

Summer 2009

# A Legacy to Celebrate

St. Norbert College

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Left to right, Jim Frett '75, Jackie Frett, Dan Frett '11 and Gene Frett.

### All in the family

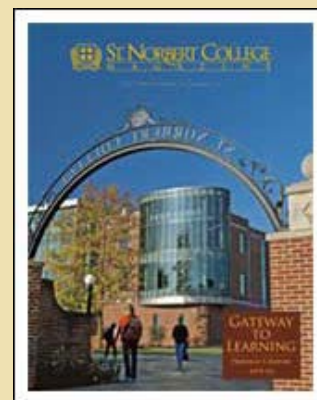
Gene Frett's first encounter with St. Norbert College was as a salesman for Binney & Smith, the creators of Crayola crayons and markers. Who knew that connection would be the start of a tradition that would see 12 members of the family educated at the De Pere, Wis., school.

Families like the Fretts were celebrated at St. Norbert College's first Legacy Brunch. The event, hosted by **President Tom Kunkel** and his wife, **Debra**, was open to current students whose parent(s) or grandparent(s) attended the college. The event, sponsored by the alumni and parent relations office, took place on the final day of Family Weekend.

#### Coloring in a lineage

St. Norbert's art department was one of Gene Frett's accounts. So, when his children started looking at colleges in the early 1970s, Gene and his wife, Patricia, suggested the college because it seemed like a nice Catholic school. Four out of his five children heeded the advice. They include **Jim Frett '75**, **Peter Frett '77**, **Terry Frett '80** and **Patty Frett '85**.

The Frett legacy has since grown to include a niece, **Rita (McKillip) Ryan '76**,



Look here for web-only content that expands on topics presented in the current [St. Norbert College Magazine \(PDF\)](#).

**SNC Day**  
 A gallery of images from the college's biggest-ever open house.

**Miss Welnick at 103**  
 The college's oldest alum looks back on more than a century of memories.

**Hildegard of Bingen**  
 A Center for Norbertine Studies symposium cast new light on the life of this influential medieval mystic.

**Game for learning**  
**Paul Waelchli** (Library) teaches information literacy through fantasy football.

**A legacy to celebrate**  
 Meet three families whose ties to St. Norbert have endured across the generations.

**Adventures in Manila**  
**Laurie MacDiarmid** (English) and her daughter chronicle their

her husband, **John Ryan '73**, and their children, **Kelly Ryan '05** and **Dan Ryan '07**. Terry's wife, **Lauree (Leverick) Frett '80**, was a graduate and their daughter, **Christina Frett '06**, as well. Finally, Jim's three children followed: **Erica Frett '06**, **Leslie Frett '08** and **Dan Frett**, who is due to graduate in 2011.

In support of their children and grandchildren, Gene and Patricia attended Family Weekend from 1971 until 1985. Patricia died in 1992, but Gene resumed the habit from 2002 on, for a grand total of 21.

Jim, Gene's second eldest son, attributes his dad's influence as key to the grandchildren's attendance. He recalls when his daughter Erica was already a student at St. Norbert and his second daughter, Leslie, was on the fence about college: She wasn't sure she wanted to go to her sister's school.

Grandpa Gene persuaded Leslie that she should take a look at the school. He took Leslie and younger brother, Dan, to a freshman orientation day at the college. Jim says, "He now has, I feel, both of them going."

Dan Frett says that St. Norbert College grew on him. With his dad, aunt and uncles and sisters all attending the school, he felt like he knew all about it.

"I didn't feel pressured, I felt more like it was home. After visiting my sisters a bunch, I just felt like this was right. All these people were nice – it was a community feeling – I liked it."

### Working together

Carole Drew was "bound and determined" that all four of her children were going to graduate from college. She knew it wouldn't be easy. Her divorce was finalized right about the time her oldest graduated from high school. Finances were going to be tight. Everyone would have to work together. And that's exactly how the Drew/Nettesheim Legacy started.

In a six-year time frame, all four of Carole's children graduated from St. Norbert College. They are **Kathy (Drew) Nettesheim '84**, **Bill Drew '85**, **Kerry Drew '87** and **Brian Drew '89**.



Left to right, Carole Drew, Kathy (Drew) Nettesheim '84, Erin Nettesheim, Ryan Nettesheim '12 and Kevin Nettesheim '85. Not pictured, Sean Nettesheim.

Carole had heard good things about St. Norbert College from Mt. Carmel High School, the Chicago high school her boys attended in Chicago. St. Norbert seemed to be the type of school she wanted for her children – a small, Catholic co-ed school with a warm, family-type atmosphere.

Kathy agreed and became the first in her family to attend St. Norbert. Carole worked hard with folks at the college to make sure that Bill, the second oldest, could attend. The family discount helped the financial situation, as did a Pell grant, student loans – and the fact that everyone worked.

Carole says, "So, then, by the time Kerry came along, it was almost like, 'No choice, you're going.' And then Brian, 'That's it, honey, all the way.'"

Laughter erupts around the Legacy Brunch table at this synopsis of events, while Kathy explains that her siblings really did want to come. She says, "They had all been up to visit. They all knew how great it was. There were no reservations."

The legacy continued. Kathy's brother Bill met his wife at the school: **Mary Pat (Van Etten) '86**. A family cousin, **Carrie (Krosse) Igoe '87**, also attended. Kathy met her husband, **Kevin Nettesheim '85**, while they were students. (Kevin's sister also was a graduate, **Mindy (Flynn) Nettesheim '88**.) Now Kathy and

semester in the Philippines.

### **The "Twilight" phenomenon**

Stephenie Meyers' series is attracting scholarly attention from, among others, our own **John Pennington** (English).

### **Keeping track**


**Jenny Scherer '10** has been taking her insider's view of varsity track and field to a national audience.

### **The inside view**

**Gerry Diaz '04** reports from his new job: covering the Green Bay Packers for CBSSports.com.

### **From start to finish**

The Mulva Library, now open, takes shape before your eyes in this time-lapse sequence of images.

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Kevin's oldest son, **Ryan Nettesheim** is a sophomore, due to graduate in 2012.

The decision for Ryan wasn't nearly so automatic. He says, "Because everyone did come here, I kinda wanted to go find my own way and go to a different school." He visited a number of other colleges but kept coming back to St. Norbert in his mind. When St. Norbert gave him a good scholarship, the decision was made easy.

Ryan has two younger siblings, Sean, a junior in high school, and Erin, an eighth grader. Both spent time on campus over Family Weekend. Kathy and Kevin would like all the children to come to St. Norbert but won't be forcing anything on them. "It's really their decision," says Kathy.



**Left to right, Doug Westhoven '81, Tricia (Laux) Westhoven '82, Sylvia Laux, Renee Westhoven, Don Laux '53 and Craig Westhoven '10.**

**Dick Smith '47.** He has since influenced others of his family to attend St. Norbert, including both of his daughters, **Tricia (Laux) Westhoven '82** and **Sara (Laux) Akin '85.** Tricia met her husband, **Doug Westhoven '81,** while they were students. Now, their oldest son, **Craig Westhoven '10,** is a senior.

Doug says he and Tricia were really pleased when Craig chose to enroll. They were confident in the quality of his education and familiar with much of what happens on campus. Doug says, "It brings back memories for you, it definitely does. He is living in the dorm [Victor McCormick Hall] where we used to live. So, that's really neat. Some of the professors are still around too."

When asked about his decision to come to St. Norbert, Craig says, "It didn't have much to do with my parents coming here, more just the feel of the campus – that it just felt right."

The **Rev. Rowland De Peaux '48** presided at the wedding of Craig and Tricia Westhoven at Old St. Joe's. He has known many of the legacy families at St. Norbert. His observation is that most of the parents and grandparents of legacy families share a common, deep involvement with the campus. Somehow, says De Peaux, they were able to pass on or explain that passion to their children.

He says, "[The children] realize there is something that the parents felt and gained through their experience here that contributed to the kind of person they are, and I think then the son or daughter realizes that and when they came they got that same feeling very quickly."

#### **A legacy to celebrate**

When **Don Laux '53** started college 60 years ago, the cost of one semester at St. Norbert was \$355.50. He's sure about that number. Real sure. His mother saved the receipt.

With encouragement from his wife, Sylvia, Don tucked the paper into his shirt pocket the morning of the Legacy Brunch. He fished it out several times during the event, delighting family and fellow alums.

Don was primarily influenced to come to St. Norbert by his older brother,

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