



Wisconsin Union
Experiences for a lifetime

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Bruce Allison has 30 years of experience with Terrace trees
NOTED ARBORIST HIRED FOR
MEMORIAL UNION RENOVATION PROJECT

R. Bruce Allison, award-winning arborist and UW forestry professor, finds himself in familiar territory: tending trees at Memorial Union. As construction looms for the building's west wing renovation starting next summer, Allison is asked to help create a plan to preserve as many healthy trees as possible, remove ailing ones and plant new trees to ensure that the canopy will last far into the future.

"I have had the honor and privilege of looking after the Terrace trees for over 30 years starting in 1980," said Allison. "One of my earliest clients after starting my tree care company in 1974 was Porter Butts, retired director of the Memorial Union. I had been successfully treating and pruning a 200-year-old at his Shorewood Hills home. When Porter heard that one of the older white oaks in a Terrace planting island near the Rathskeller entrance was in rapid decline and might be removed, he recommend contacting me to see if I could save it."

Allison, who teaches in the UW Department of Forest and Wildlife Biology, already has his class studying the Memorial Union trees and recommending plans for both maintaining healthy trees and adding new ones to the canopy.

"One of the top priorities of the Memorial Union Reinvestment Project is to protect and preserve the iconic spaces of the Union," said Katie Fischer, Wisconsin Union President. "As one of the most beloved spaces in the state, an aspect that makes the Terrace so wonderful is the canopy of trees that provide shade and add to the space's natural beauty. One of the project goals is to ensure that a healthy canopy remains for decades to come. Professor Allison's hiring will ensure this."

Renovating the Memorial Union Theater wing will demand removing some trees on one hand and adding new trees on the other. The most mature, historic white oak trees on the

Memorial Union Terrace, north of the Rathskeller, will be saved and protected during the renovation.

“To provide the best information possible I use state-of-the-art, high-technology tools to be able to ‘see inside’ the trees,” Allison explained. “My goal is to provide as much as reasonable a healthy growing environment for the trees while considering the safety, enjoyment and well-being of those people visiting the Terrace. In addition to preserving the existing trees I encourage planting new ones to be available to future generations knowing that mature trees will eventually succumb to decay.”

Initial indications from UW Facilities Planning & Management are that three trees will need to be removed:

- A recently planted tree in the right-of-way of N. Park Street, near the Hoofers’ deck, will be removed in Phase I. It was known at the time of planting that at some point this tree would likely have to be replaced with the Hoofers area redevelopment.
- The large white oak up next to the stairs east of the Theater will be removed to expand the Hoofers space below. This oak is not a prime specimen as it has been severely trimmed on the building side (west), has some internal weaknesses and concerns, and given its limited growing area has reached the end of its successful life. The Union is looking for creative ways to use the wood from this tree within the project, as both a tribute to tree and in the name of sustainability. The proposed site design will strategically locate new trees around the Hoofers area, the Terrace and the Union continuing to expand the character of the entire site.
- A honeylocust just outside and northwest of the Rathskeller will also need to be removed in Phase I and will be replaced with a new tree in a larger planter.

When complete, the site will gain additional healthy trees with a greater chance of survivability than recent Terrace renovations have offered to date. As the plan for the tree canopy advances, updates will be provided.

For more information on the Memorial Union Reinvestment plan, visit unionreinvestment.wisc.edu or contact Colin Plunkett, project manager, designcommittee@union.wisc.edu. For more information on Professor Allison, visit <http://allisontree.com/AboutRBA1.html>.

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