



The University's Law Library, remodeled about three years ago, was best helped by better lighting. Students used to joke about dark interior.

A CHANGING FACE

Monnet Hall—or the School of Law—has been changing slowly and subtly. The most striking innovations in past years have been the work of alumni.

EXCEPT FOR THE REMOVAL of a few overaged trees and the planting of a few new ones, the University's North Oval has hardly changed in the past 30 or 40 years.

Swinging round the oval, the returned alumnus sees the same sturdy Gothic halls, buildings so firmly rooted in the prairie and in tradition that they seem always to have stood there—on a campus barely 65 years old. Holmberg Hall, the Administration Building, the Carnegie Building, all look just as before. Providing, that is, that one does not look inside them at their modernized interiors, or behind them where now and then one spies a new annex.

Monnet Hall follows suit. This building, the "law barn" as students are prone to refer to it, is square, white, stone-solid. Built in 1913, it stands like a flat box, except for the bulge of its entrance arch, its steep green roof and four corner buttresses.

The front of Monnet Hall has not altered in 44 years. Its sides are the same except for a couple of stone owls which peer from nooks near the roof's peak; several years ago someone, presumably an engineering student, painted them green under cover of night.

But, again, the rear of the building and the inside of it speak of change.

Badly in need of adequate Law Library facilities, the University constructed a modern, 5-story annex onto Monnet Hall's backside in 1951. The annex houses a multitude of offices, reading rooms and storage for about 38,000 volumes.

The annex was an obvious, striking, fairly sudden change in the School of Law. It was unusual, for the school is unused to fast innovation, resigned to slow, subtle change. A small school, it is also resigned to depending upon alumni and student help—a sort of do-it-yourself policy—in some instances.

For instance, the school's basement lounge was set up by students. No tax dollars went into the decorating and furnishing of it. The lounge serves a definite need.

Students come there to discuss law cases, and coffee discussions are held there each Thursday as a follow-up session to a regular lecture series.

Student finances paid for the lounge's television set. Painting of the room was paid for by the Student Bar Association.

One of the most dramatic changes in the school is the outfitting of a new Model Courtroom. Earl Sneed, dean of the school, has called it "the most significant exemplification of the spirit of helpfulness of lawyers."

The Courtroom's birth came about five years ago when Gerald Klein of Tulsa inspected Monnet Hall and became concerned with the antiquity and inefficiency of the courtroom then in use. Klein, not an O. U. alumnus, suggested that Oklahoma's lawyers might contribute to a new and updated setup.

"At the present time," said Dean Sneed, "more than 1,350 individuals, firms and corporations have sent gifts for the Courtroom. Contributions have ranged from \$1,000 to 50 cents. The average contribution has been very modest. The heartwarming story of the Model Courtroom . . . symbolizes the desire of many lawyers and many friends of lawyers to do something for the young in the profession."

The Courtroom has, of course, all the components of the real thing, such as the bench, jury box, judge's chambers, jury room, seating for the public, allied rooms, and the like.

But the major change in the School of Law is the Law Library reading room.

A huge, arched area, it was once the butt of the cruelest student jokes. "Well," they would tell one another, "let's put on our miner's lamps and go to the reading room to study." The fact is, the room was for years so gloomy, so badly lighted, that most students simply wouldn't use it.

Today something of a problem lies in keeping enough space available in the reading room for law students themselves. Remodeled three years ago, the room was given the best lighting facilities, brightened

up with lighter colors and filled with contemporary furnishings. Also, small reading rooms which adjoin the main one are so in demand that it has been necessary to post signs to the effect that they are reserved for law students.

The reading room is symbolic of the entire changeover in the Law Library. For too long a time the system was handled by a part-time director and several employees. Today there are four full-time employees handling the operation. Two of them, Mortimer Schwartz and George Skinner, are specially trained in law library work. Another is a young lady who handles the checkout desk, now located on the annex's fourth floor. (Previously a student took care of the latter duties and, consequently, couldn't be present at all times when books were needed by other students.)

The new Law Library today is frankly an inviting place, just as is the Dean's office, redecorated in 1955.

The Law department constitutes one of the oldest schools on campus, and it is certainly one of those most heavily steeped in tradition. It is also one of the smaller schools of the University. About 70 students received degrees last year, and that is probably a good average number when one considers that a few graduating classes have approached 200, while another counted only four.

Yet, law students and practicing lawyers make up one of the closest knit professional groups, and they seem to have an acute sense of obligation toward the schools which train them. Any number of judges visit O. U.'s School of Law regularly to give students whatever help they can in their courses, and for the past eight years many practicing lawyers have served as part-time instructors on extremely modest salaries; their real pay is the satisfaction in helping to carry on or strengthen the profession. As for contributing to a project when needed, look at the Model Courtroom or the student lounge.

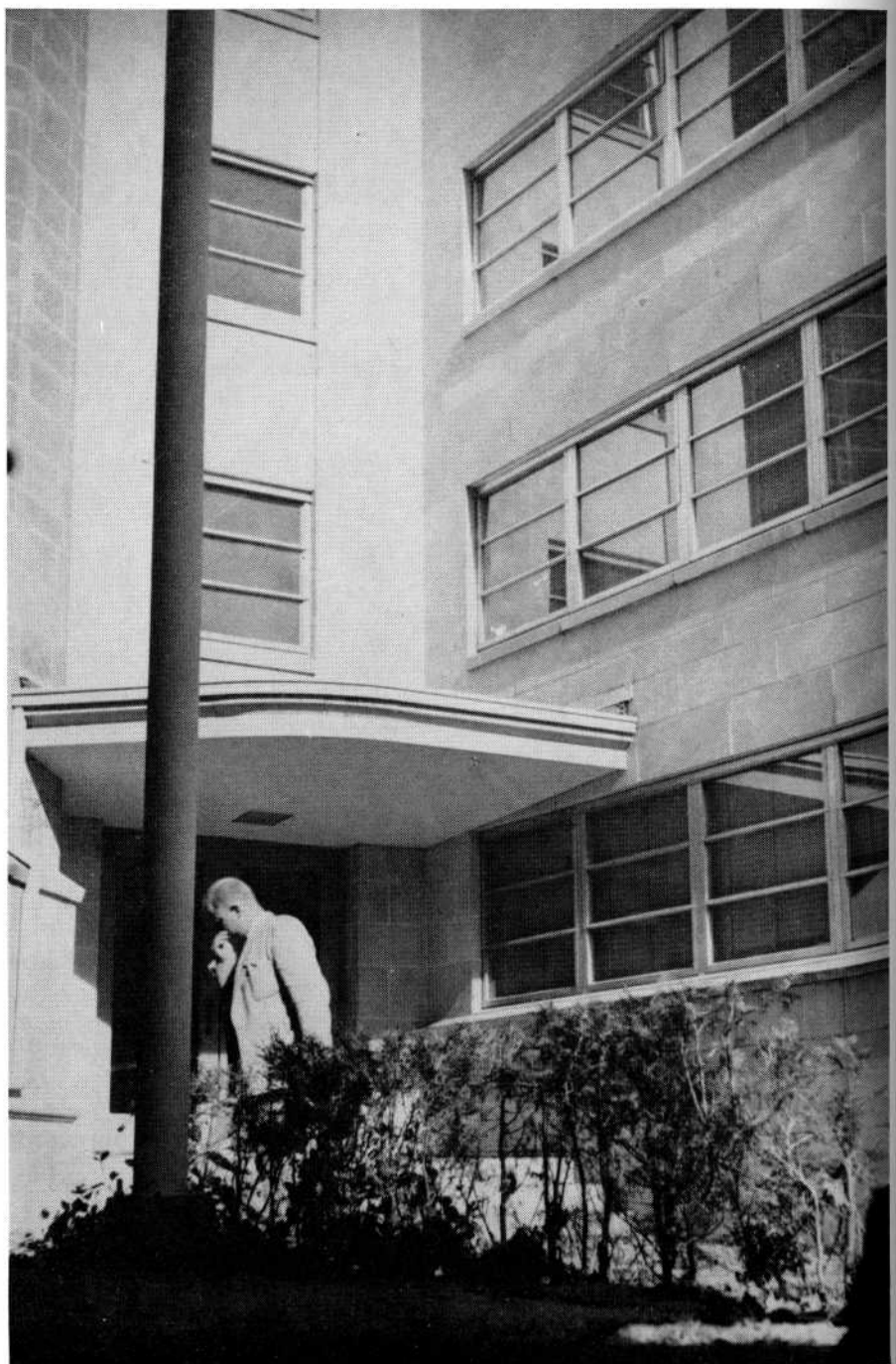
Such changes and reinforcements seldom come quickly or dramatically to the School of Law, but they come. Without what Dean Sneed calls "the continuous hard work and leadership" of learning and practicing lawyers, it might be a different story.

A CHANGING
FACE
Continued

No tax dollars went into the refurbishing of the student lounge in Monnet Hall's basement. Students chipped in to pay for items like the TV set. The Student Bar Association bought the paint to finish the lounge.



Individual reading cubicles in the Law Library proved so popular that signs had to be put up, warning outsiders that the new areas must be kept available for students of Law School only.



A potential lawyer pauses in the winter sunlight before entering Law Library annex behind. The structure was added 7 years ago.