DEDICATION

The essence of this college resides in the individuals who comprise the Siena community. The Franciscans gave life to an idea. Over the last fifty years, friars and faculty, administrators and staff, have given a part of themselves to create Siena College. They continue to nurture a vision of a liberal arts education rooted in the Franciscan tradition. It is to these men and women that this volume is dedicated.

By
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Siena's Presidents: 1937-1987

Rev. Cyprian Mensing, O.F.M. 1937-1943
Rev. Mark Kennedy, O.F.M. 1943-1952
Rev. Bertrand J. Campbell, O.F.M. 1952-1955
Rev. Edmund F. Christy, O.F.M. 1955-1964
Rev. Hugh F. Hines, O.F.M. 1976-
PROLOGUE

What follows is not a history in the scholarly sense but rather a reflection or recollection by someone who has foraged in the scrapbooks of the past. The purpose is not to reveal arcane knowledge of Siena but rather to capture something of the spirit that was and is an integral part of the college whose anniversary we celebrate. The errors of omission are many and forgiveness is asked from those not mentioned.

If what you read here has a meaning, let it be to rekindle a memory or add a new dimension to what you know as "Siena College."
Siena’s original building—the Garrett Mansion—functioned as classroom, office, chapel, and living quarters.
It was farmland before it became a campus. It was the Albany unit of St. Bonaventure College before it became St. Bernardine of Siena College, then Siena College. It was a college for men from the local area before it became coeducational and residential. It was a Catholic institution of higher education before it became an independent, liberal arts college steeped in the Franciscan tradition.

This is the chronicle of the transformation of the dream of an Albany bishop and a Franciscan friar into the reality of a college celebrating its 50th Anniversary. In the realm of higher education, fifty years is young. Yet it is these first decades that form and develop the character of an institution. The future Siena College will evolve from the traditions and ideals of this past.

The story has been told many times of the journeys of the Most Reverend Edmund F. Gibbons, Bishop of the Albany Diocese, and the Very Reverend Thomas Plassmann, President of St. Bonaventure, to find suitable land for a Catholic college for men in upstate New York. Of the resulting acquisition of thirty eight acres in Newtonville, Fr. Adalbert Callahan, editor of The Provincial Annals, said “that a more favorable site could scarcely have been secured or desired for it fulfills the two essential needs for every college campus — solitude and accessibility.” It lacked only a prestigious address and so almost from the very beginning the more euphonious “Loudonville” was used rather than the more accurate postal address of Newtonville.

Obtaining the property was the result of providence and cunning. According to The Provincial Annals, the Walter Garrett estate was inherited by his son and two daughters who were “staunch Protestants.” So it was deemed necessary to use “ruse and diplomacy” in the guise of the Bishop’s legal counsel, James E. Glavin, to make the initial purchase. Subsequently Mr. Glavin sold the property to the Province of the
Holy Name for $20,000 in April 1937. The purchase included the main residence, a tenant house, and an assortment of barns and outbuildings. The former Garrett residence, officially named St. Francis Hall, served as the main building to the fledgling college. In time the building came to be called the "Old Friary," predecessor of today's "Old Friary."

If the physical facilities were humble, it did not deter enthusiasm for the new school. Under the Bishop's prodding, plans were accelerated so the college could open on September 22, 1937, rather than the original target date of September 1938. The expected forty students turned out to be more than ninety. Donald J. Shields from Albany was the college's first admitted applicant. The classrooms ranged from a converted portion of the cellar to an airy room replete with French windows and fireplace, vestiges of the Garrett mansion days. Flexibility and adaptability were the operative themes of the first few months.

While it would be impossible to cite all the individuals who have passed through the life of Siena, some for a brief stop, others for a lasting visit, it would be shortsighted not to mention the men whose zeal and commitment were vital to the reality of this college. The original community consisted of Fr. Cyprian Mensing, Fr. Lambert Zaleha, Fr. Adalbert Callahan, Fr. Joseph Vann, Fr. Bernard Tobin, Fr. Alcuin Shields, and Fr. Benjamin Kuhn. Fr. Cyprian served as Dean of Siena while concurrently serving as Dean of Studies at St. Bonaventure. The six other friars were equally busy teaching courses ranging from Latin and Greek to Mathematics to Public Speaking, maintaining the rules of the Franciscan order, and assuaging the concerns of the neighboring Haywood family about the men "dressed in bathrobes," as Fr. Ben recalls. Two Franciscan brothers, Vincent Hall and Theodore Gillen, arrived in August and were instrumental in orchestrating many of the arrangements leading to opening day. Since its inception the college has drawn on lay faculty, with John R. Wilkinson, Professor of Accounting, having the distinction of being the first. It was a hectic time for all, a time of enthusiasm, and a time when commitment to a vision obscured the obstacles.

External circumstances were not propitious for building a new college in 1937. The country was still recovering from the
Seven Founding Friars, September 1937, front, left to right: Adalbert Callahan, Cyprian Mensing, Lambert Zaleha. Back row, Bernard Tobin, Alcuin Shields, Benjamin Kuhn, Joseph Vann.
Depression and the situation in Europe was menacing the international political scene. Locally it was not certain that bright, male high school graduates were predisposed to attend a local college. The unexpected high registration and widespread encouragement from the community, however, made addressing the problem of inadequate facilities a matter of paramount importance. The Province decided to construct a permanent building that would provide classroom and ancillary space as well as serve as the cornerstone of a symmetrically designed college campus. Accordingly, on March 1, 1938, groundbreaking ceremonies were held for the construction of the south wing of the main building; it was considered too expensive to construct the entire building at this time. Even this more pragmatic approach to construction was threatened when work on the building was halted by the Province due to "unavoidable circumstances"—lack of money! By May 10 the fiscal situation improved sufficiently for construction to resume.

The laying of the cornerstone on June 20, 1938, was doubly significant. Not only was recognition given to the physical emergence of the campus as it is now so familiar, but during the ceremony Fr. Plassmann (in what Fr. Adalbert characterized as a "lengthy address on one of the hottest days of the year") advised that henceforth the college would be called St. Bernardine of Siena College and that the University of the State of New York had granted a provisional charter in that name.

It is appropriate at this point to digress and consider the name of the institution whose 50th Anniversary we celebrate. That the name should recognize the heritage of the Franciscan order was universally understood. As Fr. Plassmann noted in his address, "the Friar Minor has the happy faculty of crystallizing in his work and word 'nova et vetera', the new and the old... and has imprinted the stamp of his Order and its spirit upon every landmark that signalizes the great events, achievements or significant turns in the road of human history, of liberal education."
Siena Hall's south end was all the college could afford in 1938.

Siena Hall was near completion by September 1939.
Drawing on this rich tradition, Fr. Plassmann indicated that the name was selected from a "veritable galaxy of Franciscan saints and savants" and there was widespread agreement as to which Franciscan to honor. Fr. Plassmann's preference for the form of the name, "San Bernardino," however, met with the "positive objections of the entire faculty," Fr. Adalbert reported. The difference of opinion was resolved without acrimony when the State Education Department advised that there already existed a San Bernardino College (in California) and this name, like the earlier suggestion of St. Francis College, should be avoided.

"St. Bernardine of Siena," a disciple of St. Francis who was noted for his eloquence and oratory in the aim of peace, was selected for the name. Reminiscing fifteen years after the college opened, Fr. Plassmann indicated that the name was chosen because "St. Bernardina seemed to harmonize well with St. Bonaventura, the patron of the sister college... and the new patron stands forth as a shining example of the ancient Franciscan motto 'In sanctitate et doctrina'." Presaging the future, Fr. Plassmann concluded his comments by saying that "being a lover of youth and youthful sports, St. Bernardine will not mind if the boys under his tutelage drop his name and simply make it 'Siena' at their games and otherwise." The "otherwise" became the everyday when the legal name was changed to "Siena College" on June 21, 1968 – thirty years after that day in June when the cornerstone was laid for Siena Hall.

Work on the south wing of Siena Hall moved at a steady pace but the earlier moratorium on construction meant the new academic year did not begin until mid-October 1938. In the meantime, renovations were made on the Garrett mansion to convert it to a friary and chapel. Interest in the college had not waned during the summer hiatus and the second year's full-time enrollment reached 255, of whom ninety five were returning students. Expanding on the educational opportunities offered by the college, the Evening Division opened with an enrollment of 100. The Siena Evening Division was the first in the Capital Region to offer courses leading to a bachelor's
degree. Except for one major difference, the academic programs and policies of the Evening Division were identical with the program for full-time students. The difference was that women were admitted as matriculating students in the evening.

With the existence of a classroom building, a residence for the friars, and the establishment of attendant administrative offices, all the other activities that one associates with a college gradually began to appear. Student government was instituted from the onset. The first Student Senate President, Edward J. Lennon, was elected on October 1, 1937. Other organizations, long since blended into the college's history, were formed during the first year: the Arts Club, Commerce Club, the Science Club.

In the fall of 1938 three issues of The Chevalier preceded the first issue of the student newspaper Siena News, which emerged on the scene December 9, 1938. Donald J. Gillen and William H. Tompkins served as co-editors. The two publications were forerunners of today's The Indian, a name selected in 1965 by Editor-in-Chief Irving E. Stephens to ensure "student identification" with expressed opinions and commentary in the newspaper. As with most collegiate newspapers, the publication schedule has been erratic, sometimes appearing weekly, sometimes monthly, and sometimes whimsically. During the war years much of the Siena News was devoted to "Mail Call," a kind of bulletin board for information on the whereabouts of alumni and former students. During the 1972-73 academic year lack of student interest forced The Indian to cease publication briefly and the Public Relations Office prepared Siena College Student-Faculty News to serve in its stead.

The yearbook, SAGA, got a later start with the first graduating class of 1941. Another issue was published in 1943, but because of the impact of the country's involvement in World War II, it wasn't until 1948 that SAGA resumed its annual publication schedule. Curiously, the 1969 issue was called SAGA/MARGENT, a title that found little support.

Other extracurricular activities and programs emerged during the early years: forensic organizations, drama groups,
Gilding the Siena Hall dome in 1983 offered more permanent finish than the peeling paint of former years.

Some of the early library facilities were tucked under Siena Hall’s roofline.
social clubs, and a variety of athletic teams reflective of available talent, interest, and facilities. Facilities were still of paramount importance. Since the only building designed expressly for collegiate purposes during these years was half of Siena Hall, attention quickly turned to completing this focal point of the long-range campus design.

At the end of the second academic year contracts were signed for construction of the remainder of Siena Hall consisting of the north wing, lobby area, and front entrance. The well-known Georgian columns, cupola, and gold dome were part of the second construction phase. The "breakthrough" occurred in December 1939 when the two sections were connected. At the time of completion the structure was almost identical, externally, to the building today. The internal metamorphosis, however, is worthy of comment. Where now the building is used for classroom and office space, the original multi-purpose use afforded sustenance for the mind, body, and soul as well as provided for the more mundane administrative details of academic life.

The basement (first floor) provided classrooms, cafeteria, and a faculty room. The second floor had additional classrooms, science labs, administrative offices, and a residence for one friar. The third floor provided more classrooms, labs, the library, and student organization offices. The attic (fourth floor) was partially used for assemblies and dances in the "Roof Garden." It was also the site of the chapel, living quarters for some friars, and a recreation room. Those intimately familiar with Siena Hall would certainly understand the prayers of thanks offered twelve years later, in 1952, when an elevator was added to the building.

While students and faculty alike were adjusting to the commodious facilities in Siena Hall, plans were formulated for the next step in campus development. Fr. Cyprian, now carrying the official title of President, argued persuasively that the next construction project should be the gymnasium. Groundbreaking was held in September 1940 with a targeted completion date of June 1941, the first Commencement.

It was decided to name the building Gibbons Hall in honor of Bishop Gibbons of Albany. The facade of the building is
Harvard brick and Indiana limestone, complementing the exterior of Siena Hall. To understand the choice of site, one should try to envision the college property in 1941. The original tract of land was irregularly shaped, but began with a linear boundary 556 feet north of Spring Street and fronted on Route 9, 611.5 feet to the north. The other boundaries, asymmetrical, veered off into undulating fields near the present tennis courts and pool. The site for the gymnasium was eminently logical, given the constraints of the real property. Located adjacent to the northern end of Siena Hall, Gibbons Hall fronted on the playing fields that had been cultivated from the former asparagus beds of the Garrett estate.

The interior of Gibbons Hall had as its main attraction a regulation basketball court and seating for 1,500. Even in the early days, its versatility was apparent: a stage and other amenities that allowed use for assemblies for 2,500; theatrical productions; or class soirees. Reflective of its athletic function, however, auxiliary space provided locker rooms, squash courts, athletic offices, and other recreational areas.

When the first Commencement was held, in Gibbons Hall as planned, on June 9, 1941, seventy-four graduates were recognized as participants in an event of lasting significance. A year earlier Charles McCloskey, a transfer student, earned the distinction of being the first graduate of Siena and the only member of the Class of 1940. The men and women receiving diplomas in 1941 were the first class to graduate from Siena, and for four years they had been the first in everything they endeavored. Among them were the first members of the honor society Alpha Kappa Alpha, the first members of the Third Order of St. Francis, the first graduates of the Evening Division as well as the full-time program. There were members of the first basketball team, tennis team, fencing team, and the first Siena pugilists. Some could recall that for a very brief time their athletic teams were officially called “the Mohawks” before becoming “the Indians.” If they raked their memories, they’d recall the other non-enduring sobriquets, including “Golden Warriors,” “Friars,” and “Wolves.” These men and women had listened with pride to the “Song of Siena” on Fred Waring’s national radio program, performed when the college was only two years old! They could recall the physical development of the campus from houses and barns to two impres-
Bowling proved a popular pastime in Gibbons Hall, now Foy Campus Center.

The 1939 evening class included the first Siena graduate, Charles McCloskey, front row, first on left.
sively permanent buildings. Though the parking lots were too few and still susceptible to springtime muck, these graduates were witnesses to the very tangible achievements of their college. This pioneer class of “America’s youngest college,” as the Siena News called it years ago, had witnessed much in the evolution of their alma mater. They were about to embark on a world that called for them to witness far less pleasant developments.

The war years at Siena, as elsewhere in the nation, were a time of struggle and sacrifice. It was a time when institutional ambitions were melded to national defense needs. These were turbulent times and those responsible for developing the vision of the Siena community had to keep a steady gaze on events in the outside world.

As early as 1939 the college had embarked on programs with potential for the nation’s armed forces. On September 30 of that year the college received a charter from the Civilian Aeronautics Administration to provide a Primary Flying School to train civilian pilots. Classroom instruction was held on campus with flight training at Albany Airport. The focus of the program shifted in 1942 to training combat pilots for the Navy. These enrollees, along with trainees in the Army’s radio technician program, attended Siena as uniformed personnel rather than civilians.

The 1941-42 academic year marked a turning point in the nature of the student body. Although Siena was founded to educate the traditional college age male through a course of full-time undergraduate study, the student body would not fit that description for almost eight years. The impact on enrollment was even more dramatic. While the graduating Class of 1942 had more graduates (eighty four) than the first, it was almost half the anticipated size: Many seniors withdrew right after the attack on Pearl Harbor. During the graduates’ last semester on campus they felt the effects of the national turbulence: They participated in blackout trials, completed coursework at an accelerated pace to comply with Defense Department directives, and they cancelled plans to publish their SAGA.
The accelerated pace of study was institutionalized the following year with development of a three-term school year running from early September through July. Increased course loads per term were also expected. Neglecting for the moment the pressure of trying to adhere to this schedule, students were faced with the additional burden of paying for three semesters of tuition, rather than two, in one year. Even the $8/credit hour tuition did little to alleviate the financial strain.

Because of limited enrollment (fewer than 350 students enrolled in Spring 1943 compared to almost 1,000 two years earlier), only freshmen students attended classes during the day; all others were enrolled in the Evening Division. The reduced numbers brought many extracurricular activities to a halt, including basketball. It was estimated that as of fall 1943 there were more than 1,000 graduates or former Siena students serving in the armed forces. During these years the growth of Siena was intangible for, as subsequently stated in SAGA, it was "her sons throughout the world who were forming her traditions." These Siena men are a significant part of the heritage of this institution. On May 9, 1947, on the south lawn in front of the present chapel, a Grotto of Lourdes was dedicated to the memory of those who served, and particularly those thirty six who died, during World War II.

Academically and administratively there were notable developments during the war years. On March 20, 1942, the college received its permanent charter to award bachelor's degrees in arts, science, and business administration. A year later it received the accreditation of the Middle States Association and formal approval for its theological courses from the Catholic University of America. The first student to receive a degree summa cum laude, John Richard Gannon, graduated in 1944, although there was no valedictorian or salutatorian at that Commencement since the graduates represented several different classes.
The Grotto of Lourdes is dedicated to Siena's fallen World War II servicemen.

Temporary buildings lined the flat, open landscape of the early campus.
A change in administration occurred in July 1943 when Fr. Mark Kennedy became the second President of Siena. His tenure began during lean, austere times and ended when campus development and enrollment were burgeoning. The seeds for the physical growth of the college were planted shortly after he assumed office.

Since the initial purchase of land made in 1937, longing eyes had been cast on the property abutting the southern boundary of Siena and ending at Spring Street. Like the original Garrett lot, the shape of the property was asymmetrical, but its annexation would almost double the size of the campus to seventy acres. Whether it was fortuitous circumstances or, as suggested in *The Provincial Annals*, the result of “friars burying a medal in a nearby field and offering novenas to St. Joseph,” the owner, Adelaide Haywood, agreed to the suggestion of her minister, Rev. Ross Lyman, to sell the property for a “reasonable sum” on September 29, 1942.

One immediate effect of the purchase was the provision of housing for Navy V-5 cadets studying at Siena. Hence, the twelve-room Haywood home was dubbed the “Navy House” and retained that designation until its demolition in 1951. Five other structures were included with the Haywood property: barns and a chicken coop used by some of the friars, and a tenant house with garage used by the commanding officer of the Naval detachment on campus. None of the structures remains.

A more enduring effect of the Haywood purchase was the manner in which it altered potential design for the campus. The original plot plan, limited by thirty eight acres, had Siena Hall and a proposed library at opposite ends of a mall with other buildings such as a gymnasium, friary, and laboratory buildings facing the mall. (Trivia buffs may be interested in knowing that a football stadium was projected for the area that is now a parking lot behind Foy Campus Center, formerly Gibbons Hall.) Acquisition of the Haywood property allowed for more fluid growth, although traces of the balanced “mall concept” can still be found.
The campus scene of 1946 was dramatically different from previous years. The cavernous classrooms were filled with the swelling ranks of students. In the nascent years Siena had withstood adversity and now it faced abundance. Enrollment quadrupled to almost 1,300 students, and facilities, as in the fall of 1937, were woefully inadequate. For a period of four to five years, space was used to capacity and beyond. The Navy House, the balcony of Gibbons Hall, and rented space at the original St. Ambrose Parish Hall were just some of the more creative areas pressed into classroom service. Temporary structures (variously called extension buildings, annex, quonset huts) were erected to alleviate the shortage of space, but the demand for more classrooms, dining facilities, and parking continued with the influx of students.

These students were very different from the previous student body. For one thing, more than two-thirds were veterans whose education was subsidized by the federal government. The majority were enrolled as full-time day students, a reversal of the three-year pattern of evening enrollment. Establishing a trend that continues to the present, business was the dominant course of study.

“Siena is experiencing a second spring” was how Fr. Mark characterized the campus climate. In spite of the dearth of desk chairs, textbooks, and even meat in the cafeteria, these students had a very different perspective on the value of their education. Minor inconveniences were not to deter them in the pursuit of their goals.

All their attention, however, was not focused on academics. The postwar years saw the resurrection of the basketball team under the coaching of Siena legend Dan Cunha. Siena’s “Coventry Players” (later known as the “Little Theatre” when they performed in the basement of Serra Hall, and subsequently called “Stage Three” when they returned to their roots in the renovated Campus Center) resumed their theatrical activities with a production of “The Betrayal,” a perennial favorite in the area. Interest in producing a literary magazine culminated in The Beverwyck, although the second issue
A banquet for seniors was sponsored by the faculty on June 13, 1949.

Outsized beakers of the 1940's have been replaced by two-inch high bottles.
fulfilled a less creative mission by serving as the yearbook for the Class of 1947.

The Debating Club was revived after a four-year hiatus and the coming decade was to see its members win prestigious awards in various competitions. "Sigma Omega," the social organization for Evening Division students, resumed its pre-war level of activity. And even as early in time as 1947, the Siena News prophesied that "Fr. Ben is fairly on his way to becoming a legend."

The 1947 Commencement, the first time honorary degrees were awarded, was, in a numerical sense, especially poignant. Seventy-one students received degrees that June, nearly the same number as received them at the first graduation. The war years had clearly taken their toll, but the promise of better times was evident.

As Siena entered its second decade it was readily apparent that now was the time to construct a home where the friars could live as a Franciscan community. During the preceding ten years the friars had established residences in some of the buildings left on the Garrett and Haywood properties, they had set up quarters in the attic of Siena Hall, and five lucky men were living in the "Canary Inn," a building acquired with 2.2 acres of land on the northern boundary of campus.

Groundbreaking for the Friary, or "faculty house" as it was called, was held on August 10, 1948. Construction took almost two years. The Friary, on the corner of Spring Street and Route 9, was constructed in the Georgian style to complement the rest of the college buildings. It contained eighty four bedrooms, a dining room, refectory, community rooms, and a chapel.

The chapel, St. Mary of the Angels, could accommodate 250 students and provided eighteen side altars in addition to the main altar. The Class of 1949, the first to make a class gift,
St. Mary of the Angels chapel succumbed to fire damage in 1980. The cozier U-shaped, post-fire chapel focuses around a center raised platform.
The Fox Trot of the 50's.

College wasn't all work, even in the "olden" days.
furnished the chapel with a statue of Our Lady of Fatima.

The Friary was to remain the centerpiece of the Franciscan community on campus for over thirty years until a new residence, constructed at the northern end of campus, was completed in 1981 and the former friary converted to a residence hall with classrooms and offices. Ironically, the first "Old Friary," the former Garrett mansion, served a similar multifunction role on campus as does the current "Old Friary," though it did so on a far less grand scale!

During the early 1950's enrollment began to stabilize as the returning veterans completed their studies and graduated. In September 1950, Siena enrolled the first of its graduate students in programs leading to a master's degree in the following fields: Education, English, History, Economics, Accounting, Sociology, Math, Physics, Chemistry, and Biology. With the expansion of similar programs at the nearby State University, the graduate program at Siena was phased out in the late 1960's.

A more enduring academic development on the campus in 1950 was the establishment of the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), a program whose mission, according to Lt. Col. William Law, was "to produce officers of the highest caliber for the Field Artillery Reserve." By 1952, ROTC was a mandatory component of the education program of full-time first and second-year students. The presence of ROTC on the Siena campus reflected national trends. Concern with defense preparedness and the nation's armed forces capabilities were common issues in this postwar time. ROTC was considered to be a complementary experience in the undergraduate training of male students. It wasn't until the late 1960's, again reflective of national trends, that the "mandatory" aspect of ROTC was critically examined. As of September 1969, the ROTC program assumed its present status as an optional experience supplementing the regular academic program.

Outside the academic sphere, other developments were leaving their mark on the Siena legacy. The late 1940's and the early 1950's were a golden era for Siena basketball, the result of the energetic teams of the "Cunha years," under the guidance of Fr. Maurus Fitzgerald, Director of Athletics. These
teams racked up impressive achievements for a small young college. They frequently had national ranking and for a brief period in early 1950 they were the No. 1 team in the East. By defeating Providence and St. Francis (Brooklyn), the 1949-50 Indians garnered the championship of the National Catholic Invitational Tournament in March 1950. In a dramatic moment the following season, Siena beat archrival Manhattan College at Madison Square Garden on December 9, 1950, before 18,000 spectators - quite a feat for a school that didn’t have a team five years before. The Garden was the site in 1953 for another piece of Siena basketball lore when Bill Kirsch made a seventy-foot shot to defeat Iona, 56-54, in the last seconds of the game.

The achievements and string of broken records continued through the early 1950’s amid undercurrents that the College’s administrators were scrutinizing the entire scope of athletics and its role in an academic institution. Part of the concern stemmed from the costs of the various athletic programs. The baseball team was dropped from the official athletic roster in 1952; it was deemed to be too expensive. It did not return until 1956. Basketball and golf remained the only varsity sports in 1953. The tennis team of these years enjoyed notable victories, but other than being furnished with tennis balls, it enjoyed no official recognition from the college. In a bit of wry humor, the administration removed any semblance of sanctioning would-be hunters when the college administration officially announced in 1955 that “the campus is posted. There will be no hunting on campus by members of the student body.”

Another concern about the athletic program centered on the recruiting practices and financial support for student-athletes. In 1955 Siena joined with six other Catholic colleges to form the Middle Eastern College Athletic Association (MECAA), which had as one of its express purposes “to avoid domination of the conference by any one particular college whose methods of securing athletes might not be wholly in harmony with the spirit and motives of the conference.” Sports such as golf, tennis, bowling, cross country, and basketball came under the aegis of this organization.
Coach Dan Cunha led the 1949-50 team to the National Catholic Intercollegiate Tournament title.

Washington Ave. Armory was the site of Siena's big basketball games in the '40's and '50's.
It wasn't just in the sports arena that the college was gaining recognition. Various special events such as "Career Day" for Siena students, "Visitors Day" for the community, "Press Day" for area high school students and journalists, the "Business Forum" and "Social Science Forum", conferences on industrial and labor relations — all drew diverse and disparate groups to the campus. In 1950, the New York Central Railroad even helped to spread the name of the college. Its dining car menus featured a reproduction of a pen and ink drawing of Siena Hall done by Vernon Howe Bailey.

At the 60th "Annual Dinner of the Albany Society of New York" in New York City on February 21, 1953, the President of Siena, Fr. Bertrand Campbell, spoke of the good fortune and the good friends of the college. Reflecting on the positive experiences the Franciscans had in the Capital Region, he announced a scholarship program, funded by the friars, that would provide 250 scholarships to academically deserving students from the Capital Region. "When Siena College was established it was the intention of its founders that it become a part and parcel of the area in which it was situated," he said, and he offered this program as a token of appreciation and a pledge to support higher education in the area. The program continues today as the "Presidential Academic Scholarship" award.

During the same speech, Fr. Campbell invited any potential benefactor interested in donating $500,000 for the construction of a new library to "telephone me at any hour of the day or night." The call never came but the construction went ahead anyway.

The Jerome Dawson Memorial Library, named after the Provincial of the Holy Name Province during the earliest days of the college, was officially dedicated on January 27, 1955. The building, constructed on the south side of the academic quadrangle, contains three sections of one, two, and four stories. It was designed as a "closed stack" library with storage space for 100,000 volumes. Since the original construction, the building has had one major addition, completed in 1979.
The Rev. Bertrand Campbell, O.F.M., President from 1952-55, broke ground in 1953 for the new library, later named for the Rev. Jerome Dawson, O.F.M., first chairman of the college's Board of Trustees.

Charles Haynes, long-time business professor and chairman of the Business Division, made mathematics understandable for students.
With the completion of the library in 1955, the college ended the first phase of development of a Franciscan institution of higher education for Capital Region residents. Campus edifices provided classrooms, offices, library resources, athletic facilities, a friary, and chapel. Administrators at the college and in the Franciscan order reached a crossroads in the Siena journey: Should they enhance and improve upon what they built? Or should they go forward and expand the educational opportunities the college offered?

Like all colleges in the state and nation, Siena was attentive to the prognostications of educational planners who anticipated an influx of students beginning around 1957. Recognizing these trends, the college planned as early as 1955 to prepare for 1,500 full-time day students and 1,000 evening students, which would necessitate additional permanent classrooms, more faculty, and a residence hall for out-of-town students. When Siena reached the crossroads, plans were in place to both enhance the resources available and expand the student body.

The president at the start of the second phase was Fr. Edmund Christy who served from 1955 to 1964. The accomplishments of his administration are extensive, yet one is particularly worthy of "note." Fr. Christy requested that the Classes of 1956 through 1960 pledge to make a gift of $1,000 each to pay for the installation of a Stromberg-Carlson Flemish master carillon and bell system in Siena Hall. Fr. Christy was persuasive. The bells that are so resoundingly familiar to the Siena community first chimed during Commencement exercises in May 1956.

Fr. Christy was equally persuasive with representatives of the Ford Foundation that year when he garnered the college's first substantial endowment of $250,000 to be used to increase faculty salaries. In accepting the funds, Fr. Christy commented that it "confirms our conviction that the quality of the faculty is the prime measure of a college's excellence," a conviction echoed to the present.
Construction equipment returned to campus in the summer of 1958 as work began on the planned residence and dining hall that architects claimed to be "the largest job in upper New York State to use copper pipe entirely in the plumbing, heating, and ventilation." Regardless of the veracity of the claim, the $1 million project was the most ambitious financial commitment the college had made.

The three-story residence hall was completed by fall semester 1959 and was named after Fr. Plassmann, one of the founders of Siena, who died earlier that year. The facility had accommodations for 250 students and four proctors (friars).

Although Plassmann was the first college-sponsored on-campus housing, Siena has had out-of-town students almost since the first day. Boarders, students residing in rooms in private homes, grew to be a significant group, particularly during the postwar years. They had their own distinct social organizations, column in the newspaper ("Roomers"), and elected student government representatives. In 1941, a Siena News feature story was done on the geographic diversity of the boarding student population, with Rochester cited as "most distant" and Glens Falls as the "most number of students." The first foreign students, from Cuba, were the brothers Peter and Frank Lluria who arrived for classes in September 1942.

Many of these boarders switched (or were cajoled into switching) and became "dormers." There were undercurrents of dissatisfaction among those used to less restrictive living; at that time dorm life included enforced curfews, mandatory study periods, restricted visiting hours, and virtually no parties. The students were to spend the next decade in getting these restrictions in residential living removed.

Morale of the "dormers" improved considerably by their second semester when the dining hall opened. Serra Hall, named after the Franciscan missionary Junipero Serra, was not completed until January 1960. The Provincial Annals attributed the delay to the fact that "many fast flowing springs were discovered when excavating for the foundation." The dining hall was constructed with a seating capacity for 525 to allow for use by both residents and commuters. Additional facilities were also available such as a faculty dining room,
reception room and, in the lower level, the "Little Theatre in the Well." (One can’t help but wonder if "the Well" had anything to do with the excavators’ discovery!) Serra Hall, which has had two additions and several renovations, still serves as the primary dining facility for the campus, but the theater has since been replaced by the bookstore.

By the time Siena celebrated its 25th anniversary in 1961-62, there were many accomplishments upon which to reflect. Most obvious was the permanent campus that would have surprised even the most ardent visionaries of 1937. The Siena community had become even more multi-dimensional; in addition to students and faculty, there were now thousands of alumni, and numerous benefactors and friends of the college. As of 1962, when the last of the boarders moved to Ryan Hall (the new residence hall named after Fr. Benvenuto Ryan, Minister Provincial of the Holy Name Province from 1925 to 1931), the student population approached 2,000 with a mix of commuters and residential students. The faculty, which had always had some laymen, was now a more proportional combination of Franciscan friars and lay professors. The first laywoman on the faculty, Dr. Gladys C. Murphy, was appointed Associate Professor of Education in 1958.

Alumni were scattered throughout the country although then, as now, heavily concentrated around the Capital Region. As a distinct constituency, the alumni were becoming more visible in the Siena community. The 25th anniversary provided the impetus for a “rebirth” of the link between the alumni and the college. “Sienalumnus” previewed in 1962 to share news with and about the graduates and the college. Spring of that year saw the first on-campus alumni weekend, a tradition that continues today.

The “friends” of the college, whether lending moral support like Bishop Gibbons, donating valuable art work such as the gifts of Dr. Pierre Bretey, or providing financial assistance, have always been a critical segment of the Siena community. In November 1963, the importance of this group was institu-
Siena's first woman professor appointed in 1958 was Gladys Murphy, later named director of the graduate school.

Siena service to the community included this Board of Associate Trustees seminar.
tionalized in the form of the Board of Associate Trustees whose membership today continues the commitment to bring about a closer relationship between Siena and the community it serves.

Other on-campus traditions still in evidence started some years before the silver anniversary. The Greyfriar Lectures, sponsored by the English Department, invited its first speaker, critic, and author Doris Grumbach, to campus in 1955. Three years later, an offshoot of the series, Greyfriar, Siena Studies in Literature, began annual publication. This was the first scholarly journal published under the aegis of Siena, with VOICES, a multidisciplinary journal, following in 1979. The Greyfriar Film series began in 1964.

Various academically oriented groups surfaced around this time: the Sociology Club, the Biology Club, Duns Scotus Society for education majors, and honors programs in English and history. Between 1958 and 1959, two Siena students became the first Fulbright Scholar, Maurice O'Meara, and the first Woodrow Wilson Fellow, David M. Fahey, in the college's history. Extracurricular organizations that came into existence included a glee club, radio station WVCR, the Big Brothers program (later to include Big Sisters), and the football club. The Sports Hall of Fame inducted its first member, Howard Tucker, in 1964. An annual event that continues to be popular, Parents Weekend, began in 1965.

In July 1964, Fr. Brian Duffy, former Dean of the College, was installed as the fifth President. One of his first actions was to announce plans for Roger Bacon Hall, the science building named after the medieval Franciscan philosopher and proponent of experimental science. Construction of the facility, completed in the fall of 1967, required demolition of Apex Hall ("A" Building) and Exeter Hall ("E"
Serving as role models: Siena students volunteer in the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program and also a number of other community projects.

Roger Bacon Hall houses laboratories, classrooms, computer facilities, and faculty office space.
Building), two temporary structures remaining from the postwar expansion.

Besides being the first building on campus to have central air conditioning, the new facility boasted eighteen teaching labs, five special labs, six classrooms, five seminar rooms, a lecture hall, and offices for Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, and Physics faculty. The completion of Roger Bacon, said Fr. James Flanagan, Science Division Chairman, “underscores the fact that science does have a place in this liberal arts college.” The subsequent inclusion of the Fine Arts Department in the building reenforces the symbiotic relationship of arts and science in a liberal education.

Construction of the science building precipitated the complete landscaping of the academic quadrangle behind Siena Hall. The vegetable gardens are gone forever and the playing fields have moved to the east and beyond. At the same time, the front of the campus was enhanced by a gift from the Class of 1968, the brick wall displaying the emblem and name of Siena College.

Even before the academic building was completed, there was recognition that the residential living situation was critical and plans were formulated for a third residence, Hennepin Hall, named in honor of Fr. Jean Louis Hennepin, an early Franciscan explorer of the Mississippi region. Construction began in 1967 and was completed early in 1968.

The first occupants were reluctant residents, having been relocated from senior housing facilities in McGuire Hall and off-campus boarding situations. The housing “draft” was necessary because Hennepin was ready before the arrival of the freshman residents in the fall of 1968. As in the academic area of the campus, a large quadrangle was created featuring a paved and landscaped courtyard connecting the two existing dorms with Hennepin Hall. In 1986 both Plassmann and Hennepin were enlarged by the addition of one and two stories respectively.

Concurrently, McGuire Hall, a private residence acquired in 1965, was converted to administrative offices. Named to honor a popular vice president at Siena from 1938 to 1943, Fr.
Cyril McGuire, today it houses offices concerned with the external affairs of the college: Admissions, Public Relations, Alumni, and Development. The Carriage House belonging to the original residence houses the Financial Aid Office. McGuire Hall has the distinction of being the only physical structure purchased by the college to be integrated into the campus design.

The internal affairs of the college underwent many changes during this time. A revised "core curriculum" was implemented in September 1966 to satisfy the goals characterized by Fr. Matthew Conlin, Dean, as "academic excellence and religious commitment." This revision provides the framework for the core in place today. Modifications and changes to the course requirements were entrusted to the Board of Instruction, composed of administrators, faculty, and students. Some of the Board's more far-reaching actions include the switch from 3.0 grade system to a 4.0 system in 1969, elimination of a college policy regarding class absence and tardiness, implementation of the pass/fail option, waiver of the modern language requirement for some majors, creation of the fine arts and computer science departments, acceptance of cross-registration for courses at area colleges, and approval of the name change from Theology Department to Religious Studies Department.

Perhaps the most far-reaching change during this time had to do with the student body. There was extensive and sometimes heated discussion among all factions of the Siena community about the basic definition of a Siena student. As late as 1968 a college official, who shall remain anonymous, was quoted as saying "Siena was founded as a men's college and I see no indication that this will change." Apparently this was the minority viewpoint, for less than a year later Fr. Duffy announced that Siena "will admit a limited number of coeds from the Capital District for the Fall semester of 1969." By the following fall, female students lived on campus and the
This bucolic scene from the 1960's is gone today.

There were women—but not many—in day classes in 1969.
myopic administrator was gone. Today the ratio of male to female students is about equal.

The last years of Fr. Duffy’s administration were disquieting. The campus felt the reverberations of the national turmoil over the Vietnam War, civil rights, and the more general questions of social injustice. The first faculty/student “dialogue” was held in 1969 to provide a forum for the exchange of thoughts and concerns. The concept was extended in 1971 when the Board of Instruction sponsored Insight ’71, a day for self-evaluation. Between these two events various faculty members and students had participated in sit-ins, marches, moratoria, strikes, and all-night vigils. As on campuses throughout the country, not every student or faculty member participated in any or all of the demonstrations. The divergence of opinion on these issues touched the entire Siena community but did not fracture it. It is difficult to measure the permanent effect this time of turbulence had on the college, since in so many ways it was a personal struggle. One senses that the effect was both visible and subtle and becomes yet another aspect of the Franciscan tradition.

The sixth President of Siena, Fr. Matthew Conlin, assumed office in July 1970. Under his administration, significant changes were made in the governance structure of the college. Deans were replaced by vice presidents in the areas of academic affairs, student affairs, business affairs, and development. The first laymen had been added to the Board of Trustees in 1967: Ernest F. Barvoets, Peter Kiernan, Hon. Francis Bergan, George W. Foy, Esq., and Hollis E. Harrington. By 1971, more than half of the trustees were not members of the Franciscan order.

Campus finances, always a concern, became even more important as costs spiraled for existing programs and proposed improvements. The president of Siena was quoted as saying “Many hard pressed colleges have raised tuition, and more will follow suit. But if tuitions get much higher, middle class Americans will not be able to meet them.” Ironically, the
president quoted was Fr. Mark Kennedy, and the time was 1947, but the sentiments accurately summarized the existing situation. Since tuition and fees have always only covered a portion of the costs of a student’s education, the deficit had to be met from other sources. For many years the contributed services of the friars had helped balance the budget, but it was becoming more apparent that outside support, either public funds and/or personal contributions, had to be obtained.

The pursuit of public funds, particularly from the state government, was problematic if Siena was deemed to be church-affiliated. This was the interpretation the New York State Department of Education made of Siena and many other colleges. Yet for many years Siena, for a variety of reasons, had been redefining its mission and purpose so that by the early 1970’s Siena had been transformed into an independent, liberal arts college with a Franciscan heritage. A 1972 court decision refuted the Education Department’s interpretation and state funds became available. Revenue from state and federal sources in the form of grants, work study programs, and loans continue to be a significant factor in the college’s budget.

During this time attention was also directed to increasing the financial support from alumni and other benefactors. Contributions from alumni were always in evidence, but in 1971 a concerted effort was made to contact the estimated 6,500 alumni who might be interested in contributing to their alma mater. This first effort, chaired by Dr. William Boland, was so successful that Siena won the first of its eleven Mobius Strip awards for sustained excellence in alumni giving presented by the American Alumni Council (now CASE) and the U.S. Steel Foundation. That same year the President’s Club, a select category of the annual giving program, was created. Subsequently additional giving categories were created: the Duns Scotus Society, the Founders Club, and the Cyprian Mensing Associates. A landmark for the Annual Fund was achieved in 1986 when gifts to the fund topped $1 million for the first time.

The success of these fund-raising efforts led Fr. Conlin to announce in 1974 that Siena would embark on a three-year capital fund campaign to raise $2.5 million for campus reno-
vations, endowed scholarship programs, and, most visibly, the Alumni Recreation Center (ARC). The campaign was an historic occasion since it was the first time in the college's history that an appeal was made to the public for financial support. In fact, in the early days, Siena was specifically prohibited from raising money locally since it might be detrimental to other diocesan fund drives. The success of the campaign, with a theme of "Academic Growth - Community Service," was attributable to Siena's friends and alumni, as well as to the financial support of businesses and industries in upstate New York and foundations interested in independent higher education.

One fruit of the campaign, the ARC, was symbolically another milestone in the college's development. If in 1958 the college reached a crossroad when it made the decision to provide residential facilities, the ARC represented a similar juncture in that it was recognized that Siena had outgrown the original gymnasium and a new facility was needed. In a sense the college had reached the third phase, "maturation," a phase that continues to guide development to the present. Facilities are expanded or improved but the essential function and purpose of the college remain intact.

The ARC, a 55,000 square foot multi-purpose building located on the lower (east) end of the campus, was completed in time for the Siena basketball team to open the 1974-75 season. The building contains three full size basketball courts; volleyball, tennis, and handball courts; a mini-gym with weightlifting equipment; and athletic department offices. With a seating capacity of 4,500, the ARC is the site of most college convocations. In March 1977 it was the setting for the ordination of Bishop Howard Hubbard. In 1976 the men's basketball team gained NCAA Division I status, the first time the team had played at that competitive level in twenty years.

The former gymnasium, Gibbons Hall, underwent significant renovations in early 1975 to convert the building to a campus center with offices for student organizations, conference rooms, and student support services. A relic of earlier days is the space designated "coffee house" which at one time really was a house, called variously "The Inner Ear" and "Our House."
The Annual Fund topped $1 million in 1987.

Alumni contributions helped finance the ARC, the Alumni Recreation Center.
The centerpiece of the renovated campus center is the theatre area with removable walls and telescoping seating, allowing the area to be used as a theatre and lounge or as a large auditorium. The lower level of the building, providing refreshment services, undergoes periodic renovations and name changes—“Rathskellar Cafe,” “the Rat,” “Watchamacallit,” “Indians’ Den”—but inevitably reverts to the “Pit,” a name that stems from the era when the building was a gym and the lower floor housed both locker rooms and the snack bar. As Jim Knust, Campus Center Director, said “In those days, it really was the ‘pits’.”

In 1976 the building was renamed in honor of the late George W. Foy, a distinguished Albany attorney and benefactor of the college.

With the extracurricular needs of the students temporarily satisfied, the next “crisis” with the campus’ facilities concerned housing. As early as 1971, the Vice President for Student Affairs, Dr. Dell Thompson, sagely predicted that building additional housing on campus was “very doubtful in the near future.” Yet the demand continued unabated. In the fall of 1975, an unexpected increase in the number of new students registering at Siena gave rise to the “annex,” a local motel that was used to house these students temporarily. When space became available at a nearby apartment complex in January 1976, the college formalized the off-campus housing option by beginning the “Lakeshore experiment.” This housing arrangement was immediately popular and created another subset of students to add to the “dormers” and the “commuters.”

When Fr. Hugh F. Hines became the seventh President of Siena in 1976, physical expansion of the campus was imperative. Plans were formulated to build a new friary and to convert the existing friars’ residence into a student residence. These two changes were accomplished in 1981. However, before the friars could move, a fire destroyed the main altar and reredos (a gift of the Class of 1952) in the adjacent chapel
in December 1980. The damage provided an incentive to redesign the interior to conform to liturgical changes and to create a multi-purpose campus ministry facility that could accommodate 300. Prior to this, in 1979, the students' physical and mental needs were addressed when both the dining hall and library were expanded. About the same time a decision by the Board of Trustees capped enrollment at 2,600 full-time students.

Commitment to the Lakeshore housing arrangement was always considered temporary and plans were formulated to construct unique housing that would bring all the residential students back to campus. In September 1986, after more than a year's delay, the townhouses were ready for occupancy. Located off Fiddlers Lane on the northern boundary of college property, the townhouse units provide college-sponsored apartments in a village setting. Amenities in the Marcelle Community Building such as laundry facilities, postal services, and community rooms are also available.

Spadework began on the latest phase of Siena's current expansion plans in October 1986 when groundbreaking ceremonies were held for a new classroom/faculty office building. The 17,000 square foot, two-story structure is the first academic building to be constructed in twenty years. The building, completed in September 1987, is situated in the middle of the triangle formed by the Old Friary residence hall, Siena Hall, and the Jerome Dawson Library.

The growth in the last decade cannot be solely characterized as physical. Applications have increased dramatically. In 1977, 1,724 students sought admission. In 1987, the number was 2,820. Admission to the college has become highly selective and competitive. Siena is among the 300 "most competitive" colleges in Peterson's Annual Guide to Undergraduate Study, rated "very competitive plus" in Barron's Guide, and included in The Best Buys in College Education by New York Times Education Editor Edward B. Fiske. The average SAT scores of Siena freshmen were 1065 in 1987, 150 points above the national average. In the academic sphere, programs were added in theatre, computer science, social work, and multi-disciplinary studies. Certificate programs began in International Studies, Foreign Language and Busi-
Upperclass students enjoy family-style living at the townhouses.

Classroom and faculty office expansion became a reality in 1987 with the opening of a new academic building.
A floor of suites was added to Plassmann Hall in 1987 to provide a new housing option.

Highly talented, motivated students fill the Siena/Albany Medical College program.
ness, Peace Studies, and Theatre Arts. The college has invited guests to campus for conferences on such subjects as the Adirondacks, Mark Twain, business mergers, and career opportunities for women in science.

Cooperative arrangements have been developed with other academic institutions that combine a Siena liberal arts education with technical training or which guarantee acceptance into graduate programs. The Siena/Albany Medical College Program, a unique eight-year program, affords talented students the opportunity to combine a commitment to serving others with a solid education in the sciences, humanities, and medicine.

The special interests of faculty and administrators are reflected in the creation of the Reinhold Neibuhr Institute of Religion and Culture, the Institute for Jewish-Christian Studies, and the Siena College Research Institute. In the external sphere, the most ambitious capital fund campaign ever undertaken by the college, "The Siena Journey," represents a multi-dimensional effort to develop support for the financial future of the campus and the academic programs.

In recent years, the Siena community has grappled with contemporary issues of diversity and divestment as well as the more fundamental concerns of enrollment and the pursuit of academic excellence. The struggle is sometimes cosmic but more often common and reflects the nature and vitality of academic institutions.

This reflection on Siena's first fifty years tells of the transformation from idea to reality. Much has changed, yet much remains the same. When Bishop Gibbons welcomed the friars to the area he said they would "assure not only an education of superior quality but will provide a splendid background of cultural excellence and expert erudition." This tradition, not the buildings or the programs, is the legacy with which Siena College enters the golden years.
"We shall overcome"—the Rev. Hugh F. Hines, O.F.M., Siena President; Coretta Scott King, civil rights activist; the Rev. Benedict Taylor, O.F.M., at a 1986 convocation.

The cars and the setting have changed over the years, but the Commencement procession is just as proud.