

Mandelle: A Brief History



Mandelle Library wasn't the first building constructed after Allan Hoben became president of Kalamazoo College in 1922, but it set the tone for all buildings later erected on the campus.

From 1902 until Mandelle's dedication in 1930, Kalamazoo College's library was housed on the second floor of Bowen Hall. An expanding collection, increasing enrollment, and limited space made a new library a necessity. President Hoben included it as part of his Centennial Building Project, a comprehensive plan to develop the campus, but construction would have to wait until funding was found.

In 1928, a gift out of the blue ended the wait. Mary Senter Mandelle, known to her friends as "Minnie," left the College the unheard of sum of \$350,000 to be used to build, equip, and maintain a new library. Mandelle had never visited the campus, but had heard wonderful things about it from her friend Claude Harmon and felt it was worthy of her support. The Index, the student newspaper, described the scene when the announcement was made during the daily chapel service.

"Reserved, aloof professors waved their arms madly in the air, and shouted at the tops of their voices. Students who had been on their good behavior burst forth into a frantic din which would do credit to a championship

football game...Ed Russey pounded out 'All Hail to Kazoo' on the gnarled old chapel piano and was almost drowned out by the hearty and noisy attempts at singing issuing from the vocal chords of some 500 professors, trustees, and students."

President Hoben felt strongly that "the theme of the building will be New England simplicity with no ostentation, inside or out...It must be a gem architecturally, but at the same time inviting, cozy, ...and personal." The President and Board of Trustees picked architect Aymar Embury, II, of New York to design the building, beginning an association with the College that would continue for many years. Embury went on to design Hoben, Welles, and Harmon Halls on the campus.

In 1967, Upjohn Library was dedicated and Mandelle's tenure as the College's library ended. Today it is the home for the College's administrative offices. The former periodicals room is now the Business Office and the reading room is now the Olmsted Room. What remains is the portrait of Minnie Mandelle, looking down at what she built.

