

# THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL

## U OF M LAW SCHOOL OPENS IN FORMER CUSTOMS HOUSE

The University of Memphis' Cecil C. Humphrey's Law School today opens the doors of its new Downtown location for the first time to more than 500 students, professors and staff.

The newly renovated 169,000-square-foot building originally housed the 19th century U.S. Customs House.

"The move to the new building will significantly enhance our ability to carry out our mission to prepare the next generation of lawyers and judges, as well as provide greatly needed access to the legal system for under-served groups through our in-house legal clinics," School of Law Dean Kevin Smith said.

"In addition, the new facility and location will enable us to compete for the best students throughout the region and country."

Here are some facts about the facility:

— The building has served as a customs house, court house and post office;

— It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980;

— Built in the early 1880s, the Italianate Revival-style building opened in 1885.

— The \$42 million renovation and construction began in fall 2006, after the Postal Service formally turned the building over;

Primary east-facing entrances will continue to be the primary entrances;

A renovated, old federal courtroom on the third floor will be the school's moot courtroom. The room provides examples of rediscovered architectural details found throughout the building, including a decorative ceiling and roof monitor;

All five levels of the South Wing will be the Plough Law Library. It includes glass walls overlooking the Mississippi River;

Two of the buildings' 10 original security vaults will serve as study space and a small office;

In the North Wing, administrative and faculty offices are on the second and third floors. The first floor houses a student lounge, study areas, law student bookstore, and a Starbucks;

The North Wing's lowest level will contain the Legal Clinic, locker rooms and student organization offices;

Five large classrooms with tiered floors and state-of-the-art technol-

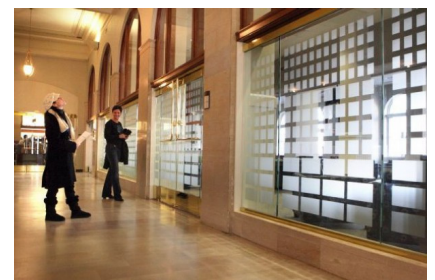
ogy are in the center-rear of the original 1903 addition;

The Front Plaza will offer new benches, bike racks and low-maintenance landscaping;

And the renovation included a \$2 million seismic retrofit.

"Great lengths have been taken to preserve the historical integrity of the building while transforming it into a high-tech, cutting-edge learning environment," said project director and architect Bill Nixon of Askew Nixon Ferguson Architects.

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Tours were held last week at the new University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law in the old U.S. Customs House. Among those on hand were Jordan Russell, a first-year law student checking out the student lounge with her mother, Susan Russell.