

Memories of Old Main



NO MATTER WHAT THE AREA OF STUDY, STUDENT CLUB

OR SPORT, TIME SPENT IN OLD MAIN IS THE COMMON THREAD

THAT ALL CANISIUS GRADUATES SHARE. WE ASKED YOU, OUR ALUMNI, TO SHARE

SOME OF YOUR CHERISHED MEMORIES OF OLD MAIN. HERE ARE A FEW EXCERPTS FROM YOUR RESPONSES,

WHICH RECALL THE VERY PERSONAL AND IN SOME CASES, THE PARTICULARLY COMICAL MEMORIES OF

TIME SPENT IN OLD MAIN.

Old Main was a lot different than it is today — I can guarantee you that! I remember downstairs, where you used to come through the tunnel, the room on the left used to be the cafeteria. Down the hall was the Senior Room. And of course at that time, when you were a senior you wore a black robe all day. You wore it so everyone knew you were a 'big guy' on campus!



DONALD W. HOCH '46
Don attended the rededication of Old Main with his daughter, Beth A. Hoch, a 1988 graduate of the college.



Being back in this building brings back memories of a lot of hard work.

At the time I was a student here in the 1940s, I was working full-time and attending Canisius at night and on Saturdays. If Canisius had not had what we then called the Extension



School, I probably would not have gone to college. Canisius gave me a great start in a career, which



turned out to be fairly successful.

JANE M. DICKMAN '46

Old Main Room 201 was named in recognition of Jane's generous contributions and service to the college.

Whenever I come into Old Main

I think of all those philosophy courses such as Father Clayton J. Murray's philosophy courses. As a result, (*he jokes*) I turned out to be a philosopher. There aren't too many philosophers out there, but when people ask what I do for a living,



I tell them I'm a philosopher!
MARTIN B. BREEN '52
In recognition of the Breen's contributions to the capital campaign, Old Main Room 417 was named in honor of Marty B. Breen '52 and his wife, Lupé. Their entire family, including seven grandchildren, was in attendance for

the Old Main rededication ceremony.



For those of us from out of town, Old Main was our home away from home. That building had everything: the lounge, the library, the cafeteria, the bookstore, the Athletic Office and of course the classrooms.

But my greatest memories are of watching Don Larsen pitch the perfect game against my beloved Dodgers; mixers in the lounge; smoking in the bathrooms between classes; sleeping in the Student Government Office after going to Gannon to watch the Griffs; Father Joseph J. McEvoy, S.J., dean of men, chasing me down the first floor corridor on St. Patrick's Day because I wore a tan shirt and a black tie; my first DiGamma dinner in the cafeteria; and playing pinnacle with Father McEvoy and other out-of-towners in the alumni lounge on the second floor of Old Main.



Though Canisius truly gave me an excellent education, I learned more about life and all it had to offer in Old Main.

HAROLD J. (BUTCH) BAUMANN BS '60, MS '69

Toward the end of my freshman

year in 1961, I was at the University of Buffalo with three other students on the debate team. They were having their Moving Up Day and had this mock rocket that stood about 16 feet long. It had a nose cone and tail fins and looked like an anti-aircraft missile.

At the time, I was running for class

president and one of us thought the rocket would be great for my campaign. One thing led to another and next thing I knew we got our hands on some wire cutters, flopped it in my car — a convertible — and off we went.

The next day, word spread and everyone knew we took this rocket. I didn't want it anymore so when Tom Coll asked if I would be willing to donate the rocket to a worthy cause, I said absolutely!

The following week at about 11:00 o'clock at night, we dressed up in black with Navy watch caps and took the rocket to the front of Old Main, where a group of friends were waiting in the bushes. They hoisted the rocket up to another group standing on what used to be the building's second floor stone balcony. They tied the rocket pointed down, so it looked like it hit the building, and dumped some stone and rubble on the outside steps of Old Main to make it appear as if there had been an impact.

The next morning around 6:00 a.m., Father Joe Clark, who was quite a legend back in the 1950s and 60s, spotted the rocket. He called the proper people to have it taken down and no one ever saw the rocket.
MICHAEL J. RYAN '64

Very few people actually got to see

the first real prank we pulled in Old Main — the rocket, so we came up with the idea of building a brick wall in the corridor that connected the library to Old Main. This would be an elaborate operation that would require everyone involved having very specific assignments. First we had to consider security. There was only one watchman at the time. He was a nice old guy but facing too formidable an enemy. We had a couple students on the second floor of Old Main keeping watch for him from the front. We had another





THE GRIFFIN

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STUDENTS EAGER TO GET to the Library find their way blocked by a wall which appeared mysteriously late Wednesday evening or early Thursday morning.

The Walls Came Tumblin' Down

The wall, where did it come from? Many rumors have arisen to answer this question. Some regard it as a last-ditch attempt by the student body to eliminate the draft which whistles incessantly between the Library and Old Main. Others feel that it was built by economically-minded Mr. Laux who discovered that he could buy 250 bricks for a fraction of the cost of a turnstile.

Still others speculate (though we deny it) that the **Griffin**

needed something spectacular for page one. Several others merely assumed that it was a genuine Fidel Castro-type firing-squad wall constructed as part of the I.R.C.'s Latin American Week. Many sought in vain for a cask of amontillado to explain its appearance.

We of the staff, however, feel it is most probable that the student nurses built it in order to avoid competing any longer with the books in the Library for the attentions of Canisius men.

guy with a walkie-talkie keeping watch in the bushes outside. I hid in the bathroom of the library with another student, who worked there part-time. When the library closed we went down to the basement where he undid the alarm.

Then, at very specific times, we arranged for certain people to bring in the bricks and someone else to bring in a bucket of cement. We had a fellow who worked as a bricklayer in the summer so we assigned him to slap up the bricks. We didn't want to damage anything, so we lined the wall and the floor with tinfoil and assigned another guy strictly to cleanup. He mopped up all the cement and dirt as we took everything back down and out the cellar door in the library. The entire operation took us an hour and a half and when we were done, the wall was about four-and-a-half feet high and weighed 1,300 pounds!

The next morning, we got word to *The Griffin* and they sent a photographer over to take a picture. The funny thing was we were being subtle but not so subtle. All the people in that photograph standing along the top of the wall were all people involved in the brick wall operation.

LTC THOMAS J. COLL (RET.) '61

LTC Coll's counterparts describe him as a "straight as an arrow" student and the last person one might suspect of pulling off such a clever caper. He is pictured (page 25) with his daughter, Maria.

already finished a few more! But I brought more out for them, so I guess the mission was successful. We liberated some beer!
REV. JAMES C. ENRIGHT '65



It was in the spring of 1966 and the dome was in pretty sorry shape in terms of its gilding. It had all worn off so the Golden Dome wasn't very golden anymore.

The Student Government asked the administration whether it was possible to have the dome repainted for graduation, since at that time the ceremonies would take place right in the Quadrangle. It was

As a student, I worked

in the Audio Visual Department on the fourth floor of Old Main, so a few friends and myself were always able to acquire access to most places on campus.

On one occasion, there was a Jesuit who worked either in college relations or fund raising and who everyone thought was very caught up on himself. So, we took a picture of him and went down to the photo lab where we made enough copies to cover up all the



explained, however, that this was a very expensive proposition (\$50,000) and not in the budget.

So, some of the students decided to take it upon themselves to fix the problem. About a dozen of us got our hands on harnesses and ropes, and went out and bought a gross of gold spray paint. In those days, not much was locked around campus so it was never a problem getting into Old Main. We climbed the dome, went to work spraying away and didn't come down until dawn. Before leaving, we slid a note under the president's door in Bagen Hall indicating we were happy to paint the dome for him and our price was only \$25,000.

Nothing was ever said about it until Rev. James J. McGinley, S.J., the college president, spoke at graduation. At the end of his speech, he mentioned the 12 nocturnal apostles who painted the dome. He never identified us by name, just expressed the thanks of the college. It was pretty funny!

ROBERT M. GREENE '66

Bob was president of the Student Government in 1966. He is currently CEO at the law firm of Phillips, Lytle, Hitchcock, Blaine & Huber.

I believe it was 1967. There was a blackout in the power grid that covered New York City and Buffalo — and where was Frank Eberl? Stuck in the Old Main elevator!

The power went off and the elevator became locked between floors. So, I'm sitting in there and who comes strolling by but the famous Dr. Daniel Starr from the History Department. He threw me a chair and helped me crawl out.

I also remember a time working in the Audio Visual (AV) Department. Some of us were asked to help dispose of the stuffed birds from down on the third floor of Old Main in the Science Department. Dr.

Vinnie P. Stouter — who is now deceased and can't defend himself — would allow us to get these birds. We would put them in an AV box packed with the old reel-to-reel recording tape and send them to people all over the United States on their birthday!

FRANK L. EBERL '67

Frank is co-owner of Eberl Iron Works Inc. He is pictured here with his wife, Mary '88 (seated) and their two daughters, Margaret '95 (left) and Nora '92 (right).



Most of our freshman orientation

activities were on campus, including a sobering session held in the Old Main Lounge, where we were told to look to our left and to our right, since odds were that one of us would not be there in four years.

Happily, I and one of my fellow co-eds, who had a hard time finding that



orientation session because she misunderstood the name for Old Man's Lounge, were there four years later, graduating from a college fully open to female students.

NANCY DAY INGRISANO '67

I have a lot of fun memories from being in Old Main but probably my most vivid memory is of the day President Kennedy was assassinated. I was in Dr. A. Allan Alexander's biology class and you could hear someone running through the halls yelling the news. Everyone



went numb. We had a moment of silence and then it was back to class.

CRAIG J. COSTANZO '67



My Memories of Old Main

- Demanding task master and source of strength
- Classes and labs
- Love and hate
- Fulfillment and despair
- Stress and relief
- Weekdays and weekends
- Memorize and learn
- Quizzes and tests
- Challenges and more challenges
- Inspiration and perspiration
- Comrades and competitors
- Senseless and doubtful



Pride and hope
Why and why not?
Yes and no, and I don't know!
But each day and always, in your name,
Lord Jesus Christ.
NICHOLAS E. FUERST, M.D. '70

I remember as a student, standing

in the entranceway to Old Main waiting for a friend. I happened to look up and noticed the marble plaque on the wall that listed the original donors of the campaign to build Old Main, when I recognized my great-grandfather's name. I went home that day and asked my mother about it. She told me that my great-grandfather — his estate — was one of the original contributors to the construction of Old Main on the Main-Jefferson site.



DENNIS TOOLE '72

Dennis and his sister, Patricia Toole, gave generously to the college's most recent capital campaign. In recognition of their gift, Canisius presented them with Case Study Room 203 in Old Main, which the Toole's named in memory of their great-grandfather, Julius Binz. Dennis is pictured here with his wife, Corinne.

I graduated in May 1977 with a BS degree in accounting and I would say that about 80 percent of my classes were in Old Main. I liked the classes that had auditorium-like seating.

One of my earliest memories include my first math class in the fall 1973 semester. The course was linear algebra taught by Dr. Richard H. Escobales, who started his teaching career at Canisius and is now in his 29th year.

ALAN KANIECKI '77



IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO
SHARE A MEMORY OF
OLD MAIN, YOU MAY DO SO AT
www.canisius.edu/alumni/memories.asp

