



THE NEW

# Old Main

by Nick Healy '93, MFA '05



Marso-Schmitz Plaza and Jane Rush Gathering Place by John Cross

*WHEN THE* lower campus closed, MSU had more than a century of history, but it was a young place. They called it the Highland Campus, the hilltop site where construction had taken off during the 1960s. New residence halls. New classroom buildings. New athletic facilities. The campus grew at a time when new meant efficient and functional, not necessarily welcoming and comfortable. A fresh wave of construction and renovation in the past few years has changed that. Today's facilities provide attractive — even inspiring — spaces, and some of those earlier buildings have been remade to give students places to go and gather, places where they want to stay.



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Taylor Center by John Cross



*EACH BUILDING* creates an image, and each image represents an idea. Old Main — a dignified edifice with a commanding view of the city — dominates recollections of the lower campus. The building said something important about the University, and people liked what it said. Today's campus has a new architectural iconography. To the east, the sweeping curve of Taylor Center's glass façade reveals a concourse lined with mementos of athletic and academic history. To the west, a gleaming addition to Centennial Student Union creates a new front door to campus, one that leads to a three-story hearth room where a flames glow in a huge fireplace made from locally quarried Kasota stone. These join other images of a campus that is modern but not cold, new but connected to its past and its place.



Centennial Student Union by Kenn Busch



*THE STUDENT* union forms the heart of any campus, the center of student life and the only place that is devoted entirely to those vital aspects of the college experience that occur outside the classroom. For more than thirty years, Centennial Student Union was well-used, but its design was form-follows-function to a fault. This spring, the CSU reopened fully to students after a renovation that reshaped and renewed the building. The project unified many public areas, clearing away walls that obscured views of the fountain outside, blocked natural light and created cramped rooms for designated uses. Now, students walk into a hearth room that connects a great, wide-open space on two levels, all of it splashed with color and furnished with dining tables, cozy couches and chairs, and rows of computer stations. The new CSU invites students to get comfortable, to settle in and hang out as long as they want.





Centennial Student Union by Kenn Busch



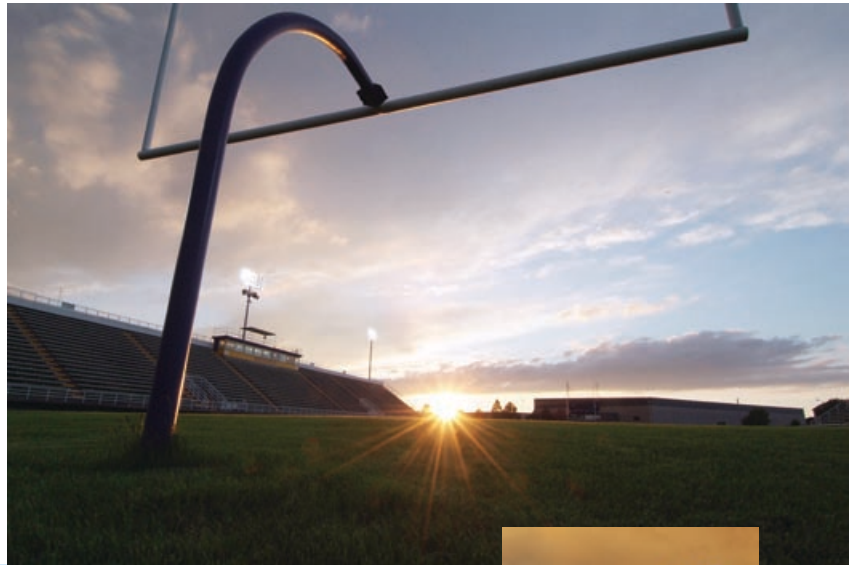


Wiecking Auditorium by Heather Gordon

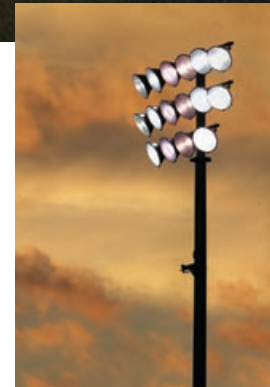
*TO SIT* in Wiecking Auditorium these days is almost disorienting to anyone who knew the place before. This, after all, was the dim room where freshmen slouched in corners and fanned themselves with notebooks while instructors bellowed at 200 or more students crowded in rows of squeaking seats. Having undergone a complete makeover, the auditorium now shines, its echoes and shadows gone. Instructors control state-of-the-art projection and sound systems, and their students enjoy new lighting, seating and air conditioning. To be here is to learn how potential can lie in unexpected places, and that seems like a good metaphor for any university.

*A LIFETIME* is an assemblage of moments. Four thousand fans roar as the Mavericks take the lead inside Bresnan Arena at the Taylor Center. A class watches a foreign film in an auditorium that is better-equipped than some theaters back home. Four friends laugh as they slide into a booth in the Global Learning Lab, a warm and bright space created in what had been a quiet corner of the library basement, a place that is now a high-tech platform for traditional classes

Blakeslee Stadium by Brian Fowler



and casual study. These are the moments people remember, moments small and large. And they are all part of one night on MSU's campus, a place that is not so young anymore but one with a new identity, a stronger sense of community. 🏠



Nick Healy is an editor for Compass Point Books and an adjunct faculty member in MSU's Department of English. He was awarded a 2005 McKnight Individual Artist Grant from Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council, and one of his short stories will appear in a forthcoming issue of *The Georgetown Review*.

**MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
MANKATO

BUILDING KEY			
AF	Alumni Foundation Center	PA	Performing Arts Center
AH	Armstrong Hall	SU	Centennial Student Union
CC	Carkoski Commons	TC	Taylor Center
CR	Crawford Complex	TR	Trafton Science Center
GC	Gage Complex	TE	Trafton Science Center E
HC	Highland Center	TN	Trafton Science Center N
HN	Highland Center N	TS	Trafton Science Center S
MC	McElroy Complex	UP	Utilities Plant
MF	Myers Field House	WC	Wiecking Center
ML	Memorial Library	WA	Wigley Administration Center
MH	Morris Hall	WH	Wissink Hall
NH	Nelson Hall	●	Marso-Schmitz Plaza
PH	Pennington Hall	■	Jane Rush Gathering Place