



Alumni Center Timeline

Before there was a McNamara Alumni Center, University of Minnesota Gateway, proposed alumni homes took many shapes and encountered many obstacles.

By Chris Coughlan-Smith and Shelly Fling



January 1904

General Alumni Association is formed; Cyrus Northrop is University president

May 1921

Concept for Memorial Stadium, to be built entirely with private funds, proposed at alumni meetings

November 15, 1924

Memorial Stadium dedicated

1965

Plans drawn up for constructing a new building on the West Bank to include an alumni center and hotel

October 1958

Space needs become urgent as a temporary building that houses alumni records is to be taken down; options considered include in the new wing of Coffman Union; atop a West Bank building; in Pillsbury Hall; and in an alumni building of its own

June 1957

The need for an alumni and visitors center is first expressed by alumni association

November 1956

Alumni association sends letter to University President James Lewis Morrill concerning lack of adequate space and divisions housed in various buildings



August 1970

Alumni association moves to 2610 University Avenue, the former Blue Cross building

March 1971

University officials ask that any alumni center be a "gateway to the University"; one proposal includes a complex containing a motel, administrative offices, office tower (leased by IDS), and an alumni center built between 14th and 16th avenues and University Avenue and Fourth Street

1977

Site on top of former River Road Ramp south of Coffman Memorial Union proposed

1979

Alumni association offices move to Morrill Hall, lessening the immediate need for office space

1980

Leonard Parker and Associates completes a drawing of a proposed alumni center; the projected cost of a site on the river is \$4 million; University officials agree with alumni center idea but disagree over the site and on parking issues

September 1981

Gopher football team moves to the new Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome, vacating Memorial Stadium; Board of Regents are lukewarm to the alumni center plan but recommend it be combined with a University gallery; fund-raising feasibility study is next step



PHOTOGRAPH BY ROB LEVINE

1984–86

Alumni center in conjunction with what would become the Weisman Art Museum is discussed, but museum later built on its own and the University committed the corner of Oak and Washington for an alumni center

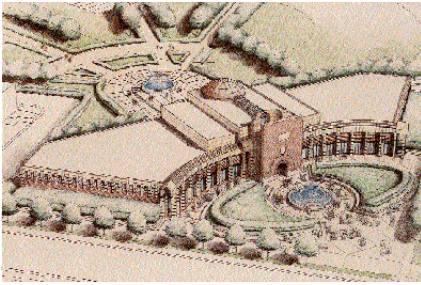


1988

Larry Laukka is recruited for his development expertise; he's added to national board and shows bulldog-like resolve in building alumni center

1989

UMAA National Board approves pursuing the Oak and Washington location, authorizing initial plans and the Gateway name



1990

Drawings of a building at Oak and Washington created; University of Minnesota Foundation signs on



July 1992

With donations from the class of 1942 and funding from the Board of Regents, the Memorial Stadium Arch is dismantled and preserved as Memorial Stadium is demolished

September 1992

Alumni association moves to fifth floor of Coffman Union

October 1994

Dale Olseth is recruited for his fund-raising expertise and added to national board

April 1997
Regents approve concept plan for the Oak and University precinct, including the Gateway



1994

With Laukka as national president, the UMAA makes building Gateway one of its five-year goals; partnership with the University of Minnesota Foundation and Minnesota Medical Foundation is formed; focus shifts to the corner of Oak and University

June 1996

Antoine Predock is chosen as Gateway architect, teamed with Minneapolis-based KKE Architects



November 1997

Ceremonial groundbreaking; actual construction begins in March 1998



August 28, 1999

Caps placed on reconstructed Memorial Stadium Arch



October 29, 1999

Building officially named McNamara Alumni Center, University of Minnesota Gateway



February 11–13, 2000

Grand opening celebrations, public unveiling of the Heritage Gallery and Memorial Hall