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USL Architecture Building A Standout

By ALTON BROUSSARD
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The new university building is a three-story structure composed of four quadrants clustered around this central court.

Sculpture Studio - This studio for sculpture students and studios for painting, photography and other applied arts spaces.

Central Court - The new university building is a three-story structure composed of four quadrants clustered around this central court.

PRIZE-WINNING BUILDING — The new art and architecture building at Southwestern was built from a prize winning design submitted by Barras, Breaux and Champeaux of Lafayette. Competition to select the design was open to architects registered to practice in Louisiana.

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Building A Standout

In an area in which interesting and accommodating buildings are plentiful, the new art and architecture building at the University of Southwestern is a stand-out. Designed with the manner by which the design was selected, the building has been exceptional and recently selected by the most critical of professionals, the state's architects.

At a recent state convention of the Louisiana Architects Association, the new university structure was selected as one of five to win top honor awards.

Two other Lafayette buildings were also among the five top designs honored, bringing outstanding recognition to the local architectural firms who designed them. Barras, Breaux and Champeaux designed two of the honor buildings, the art and architecture building and Andrus Book Store, 210 W. St. Mary. The other award winner, the Acadiana Medical Laboratories, Ltd., 218 Rue France, was designed by Meleton, Patin and Guillory, also of Lafayette.

The awards were presented for design excellence on completed buildings. Barras, Breaux and Champeaux previously received national recognition for the art and architecture building when the firm was selected for construction as the winning design for the facility through nation-wide architectural competition several years ago.

The jury which selected the design said the building was a "strong sense of visual order and spatial organization." The designers' attention to the function within the building and a straightforward use of materials and details produce an environment which would stimulate total freedom of imagination and thought.

The basic functions are organized horizontally and clearly express the school's three sections: applied arts, architecture, and fine arts. Spatial interaction, achieved by open planning, permits the unique programs of each section to function independently, yet allow active participation with the other sections in interdisciplinary projects.

The architectural forms are kept simple and crisp and would provide a suitable environment in which to teach the arts.

The imposing building has 65,000 square feet and is a three story structure composed of four quadrants clustered around a central court. The ground floor houses the architectural spaces, ceramics and sculpture studios and shops.

The second floor contains the director's suite, basic design and freehand drawing studios; and the media center.

The third level contains the basic functions for architecture, ceramics and sculpture students and studios for painting, freehand drawing and sculpture. The manner in which the building design was selected was almost as unique as the building. When it was learned that a new facility was to be constructed to house the School of Art and Architecture a group of architecture students prepared a petition asking that the selection of the architect be made by competition.

The petition was presented to the Louisiana Architects Association and received unanimous approval. After considerable effort by the LAA, university authorities and other interested groups and individuals, the State Board of Education authorized plans for the competition.

The winner was promised the project design contract, second place would receive $2,500 and third place would receive $1,500.

Thirty-six entries were received; 26 from Louisiana architects and the remainder from six other states.

Construction of the building began in the fall of 1973. The building is complete and occupied but the grounds have not yet been landscaped.