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2014

## Benedicta Arts Center at 50: A History

Peggy L. Roske

College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University, [proske@csbsju.edu](mailto:proske@csbsju.edu)

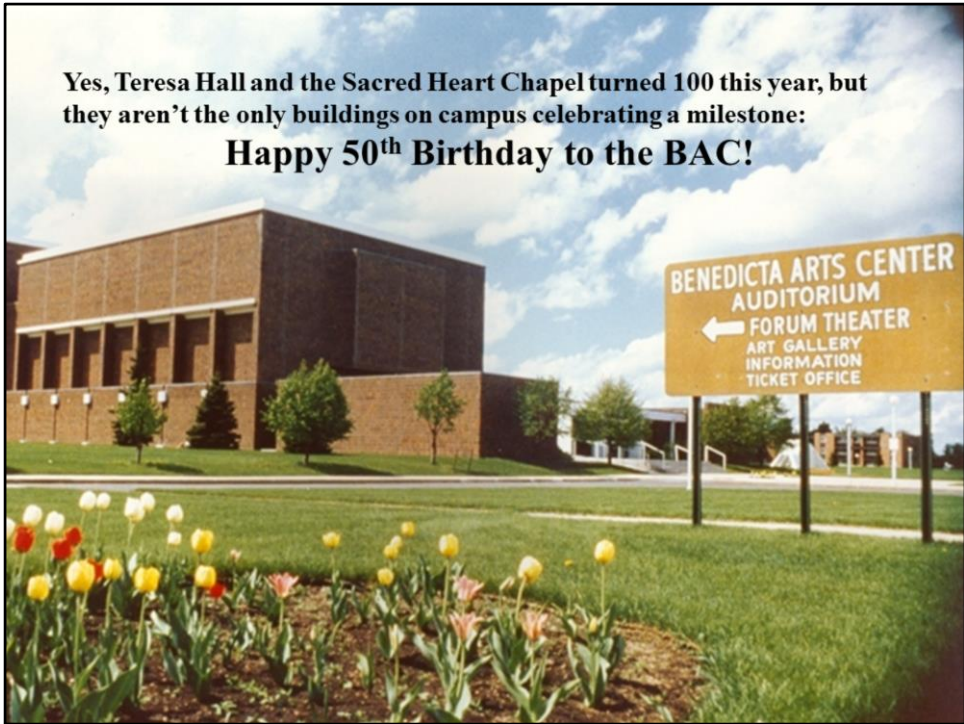
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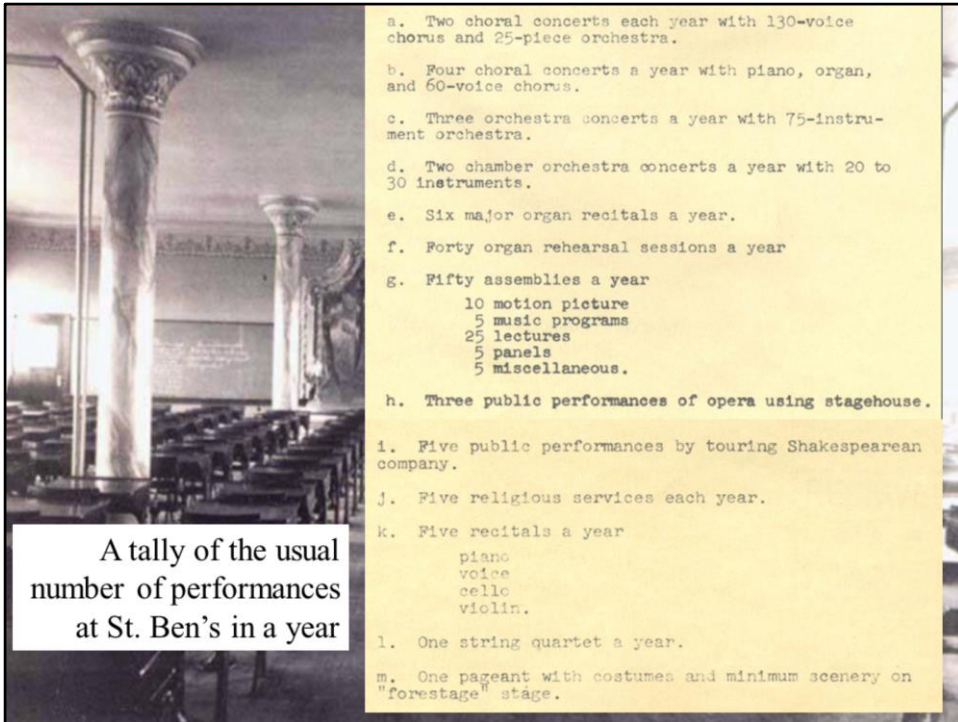
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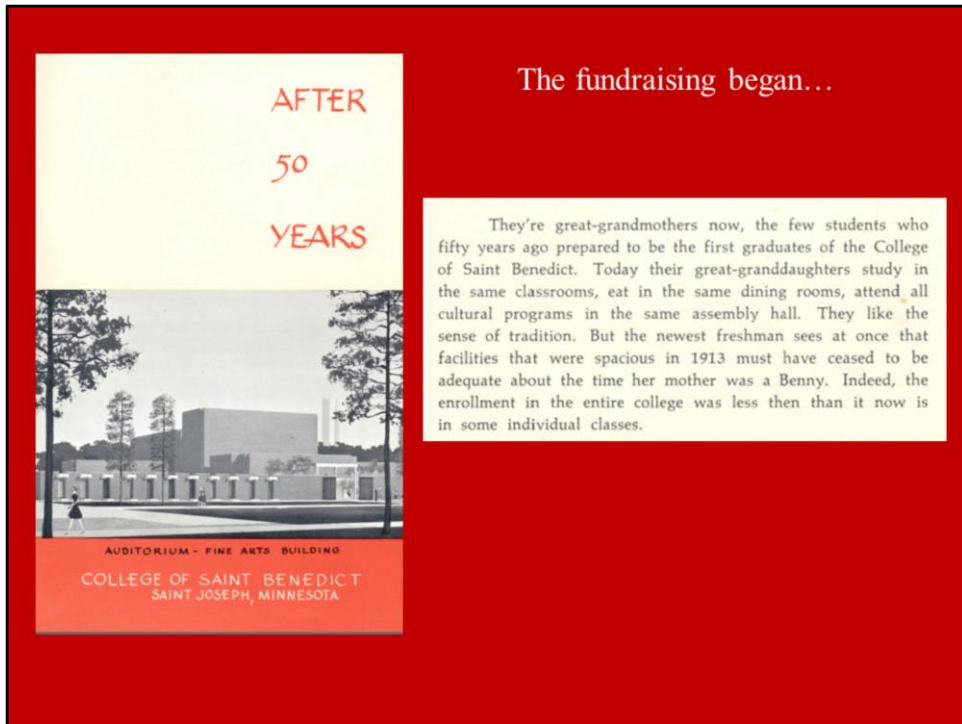
Undated photo in the CSB Archives



<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/CSBArchives/id/5>  
Auditorium in Teresa Hall (Main Building), second floor, 1913



<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/CSBArchives/id/5> Auditorium in Teresa Hall (Main Building), second floor, 1913  
January 4, 1962 letter from Russell Johnson, Bolt Beranek and Newman, Inc., to Curtis Green, Hammel and Green, Inc. concerning "Large Auditorium, St. Benedict's College." 6 pages.



Mother Henrita Osendorf - "After 50 years..." Fundraising brochure in AC16.01.F05 Box 1

It's not that we think 50 years is old for a college building and we'd better have a new one! For Benedictines 50 years is young.

The point is that accommodations that were vast for the dozen students and three teachers who made up the college community in 1913-14 won't begin to hold the 1963-64 college community.

Thus, for the first time in our 105-year history we are organizing an appeal for funds. We know that our friends and the friends of Christian higher education will help us in this project which we cannot undertake alone.



Yours in Christ,


*Mother M. Henrita, O.S.B.*

Mother Henrita, O.S.B.  
Prioress

Mother Henrita Osendorf - Fundraising brochure in AC16.01.F05 Box 1

„,as did the planning

October 8, 1960

**COLLEGE OF SAINT BENEDICT**  
SAINT JOSEPH, MINNESOTA

October 8, 1960

Sister M. Rosita  
President  
Dominican College  
Madison, Wisconsin

Dear Sister Rosita:

The College of Saint Benedict is planning a Fine Arts Center which will include an auditorium, drama and speech, art and music. Does your college have a Fine Arts building which would give our building committee some ideas for planning such a unit? Or perhaps you have developed one area which is very satisfactory. If you have one or more buildings, recently erected, would you permit our building committee to include your campus in a tour? We are planning to make our trip between October 23 and November 1.

Would you recommend visiting any other campus in your area? We shall be grateful for any help you can give us.

Thank you.

Sincerely,  
*Sister M. Firmin, O.S.B.*  
Sister M. Firmin, O.S.B.  
Chairman of the Fine Arts Building Committee

*He, Sister*

*Be -  
Cant.  
You  
But  
Knows*

*He do think we may make an appointment.  
Sister*

*Cardinal Stritch  
College in  
Madison*

*He just started  
moving our study  
room building  
in September. You  
are so welcome  
Sister Rosita*

*Mount Mary and  
Alma's should  
be good. I think*

*Sorry to hear delay. We are  
getting ready for Open House &  
the festival. I will my father  
did last Wednesday. Please  
send their notes  
LR*

From AC16.01.F03 Box 1

Sister M. Rosita  
President  
Dominican College  
Racine, Wisconsin

Dear Sister Rosita:

The College of Saint Benedict is planning a Fine Arts Center which will include an auditorium, drama and speech, art and music. Does your college have a Fine Arts building which would give our building committee some ideas for planning such a unit? Or perhaps you have developed one area which is very satisfactory. If you have one or more buildings, recently erected, would you permit our building committee to include your campus in a tour? We are planning to make our trip between October 28 and November 1.

Would you recommend visiting any other campus in your area? We shall be grateful for any help you can give us.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

*Sister M. Firmin, O.S.B.*

Sister M. Firmin, O.S.B.  
Chairman of the Fine Arts  
Building Committee

sc

From AC16.01.F03 Box 1



Sister M. Rosita  
President  
Dominican College  
Racine, Wisconsin

Dear Sister Rosita:

The College of Saint Benedict is planning a Fine Arts Center which will include an auditorium, drama and speech, art and music. Does your college have a Fine Arts building which would give our building committee some ideas for planning such a unit? Or perhaps you have developed one area which is very satisfactory. If you have one or more buildings, recently erected, would you permit our building committee to include your campus in a tour? We are planning to make our trip between October 28 and November 1.

Would you recommend visiting any other campus in your area? We shall be grateful for any help you can give us.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

*Sister M. Firmin, O.S.B.*  
Sister M. Firmin, O.S.B.  
Chairman of the Fine Arts  
Building Committee

*No,  
Sister.*

*Do  
come.  
Just  
let me  
know.*

*We do have a  
very nice art  
department,  
Sister.*

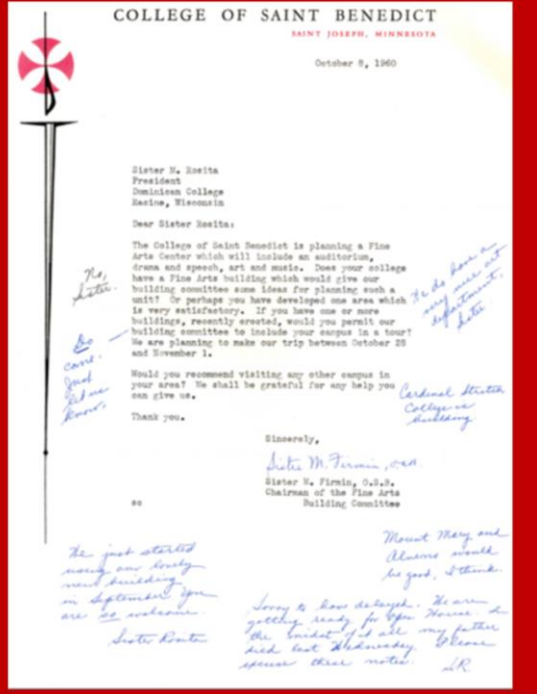
*Cardinal Stritch  
College is  
building.*

sc

From AC16.01.F03 Box 1

There are many letters of regret in the file from colleges with no fine arts building in 1960:

- Carleton
- Concordia Moorhead
- Macalester
- Mankato
- St. Kate's
- St. Olaf
- St. Teresa's, Winona
- St. Thomas



From AC16.01.F03 Box 1

**Sister Mary Patrick**  
Dean of Residence  
Latin . Business Education





**S. Firmin**  
Music, Chorus, Orchestra,  
Faculty-Student Council  
Moderator

**S. Colman**  
Speech and Drama, English,  
Ardelecons

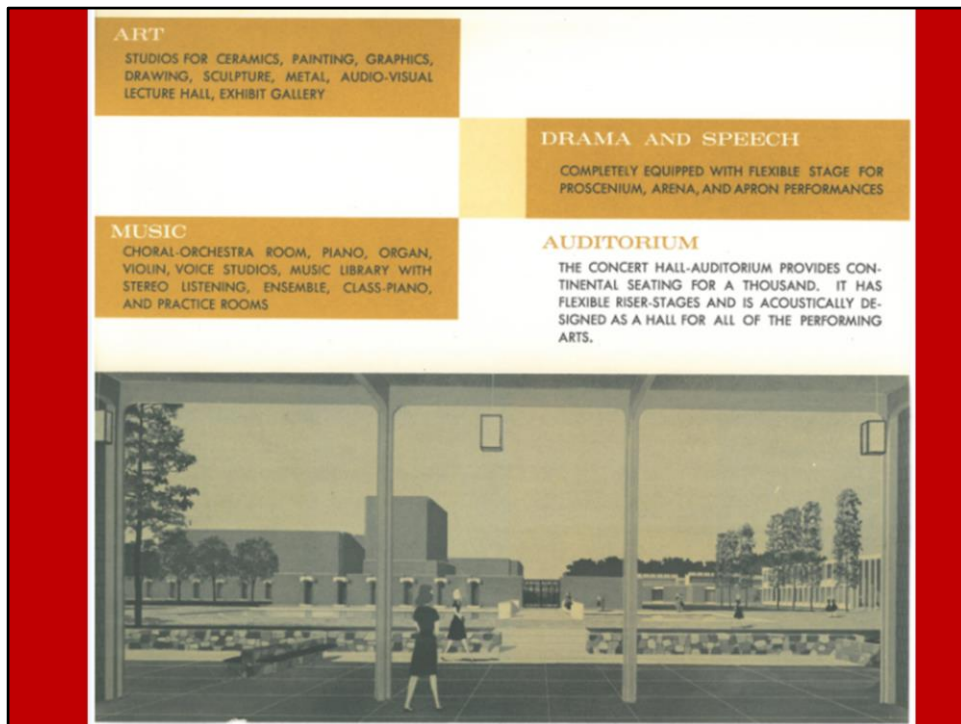
**S. Jacquelyn**  
Art, *Facula*

Sister Mary Patrick, Sister Jacqueline, Sister Colman, Sister Firmin  
TOUR FAAN for October 28 - November 1  
Thursday evening-- leave for Minneapolis 5:00 p.m.  
Friday  
Leave Minneapolis 7:30 a.m.  
Arrive in Appleton, Wis. Between 1:30 and 2:00 p.m.  
Leave Appleton, Wis 4:30 p.m.  
Arrive in Milwaukee (Alverno College) between 7 and 8 p.m.  
Tour when we arrive. Stay all night.  
Saturday  
Leave Milwaukee 8:00 a.m.  
Arrive at Racine (Dominican College) at 9:00 a.m.  
Leave Racine 10:30 a.m.  
Arrive at St. Scholastica's in Chicago at 1:00 p.m.  
Leave St. Scholastica's at 2:00 p.m.  
Arrive at Rosary College, River Forest, Illinois at 3:15 p.m.  
Leave Rosary College at 5:00 p.m.  
Arrive at St. Mary's College, Notre Dame between 8 and 9 p.m.  
(Tour on Sunday morning) Stay all night.  
Leave St. Mary's at 2:00 p.m.

From AC16.01.F03 Box 1; photos from the 1955 (Mary Pat's) and 1960 *Facula*

		<p><b>Sister Mary Patrick</b> Dean of Residence Latin . Business Education</p>	
<p>S. Colman Speech and Drama, English, Ardelecons</p>	<p><u>Sunday</u> Arrive at Fort Wayne, Ind. (Concordia College) at 4:00 p.m. Leave Fort Wayne at 6:00 p.m. Arrive at Muncie, Indiana at 9:00 p.m. Stay over night</p>		
	<p><u>Monday</u> Tour Ball State College at 8:30 or 9:00 a.m. Leave Muncie at 11:30 a.m. Arrive at Lafayette, Indiana (Purdue University) at 3:00 p.m. Leave Purdue University at 5:30 p.m.  Arrive at Peoria, Illinois 10:00 p.m. Stay over night</p>		
<p>S. Jacquelyn Art, Facula</p>	<p><u>Tuesday</u> Tour the Art Center in Peoria, Ill. 9:00 a.m. Leave Peoria 10:00 a.m.  Travel to Minneapolis Arrive late ??</p>		
<p><u>Wednesday</u> Return to CSB in time for 8:15 classes Attend noon mass</p>			

From AC16.01.F03 Box 1; photos from the 1955 (Mary Pat's) and 1960 *Facula*



BAC fundraising brochure in the CSB Archives

BOLT BERANEK AND NEWMAN INC  
CONSULTING · DEVELOPMENT · APPLIED RESEARCH

55 MOULTON STREET  
CAMBRIDGE 38, MASSACHUSETTS  
TELEPHONE 491-1850

RECEIVED

JAN 5 1962

HAMMEL AND GREEN  
ARCHITECTS

4 January 1962

Mr. Curtis H. Green  
Hammel and Green, Inc.,  
2650 University Avenue  
St. Paul, Minnesota

Subject: Large Auditorium,  
St. Benedict's College  
BBN #133398

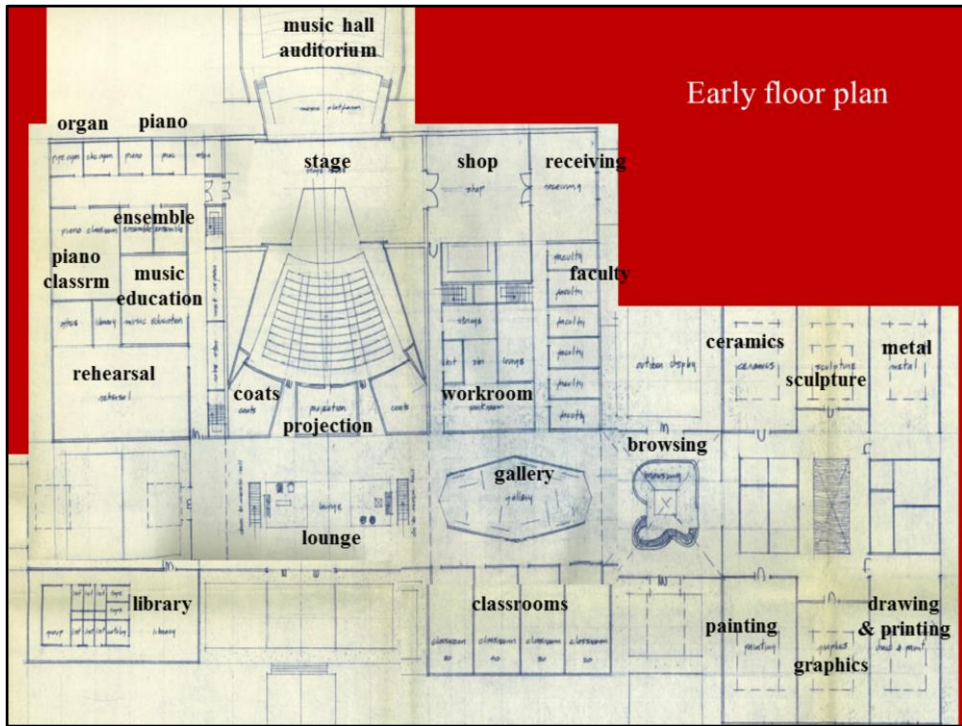
Dear Curt:

Russ Johnson  
letter to  
architect Green  
about acoustics

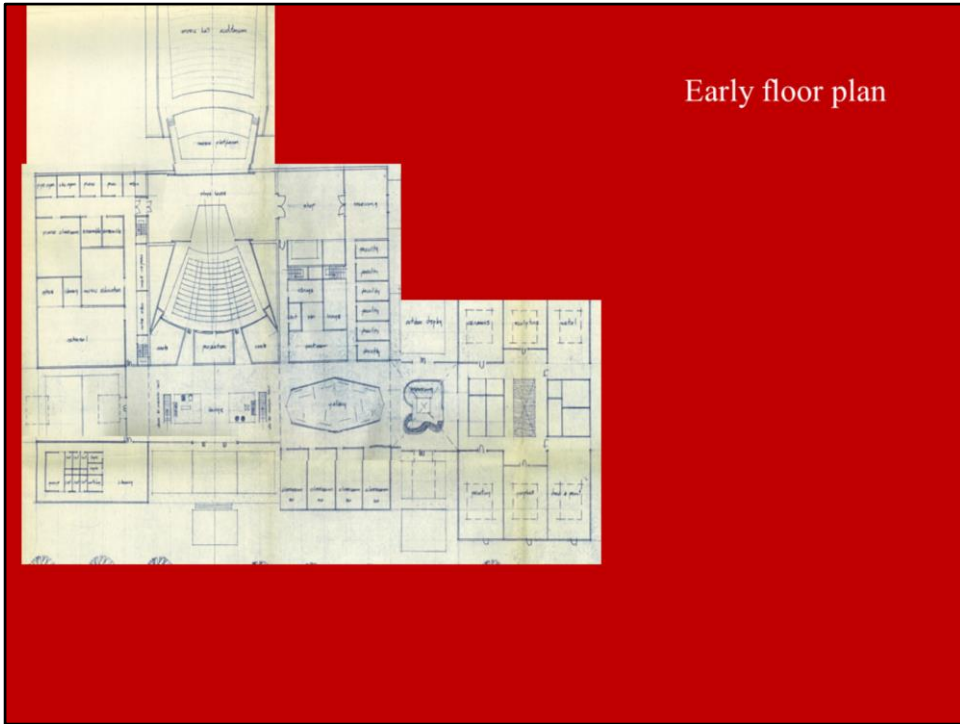
The auditorium design shown on your preliminary drawings is quite good in respect to acoustical requirements, although the roof is too low and the hall is a bit too wide. However, there is a danger that the acoustical "needs" will overshadow the other aspects of the hall design. We have found that building owners tend to forget they have good acoustics if other basic aspects of the hall are unsatisfactory.

It is very important to place most of the audience members so that they are "high" enough to see the activity on stage without body strain. Graphic analysis of sight lines (paper architecture) can be very misleading.

AC 16.01.F05 Box 1 Russ Johnson letter to Green, architect, p. 1



Early floor plan (on left) - AC 16.01.F05

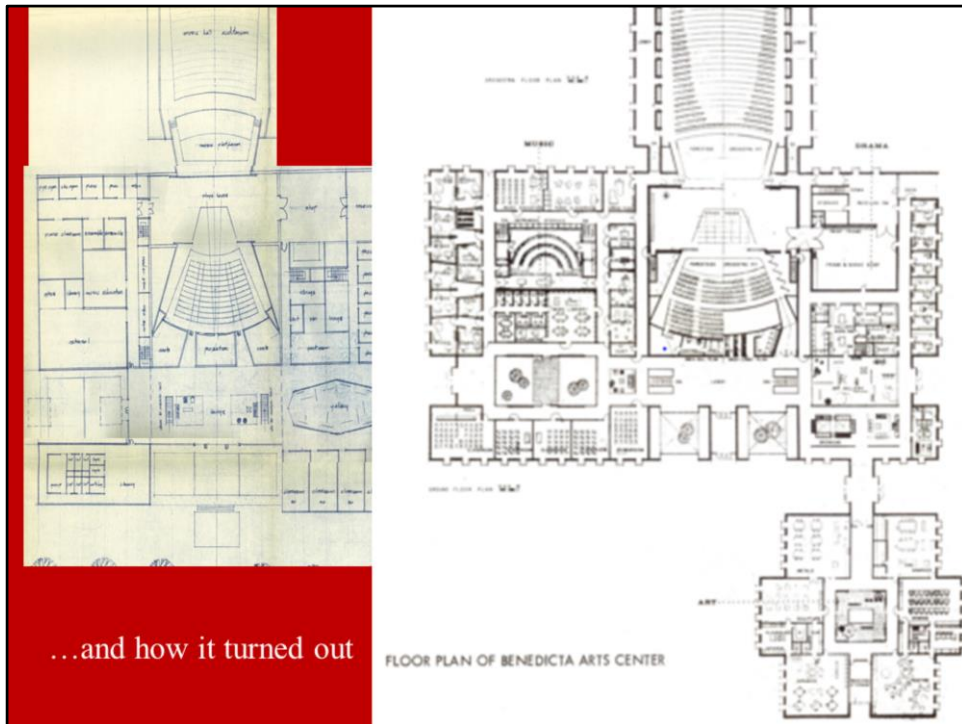


Early floor plan

Early floor plan (on left) - AC 16.01.F05

Final floor plan (on right) from the Program for the blessing of the BAC, July 19, 1964.





Early floor plan (on left) - AC 16.01.F05

Final floor plan (on right) from the Program for the blessing of the BAC, July 19, 1964.



March 17, 1963 – Mother Henrita lays the cornerstone

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SBM/id/505>

SBM.20a01 Mother Henrita Osendorf laying the cornerstone of the Fine Arts Building



<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SBM/id/506>  
SBM.20a02 Benedicta Arts Center (BAC)" Construction

127315<sup>0</sup> St. Benedict's College  
Fine Arts Department

Hiram W. Green  
Feb 28, 1962  
Grandy

Sec No	Description	Total Cost
1-2	General & Special Cond	96,600
4	Exc. Grade - Site	29,480
	Blacktopping	1,500
	Sodding	800
	Side-walks	580
6	Concrete - Reinforcing	29,710
	Spconcrete	85,219
	Zonotile 8820'	6,615
	Precast Window Header	13,500
B	Masonry	346,196
10	Dampproofing	2,400
12	Steel Joists - L.S.	72,54
14-15	Misc - orn Metals	58,800
16	Toilet Part. - U. Screen - Shower	6,056
	Louvers - Grills	1,800
17	Hollow Metal	64,215
19	Metal Windows Entries Glazed	51,500
20-21	Roofing - Sheet Metal	448,43
22	Carpentry	43,147
23	Millwork	107,375

Costs, from AC16.01.F03 (bid?)

24	Caulk & w.s	64.00
25	Lath & Plaster	316.79
26	Ceramic Tile	102.00
27	Durazzo	3436.6
29	Comp floors	2061.0
30	Wood floors	163.6
31	Glazing	346.0
32	Acoustical	446.03
33	Paint	288.73
34	Paint	310.74
36	Chene & Cork	36.40
	Seating	563.20
	Kitchen Equip	1000.0
	Sliding Sound Door	5000.0
	Elevators	5000.0
		16399.56
	Tax & Ins - in Gen Bond	
	OH. & Profit	8500.0
	Bond	14500
		<u>\$1,739,456</u>

Costs, from AC16.01.F03 (bid?)

ESTIMATED COST OF FINE ARTS BUILDING

GENERAL CONSTRUCTION (PER ENCLOSED)	\$1,739,456
MECHANICAL CONSTRUCTION	395,000
ELECTRICAL CONSTRUCTION	263,400
STAGE EQUIPMENT & PAINT FRAME	<u>58,250</u>
TOTAL	\$2,456,106

MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES

UTILITIES TO BUILDINGS (FOR FUTURE BUILDINGS ALSO)	\$ 113,000
ROAD AROUND BUILDING (SEAL COAT)	4,000
ARCHITECT'S FEE	<u>154,146</u>
TOTAL	\$ 271,146

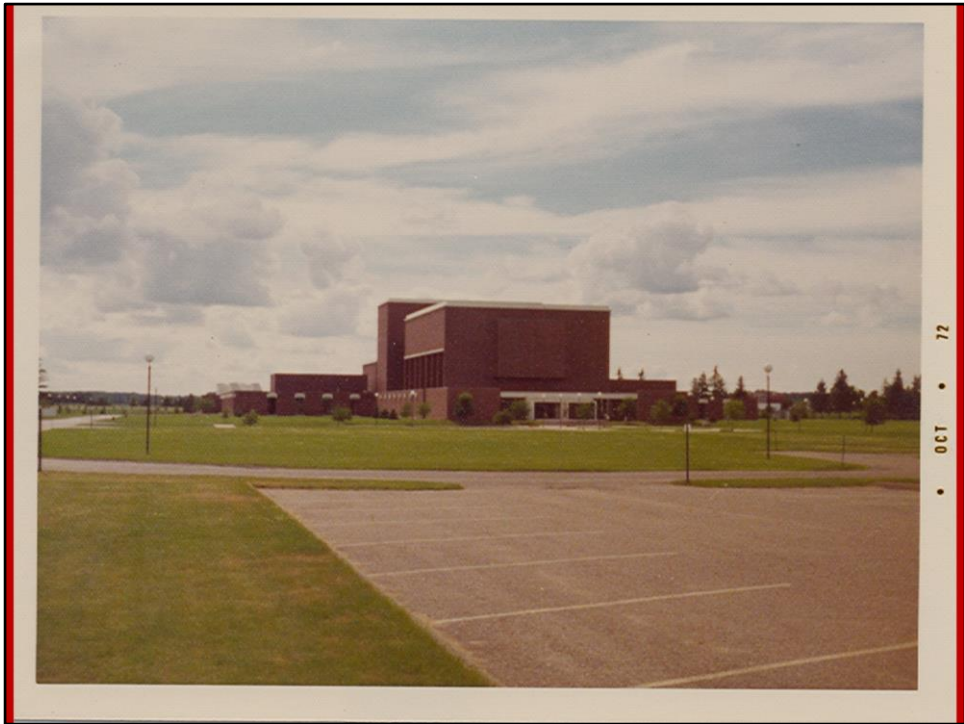
NOTE - DOES NOT INCLUDE MOVEABLE EQUIPMENT OTHER THAN SOME ELECTRONIC UNITS FOR MUSIC DEPARTMENT.

Estimated costs, from AC16.01.F03



<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SBM/id/507>

SBM.20a03 View of the exterior of the Benedicta Arts Center from the southeast



1972 photo from the CSB Archives





Photo from the CSB Archives

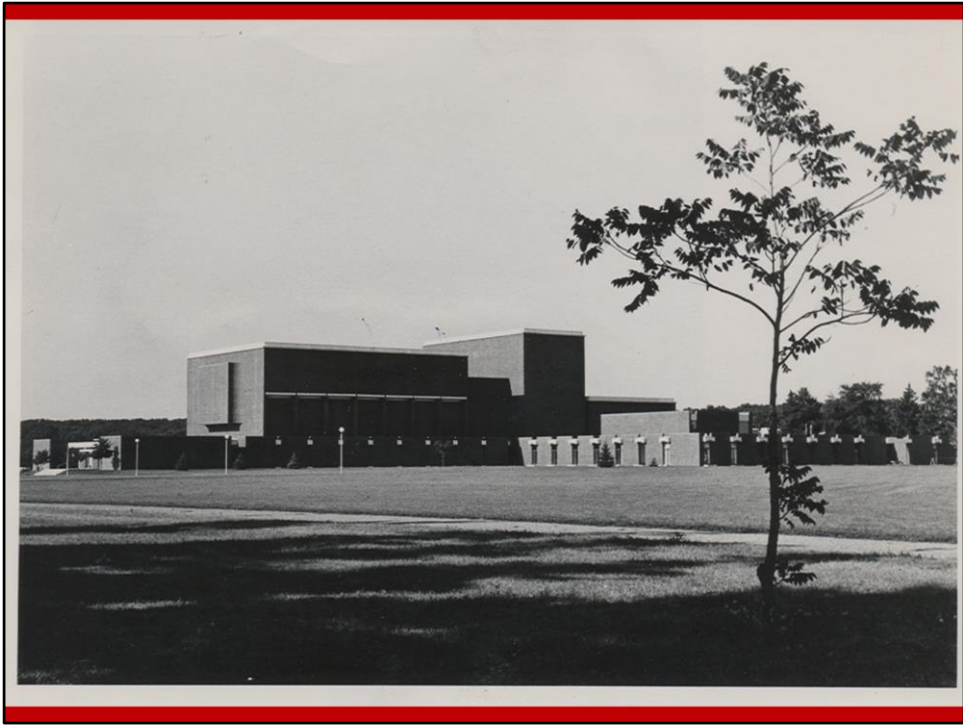


Photo from the CSB Archives



Late 1970s photo from the CSB Archives; the Loft/Academic Services Building on the left was built in 1974.



1970s (?) photo from the CSB Archives



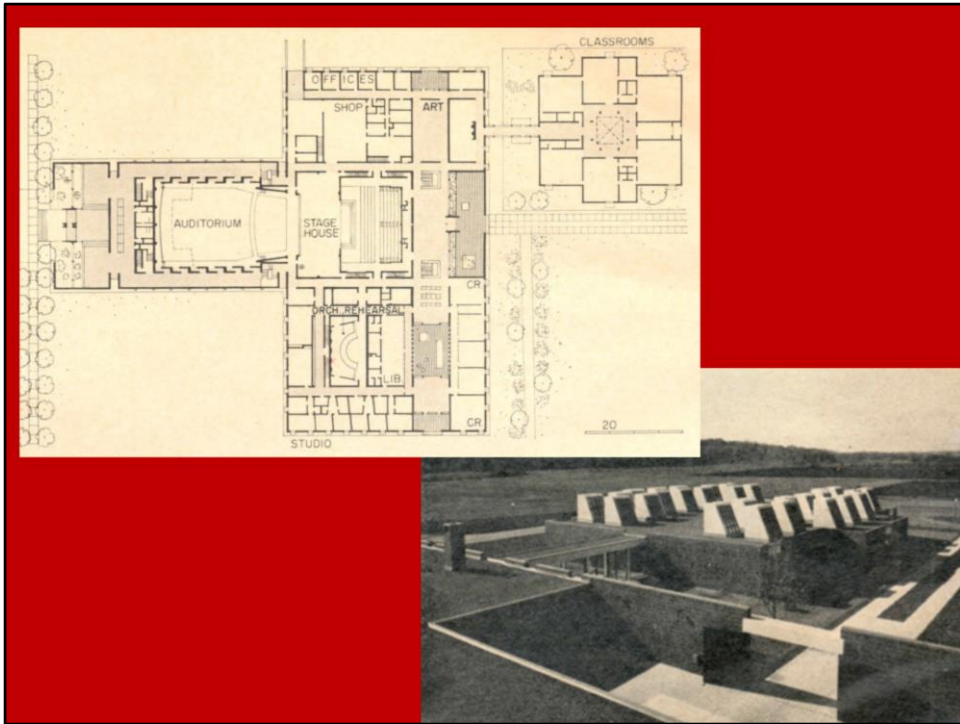
Undated photo from the CSB Archives



Photo from a postcard in the CSB Archives



*St. Cloud Times* July 15, 1964, p. 14. "College Aims at Bid for 'First' in 51<sup>st</sup> Year."



“Flexible Design for the Performing Arts: Benedicta Arts Center, College of Saint Benedict, St. Joseph, Minnesota” in *Better Architecture for the Performing Arts: Building Types Study 340: Theaters and Auditoriums*. McGraw-Hill. Reprinted from *Architectural Record*, December 1964. CSB Archives AC 16.01.F03



# College Aims at Bid for 'First' In 51st Year

ST. JOSEPH, Minn. — The new \$3 million dollar Benedicta Arts Center at the College of St. Benedict will be blessed Sunday by the Most Rev. Peter W. Bartholome, Bishop of St. Cloud. Combining facilities for art, music, speech and drama, the center has been in partial use since last September, when the art section of the three-building complex was opened. The college has just completed its 50th academic year

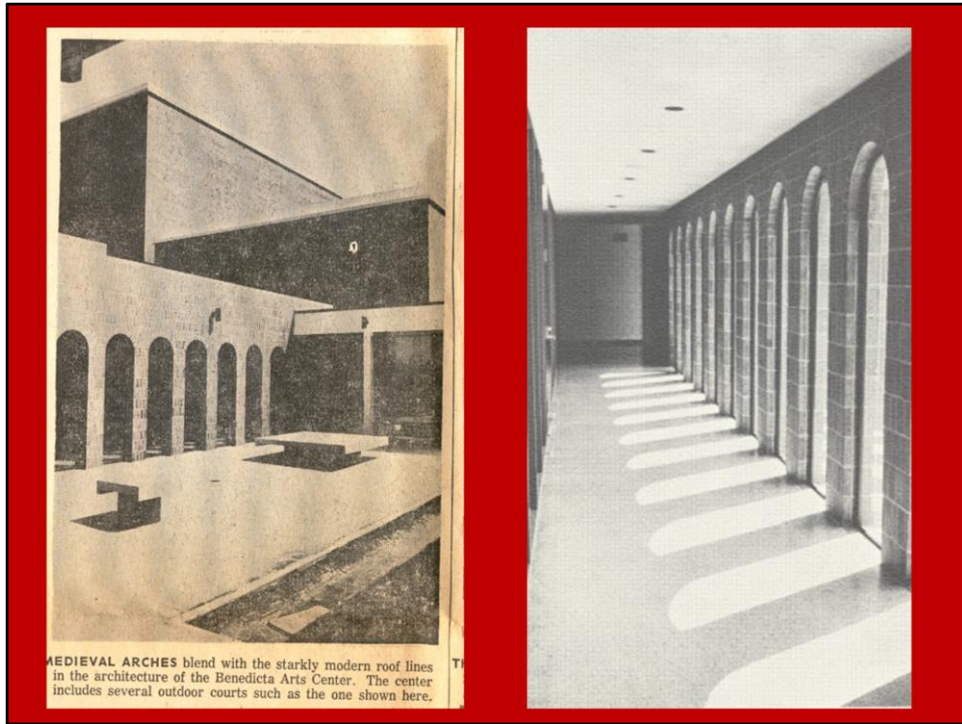
stage house and is also equipped with flexible riser stage and electronic sound and lighting controls. With three-quarter round seating, the Forum is designed for intimate staging of dramatic productions and will be used for large group meetings, lectures and symposia. The Forum will get its first test on July 24, 25 and 26, when the college will present the world premiere of a new play by Emmet Lavery,

14 Wed., July 15, 1964  
ST. CLOUD DAILY TIMES

St. Cloud Times July 15, 1964, p. 14. "College Aims at Bid for 'First' in 51<sup>st</sup> Year."



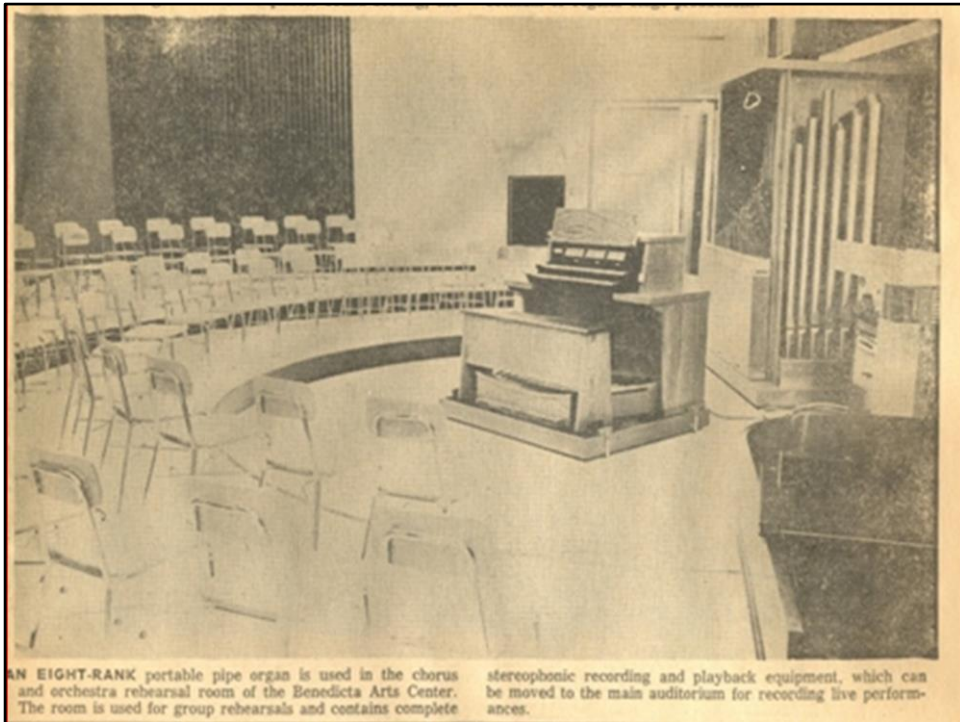
St. Cloud Times July 15, 1964, p. 14. "College Aims at Bid for 'First' in 51<sup>st</sup> Year."



Left: *St. Cloud Times* July 15, 1964, p. 14. "College Aims at Bid for 'First' in 51<sup>st</sup> Year."  
Right: Dedication Series Program, p. 2.

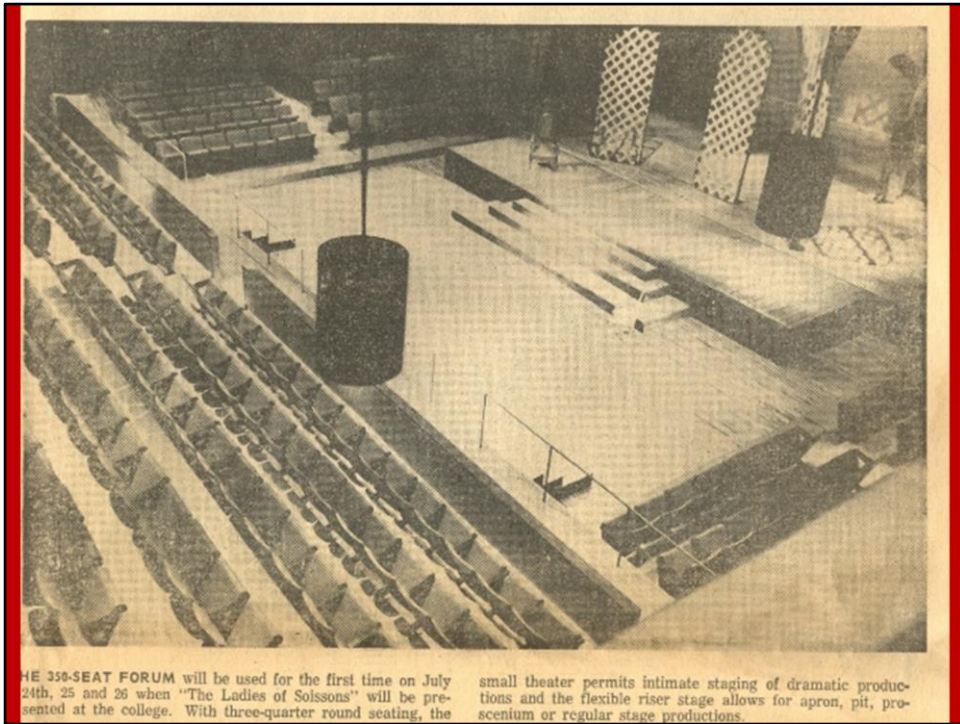


Left: Photo August 2011 by the archivist  
Right: Dedication Series Program, p. 2.



AN EIGHT-RANK portable pipe organ is used in the chorus and orchestra rehearsal room of the Benedicts Arts Center. The room is used for group rehearsals and contains complete stereophonic recording and playback equipment, which can be moved to the main auditorium for recording live performances.

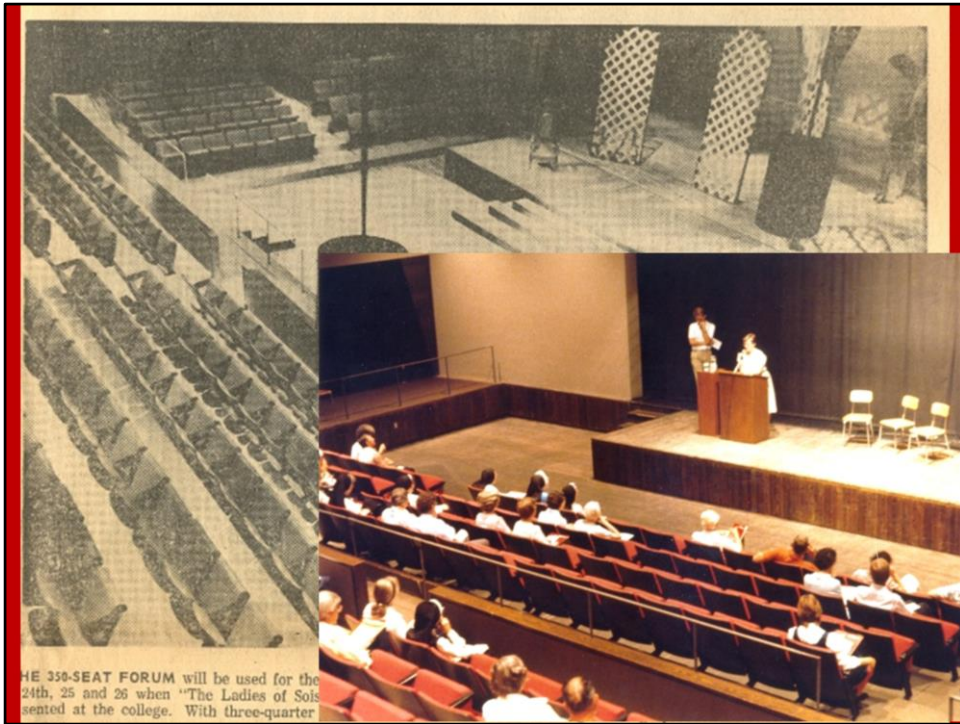
*St. Cloud Times* July 15, 1964, p. 14. "College Aims at Bid for 'First' in 51<sup>st</sup> Year."



THE 350-SEAT FORUM will be used for the first time on July 24th, 25 and 26 when "The Ladies of Soissons" will be presented at the college. With three-quarter round seating, the

small theater permits intimate staging of dramatic productions and the flexible riser stage allows for apron, pit, proscenium or regular stage productions.

*St. Cloud Times* July 15, 1964, p. 14. "College Aims at Bid for 'First' in 51<sup>st</sup> Year."



*St. Cloud Times* July 15, 1964, p. 14. "College Aims at Bid for 'First' in 51<sup>st</sup> Year."  
Right photo from CSB Archives



Lobby to Forum of Auditorium

Drawing from "After 50 years..." Fundraising brochure in AC16.01.F05 Box 1  
<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SBM/id/510>  
SBM.20a04a Interior BAC: lobby at the forum entrance of BAC





Photos from the CSB Archives

“The completion of the Benedicta Arts Center in 1964 was to be a game changer for CSB.

It represented the audacity with which the sisters saw their future.”



“Most importantly, it put onto the CSB campus a building that was better than any arts facility at SJU.

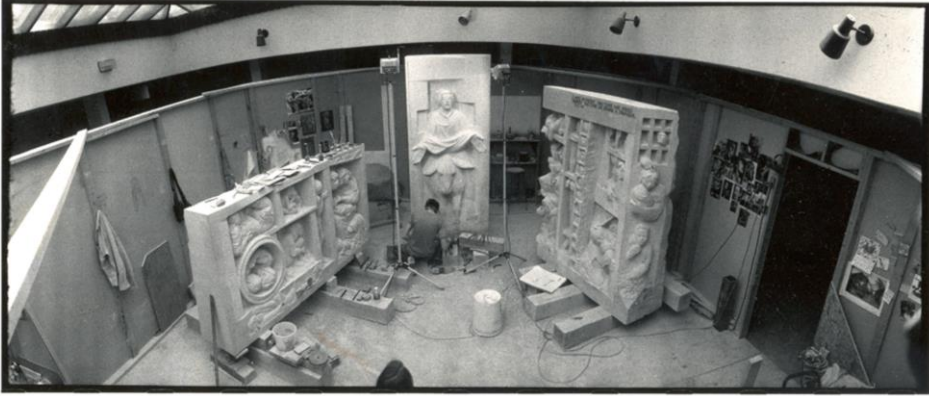
Music and art students, especially, could feel enormous excitement about taking classes there.”

Annette Atkins, *Challenging women since 1913: the College of Saint Benedict*.

Photo from the CSB Archives

Atkins, Annette. *Challenging women since 1913: the College of Saint Benedict*. St. Joseph, Minnesota: College of Saint Benedict Press, 2013, p.136 & 138.

The skylight-covered courtyard later served as the workshop of Artist in Residence Joe O'Connell as he created his sculptures – here carving his final work, *Christ in the Desert*.



(See <http://www.csbju.edu/csb-archives/joeconnellcollection> for more about Joe.)

Photo in the Joe O'Connell Collection, CSB Archives



August 1970 photo from the CSB Archives



Photo from the CSB Archives

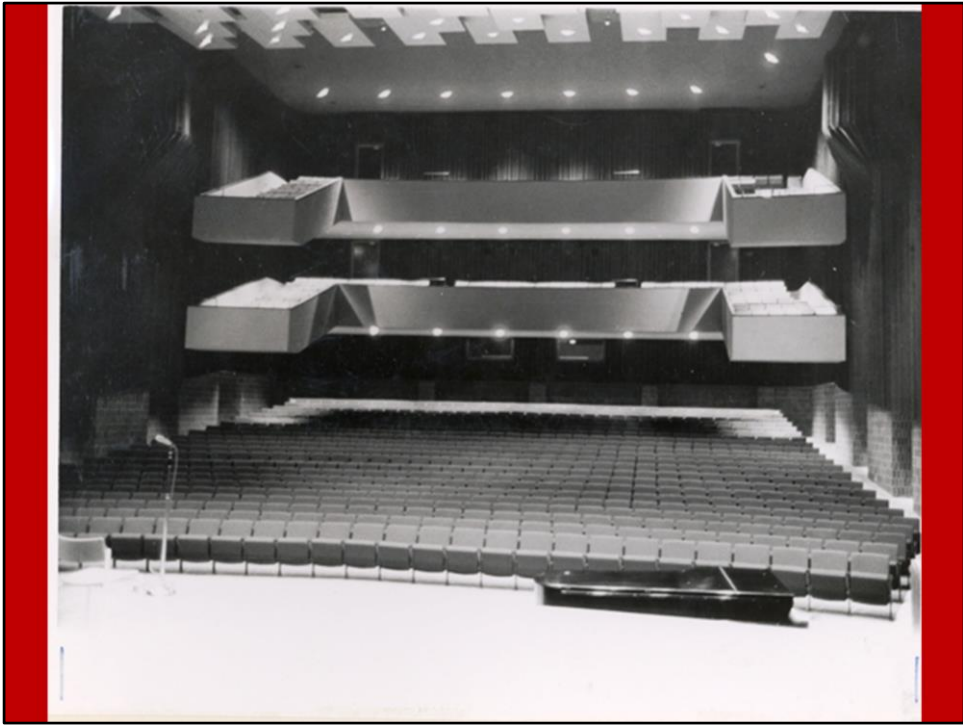
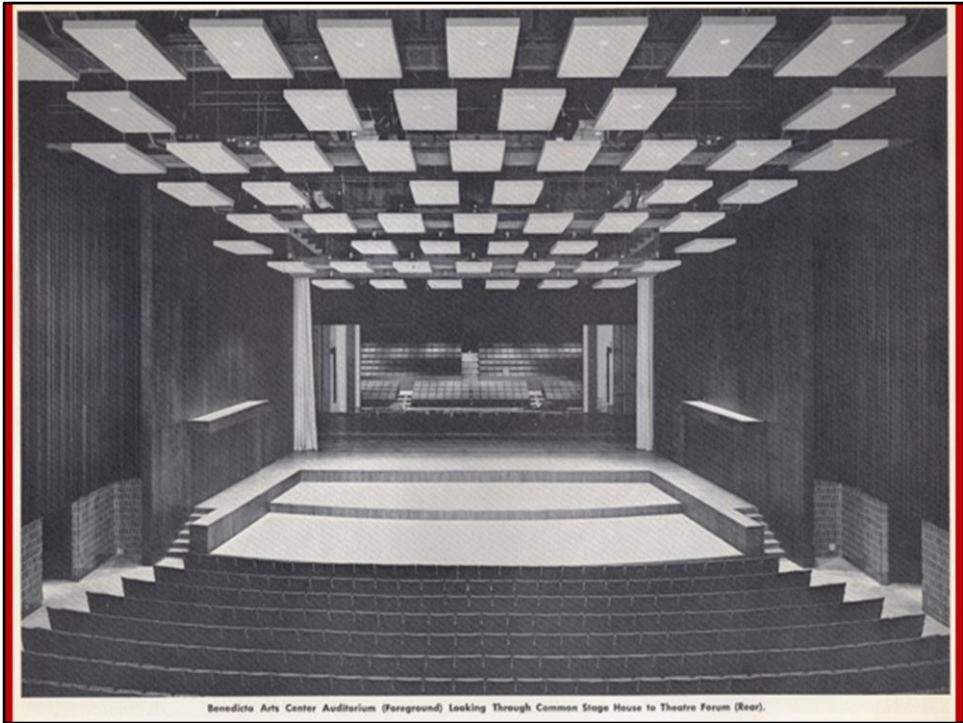


Photo from the CSB Archives

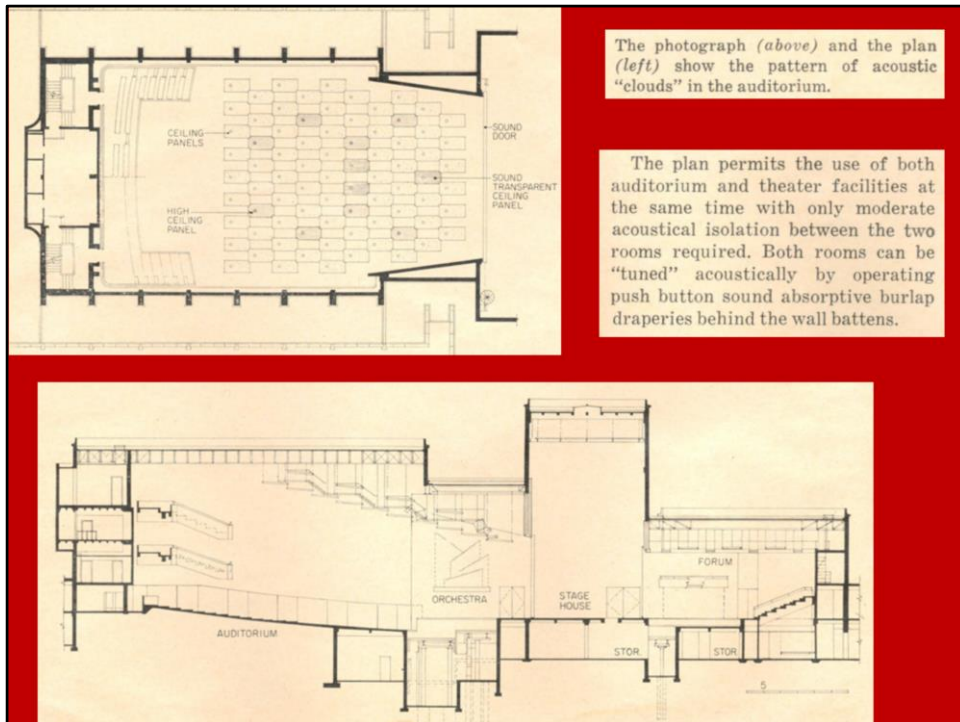


*Benedicite Arts Center Auditorium (Foreground) Looking Through Common Stage House to Theatre Forum (Rear).*



CSB graduation photo in the CSB Archives

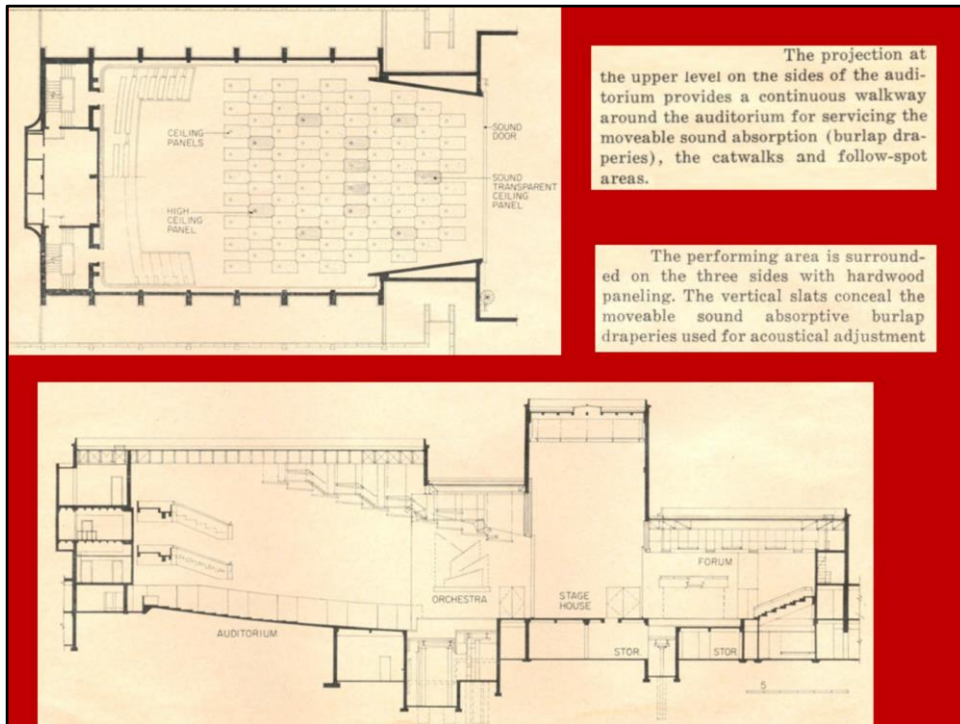




The photograph (above) and the plan (left) show the pattern of acoustic "clouds" in the auditorium.

The plan permits the use of both auditorium and theater facilities at the same time with only moderate acoustical isolation between the two rooms required. Both rooms can be "tuned" acoustically by operating push button sound absorptive burlap draperies behind the wall battens.

"Flexible Design for the Performing Arts: Benedicta Arts Center, College of Saint Benedict, St. Joseph, Minnesota" in *Better Architecture for the Performing Arts: Building Types Study 340: Theaters and Auditoriums*. McGraw-Hill. Reprinted from *Architectural Record*, December 1964. CSB Archives AC 16.01.F03



“Flexible Design for the Performing Arts: Benedicta Arts Center, College of Saint Benedict, St. Joseph, Minnesota” in *Better Architecture for the Performing Arts: Building Types Study 340: Theaters and Auditoriums*. McGraw-Hill. Reprinted from *Architectural Record*, December 1964. CSB Archives AC 16.01.F03

BUILDING TYPES STUDY 340: THEATERS AND AUDITORIUMS

## BETTER ARCHITECTURE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

This ARCHITECTURAL RECORD Building Types Study includes a few of the recent projects for which Bolt Beranek and Newman Inc. provided acoustical consulting services:

Benedicta Arts Center, St. Joseph, Minnesota

Hopkins Center, Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H.

Loretto Hilton Center, Webster College,  
Webster Groves, Missouri

Conservatory of Music Building, Oberlin College,  
including Warner Concert Hall

“Flexible Design for the Performing Arts: Benedicta Arts Center, College of Saint Benedict, St. Joseph, Minnesota” in *Better Architecture for the Performing Arts: Building Types Study 340: Theaters and Auditoriums*. McGraw-Hill. Reprinted from *Architectural Record*, December 1964. CSB Archives AC 16.01.F03

## Flexible Design for the Performing Arts

**Benedicta Arts Center  
College of Saint Benedict  
St. Joseph, Minnesota**

Central Minnesota's new \$2,750,000 arts center completed this fall combines art, music, speech and drama facilities for a small women's liberal arts college for 600 to 800 students, which is owned by the Sisters of the Order of Saint Benedict. The arts center boasts two multi-form spaces, one an auditorium and the other a theater, which are served and connected by a common stage house.

Architect Curtis Green, of Hamel, Green and Abrahamson, Inc., architects and engineers for the arts center, has described the development of the design as follows: "Due to the size and financial limitations of the college, the nuns were obviously thinking of only one auditorium for both theater and music. During a

the acoustical consultants, we determined that standards of acoustical and visual quality for type of performance, and requirements for flexibility of use and scheduling would not be adequately satisfied by one multi-purpose hall. An auditorium and theater, each with its own stage, required too big a jump in the budget, so a solution providing flexibility of staging within one stage house as well as within the auditorium and theater was sought. It was agreed that the theater must necessarily have the most frequent access to the stage house, and that most speaking

"Flexible Design for the Performing Arts: Benedicta Arts Center, College of Saint Benedict, St. Joseph, Minnesota" in *Better Architecture for the Performing Arts: Building Types Study 340: Theaters and Auditoriums*. McGraw-Hill. Reprinted from *Architectural Record*, December 1964. CSB Archives AC 16.01.F03



Photo from the CSB Archives

The BAC Music Library's  
listening stations, 1981



1981 photos from the CSB Archives

**Program from the blessing of the BAC - July 19, 1964**

BLESSING OF THE BENEDICTA ARTS CENTER

COLLEGE OF SAINT BENEDICT

SAINT JOSEPH, MINNESOTA

by The Most Reverend Peter W. Bartholome, D. D. , Bishop of Saint Cloud

Sunday Afternoon, July 19, 1964

Two o'clock

**PROGRAM**

Procession from foyer of Saint Benedict's High School starting at two o'clock.

Blessing of exterior and interior of Benedicta Arts Center in accordance with traditional Roman rite.

Address by His Excellency, Bishop Bartholome, in auditorium of Benedicta Arts Center, with introduction and welcome by Mother Henrita Osendorf, O. S. B. , Prioress of Saint Benedict's.

Reception, light refreshments and tours of The Center following the program. Refreshments will be served in lobby of the Forum.

Program from the blessing of the BAC, July 19, 1964

ASSISTING PRIESTS

Right Reverend Monsignor Leo Keaveny, Diocesan Superintendent  
of Schools  
Reverend Robert Schulzetenberg, Assistant Diocesan Superintendent  
of Schools  
Reverend Paul Zylla of St. Cloud, Master of Ceremonies  
Reverend Walter Reger, O. S. B., St. John's Abbey, Deacon  
Reverend Patrick Riley of St. Cloud, Subdeacon  
Very Reverend John Eidenschink, O. S. B., St. John's Abbey  
Reverend Colman J. Barry, O. S. B., St. John's Abbey  
Reverend Vernon Miller, O. S. B., St. John's Abbey  
Reverend Victor Kinzer of Pierz  
Reverend David Rieder of St. Cloud  
Reverend Gunther Rolfson, O. S. B., St. John's Abbey  
Reverend Reinold Theisen, O. S. B., St. John's Abbey  
Reverend Olaf Skjolsvik, O. S. B., St. John's Abbey

IN ATTENDANCE: Right Reverend Abbot Baldwin Dworschak, O. S. B.  
St. John's Abbey

MUSIC

Choir under the direction of Sister Nathan Super, O. S. B.  
Organ prelude and postlude by Sister Nathan Super, O. S. B.

Program from the blessing of the BAC, July 19, 1964



## The Dedication Series

Sunday, October 11, 1964

The Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Stanislaw Skrowaczewski. This world famous orchestra will play two concerts, at 3 P.M. and 8 P.M., and these will officially inaugurate use of the Benedicta Arts Center Auditorium. Admission to these concerts is by invitation only.

Friday, November 6

Premiere of "From Sea To Sea" by George Herman, playwright. Performances will be presented November 6, 7, 13, 14, 20 and 21, 1964. The Forum at the Benedicta Arts Center. Tickets may be reserved by writing Benedicta Arts Center or telephoning 363-7711, Extension 340.

Sunday, November 8

Paul Draper, Master of the Art of the Recital with classic guitar and dancing. One performance in the auditorium of the Benedicta Arts Center. Tickets may be reserved by writing Benedicta Arts Center or telephoning 363-7711, Extension 340.

Monday, November 9

"The Platform," original play written by Douglas Campbell of the Tyrone Guthrie Theatre and performed by the Minnesota Theatre Company players. One performance at 8 P.M. in the auditorium of the Benedicta Arts Center. A symposium on modern drama will be held the following day for students and faculty of the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University. Tickets may be reserved by writing Benedicta Arts Center or telephoning 363-7711, Extension 340.

Thursday  
November 19, 1964

"Twelfth Night" by William Shakespeare. This great work will be performed by the National Players of Washington, D.C., and presented in the auditorium of the Benedicta Arts Center. Tickets may be reserved by writing Benedicta Arts Center or telephoning 363-7711, Extension 340.



## Concert Series

Dedication Series Program, p. 3

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### Concert Series

## Eddie

By Sister Jeremy Hall, O.S.B.  
(reprint from the Winter, 1965, Quarry)

Of course everybody who came to school at St. Benedict's during the past two generations knew Eddie's trade: every girl learning the maidenly arts at the "Academy" here in the 20's, every little boy in knickers who went "over town" from the Boy's School in the 30's, and every collegiate Benny in all those years and since knew that Eddie kept store across the street in the village.

They didn't, for the most part though, know that Linneman's was the first store in St. Joe (it was Linneman's & Loso's initially), and that Eddie had been its mainstay for just about half of its 112 years of existence. They knew they could buy almost anything, from an abacus to a can of zucchinis, at Eddie's (and bus tickets, rosaries, and lamp wicks if they needed them), that Eddie's was practically always open and Eddie was nearly always behind the counter. But they didn't, very likely, know what Eddie's motivation was for spending all those hours behind the counter.

Eddie's interest in people was phenomenal. Bennies who are grandmothers now could come back last year and not only would he remember them and most of their classmates as well, but also which Bennies in that class married which Johnnies and when they were last in the store. Homecoming at C.S.B. was always a great time for Eddie; "the girls" of all ages who stopped at the store were genially greeted by name. It is doubtful if any faculty member ever had a more infallible memory for names and the persons who answered to them. If Eddie met a student's parents when a bus ticket or the morning paper was purchased during a parental visit to the campus and the store, Eddie remembered.

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/CSBArchives/id/514> 1965-05 *The Benet* Volume 30 Number 04 p. 4

Concert Series from Oct. 1965 *Benet* p. 7

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/CSBArchives/id/436>

*Dedication Series* brochure from CSB Archives

(In 1968, the orchestra changed its name to the Minnesota Orchestra.)

**CSB Fine Arts Faculty listed in the 1962-64 *Bulletin/Catalog***

Colman O'Connell OSB	Speech and Drama
Cecile Gertken OSB	Music
Ellen Cotone OSB	Music
Firmin Escher OSB	Music
Mary K. Hendrickson	Music
Jacuelyn Dubay OSB	Art
Johanna Becker OSB	Art

**CSB Fine Arts Faculty listed in the 1964-66 Bulletin/Catalog**

Colman O'Connell OSB	Speech and Drama
Cecile Gertken OSB	Music
Ellen Cotone OSB	Music
Firmin Escher OSB	Music
Mary K. Hendrickson	Music
Jacuelyn Dubay OSB	Art
Johanna Becker OSB	Art
Jocelyn Dubay OSB	Art and Education
Clementine Ernst OSB	Art and Education
George Herman	Speech and Drama
Louise Lupien Jenkins	Music
Maranatha Renner OSB	Music
mary Helen Juettner OSB	Music
Nathan Super OSB (Delores)	Music

## Petters gives to BAC

By Kristen Nowak  
Staff writer

A \$3 million gift will allow CSB to renovate the Benedicta Arts Center. Plans to renovate the 40-year-old building are under way thanks to a donation by Tom Petters.

The BAC auditorium will be named the Petters Auditorium after his parents, Rosemary and Frederick. Both of Petters' parents are

CSB/SJU graduates. Petters is chairman and CEO of The Petters Companies, Inc. and Redtag, Inc. and is president of BoomBuy, Inc. Petters was also recently appointed as a member of the CSB Board of Trustees.

"They've always had an interest in the arts and a tie to the college. It makes the gift very special," said Anna Thompson, the execu-



Tom Petters  
Donated \$3 million to CSB  
Petters is chairman and CEO of The Petters Companies, Inc. and Redtag, Inc. and is president of BoomBuy, Inc. Petters was also recently appointed as a member of the CSB Board of Trustees.

The first phase of the project will be to bring the BAC up to fire and accessibility codes. Elevators would then be available at either ends of the facility, said Jim Fredricks, who is the chief physical plant/facilities manager.

Because of the growing fine arts departments the BAC no longer provides adequate space.

See GIFT, Page 2

## Trustee donates \$3 million to CSB

FROM GIFT PG. 1

Renovation plans include adding areas for rehearsals and storage.

The renovations will help. "The academic departments will really have the room to teach without being hindered by space limitations," Thompson said. "Being in a cramped environment or having to move equipment that takes away from instructional time (are) ... all things that impede teaching, so we hope it makes it easier and will also help us attract more arts students."

Currently, the acting and dancing classes share what was built to be a dance studio. Part of the \$3 million will be used to build a black box theater, which will be inexpensive and alleviate many of the space concerns. With more space, there would be more opportunity for students to be involved in things, said Kaarin Johnston, theater pro-

*The academic departments will really have room to teach."*

Anna Thompson  
Director of fine arts

fessor and core director. CSB is appreciative of the gift.

"I think it's a wonderful statement by Petters and a wonderful way to honor his parents and ... to acknowledge the BAC and what we've given to the community," Thompson said.

"With the current state of the economy, it's real exciting to see a corporate leader like this step up to the plate and say we need to support St. Ben's and we need to support the arts, and to make a gift like this is really exciting."

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/CSBArchNews/id/31549>  
2003-02-06, *The Record* p. 1 & 2

After the  
Peters  
donation fell  
through, the  
auditorium  
was re-named  
to honor S.  
Firmin  
Escher, so  
instrumental  
in the BAC's  
design and  
construction.



2011 photo by the archivist

**BENEDICTA ARTS CENTER  
ESCHER AUDITORIUM**

**S. Firmin Escher - Escher Auditorium**

In 2003, the Benedicta Arts Center was renovated and the Petters auditorium was named. The auditorium was renamed the Escher Auditorium in 2009.

Sister Firmin Escher, OSB, was yet another strong visionary. She earned a BA in music in violin at the MacPhail School of Music, and a master of music degree, also in violin, from the Chicago Musical College. Her lifelong music ministry began at CSB in 1940 as a violin teacher. Her classes soon included the history of music, harmony, ear training and other subjects. Orchestra and choral groups flourished with her direction. She initiated the Campus Singers and produced a number of excellent operas. She was also a member of the building committee for the construction of the BAC.

Sister Firmin was dean of the college from 1961 to 1972. With her leadership, a core curriculum was inaugurated; nursing became a degree program; study abroad programs were initiated. She helped coordinate the relationship with Saint John's University, and from 1971 to 1977, she served as Director of the Planning Program for the college. From 1977 to 1980, she was Dean of the Fine Arts.

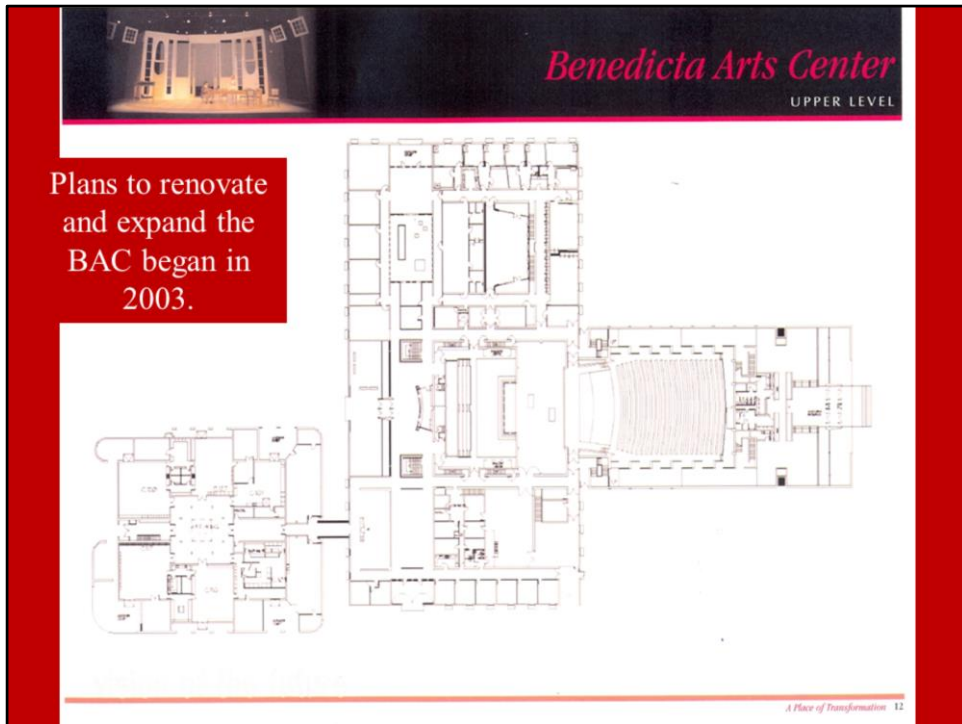
What a treasure Sister Firmin was! She eventually lost most of her eyesight and resided at St. Scholastic Convent until her death in 2009. The monastery has her beloved 18th century violin and it is played occasionally in her honor.

**S. Firmin**  
Music, Chorus, Orchestra,  
Faculty-Student Council  
Moderator

**BENEDICTA ARTS CENTER  
ESCHER AUDITORIUM**

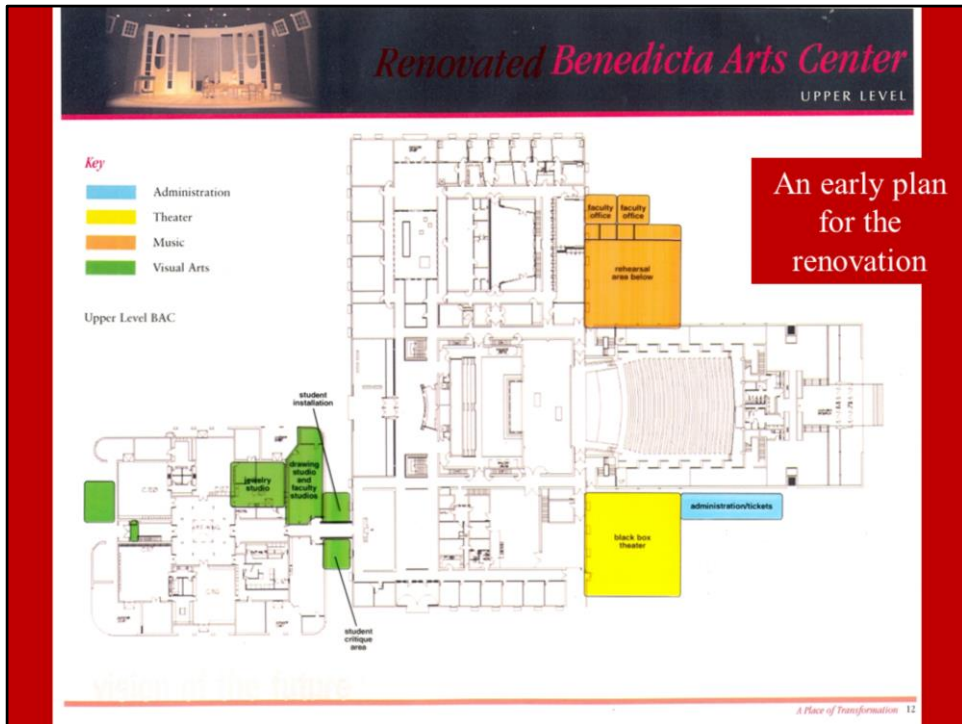
[http://sbm.osb.org/index.php/history\\_haehn\\_museum/our\\_history/csb/](http://sbm.osb.org/index.php/history_haehn_museum/our_history/csb/) - "What's In a Name?"

Building photo by the archivist, 2011



Planning materials in the CSB Archives, AC16.01.F05 Box 1





Planning materials in the CSB Archives, AC16.01.F05 Box 1

2005  
ground-  
breaking

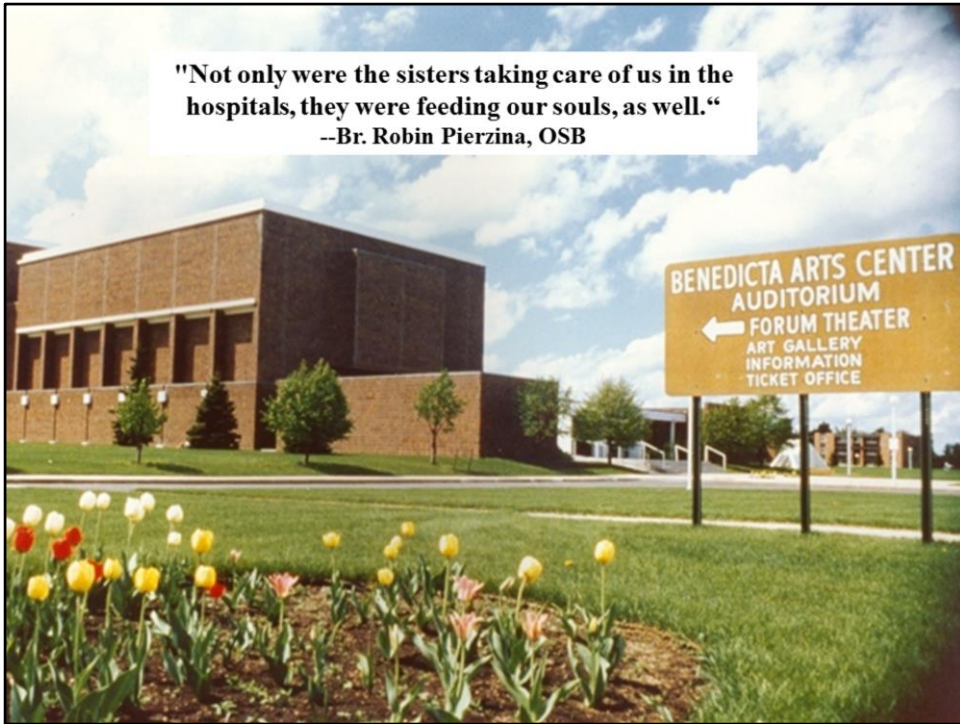


2006  
completion



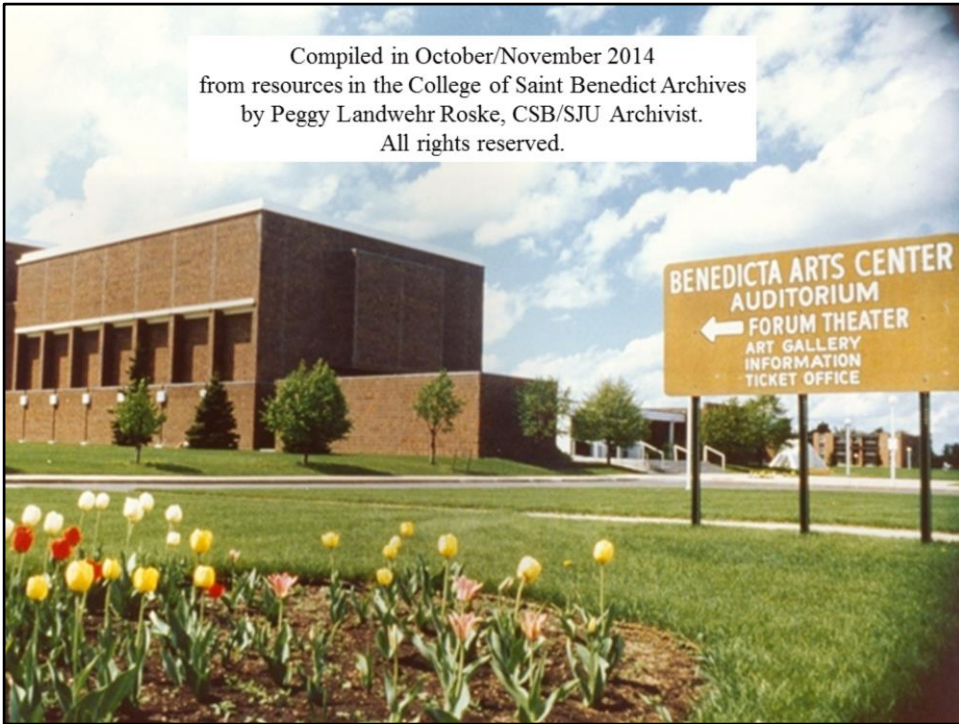
Groundbreaking – 2005 – CSB Archives photo

**"Not only were the sisters taking care of us in the hospitals, they were feeding our souls, as well."  
--Br. Robin Pierzina, OSB**



Undated photo in the CSB Archives

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from resources in the College of Saint Benedict Archives  
by Peggy Landwehr Roske, CSB/SJU Archivist.  
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Undated photo in the CSB Archives