

GROUNDING IN HISTORY

By Matt Schnepf

The story of Purdue University is a powerful one, where people bring their best and learn to build a better world together through small steps and giant leaps.

—Message on the Atlas Family Marketplace welcome arch

A comprehensive renovation has revitalized the Purdue Memorial Union's ground floor, which reopened in January as the Atlas Family Marketplace.

The facility's name honors a \$2.5 million gift from the Robert and Judith Atlas Family Foundation. A former senior vice president with Walgreens, the late Bob Atlas (P'57) met his future wife, Judy, at Purdue. When they were first dating, they often ordered hamburgers in the Union. Judy liked hers with tomato—which cost an extra 10 cents—and always wondered why Bob would drink water instead of Coke. He didn't mention it at the time, but the young college student was working his way through school and sacrificed having a Coke so Judy could enjoy her tomato.

"Purdue was really the beginning of our family, and we wanted to celebrate that through this gift," says son Howard Atlas (P'84), president of the foundation. "College is challenging today, and it's important that students have this hub on campus—a place of refuge, study, and relaxation."

The University dedicated the Atlas Family Marketplace on April 28. The design blends a fresh, modern look with treasured elements of the iconic building, including plaster arches and wooden windows. Campus memorabilia throughout the facility honor Purdue traditions and history.

The marketplace features state-of-the-art technology; increased accessibility; 900 interior seats in various styles and configurations; collaborative spaces; and 12 retail dining venues.

Purdue completed the Union's original construction in 1924. The ground floor's last renovation in 2008 included mostly cosmetic updates.

"The Atlas Family Marketplace has dramatically transformed the ground floor of the Purdue Memorial Union, blending modern amenities with historic and treasured features," says Purdue President Mitch Daniels. "We extend sincere thanks to the Atlas family and all of our generous donors who helped us create this premier destination for students, faculty, staff, and guests."

WARM WELCOME

Upon entering the Atlas Family Marketplace, visitors are greeted by a welcome arch similar to the one found outside at State and Grant Streets.

BOILERMAKER MARKET

A new convenience store allows students and visitors to grab a quick snack or beverage while passing through the Union. The store's proximity to the Union Club Hotel makes it accessible to overnight guests as well.

GATHER ROUND

The 1869 Meeting Room provides space for small gatherings. The room's name reflects the year of Purdue's founding.

HAVE A SEAT

Just outside the 1869 Meeting Room, the 1869 Lounge provides a variety of seating options—booths, couches, and high tables—to create an ideal spot for quiet study, collaboration, or a snack break.

TAKE A CUE

Students and guests can reserve one of the marketplace billiard tables, a nod to the Union's original billiards space. Additional tables and the campus bowling alley can still be found at Union Rack and Roll in the basement.

CENTER STAGE

The smaller of two terraces within the Atlas Family Marketplace, the Mary J. Hanna-Elmore East Terrace includes an outdoor stage, firepit, and event space ideal for private functions.

TRUE COLORS

A nod to the building's history, new stained-glass windows emulate existing windows in the Union that represent "the mixing of students of all races and creeds welcome within its walls."

[Photo Gallery]

// Co-owned by Purdue football legend Drew Brees (M'01), Walk-On's Sports Bistreaux features 48 TVs and scratch-made, Louisiana-inspired cuisine with game-day flair.

// Photos of Purdue student-athletes are featured within Walk-On's.

// As a tribute to the beloved Pappy's Sweet Shop previously located nearby, Walk-On's includes a small section with an original Pappy's booth.

// Generations of Boilermakers carved their names into this booth once located in Pappy's Sweet Shop.

SMOKE SCREEN

The smoking fence—an iron railing that once encircled much of campus—got its name from 19th-century students who skirted a rule that forbade smoking on University grounds. The students would lean over the fence, technically off campus, while smoking. Sections of the smoking fence can still be found around campus, including inside the Union. A small remnant divides the 21-and-older area of Walk-On's from the main dining section.

ETCHED IN STONE

A limestone marker honoring the late Beverley Stone (HDR LA'86)—Purdue's first dean of students and the first woman to hold such a position at a Big Ten university—was once located at the corner of Grant and State Streets outside the Union. Components of the original marker were incorporated into the ground floor's design during the renovation, and they now welcome guests at the base of the Great Hall staircase and near the west tower stairs.

OLD FLAME

The Fireside Lounge features abundant seating, natural light, and a restored fireplace uncovered during construction. The fireplace now includes the popular Purdue acclamation "Hammer Down" at the top.

PIECES OF PURDUE

The mosaic wall pays tribute to the beloved places, activities, and traditions woven into the fabric of Purdue's campus. Look closely, and you'll see icons representing the griffin on Purdue's seal, the Bell Tower, space exploration, and the "World's Largest Drum."

[Photo Gallery]

// During the renovation's demolition phase, an exterior wall from the original 1924 construction was uncovered. It is now encased in glass near the Sol Toro restaurant.

// Columns to the left and right of the exterior wall display include the lyrics to "Purdue Hymn" and the fight song, "Hail Purdue!"

// Many seating options are available throughout Atlas Family Marketplace. As part of the renovation, the Union invited students to test out dining, lounge, and patio furniture and rate the pieces on comfort, durability, and style.

// An open area near Starbucks features the Hail Purdue Stage. To accommodate performances, seating in this space can be adapted to more of a theater feel.

PURDUE TRADITIONS

Located throughout the Atlas Family Marketplace, several wood plaques highlight cherished campus features and history. Some of these include the Bell Tower, the Stone Lions Fountain, and the Old Pump.

MATERNAL TRIBUTE

Named in honor of the late Kathie Beeken, mother of Michael Patterson (EnE'80), Kathie's Porch in the west terrace breezeway provides a comfortable place to sit and relax.

OUTDOOR OASIS

The larger of two terraces, the Mary J. Hanna-Elmore West Terrace provides additional seating and a second firepit. Students and guests can grab food in the marketplace and meet friends here for a meal.

DINING OPTIONS

[Aatish](#) // Contemporary Indian kitchen with build-your-own meals.

[BBQ District](#) // Slow-cooked meats, regional sauces, and savory sides.

[Chef Bill Kim's](#) // Asian dumplings and bowls using authentic ingredients.

[Fresh Fare](#) // Fresh flavors with an emphasis on dairy-free and gluten-free fare.

[Latin Inspired](#) // Casual dishes with South American touches.

[Pizza & Parm Shop](#) // Detroit-style pizza, pasta, and sandwich options.

[Sol Toro](#) // Mexican specialties with a modern flair.

[Starbucks](#) // Coffee and food from the multinational chain.

[Sushi Boss](#) // Customizable sushi rolls and bowls.

[Walk-On's Sports Bistreaux](#) // Louisiana-inspired cuisine with game-day spirit.

[Zen](#) // Build-your-own poké bowls with fresh and healthy ingredients.

FLY-THROUGH

[Get a drone's-eye view](#) of the entire ground-floor renovation.