Old Main – Wayne State University
Cass Avenue at West Warren

Dedicated in 1896, this centenarian building was designed by Malcolmson and Higginbotham to serve as Detroit’s Central High School. A series of additions in 1907, 1934 and 1949 enlarged Old Main from its original “T” shape to occupy the entire city block. It became the home of the Detroit Board of Education’s newly formed Wayne University in 1933. Wayne became a state university in 1956. Classes of every description were conducted there until 1993 when Old Main was closed to begin a $41,000,000 renovation funded by the State of Michigan. It now houses general classrooms, many departments of the College of Science, the College of Fine, Performing & Communication Arts, and a new addition containing the Elaine L. Jacob Gallery along with rehearsal and recital halls. Alumnus William A. Bostick’s dramatic watercolor of Old Main records the landmark yellow brick, stone and terra cotta building as it looked at the age of eighty in 1976.

Richard J. Bilaitis

Wayne State University Art Collection
Gift of William A Bostick

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