

A New Timepiece for Bradley U.

A 700-lb.copper dome tops Clock Tower

Bradley University, home of the Braves, in Peoria, IL, is going through a rebirth. Through the “Campaign for the Bradley Renaissance,” school officials have been able to raise more than \$150 million since 2008 for a campus-wide capital improvement project that includes the recent renovation and expansion of their second oldest structure, Westlake Hall.

The \$150 million campus-wide capital improvement project, dubbed the “Campaign for the Bradley Renaissance” started in 2008 and includes the recent renovation and expansion of their second oldest structure, Westlake Hall.

Constructed in 1897, Westlake Hall (formerly Horology Hall) was once the only school in the nation built specifically for horology, the science of measuring time and the art of making timepieces. So at the time, it was only fitting that the building was adorned with a six-story clock tower topped with a copper dome.

The university’s iconic clock tower was one of the first building projects to receive a facelift, and was part of the estimated \$22 million renovation of Westlake Hall.

“Westlake Hall is one of Bradley’s landmark buildings and a significant symbol of the University,” says Kath Conner, Bradley’s Senior Director of Public Relations. “The restoration of the clock tower with its shining new dome reflects our respect for our proud history.”

The renovated building will be the new home of the College of Education and Health Services and the Institute for Principled Leadership in Public Service.

When completed, the building size will have been expanded to 85,600 square feet, and include a four-floor addition, a 100-seat auditorium, smart classrooms with new technology and laboratories for science, math, reading, language arts and counseling.

For the copper work to the clock tower, Bradley University turned to Campbellsville Industries. Known in the business as “The Steeple People,” the Kentucky-based firm specializes in the reconstruction of early 1900’s era steeples and cupolas.

“We work directly with the architect to try to get as close to an exact replica as possible,” said David Manning, regional representative for Campbellsville. “This particular project called for about 700 pounds of copper including the cornice, dome and finial.”

A crew of 15 laborers carefully handcrafted the dome, which measures 11 feet across at its widest point. Many of the projects that Campbellsville works on involve copper. Manning said that they restore or renovate approximately 100 jobs a year featuring copper.

“People appreciate the aging process that copper goes through, starting out as shiny as a new penny,” says Manning, “then turning from a light to a dark bronze color, and finally, after many years, to a rich patina green color.”

The previous copper dome on the Westlake Hall clock tower had long turned a rich green patina color. With the renovation, comes the beginning of a new visual lifecycle for the copper-clad clock tower. In its current state, the copper dome shines for the whole campus to see, adding a new luster to Bradley’s educational facilities.

In addition, the university is replacing the clock face with one that features Roman numerals further imitating the original. The tower is only the start of Westlake Hall’s revival, but it shines brightly as a new beacon of hope for the Bradley Renaissance.

For more information about working with copper in architecture, please visit www.copper.org.