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When did the tradition of “uglies” and “queens” first begin on campus?

St. Norbert College

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November 2006

Question:

Dear Abbot Pennings,

When did the tradition of “uglies” and “queens” first begin on campus?

Answer:

Let it first be noted that “ugly” is actually a complimentary title here at St. Norbert College. Uglies and queens are men and women picked by social organizations to represent their groups at Homecoming and other social activities throughout the year.

The history of uglies and queens appears to have started back in the 1950s. The first written reference to an “ugly” was apparently in the 1955 yearbook. Alpha Phi Omega, a national service fraternity on campus, held the first “Ugliest Man on Campus” contest in 1954.

The first “Ugly Man” was George DesMarais '56. (DesMarais was just inducted as a Golden Knight this past reunion). The contest was so popular that the group held a second contest in 1955.

The “queen” tradition, as it is celebrated today, has been a little harder to pinpoint. Even before women were admitted to St. Norbert in 1952, there were homecoming queens, prom queens and sweethearts.

Responses to “Ask the Abbot” questions are penned by St. Norbert College staff in the name of Abbot Bernard Pennings, O.Praem., who founded St. Norbert College in 1898.



Ask the Abbot

As the founder of St. Norbert College, and having a prime seat in the center of campus throughout the years, I, Abbot Bernard Pennings, hold the answers to many of your burning questions about the college.

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