

GRAINGER HALL



Fig. 1.
Grainger Hall,
1994. [photo
courtesy of
Grainger
public
relations
office]

Built in 1992 with state funds and a 9 million dollar gift from David Grainger, Grainger Hall of Business Administration helped restore the UW School of Business to its place of national preeminence.

A series of meetings of the Board of Visitors (BOV) for the School of Business in April and May of 1985 began the process that would culminate in the construction of Grainger Hall. The BOV was addressed in April 1985 by the acting dean of the school of business James Blakely and told that he had asked for University support for a new building that would allow the school of business to be housed in one building, and bring the University's facilities into line with other top-ranked business schools.

The same day the president of the BOV wrote to chancellor Irving Shain that the BOV (chaired by ex-regent Joyce Erdman) had passed a resolution committing the BOV to raising from the public sector twenty five per cent of the cost of a new building, or \$5 million, whichever is lower. This resolution implies that plans were already in the works, since it mentions the "Brooks Street site". In May 1985 associate dean Strang asked permission from campus planning to proceed with a detailed proposal. Strang would be heavily involved in the project from then on.¹

In October 1985 a major project proposal was produced by the building committee chaired by William Strang. It called for the construction of an entirely new building to house the school of Business to be erected on the west half of the block bounded by University Avenue, North Johnson, North Park and North Brooks Streets. This proposal points out that the existing facilities for the School of

Business in the Commerce building had been inadequate for more than ten years. Enrollment in the School had grown by 85 percent between 1967 and 1977. The School's enrollment in 1985 comprised 27 per cent of the Letters and Science freshman class, and 13 per cent of all Madison undergraduates. Clearly the School of Business had space deficiencies. Besides the Commerce building the School had space in Bascom Hall, the old Infirmary, and storage in other buildings around campus. This dispersal of space led to problems in maintaining the high standards of the School. The proposal would not only unite the School under one roof, but provide expansion for about 400 more undergraduates. As an alternative to a new building, the committee had examined the possibility of expanding the commerce building by extending it down Charter Street and building upwards five stories. This plan would have meant the loss of the Commerce building for the 2-3 years of construction time.²

In early 1986 state business leaders encouraged chancellor Shain and the administration to expedite the new building. It was pointed out that the enrollment of the School had risen 152 per cent since 1965 when new space (an addition to the commerce building) had first been mentioned. In October 1986 the regents approved the construction of a new School of Business facility on North Brooks Street, at a budget of \$21.8 million, provided that \$8 million in gift funds could be raised for the project. In March 1987 the state building commission approved the project at a budget of \$26.3 million, with a provision that \$8 million be raised in private funds, and that state money to proceed with planning would be released when the fund-raising reached \$4 million.³

Reflecting the wide support in the business community for the project, fund-raising went well from the start. The \$4 million halfway point needed to obtain state planning money to hire architects and consultants was announced to the regents at their July 1988 meeting. The state building Commission approved the preparation of preliminary plans, with the provision that the plans include parking for 350 cars. Large donations were received from individuals John Morgridge, Ab Nicholas, Ted Kellner and corporations American Family Insurance, the Bolz Foundation and the Rennebohm Foundation. In August 1988, the first hint of an anonymous source for a large contribution appeared. "Mr. X" was interested in some major name recognition in the School of Business. Also in August 1988 the state released \$550,000 for preparation of plans. Architects were chosen in early November 1988. The choice fell to the Zimmerman Design Group of Milwaukee, who teamed with the Architect's Collaborative of Cambridge Massachusetts.⁴

Building committee meetings with the architects began in January 1989. An early complaint from the designers was the limited amount of space available on the half block site. William Strang noted that the still anonymous donor had made as a firm condition of his gift that the Walgreens store lot be brought into the building site. Since the University already owned the old state crime lab building next to Walgreens, this would give the designers the entire block to work with, except the old bank building which was deemed unexpendable. The negotiations with Walgreens and their real estate holding company went on for all of 1989, with widely varying appraisals quoted by both parties. In June 1989 the Board of Visitors asked that the architects use the Walgreens space for design but that they include a phase II addition that would eventually use the old bank space as well. The University asked the state to approve the preliminary plans, and to release money for final plans in November 1989.⁵

In February 1990 the University prepared to fire its big cannon in the land acquisition war, when the regents approved the initiation of condemnation proceeding against the owners of the Walgreen property. As usual the threat did not have to be carried out. Within a month the property was sold to the University of Wisconsin Foundation, a nonprofit corporation that was coordinating the fund-raising program. The sale price was \$1.0 million. This was an un-budgeted expense for the project. The still unannounced mystery donor, now widely known to be David Grainger, agreed to pay the million for the land. The regents accepted the gift of the Walgreens property from the Foundation at their May 1990 meeting. On May 14, the University of Wisconsin Foundation released the news that David W. Grainger and the Grainger Foundation

had committed \$9 million to the construction of the new School of Business Building. At its May 11, 1990 meeting the regents approved naming the building the "Grainger Hall of Business Administration". Grainger was a 1950 graduate of the University in engineering, and the chairman of W. W. Grainger of Skokie Illinois. One million dollars of the gift provided for a new program in business ethics.⁶

A major change took place in the project during May 1990, the formal combination of two projects, the School of Business building and a parking ramp earlier intended for the same block. At the suggestion of the Business school architects, the parking was design to go under the new building, and the state approved this alteration. This enabled the design of the building to cover more of the block.⁷

Ground-breaking for Grainger Hall took place on March 20, 1991. The ceremony was attended by governor Thompson, chancellor Shalala, the University pep band, and guests David and Juli Grainger. At the time of the ceremony a contractor had not yet been selected.⁸

Because of the complexity of the building, contractors had asked for and received an extension of the time for submitting bids. When the bids did come in early April 1991 they were more than \$3 million over the budget. The building committee and the architects and the contractors began to look for items to remove from the building. In June 1991 the regents approved the addition of \$3.4 million in gift funds to the budget. The state concurred in the increase. The total budget was now \$34.4 million. The building could now be built but much of the quality had been removed, stone facing and floors, landscaping and other items that would set the building apart from run-of-the-mill University buildings. Then in July 1991 David Grainger, faced with the cheapening of a building with his name on it, agreed to donate another million dollars. The gift was contingent on the replacement of certain specified items that had been negotiated out of the project, especially colored concrete and much stone trim and flooring. This was the final piece of the budget.⁹

Contracts were awarded in May 1991 with the general contract going to J. H. Findorff for \$22.2 million. Total contracted amount was \$31.1 million. Construction began with the demolition of Walgreens on July 10, 1991. The site was so completely covered by the building that normal construction storage and parking was problematical. Given the size and complexity of the project, construction was uneventful. A cornerstone and time capsule ceremony was held to mark the halfway point was held on June 5, 1992. At that time the building was on schedule to open in the summer of 1993.¹⁰

The building was finished and began to host classes in August of 1993, but the grand opening was delayed in order to coincide with homecoming week of October 8-10. Secretary of Health and Human Services Shalala and guest speaker Jim Leher were honored guests at the grand opening. David Grainger was the ribbon-cutter. The August opening of Grainger Hall set off a wave of campus movement not only into Grainger but into the large spaces vacated by the School of Business in Commerce, Bascom and the Infirmary.¹¹

The building is five stories high in its main parts, but the library section on the University Avenue side is only three and the central atrium has a tower that rises 180 feet. Parking for 415 vehicles is provided below grade. The architecture mirrors (albeit in a very large scale) features from other older building from the campus. The Brooks Street entrance has the formal 'H' shape of Barnard and Lathrop Halls across University Avenue. The large curved segments on University and Johnson Streets reflect the main towers of the red gym. Other elements were borrowed from the design of the state capitol. The effect of architecture from another more opulent time is heightened by the extensive use of "quality" materials: there are three kinds of stone and brick on the exterior of the building, most of the visible roofs are red clay tile. The huge stained glass window in the library (designed by artist Ed Carpenter of Portland) lends an unexpected touch to the University Avenue facade.

The building contains the latest in high tech equipment. Many of the casual seating benches have computer hookups at hand. The three plush lecture halls, named for other generous benefactors (the 280

seat Morgridge auditorium , 125 seat Nicholas hall, and 125 seat Kellner hall) have state of the art sound and video facilities, "squeakless" chalkboards, computer hookups, and well spaced and comfortable seating. The 30 classrooms are similarly equipped.

The final budget was \$36.8 million, \$17.1 million in state funds, \$14.32 million in gift funds and 5.2 million in other University funds. After 30 years of crowding and dispersal the School of Business is under a single roof, with room for expansion and a home that was designed and built to last as well as the best older buildings on the University campus.

- 1) Erdman to Shain, April 29, 1985, UW News release, May 1, 1985, and May 6, 1985, Strang to Van Ess, May 20, 1985, series 4/31/9-3 box 2.
- 2) School of Business, A Major Project, October 1985, series 4/31/9-3 box 2.
- 3) Erdman to Van Ess, January 31, 1986, Britt to Van Ess, January 3, 1986, Strang to Van Ess, February 4, 1986, Memorandum, Hickman to Shain, October 28, 1986, School of Business, A Major Project, May 1986, UW News Release, March 12, 1987, series 4/31/9-3 box 2; *Regent's Minutes*, October 1986; Laws of Wisconsin, 1987 Senate Bill 100 section 13m.
- 4) *Regent's Minutes*, July 8, 1988; UW News Release, July 12, 1988, November 3, 1988, Building Commission Actions August 2, 1988, Memorandum Hickman to Shalala et al. August 22, 1988, series 4/31/9-3 box 2; Wisconsin Week, July 13, 1988; *Wisconsin State Journal*, February 8, 1988.
- 5) Meeting Minutes, UW School of Business, January 20, 1989, Strang to Kennedy, February 17, 1989, Hickman to Shalala, April 21, 1989, Shalala to Brown, April 28, 1989, Fulop to Wilcox, May 2, 1989, Fulop to Feldt, June 29, 1989, Informational Briefing for Regents may 4, 1989, Fulop to Hendricks, February 9, 1989, Bessey to Feldt, July 18, 1989, Bessey to Gerhard, July 20, 1989, Strang to Kennedy, June 15, 1989, Agency Request for State Building Commission Action, November 1989, series 4/31/9-3 box 2.
- 6) *Regent's Minutes*, February 2, 1990; Ward to Shalala, January 25, 1990, Wilcox to McGown, March 30, 1990, Memorandum of Agreement, Grainger Foundation and University of Wisconsin Foundation, April 16, 1990, series 4/31/9-3 box 2; University of Wisconsin Foundation News Release, May 11, 1990, series 4/31/9-3 box 2; *Regent's Minutes*, May 11, 1990.
- 7) Agency Request for State Building Commission Action, May 29, 1990, series 4/31/9-3 box 2.
- 8) UW News Release, March 13, 1991, Groundbreaking program, March 20, 1991, series 4/31/9-3 box 2.
- 9) Memorandum Gluesing to Macari, March 19, 1991, Strang to Fluno, May 21, 1991, Strang to Wilcox, April 26, 1991, Strang to Gluesing, July 22, 1991, Hickling, to Eisenberg, May 21, 1991, Gluesing to Hickling, April 30, 1991, series 4/31/9-3 box 2; *Regent's Minutes*, June 7, 1991, October 11, 1991, December 11, 1992, December 10, 1993; Wilcox to Shalala, August 27, 1991, series 4/31/9-3 box 2.
- 10) Brandherm to Brown, May 21, 1991, State Department of Administration, office of Patricia Hillestadt; UW News Release, July 10, 1991, UW News Release, May 28, 1992, Grainger Hall cornerstone ceremony program, series 4/31/9-3 box 2.
- 11) *Wisconsin State Journal*, August 29, 1993; A Guide to Grainger Hall, Archives Grainger Hall subject file.