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## A Dream Takes Flight

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# A Dream Takes Flight

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Thursday April 25, 2019

By Eric F. Spina

When I first looked up at the stunning glass rotunda in the Dayton Arcade, it gave me goose bumps.

This is glorious space, historic space. Less than two miles from campus and smack in the middle of the city sits an extraordinary place for students, faculty, and staff to make their mark as innovators.

Perhaps UD's presence as a cornerstone tenant in a renovated Arcade could help community leaders and developers restore this crown jewel of our city, an icon that has stood vacant for more than a quarter of a century and fallen into disrepair.

And, just maybe, this project could further accelerate the rebirth of Dayton that is occurring downtown.

This is exactly what's happening, thanks to creative thinkers on campus — including Vince Lewis, Andy Horner, Paul Benson, Mary Ann Recker, David Schmidt, Rick Krysiak, Jim Shaw, and others — as well as leaders in the community and beyond who want to see the historic Dayton landmark bustling again, serving as a central hub in a city that will again be known as an innovation engine.

The Arcade will be transformed into an Innovation Hub with flexible spaces for education, co-working spaces for budding and established entrepreneurs collaborating on new ventures, artist studios, and affordable loft apartments.

In the last few months, a bold leap forward was taken in making that vision a reality when lead developer Cross Street Partners closed on the purchase of the Kuhns Building — the final building in the first phase — and secured the last bit of necessary funding to rehabilitate the properties. As anchor tenants, we joined with The Entrepreneurs Center earlier this month in signing the lease for the building's Innovation Hub, nearly 96,000 square feet devoted to academics, experiential learning, and co-shared space.

And today, the long-awaited closing happened.

No one is happier about this pivotal moment than Vince Lewis, director of the L. William Crotty Center for Entrepreneurship on campus and one of the project's most energetic, ardent supporters. A native Daytonian, he has seen his share of fits and starts, hopes and dreams, for the building's renaissance, only to see plans dashed time and again because of the sheer cost of renovating more than 420,000 square feet stretching over nearly a city block.

Vince fondly remembers taking the bus downtown as a young boy to have lunch with his father at the Dayton Arcade. When the \$90 million first phase renovation is completed, UD students from a variety of disciplines will hop on *The Flyer* shuttle to take classes in a building expressly transformed for innovation, creativity, and collaboration.

An urban laboratory for hands-on learning and doing, the Dayton Arcade will house the Crotty Center — including spaces for faculty, staff and student-run businesses as well as start-ups from the community.

The Institute for Applied Creativity and Transformation (IACT) and the School of Engineering's Innovation Center will set up satellite offices, and the building's basement will include space for GEMnasium, IACT's collaborative hands-on test lab.

In addition, a few art and design studios and faculty offices will move to the Arcade, creating an unmatched hub for creativity and innovation.

Here in a city where dreams take flight, why can't we imagine a rebirth for this grand building in the heart of downtown Dayton, a rebirth that gives UD, our students, and our community some unprecedented opportunities?

Why not, indeed.