

# LANSING CAMPUS



## SOCIETY OF ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE FACILITIES

**LOCATION:** Downtown Lansing, Michigan

**OWNER:** Thomas M. Cooley Law School

Responsibility is a subject lawyers talk a great deal about. Usually, this is in the context of litigation or criminal prosecution. The Thomas M. Cooley Law School applied this sense of responsibility and stewardship to its community and environment as it built and grew its Lansing, Mich., campus

Cooley's Lansing campus is comprised of four buildings. Heading south from the beautiful Michigan State Capitol Building and its picturesque dome, you first come across the Cooley Temple Conference Center, a classic example of adaptive reuse. Formerly a Masonic Temple located in downtown Lansing's core, this building now houses classrooms, staff, and auditorium space for the United States' largest law school (by enrollment).

Rather than tear down the classic architecture and symbols of the Masons, the school retains these elements as critical structural and decorative elements to the building's exterior, lobby, and auditorium.

The building, lacking both heat and water throughout much of the structure, was purchased for \$400,000. Subsequently, Cooley has spent over \$10 million to keep the classic exterior and develop and modernize the interior.

Though an older building, the Temple features modern water efficiency technology, a strong emphasis on recycling, and stringent air quality standards. Older windows have been retrofitted with double pane glass, and reflective coating was applied to the existing roof to increase heating and cooling efficiency. Cooley further increases the users' quality of life by using green cleaning products. Heavy insulation and an advanced building automation system are used to efficiently cre-



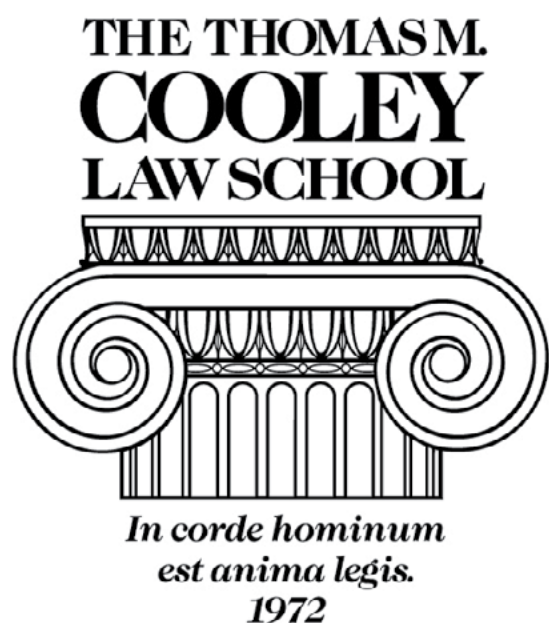


ate optimal temperature conditions inside. Most importantly, a visitor will find these features in every building on the Lansing campus, all of which are a very short walk from one another.

A short jaunt across Capitol Avenue takes you to the Cooley Center, the principal teaching and administrative building at Cooley's Lansing campus. Among other facilities, this building holds the school's bookstore and offices of President Don LeDuc. At 10 stories tall, this building is a critical element of Lansing's economy and intellectual scene. With stunning views and state-of-the-art classrooms, this building helps attract law students to Lansing from around the country and the world.

The building was once much different and is a classic example of efficiently using urban core space. Formerly the Commerce Center Building, the structure was once 14 floors and largely vacant after the state of Michigan relocated previously used offices. Cooley bought the building for \$1.5 million, and proceeded to invest over \$35 million in its rehabilitation. Extensive asbestos removal was necessary and the building was redesigned to allow for only 10 floors with 14-foot ceilings. The building's skin and some of the steel was replaced to make it more structurally sound and efficient

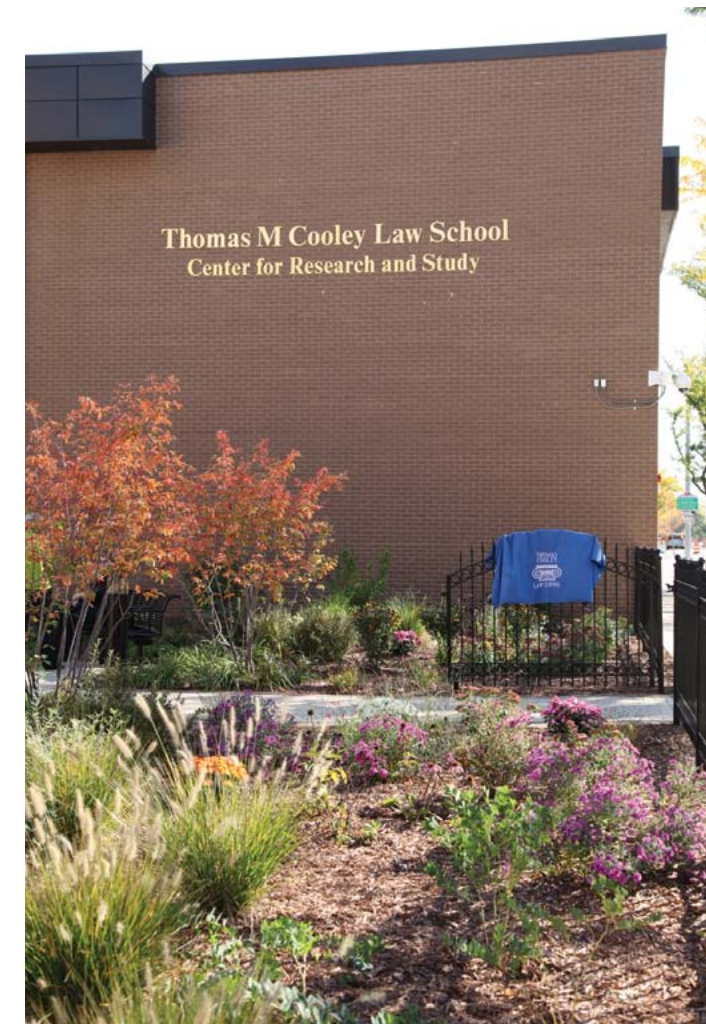
The size, sophistication, and location of this facility (and the campus in general) offer Cooley students many opportunities. Due to the size of its student population, faculty, and facilities, the school offers many classes that other law schools cannot. Cooley capitalized on this advantage by establishing campuses across Michigan in Ann Arbor, Auburn Hills, and Grand Rapids, Mich. In May 2012, the school will begin courses at its new campus in Tampa, Fla.



Though each one of these campuses operates as a functional law school, Cooley uses distance learning technology to transport the knowledge of expert professors at one campus to students at all its campuses.

Many specialized electives are interactively broadcast throughout the campuses. Therefore, a professor in Lansing can answer a question from a student in Grand Rapids without having to drive between campuses. This innovative technique allows for expansion and maintenance of a highly specialized level of education without the usual negative environmental impact of students or professors traveling between campuses.

The Cooley Center acts as the hub for this activity and has helped turn downtown Lansing into an educational destination where knowledge may be disseminated throughout the country. The Cooley Center accomplishes this with a high level of operational efficiency in a clean and contemporary work setting. Activities like class registration, note and test taking are now paperless as a result of intense systems cultivation by administrators at the Cooley Center. It only takes a



walk back across Capitol Avenue to find Cooley's newest project: the Thomas M. Cooley Law School Center for Research & Study.

The Center for Research & Study represents a new step for Cooley. Adjoining the Lansing campus' existing library, the center adds even more space and resources to what is already one of the largest law libraries in the country. Prior to its conversion, the building was office space. This facility features a lounge area for students, quiet study spaces, and conference rooms.





The center features state-of-the-art restrooms, lighting concepts, and exceptional air quality standards. The restrooms in particular feature low-flow faucets, Dyson high-efficiency dryers, Sloan water-free urinals, and Sloan low-flush, multiple-flush-option toilets. The center also features a novelty in downtown life: green space. Though limited, the center's green space is a handsomely arranged mix of walking trails, benches, and a fountain, all surrounded by dense pocket of native plants. Photocells are used to power and operate the lighted foot-paths. It provides a peaceful, green oasis in an otherwise high-traffic concrete jungle and is efficiently irrigated by rainwater from the center. A walk through this lovely garden will lead you to the entrance of the last building in the Lansing campus: The Thomas E. Brennan Law Library.

Thomas E. Brennan founded Thomas M. Cooley Law School in 1972 after having served as Chief Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court. Brennan created a law school with a different focus than those of the day. The mission of Cooley extols the wide availability of legal education for those who can be successful, especially for those who would not traditionally have access, and the importance of constant academic rigor.

When Cooley Law School bought the building, it was a former department store in dilapidated condition. They sale price was only \$700,000, but over \$11 million was invested to modernize the structure. As a statement of progress and development in downtown Lansing, Judge Brennan had the usual "breaking ground" ceremony replaced with a more symbolic action. Supplied by former colleagues with a sledge hammer, bearing the inscription "Tom Brennan's Gavel," Brennan knocked out a dirty plate glass window as a gesture to show the building's rebirth. The "gavel" is prominently displayed in the library to this day.

It follows that SERF, an organization looking to challenge environmental and certification norms while maintaining high standards, would partner with Cooley to promote their commitment to Practical Environmental Stewardship™. Like the other buildings of Cooley's Lansing campus, the Brennan Law Library is a model in responsible stewardship.

The building draws on natural light to reduce its own lighting costs (a constant concern in a library setting). This is particularly important to students having access to one of the largest collection of legal material



in the country, including reference materials from all 50 states. The building shares many of the same efficiency features as the other buildings on the Lansing campus. However, the most important aspect of this building, and the whole campus, may be the school's understanding of its location.

The Brennan Law Library's entrance is flanked by rows of bicycle racks and nearby car parking. Its location on Lansing's vibrant Washington Square encourages students to come and stay in the area. With immediate walking distance to numerous restaurants, bicycle trails, trendy loft apartments, Lansing's main bus terminal, and numerous internship/job opportunities, this facility gives students, faculty, and staff every incentive to linger or live in a vibrant downtown core.

More than anything, Cooley shows its commitment to environmental responsibility by showing an understanding of the school and its surroundings. The Lansing campus is in a prime location. Efforts to be environmentally responsible focus on two great challenges. First, Cooley manages its consumption levels due to high volume by employing top-notch water efficiency measures and air quality standards, and by strongly promoting recycling. Second, Cooley has adapted to Michigan's climate by heavily insulating its buildings and offering high-tech distance learning to spread academic knowledge and keep people off the roads.

Finally, Cooley has integrated itself into the downtown core community and promoted downtown Lansing as much as any private entity. When the Capital City River Run needed a sponsor for its downtown 5k race, Cooley brought its own decade-long 5k race to

benefit schools to the Capital City program. When a naming right's sponsor was needed to keep the downtown baseball stadium in place, Cooley stepped to the plate and provided the financing. The ballpark manager, LEPPA (Lansing Entertainment and Public Facilities Authority) worked with SERF in certifying that sustainable structure, which is also one of the most handicap accessible in the nation.

Cooley's Lansing campus makes these positive interactions possible. Thomas M. Cooley Law School's Lansing campus exhibits the school's commitment to environmental responsibility, adaptive reuse and urban renewal in an exceptional way.

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SOCIETY OF ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE FACILITIES



**SERF** is a coalition of property owners and professionals certifying and promoting environmentally responsible homes and building.

**SERF** affirms that with private property rights come *responsibilities* – not least of which are the responsibilities to construct, rehabilitate, and operate our homes and facilities, enhance our communities and minimize environmental impact.

**SERF** recognizes that protection of our environment is the duty of every steward of the land, and such stewards who act accordingly should be recognized and encouraged.

**SERF** holds that honest cost-benefit analysis should be applied to building improvements and systems intended to help the environment. To endure, sustainability must be affordable.

**SERF** is an inclusive organization which provides live and online forums for members to share methods to cost-effectively meet our goals.

**SERF** builds future generations of environmentally responsible property owners. Our examples and support can teach and endow future generations to live in harmony with our planet and to conserve its precious resources.

**SERF** *Catch the wave ~ get certified!*



**PRACTICAL ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP**



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