

Beadle Center dedication

Monetary investment in new center causes differences of opinion

By Ted Taylor
Staff Reporter

Though some may wonder whether the George W. Beadle Center is worth its nearly \$32 million price tag, supporters insist the center will pay for itself.

"Yes, it is a lot of money to spend on one building," said Marion O'Leary, chairman of the biochemistry department. "There is no way to build a building of this stature cheap. It has to be designed for safety and to give students the best education possible."

But the investment will bring a valuable return, O'Leary said. "This building represents an investment in the education of the citizens of Nebraska, the economic well-being of the state and the rising stature of UNL," he said.

Shawntell Hurtgen, president of the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska, agreed that the building would produce much more than was put into it.

"It's going to be a building that will benefit the students, as well as the community," Hurtgen said.

NU Regent Robert Allen of Hastings sees things differently. Allen said the building just cost too much. That money could be better spent at the university, Allen said.

"I don't think we have our priorities straight," he said. "We need to improve the guts of the university first, and that includes the arts and sciences and agriculture."

More attention should be paid to undergraduates and faculty, he said. "We shouldn't be putting research ahead of the needs of teaching and the students."

"It's a wonderful building, and I am glad we have it. I just think it was a little more expensive than it needed to be. We have to think of the students first."

The center's supporters say that argument doesn't hold. The money couldn't have been spent on anything else, said Interim Chancellor Joan Leitzel.

Regent Don Blank of McCook agreed.

"There wasn't a decision for the regents to make on what to spend the money on," he said. "The money obtained was specifically for the Beadle Center."

It's appropriate for UNL to invest in research, said Regent Charles Wilson of Lincoln, because research is one of the campus's primary functions.

"UNL is the designated research campus for the entire state," he said. "UNL's sole function is not to be a lecture facility for undergraduates."

Beadle Center



We have a major responsibility and commitment to research."

However, Blank said, "you still have to wonder if we could have built it less expensively. But it isn't the kind of building that we are going to have to renovate and remodel in the next 10 years."

"It's going to be around for quite some time."

Having a building like the Beadle Center will bring more research opportunities, jobs and money to UNL, O'Leary said.

"It's not like we spent all that money on a building and said, 'There you go, now you deal with it,'" O'Leary said. "This building will be giving back to the university for a long, long time."

Both O'Leary and chemical engineering professor William Scheller said the center's cost was in line with similar research facilities on other campuses. And the building itself is almost unequaled in the region.

"Buildings that house laboratories are generally more expensive than buildings that include only classrooms," Scheller said.

For example, he said, the replacement cost of Hamilton Hall would not exceed \$28 million, and the cost of replacing Burnett Hall would be only \$6.5 million.

Donald Weeks, director of the Center of Biotechnology, also had high praise for the building, regardless of its cost.

"We now have a state-of-the-art teaching and research facility," he said. "It will allow us to expand teaching and research into all important areas of science."

Leitzel said the center would be another stepping stone in the university's drive towards academic excellence.

"This positions us to be a strong player in the areas of science that are thriving right now — cellular and molecular biology, biochemistry and biotechnology," she said.

Much of the center's funding came from the Nebraska congressional delegation, which raised \$21.9 million in federal funds for the center's development.

The federal departments that contributed to the project included the U.S. departments of agriculture and energy and the General Services Administration.

The remaining \$9.8 million came from state, university and private funds.

Nebraska Sen. Bob Kerrey said he was initially hesitant to seek federal money for the project.

"I was unenthusiastic about the project at first," he said. "But the more I talked to Marion O'Leary and Don Weeks, I became more interested and confident enough in the project to bring it before the committees."

Kerrey said the center's benefits would spread nationally.

"Ranchers in Montana and consumers from New York to California will be affected by the Beadle Center," he said. "I needed to be able to tell the committees it would be a good investment for taxpayers not only in Nebraska but across the nation, as well."

Beadle a famed graduate

By Becky Keasling
Staff Reporter

George Wells Beadle was one of America's greatest geneticists, a Nobel Prize winner and a UNL graduate.

Beadle is the only native Nebraskan and NU graduate to receive the Nobel Prize.

He was born in Wahoo on Oct. 22, 1903. His father was a farmer who cultivated potatoes, asparagus and strawberries.

During his high school years, Beadle was greatly influenced by a teacher who taught chemistry and physics. She took a special interest in him and convinced him to attend college.

Beadle's father did not want him to go to the University of Nebraska because he wanted him to take over the family farm.

Eventually, Beadle's father agreed to let him attend the university. In 1922, Beadle entered the university to study agronomy. During that same year, he met Frank Keim, a genetics professor.

Beadle earned a bachelor's of science degree in 1926 and a master's of science degree in 1927. After graduation, Keim told him to go to New York's Cornell University to study genetics.

As the professor had directed, Beadle went to Cornell and became engrossed in his studies.

Following his time at Cornell, Beadle worked as an instructor at the California Institute of Technology. He served as an instructor until 1935.

Beadle later served on the faculties of Harvard and Stanford universities and the Institut de Biologie in Paris.

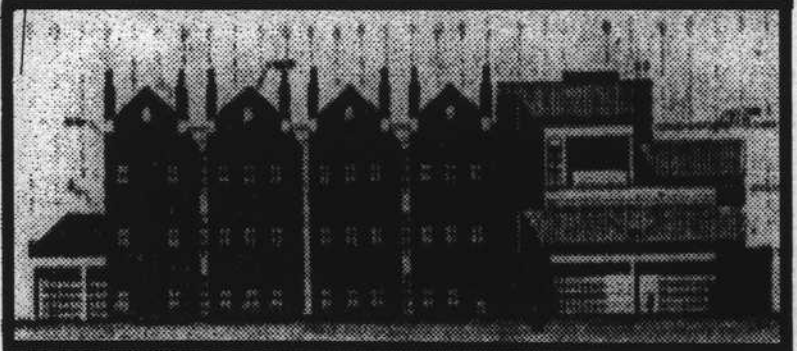
In 1958, Beadle was awarded the Nobel Prize in physiology and medicine. He received the prize for work he had done with his associates Joshua Lederberg and Edward Tatum.

Besides being a scientist, Beadle also was a thrill seeker. At the age of 49, he decided to take up skiing and mountain climbing. He scaled California's Mount Whitney six times and also was one of the first three people to climb Alaska's Mount Doonerak.

Although Beadle died June 9, 1989, UNL is keeping his memory alive. The George W. Beadle Center for Genetics and Biomaterials Research will be formally dedicated today.

Information in this story was acquired from the Genetics Society of America.

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Famous biologist to speak today

By Kelli Bamsey
Staff Reporter

James Dewey Watson, a biologist known for helping discover the structure of DNA, will speak at the Beadle Center dedication today.

Beadle Center



"If you ask anyone, from a scientist to a person on the street, James Dewey Watson is the name they associate with DNA," said Marion O'Leary, head of the biochemistry department. "Everyone recognizes the name James Dewey Watson."

Throughout his career, Watson has done — and continues to do — very important work and research, O'Leary said.

"Everyone recognizes the name James Dewey Watson."

MARION O'LEARY

head of biochemistry department

In 1962, Watson received the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine along with Francis Crick and Maurice Wilkins for their efforts in DNA-related work.

Hearing James Watson speak will be a once-in-a-lifetime chance to see someone who is a part of history, said Kimra Carlson, a genetics teaching assistant.

Watson will speak at 2 p.m. at the Lied Center for Performing Arts.

In recent years, Watson has played an important role in genetic research as director of the Cold Springs Har-

bor Laboratory, said Lawrence Harshman, assistant professor of biological sciences.

The Long Island, N.Y., laboratory is known for its cutting-edge molecular work with genetics, Harshman said, including human genome research.

An open house at the Beadle Center will be Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon and Sunday from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

"Hearing a person as influential as Watson speak can be a landmark time in one's life," Harshman said.



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