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Ask the Abbot

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When was the iconic arch constructed? And what happened to the missing leaf on the right side of the arch?

Laura Lear

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July 2021

Question:

Dear Abbot Pennings,

“When was the iconic arch constructed? And what happened to the missing leaf on the right side of the arch?”

Laura Lear (Office of Communications)

Answer:

My, what an eagle-eyed observation! Our beloved arch is indeed bereft of one of the four hand-pounded leaves of bronze that adorned it upon its dedication on Sept. 15, 1993. These were the handiwork of Wisconsin blacksmith Robert Bergman, who designed the 1,400-pound, wrought-iron structure to serve as the centerpiece of a clearly defined entrance to campus.

The matter of when and how the leaf took its leave, if you will, is shrouded in mystery. Our eminently capable director of facilities, Patrick Wrenn, has found photographic evidence to suggest an absence of at least 20 years! However, I’m pleased to report that Patrick plans to speak with a metal artist about producing a replacement leaf. This would restore ornamental symmetry to our storied arch as it continues to frame memorable moments on campus for generations to come.

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.



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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