

# Christ the King Chapel

A S P I R I T U A L C E N T E R P I E C E

**T**he Feast of St. Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Society of Jesus, seemed like a fitting day for the blessing and dedication of the new chapel at Canisius. And so, on July 31, 1951, Christ the King Chapel opened its doors.

Constructed in the very center of campus, so that all life at the college would revolve around it, the chapel was conceived by the Very Reverend Raymond W. Schouten, S.J., then president of Canisius College. He envisioned a church built strictly along ecclesiastical lines, combining ancient ecclesiastical forms of church structure in a modern atmosphere. Set in the form of a cross, the chapel's architectural motif is modified Romanesque and features five brilliant rose windows built into the walls of the transept and nave. But Father Schouten pictured more than a simple Romanesque-style house of worship. He wanted the chapel to be the spiritual focal point of this Jesuit institution and its campus life. A place, he said, where students, faculty and alumni could come to worship God – as one – and experience a sense of community through prayer.

Now, 50 years later, what Father Schouten envisioned for Canisius is thriving. Student walkways still crisscross the quadrangle in front of where the church sits and its doors are almost always open. For students, it is their house of worship. For the campus community, it is a sanctuary for prayer and celebration. And for many Canisius alumni who met their spouses here on campus, Christ the King Chapel was where they chose to begin their new lives together, as husband and wife. The following pages share the stories of just a few of these couples, whose love for one another is strengthened by the mutual bond of their alma mater and the Chapel of Christ the King.

## An Heirloom for Christ the King Chapel



The architectural details of Christ the King Chapel are reproduced in the recently reconditioned bridal kneelers. Presented this spring, in celebration of the chapel's 50 years of service, the heirloom project used liturgical needlepoint to create an ecclesiastical embroidered design unique to Canisius College and the sacrament of marriage.

The center panel is a crown, which represents Christ the King and the marriage crown. Underneath is the Jesuit motto of Ignatius Loyola (IHS). Flanking the crown are two heraldic animals closely associated with Canisius. On the left, the dog "canis" from the St. Peter Canisius coat of arms. On the right is

the golden griffin. Grapevines, celebrating the marriage feast of Cana, complete the design. Stylized wheat sheaves separate the panels.

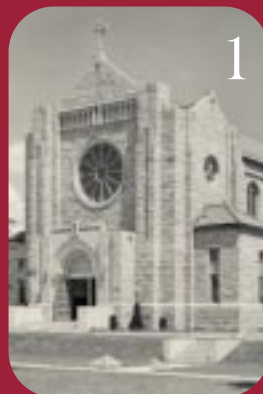
The kneelers were stitched in Persian wool and are colored in rich ruby reds, sapphire blues, forest greens, plums, grapes and golds to compliment the chapel's oriental carpet and stained glass windows.

A plaque will be presented at a later date to honor those who participated in the project:

- Bernice Bakowski
- Rev. Benjamin Fiore, S.J.
- Mary Jakubowski
- Mary Lu Littlefield
- Suzanne Littlefield MS '91
- Martha Murrett

It is easy to miss a stitch on a project this large, but we've missed an entire stitcher! A Canisius alumna stitched one of the kneeler panels and unfortunately, her name was lost. If you are the mystery stitcher, please contact Mary Lu Littlefield at 716-888-2782.

## chapel facts



Architect:  
Duane Lyman &  
Associates

Builder:  
John W. Cowper Co.

Windows:  
Pike Stained Glass

Total Project Cost:  
\$439,992.83

On average, 75 weddings and 20 baptisms are performed at Christ the King Chapel each year





## Christ the King Chapel

Open Monday - Friday: 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. (while classes are in session) | Weekend hours vary  
Sunday Masses: 11:45 a.m. • 9:30 p.m.

For more information on chapel services, call Campus Ministry at 716-888-2420.



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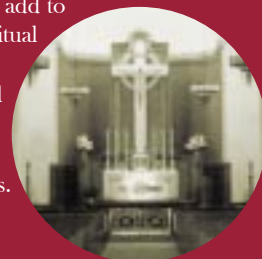
The rose window over the main entrance of the chapel features the figure of Christ the King. The 12 petals of the rose each represent symbols of the 12 Apostles.

4 Christ the King Chapel sits on what was once a country recreation area and later a parking lot and football field.



5 With the completion of Christ the King Chapel, the Canisius quadrangle received its final side. (The other sides are the Horan-O'Donnell Science Building, Loyola Hall and Old Main.)

6 The main altar and sanctuary furnishings in Christ the King Chapel were a gift from the Alumni Association. It was the first time the Alumni Association acted as a body to add to the spiritual and material wealth of Canisius.



## ENAMORED HONOR STUDENTS

Mike Christel '83 and Diane Borkowski '83 grew up just two miles from each other in Cheektowaga. Although their paths probably crossed during their teen years, it was not until their freshman year at Canisius, in 1979, when they actually met for the first time.

"Diane and I were both in the All-College Honors Program," recalls Mike. "We had two classes together our first semester and when I looked around the room and saw how pretty Diane was, I said 'Oh boy, I would like to go out with her sometime!'" It took Mike a full year, however, to work up the courage to ask Diane out. "I knew she liked the Buffalo Sabres a lot," says Mike. "So I figured if I asked her to a game there was a good chance she would say yes." He was right. She said yes and the two continued dating through college and graduate school.

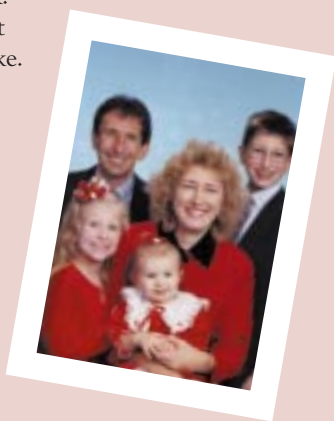
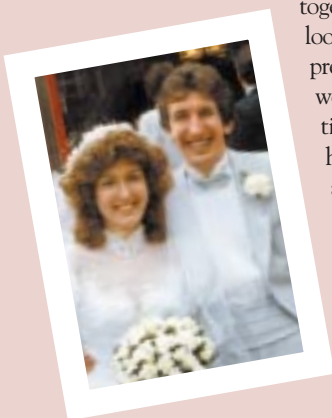
A history and political science major, Diane attended law school at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. Mike, a math and computer science major, pursued his master's degree at Georgia Tech in Atlanta. They say the years apart were difficult, but they were both committed to making the relationship work. "We tried to see each other at least once a month," says Mike. "So I would hitch rides with anyone on campus that was going anywhere close to Charlottesville."

Their long distance relationship went on for about three years until the summer of 1985 when Mike proposed. Diane said yes. "I knew I would never find a man that smart, that handsome and that nice."

The couple married June 6, 1987 and exchanged vows in a place they hold very dear – Christ the King Chapel. "After having gone to so many different churches for so long," Diane recalls, "we decided it would be nice to be married in a common church by a professor who taught us both – Father Fiore."

Nearly 14 years and three children later, Diane and Mike make their home in Pittsburgh and still enjoy reminiscing about the place where they first met.

"I think we both knew way back during our Canisius years that we were made for each other," says Mike. Diane adds, "We have such vivid memories of Canisius. We still talk about the courses and remember our professors. We had a great time and I think it's because we were together." ♥



## PARTNERS IN SCHOOL SPIRIT

Jim Murphy graduated from Canisius in 1983. That was nearly 18 years ago, but he still remembers the fall of his junior year when Noreen Wheeler came into the choir club room. "When Noreen arrived on campus as a freshman, she literally went room to room in the old student center, to all the club rooms, and introduced herself and signed up to get involved. She was a very, very outgoing person."

Not much transpired from that first introduction but Jim and Noreen would meet again. This time at a campus poetry reading where they were more formally introduced through a mutual friend. In the following months, the two saw each other more frequently as they became involved in the same social clubs – including the school newspaper. "I was a reporter with *The Griffin* and Jim was editor in chief," recalls Noreen. "I lived in the dorms back then and he used to spend a lot of late nights on campus because *The Griffin* had to go out. We spent a lot of time together."

Their school involvement fostered a very close friendship and eventually a more personal relationship. "Oh, I was persistent," admits Noreen. "I don't remember exactly who asked who out on the first date, but it was probably me."

The two began dating in spring of 1983 – just as Jim, an English and communication studies major, was ready to graduate from Canisius. He left almost one year later for graduate school at New York's Fordham University. "It was tough when I first went away," says Jim. "We visited a lot, though. Airfares were cheap in those days and I would fly home as often as possible." Not surprisingly, when Noreen, a psychology and English major graduated in 1985, she chose NYU as the place to pursue her master's degree. "I wouldn't admit it at the time," she says, "because NYU had a very good program in rehabilitation counseling. But Jim being in New York City was a definite draw."

Their five-year courtship through college and graduate school eventually led to marriage on July 16, 1988. Laughing, Jim says Noreen planned everything, but their decision to marry at Christ the King Chapel was a mutual one. "Noreen is Episcopalian and I am Catholic," he says. "But for us, the chapel was a way we could come back to the place we met. Canisius has always been such a very important place for us."

So important that Jim and Noreen baptized their first child, Maura, in the chapel and are hoping to do the same for their second child who will be born in July. Noreen says "The parish we belong to, while it's very nice, is very big and we wanted something personal for Maura's baptism. At the chapel, we could invite the people we wanted, have Maura baptized by someone we felt very close to, Father Conroy, and be in a place that Jim and I feel very connected to." ♥



## READING, WRITING AND ROMANCE

It was a love for literature that first spawned a relationship between Barbara “Michelle” Granville and Gerard Frank in 1984. Michelle was just beginning her freshman year at Canisius as an English major and was anxious to get involved in a student club. “As I walked around this club fair, I saw Gerard,” Michelle recalls.

“He was standing at the end of a large circle of club booths and when I asked him what club he belonged to, he said he was president of the English club. So I signed up.” Although Michelle was interested in English literature – specifically Shakespeare – she admits Gerard was the real reason she joined the English club. “It was mostly because I saw him. I thought he was cute.”

The feeling was mutual for Gerard. A senior English and History Honors major, he says, “she was a beauty.” So the wily college senior lifted Michelle’s telephone number from the club

sign-up sheet and called her. The two soon learned they shared a lot of the same interests and began spending more time together. At first, they would meet between classes and maybe go for walks. Later they would attend campus literature readings together.

Inevitably Gerard charmed Michelle away from someone else she had been seeing and asked her out on, what was supposed to be, their first “official” date. “I had planned to take Michelle to one of the English Department barn parties,” remembers Gerard. “But I got injured playing football. I took a harsh body blow and had to cancel our first date.” He made it up, however, a few weeks later with dinner at the Park Lane Restaurant. Shortly after, a marriage proposal followed, in the lounge of Frisch Hall.

Gerard says “I proposed to Michelle within a month after we started going out. It was sort of like ‘someday in the future’ would you consider marrying me. But I knew I wanted to marry her.”

A more formal proposal came five years later when they both finished school. Michelle and Gerard were married on January 21, 1989 in Christ the King Chapel. A place, they say, where they shared so many wonderful masses together. “It just seemed appropriate,” says Gerard, “when deciding where to have our wedding, that we be married in a place that meant so much to us.”

Twelve years later, Michelle and Gerard are still amazed at the intense growth they experienced, both intellectually and spiritually, as students at Canisius. It is an experience they now share with their six children through a love for family, which they say, is inspired by God.

“When we received the sacrament of marriage our lives changed after that,” says Michelle. “We were open to life and open to understanding things about our faith in a more profound way. A lot of spiritual things happened to us on our wedding day in that chapel.” ♥



## LANGUAGE OF LOVE

Born and raised in the Bulgarian town of Varna, on the Black Sea, Elka Dintcheva (Din-chev’-ah) always had a fascination with America. She studied the English language all through high school and would often teach it to family and friends. So when the opportunity arose for Elka to study abroad, she jumped at the opportunity and landed at Canisius College. That was in January 1995 and Elka knew instantly she made the right decision. But what she did not know was that she would soon meet the man she would marry – Tim Wilsoncroft.

They met through Elka’s roommate who was eager to introduce her to as many people as possible. It was Tim, however, who left the biggest impression on Elka. “I was so shy because I couldn’t speak English very well,” recalls Elka. “But when I met Tim, he was very much interested in where I came from. He began asking me all kinds of questions about the communist regime and Bulgaria.”

Both international relations and political science majors, the two became friends. Elka – somewhat culture shocked – frequently turned to Tim for academic and social advice. Tim, a sophomore at the time, was all too happy to help.

As their friendship matured so did their feelings for one another. Even after he graduated in 1997 and moved back home to Corning, NY, Tim kept in touch with

Elka and frequently visited her. “I

knew I had feelings for Elka, but was afraid to tell her,” says Tim. “If she didn’t feel the same way, it could have ended our friendship.”

Eventually their friendship evolved into love. “As a sign of our friendship,” recalls Elka, “Tim bought me this beautiful bracelet. So I gave him a kiss and we both knew at that time that was our sign that we wanted something different.”

Shortly after, Tim moved back to Buffalo to pursue his master’s degree – and, more importantly, the woman he loved. He proposed to Elka in April 1999. Both were in school so trying to plan a wedding around their schedule was not easy. There were a lot of decisions to make but deciding to exchange their vows in Christ the King Chapel, however, was an easy one. “Canisius is so close to me,” explains Elka. “It was my family when I first arrived here. It was where I met Tim. I feel like everything started here for me – for us – and so it seemed obvious to start our new lives together here.”

Tim and Elka were married on March 11, 2000 and just celebrated their first anniversary. Although they are newlyweds, their marriage is rooted in a friendship that began more than five years ago – a friendship that grew and finally blossomed into an everlasting love.

“Canisius shaped our lives and our personalities,” says Elka. “Tim and I grew as people here and we went through it together as friends. All of this is the story of us – made at Canisius. It is unforgettable the memories we have.” ♥



Elka and Tim visit the Sunny Beach Resort on the Black Sea, just outside the Bulgarian city of Burgas where Elka was born.