



A Brief History of the Memorial Union

Whether viewed from near or far, the Memorial Union is the center of campus. It's here that people gather to share a snack or a bit of conversation. It's where the pin ball wizards meet for a match and the Board of Curators assemble to decide University Policy. It's the place to grab a quick Bengal Burger or dine in the elegant and comfortable atmosphere of the Hawthorn Room.

The idea of a Union originated on the campus during the 1915-16 school year. In 1916 the constitution of the Union was approved and temporary headquarters were set up in the Columbia Club building at Ninth and Elm Street where it remained until after W.W. I.

After the war the idea of a Union was revived as a memorial to those who had given their lives in the war. The plans included the Memorial Union Tower as it stands today, with the Union Facilities on either side. One side was meant to be a women's Union and the other side a men's. Included in the plans were lounge facilities, conference rooms and sleeping quarters for guests of the University. The approximate cost of the facility was \$725,000.

The Memorial campaign for funds was started in 1921. In 1923 the project was expanded to include a new football stadium. The work on the tower began in 1923 and was completed in 1926 at a cost of \$288,000. The Memorial Stadium was also completed in 1926 and dedicated on Nov. 20.

Lack of funds and materials plagued the project after completion of the tower and stadium. In an effort to create new interest ground was broken for the north wing of the Union on Homecoming Day 1930. However, construction was again slowed by the advent of the depression and the second World War.

After W.W. II plans were revived for the North Wing and it was completed and occupied in September of 1952. The South Wing was completed in August of 1963, thirty-three years after the ground breaking ceremonies. The Brady Commons was completed in June of 1963.