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Thursday, September 13, 2007

Whitko Grad Designs Letterman Building

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Thursday, September 13, 2007



The David Letterman Communication and Media Building at Ball State University, Muncie, was dedicated Friday. The architect and designer for the building was Rod Collier, a 1991 Whitko High School graduate. He is the son of Jim and Linda Collier, Warsaw. Photo provided

INDIANAPOLIS - What do David Letterman, Ball State University and 1991 Whitko High School graduate Rod Collier have in common?

Friday, BSU dedicated the David Letterman Communication and Media Building on the university's Muncie campus. Rod Collier, the son of Jim and Linda Collier, Warsaw, was the architect and designer for the building. Letterman also is a BSU graduate.

In a telephone interview Tuesday afternoon, Rod Collier said he graduated from BSU in 1996 with degrees in architecture and environmental design. After graduation, he moved to Fort Wayne, working for MSKTD and Associates Inc. After 10 years, in 2005, Collier moved to Indianapolis, where he continues to work for MSKTD.

When Collier started on the communication building, he said Letterman's name had not yet been attached to it.

The Associated Press reported Ball State President Jo Ann Gora said the idea to name the building for Letterman first was discussed among school trustees about a year ago, but they had to persuade him to accept the honor because he didn't want the attention.

It was about six months ago when Dave's mother Dorothy started getting involved with the building that Collier said they knew something was happening. For Friday's dedication, Letterman was joined by his young son and Dorothy for the ceremony.

Letterman also was on the Oprah Winfrey Show Monday. During the interview, the communications building was shown.

"This has generated a lot of publicity for Ball State and it's much deserved," said Collier.

The dedication ceremony also was much bigger than anticipated, Collier said. Unfortunately, he said he did not get to meet Letterman, but Letterman asked about the architects and wanted to make sure they, too, were BSU graduates.

"This has been my first really big project," said Collier.



Rod Collier

according to the information on BSU's Web site.

The building helps bring BSU's school of communication into one big complex.

"It's really the new entrance to the College of Communications," said Collier. "... It's kind of the next generation of buildings for them."

The building connects a three-building communications complex, supporting three departments - communication studies, journalism and telecommunications, according to information provided by Collier. It houses the Center for Information and Communication Sciences and the Center for Media Design.

Work began on the \$21 million building in 2005, enclosing about 75,000 square feet of classroom, studio and faculty office space. There also is an additional 10,000 square feet of renovated space in the adjacent Ball Building. The building opened in August.

Cutting-edge equipment populates the \$1 million production complex, which includes two recording studios, two control rooms, two isolation rooms and five editing suites. The same equipment may be found in most of the top production houses and film studios in Hollywood, New York and London,

The building is environmentally friendly. Visitors will find light-filled, healthy instructional areas, research labs, offices and socialization areas that will be a part of the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design-certified facility.

Working with Ball State on the project has been great, Collier said. This is the fourth year Collier has worked with the university on this project, beginning with the design and construction. Collier also got to be the project administrator for the Letterman building.

"It's been a really great relationship with Ball State," Collier said. He has two more projects in the works with them that will keep him at BSU through 2010.

Collier and his partner recently built a home in downtown Indianapolis. He said though it does not bear a famous person's name, he is equally proud of his home. It is featured on the cover of the current edition of Indianapolis Monthly Home magazine.

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