Building for the Future Q&A Brochure, 1982
Why is the existing Law School building at Bloomington no longer adequate?

The primary problem is the shortage of library space. When the building was built, 25 years ago, the planners allowed for growth for 15 to 20 years and for a library of about 160,000 volumes. We now have over 200,000 volumes and must grow at the rate of 10,000 to 15,000 volumes a year to keep current. We squeezed in books by replacing tables and chairs with shelving, until this caused an American Bar Association inspection team to find us below the national standard for student library seating. With our accreditation threatened, we jammed enough chairs back into the library, but there’s no space left.

The building as a whole is too small. An inspection team in 1968 called for “action at once to provide for adequate plant facilities” to avoid having the School’s progress “blocked by an inadequate plant.” The 1975 team noted that “nothing has changed plant-wise since 1964” and that “the School is dangerously close to inadequacy under the governing standards.” A special need for the addition and renovation is created by the School’s plans to increase its training in practical skills by adding to the number of clinical courses. Such training calls for small discussion-type classes; consequently certain large classrooms must be converted into several small conference rooms.

How do we compare with other Big Ten schools?

While the School compares favorably in academic areas, comparison of its physical facilities gives no cause for Hoosier pride. As the accompanying graph shows, in total building square footage and library square footage the Bloomington Law School ranks last. In library seating capacity the Bloomington Law School ranks last. In number and size of classrooms and seminar rooms the Bloomington Law School stands far below the Big Ten average.

The building now occupied by the Indiana University School of Law at Bloomington was designed in the early 1950s and occupied in 1956. Before 20 years had elapsed, the need for major changes to meet program demands and overcome building deficiencies had become clear. Criticisms of deficiencies by accreditation inspecting teams as well as students and faculty accumulated, but planning for new construction did not begin in earnest until 1977-78. In 1979 the President and Board of Trustees of Indiana University approved plans for a major addition to and renovation of the existing facility. The Dean and Faculty preferred this solution to that of building an entirely new structure, and it is, of course, a substantially less costly alternative. In Spring 1980 the Indiana Higher Education Commission granted $146,000 to prepare detailed plans and schematics for the project. These pages explain why Indiana desperately needs the improvements and what they will mean to its citizens and to legal education in the state.
How does this inadequate physical plant affect Indiana University and the state?

No university can have first-rate stature if its law school suffers from serious deficiencies. Indiana's well-being is intimately affected by the quality of the Law School, whose faculty and students, past and present, actively involved in state and national affairs. Within the University the faculty play an important role in governance and interdisciplinary studies. The law library is much used by non-law students: each semester about 800 non-law students receive course assignments that require the services of the law library and of its staff (which is the smallest in the Big Ten).

Can the problem be alleviated by sharing with the law library at Indianapolis?

No. We do share with that library and are pursuing every possibility for cooperative arrangements. For example, we have agreements that only one of the two schools will acquire books in specialized areas. However, for most legal work, students and faculty, like lawyers in general, must have immediate access to statutes, cases, and other research volumes. A law school cannot function properly without a full teaching and research library of its own.

Are there other alternatives to building library space?

The bearing strength in the current building is not sufficient for compact motorized shelving, even if that system were otherwise practical in a law school, where hundreds of students simultaneously seek access to hundreds of books. Because of the extensive daily use of so much of the collection, storage away from the
library is possible for only a relatively small part of the collection—at most about 45,000 volumes. And at the current growth rate of 10,000 volumes per year, projected shortly to become 15,000, such storage, if it were feasible, would at best postpone the problem very briefly.

Will new technology—microforms and information retrieval through computers—make books and book shelves obsolete?

Modern technology is offering to libraries many valuable alternatives. Whenever feasible, the law library is purchasing material in microform. However, most material is not available in this form. Computers offer time-saving means of finding material, and technology is developing rapidly. But experts agree that computers will not replace "hard copy" sources for many years, if ever.

Why should any more money go to publicly supported legal education in Indiana, and what are we getting for our money?

The facts are clear: just about everything we do is touched by some part of our legal system—the air we breathe (pollution control), the food we eat (FDA regulations, pesticide bans), the money we make (labor contracts, taxes, social security, unemployment), the things we own (insurance, police protection), the places we go (vehicle standards and safety requirements, public facilities laws, auto accident recoveries) and so on. People must be adequately trained to understand and administer these laws, and the better their training, the more competent and effective their service to the public. A spot survey of several Indiana cities indicates that 57 percent of the lawyers practicing today are Bloomington graduates. On the average, over 60 percent of the graduating class of the Indiana University-Bloomington School of Law will take jobs in Indiana. Obviously, the quality of legal education at Indiana University is vital to the quality of Indiana's laws and of the legal services provided to its citizens.

Does the addition to the building mean more law students and more lawyers?

No. The proposed addition to the Law School involves no increase in the student body. It is solely to correct existing deficiencies in the building and the programs offered.

What would be the consequences of not getting this addition to the building?

We would have to slow our rate of library acquisitions, and at some point would probably have to stop buying books. Sets of law books become obsolete if they are not kept current, and if we cut down on book buying the library stock that we own would lose much of its value. Cost of catch-up in later years would be enormous, even if the books could be found. Continuing to buy books but storing them would not help students or faculty: stored books cannot be read. In sum, we would let a top-rank law school, of which Indiana has a right to be proud, slip to something less.

How can I help?

The University's President and Trustees have already approved the proposed addition and declared it a top priority. We need now the approval of the Higher Education Commission (which has already approved the planning of the addition) and an appropriation from the 1981 Indiana Legislature, as part of the University's capital budget. Your help, support, counsel, and if applicable, vote, are the keys to making it happen.
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