9-17-1998

UD Holds Groundbreaking for Business School Renovation, Thanks Crotty Family for $1 Million Gift

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DAYTON, Ohio — The University of Dayton today paid tribute to a local couple who have made a $1 million commitment toward a nearly $9 million modernization of UD’s business school.

“Bill and Marilyn Crotty’s gift will fund the L. William Crotty Business Center, the first floor of Miriam Hall, which includes an atrium that will allow for casual meetings and conversations between students and professors,” said Brother Raymond L. Fitz, S.M., president, at a groundbreaking ceremony that included a blessing of the building. “Their gift will provide a much more effective learning environment than the makeshift annex behind the women’s gymnasium where the Crottys took classes when they were at UD. We’re thankful for their faith in our future.”

Their future together began at UD. The couple met during a UD Players production of “Jenny Kissed Me.” Marilyn snared the lead role. As business manager, Bill sold out the auditorium at the Dayton Art Institute — a sign of the marketing savvy that he later used to grow Van Dyne Crotty Inc., his third-generation, family-owned business, into one of the largest uniform rental and sales companies in the country. Bill earned a management degree in 1952; Marilyn graduated with a degree in education in 1953. One of their seven children, Jim, graduated in 1989 with a degree in communication. Bill Crotty served on UD’s board of trustees in the 1980s.

“There are lots of reasons for our gift, but it boils down to a long-term love affair with the University of Dayton. There were so many things that we learned here that set the stage for solid success in life,” said Crotty, the semi-retired chairman and chief executive officer of Van Dyne Crotty Inc. “This gives us an opportunity to repay a most wonderful experience in our lives, without which the two of us wouldn’t be together. Beyond that, we consider this a significant investment in the future of the University of Dayton and the Miami Valley at large.”

Co-founded by Crotty’s father with a $500 loan in 1935 during the Great Depression, Van Dyne Crotty laundered shop towels for local companies. Today, it’s grown to employ 1,000.
workers in 14 states and posts more than $75 million in annual sales.

Since Miriam Hall opened its doors to University of Dayton students in 1966, business and business education have changed dramatically. Today, business education requires the latest technology and support for team learning and team teaching.

The three-phase renovation, which began in March, includes:

- Modernization of faculty offices, to be completed by the end of November.
- Gutting of the first floor of the eight-story building to create the L. William Crotty Business Center, which includes the atrium, team-learning classrooms and a proposed Center for Portfolio Management and Security Analysis. Construction is expected to begin next summer.
- Creation of a number of team-teaching and seminar classrooms, designed to support teamwork and collaboration and equipped with technological tools to allow students to make multimedia presentations, tap into the World Wide Web as a research tool and use long-distance interactive video and computer simulations to learn with students in other parts of the world.

The project is projected to cost $8.9 million, with $4.5 million coming from alumni and friends of the school and the balance from University funds. To date, more than $2.8 million has been raised toward the renovation, which is expected to be completed by 2002. UD is also seeking private contributions for a number of proposed endowments, including two centers (Center for Enterprise Leadership and Center for Portfolio Management and Security Analysis), professorships and a fund to provide money for timely initiatives.

"We're grateful to the Crottys for changing both the function and the functionality of the business school," said Sam Gould, dean of the School of Business Administration. "The open design of the atrium allows for ample space for small-group meetings between students as well as between students and their professors. We're equipping the building with the latest technological tools, but we're also strengthening the opportunities for personal interaction between students and faculty members—part of a UD education we prize and nourish."

The project is timely. This fall, UD enrolled the highest number of business majors in a decade.

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For media interviews, contact Bill Crotty at (937) 236-1500 and Sam Gould, dean of the School of Business Administration, at (937) 229-3731.