

“High Tech, High Touch” on Park Avenue

The Norton School Expansion

By Susan McGinley

Forget Boardwalk or Park Place: the new McClelland Park building under construction at the corner of Park Avenue and Fourth Street will offer a unique business environment with a warm family atmosphere right here at the University of Arizona.

Accented with traditional brick, contemporary glass and other features that blend it into the “skyline” of the west end of the UA campus, the four-story McClelland Park complex will feature 70,000 square feet of high-tech auditoriums, classrooms, offices, lounges, outdoor plazas and other amenities, all custom-designed to provide a better fit for the John and Doris Norton School of Family and Consumer Sciences. It is scheduled for completion in June 2008.

Over the past decade the Norton School has grown so rapidly that its current home, an outdated, overcrowded 1958 building, feels like a shoe that’s too small. Office and research space is tight, and it lacks common areas where students and faculty can gather to share ideas. Newer, better designed facilities will enhance the quality of education received at the Norton School, attract more students, and assist in recruiting outstanding faculty members.

Part of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALs), the school is the modern descendant of the original home economics department. The first class in “domestic science” was offered in 1899, and the department was officially established in 1913. By 1950 enrollment was more than 200. Currently more than 800 majors and 200 minors are enrolled in the school.

“As the Norton School is evolving and expanding to meet the growing needs of the industry and society,” says Soyeon Shim, Norton School director, “the number of students pursuing degrees from the school, as well as the size of the faculty and the desired curriculum are expanding as well, outgrowing the current building.”

Shim, along with faculty and staff members, students and representatives from the school’s corporate partners met with architect Eddie Garcia of the Smith Group; Steve Grauer and others from Hensel Phelps construction firm; and Rodney Mackey’s team from UA Facilities Design and Construction to clarify what was needed. The result is a building that is professional yet personal, reflecting the Norton School’s dual emphasis on family issues and retailing.

In the new facility, wireless networking, videoconferencing and multimedia technology will enhance teaching, research and outreach. Students and faculty alike will find a place to share ideas, conduct research projects, and make professional contacts with representatives from the school’s numerous corporate and community partners. Returning alumni will rekindle long-held ties to their school in a more comfortable setting, while business collaborators will convene in a professional venue to bring the world of corporate ideas to the university and to recruit future graduates. The school will reflect the “high tech, high touch” concept advanced by John Naisbitt in his 1988 book *Megatrends*—the idea that high technology needs to be balanced with human involvement.

“Stepping in off the street, the lobby area will impart a neighborhood business-street feeling—corporate, yet friendly,” says Shim, who was involved throughout in the careful planning of the new building. “The entire first floor, including the outdoor Lakin Family Plaza, is a place where students, executives, alumni, family members and faculty can come together and interact, socially, professionally and academically.”



Smithgroup Inc.



A first on the UA campus, the Lakin Family Plaza is a tree-lined open atrium that symbolizes the importance of children and family to the Norton School and to society. It will form a perfect oasis for informal student gatherings, study groups, and play for visiting children using services or involved in research, according to Shim. It will also serve as an outdoor venue for events.

Along with academic advising offices and areas where students and faculty can convene and conduct research, the second floor features a multidisciplinary observation laboratory focusing on children and family interactions. Faculty members from across campus who have an interest in child and family research will use this space for collaborative research.

Faculty offices share the third floor with a unique Cooperative Extension suite where off-campus extension personnel can meet when they are visiting the campus from one of Arizona's 15 counties. With the new suite, family and consumer sciences Cooperative Extension and 4-H youth specialists will have a highly visible presence and permanent identity on campus for the first time.

"It's a workspace for agents to gather so they don't have to find a room when they're here," Shim notes. "It's always reserved for them."

The fourth-floor executive area includes administrative offices for executive programs, a multi-media board room, the Lundgren Center for Retailing, and the Take Charge America Institute.

Thanks to the success of an extensive, ongoing fundraising campaign called Cornerstones, the facility will be built entirely through private donations.

"This is a unique building," says Eugene Sander, vice provost and CALS dean. "Like the Marley Building, also part of the College, it is not funded by the taxpayers. Instead, it has been funded primarily by two agricultural industry giants, John and Doris Norton and Norman and Frances McClelland, along with a host of other significant donors." The Nortons and the McClellands pledged \$4 million each to support the expansion of the Norton School (*see sidebar*).

"The University will be like this in the future," adds Arizona Regent Fred Boice. "Persons of goodwill and forethought come together to create what the public sector can no longer create."

The name conveys so much more than just a building.

"'Park' is a very interesting word," says George Davis, UA provost. "It makes us think of openness, public accessibility, community, family, refreshment, recreation—restoration of the spirit and restoration physically. I think this park is about students, faculty, administrators, alumni and others coming together to work tirelessly in good spirit. This name, McClelland Park, is a name that is not only full of recreation, it's full of integrity."

Park Avenue, Tucson, will never be the same. ■



A Legacy from the McClellands and the Nortons

McClelland Park was designed as a hub for innovative teaching, collaborative research and education, groundbreaking industry seminars and workshops, productive faculty and staff meetings, receptions, and alumni gatherings.

Named for Norman McClelland, chairman of Shamrock Foods Company and 1944 UA alumnus, and his late sister Frances, McClelland Park will house two academic programs—Family Studies and Human Development, and Retailing and Consumer Sciences—and three centers: the Terry J. Lundgren Center for Retailing, the Take Charge America Institute for Consumer Financial Education and Research, and the Institute for Children, Youth and Families.

"Frances and I talked about what we could do for the school," Norman McClelland remarked at the groundbreaking on May 9. "Our parents came to Arizona from Northern Ireland in 1912. In our dairy business we always stayed close to the university. This building reflects the intertwining of family and agriculture and is aimed at strengthening families, community and the marketplace."

John and Doris Norton are UA alumni and John is a third generation Arizonan and a founder of J.R. Norton Company. He served as deputy secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture during the Ronald Reagan administration.

"We're very excited for the students who will be learning in the new facility," the Nortons say. "The faculty of the school conducts cutting-edge research and provides an outstanding curriculum, addressing issues we believe are of critical importance to the future of our society."

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