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Alumni Relations

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Every time I walk past the Alumni House on campus, I can't help but wonder about its history. Has it always been a place for alumni to gather?

Maggie McFadden '20

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October 2019

Question:

Dear Abbot Pennings,

Every time I walk past the Alumni House on campus, I can't help but wonder about its history. Has it always been a place for alumni to gather?

Maggie McFadden '20

Answer:

My dear Maggie,

How fitting your inquiry is as we embrace our 2019-20 annual theme "Ever Ancient, Ever New" – for the Alumni House has undergone a multitude of intriguing transitions over the years as the college adjusts to the changing needs of our community.

Built in 1916, the house was initially the rectory for St. John's Church next door (now the home of our renowned Cassandra Voss Center). After the college acquired the house in 1961, it became home to a faculty member for three years. From 1968 to 1977, it was the residence of the Rev. Dennis M. Burke '26, who served as chancellor of the college following his 13-year presidency.

In 1978, the house became the International Culture House, a splendid residence for students specializing in foreign language and foreign culture courses. Roughly two decades later, renovations began to transform the house into the Rev. Ignatius Francis Van Dyke, O. Praem., Alumni House we are familiar with today. This 1999 renovation, arguably the largest



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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in the building's history, was funded solely by donations from incredibly generous St. Norbert alumni. My heart swells at the thought of their kindness.

Today, the Alumni House is home to the **office of alumni and parent relations**. It is a prime gathering place for alumni to catch up with one another and is used by students and staff looking for a comfortable place to work or unwind. St. Norbert community members can also reserve the parlor space for personal gatherings.

The Alumni House as it stands today looks quite different from the way it did 60 years ago, but inside, visitors can hark back to days past. The quaint house is home to an interesting artifact of the college's history: Father Burke's desk. Oh, the stories it could tell! Next time you are near Third Street, stop in and take a look!

Though the Alumni House has undergone many changes, it has maintained throughout the years an ethos of service to the college community. As the college carries us into the future, no doubt the Alumni House will continue to adapt to meet the needs of our community.

Responses to "Ask the Abbot" questions are penned by St. Norbert College staff in the name of Abbot Bernard Pennings, who founded St. Norbert College in 1898.

St. Norbert College

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