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At UD, The Humanities Find a Home in Jesse Philips Center for Humanities

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DAYTON, Ohio -- University of Dayton President Brother Raymond L. Fitz, S.M., today joined Dayton philanthropist Jesse Philips in turning the first spade of earth at the site of the new Jesse Philips Humanities Center. The ceremony marked the beginning of construction for the $16 million center that will unite six disciplines in one modern new center and create a home for the humanities at UD.

Scheduled for completion in the fall of 1993, the center will feature an interactive, multimedia language laboratory, a recital hall equipped for performances as well as lectures, and 83,000 square feet for needed classroom and faculty office space.

Philips, who has been honored nationally and at the state level for his unwavering support of education, helped make construction of the building possible with a $5 million contribution to furthering the humanities at UD. It was among the most significant private contributions in the University’s history.

"A good liberal arts education is key to developing adults capable of critical thinking," Philips said. "With this center and its approach to a humanities education, the University of Dayton is celebrating the humanities, giving them the place they merit in our society."

Philips, founder of Philips Industries, is a graduate of Oberlin College and the Harvard Business School. He served 18 years on the University’s board of trustees, the longest tenure of any board member in UD history. He stepped down in 1989 after serving as chair of the board.

Construction of the Philips Center is linked to the University’s general education curriculum, which is anchored in the humanities. From Plato to Faulker, from St. Augustine - more -
to Schlesinger, the humanities provide a lasting foundation for students across all disciplines. "The humanities are at the core of the University of Dayton’s educational mission," Fitz said at the groundbreaking ceremony. "The Jesse Philips Humanities Center will stand as a striking symbol of that mission."

The four-story building will be located just east of historic Zehler Hall. In architectural style, the building is designed to blend with the traditional elements found in St. Joseph Hall and the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception. In the arched niches of the building, sculpture and quotations will offer a passive education in the humanities to the passerby.

The Jesse Philips Humanities Center will increase space for humanities classrooms and offices by about 30 percent and free needed space in other buildings on campus.

The new building will feature:
• a 183-seat recital hall featuring a raised stage, storage for a grand piano, and the latest in sound and recording equipment.
• a lobby designed to showcase the creative work of visual artists.
• excellent faculty office space, conference and seminar rooms.
• a high-technology, multimedia language lab designed to help students acquire the skills they need to communicate and compete effectively in a global marketplace.
• microcomputer labs available to students for writing and research projects.
• classrooms wired for special needs and linked throughout by a computer network.

The humanities center will bring together the disciplines of English, history, languages, philosophy, religious studies and American studies. Offices and classrooms for the humanities faculty are now scattered throughout six buildings on campus.

Paul J. Morman, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, thanked faculty, students, alumni, friends "and all those who are making this dream possible."

"During the next 16 months, we will witness the Jesse Philips Humanities Center taking shape as a proud symbol of the University’s enduring commitment to the humanities," Morman said.

"And after this building has taken its physical form, we will bring together within its walls a lively community of teachers, scholars and students, who on a daily basis, will

- more -
continue the timeless exploration of what it means to be human."

The Philips Center will also be home to the Dayton Humanities Institute, an outreach component of the humanities program run by University faculty. Business executives from around the country assemble to study philosophy and literature.

The humanities center is part of UD's major building plan, keyed to academic goals of the University, called Campus 2000. The plan's other components include construction of a new School of Law, scheduled for completion in 1997, and the renovation and revitalization of Sherman and Wohlleben halls, which includes linking the two to create a natural science and mathematics complex.

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