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WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY TURNS 25-YEAR-OLD
GYM INTO COMPLETE, MODERN, WELL-CARPETED LIBRARY

What has aptly been described as a "feat of utilization" at Western Kentucky University is also the forerunner of an ambitious long range program of growth which will double facilities of the university in Bowling Green, Ky. The resourcefulness of the university administrators and others directing the gigantic program was demonstrated last fall in the reconstruction and enlargement of its 25-year-old physical education building into a modern three-story library which is truly a cultural center of contemporary design.

The reconstructed building, now known as the Margie Helm Library, is replete with all of the modern devices available to library science. The remodeled building is named for Margie Helm, who retired as head librarian in 1965 after having served on the university's library staff for nearly 45 years.

In addition to an excellent collection of reference volumes, the library boasts such features as a law library, microfilm, microprint, microfiche, and microcard collections, an impressive depository of government publications, a listening room, numerous study alcoves, classrooms, and a staff lounge outfitted with compact kitchen equipment.

This wealth of source material for the ever-increasing student body and faculty is contained in a library which is as attractive as it is functional. Original paintings adorn walls, and colorful sound-deadening carpet complements contemporary furnishings in bright colors and walls of pastel shades.

Two floors of the library rose where once thousands of basketball fans witnessed action on a gleaming hardwood court. The floor surface is now a carpet of dark gold, rust and white created expressly for this installation by C. H. Masland & Sons of Carlisle, Pa.

An Art Room on the second floor is attractively carpeted and furnished for display of a fine collection of material in the fine arts. Adjoining is the Listening Room for enjoying records owned by the library.

Classrooms, offices, reading and study rooms for the Department of Library Science are located on the ground level, below what is referred to as the Main Floor. Of particular interest is the Library Science Reading Room, furnished and planned to present a small model library atmosphere and charm.

Western Kentucky University, where enrollment is expected to grow from the present 7,824 to more than 16,000 students in the next decade, employed the architectural firm of Wilk & Arrasmith, of Bowling Green and Louisville, for the reconstruction.

In addition to designing library facilities within the shell of the former gymnasium, the architects modernized the exterior by adding a handsome two-story foyer and patio of colorful pre-cast concrete blocks to the front of the building. The foyer is 25 feet high with side walls of glass covered with ceiling-to-floor drapes. A wedding of glass, aluminum, walnut paneling, and huge plastic bubble lights suspended from the ceiling set a contemporary atmosphere for the whole building. A map of the campus decorates the entire inside solid front wall.

Interior design for the spaces created by the architects was directed by Jack Schafer of Cincinnati, Ohio. Dark walnut forms a traditional base for clear, bright colors that flow around wood used for wall panels, desks, card files, shelving, book carts and study tables. Colors such as bittersweet, citron, jade and willow blue are found in lounge furniture, librarians' chairs and occasional pieces. Underfoot are carpets of green and sandlewood throughout much of the huge first floor.

In selecting more than 2,000 square yards of carpet for the Margie Helm Library, design consultant Schafer worked with representatives of C. H. Masland & Sons, who made the carpet, and the Marcus Furniture Co. of Frankfort, Ky., who sold and installed it.

Through extensive use of carpet in the areas which are used most, the library has achieved an atmosphere conducive to study as well as pleasant decor normally reserved for much smaller areas. In addition to careful selection of the carpet colors to provide the base for the decor of these areas, the designer took into account the heavy traffic to which the carpet will be put. Areas such as the Reference and Browsing Rooms, and the corridors are subjected to a constant flow of book-trucks and foot traffic of active college students. To carpet these areas, Masland produced more than 1700 square yards of a rugged 3-ply, 10-wire wool carpet of velvet construction.

The carpet in the Browsing Room and corridors is a green selected from the Masland "Varsity" stock color line. The sandlewood composed of a combination of dark gold, rust and white wool yarns was installed in the Reference Room.

A slightly lighter weight carpet of velvet construction was installed in the offices and periodical browsing area. The "Varsity" green was installed in the administrative offices in the south wing on the Main Floor. Masland's "Pointset", a widely-used wool velvet commercial quality, in cinnamon moresque was installed in the art, listening, and periodical areas on the second floor.

Working with the designer and Marcus Furniture Co. on this phase of the creation of the new library were Samuel Rolick, territory manager for C. H. Masland & Sons, and Owen Lawson, Jr., Physical Plant Administrator for the university.

In constructing its new library from a landmark which is well known to Western Kentucky alumni, the college considered and provided for the needs of students, faculty and townspeople. To make way for the reconstruction project, the university constructed four years ago a new Academic-Athletic Building, the beginning of an extensive athletics complex which will include a new stadium, tennis courts, baseball field, and a plot for bowling on the green, the sport from which the community got its name. Part of the expansion for the future also calls for a major addition to the Margie Helm Library.

The mammoth expansion project which the university plans to complete on its 183-acre campus to meet continuing demands for more educational facilities will include 39 new buildings.

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