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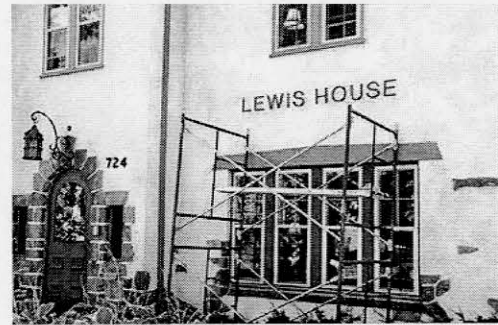
Old houses, new names

Thursday, September 8, 2011

Two St. Cloud State buildings have been renamed for the families who built and first lived in them.

This summer the Minnesota Colleges and Universities system approved changing the name of Alumni House to Lewis House and Carol Hall to Ervin House. Signs reflecting the new names and their historic origins were changed this week.

Lewis House was built by St. Cloud physician Claude Lewis and his wife Mary in 1926. Claude's brother, Nobel Prize-winning author Sinclair Lewis, frequently visited their home for family dinners when he came to Minnesota. Architect Louis C. Pinault (architect for Stewart Hall) designed and Hubert J. Hansen built the tudor style home, which Claude's widow - his second wife, Helen, sold in 1964 to L. Ferne Goble Atwood of the family for whom Atwood Memorial Center is named. The home became state of Minnesota property via condemnation in 1972, as St. Cloud State expanded its campus. Mrs. Atwood vacated the property in 1973, and according to a 1973 article in the *University Chronicle*, a final decision regarding the Atwood house read that the state would give Mrs. Atwood \$82,000 for the property and some items in the home. The home became known as Alumni House as it was converted into offices for the St. Cloud State University Foundation and Alumni Relations.



A new sign for the renamed Alumni House.

The three-story Ervin House was one of the south side's most stately homes when it was built in 1917 for the family of widow Mary Sappington Ervin after the death of her husband, local miller Harry Clay Ervin. St. Cloud State acquired the granite Dutch Colonial in 1936 when the house went into receivership. Then-President George Selke purchased it for \$11,000 with student activity money. Between 1936 and 1940 the Wheelock Whitney family lived in the home, across the street from Whitney House, which at the time was still the home of Alice Wheelock Whitney. During World War II the former Ervin family home - named after Selke's wife, Carol - was housing for military glider pilots in training, then became a women's student residence until the early 1980s. Currently it houses the Department of Residential Life and serves as the reception desk for Benton Hall, an upper class student residence hall adjacent to Ervin House.

Both buildings have been featured on annual south side historic home tours sponsored by the St. Cloud Historic and Neighborhood Preservation Association and South Side University Neighborhood Association.

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