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DesMoinesRegister.com/business



The World Food Prize

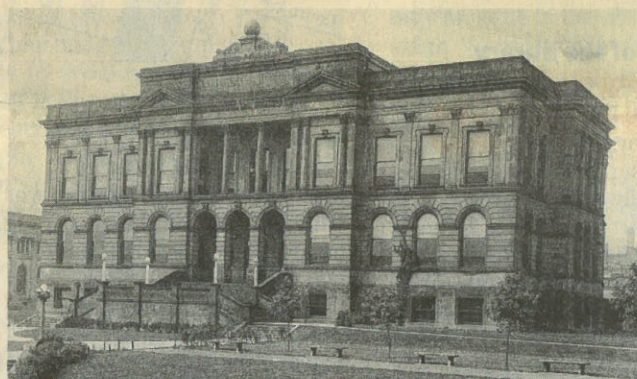
Oct. 14-16, Des Moines



RODNEY WHITE/THE REGISTER

World Food Prize President Kenneth Quinn shows some of the artwork for the rotunda in the old downtown Des Moines Public Library, 100 Locust St. The four murals show Norman Borlaug at four stages of his life, in four different countries at four different times of day. In the background is part of the ornate architecture of the former library.

Stately new home enhances mission of World Food Prize



Des Moines' downtown public library, circa 1920s.

Ruan family, Kenneth Quinn nurture the goal of a headquarters honoring Borlaug and others

Two historic threads come together this week when Des Moines' century-old riverfront library is transferred to the World Food Prize Foundation.

One thread winds back through the city's public library system, which has been the backbone of community arts and culture programs since the mid-19th century.

The other ties up and honors the accomplishments of Iowans from George Washington Carver to Herbert Hoover, Henry Wallace, Norman Borlaug and others who fed the world.

The threads will be joined Wednesday during a dedication ceremony that marks the beginning of a year-long, \$30 million



DAVID ELBERT
delbert@dmreg.com

effort to transform the former downtown library into the Norman E. Borlaug Hall of Laureates.

The project is the result of years

of effort by many individuals.

They include World Food Prize founder Borlaug, who died last month; Des Moines businessman John Ruan, who created the endowment that supports the foundation; and his son, John Ruan III, who proposed the library as a home for the World Food Prize Foundation and eight years ago this week pledged the first \$5 million toward that goal.

Ultimately, though, the vision driving the project belongs to Dubuque native and former U.S. Ambassador Kenneth Quinn, who retired from diplomatic service 10 years ago to become president of the World Food Prize Foundation.

Iowans, Quinn said recently, are

a genuinely modest people who have lived so close to exceptional people like Carver, Wallace and Borlaug for so long that we often fail to recognize their superhuman accomplishments, even when the rest of the world does.

When Quinn returned to Iowa after spending much of his own career in foreign capitals, he was struck by how little notice Iowans pay to great people who came from this state.

Other nations build monuments to political leaders and generals who won wars, he said.

But Iowa is different. Our heroes didn't fight wars or conquer territory, Quinn said. They did

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Timeline of the convergence of Des Moines' library and the World Food Prize

1866: Des Moines' first library association is formed in basement of a Methodist Church.

1867-1903: Library rents space in four separate downtown locations.

1882: The library operation is turned over to the City of Des Moines.

1896: City levies a 3-mill tax to construct a building.

1899-1903: Library cornerstone is laid June 14, 1899; library opens Oct. 13, 1903.

1955: Renovation work eliminates the east, main entrance and removes a riverside fountain.

1983: John Ruan proposes building a high-rise world trade center in Des Moines that would focus on agricultural trade. The concept would grow to include a 100-story building that would house part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, before Ruan abandoned the idea in 1995.

1986: Norman Borlaug establishes World Food Prize, after having won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1970.

1990: John Ruan Foundation takes over annual funding of the \$200,000 World Food Prize.

1997: John Ruan provides a \$10 million permanent

endowment for the prize and increases its size to \$250,000.

2001: Des Moines officials begin to discuss building a library in Western Gateway Park and John Ruan III suggests the World Food Prize acquire the riverside library and convert it into a headquarters and conference center for the group.

2006: The new \$32 million library opens in Western Gateway Park.

2009: City of Des Moines gives the World Food Prize Foundation a 50-year lease on the riverside library building.



RDG PLANNING DESIGN/SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER

This is a rendering of one of the interiors of the redesigned library, which will become the headquarters for the World Food Prize, 100 Locust St.

ELBERT

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something even more important. They conquered hunger.

"We have all these people who fed the world," Quinn said. "Dr. Borlaug saved a billion lives, more than anyone else in all history.

"If you do something like that, you ought to have a place where your spirit resides, where you are available to inspire people."

Library's past to drive future of Food Prize

Des Moines' downtown library, which the city vacated in 2006 for a new building in Western Gateway Park, is a perfect location for a combination museum, conference center and headquarters for the World Food Prize Foundation.

The building at 100 Locust St. is on the axis of modern Des Moines.

It's in the middle of the \$72 million Principal Riverwalk, which is scheduled for completion about the same time as the building renovation. It's midway between the Iowa Capitol and Meredith Corp. on Locust Street. Quinn said that "is going to become one of the truly great avenues of art and architecture in America" with the newly opened Pappajohn Sculpture Garden at one end, the riverwalk in the middle and the Capitol grounds at the other.

History of the library tied to city construction

Plus, the former library has a compelling history.

Its classic Beaux-Art style supposedly was patterned after an art museum in Nancy, France. The 1977 nomination that placed the library on the National Register of Historic Places describes the building as "a scaled-down model of the Library of Congress."

Before the library was built, its riverfront site was occupied by an Civil War-era arsenal.

The library was the first of seven public buildings erected along the downtown riverfront in the early decades of the 20th century as part of the nationwide "City Beautiful" movement. The effort reclaimed the riverfront from 19th-century decay with a new City Hall, federal courthouse, municipal courts building, which is now the police station, and the Coliseum, which fire destroyed in the 1950s.

The library is the only one with a hint of color. Its coat of salmon-colored Minnesota sandstone gives the building a pinkish hue.

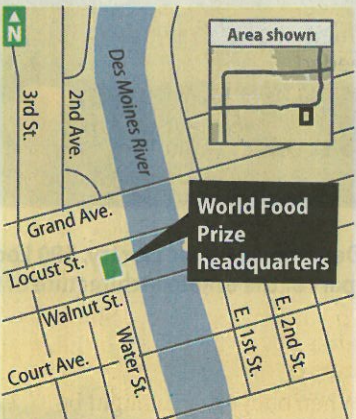
The building's early history "mirrors the delays experienced by the World Food Prize Foundation," local historian John Zeller said. The cornerstone on the building says 1900. Construction began in 1899 and wasn't completed until 1903.

"The city kept running out of money," Zeller said. When the building finally opened, it was only partially lit, partially occu-



RODNEY WHITE/THE REGISTER

RDG architect Scott Allen studies how the interior of the old library looks before plans to convert it are launched in November. He is grasping one of the entryway columns that are scheduled to be restored.



The Register

were few books, Zeller said. Stacks weren't installed until 1907. Electric lighting was added in 1911, and landscaping, including a riverside fountain, was completed in 1912.

For the first 25 years, the library was also an art center, housing the Cumming School of Art on the fourth floor and the Fine Arts Association gallery on the third floor.

The roof featured nine skylights — a large one to light the stained-glass dome over the rotunda and eight smaller ones to provide direct light for a third floor gallery and art studios.

The original main entrance featured a stone staircase that faced the river. It was removed in 1955, along with the fountain.

The renovation will restore that east entrance, as well as landscaping along the river.

It also will restore an ornamental globe, called an acroterium, on the roof over the east entrance. The globe was shattered when it was struck by lightning in the mid-1930s, Zeller said.

The new acroterium will resemble the original globe in size and shape and be made from cast stone, instead of terra cotta. That should increase its chances of surviving a lightning strike, architect Scott Allen of RDG Planning and Design said.

Two dreams merge in library renovation

Quinn said he remembers sitting on stage at the Civic Center of Greater Des Moines eight years ago when maestro Joseph Giunta conducted the inaugural performance of a symphony commissioned to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the World Food Prize.

As the music ended, he said, "John Ruan III came out and

announced his family was committing \$5 million to transform the Des Moines Public Library building into a hall of laureates in honor of Dr. Borlaug."

That was in 2001. British architect David Chipperfield had not yet pitched his unusual, amoeba-shaped, grass-roof design for the new library that opened in 2006. But Ruan believed strongly that the push for a new library would succeed, and he wanted to back a new use for the old building.

The proposal was a continuation of efforts that Ruan's father, John Sr., began in 1983 when he proposed building a high-rise, agriculture-oriented world trade center in Des Moines. Before the elder Ruan gave up that dream in 1995, his proposal had grown into a 100-story building topped by a rotating globe that Ruan believed would become the city's signature piece of 20th-century architecture.

The complex project required unique funding from the federal government and others. As hope for tying all the pieces together faded, Ruan Sr. redirected his energy into his growing friendship with Borlaug and a desire to help the World Food Prize further Borlaug's dream of a hunger-free world.

In 2001, John Ruan III saw a way to combine both of his father's passions: for a signature Des Moines building and to further Borlaug's worldwide work.

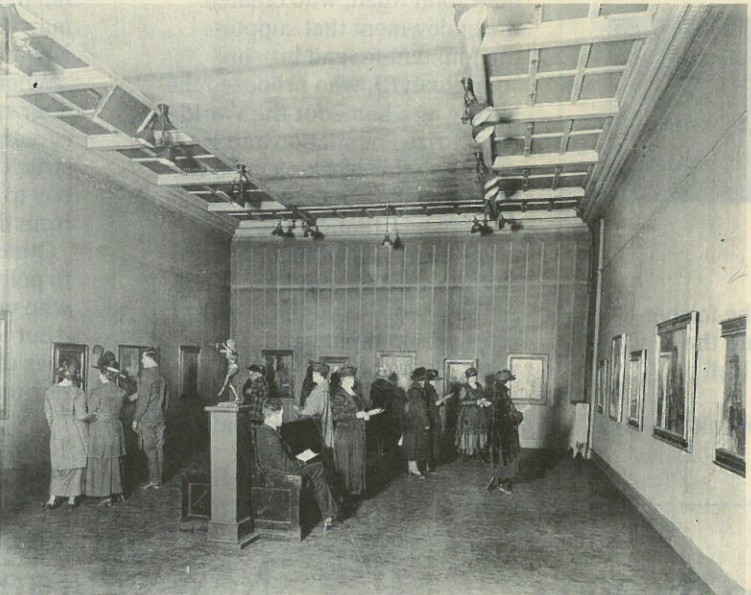
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Elements such as energy efficiency to be used

That's what Quinn has been working to do ever since. It's taken longer and cost more than expected, but contracts for the renovation will be let this fall and work begun by year's end.

"What I'm most excited about is the energy efficiency," Quinn said. Plans call for geothermal heating and cooling, light-emitting diodes and other energy efficiencies designed to win a



SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER

The Cumming School of Art had a gallery on the fourth floor for the first 25 years the old downtown library was open. Space on the third

Top donations

The World Food Prize Foundation has raised \$24.5 million of the nearly \$30 million needed to renovate Des Moines' 1903 downtown library building and convert it into combination headquarters, museum and conference center. Major donations in the following amounts have come from:

Ruan family: \$5 million.

Polk County: \$5 million.

Monsanto: \$5 million.

DuPont/Pioneer: \$1 million.

Institute of Museum and Library Services: \$2.97 million.

Vision Iowa: \$2 million.

W.T. Dahl Trust: \$500,000

United Soybean Board: \$400,000.

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation: \$300,000.

Save America's Treasures: Washington, D.C., \$298,000.

Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines: \$250,000.

Iowa Soybean Association: \$200,000.

Cargill: \$125,000.

Prairie Meadow Racetrack and Casino: \$100,000.

West Central Cooperative: \$100,000.

Others: About \$1.2 million

Gold Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design rating from the U.S. Green Building Council. If successful, it will be the oldest building in Iowa to win the gold status.

The building should be 65 percent more energy efficient than a typical modern commercial building, architect Allen said.

The renovation will be artistic. It includes removing a roof-level structure that prevents sunlight from reaching the stained-glass dome above the rotunda. The structure will be replaced with an all-glass enclosure similar to what was removed years ago. The new skylight will allow the sun to once again move around on the floor of the rotunda.

The most dramatic changes will be on the east side of the building, where the original riverfront staircase and entry will be recreated. There will be a significant change on the west face where a two-story, three-panel, arched window will be replaced with a stained-glass depiction of a family bringing in a harvest.

Parking lots west of the building will be replaced with gardens created on top of 90 to 110 geothermal wells that will drop down 250 to 300 feet to provide heating and cooling.

A statue of Borlaug will grace the main entry. The main floor will have a room honoring World Food Prize recipients and another honoring Borlaug's life.

George Washington Carver and other former Iowans will be honored on the second floor, while interactive displays and a small theater will be placed on the ground level floor. The third floor, where the art school was once located, initially will be used for storage and offices.

Even before construction starts, walking in the building with the stacks removed creates views of the river, Capitol and Des Moines skyline that haven't been seen in many decades, said