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What inspired the creation of the beautiful Shakespeare Garden on campus?

Breanna Cisler '23

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August 2021

Question:

Dear Abbot Pennings,

“What inspired the creation of the beautiful Shakespeare Garden on campus?”

Brenna Cisler '23

Answer:

My dearest Brenna,

Blooms and the Bard – a delightful combination! The college dedicated its Shakespeare Garden on May 15, 2000; a year that also marked a full century since the founding of the Monday Shakespeare Club of Green Bay and De Pere. This organization, which has historically met on Mondays to discuss the works of Shakespeare, ranks among the nation’s oldest ongoing study groups for women. The club’s gift, made in memory of its past president, Mrs. Crane (Mary) Murphy, included an endowment to ensure the garden’s proper maintenance in perpetuity.

The Shakespeare Garden is situated in the quadrangle between the F. K. Bemis International Conference Center, Austin E. Cofrin Hall, the Gehl-Mulva Science Center, and Todd Wehr Hall. Its layout, a revival of the Monday Shakespeare Club’s first garden completed in 1931 in west Green Bay, is shaped with teakwood benches, an arbor, terra cotta granite gravel paths, and a center pedestal with sundial. Plants in the garden are each mentioned in Shakespeare’s works, and have included boxwood, flax, petunias, tulips, marigolds and, of course,



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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roses.

In 2011, the garden expanded to include the Memorial Walk along its east entrance. This path includes bricks engraved in tribute to dearly departed members of our St. Norbert College community. I encourage everyone to experience this walk for themselves, whether to reminisce, pay respects, pray, or simply appreciate the beauty of the space.

Beside the Memorial Walk is a Little Free Library, a wonderful amenity to my mind and one constructed in 2014 by SNC's Alpha Tau Chapter of the Sigma Tau Delta International English Honor Society. In my opinion, the garden provides a perfect venue for encouraging the free exchange of literature!

It is my fervent hope that the Shakespeare Garden continues to bring moments of contemplation, joy and peace to all who visit. Perhaps it will even inspire world-famous works by SNC's own poets and playwrights who follow in the tradition of the Bard of Avon himself!

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

100 Grant Street
De Pere, WI 54115
920-337-3181
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