

Calvin College dedicates Hekman library

By Lisa Ann Williamson
The Grand Rapids Press

It was a tale of two libraries, two campuses of Calvin College, a mixing of the old and the new, and a completion of tradition.

And through it all, the Hekman family name has played a role.

About 175 Calvin College trustees, students, faculty and guests gathered Friday at the south entrance of the recently expanded campus library for the unveiling of the building's cornerstone — and the dedication and naming of the facility for Edsko Hekman.

"In 1962, the library was built on the new campus, but something was missing — the carry-over of the Hekman name," said Anthony Diekema, president of Calvin, as leaves fell gently in the sunshine that swept across the structure.

In 1928, the library at Calvin's Franklin Street campus was

named for Edsko Hekman Sr., a Dutch immigrant and cookie baker who built the Hekman Biscuit Co. The Hekman family made several donations to the building fund over the years.

When the campus moved to its current location off East Beltline Avenue SE, plans were drawn for a new five-story library. The structure was built with four levels in 1962.

The dedication ceremony for the nearly expanded library actually was a tribute to another Hekman. The grandson of Edsko Hekman Sr., who was named for his grandfather, underwrote much of the \$3.5 million cost for the fifth-floor addition.

The cornerstone reads: "Hekman Library 1962."

The younger Hekman graduated with Calvin's class of 1935. He founded Import Motors and the Meridian Corp. and was a partner

in WOOD radio.

Hekman married Claire Kuiper, also a graduate of the class of 1935. Kuiper's father, H.J. Kuiper, served many years as editor of the Christian Reformed Church's weekly magazine, "The Banner."

The Calvin Library is part of the family, Hekman noted Friday.

"We dare to dream that this gift will shape students at a critical time of their lives and in the right place," Hekman said. "The gift to the library is made in tribute to my grandparents, Edsko and Hendrijke, their three sons, Henry, John and Jelle, and all their descendants."

As a result of the new construction, about 200 study stations have been added and the library can increase its holdings by 200,000 items.

Last year, the library served 4,300 students and faculty members and 4,000 guests.



PRESS PHOTO REX D. LARSEN
Calvin College President Anthony Diekema pays tribute to the grandson of Edsko Hekman Sr., and his wife, Claire, at library dedication ceremony