Before a capacity crowd in the BYU Marriott Center on Sept. 20, President Gordon B. Hinckley, president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and chair of the Brigham Young University Board of Trustees, dedicated the newly completed Joseph F. Smith Building and praised its namesake.

“He was a man of unshakeable courage in the face of adversity, [a man] of industry and devotion, and of faith and knowledge concerning the latter-day work of the Redeemer,” said President Hinckley. “It is proper that this wonderful new building carry the name of this remarkable man.”

Joining President Hinckley and BYU president Elder Cecil O. Samuelson of the First Quorum of the Seventy for the ceremony were Presidents Thomas S. Monson and James E. Faust, first and second counselors in the First Presidency, and President Boyd K. Packer, acting president of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Built on the site of the old Joseph F. Smith Family Living Center west of the Harold B. Lee Library, the 280,000-square-foot Joseph F. Smith Building is now home to the two largest colleges on campus. The College of Family, Home and Social Sciences occupies the second floor and the south and west portions of the first floor, and the College of Humanities resides on the third and fourth floors.

Its 25 classrooms can accommodate 1,400 students, and it also houses faculty offices, laboratories and conference rooms as well as several academic centers affiliated with the two colleges.

Constructed with the theme of “light and truth,” the modern glass façade of the building’s main entrance contrasts with a cloistered inner courtyard featuring a fountain.

Some of the building’s residents include:

- The Family History and Genealogy Center is the hub for family history education, where more than 800 students each semester are trained in the basics of family history research, including computerized genealogical programs.

- The Humanities Technology and Research Report Center is a multi-faceted, computer-supported environment that assists students taking one of the many foreign language courses offered at BYU.

- The Gallery and Gallery Overlook, a beautiful, light-drenched space, is designed to house a series of exhibits that will expand on the educational experiences offered in the building.

- The Child and Family Studies Laboratory, founded in 1950, is a popular campus fixture. It serves more than 280 preschool and kindergarten children annually and provides a research base for the university’s marriage, family and human development programs.

- The Anthropology Laboratory provides a much-needed space for training students in skills unique to this discipline, such as studies in museum presentation, primitive technology and human osteology.

The building honors President Joseph F. Smith (1838-1918), who was the sixth president of the Church of Jesus Christ. He was five years old when his father, Hyrum Smith, and uncle, Joseph Smith, were martyred in Carthage, Ill.

Known as a preacher of righteousness and a youthful missionary, he was called as a missionary to the Sandwich Islands, now Hawaii, when he was 15 years old.

In his dedicatory prayer at the Smith Family Living Center dedication in 1955, Elder Willard R. Smith, a son of Joseph F. Smith, spoke of President Smith’s “great love for the youth, the children of Zion; and the great hope that was always in his breast that opportunities and privileges might be granted them to be spiritually enlightened, to be physically strengthened, and to be put in tune with our Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ.”

That same spirit of enlightenment continues in the new building. Mf

—Cecelia Harris Fielding