth. These same large windows permit an observer in the office to control and administer activities in either classroom.

"Each classroom will be equipped for the projection of sound motion pictures, slides, filmstrips, and opaque materials, and will have bulletin board, blackboard, and exhibit facilities. In each room is a concealed chair-height wire railway with hinged cover, which looks like part of the wall decoration scheme but which provides a means for making electric connections without having wires placed across the floor. The room lighting is focused and controllable to provide subdued light during the use of projected pictures so that students may take notes.

"A photographic darkroom with a light trap may be entered so that students may come and go without introducing light which would spoil the work of their classmates. For large groups one of the classrooms may be converted into a temporary darkroom. Space has been provided for the storage of films and the maintenance of audio-visual equipment to be supplied from this center to the rest of the college. A large listening room will be equipped with phonograph and tape recorder facilities. This will be supplemented by three smaller rooms which can be used either as listening rooms or as preview rooms. A special inside stairway provides entrance when the rest of the building is closed."

A storage room with a capacity of 20,000 books for less-used volumes, a large work-

room with direct access to the elevator, a vault, and an exchange periodical room will take care of other needs of the library. Other parts on the west section house the ventilation system and the mechanical equipment.

The grounds around the library are landscaped. Banks of bushes on the terraced ground to the south of the building, perennials and other planting in keeping with the natural growth along the river bank, the grand old trees of the grounds, and the contribution of the river itself as part of the setting help to make the building a focal point of beauty and inspiration on the campus.

The library is named after the second president of the college, Dr. David L. Kiehle, who occupies a very important niche in the history of education in Minnesota and is known for his long work in the early development of the state's educational system. It is quite fitting that this new center of learning be named after one who so zealously devoted his life to the cause of education. It is hoped that the new library will contribute as much to the enrichment of education as did Dr. Kiehle.

Many persons have been instrumental in securing the appropriations and in planning this library. Former President John W. Headley, members of the Faculty Library Committee and the Alumni Association, members of the Legislatures of 1947 and 1949, the State Department of Administration, the architects — all have contributed generously of their time and thought.

Edgar Odell Lovett, in the dedicatory booklet describing the Fondren Library of Rice Institute, has said, "A library is a great deal more than a storehouse of marvels, ancient and modern. It is a powerhouse of ideas and ideals." The task ahead for all of us is to put this new tool of learning to work.