

St. Norbert College

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5-2014

**What is the proper use of the college' name? Is it still acceptable to say "St. Norbert's"?**

Matt Christoff '14

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## May 2014

### Question:

Dear Abbot Pennings,

A point of contention among my contemporaries and co-workers has been left unanswered too long! Hence, I'm here to ask for your wonderful wealth of wisdom concerning the history of St. Norbert College. This has been a topic hotly debated with many that I have encountered even before starting my undergraduate experience. Locals have their point of view, staff have their opinions, students have no clue and the squirrels? Well, I doubt they'll say anything these days ...

The moniker for this college seems to have changed at some point in time from "St. Norbert's College" to "St. Norbert College." In fact, it seems that the stone arch overlooking Main Hall has a space that was sandblasted, presumably because the "s" was removed when the name change occurred.

When did this name change occur, and why? What is the proper use of the college's name? Is it still acceptable to say "St. Norbert's"?

Please answer this question for me! I don't want to be accused of besmirching the fair college's name by using some antiquated nomenclature.

Sincerely,

Matt Christoff '14

### Answer:

My dear Matt,



### 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.

[Submit Your Question](#)

First of all, may I congratulate you on the perspicacity and elegance of your prose style! It is a rare quality in this age of texting, posting and, ahem, tweeting.

Your question is an intriguing one and, if I may say so, a perennial one on our campus.

I, too, have witnessed the heated debates regarding the history of St. Norbert College. I have seen cringes by locals, staff, students and particularly the squirrels when they hear someone say what they believe is the wrong name of our beloved institution. I believe I can shed some light on the topic to eliminate a few squabbles among your contemporaries.

You certainly have a keen eye to notice the revision to the stone arch overlooking Main Hall. The arch at one time did read, “St. Norbert’s College.” From our inception in 1898 until 1928, the school was referred to as St. Norbert’s College. This implied that St. Norbert himself was the owner of the institution and (grammatically speaking) had possessive rights of the school. Since this was misleading, the “s” was dropped and the institution has henceforth properly been called St. Norbert College. I sincerely doubt there would be any dire consequences if you said, “St. Norbert’s,” but I am sure you would agree that it is seemly to err on the side of preferred usage.

*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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