

Inventory of the

# **Holmes Student Center**

in the

Northern Illinois University Archives

**UA 43**

## INTRODUCTION

The University Archives acquired the Holmes Student Center records in several installments beginning in the late 1970's. Literary rights are dedicated to the public. There are no restrictions on access to the collection.

5 boxes  
3 linear feet  
1962-2001

## SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Holmes Student Center records are a series within the Student Affairs records group. There are three sub-series within the collection: University Center records, University Center Board/Holmes Student Center Board records, and Association of College Unions, International Recreation Committee records.

There are few records from the departments within the Holmes Student Center, i.e. the Bookstore, Food Service, and the Program Departments. However, the records of the University Center Board, later the Holmes Center Board, are quite extensive. Minutes of the Board and its various subcommittees provide excellent documentation of Center activities from its opening in 1962 to the mid-1980's. Coverage of entertainment events held at the Center is provided through press releases and documentation of sponsored programs. Recreational activities at the Center are documented in the University Center Board/Holmes Center Board series. Records of competitive recreational events are found in the series from the Association of College Unions, International Recreation Committee.

Additional information on the Holmes Student Center/University Center is available in the Presidents' Papers (UA 4) and several other University Archives records series.

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

By the mid-1950's, the Student Union building on College Avenue had become far too small to accommodate Northern's student population, which had experienced a 136% increase between 1953 and 1956. A University steering committee began to plan for the construction of a new, centrally located building that would accommodate an enrollment of at least 10,000 students.

A bond issue, designed to benefit universities state-wide, was proposed in Springfield in 1960. Described as a ten year expansion plan, the issue of self-liquidating bonds was passed by a state referendum. Northern received approximately 15 million dollars under the plan and used the money to construct 10 buildings, add space to current buildings, and remodel several others over the next decade. The University Center was one of the first new structures to be

constructed.

The Center opened its doors in the fall of 1962 to an enthusiastic university community. President Leslie Holmes wanted the Center to become a focal point for Northern, the "hearthstone" that everyone could share equally. He envisioned it as having a unifying force that would hold the university community together as the school grew larger and larger.

The building provided space for a variety of university ventures, including the first campus bookstore. Prior to this time, students had been limited to town bookstores when purchasing and reselling texts. Three food service areas, large rooms for meetings, guest rooms, an auditorium, and a recreation hall with bowling alleys and billiards completed the Center. Reaction from the DeKalb business community was mixed: they applauded the campus expansion, but were concerned about the loss of business they would experience as the result of the Center's opening.

By 1968, the Center had doubled in size with the addition of a west wing topped by a sixteen story tower that defined the building as a campus landmark. The additional 100 guest rooms provided by the tower made it possible for NIU to become a major conference and convention center serving the entire northern Illinois area.

In 1974, the building was re-dedicated as the Leslie A. Holmes Student Center. On April 18, 1984 the sky room was re-named the Clara Sperling Sky Room in honor of Miss Sperling who served as secretary to three presidents, including 19 years to Leslie Holmes. During the 1989-1990 school year the exterior of the tower was re-clad with white limestone panels. New, tinted windows were installed, and a lighted copper dome was placed over the top.

### COLLECTION INVENTORY

<u>BOX</u>	<u>FOLDER</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
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#### **SERIES I: University Center**

		Administration
1	1	History and Information, 1961-1972
	2	Activities Calendars, 1963-1974, 1985
	3	Activities Schedules, 1963-1964
	4	Financial Reports, 1963-1965
	5	Program Department, 1964-1965
	6	Food Service, 1954-1978
	7	Bookstore, (1953-1988)
		Sponsored Activities
	8	Madrigal Dinners, 1964-1972
	9	Winter Carnival, 1967-1970

<u>BOX</u>	<u>FOLDER</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
		Sponsored Activities, cont.:
2	1-2	Art Exhibitions, Other Exhibits, 1967-1974
<b>SERIES II: University Center Board, 1962-1973</b>		
<b>Holmes Center Board, 1974-</b>		
		Administration
	3a	Constitutions and By-laws, (1967-1984)
	3b	Correspondence, 1982-1984
	4	Building and Programming Policies, 1968, 1974
	5	Solicitation Policy, 1970
	6	Room Scheduling Manual, 1973
	7-8	Financial Reports, 1966-1973, 1980-1981
	9	Information for Board Members, 1974, 1981
	10	Pamphlets and Newsletters, 1964-1973, 1985
	11	Building and Campus Tours, 1969, n.d.
	12	Student Surveys, 1979, 1982, n.d.
	13	Memorabilia, 1969
3	1-8	Minutes, 1962-1975, 1978-1980
4	1-2a	Minutes, 1981-1985
	2b	Minutes, Policies and Related Material, 1999-2001
		Subcommittees
	3	Staff Meeting Minutes, 1984
	4	Program Council, 1962-1974
	5	Art Committee, 1971
	6	Entertainment Committee, 1972
	7	Recreation Committee, 1969-1972
	8	Public Relations Committee, 1968-1980
	9	Social Committee, 1968-1970
	10	Special Events Committee, 1968
	11	Travel Committee, 1980-1981
	12	Yearbook Advisory Committee, 1981-1982
		Board Activities
	13	Press Releases, 1969-1971, 1977-1980
	14	Sponsored Programs, 1962-1969
5	1a-4	Sponsored Programs, 1970-1978, 1980-1987
	5	Film Schedules, 1965-1983
	6	Sponsored Travel, 1969-1973, 1986
	7	Humanities Week, 1972
	8	All-School Carnival, May Fete, 1972

BOX    FOLDER    DESCRIPTION

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5		Board Activities, cont.:
	9	Thanksgiving Dinner, 1979
	10	Erotic Week, 1981
	11-15	Recreation Classes, 1969-1970, 1979-1983

**SERIES III: Association of College Unions, International Recreation Committee,  
Region IX (ACU-I)**

16	Manuals, 1975, 1981
17	Bowling, 1968-1971, 1981-1982
18	Bridge, 1969-1971
19	Chess, 1969-1970
20	Foosball, 1971
21	Pinochle, Gin Rummy, 1970
22	Pocket Billiards, 1969-1970, 1980-1982
23	Table Tennis, 1969-1971
24-28	Regional Tournaments, 1969-1971, 1982-1983