

FROM Public Relations Office
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A completely modern observatory and planetarium which will be used for teaching and research, and as a public facility was announced today by Dr. William S. Carlson, president of the University of Toledo. The structure, to be built at an estimated cost "in excess of \$400,000," is the gift of Mr. and Mrs. George W. Ritter, 4555 Forest View Dr., and will be known as The Ritter Planetarium and Observatory, Dr. Carlson said.

Final plans for the building were approved by Mr. Ritter at a meeting last week with Dr. Carlson and John Richards of Richards, Bauer and Moorhead, architects for the building. The Ritter gift was announced at TU's commencement last June. A university planning committee has been working with the architects and Mr. Ritter since then on the building.

The building will be constructed, probably starting in late June, near the present Cheltenham Road entrance to the university. It will have six levels and two towers. The observatory tower will be capped by a dome 62 feet above the ground level. The observatory dome will have a 24-foot diameter and will contain a Cassegrain-type reflecting telescope with a 15-inch mirror. Its attachments will include a refracting telescope equipped with a filter for solar study, a spectrograph, an astrograph for wide-field photography, and photographic equipment.

The pier for the telescope will be buried some 70 feet beneath the ground level to prevent vibrations. The section of the building housing the observatory measures about 40 feet by 40 feet and connects to the planetarium -- the main section -- which measures 54 feet by 87 feet.

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In the planetarium there will be a theater-classroom with a seating capacity of about 175 persons. The dome of the planetarium will have a 40-foot diameter on which projections of stars, planetary motion and astronomical phenomena may be shown. When not in use as a planetarium the room can be converted into a classroom. Rather than conventional planetarium seating, in which the seats encircle the room, the Ritter Planetarium will utilize a theater-type seating arrangement. This will permit conversion for classroom use.

Mrs. Helen Brooks, assistant professor of astronomy at TU, who will be in charge of the new building, said it will include offices, an office-seminar room, an astronomy laboratory and a darkroom for photographic work. The building will be equipped with an elevator.

"We expect this to become a center of public interest as well as an education and research center," Dr. Carlson said. He noted that experience at planetariums in other cities indicates that thousands of adults, as well as elementary and secondary school children visit such facilities annually.

A major attraction in the new building will be the exhibits which will be in the space surrounding the planetarium and observatory towers. This exhibit area will be devoted to a series of displays which are designed to supplement the demonstrations given in the planetarium chambers, and also will serve as an assembly area for persons waiting to attend the demonstrations.

"The planetarium will allow the sky to be presented as it appears at any time of day or night, for any time in the past or future, and from any point on the earth," Mrs. Brooks said. She added that "Motions of

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the earth and other celestial bodies can be accelerated so that phenomena which take centuries in nature can be accomplished within the span of a single demonstration session."

The telescope will be mounted to span 360-degrees although the major portion of the research work at TU will be concentrated on the heavens in the south, southeast and southwest, Mrs. Brooks said. The other major area of emphasis for research will be conducted with the smaller, refracting telescope which will be equipped for studies of the sun.

The building will face Bancroft Street and will be set back from the street in line with the University Library. Lannon stone will be used for the building which will blend with other university structures.

Other equipment now being used in the small planetarium in University Hall will be moved to the new building when it is completed, Mrs. Brooks said. It is expected that the new building will be completed about a year after construction begins.