



A Better School

BY ERIC BROSCH

Urban universities and renaissance cities have at least one thing in common: They always seem to be under construction. Streets are torn up for work underground. Abandoned buildings are torn down. Historic buildings are wired for the Internet. New buildings are planned and fund raising makes them possible. It is a sign of growth, but with growth comes growing pains.

The law school may be settled in on the south side of campus for the time being, but when faculty members, staff and students look out toward their old block, they have even more to look forward to. Because of the vision of the governor, the general assembly, and the University and the generosity of friends of the school, improvements to plans for the new building are no longer just a hope—they are a reality.

“We have designed a building that will allow us to shape our curriculum to provide the best legal education for the 21st century,” says Interim Dean Karen Rothenberg. It will be conducive to innov-



of Law Building Will Emerge

ative learning and will promote a sense of community for the students, faculty and staff.”

Although the law school met its legislatively mandated target of \$8 million, additional private contributions will enable amenities such as the ceremonial moot courtroom. There will also be more space for student activities, computer connections in class rooms and library stations, and state-of-the-art audio-visual and computer systems.

Equally as exciting is what is happening with the Thurgood Marshall Law Library. Plans that were shelved due to budgetary constraints are back on the table. Instead of having the old library building attached to the new, state-of-the-art law school, a completely renovated and expanded library will go up with the new building. It will extend to Paca Street instead of being set back from the road as it is now.

“This is really exciting,” says Barbara Gontrum, director. “[The library] was going to be OK before and we had more

space, but the revised plans will make it a better facility.”

Not only will the library have more space in all areas from special collections to additional group-study rooms, but also two computer labs: one dedicated to training and teaching, the other for research. There will also be more space in the reading room. Located on the third floor, it will open into a two-story atrium, “with tables and lamps and with a tall ceiling,” says Gontrum.

Completing the package are the exterior plans, which once again call for the façade to match the style of the new building, tying together the entire block.

When the law school becomes the new kid on its old block in 2002, it may have some new neighbors. If the west-side redevelopment plan unveiled last year moves forward, which includes financing for new shops, apartments, and the historic Hippodrome theater, the new law school building will be just blocks away.

Even with these enhancements to

the project, there is a place for your contribution. Pledges to have your name commemorated on a student organization office (\$25,000) or faculty office (\$15,000) or even on a brick in the courtyard (\$1,000) are being accepted and will keep the law school on the leading edge of changing technology. **JD**

