

St. Norbert College

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Ask the Abbot

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**I've heard that there was an auditorium housed in Main Hall. What have been all the uses for Main Hall over the years?**

John Connelly '89

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## April 2008

### Question:

Dear Abbot Pennings,

I've heard that there was an auditorium housed in Main Hall. What have been all the uses for Main Hall over the years?

John Connelly '89

### Answer:

I sincerely appreciate your question as it gives me reason to reflect on the rich history exemplified by Main Hall.

I can clearly remember the day we laid the cornerstone – March 19, 1902. Unlike the vast campus that exists today, Main Hall (or as we sometimes referred to it back in the day, “Old Main”) was truly St. Norbert College in its entirety.

During that time it housed our classrooms, the library, the dormitory, and our dining and recreational rooms. It did indeed house an auditorium – on the third floor to be exact. It was so wonderful to be able to offer our students such a purposeful facility.

Main Hall has seen much transition in its functions over the years. At one time it housed administrative offices, the bookstore, ROTC headquarters, the personnel office, the registrar's office, the college mailroom and some classrooms, all under one roof!

Today it primarily houses administrative offices, including the president's office, and the office of the academic dean and the



### 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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vice presidents for student life, mission and heritage, business and finance, and college advancement. Health services and the counseling center are located in the lower level as well.

I am so pleased that our “Old Main” has been well maintained over the years. The cornerstone bears the letters D.O.M., an abbreviation for *Deo optimo maximo*, “To God the Best and the Greatest” – a phrase very appropriate for a building that at one time contained everything that was St. Norbert College.

*Note: Main Hall was named to the National Register of Historic Places in 1989 by the U. S. Secretary of the Interior on the basis of its age, architectural significance and its importance to the history of the community and higher education.*

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.

## St. Norbert College

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