

Cook & Franke Gift Supports Computer Facilities

BY LISA KAISER

Law students will benefit greatly from the latest gift from the members of the Milwaukee firm Cook & Franke. The gift will help pay for new computer facilities to be housed in the remodeled Law School.

The effort was spearheaded by firm president Francis R. Croak ('53), who suggested that members pledge and that the firm match the funds contributed by the individuals. Almost \$80,000 was pledged by individuals; the total amount contributed is more than \$105,000.

Croak stated that raising the money required little effort. "It was surprisingly easy," Croak said. "There was a great deal of enthusiasm. Especially the younger people felt that with a computer lab they wanted to be involved."

The gift will help alleviate the stress on the current computer facilities, which are too small to handle all of the students' needs, especially when it comes to instruction.

Presently computers are scattered throughout the building, but the main computer lab used for instruction contains only 12 computers—not enough to meet the demands of 285 Legal Writing students. Groups of a dozen students are taught basic research skills every hour, but that prevents other students from using the room. The lab must be shut down for a week to teach the Legal Writing students, preventing the rest of the law students from using the lab.

The Cook & Franke contribution will end this situation by doubling the size of the instructional lab. A second lab will provide additional computer access. One lab will always be open for students to use on their own, regardless of teaching schedules.

The new labs will also be larger for the accommodation of 25 computers in each room, and also provide for increased work space.

Despite the space problems, the Law School has earned a national reputation

for using computers creatively. The School is hooked up to larger information networks such as CD-Rom, LEXIS/NEXIS, and WESTLAW to make research more efficient and thorough. Additionally, students can check out laptop and notebook computers to plug into networks throughout the library or take home.

The School's influence can also be felt in the daily practice of law, according to Croak. "The Wisconsin Law School has always been involved in programs that affect the practice of law, so that you have a continuing relationship if you're at all active in the field," Croak said. "There's a constant relationship, a continuing relationship between graduates and the School. If you practice law in Wisconsin you're aware of the Law School and what it's doing."