

New, High-Tech Greenhouse Dedicated on UW-Madison Campus

By Monroe S. Miller

The University of Wisconsin-Madison Departments of Horticulture and Agronomy dedicated a new campus greenhouse on Friday, April 4. The new D.C. Smith Greenhouse is named for Professor Smith, long time Agronomy faculty member and department chair for 19 years. His son Irwin donated half of the \$2.6 million construction costs. The state paid the other half.

The new Smith greenhouse replaces the Babcock Greenhouse Range that was a campus landmark for decades. Facing University Avenue and Babcock Drive, the old houses were torn down to make room for a desperately needed parking ramp. They were plagued with rotting wood and insect infestations and even lacked the electrical service to run high intensity growth lamps during the winter months. Safety had also become a factor. They were simply worn out.

High technology is at every turn in the new building. It is primarily a wood and glass structure and has 11 greenhouse bays. A central computer monitors and records environmental conditions in each, and it also does everything from watering plants to turning down the lights or closing mechanical roof curtains. Also featured are a hot water system to regulate temperatures, fine mesh screens that limit insect spread, and a fogging system that can create a tropical haze in one of the bays.

The D.C. Smith Greenhouse is the second of three major campus greenhouse complexes to be replaced. The Walnut Street greenhouse is

next in line for renovation; fundraising for that project is underway by the University of Wisconsin Foundation.

The centerpiece to the facility is the 1,600-square-foot conservatory. It is full of ornamental plants and will be a lab for "interiorscaping", a new discipline that designs and manages indoor gardens like those in shopping malls and office buildings. The conservatory, which faces Linden Drive and Babcock Drive, is open to the public.

The dedication ceremonies took place on the lawn across Linden Drive from the greenhouse, near the Microbiology building. Governor Tommy Thompson, Chancellor David Ward, Dean Roger Wyse, and Irwin Smith took part in the dedication ceremony. The governor spoke of state/industry and state/private partnership in projects like this one. For those like me, the Noer Facility also came to mind.

Next time you are in Madison and near campus, park in the new ramp and take a look at the new greenhouse. You'll envy the undergrads who will be able to get their hands dirty in such beautiful surroundings! 🌱



A string quartet played classical music in the conservatory during the open house of the new Smith greenhouse.



The hallway that connects all the greenhouse bays.



Governor Tommy Thompson took part in the D.C. Smith Greenhouse dedication.



Students, faculty, alums and industry supporters were impressed by the design and technology of the new greenhouse.



The conservatory faces Linden Drive. The gentleman crossing the street in the left of the picture is Irwin Smith, son of the greenhouse namesake and donor of \$1.3 million to the project.