1929

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The Michigan Alumnus

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A BEAUTIFUL Legal Research Library, to cost approximately $1,750,000, is to be the second phase of the development by William W. Cook, '80, '82, of a Law Quadrangle for the housing of the University's Law School. Announcement of the gift of the Library was made by the Board of Regents at its special meeting January 11.

The building, an architect's drawing of which appears as the cover design of this issue, will be erected on the property designated for the Law Quadrangle, the two square blocks bounded by South State, South University, Tappan and Monroe Streets. On this tract is now located the Lawyers' Club, with its dormitories and dining hall. The Lawyers' Club was the initial gift of Mr. Cook for the Quadrangle and has now been an integral part of Michigan's Campus for nearly four years.

Mr. Cook, an attorney of New York City, is also the donor of the Martha Cook Dormitory, a women's residence which stands just east of the Lawyers' Club dormitories on South University avenue.

The Legal Research Library is a further expression of Mr. Cook's intense interest in the scholarly side of the law. He has emphasized this phase many times in the past and it is in accordance with his instructions that the earnings from the Lawyers' Club are devoted to legal research. These earnings will aid in the financing of at least a considerable portion of the special study
which will be centered in this new library, with the assurance that available funds will be increased greatly in future years.

The new building will be located on the south portion of the quadrangle tract, with its main entrance facing north and directly in line with the beautiful main tower and archway of the dormitories building. It will be considerably larger than even the dining hall of the Lawyers' Club, the largest building of the present group, and will probably be the commanding structure of the whole quadrangle in its completed state. It is not known when construction on the library will begin, but it is not anticipated that the building will be completed and fully occupied until the fall of 1931.

In this new building will be centered all the research activities of the Law School. To facilitate this work, the entire library of the Law School of more than 80,000 volumes will be placed in its stacks. Inasmuch as there is room for approximately 250,000 books in this new Legal Research Library, it is easily seen just how comprehensive this new building is in the conception of the future development of the study of law at Michigan.

Although the plans prepared by the architects, York & Sawyer of New York City, and submitted to the Regents for their inspection, by no means represent the final conception of the building, they indicate pretty definitely just what the building will be. In architectural motive it will be the same as the buildings of the Lawyers' Club, Elizabethan Gothic. The Lawyers' Club is distinctive on the Michigan Campus, and this new building will serve to further this distinction and to emphasize the beauty of the group.

The building is in the form of a “T” with a very short leg, the leg being the wing housing the stacks. This stack wing will not be as lofty as the main building and will not be visible from the center of the quadrangle, the point from which the real beauty of the whole group will best be realized and appreciated. This wing will project south from the building toward Monroe street and will be so constructed that it can be added to if desired. The only entrance will be on the north, from the quadrangle enclosure.

The beauty of the building will find its culmination in the reading room on the main floor. This room, in its general outline, will be similar to the dining hall of the Lawyers' Club, save that it will be much larger. In it will be room for the seating at reading tables of 580 students, and around its walls will be space for 45,000 volumes. In dimensions this wonderful room will be 242 feet long and 46 feet wide. Into its construction and decoration will go all of the architects' and builders' craftsmanship.

Feeding into this room will be the facilities offered by the stack wing. The stacks on the main floor of this wing have provision for more than 37,000 volumes. Adjacent to these stacks will be the offices of the Library staff and also two seminar rooms. The stacks on each of the mezzanine floors will provide for the remainder of the 205,000 volumes which go into this wing. On one of these mezzanine floors space will be provided for eight small rooms designed for research activity.

The basement floor of the Legal Research Library is so designed that a large amount of space is made available. The stack wing will handle more than 28,000 volumes as well as provide room for a receiving and cataloguing staff in addition to rest rooms, locker rooms and toilets for the whole building staff. In the space beneath the main reading room is a great area which can be devoted to storage. In addition space is allotted to men's and women's locker rooms and toilets.

The second floor plan for the Library is most unusual, though its uniqueness lies in its simplicity. The whole floor is simply a series of small research rooms, grouped in two rows on either side of a long corridor. There are only two breaks in this general scheme, one a room to be designated a special library and the other to contain certain prized books now in Mr. Cook's private library in his New York City home.

By this gift of the Legal Research Library, Mr. Cook stamps himself as one of the great benefactors of education in this country. His generosity to the University of Michigan puts him in the front rank of those who have given of their wealth to this University. His gift makes still easier the task of the Law School in making itself the equal, if not the superior, of any law school in the country. His previous gift, the Lawyers' Club, has already taken its place as a vital part of the life of the Law School and its students. Under the efficient administration and guidance which the Lawyers' Club has enjoyed, it has more than fulfilled the hope of its donor.