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## Law school comes to order at new campus

### High-tech complex is the 1st in the westside's Bryant Park development

By Doug Smith

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Charlotte School of Law dean Eugene Clark (left) calls the skyline view one of the delightful surprises at the school's new building on Wilkinson Boulevard.

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Students attending the Charlotte School of Law will be able to belly up to the “knowledge bar” and hang out at the “bus stop.”

Those are two unique features of the school's new four-story, \$20 million westside building to be unveiled at an 11 a.m. ribbon cutting today.

The facility has 400 study areas, a law library and high tech features ranging from touch-screen lecture tools to courtroom cameras.

That's important in preparing people for careers in law, said dean Eugene Clark, but so is engaging students and facilitating student-to-student and student-to-faculty interaction and collaboration.

Seated at the semi-circular knowledge bar – there's one on each floor – students can draw diagrams on the whiteboard bar top, plug in laptop computers and access a flat screen TV.

The bus stop is an informal gathering area where they can push chairs together and converse between classes or convene in after hours sessions.

About 50 faculty and staff members have moved into the building and are preparing for the start of classes on Aug. 18 for about 300 students.

The Charlotte School of Law, part of the InfiLaw Consortium of Independent Law Schools, has operated for about two years from temporary quarters on East Morehead Street.

The new building is the first in the 40-acre Bryant Park multi-use development on the former Radiator Specialty Co. site at Wilkinson Boulevard and Suttle Avenue.

Clark said the location just outside the Interstate 277 loop was attractive because of its proximity to uptown, the airport and interstate highways.

Developer Merrifield Partners and its team of LS3P Associates, Matrix Real Estate Services and J.F. Schultze Construction pushed to have the building finished in time for the start of classes, he said.

The surprises that came with moving into the new building – the night views of the skyline and the excitement the school is generating on the westside – have been “delightful,” Clark said.

Lawyers and paralegals from Charlotte law firms already are using the law library, which covers most of the second floor in the new building.

Students will get a taste of the real world during mock trials conducted in a first floor courtroom with cameras that follow the proceedings.

An adjoining 115-seat lecture room is loaded with high-tech innovations. A student can press a button on the desk to speak, for example, and a camera beams his image onto a screen in front of the class.

A professor can move around the classroom with a portable touch-screen computer and project documents on a screen for the class to view. A classroom camera can photograph notes he writes on a whiteboard so students don't have to copy off the board.

The school occupies about 75,000 square feet on three floors of the 102,000-square-foot building. Clark said the fourth floor will remain unfinished as the staff determines what's needed to accommodate growth.

Merrifield Partners, which is developing Bryant Park for a joint venture of Crosland and the Radiator Specialty property owners, is working to attract additional tenants.

The master plan envisions apartments overlooking the project's namesake public park, and Merrifield's George Macon said he's talking with a multifamily developer interested in building a 350-unit complex there.

Two other potential buildings are in the early stages of preleasing and presales.

Macon said an 80,000-square-foot leased office building would face Wilkinson Boulevard, and a 45,000- to 50,000-square-foot office condo building would be on a planned parkway connecting Wilkinson and West Morehead Street.

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