



## ***U-M Law School receives \$10 million gift for building project from Robert and Ann Aikens***

**Nov. 5, 2009**

**Contact: John Masson, 734.647.7352, [jpmasson@umich.edu](mailto:jpmasson@umich.edu)**

ANN ARBOR, Mich.---Robert and Ann Aikens have made a \$10 million gift to the University of Michigan Law School for the School's ongoing building expansion and renovation project. Robert Aikens, of Bloomfield Hills, Mich., is chairman of Robert B. Aikens & Associates L.L.C., a commercial real estate development and management firm based in suburban Detroit, and a 1954 alumnus of the Law School. The gift is the largest ever made to the Law School by a living donor.

The Aikens' gift will help fund construction that expands instructional space at the historic Law Quadrangle for the first time since the School's main classroom building opened in 1933. The \$102 million project, for which ground was broken in September, includes a new Law School Commons adjacent to existing Law School buildings, and a new four-story academic building across Monroe Street south of the Quadrangle.

In recognition of the Aikens' extraordinary generosity, the Law School will name the new Commons the Robert B. Aikens Commons. Blending contemporary and traditional architecture, the two-story, 16,000-square-foot space will have a glass roof that affords views of the surrounding stone walls. The Aikens Commons, which will include group study spaces, gathering spots for faculty and students, a café, and student organizational space, is destined to become the heart of Law School community life.

"Bob Aikens is one of the nation's most respected developers of commercial real estate, and we are so pleased that his name will be associated in perpetuity with the Law Quadrangle, the architectural jewel in the University's crown," said University President Mary Sue Coleman. "We are deeply grateful that Bob and Ann have chosen to invest in the University and the Law School at this critical time."

The couple has previously provided generous support to the Law School, the School of Art & Design, and the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics. Ann Aikens earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University's School of Art & Design in 2002 and is a member of the Dean's Advisory Council of the University of Michigan School of Art & Design.

"When I was in law school, there were few places for the off-campus students to have lunch or work other than the Law Library," Robert Aikens said. "When I was appointed to the Building Committee, we found that most leading law schools had a gathering place. I am pleased to help our school join other leading law schools with such a wonderful facility."

-- MORE --

Law School Dean Evan Caminker said the Robert B. Aikens Commons will have a dramatic impact on the student experience, making a school already known for its collegiality an even warmer and more welcoming place.

“By helping build the new Commons, this splendid gift will enable generations of students to enjoy the soaring architecture of the Law Quad in an entirely new way,” Caminker said. “The Robert B. Aikens Commons is sure to become a new nucleus for the intellectual and social life of the Law School and will help nurture the bonds students form here, both among themselves and with the faculty. We’re extremely grateful to Ann and Bob Aikens for their generosity.”

A native of South Bend, Ind., Robert Aikens earned a B.A. at Brown University before coming to Michigan to study law. He was a senior partner with the law firm of Wunsch, Aikens & Lungershausen before forming a company in his name in 1973 in Troy, Michigan. His portfolio of projects has included regional shopping centers, main-street lifestyle centers, community centers, commercial office buildings, and resort communities.

At the University of Michigan, Aikens has served on the Law School’s Committee of Visitors and its Detroit Major Gifts Committee. He has also served on the Brady Advisory Council of Johns Hopkins University, the Board of Trustees of Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, Michigan, and as stewardship chairman at Christ Church, Cranbrook in Bloomfield Hills.

The new Law School facilities are scheduled for completion in 2012. The project architect is Hartman-Cox Architects of Washington, D.C., working in association with Michigan-based Integrated Design Solutions.

###