

BORSERINE NURSE EDUCATION CENTER  
GOPPERT THEATER  
MABEE FIELDHOUSE  
ZARDA FAMILY ATHLETIC COMPLEX

January 17, 1973 \$1,820,000  
Bishop Construction Co.  
1979/Dunn Construction \$1,100,000  
August 3, 1992

The groundbreaking for the seventh building on campus took place on January 17, 1973. The weather became so blustery that the guests remained in the Alumni Lounge of Marian Center while the participants in the actual breaking of ground held on to their hats and jackets as they sank their spades into some of the dirt. Perhaps the turbulency of the weather reflected the times which were made hectic by CHANGE. The College administrators forged ahead in their vision knowing full well that health care and the arts would not become less important but more so in society.

Title I provided \$274,240 which came through an HEFA Construction\*Grant-loan  
\$402,911 came through the Nursing Construction Grant  
\$430,000 came as a gift from the Goppert Foundation

The building cost \$1,820,000. Friends, benefactors and alumni contributed the remaining money needed to make the facilities a reality.

\*A federal interest subsidy loan was applied for and received.

The North Central Visitors were impressed with the fact that the professional program of Nursing shared the common lobby of the theater. The Music Department and its facilities on the northwest side of the complex: studios and practice rooms plus a small recital room. A cage was constructed for the concert grand piano in the righthand corner of the back stage. The first concert grand had to be replaced and the second concert grand was through the generous donation of Mr. and Mrs. Mark Bauman. Twelve thousand dollars had been budgeted for the first concert grand piano. When the time came for its purchase, the price had accelerated to thirty thousand. No way seemed open to purchase this needed instrument. Jenkins Music Company contacted Sister de la Salle to inform her that a Baldwin piano was being held through bankruptcy for less than ten thousand dollars! Though not a Steinway, Sister de la Salle's first choice, it was a CONCERT GRAND. God seems to take perfect care of our needs. Enough money was on hand to purchase the lovely leather seat which could be adjusted to the pianist height, the piano cover while backstage and the necessary rollers installed to move the piano with some ease. Sister de la Salle McKeon, Professor of Music, is delighted in her semi-retirement knowing that Dr. Dan Larson has assumed

responsibility for the Humanities Department. Dan has been with Avila College since his earning of his Masters Degree from the Eastman School of Music and his Doctoral Degree from the University of Missouri at Kansas City. Sister de la Salle continues to give private lessons and to enjoy campus life. It is she who keeps the pianos properly tuned, the music studios and practice rooms in order. Three of the Steinway pianos have been gifts of the McKeon Family. Today, plans are in motion for a fourth piano from Margaret McKeon Wilson in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, to be hauled to Kansas City, Missouri. This is being done through the generosity of Margaret's daughter, Carolyn Wilson Sandor, to whom the piano has been willed.

The music area has been named in honor of Rose Dunn, mother of Ernie, Bill, Rosalie Dunn Donahue and Mary Ellen Dunn Daly'39. Mr. and Mrs. Ernie Dunn, Sr., were well known and respected in the metropolitan area. Rose played the piano well and loved music. She was fond especially of young people and wanted them to enjoy and have the opportunity to have music.

The Department of Nursing realized the dream of Sister Mary Mark Duranty when the Borserine Nurse Education Center opened. Sister Mark had worked diligently for years in close cooperation with the National League for Nursing. She followed the requirements of the League and even pioneered the study of geriatrics in the nursing curriculum. Sister laid the basics in quality of nursing care for which Avila College is known and respected. Norma Lewis Lavik carried forward the ideals of Sister Mary Mark and was Sister's immediate successor. She had worked closely with Sister. The Department of Nursing grew until half of the fulltime students were in this health area. The excellence of the Avila nurse was recognized wherever an alumna chose to practice. Change caught up with Avila College in the early eighties when the traditional woman's role in nursing and teaching were abandoned in favor of pre-law, law, medicine, engineering. Enrollment had peaked to nine hundred fulltime students and twelve hundred parttime students. Dr. Larry Kramer and his Executive Team have worked and planned strategy to recruit Avila's share of the traditional students and parttime students. The excellence of the professional programs with the liberal arts has been stressed in all advertising. Societal changes necessitate a constant touch on the pulse of today's needs.

The Helmes Room serves as a conference room in addition to the Borserine Conference Room. Mention must be made of the portraits in the Borserine Room: Judge Henry A. Bundschu, benefactor of the library and the scholarship fund in memory of his mother, Helen Ott Bundschu; John Bachofer, first Chairman of the Board of Counselors. John had been a CPA by profession and became Chief Executive of Nelly Don until John Quinlan (adopted son of Nell and Senator Reed) took his position. John's daughter, Bernice Bachofer Campbell, was a student at the College. He was a friend of Sister Berenice, first fulltime President and Superior of the College of St. Teresa. Likewise, Sister Mary Daniel Tammany asked John to be a Counselor to the Sisters in drawing up plans for the new campus. John's second marriage was to Juanita Huppe Bachofer who became <sup>one</sup> of the Charter Members of the Scholarship Sponsors in 1962. The portrait of Mr. Alfred Blasco was from Interstate Securities Corporation where Mr. Blasco had served as Chief Executive after J. Frank Hudson's death. Mr. Blasco served on the Board of Counselors and assumed the Chairmanship of the Board of Trustees of Avila College when asked to do so by Sister Joan Marie Gleason, CSJ, Provincial Superior of the midwest province. He was the first lay Chairman of the Board.

The large mirror in the Borserine Conference Room replaced one of the severely damaged canvases from the Nelson Atkins Gallery. The gold leafed frame was kept. Mr. Sickman of the Gallery had said at the time of their move to campus that these canvases were past sixty years old and should be destroyed when removed. The large conference table and chairs in Borserine were a gift from Interstate Securities through Mr. Blasco; likewise, the conference table in the Helmes Room. These meeting rooms serve the entire campus.

In the planning of this facility, the theater and nurse education center, consideration was given to make the foyer connecting these two departments as practical as possible for receptions. Folding doors were specified to form the closing wall of the Helmes room off the foyer. A wet bar was provided and situated between the cloakroom and the lobby. The Goppert Theater has been in use since September 20, 1974. It seats approximately five hundred guests, has two catwalks, a sound room and light room modeled after the light system of the Guthrie Theater; a greenroom, large dressing rooms, showers, laundry, sewing rooms, storage areas for costumes and the well-used vomitories. The theatre has a thrust stage and ample wings and backstage. The stage floor has sections which can be removed easily to

achieve special effects. The acoustics of the theater have been rated as excellent by music critics. The greatest compliment is received when vocalists, choral and instrumentable ensemble groups voice their appreciation in performing onstage. While attending a performance, I was distracted by the rustling of paper coming from the opposite side of the theater. It was a real distraction to note that the sound was coming from the fingers of a young child who was unwrapping a piece of candy. The first stage curtain was gold and was the gift of the alumni association. In the Fall of 1992, this curtain was replaced with a lovely red curtain.

In the foyer of the theater hang two paintings by Sister Margaret Reinhart: Three Sisters and White Birches. The portraits of Kathleen Borserine and her late husband, Louis Borserine, are on the wall opposite the office of the Department of Nursing. Louis had died in the sixties and had accumulated their fortune with hard work in their liquor business and the <sup>b</sup>Car Company of which Edwin Borserine served as President.

There are four major theater productions a year. Each is professionally executed and well received. Sister Felice was sent originally to the College to found the Theater Department. James Assad, Dr. Bill Louis and Dr. Buck Baker have contributed much to the reputation of the theater. The Actors Laboratory Theater has been an adjunct facility of the theater department and used for student productions. This area also had served as the Church for St. Thomas More Parish as well as for the College activities. This space was planned originally for the science rooms to be added. In the Fall of 1992, the entire area of the ALT was razed and the area made ready for the move of the personnel from Blasco Hall which was to be gutted and refurbished. The remodeled McKeon Room in Goppert Theater replaces Actors Laboratory Theater.

The theater has been well used these two decades since its completion. *// Cardinal Cook came from Chicago to dedicate the theater and Nurse Education Center on November 3, 1974.*

The persons after whom this facility is named are Mr. and Mrs. Clarence H. Goppert. John O'Hern, Counselor, brought to Mr. Blasco's attention the fact that the Goppert Foundation might be interested in contributing to the construction of the theater. The Gopperts were invited to the College for luncheon and a tour of the campus. A presentation was made and their commitment was received. It must be noted that the Gopperts were not of our Faith; however, both were convinced of private education and the values of the College. Mrs.

Vita Goppert accepted membership on the Board of Trustees and served for eight years until their move to Scottsdale, Arizona. Vita took instructions in our Faith from Bishop Fitzsimons and was baptized. Mr. Goppert had made his fortune by being one of the first bankers to lend to the middle class person. He had the foresight to be a "banker of the people". Both of the families, Goppert and Borserine, became part of Avila's growth. They are primary examples of entrepreneurs who worked astutely and conscientiously to achieve success in their respective businesses. Kathleen remarked often that she and her husband had worked hard in the liquor business and then, together with Edwin, went into the Cab Company. They believed in contributing to the well being of their fellowmen and women. At one time all the persons in whose names the respective buildings were dedicated were alive with the exception of Margaret O'Rielly. The College Community has had the opportunity to thank these benefactors personally long before their demise.

The Mabee Fieldhouse was a response to the urgent needs of our sports programs and especially to the basketball ~~team~~ athletes, ~~for~~ For several years, <sup>our team hosted games</sup> ~~played~~ in rented facilities and <sup>many times</sup> ~~often~~ in the elementary school gym of St. Thomas More. Often, our young men voiced their hopes for a representative gym in which to play. When the teams moved into District Sixteen Competition, it was a relief to have our own fieldhouse on campus. The one luxury permitted in the construction of this facility was the excellent wooden floor in the Fieldhouse. No substitute was considered in spite of the low low price quoted on a ~~new~~ synthetic floor. Cotton Fitzsimmons, former Kansas City Kings Coach, remarked to me that Avila College had the best practice floor for his players. Since they had begun their practice at Avila College, no player had suffered or complained of the splinter breaks of the past.

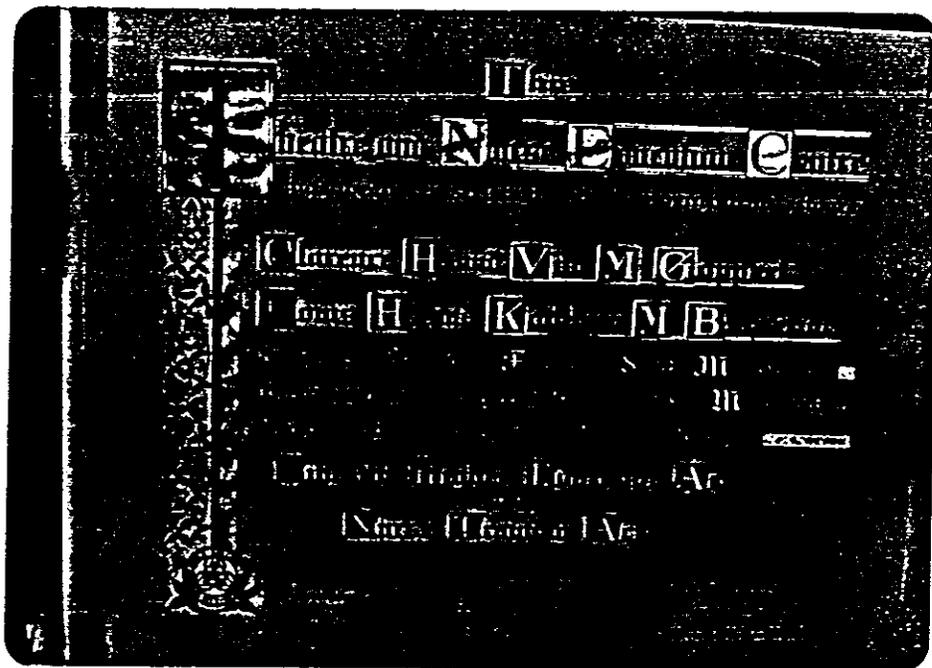
When Mr. Moyers was approached for a gift to the construction of the Fieldhouse, he asked: "Sister, how much do you want?" Five hundred thousand was my ready response. Later, he added to this another seventy-five thousand to complete the facility. He reminded me of George Burns. In fact, when at the airport to bring him to campus, I did not recognize him with his bowl-like hat. Getting into the car, I could smell the peanuts eaten before going into the airport for our guest. Being polite, I offered him some. His being polite, accepted and so we munched. The Mabee Foundation through its Chairman, Mr. Donald Moyers, had given a grant of \$100,000 for the library construction.

Now, the Mabee Foundation provided half of the million dollar cost of the Fieldhouse. Mr. Moyers came from Tulsa to be present at the half-time dedication of this facility. Another benefactor, Mr. James Jackson, gave seventy-five thousand dollars toward the construction of this facility. (shown here) The rest of the funds needed came from friends and benefactors and alumni.

The offices constructed on the side of the Fieldhouse were done by Art Schlumpberger and his men. The crucifix of Christ Triumphant was taken from the 5600 campus. It had been in the Art room on the third floor of the Arts and Sciences Building of the Academy. It seemed symbolic to take for Avila College for all the Fieldhouse victories to take place in this facility. Our first entrant into the Avila Hall of Fame was Bill Waris, former Principal of St. Thomas More School, County Executive of Jackson County and Avila's first parttime basketball coach. Bill claims a 500 average for each of his years of coaching. He was interested in his young men as persons. Sister Rose Anthony Schmitt and Sister Ann Dominic Tassone's name grace the two entrances of the Fieldhouse. These two religious attended every game of the men and women's teams: Sister Rose prayed devoutly while Sister Ann yelled, "Yes, the men and women athletes appreciated their loyal support and interest. From the inception of the sports banquet, these two religious were traditional guests. Such devotion and commitment are rare.

The first attention given to the soccer field required the moving of dirt from the back campus to the east side of Wornall Road. What seemed to be a slight slant proved to be a variant of twenty-three feet from the library and convent buildings to Santa Fe Road. It cost approximately twenty-five thousand to level this property so that it could be used for sports. The students helped pay half of this amount from their student activity fees. This was spontaneous on their part. In 1992, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Thomas R. Zarda, provided the funds to professionalize the playing field for soccer, baseball and softball. This field has been named appropriately the Thomas R. Zarda Family Athletic Sports Complex.

As early as 1966, Avila College was awarded the 1966 Urban Design Award. This citation of the Municipal Art Commission was presented "in recognition of the excellence and responsibility that has been demonstrated toward higher standards of urban design in Kansas City. The education complex was described as "thoroughly pleasing" due to its over all aesthetic and functional design.



✓ Sr Rita 9/20  
 ✓ Sr Elken 9/2/92  
 ✓ Jr Ann O 9/5/92  
 9/1/92 Sr Margaret R  
 — Pt Martin

SUM (read)  
 BET 8/28/92  
 SMD 8/28  
 Adela LS 8/28

Snapshots of Goppert Theater Entrance and side entrance of Borserine Nurse Education Center during the renovation of Blasco Hall. The blossoming tree was planted in memory of Celeste Ruzicka, secretary, who was killed while vacationing in Matzalan, Mexico. Celeste was a devoted secretary and most responsible in her duties to the office of the President. Picture 1.

Sister Marie Eschbacher poses in front of the Ruzicka tree and Goppert Theater. Picture 2.

