

St. Norbert College

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**At graduation, I couldn't help but notice the 'bling' that President Kunkel had on – what is the story behind the medal he wears?**

Larissa Dallman '13

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## August 2013

### Question:

Dear Abbot Pennings,

At graduation, I couldn't help but notice the 'bling' that President Kunkel had on – what is the story behind the medal he wears?

Larissa Dallman '13

### Answer:

My dear Larissa,

Oh, how I love Commencement! The caps, the gowns, the beautiful memories being made . . . . I sincerely hope you had a wonderful time experiencing the rich tradition of a St. Norbert College Commencement ceremony.

But on to your question about 'bling.' I confess I was not familiar with that term, and had to consult my dictionary. I now realize you must be inquiring about the President's Medal! Yours is an excellent question, which affords me the opportunity to share with you and my dear readers the tradition surrounding that piece.

The medallion, 4¾ inches in diameter, was designed and sculpted in 1983 by Paul Cavanaugh of Greenville, Rhode Island. Cavanaugh crafted it from both hand-wrought metal and ebony wood, incorporating the seal of the president into the design.

The presidential seal as a whole symbolizes the responsibilities of the president to provide leadership to the academic community, assure the continuation of the tradition and



### 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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heritage of the college and represent the college to other constituencies. On the outer ring one finds the words “St. Norbert College Seal of the President.” But you may also be interested to know that each element in the seal’s design carries meaning.

Within the ring is a square, which symbolizes the four connected parts of our academic community: the administration, faculty, student body and alumni community. The shield found within the square symbolizes our rich heritage.

On the reverse side of the medal, you will find my own name followed by the names of all the college’s subsequent presidents – servants of the college who are held in my greatest esteem and that of many others also.

The president of St. Norbert wears the medal only at the two special occasions that open and close the academic experience for each new class of our undergraduates: at Convocation in the fall and at Commencement in the spring. Maybe that’s because it is indeed rather heavy!

*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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