



Honoring Our Heritage

One of the treasures of the new alumni center is the **Heritage Gallery**, a permanent exhibit that pays tribute to the accomplishments of the University and its alumni, students, and faculty. By Shelly Fling

Visitors to the McNamara Alumni Center, University of Minnesota Gateway, won't have any trouble finding one of the building's most sensational spaces. They'll be pulled toward the Curtis L. and Arleen Carlson Heritage Gallery by its magnificent doorway: the reconstructed brick Memorial Stadium Arch that towers 55 feet high inside Memorial Hall.

Inside the 2,600-square-foot gallery, adjacent to Memorial Hall, is a remarkable collection of photographs, artifacts, artwork, literature, video, and audio—evidence of the University's rich history. Nearly two years ago, the Gateway Corporation selected New York-based Vincent Ciulla Design to create the concept and design for the Heritage Gallery. Since then, numerous alumni, faculty, and museum experts have searched archives and forgotten storage closets, hunted down historical documents and factual

information, collected scientific devices and sports memorabilia, and hired artists and computer consultants to help tell some of the University's greatest stories.

"The challenge was the editing," says Ciulla. "What's in and what's out? How do we give visitors a total picture of the heritage of the University and yet keep it digestible so that it's not an overwhelming presentation?"

Despite the gallery planners' best efforts, visitors may very well be overwhelmed—not only by the volume of objects and information but by their presentation. When visitors walk through the Memorial Arch, they'll hear historical audio of Gopher announcer Julius Perlt, the University Marching Band, and fans singing the "Minnesota Rouser." Under glass, set into the black terrazzo floor, they'll see the contents of two time capsules: from 1924, when Memorial Stadium was dedicated, and items representative of

Bronislaw "Bronko" Nagurski, an International Falls, Minnesota, native who played football for the Gophers from 1927 to 1929, was tough at any position, and Coach Doc Spears played him everywhere he could. Nagurski was the only player ever to be named all-American at two positions in the same season. He went on to play for the Chicago Bears, where legend has it he was carrying the ball when he ran into the brick wall at Wrigley Field and cracked it.



Professor Alfred Nier ('31, '33, '36) used a mass spectrometer to isolate a detectable amount of U-235 in the basement of Tate Laboratory in 1940. The mass spectrometer and the Akerman Tailless Airplane, both on loan from the Smithsonian Institution, will be installed after the grand opening.



More than 50 years ago, Mary Turpie ('30) and a few other University scholars and teachers founded the American studies program to distinguish between American and European history and culture and to address American cultural concerns in interdisciplinary fashion. The program continues to be ranked as one of the best in the country.



2000, when the alumni center was built.

Looking back at the arch from inside the gallery, visitors can see the Wall of Books, an awesome permanent collection of books stacked eight feet high and 60 feet long. The 5,000 books, written by or about alumni, faculty, and students, represent the wealth of knowledge acquired and shared by people touched by the University.

A timeline runs along two walls of the gallery and consists of five levels: a 90-foot mural depicting changes in the United States over time; photos, sketches, and illustrations of the U's campuses; themes that emerged as the University grew and matured, illustrated with yearbooks, video monitors, and hand-held audio sets; a graphic timeline indicating major and minor events as well as noting enrollment figures and winners of Nobel and Pulitzer prizes; and a case containing homecoming buttons, commencement programs, theater playbills, and other memorabilia.

Eight glass kiosks, each bearing the carved likeness of an individual who has made significant contributions to society and the University, will be placed throughout the gallery. Visitors can learn more about these people and other entrepreneurs, artists, athletes, and researchers through interactive touch-screen monitors on each kiosk.

The Heritage Gallery includes hundreds of other objects, including a "sod buster"

plow, a sculpture by Katherine Nash, and an original K ration. The gallery also holds space for installation of temporary exhibits showing the University's latest research breakthroughs and artistic achievements.

Ciulla, whose firm has completed 250 design projects, including the San Diego Museum of Art and the Ellis Island National Historical Site, approaches each of his projects by considering three distinctive perspectives. "Picture a triangle," he says. "The three points are *content*, *audience*, and *place*. And in the center is *visitor experience*."

Ciulla and his designers define each of the three points and then evaluate whether the points are balanced and relate to each other appropriately. For example, the gallery's place—its size, adjacency to Memorial Hall, location in the alumni center, site on campus, urban setting, and geographic situation—are considered in relation to the gallery's content and target audience. "Those three forces actually define the visitor experience," Ciulla says.

When alumni, faculty, and prospective students exit the gallery through the Memorial Arch, they undoubtedly will leave with a tremendous sense of pride in the accomplishments of individuals touched by the University and with new—or renewed—ties to this great institution.

In 1907, the first women graduated from the University's School of Agriculture.

