

The Boyd Law Building

“The circular theme is a fitting symbol for the profession of law since it expresses perfection, clarity, integrity and geometric purity. It also seeks affinity with astrology and the early architecture of Stonehenge.”

Architect Gunnar Birkerts

The Iowa Law School, the oldest law school in continuous operation west of the Mississippi River, owned a dubious distinction in 1977, when it was described by both the Association of American Law Schools and the American Bar Association as the worst housed, superior law school in the country.”

Fortunately, that distinction has been lost now that the College of Law has completed its move to the Boyd Law Building. Situated on a limestone bluff on a 3.5-acre site overlooking the busy intersection of Grand Avenue and Riverside Drive, the building stands 92 feet tall.

The main entrance is on the second floor, where the dean's office, classrooms, and an auditorium to seat 100 are located. The third floor is primarily devoted to library space, while faculty offices are located on the fourth floor. On the first floor, an outdoor amphitheater, several courtrooms, a vending area, locker room, and copy center share space with student academic activities offices and the Law Library.

The Law Library is the centerpiece of the circular building. Occupying more than 60 percent of the building's 200,000 square feet of space, the library brings the college's 485,000-volume collection under one roof for the first time in over a decade. Distributed throughout the library are

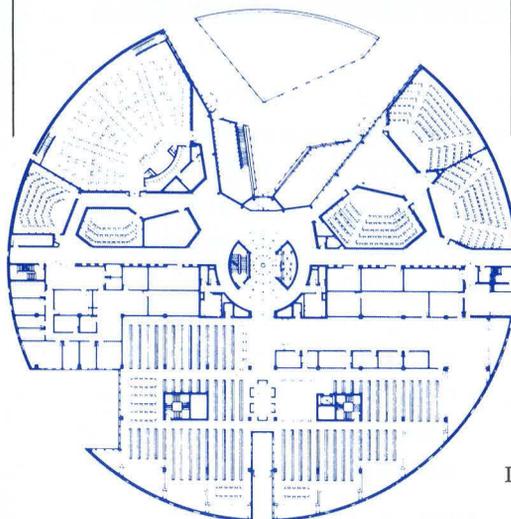
“Bricks and mortar do not make lawyers or law teachers or leaders in the legal profession. But one cannot deny that a building of this kind helps to provide incentive and the appropriate atmosphere for the flowering of those talents that are peculiar to the legal profession.”

Supreme Court Associate Justice Harry A. Blackmun

452 individual study carrels, each with a locking bookshelf, and 232 seats at reading tables. The new facility provides sufficient seating to accommodate all of the more than 625 full-time students and was designed for a stack capacity of over one million volumes.

Other special features of the building include teaching space built into each of the 45 faculty offices, an in-house computer network with access to legal data bases and search systems, and two full-scale trial courtrooms, each with its own jury room and judge's chamber. Unlike most law schools, the new building has no large classrooms. The largest regular classroom seats only 100 students. Small classrooms and special-purpose learning areas are located throughout the building to keep students and faculty working together in close professional interactions.

Construction on the \$25 million building began in 1983 and classes have been conducted in the building since last May. Supreme Court Associate Justice Harry A. Blackmun and other distinguished members of the bar spoke at the dedication ceremonies October 18. A naming ceremony November 20 honored former UI President Willard “Sandy” Boyd.



Level 2: Entry Level
Floor Plan