

CARONDELET HALL
HODES EDUCATION CENTER
MARIAN CENTER

4/10/64
HUD Loan, Construction, 1964
Poole & Canfield 1973
Construction/ELDRIDGE 1964
\$ 1,089,000 HUD (Hall and Marian Center)

On October 25, 1962, the government loan for Marian Center and Carondelet Hall was approved in the amount of \$1,081,000. Groundbreaking did not take place until April 10, 1964; however, architects and administrators became involved immediately with the drawings. The construction was completed in less than a year since resident students and religious faculty and staff members moved into the hall on March 1, 1965. The resident students who moved from Rossiter Hall, St. Joseph Hospital, to the new residence hall remember the move well. No more commuting to and from the hospital. Janet McCullough, Georgiana Hearnden, Julie Water and Mary Fran Johnson still reminisceⁿ these pioneering days.

Mr. McCallum, Architect, used every square foot permitted by the government for the student use. The hall when completed and furnished was known by students from the neighboring college campuses as the Avila Hilton. Angus chose the furnishings well and when couches needed reupholstering after ten years of consistent daily use, the upholsterer answered my query: "Are they worth the expense?" by "Yes, these Dunbar sofas have frames like iron and are excellent pieces." The same was true of lounge chairs, side and coffee tables and Empire Chairs, many of which are still in use throughout the campus buildings. The beds and mattresses were purchased from the Flex-a-lator Company in Carthage, Missouri. This small company was discovered through the Missouri College Fund solicitation work. Again, the guarantee of the company has been proven: the flexalator patented by the same company has served the college student body and religious faculty members well. We ordered our first and only frames to date from the company. On the first, second and third floors of Carondelet Hall were placed various pieces from the estate of Mr. and Mrs. Waldo Tyler: the wall size beveled mirror on the first floor and the chest of drawers on each of the remaining floors. The paintings and prints on each of the center walls of the front and back landings were prints purchased by jubilee money given to Sister Olive Louise on the occasion of her twenty-fifth anniversary. These prints were framed by Art Schlumpberger. They were appreciated by the residents.

The first housekeeper was Golda Benton who loved her residents and her job.

She had been recommended by Monsignor Huhmann, her friend and our first Chaplain. Mimi Myoko Klima who is still working at the college had her first position as housekeeper. She, Dora and Harry Gunnels and Golda were exemplary maintenance staff members who gave many years to Avila, for which we continue to be grateful. Avila was known throughout the city for its cleanliness, neatness, simplicity and refinement of personnel and surroundings.

It was Harry Gunnels who sounded the alarm when he discovered that one of the boilers in the O'Rielly mechanical room was ready to explode. The mechanism to shut off the boiler, safety valve, was faulty and the boiler was in white heat. The Plant Committee with the Insurance Inspectors spent much time to discover what had malfunctioned. The entire cost of replacing the boiler was borne by the insurance carried through the Catholic Diocesan Office. This had to be purchased through the insistence of Bishop Cody. For this also, Avila has been grateful. Harry and Dora came to work each day at 4:30 a.m.

Since the government would permit no excess footage, only enough basement area for a small mechanical room, the decision was made to rescue these twelve thousand plus square feet of lower level space for future needs. Common sense dictated that this must be done strategically. A knockout panel for this excavation to take place after the takeover of the hall was planned and executed. When the HUD representatives visited the campus years later to inspect our federally financed buildings, they expressed surprise at the discovery of a basement added to Carondelet Hall. Their greater surprise was to note the excellent condition of the halls. It was not until the middle of the eighties that the government provided the incentive to have the college administrators consider purchasing the halls and Marian Center: a sizeable reduction of the principal. President Kramer with his Board of Trustees worked through the process and ^{borrowed} ~~acquired~~ the necessary funds from the college reserve funds. The funds were ~~borrowed~~ ^{and} are being paid back to the college with interest. Avila's buildings remain virtually debt free.

Let's return to 1965. Mary Agnes Thornhill attended the open house scheduled for the first residence hall. She opened the door leading out from the small

mechanical room. She was horrified to see a mass of dirt sprouting weeds. How unhealthy! Her eyes returned to normalcy when it was explained to her what was to take place shortly. This basement area was to become the Hodes Education Center. For several years, the lower level of Carondelet Hall served as a recreation area for the residents as well as a storage area. Poole and Canfield Contractors, with the architects, Department of Education personnel and Ron Bennett, Comptroller; worked on this project. It has been and continues to be a self-contained Education and Psychology Department.

A system of tunnels was devised to keep the pipes out of the ground and to provide walking space for the college community members from the residence halls to the student center where the meals were served. Dr. Kramer asked how the tunnels came to be. With the background of broken pipes experienced on the St. Teresa campus, we were conscious of the many difficulties had. In fact, the first ^{steps} steps leading from Blasco to O'Rielly were asked to be redesigned, ~~purposefully~~ since the architect felt that the college community members would not be using the tunnels very often. Angus was assured that once rain and the snow began the college community members would use the tunnel passages. The steep steps were redone. These tunnels were to provide shelter during the tornado season primarily; however, one is never tempted to venture outside during the cold of winter, nor the heat of the summer, nor windy and rainy weather. During the tornado season when funnel clouds were sighted nearby, the alarm system was used to warn all students and personnel to retire to the tunnels. ^{On one such occasion, alarm systems} After the use of ~~the microphones~~ and thinking everyone was safely sheltered, it was unbelievable to see students and directors on the atrium porches watching the devastating funnel move northward from Overland Park. Excitement gave way to frustration.

An area in Carondelet Hall was reserved for the dance classes. This area had a special wooden floor, ^{constructed} and has been used continuously. Likewise, the health service area was situated on this lower level for easy access to the residents of both halls. In the evening, senior nursing students were on duty; during the day, a registered nurse was on duty for the total college community members. Mrs. Carol Frevert, RN, claims longevity in this important service area. Parents have been relieved on many occasions knowing that their son/daughter was given TLC by such a qualified caring person. Carol is a most sensitive person to all.

Office areas for Sister Ann Dominic Tassone, Professor of Mathematics, and Sister Marie Georgette Eschbacher, Professor of Education, were created off the tunnel leading from Carondelet Hall to Marian Center. It can be said that Sister Marie developed the Education Department to the quality of teacher education which is respected and admired not only at home but throughout the United States. The State Department of Education lauded openly the efforts of Sister Marie in her pursuit of what an educator is meant to be. She worked untiringly to achieve this goal. President and Superior, Sister Berenice O'Neill, laid the groundwork for this program in the college curricula. The development of this department continues to build solidly through her successors. The same can be said of Sister Ann who came to the college to assist Sister Mary Pachomia Lackey, who in her eighties was still teaching. Sister Ann creates and produces the teaching materials for her method classes. A student did learn with Sister Ann, Sister Rita Flaherty and Sister Mary Fitzpatrick. At no time during my tenure did a complaint come in regard to the teaching-learning process in their classes. It is no wonder that the reputation of the college continues with such dedication and commitment. Lay faculty members emulated and contributed their efforts spurred on by such example.

It must be noted that the development of the professional programs in turn necessitated the development of the Psychology and Social Sciences Departments. In 1965, a Title III grant proposal for the hiring of three full-time faculty members was approved for Avila. With this money, \$63,000, three full-time professors were hired for 1966-1967: Ana McGlynn, Social Sciences; Dr. Rita Wetzel, Psychology; G. Richard Scott, Political Science and History. These areas flourished: the Department of Psychology and the Department of Social Sciences -- necessary adjuncts to the professional degrees. G. Richard Scott became Academic Dean in 1970, remaining in this position until 1987. His years at Avila, 1964-1987, have provided the Advancement Office with another able person to work with the Avila Community of alumni, friends and benefactors.

The art pieces throughout Hodes Center were contributed by Professor Emeritus, Tom Webster, who gave the Indian blanket and the colorful molas from the Cuna Indian tribes with whom he lived as researcher for many summers; by Dr. Blanche Dow, Trustee, who gave the early English pictures; by Justine Hopper, Kansas

City Artist and friend of Sister Margaret Reinhart.

The framed portrait of Herman Hodes is fitting for this important area of the college. Herman married an alumna, KaRose Dierks'25. Together, they reared ten children. They were steeped in Catholicism and worked at providing their family with the proper upbringing. The changes in the Church during the sixties were the subject of many discussions with Herman and KaRose. In the months before his death, it can be said that Herman looked forward to his death when God would give him the answers to his many questions. He was a good man who loved his family and his Church equally.

The naming of Carondelet Hall was an easy matter. We were eager to associate the college with the cradle of our religious order, Carondelet in St. Louis. The Motherhouse is still in use today and is on the historic registry. What is more important, it stands as a monument of our heritage, the spirit of the early Sisters of St. Joseph, who ventured to the New World at the Call of the Church.

Marian Center was designed, as best possible and feasible, to conform to the footage permitted by the government within its budgeted loan. The cost of any excess footage would have had to be borne by the College and no excess funds were available. When the College moved from its site at 5600 Main Street, the books for keeping accounts were given to our first Comptroller, Sister Mary Aurelia Strecker. There had been no exchange of funds for Donnelly Hall on the books. There had been no discussion. It was the first time that the books were available... Yes, it had been understood that the academic and administration buildings would be the last construction to be borne by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. Sister Berenice O'Neill had referred often to the future building of the college by the Congregation. There would be no more construction. The Sisters were far sighted in making this decision for the Midwest Province. The one million dollars on the books of the college is shown as a debt to the Sisters in the event of the failure of the College to maintain itself. Some minutes exist as to this money being a gift to the College in fulfillment of the promises made to Sister Berenice. At a meeting of laymen which presaged the Board of Counselors and to which I was invited by Sister Mary Daniel Tammany, the question was asked by J. Ernie Dunn as to where the funds were coming from for the construction of the first buildings on Wornall Road.

To have meals prepared on a daily basis seemed a luxury to the Sisters. Each succeeding year saw the diningroom occupied one-fourth, one-half, until the capacity was reached. The fireplaces considered apropos at one time were removed on both levels for better space utilization. The original tables and chairs are still in use. With the increase in student services staff members, every possible inch of available space has been converted into an office area. When visitors remark on the muted tones of the college walls and furnishings, the thinking of Angus McCallum comes to mind: "The occupants bring the color into the buildings."

The lovely marble baptismal font is housed temporarily on the upper level of Marian Center, an artistic example of Carrara marble and intricate sensitive sculpturing, the gift of Dr. and Mrs. John T. Skinner. This font was removed from Visitation Church when the traditional decor was changed to modernistic Spanish style. Mrs. Skinner, Katie, asked if Avila would receive this font which was to be discarded. It was given to Visitation Church as a memorial at the time of the death of their infant son. The large bronze seal of the College was cast by Livers Company and was purchased originally for Marian Center. It was placed in the area designated as the Alumni Lounge. The Barefoot Room was so named by the students because of its being the only carpeted room in the Center. The present Activities Room was planned for the Sisters' Diningroom but this did not last more than several months. It was more practical for the Sisters to eat in the main diningroom with the students. Moreover, it dispelled the resident students' rumors that the Sisters were given different food to eat than their 'mystery food'. When visited by the Provincial Superior of the Sisters of St. Joseph, ^{the latter remarked} ~~she~~ remarked how well the Sisters had adjusted to taking their meals with the students. (This was not a difficult adjustment.)

The wall-length bulletin board and easels on the upper level of Marian Center served as our art gallery to exhibit student and guest artists' works. Mr. Douglas R. Hansen, faculty member of the University of Missouri at Columbia, exhibited at the request of his former student, Sister Margaret Reinhart. Mr. Charles Kimball of Midwest Research Institute had his reception and paintings on display in this area. Don Hall made a special visit to Avila to view the exhibit of his friend.* Piano concerts and recitals took place in this Alumni

* At the time of the exhibit, the Provincial Superior of the Sisters of St. Joseph, Katie, remarked how well the Sisters had adjusted to taking their meals with the students. (This was not a difficult adjustment.)

Lounge area. Mrs. Catherin Merrill contributed to the purchase of the piano placed in the Alumni Lounge. It rested on a raised platform. The dining room was used as our assembly hall to host our first Truman Lecturer, David E. Bell, 1971. Mr. Bell was President Truman's Administrative Assistant when Mr. Bell was only twenty-six years old. It was a great experience to visit with Harry and Bess Truman in their Independence home and to hear them reminisce on their White House years together. Mr. Bell's lecture was printed by the Ford Foundation for whom he was working. The second Truman Lecturer was Father Reinert, SJ, distinguished President of St. Louis University. Michael and Karen Novak, the Reverend Bernard Haring and the Reverend Martin Niemoller, President of the World Council of Churches, were guest lecturers. The loudspeakers throughout Marian Center carried their words to overflow audiences seated everywhere, upstairs and down throughout the Center. Mr. Joseph McGee acted as Chairman of the Committee to select the Truman Lecturer for a number of years. This committee consisted of prominent Kansas Citians who were devotees of President Truman: Stephen Talge, Homer Wadsworth, Charles Curran are a few of the names recalled. Avila College was the only College in the United States which had the official approval of President Truman to have a lecture series in his honor. Through the efforts of Rose Conway, his secretary, and the Committee, David Bell had accepted the invitation to initiate the Truman Series.

The intimacy of this small building contributed to the personal touch of the public events. A busy place, Marian Center was so named in light of Mary's love and protection over all who entered and made use of this functional facility. As a memorial to Anna Ott Bundschu, it fulfilled the stipulation in the will of Judge Henry Bundschu that the recipient of his bequest have a recognition in the name of his mother. The funds which came to Avila College went into an endowment fund to provide financial aid to our men and women students.

On April 29, 1965, O'Reilly Hall, Blosser Hall, Conzelmann Hall and Marian Center were blessed by Cardinal Ritter of St. Louis. The corner stone and memorabilia were placed in and sealed with the original trowel used for the sealing of the Arts and Science Building and Donnelly Hall at 5000 Main. This trowel was silver plated and etched with its history. It was not returned when used by St. Peter's for its Hoppert Building. 40.

Handwritten notes:
 JULY 7/26/92
 JULY 7/27/92
 JULY 7/28/92
 JULY 7/29/92
 JULY 7/29/92
 5 MR 5 MR - 7/30/92
 J. Ellen 7/31/92
 P. Martin 7/31/92

SUM 8/27/92



Snapshot of children's playground at rear of Hodes Education Center. The children have access to this area from the basement doors facing the yard.



After Commencement, one of the many receptions in Marian Center. On the left, Mrs. Clarence Goppert, Vita; Sister Joan Marie Gleason, CSJ, Provincial Superior and Len Dawson, Kansas City Chiefs Quarterback who received the Avila Medal of Honor. In the rear between Mrs. Goppert and Sister Joan Marie stands Mr. Norman P. Gordon, Avila's Trustee and the father of Tom Gordon, present trustee.

Snapshots taken by Sister Marie Georgette Eschbacher during the renovation of Blasco Hall. Snapshots 1 and 2 and 3 show the rear of Carondelet Hall with the blossoming trees. These trees surrounding Carondelet Hall were given to Avila by the J.C. Nichols Company which at the time still had its own nursery. Miller Nichols was generous to the College in this regard. Remember, he had offered four hundred dollars an acre for our property. When he questioned how the Sisters were able to purchase this land, I told him that the owner (Sarah Jane Wells Ingram) made it known that she was offered a thousand an acre.) Unbeknown to Sarah Jane, the developer had in reality pocketed an additional thousand from the sale of the acreage. Avila College paid two thousand an acre. Sarah was sad to learn almost twenty-five years later (We, Too!) that this fraud had occurred.

Picture 3 shows the new parking lot and lights surrounding Carondelet and the new building, Dallavis Center.

