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Dimond Library Receives National Award for Architecture
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By Jennifer Vento
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DURHAM, N.H. -- Dimond Library has been chosen as one of eight libraries in the country to receive a 2001 Library Building Award from the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and the American Library Association.

The honor is bestowed upon libraries that exemplify excellent design, fit the communities they serve, respond honestly to their context and create a strong sense of place, according to AIA. Representatives from UNH and Graham Gund Architects of Cambridge, Mass., the firm that designed Dimond Library, will travel to the San Francisco Public Library later this month to receive the award.

"This is the most prestigious award for a library, bar none," says University Librarian Claudia Morner. "It is particularly gratifying to me because so many people here at UNH worked on this project and were so involved in making it a success."

Dimond Library underwent a $19 million renovation project between 1996 and 1998 that gave the facility 500 more seats, 350 more computer outlets, a new map room, data center and $400,000 worth of electronic resources.

Dimond was chosen for the AIA/ALA award because it "created light-filled spaces for student use through additions on two sides of its existing building," according to a statement released by AIA. The jury, composed of three AIA members and three ALA members, called Dimond Library's redesign "a great solution to a common problem: a harsh, 1960s library has been expanded and softened with the addition of large reading areas on the outer edge of the building."
Graham Gund architects also received an award of merit from the New York Council Society of American Registered Architects for the Dimond Library renovation project.

"It not only is a beautiful building," Morner said, "but it also works very well and that is an ideal combination when you have something that is pretty to look at and is very successful for the people who use it."

The following libraries were also chosen for the 2001 Library Building Awards: Denver Public Library; Friend Memorial Library, Brooklin, Maine; Multnomah County Central Library, Portland Ore.; North Mason Timberland Library, Belfair, Wash.; Rhys Carpenter Library, Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, Pa.; Robertson Branch Library, Los Angeles; and Woodstock Branch Library, Portland, Ore.

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