

When the first load of dirt was removed by Kidwell Excavation Company on January 14, 1963, a snowfall began and lasted throughout the day. Several of us Sisters got into the car to view the digging at 119th Street and Wornall Road. The fifty acres had just been incorporated into Kansas City, Missouri. Groundbreaking by the College and City Officials had taken place in October of 1962. Mayor Roe Bartle participated in turning one of the first spadefuls of ground. Toni Maurin Conroy '63 remembers the event well. Having been away from Kansas City for more than twenty-five years, she was astounded to see in the Spring of 1992 how the college had progressed in its building program. Her Commencement Exercises were the last to take place on the college campus at 5600 Main Street. Toni had returned from Canada for her father Paul's funeral on June 4, 1992.

The beginning of the construction was a thrill for the religious faculty members who had not witnessed such a college event. The last building constructed ^{Donnelly Hall} ~~was~~ more than twenty-three years ago, Donnelly Hall, to be exact. The decision was made by the Academy and College Administrative Officers that the College would vacate Donnelly Hall and begin classes on the new campus the Fall of 1963. It was with some trepidation that the Sisters watched each month slip by with the building so long in the "making". All seemed to progress well until the glazier strike in late summer. This was the one major setback during the construction of the academic and administration buildings. Even though the days began to shorten and to grow colder, classes continued with thick plastic sheets over the atrium window openings. Another decision necessitated the close of the adult continuing education classes in the evening. The Jewish Community Center had moved to South Holmes Street and convenience prompted many of the adult students to pursue their classes in their warm buildings. It is important to recall that the College of St. Teresa/Avila had pioneered adult education classes in the metropolitan area with the expertise of Brother Dan Rabbit who was invited to organize these classes in 1952. The enrollment of adult students peaked at five thousand persons and was the envy of other colleges and universities in the area.

Mention must be made of our Registrar, Sister Anna Schlett, who worked late hours at night helping to pack the cups and saucers given to the college by the classes of 1960 and 1961; the silver punch bowl and ladle, by the class of 1936; the glassware, silver tea set and other pieces, by Margaret O'Rielly; the tea set, by Monsignor Baum's mother. An ivorylike picture from the estate of Mrs. Baum is in the President's Office, a reminder of Bishop Baum's association with the Sisters of St. Joseph and the College. Bishop Baum, known as 'Billy Baum' taught history at the College of St. Teresa. He ~~is~~^{was} a highly respected and admired prelate in the North American College/Rome, is now ... All of the silver tea sets, cups and plates, candle holders are in use today.

When the College moved into O'Rielly Hall, Sister Anna had the boxes labeled and college furniture tabbed as to where these pieces were to be placed. Among the students who helped with the moving was Mary Alice Staggs Strannigan'64. She remained with the job until the work was finished. Another invaluable aide was Sister Cecilia Sullivan who helped Sister Margaret Reinhart pack the art equipment acquired since 1910. At lunchtime, workers opened their paper bags and ate their peanut butter sandwiches and fruit. Charles Brenneke, a free lance photographer, and the husband of Shirley Gier Brenneke'37, took pictures on his own of the historic move. The trek was Main Street to Holmes Road to 119th Street. Oak Street was not cut through at the time of the move. The closest road was Santa Fe Road from Holmes Street to Wornall Road.

It was a big change to move desks into the offices designed for the faculty members. To have moved from one large room for nine faculty members on the old campus to a wing of faculty offices housing two faculty members at the most seemed a luxury. The classrooms were outfitted with some of the wood and steel chairs from the old campus, a desk for the professor, a file, and two green chalkboards; a clock and maps, where needed, for history, geography and language classes. The drapery on the windows softened the walls. The new classroom chairs were light and the atmosphere was cheery and bright. Angus had planned three small classrooms. These seemed apropos for the time being as studios for the music faculty. Strains of music competed with science classes and the liberal arts. The lower level housed future space for science laboratories. These spaces were used for multiple art laboratory purposes instead: life drawing, sculpture, ceramics, painting, design, and art for the

elementary school. When the easels were needed for the painting sessions, the design tables were pushed aside. These were daily adjustments; sometimes hourly.

A language laboratory with the latest equipment manufactured by the Rheems Califone Corporation was installed. The students could listen to tapes, record and have cross booth conversations. Through the talents of Sister Germaine Matter, the students in French excelled in their language proficiency.

The Academic Dean and President were housed in the niches outside of the science laboratory offices. A file case, desk and phone completed the open offices of these administrators. The two-tiered demonstration classroom seated one hundred students and served as a meeting area as well as for chorus and classroom use for Art History slide lectures. This particularly steep room seemed a hazard although throughout the three decades of use, no mishap has taken place. On the wall was hung a genuine Aubusson Carpet from the estate of Waldo and Mary Tyler. Mr. Tyler had been asked several times for a contribution to Avila's building. He responded negatively each time but when confronted by appraisers of their antique pieces who suggested their giving the remaining furniture which did not sell at auction to Dartmouth College, Mr. Tyler responded: "No, ship them to Avila College in Kansas City, Missouri." One of the carpet experts of Mann Carpet Company asked to come to Avila to see the carpet. He was so impressed with its being genuine and vouched that not even the New York Metropolitan ^{Museum} had so large an Aubusson.

The bolted student chairs in the demonstration classroom were the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Wilson of Baton Rouge. The sister of Sister de la Salle, Marge Wilson, was instrumental in obtaining this gift for the college. Sister de la Salle had her choral classes in this ample room. As the names of Sister Marie Georgette is associated with the Department of Education; Sister Mary Mark Duranty, with the Department of Nursing; Sister de la Salle McKeon is associated with the Music Department. In her seventy-fifth year, Sister refers to her age as being in common with the Septuaginta-Quinquennial anniversary of the Avila College. To this date, although no longer the head of the Music Department, Sister works diligently full-time with the conduct of the Music Festival which she began more than forty-eight years ago. She gives more than thirty private lessons a semester to elementary, secondary and college students. It is not unusual to see Sister playing the second piano part with one of her budding musicians. She

serves as organist for many churches in the metropolitan area when a need arises. Always a happy person, Sister chaired the Committee for the planning of the celebration of Avila's Seventy-Fifth Anniversary. She enjoyed the citywide picnic on campus, the High Tea at St. Teresa's Academy preceded by the glorious Mass of Thanksgiving in the Cathedral as much as the guests and the many alumni, friends and benefactors who attended the events. One must add that the seventy-five hours of prayer stretched over the Lenten season was a fitting conclusion, AMEN, to the joyous year.

The science laboratories were an entity in themselves: four large classrooms complete with up-to-date hoods, cases, sinks, stools, artifacts. Dr. Maude Massie, an astute black Professor whose husband taught chemistry at the University of Kansas City, began teaching and doing research in these laboratories. Today, through the quality teaching and laboratory work of Sisters Rose Agnes Keyes, Eucharía Walsh, Agnes Joseph Donovan, Paul Joseph Koutsoumpas, Rose Daniel Harrington, Marie Joan Harris, Evelyn Murrill, Dr. Bob Powell, Mark Seelbinder, David Uhlich and Larry Sullivan, the sciences at Avila College have merited the respect of the universities to which Avila graduates have applied for their advanced degrees. A set of inner stairs ^{had been} ~~was~~ built to allow access to the lower level future laboratories. These future laboratories were used temporarily to house the art classes. One classroom had an ample storage area which was planned for cadavers for the nursing and pre-medicine classes. This classroom has a plaque in honor of Sister Rose Agnes Keyes. A contribution was given in her honor by Dr. and Mrs. Bob Ling, Virginia Rice '53.

Sister Marie Joan Harris who came to Avila College in 1970, won the International Chemistry Award for her thesis as a doctoral candidate at Kansas University. She took her mother with her to Milan to receive the recognition and to claim her award of Italian lire. Sister Marie Joan Harris served the science department well as Professor and Chairperson of the Department of Chemistry and the Natural Sciences. When the position of Academic Dean was available, she applied and was chosen unanimously by faculty peers and President Kramer. Her Predecessor, G. Richard Scott, had come to Avila College the summer of 1964, to teach several courses in political science. He did well, and when the Title III grant was awarded Avila College for the hiring of three fulltime faculty members in the Fall of 1966-67, Mr. Scott was offered a fulltime teaching position as Instructor

in political science. The other positions were: fulltime psychology, ^{professor,} Dr. Rita Wetzal; social science/work, ^{assistant} Ana McGlynn. Richard Scott was respected by his peers and students alike. One of my nieces who was in his class remarked: I got only a C but I learned a lot in that C. When Sister Patricia Marie Hix resigned her position as Academic Dean to teach mathematics at the renowned St. Joseph International School for the Deaf, ^{professor,} Dean Scott was appointed to the Dean's position and carried it well for seventeen years. Since 1987, the Advancement Office has been enriched by his presence, and his work as Director of Planned Giving, is helped by his acquaintance with faculty members, students and alumni. Richard Scott has a natural talent to sell.

When Bob McCloskey, one of the Directors of Hallmark Products in art, came to Avila at my invitation, he remarked that Avila College had more creativity and productivity taking place in the two art rooms than the University and/or Art Institute. It has been envisioned always that the Arts at Avila would be an integral part of the college, physically and aesthetically. Art was to be a living entity and not just in books or the classroom. The Art Majors produced their pieces with the tutelage, supervision and critiques of Sister Joan Louise Clish and Sister Margaret Reinhart. It became a custom for the art Major to choose one of her exhibit pieces as a contribution to the College. These paintings or sculpture pieces were placed throughout the college buildings. Although hampered by their limited and limiting quarters, the Professors in Art and the students did well. Throughout the history of the college, small though it was, the collection of art volumes and books through the leadership of Sister Annetta, merited praise from the North Central Visitors. It was written in their first Report that the Art Department had excellent solid information in the library for its students and that the art section was the strongest area. ^{of the library} Sister Margaret Reinhart attributes this to the foresight and knowledge of Sister Annetta, Founder of the Art Department of the College. Four oil paintings of Sister Baptista and Sister Natalie are in the O'Neill room of the library. These were found, restretched, framed and hung with the advisement of Tim Ward, professional artist. Sister Margaret Reinhart had the responsibility to organize the Studio Art Major with the first graduates in 1949. Today, acrylics and water colors, photography, design, sculpture, art education are housed in the newly refurbished Dallavis Center together with the Communications area. The dedication of this new facility was had May 7, 1993, honoring Sister Olive Louise and her family. Mrs. Olivia Dallavis, Ida Dallavis

Downing, Bud and Colleen Dallavis were present on this happy occasion.

It became evident that Special Education was to be an integral part of the education curricula. A corner classroom on the lower level of O'Rielly Hall was set aside for this important teaching-learning process. The state law was not in effect as yet requiring the public schools to provide an education to the mentally handicapped. Monsignor Behrman, Resource Priest and Consultant to President Kennedy in Washington, addressed the students and faculty members in 1962, at the weekly convocation in the auditorium of the Music and Arts Building of the College at 5600 Main Street. A gasp of astonishment ran through the audience when Monsignor stated that one out of every seven students would give birth to a mentally and/or physically handicapped child. He gave assurance to the administrative officers that Special Education should be included in the college curricula. The Master Classroom required an instructor qualified to teach in this program and to guide the students majoring in this area. Education students who enrolled for a major in Special Education had the opportunity to do their observation hours in this classroom.

One-half of the lower level of the academic building was used as a storage area for a short time. As soon as the one walled room on this lower level became available, the first temporary bookstore was opened. Sister Ann Dominic Tassone, a fulltime faculty member, became the bookstore manager until Marian Center would be constructed. Funds to lower the ceiling and tile the concrete floor were obtained from Mr. and Mrs. Robert Muntzel. This area was named in Philomena's honor. She was always in the background of this unusual team of husband and wife. It was she who gave him the public relations spotlight in business and social events. She took care of details thoroughly and humbly, always taking care that Bob had all he needed to do well. When Mr. Muntzel was the International President of the Red Cross, he traveled extensively. As a result, he was invited to speak to many groups. One of these groups was the Key Ceremony guests of Avila College in the winter of 1961. Having been President of the International Red Cross for twenty-five years, Mr. Muntzel had much information to share about the international scene.

When St. Thomas More's temporary Church was built, the vacated area became the Avila Theater. Loretto Academy had its theater seats on sale at ten dollars each. One hundred and fifty seats in good condition were available for us to

purchase. The theater became in the round. The ceiling was blackened and the stage lights installed. Sound and light booths were constructed by the theater students with the assistance of James Assad. Let us remember that in this humble setting, Professor and Producer, James Assad, led this cast of neophytes to the National Theater Award with their production of STORYBOOK TALES. Our musical, YANKEE DOODLE DANDY with Mike LaGue was well executed. Mike went on to become the ELEPHANT MAN in the title role and is active in professional theater. The MEDIUM by Menotti was produced in this small area with Anna Marie Pileggi in the poignant role of the ingenue. In 1991, in the concert given by the talented alumni who came to homecoming, Anna Marie returned to perform again Menotti's aria with the assistance of Walter Brandes '92. This time, it was on the Goppert stage in a theater which boasts of excellent acoustics. It was performed flawlessly by this alumna who is now Professor in theater and voice at Washington University in St. Louis. The senior student starred as the mute who falls hopelessly in love and who touchingly reveals this love to Anna Marie. When complimenting Walter for his sensitivity toward Miss Pileggi, he responded: "It was natural to react to her. She's excellent." The drama department continued to produce excellent theater and theater majors who performed their senior recitals in these obscure surroundings. Puccini's LA BOEHME was performed with Gretchen Wagner '73 and Terry Beth Mayer Lewerenz '63 alternating in the role of Mimi. With so little, so much was accomplished. Playwriter, Edward Albee, visited and lectured at Avila College. The temporary lightroom and sound room were professionally outfitted so that students in technical theatre could and would learn their skills well. Tom Joyce majored in technical theater. He was a strikingly handsome young man and most serious about his work. His was a most untimely death while working on his Masters at the University. The sound room is his work and memorial. His mother established a memorial scholarship in technical theater in his honor. Sister Felice Helmes had begun the theater department on the 5600 Main campus. She pioneered Children's Theater in the metropolitan area. She had kept the department together during these challenging transitional years. James Assad, who had been recommended by Dr. Patricia McIlrath, became Director and Producer of the Avila productions when Sister Felice was unable to handle these responsibilities. Dr. William Louis, Sister's immediate Successor to the Department Chairmanship, became a faithful friend and confidante of Sister Felice until her departure in the Spring of 1992, for the retirement

Home, Nazareth, of the Sisters of St. Joseph. At Nazareth, Sister Felice can reminisce on the decades of talent which she nurtured almost singlehandedly in the development of a theater department. Sister Felice had studied at Catholic University of America and had been in classes with Neil Simon. *At their reading Sister Felice studied at Nazareth.*

The dock area in O'Rielly Hall housed one college car, the equipment and machinery of the maintenance crew. The large storage area was halved and became the first Communications area for radio and television classes. Funds for the first purchases were had from Victor Poirier, Public Relations Director of Power and Light, for the curtains and television cameras. *Cit'* Funds from the Union Pacific Foundation were used for further development of necessary lighting and electronic equipment. Again, Art Schlumpberger and his crew of two assistants built the necessary partitions and booths. The tunnel leading to the Administration Building was used as a temporary gallery to display student art work. The four atriums were used as student lounge areas and at the same time for storage spaces for the sofas and chairs to be placed in the future student center.

One of the old art room tables from the 5600 Main campus whose legs were shortened and then covered with heavy linoleum has been in the lower atrium level since the day of our move in 1963. The large fern belonging to Sister Mary Pachomia Lackey, Professor of Mathematics, was brought to the new campus protected carefully in one of the Jerry Smith cars and placed in the upper level atrium. This fern is still alive and is more than ^{forty} ~~forty~~ years old plus! Sister Pachomia, "Packey" as she was nicknamed, was an avid baseball fan and close friend of Bill Grigsby. He was instrumental in providing Sister with baseball memorabilia, tickets to games and even some beverages when she listened to games on the radio.

Various paintings and prints were placed in rooms over the years. Several oils are: The Burning Bush with Moses and Jesus, The Sister, The Celebration of the Eucharist. These were painted by sister Margaret Reinhart. In the seventies when enrollment peaked to twenty-one hundred, several of the atriums were taken: one for an office area, the other for a classroom. Laurelle O'Leary '38, gave the oil painting, Mont Martre, in a lower level classroom.

It was considered right that the first building on campus be named O'Rielly

Hall in memory of Margaret O'Rielly, our first and only alumna in the class of 1918. Margaret's father began the first cut-rate drugstores in Missouri. The Owl Drugstores were later purchased by Katz Brothers, the forerunner of Osco. Margaret never married. Sister Berenice, President and Superior of the College and Sisters respectively, had me on my knees in her room to haul out from under her bed two black narrow cases. This was in 1952. In these mysterious cases were the jewelry pieces, costume and authentic, given to Sister Berenice by Margaret O'Rielly. Sister Berenice took me with her to the Goldman Jewelry Company where Mr. Fred Goldman welcomed her and took the pieces off her hands for an unspecified sum of money. (It was interesting to have had the opportunity almost two and a half decades later to serve on a three-person committee with Mr. Goldman's son and Ilus Davis to settle the Philharmonic dispute between musicians and Director.) In addition to this jewelry and other articles, Margaret had given to the College her bequest of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) for the capital improvements of the College. Her will was contested by relatives (2) but the move to the new campus settled the dispute. Her money was sufficient to purchase the property at 119th and Wornall Road, bounded by the original Santa Fe Road on the South and Wornall Road on the East. || Almost twenty-five years after the property was purchased, a surprise call from a stranger, Sarah Jane Wells Dunlap Ingram, revealed that our fifty acres had once belonged to Sarah's grandfather. John Well, who had come up the Missouri River on a barge from Kentucky, was twelve years old and a well-built tall youth. When cut short by the farmer who was looking for hired help and who had retorted impatiently to John's request: "Not a child, but a man who is able to work is who I need." John replied: "Try me, sir, and you'll see." Touched by his spunk, the farmer hired John Wells and paid him with room, board and acreage of farm land. Sarah's portion was fifty acres and ^{was} her patrimonial gift. This virgin soil housed the first barn built. It was needed to hold the supplies sold to the pioneers who took the Santa Fe Trail to the West. Molasses, wheat, corn, materials for clothing, shoes, barrels, nails, planks of wood were needed for the hardy men, women and children who traveled the ~~wagon~~ trails in their covered rustic ^{wagons} ~~means~~. A smithy held fort on what is now the southwest corner of Santa Fe. Horses had to be shod, the cattle watered and fed. Sarah Jane remembers when the mowers were warned not to plow deeply ~~nor~~ around that area of the farm. It was feared that the disposal of the old horseshoes might wreak havoc on the

machinery. The home of the Wells Family was built after the barn was built and nestled in the land by the grove of the honey locust trees.

When the permanent library was being constructed, the excavators made sure that the family's deep well was filled in and covered ~~well~~ with stones and dirt. In later years, with the seepage under the Hooley-Bundschu Library, Art Schlumpberger drilled and cut into the concrete floor in a corner of the lower level classroom facing the grove. Out of curiosity, I peered into the opening and saw to my amazement, water flowing so clear that the pebbles and sand were plainly visible. Yes, the Wells Family had had clear cold drinking water. Art, with engineers, was able to solve the problem. There are still jonquils which rear their bright heads each spring in that area. Sarah Jane asked about them on one of my many visits to her home. Yes, there are still jonquils which rear their golden petals, beautifully symbolic of God's care for us at Avila. What is important about Sarah's phone call is the fact that she reported that she had received only one hundred thousand dollars for her acreage, not the two hundred thousand which I had reported to the STAR Reporter. In rechecking the deed, my statement remained the same. Two hundred thousand dollars had been paid for this property. Sarah had asked for the fifty acres to be sold for one hundred thousand dollars. The fraud came to light after two decades and a half. Evidently, the Lord wanted this misdeed to come to light. Although the real estate agent was contacted by letter, there was no response to my correspondence. But the many ^{speculations} ~~thoughts~~ about our fifty-acre site, its first owners, its use were ^{analyzed} ~~related~~ by Sarah Jane Wells Dunlap Ingram. Sarah died two years ago. She regretted that the college had paid twice as much as she had asked. It must be added that this realtor took his commission from Sarah Jane's one hundred thousand dollars. The name of the realtor is on the deed.

A church collection plate was made from the original wood of the Wells' barn. It was destroyed by fire but some wood was salvaged. This plate together with a small framed picture of the Wells Homestead were given me by Sarah Jane herself. More of her memories are recorded elsewhere. How proudly Avila stands on ground earned by the honest labor of John Wells, a Kentuckian, who began his adulthood in Missouri. When John married, he brought a bargeload of furniture from Kentucky: trundlebed, drawers, chairs, rocker and a clock for his bride, Mary. Avila stands bordered by a zig-

zagged road traveled by the early settlers who migrated westward using the Santa Fe Trail.

Judge Henry Bundschu after whom the library is named, clapped his hands and cheered the fact that the Avila College Campus bordered the Santa Fe Trail. He was an avid Son of the Jackson County Historical Society and rejoiced at this knowledge. Mr. McAdams, CEO of the Title Company and parent of one of our alumnae, remarked to me how difficult it was to settle the border line of our property. The erratic trail was not defined clearly since the cattle and wagons veered to right and left dependent on weather conditions. Finally, the neighbors across the trail and the college officials with the engineers inched the settlement back and forth until agreement was had.



S. C. L. 7/24/92 Read by L. Ellen 4/30
Read by JMB 6/30
" " J. Adams 7/11
" " J. S. 7/2
" " S. Margaret 7/2
" " H. S. 7/17
" " P. M. 7/22
" " L. U. M. 8/27/92