



The Charles H. Benzinger Memorial Library

The Charles H. Benzinger Memorial Library was formally dedicated on May 22, 1955 and opened in May 1956. The Library was part of U-M's formal library system until the early 2000s, when it was decommissioned and became a "community learning center." It continues as an informal library and meeting space in East Quad. The library moved from the basement to the main floor in the 1970s (into space that had been affectionately called "the airport lounge"). Following building renovation (2013), a smaller version of the library opened, south of the main entrance on East University Avenue near Willard Street.

The library is named for **Charles Harry Benzinger**, who was treasurer of the East Quad Council that called for the creation in the East Quad basement of a library, a council meeting room, a snack bar (the precursor of the Halfway Inn), soundproofing of music practice rooms, renovation of the Camera Club's darkroom, and three rooms to serve as headquarters for student radio station WCBN (Campus Broadcasting Network), which began broadcasting in 1952. Chuck Benzinger provided the project plan and much of the inspiration. Funding for the project came from private donors but also from East Quad student funds, apparently the rationale behind the project being called "Operation Ransom."

Chuck was a pre-med student at U-M. He earned his BS in Spring 1953. From Escanaba, Michigan, he died in a car accident in 1954 in Wells, near his home. Chuck played trombone in the U-M Concert Band and Symphonic Band, and was in the Michigan Marching Band. Chuck was president of his high school's National Honor Society, and received awards for instrumental music and debate. He had two brothers, Robert and Bill. His parents, Muriel and Carl, attended the library's dedication.

Muriel (left) and Carl Benzinger visit their son Chuck at U-M in the early 1950s. They stand outside East Quad's main entrance, on East University Avenue (left) near Willard Street. It is likely that Chuck is wearing his U-M Marching Band uniform.

