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Who is Mel Nicks and why is St. Norbert's sports complex named after him?

Bridget Zach '11

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July 2010

Question:

Dear Abbot Pennings,

Who is Mel Nicks and why is St. Norbert's sports complex named after him?

Bridget Zach '11

Answer:

My dearest Bridget,

I always enjoy reminiscing about the college and the many talented people who have contributed to its development. Mel Nicks certainly belongs in this category.

A graduate of Loras College, Mel worked at Campion High School in Prairie du Chien, Wis., before coming to St. Norbert in 1953. He was to coach all sports programs, and was a wonderfully able addition to the college, to be sure. During one three-year span, he held four positions in the athletics department: athletics director, head basketball coach, head football coach and head baseball coach.

Mel eventually resigned his position as head basketball coach but I am glad to say he remained in his other positions. He served us as track coach, too, at one stage of his estimable career with us. He further served as a faculty member, for 26 years.

I, and many others, really think Mel brought new life to the baseball program at St. Norbert, as his was the commendable idea to build a campus baseball field. Today, the college's Mel



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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Nicks Sports Complex includes a baseball diamond, softball diamond and football practice fields.

Those further removed from their time on campus may remember the complex as Candlenicks Field. The droll nickname, a play on San Francisco's Candlestick Park, was a nod to both De Pere's windy springtime weather and Mel Nicks' name.

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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