

# At Last!

BlueCross BlueShield Goes **Blue** and **Gold**

By Debra S. Park



**No doubt** it will go down in Canisius history as *the* most frequently asked question. For 22 years, members of the Canisius community have been asking about it. That's 22 years of alumni reunions, athletic competitions, graduations, classes, as well as faculty and staff lunches where this was discussed. Twenty-two years of ponderings about "why the college didn't do it when it had the chance?"

Twenty-two years, that's almost a generation! Now, those long years of wondering have come to an end.

The BlueCross BlueShield complex is going *blue* and *gold*.

Canisius College announced last month that it plans to purchase the property from The Uniland Partnership of Delaware, L.P., for \$18.45 million. "This is truly a historic moment for Canisius College," said **Rev. Vincent M. Cooke, S.J.**, president of Canisius College. "It is no secret that opportunities to expand our campus are limited, given the wonderful historic neighborhoods and green spaces that surround us. With this acquisition, Canisius will be in a position to control its destiny and our vision of the college as a leading comprehensive university has been brought into much sharper focus."

A binding agreement is now in place that allows for the acquisition to be completed between January 2006 and January 2009.

"This plan gives Canisius a location that fits its needs and allows us time to identify the right space," said **Thomas P. Harnett, PhD**, president and CEO of Healthnow New York Inc, parent company of BlueCross BlueShield, and a member of Canisius' Board of Trustees. Harnett says they will now step up efforts to identify a new headquarters in Buffalo.

The property at 1901 Main Street is perhaps best known as the site of the former Sears Roebuck store, which operated there between 1929-1980. In the Gay Nineties, the property was known as the Buffalo Athletic Field, a popular site for America's favorite pastime which, in those days, was cycling. It became Luna Park near the turn of the century. Then it was transformed into Carnival Court, an amusement park that operated on the site between 1909-1915. At about that time, Canisius College undertook its first building campaign to erect Old Main and move from Washington Street to its present location.

Uniland purchased the property from Sears in 1984 and developed it for lease to Blue Cross in 1987. Over the years, Uniland has invested \$17.5 million in the property. The complex includes the building with 237,000 square feet of office space on four levels and a parking ramp that was built by Sears in 1962. The ramp was hailed by then Buffalo Mayor Chester Kowal, who declared "free parking and the convenience it offers to the community is the keystone to our future economy."

The ramp has been a helpful convenience for Canisius for

many years. It's no secret that parking on campus is at a premium. To alleviate some of the problems, Canisius has been leasing 450 spaces in the ramp since the late 1970s. But actual ownership of the 1,350 spaces in the ramp and surface lot means the college's longstanding parking problems will come to an end in one fell swoop.

It's time, though, to set the record straight. Why didn't the college purchase the Sears complex in 1980? Contrary to the rumors that continue to live on to this day, the asking price was not \$1. Simply put, it was more than the college could afford.

"At that time, the college's endowment had a market value of about \$2 million," says Father Cooke. At about one and a half times the size of Old Main and Lyons Hall combined, the building was also more space than the college needed at the time, or could afford to maintain. "Today, Canisius finds itself in a much different place," Father Cooke adds. "We are confident in our vision and our strategic plan for the college. Now, we are able to benefit from Uniland's beautiful renovation and BlueCross BlueShield's careful maintenance of this building."

"This is one of those great win-win situations for all of the parties involved," says **Carl Montante '64**, the managing director of Uniland and former chair of the college's Board of Trustees. "This building has been a great asset for Uniland for the past 15 years but we were mindful of Canisius' needs for additional space, and happy to be able to work with BlueCross BlueShield and Canisius to make this happen."

As for Canisius' future needs, the college plans to use the building to create a comprehensive state-of-the-art science center, with the consolidation of all of the current programs from the Horan O'Donnell building on Hughes Avenue and the Health Science Center at East Delavan and Jefferson. These programs include biology, chemistry, biochemistry, psychology, physics and environmental science, as well as new programs emerging in the life sciences including bioinformatics and its related disciplines, computer science and mathematics.

"This acquisition will allow us to build on the strength of some very successful undergraduate science programs," says Father

# A History of 1901 Main Street

Cooke. “Our success rate with admissions to medical, dental and veterinary schools is superlative. This new science center will allow us to continue that record while capitalizing on opportunities presented by the bioinformatics initiative downtown and the emerging life sciences economy.”

Several other offices and departments will also move to the new center. Funds for the acquisition and renovation of the complex will be obtained from college fund-raising efforts.

And now that the college’s most frequently asked question has been answered, we’re fairly certain the second most frequently asked question will rise to the top spot.

And the answer to that is “there are no plans in the foreseeable future to implode the Tower.” But “never say never.” Check back in 22 years. ■

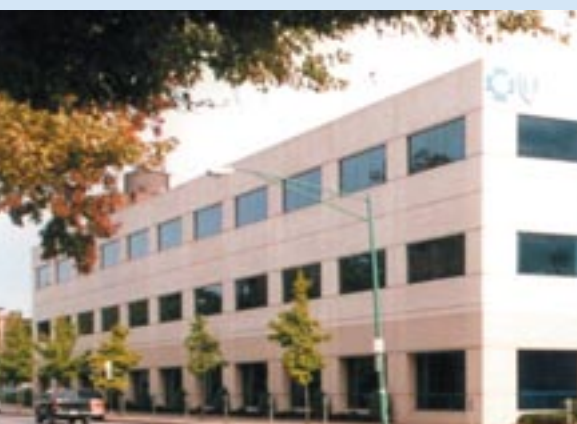
The property at 1901 Main Street has undergone many transformations. In the Gay Nineties, it was home to the Buffalo Athletic Field. Near the turn of the century it became Luna Park. In 1909, the site was transformed into Carnival Court, Buffalo’s mid-city amusement park (top and middle photo). Carnival Court occupied the Main-Jefferson site for several years until Sears Roebuck purchased the property in 1929 and built a store that stayed in operation for more than 50 years (bottom photo).



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Today, the site at 1901 Main Street houses the BlueCross BlueShield complex – future home of the college's science center.

# Building on the future

The BlueCross acquisition aside, the completion of several other major campus projects this past summer has certainly added to the campus transformation. Most notable is the Quadrangle, with its \$1.3 million renovation.

“Our alumni will be very impressed with what the Quadrangle looks like when they return to campus,” says Dr. Laurence W. Franz, vice president for business and finance.

The sidewalks in the Quad have been widened from four to six feet and a new center walkway lined with bricks and pavers is now in place. (See page 21 for information on how you can create a legacy on campus with the purchase a brick or paver on the Canisius Leadership Walkway.) The Koessler Plaza, the dramatic entrance at the back of Old Main, which also serves as a popular gathering place for students and faculty, now extends to Loyola Hall. The area is beautifully illuminated with new lamps. And post rainfall flooding is a thing of the past thanks to a new drainage system. Poor soil conditions, coupled with the work to improve the drainage system required that 25 trees in the Quad be removed.

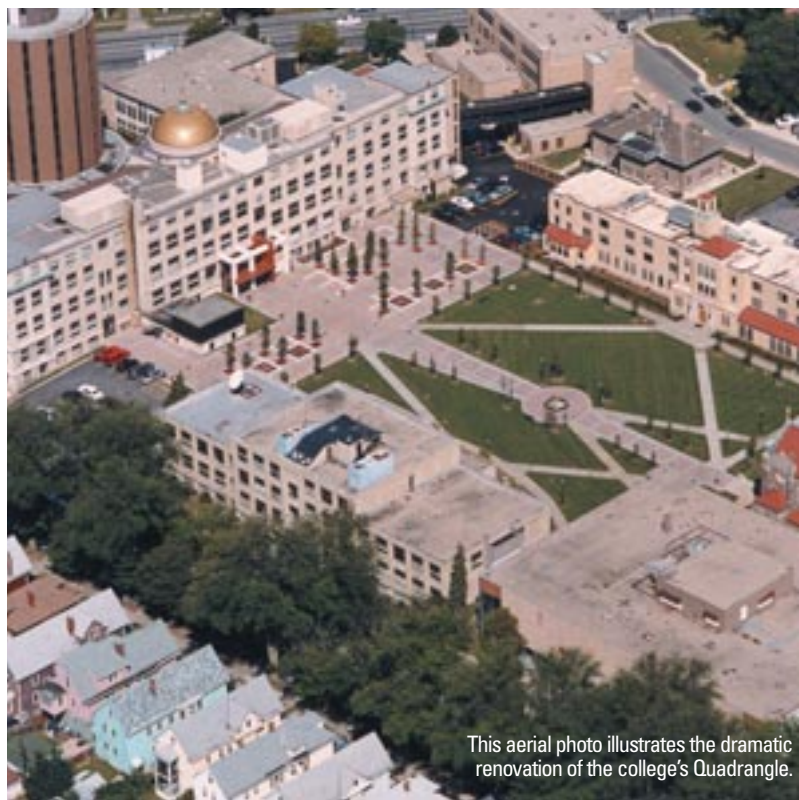
“Prior to the renovation, test results showed that the soil conditions in the Quad were very poor to sustain healthy tree growth,” notes Franz. That is not surprising when you consider the Quad once served as a parking lot and an athletic field. Fifty-two new trees are now in place along with new flower-

beds and an in-ground watering system.

As *Canisius College Magazine* went to press, a new life-sized St. Peter Canisius statue was making its way by boat from Thailand to the United States. A 600 pound bronze replica of the statue, created by Buffalo artist Larry Griffis Jr., has been recast because the original Griffis fiberglass resin statue installed in 1995 was not standing up well to the tough Buffalo winters. The St. Isaac Jogues statue outside the Horan-O'Donnell Science Building was also cleaned, raised in height, and pavers surrounding it were reset.

The view of the Quad also looks spectacular from the Peter Gust Economou Dining Hall, but then again so does the dining hall. A \$1.3 million renovation transformed the facility into a unique dining establishment. This is not your typical college cafeteria. It's college dining 21st century style.

The room, inspired by Buffalo's Delaware Park, is now a park-like setting complete with wall murals and illuminated kites and clouds suspended from the ceiling. The old fluorescent lighting has been replaced by streetlights hanging from pillars. In place of the big



This aerial photo illustrates the dramatic renovation of the college's Quadrangle.



The Fresh Grille is just one of the many new food stations in the newly renovated Peter Gust Economou Dining Hall.

round banquet tables are booths and café tables.

"It's more of a restaurant atmosphere — definitely no longer a dining hall," says Bob Mottola, director for Chartwells, the college's food-service provider. "It's colorful and you get a different perspective no matter where you sit. Everyone has been just so pleased with what we've done here."

that mom used to make. The Fresh Grille sells hot dogs, burgers, grilled sandwiches and fries. Cold sandwiches made on fresh baked specialty breads are available at Sandwich Central. Vegetarian and vegan options are offered every day and of course there are salad and dessert bars, too.

"I enjoy the expanded menu options," says John Leberman '05.

karaoke machine and hearty laugh are as popular as his pasta. The days of brown bag lunches at Canisius are definitely over.

For more than a year, *Canisius College Magazine* has been reporting on the changes to the Koessler Athletic Center. The two-phase \$1.3 million project, made possible through a generous donation from Chester '01 HON and Diane Stranczek, is

heating and ventilation components were updated and the ceiling was raised. The Sylvia and Irwin Pastor Aerobic Fitness Center is now air conditioned thanks to Martin W. Rauch '56 and his wife, Sue, who last spring secured a \$43,000 grant from the Emil '40 and Catherine Rothfuss Living Trust.

Canisius College forward Toby Foster '03 says the new surround-

Upperclassmen enjoy a little "down time" in their new Delavan suites.



Chef Paul dishes up more than the day's special in the dining hall's new "Menutainment" station.



But the renovation is not just about good looks. Chartwells also revamped its menus following extensive one-on-one surveys with more than 500 people from the campus community. The results are impressive.

There are new food stations — no traditional cafeteria line! The Trattoria offers pasta and calzones cooked in an authentic pizza oven. The Market Carvery features entrees and casseroles — the classic stick-to-your-ribs food

"I like the styles of pizza they offer and how the pasta and sauces change every day. The menu at every single location is varied and I like that."

And here's a new word for your restaurant lexicon: "Menutainment." It means show cooking and Chef Paul does not disappoint. He's front and center in the dining room where he cooks pasta, stir fry selections, gourmet sandwiches, even Belgian waffles to order while entertaining the crowd. His

now complete and getting rave reviews.

"The difference is basically night and day," says Brian Dux '03, who plays guard for the Golden Griffin's men's basketball team. "The old Koessler from two years ago was like a high school gym. It's just totally different. It's absolutely beautiful in there."

New chair-back seating is now in place and the floor has been restored to its original luster. Last summer, the lighting, electrical,

ings give the team a real home court advantage.

"I think most of the guys on the team believe it's a new building and we do not want to lose in it. It's our 'house' and we're not going to lose."

The Koessler Athletic Center will be rededicated on Saturday, November 23, when the Golden Griffins tip off against Bethune-Cookman at 3:00 p.m. Season and game day tickets are available at [gogriffs.com](http://gogriffs.com).

# Become a Leadership Walkway Donor

Mark your place in Canisius history with the purchase of a brick or paver on the Leadership Walkway, located in the newly renovated Quadrangle.

Your engraved brick or paver can be a personal legacy or be used to honor a friend, parent, student or even a favorite faculty member. Memorial bricks may also be purchased in tribute to those you wish to remember. Gift cards are available.

For more information, visit our Web site at [www.canisius.edu/support/walkway](http://www.canisius.edu/support/walkway).



## 12" x 12" Paver

\$1,000

Granite paver inscribed with up to four lines of type with the name(s) of your choice.



## 4" x 8" Brick \$500

Red/tan brick inscribed with up to two lines of type with the name(s) of your choice.

### ORDER FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to purchase the following:

**12" x 12" Paver**

Please fill in inscription below, using a maximum of 18 characters per line, including punctuation and spaces. (It is not necessary to use all the spaces or lines.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**4" x 8" Brick**

Please fill in inscription below, using a maximum of 15 characters per line, including punctuation and spaces. (It is not necessary to use all the spaces or lines.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

*I authorize Canisius College to choose the location of the brick or paver within the walkway.*

Please make your check payable to *Canisius College*.  
 Send to: Canisius College Leadership Walkway  
 Canisius College | 2001 Main Street | Buffalo NY 14208

Please charge my credit card:  Visa  Mastercard  Discover

Card No. \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

This brick/paver is in:  honor of \_\_\_\_\_

memory of \_\_\_\_\_

on the occasion of \_\_\_\_\_

Please send an acknowledgement to: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

To support the college's thriving community and growing campus population, two new residence halls opened their doors this fall with the completion of Phase Two of the Delavan Townhouse Project. The apartments have 2, 3, 4 and 5 single bedroom apartments. A 6,000 square foot community center is located in building A, and the center includes administrative

forts of home on campus, it's good to know that here at Canisius the outstanding facilities do not go unnoticed or unappreciated.

"It shows that Canisius is very concerned with the quality of student life for students while they are here," says Anthony Maggiotto '04. "They want to make sure the students' days here at Canisius are maximized, as far as education,



The women's volleyball team serves up some exciting competition in the newly renovated Koessler Athletic Center.

offices, coin-free laundry, a computer lab, a recreation room, as well as a meeting and gathering place.

While most college students these days are expecting the com-

entertainment, social activity and service. Ultimately, I think it just reiterates the fact that Canisius is a place where leaders are made." ■



Secure your seat in the KAC with season tickets to the Griffis.

For more info visit [www.gogriffs.com](http://www.gogriffs.com)