

# A Decade



# OF *Change*

*W*HEN THE REV. VINCENT M. COOKE, S.J., ASSUMED THE PRESIDENCY OF CANISIUS COLLEGE IN JULY 1993 THE CHALLENGE BEFORE HIM WAS CLEAR: make Canisius a truly great regional university. While the challenge was clear, the path to success was not. Father Cooke knew that other colleges and universities had been successful in transforming themselves. He looked at the examples of sister Jesuit institutions, Boston College and Loyola College in Maryland. He concluded that Canisius needed to focus on building modern residence facilities, creating state-of-the-art technology classrooms, raising academic standards, enriching faculty programs, using a win-win approach with relations between the college and the community, and launching a new athletics game plan.

It was a very tall order. But Father Cooke relished the tall order. He forged ahead and began to describe a new vision of Canisius College. The results have surprised even the most optimistic supporters of Canisius.



*“We cannot drive forward with our eyes on the rearview mirror. We have to be prepared for constant and imaginative change if Canisius is to compete in the higher education marketplace of the next century.”*

— REV. VINCENT M. COOKE, S.J. (NOVEMBER 1995)



## COVER STORY

STORY BY: Audrey R. Browka, John J. Hurley '78  
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A FIRST-CLASS

*Facilities Facelift*

“Every Canisius College residence hall and classroom will be absolutely state-of-the-art. No college in the country will be able to offer students better facilities than Canisius. A few may be as good but none will be better.” — REV. VINCENT M. COOKE, S.J. (DECEMBER 1996)

Residence Hall Renovations

Canisius was once nearly exclusively a commuter college, but no longer. Residence halls that were outdated and partially vacant are now filled to capacity with students who seek the modern-day comforts of home. The newly constructed Village and Delavan Townhouses added 551 new rooms for students.

Over the past eight years, the college has been in a constant state of residence hall renovation

and construction: Village Townhouses, Bosch Hall, Frisch Hall, Desmond Hall, George Martin Hall, Delavan Townhouses, Campion Hall. By 1997, the number of freshman resident students surpassed the number of freshman commuter students; a first for Canisius College. Today, the college has 1,418 beds available for students and 100 percent occupancy. Last fall and again this fall, more than 60 percent of freshman students live on campus.



VILLAGE TOWNHOUSES / TOM WOLF '86

LYONS HALL / TIM WILKES © 2002



**September 1993**  
Canisius purchases St. Vincent de Paul Church and adjacent rectory

**May 1996**  
Renovation work begins on Bosch and Frisch residence halls

**Fall 1996**  
Village Townhouses open to students; accommodate 227 students in two and three bedroom apartments (\$8,300,000)

**Spring 1997**  
Renovation of Bosch Hall completed; accommodates approximately 250 students in dormitory setting

**October 1998**  
Dedication ceremonies mark the opening of the newly-constructed Patrick P. Lee Student Athletic Center (\$1,820,000)

9/93

6/95

5/96

1996

1997

7/98

10/98

**June 1995**  
Construction begins on Village Townhouse residence facilities

Renovation of Frisch Hall completed; accommodates approximately 250 students in dormitory setting

**July 1998**  
Purchase and renovation of Desmond Hall; a 29-bed residence hall on Jewett Parkway (\$570,000)



# A Growing RESIDENT POPULATION

Percentage of enrolled residential students over the past 10 years:

**1993**  
Resident - 46%  
Commuter - 54%

**1997**  
Resident - 51.2%  
Commuter - 48.8%

**2003**  
Resident - 60.2%  
Commuter - 39.8%

## Classroom Renovations

When Father Cooke came to Canisius in 1993, the concept of the World Wide Web was just taking shape. The 90s were a decade of rapid-fire technology advances. The demand for state-of-the-art learning environments was met at Canisius with a 17-month, \$22 million infusion that created more than 50 technology classrooms and computer labs in Old Main and Lyons Hall.

"I'll tell anyone who will listen, it's like teaching in heaven," says Dr. Walter G. Sharrow, a 39-year veteran history professor who chaired the building program committee for the renovation of Old Main. "Having this kind of technological support in the classrooms means professors can engage students not just intellectually but emotionally, visually and through audio.

## Co-curricular Renovations

Outside the classroom, the facilities overhaul enhanced and restored the original beauty of Old Main and Lyons Hall. Other co-curricular areas were also targeted for a facelift including St. Vincent de Paul Church, now the Montante Cultural Center and the dining hall in the Richard E. Winter Student Center; each renovation meeting Father Cooke's new standard that "nothing less than quality would be acceptable."



TECHNOLOGY CLASSROOM / TIM WILKES © 2002



OLD MAIN/KOESSLER PLAZA / TIM WILKES © 2002

**October 1999**  
George M. Martin Hall, the former St. Vincent de Paul Rectory, is dedicated as a new 14-bed residence for students in the All-College Honors Program (\$630,000)

**September 2000**  
Groundbreaking ceremony marks the start of construction on the Delavan Townhouse residence facility, at the site of the former Delavan Avenue Armory

**October 2000**  
Dedication of Lyons Hall, a 68,000 square foot office-classroom building to serve as the new "gateway to Canisius" (\$8,700,000)

**November 2001**  
Re-dedication of Old Main, the college's primary academic center; includes 50 technology classrooms (\$11,300,000)

5/99

10/99

2000

9/00

10/00

8/01

11/01

**May 1999**  
Renovation work begins on Lyons Hall, the former Mt. Saint Joseph High School

**Summer 2000**  
Renovation work begins on Old Main

**Dedication of Montante Cultural Center**, a 500-seat performing arts center in the former St. Vincent de Paul Church (\$4,500,000)

**August 2001**  
Phase I of the Delavan Townhouse Project completed and open to students; consists of 194 beds



# Boom

*Newly constructed residence halls*

- Village Townhouses
- Delavan Townhouses

*Newly renovated residence halls*

- Bosch & Frisch Halls
- George Martin Hall
- Desmond Hall
- Campion Hall

*Other newly constructed & renovated facilities*

- Old Main
- Lyons Hall
- Montante Cultural Center
- Palisano Pavilion
- Patrick P. Lee Student Recreation Center
- Richard E. Winter Student Center
- Economou Dining Hall



MONTANTE CULTURAL CENTER (EXTERIOR) / DON DANNECKER

RESIDENCE HALL

## Amenities

*Features at a glance:*

- Air conditioning
- Bedroom suites
- Cable TV
- Coin-free laundry
- Community center
- Computer labs
- Internet access
- Kitchen
- Local phone service
- Voice mail



ECONOMOUD DINING HALL / FILE PHOTO



DELANAV TOWNHOUSES (INTERIOR) / DON DANNECKER

**August 2002**

Renovation of the *Quadrangle* and construction of *Koessler Plaza* behind Old Main are completed (\$1,300,000)

Phase II of the *Delavan Townhouse* project completed and open to students; consists of 130 beds (\$17,000,000)

**Fall 2003**

A fully renovated *Campion Hall* reopens as the new housing facility for 48 international students (\$2.1 million)

5/02

8/02

8/02

8/02

2003

**May 2002**

*Campion Hall*, a 24-unit apartment building for students, closes for a complete renovation

Renovated *Economou Dining Hall* opens to students; features park-like setting with new seating, lighting and food stations (\$1,300,000)



## Academic Quality O N T H E R I S E

*“The academic quality of our student body is our first priority. If we have to choose between academic quality and numbers, academic quality will always be our priority.”* – REV. VINCENT M. COOKE, S.J. (NOVEMBER 1995)

Canisius has always had better students and more of them. It’s what has helped sustain the college’s reputation for academic excellence throughout its 133-year history. In the past decade, Canisius has made significant strides in upgrading the academic quality of the student body.

Canisius raised its academic

standards; increased its applicant pool outside the Western New York region and New York State; and made Canisius more affordable by offering merit-based aid and other scholarship assistance to the best students.

To make Canisius even more attractive to the best and brightest 21st century students, the college

introduced new undergraduate and graduate majors in the emerging fields of bioinformatics, digital media arts, accounting information systems and health & human performance.

Combined, these new initiatives re-stimulated the intellectual life on campus and significantly enhanced the academic quality of the student body.

In the past decade, SAT scores among freshman students climbed 15.6 percent from 958 (1993) to 1108 (2003); similarly high school averages among incoming freshmen have progressively increased from 85 (1993) to 89.73 (2003).

**Fall 1993**  
Quest Program is eliminated

**Fall 1995**  
The academic quality of students shows early signs of improvement. The average SAT score among incoming freshmen is 990; 18 points higher than the previous class year and 32 points higher than the incoming class of 1993

**Fall 1998**  
Average SAT score among incoming freshmen climbs to 1099

Peter Canisius Distinguished Teaching Professors Program is introduced (formerly Oishei Professors Program)

Canisius introduces new graduate major in telecommunications management

1998

1999

**Fall 1999**  
Canisius receives grant from McGowan Charitable Fund to support Learning Communities Program

Canisius introduces two new graduate programs: organizational communication & development and sport administration

# Quality Faculty

*“Our business is education first, education second and education a thousand times before anything else. Canisius College will prosper only as long as we provide first-class academic teaching and programs that are better — far better — than what is available elsewhere.”* — **REV. VINCENT M. COOKE, S.J.** (NOVEMBER 1997)

As Canisius raises the quality of the student body, it continues to raise the bar on the recruitment of quality faculty and creation of innovative academic programs. Since fall 2001, the college has added 28 new full-time professors to its teaching roster, increasing the percentage of courses taught by full-time faculty to approximately 70 percent. The current student-faculty ratio is 14:1.

Both are key indicators when colleges and universities are evaluated for academic quality. So, too, are the academic programs available to students; an area in which Canisius has broken new ground over the past 10 years. The Learning Communities Program, which aims to create a new generation of minority student leaders through a unique collaborative learning initiative, and the Peter Canisius Distinguished Teaching Professors Program, which provides the college’s best educators with the resources needed to focus

on creative teaching initiatives, have made Canisius an attractive institution among students – and educators.

“Today’s current trend is to teach by doing and it’s a method we are fortunate to be able to offer students and Canisius; something they can not get at most colleges,” says Dr. Sara Morris, an associate professor of biology. Morris has used her Peter Canisius Distinguished Teaching Professorship to travel with students to the Galapagos Islands, to study natural history and ecology.

These hands-on learning methods are building better relationships between students and professors (many of whom now collaborate to prepare, publish and present research) and ultimately improving student acceptance rates into professional schools. Over the past five years, 95 percent of pre-law students and 93 percent of pre-med students were accepted into professional schools.



**DR. SARA MORRIS**, a Peter Canisius Distinguished Teaching Professor, is approached by a curious sea lion pup while conducting research on Espanola Island in the Galapagos Islands. / PHOTO COURTESY DR. SARA MORRIS

## New Majors

- Accounting Information Systems
- Bioinformatics
- Digital Media Arts
- Health & Human Performance (graduate)
- International Business
- Music
- Organizational Communication & Development (graduate)
- Sport Administration (graduate)
- Telecommunications Management (graduate)

## Raising the Bar

### QUALITY FACULTY

- There are currently 212 full-time faculty at Canisius College
- Ninety-five percent (95%) hold a PhD

### INSIDE THE CLASSROOM

- The average class size at Canisius is 23 students
- The student-faculty ratio is 14:1

## Rising Standards

AMONG STUDENT BODY

*Average SAT scores among enrolled freshmen:*

1993 - 958, 1997 - 1089, 2003 - 1108

*High School averages among enrolled freshmen:*

1993 - 85%, 1997 - 87.9%, 2003 - 89.73%

**STUDENTS** in Dr. Sara Morris’ field course, on special topics in natural history, study a marine iguana colony on Espanola Island in the Galapagos Islands. / PHOTO COURTESY DR. SARA MORRIS



**Fall 2000**  
Canisius introduces new undergraduate majors in digital media arts

**September 2001**  
Renovated Streg Oldsmobile property is reopened as Demerly Hall, home to the Health & Human Performance Program and the college’s physical plant (\$3,600,000)

**Fall 2001**  
Canisius introduces new undergraduate majors in accounting information systems and bio-informatics, and a new graduate major in health & human performance

**Fall 2003**  
Canisius introduces new undergraduate majors in international business and music

CREATING QUALITY RELATIONSHIPS

*within the Community*

*“We believe that what is good for our neighbors should be good for Canisius. And I would like to have our neighbors believe that what is good for the college will be good for them.”*

— REV. VINCENT M. COOKE, S.J. (NOVEMBER 1998)



While much attention has been paid to the \$90 million capital investment in the campus, one project tends to be overlooked for the part it played in helping to make a great college even better — particularly in the eyes of the community: the renovation of the former St. Vincent de Paul Rectory, now George M. Martin Hall. The rectory came within hours of demolition by the college in 1995 as the college sought to create a new entrance to the campus behind Old Main, over

the objections of the neighbors. The City of Buffalo Common Council, responding to the wishes of the neighbors and the district council member, designated the rectory as a landmark, forestalling demolition. The dispute moved to the courts where the designation was upheld.

Canisius was left with a vacant, boarded and gutted building that stood, according to Father Cooke, as a monument to the disagreements between the college and the neighbor-

hood. In 1998, he announced plans to convert the building into a student residence hall and explained to the neighbors, “So long as the rectory remained boarded up, it became clear to me it would be a wall between us and an obstacle to real progress in our efforts toward a collective vision of what our neighborhood could become.”

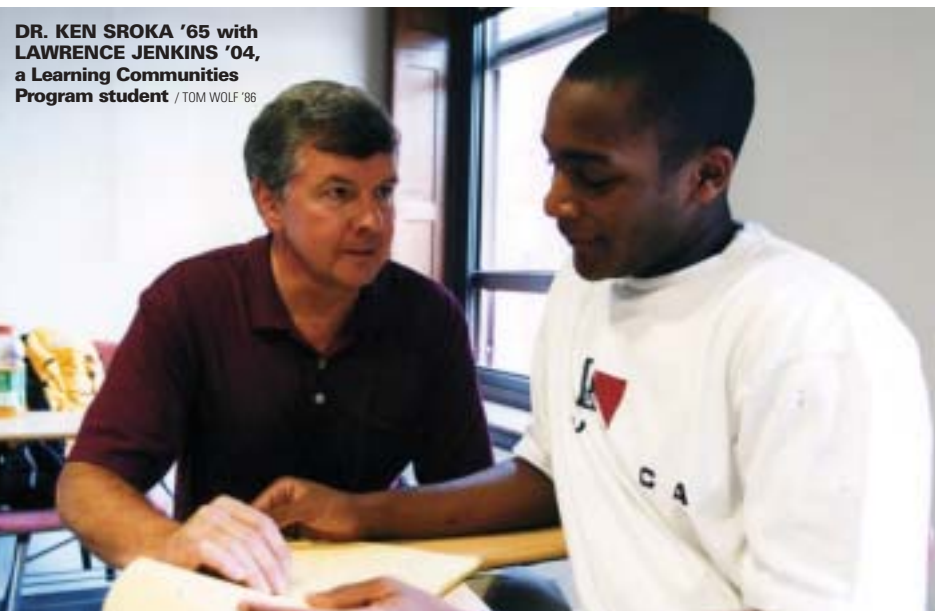
“That experience really illustrated the importance for the college to be good neighbors,” recalls Dr. Ellen O. Conley, vice president for student affairs.

“The rectory renovation demonstrated the conviction behind Father Cooke’s philosophy that what is good for Canisius College must also be good for the community and what is good for the community is always good for Canisius College.”

The college’s win-win approach to community relations has resulted in many other undertakings, which benefit Canisius, its neighbors and the greater Buffalo community. In summer 1999, the college improved communications with its Hamlin Park and later (fall 2002) Linwood-Oxford neighbors by publishing a quarterly newsletter. Community policing efforts were enhanced when New York State granted public safety officers peace officer status. Support from the McGowan Charitable Fund enabled Canisius to establish the Learning Communities Program, which offers full tuition,

room and board scholarships to academically qualified minority students from Buffalo’s inner city. And a partnership with Fannie Mae and Hunt Real Estate allowed the college to introduce the Employer Assisted Housing Program, which provides financial incentives to Canisius employees who buy homes near the college. The Learning Communities Program and the Employer Assisted Housing Program have both been lauded by the local media and government officials, respectively. And this past spring, the Preservation League of New York State presented Canisius with its Excellence in Preservation Award, for the preservation, restoration and revitalization of four historic campus buildings, which among other things, “revitalized (neighboring) communities and spurred economic development.”

**DR. KEN SROKA '65 with LAWRENCE JENKINS '04, a Learning Communities Program student** / TOM WOLF '86



*Employer Assisted*  
HOUSING PROGRAM

- Two (2) faculty and two (2) staff members are currently enrolled in the Employer Assisted Housing Program
- Two (2) additional faculty applications are pending

**September 1993**  
Canisius purchases St. Vincent de Paul Rectory on Eastwood Place

**Fall 1999**  
Canisius receives grant from McGowan Charitable Fund to support Learning Communities Program

**August 2000**  
Canisius College public safety officers are granted peace officer status by New York State making them the first private security organization in the state to receive such certification

**Fall 2002**  
Canisius publishes first issue of the *Lin-Ox Ledger*, a quarterly newsletter aimed at informing neighbors in the Linwood-Oxford neighborhood of upcoming campus news and events

9/93

1999

1999

10/99

8/00

2002

2002

**Summer 1999**  
Canisius publishes the first issue of the *Hamlin Herald*, a quarterly newsletter aimed at informing the college’s Hamlin Park neighbors of upcoming campus news and events

**October 1999**  
George M. Martin Hall, the former St. Vincent de Paul Rectory, is dedicated as a new 14-bed residence for students in the All-College Honors Program (\$630,000)

**Summer 2002**  
Canisius College introduces Employer Assisted Housing Program, which provides financial incentives to Canisius employees interested in living in the city

# A QUALITY Game Plan FOR ATHLETICS

*“Whether it is in a classroom, a residence hall or on an athletic field, Canisius College wants to provide a quality experience for its students.”*

— REV. VINCENT M. COOKE, S.J. (OCTOBER 2002)

By the time construction of new classrooms and residence facilities was well underway in 1997, the recreational and academic services for student athletes had hit a losing streak. Varsity athletes were competing for practice time in the KAC while non-varsity students were relegated to the gym at Mt. Saint Joseph Academy. There were a scant

number of full-time coaches, limited availability of scholarships needed to compete with other Division I schools, stagnant operating expenses and outdated facilities.

The college’s athletics program needed to make a comeback if it was to uphold Father Cooke’s high standard for quality services.

The first signs of change

came in 1998 when club and intramural athletes were given a place of their own: the Patrick P. Lee Student Recreation Center. At the same time, a new aerobic and fitness center opened at the KAC. Last year, the KAC received new seating, lighting, mechanical systems and in short, a whole new look in a \$1.3 million makeover.

The Department of Athletics has also been increasing its number of full-time coaches and initiating the CHAMPS Life Skills (aka: GRIFFS Life Skills) Program, which supports student-athlete development in academics, athletics, community service, personal and career development. Fall 2003 will mark the first full academic year that the athletics program will operate under all the new improvements.

“I really think we will see

the athletic teams start to bear the fruits of all the improvements,” says Men’s Basketball Coach Mike MacDonald MS ’95. “I think we’re going to see our teams being very successful in the top half of the MAAC and really competing year in and year out.”

## STUDENT-ATHLETE

### Scores

*The student-athlete GPA has averaged 3.0 or higher since the GRIFFS Life Skills Program was implemented in fall 2000*



**PETEY, THE CANISIUS MASCOT** / TOM WOLF '96



**KOESSLER ATHLETIC CENTER GYM** / TOM WOLF '96

**October 1999**  
Dedication ceremonies mark the opening of the newly-constructed Patrick P. Lee Student Athletic Center (\$1,820,000)

**Fall 2000**  
Athletics Department implements CHAMPS Life Skills (aka GRIFFS Life Skills) Program

**August 2001**  
Phase I of Koessler Athletic Center renovation completed

**October 2002**  
Canisius College announces athletics realignment reducing the number of NCAA Division I varsity sports from 23 to 16

**Fall 2003**  
Marks the first full academic year the Athletics Department will operate under all the new improvements

12/98

10/99

4/00

2000

2001

8/01

8/02

10/02

11/02

2003

**December 1998**  
The Pastor Family Aerobic & Fitness Center opens in the Koessler Athletic Center

**April 2000**  
Canisius welcomes new Athletics Director Timothy J. Dillon

**Spring 2001**  
Student-athlete GPA reaches 3.0 (and higher), following the implementation of the GRIFFS Life Skills Program

**August 2002**  
Phase II of Koessler Athletic Center renovation completed (\$1.2 million)

**November 2002**  
Koessler Athletic Center is rededicated at men’s basketball home opener