



# AURORA UNIVERSITY

MAGAZINE ————— VOLUME 3, ISSUE 1 — FALL 2017



**FOUNDATION FOR  
THE FUTURE**





*Rebecca L. Sherrick*  
**REBECCA L. SHERRICK**  
**PRESIDENT**

The great cathedrals of Europe hold a special fascination for me. In a time when few could understand the Latin words of the Mass, the Christian message was communicated in the languages of art, architecture, stained glass and music. I am awed by the bright colors that dance across the stone interior at Metz. The towering façade of the Cologne Cathedral leaves me a little breathless. The powerful iconography of judgment and salvation above the portal at Notre Dame reminds me of all that is at stake in life. The cathedral at Chartres, known by many for its stunning rose window, draws my attention because of its labyrinth. It is precisely the same size as the famous window and covers the entire central nave of the cathedral.


Experts offer varying interpretations for the meaning of the labyrinths. Some suggest that they were developed as tributes to the architects and builders of the cathedrals. Others contend that they symbolized the final days in the life of Jesus Christ, the road from Pilate to Calvary. Another explanation is that the labyrinths provided a local alternative for those unable to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Such a journey, whether overland or within the walls of a great cathedral, was a purposeful walk toward a spiritual destination. Unlike a maze, with its dead ends and problem to solve, a labyrinth leads inexorably toward the center, if the traveler has stamina and strength sufficient for the journey.

An Aurora University education invites students to undertake a similar journey. During their tenure on campus, we encourage undergraduates to “discover what matters” and then to build a life with intentionality and purpose. In a sense, the college years are a point of embarkation on the road that winds through an entire lifetime. Pathways are rarely straight or flat, and, often, it is only in retrospect that the full meaning of the experience becomes known.

And so it was that, when the Aurora College Class of 1967 began to contemplate a 50th reunion gift, I asked them to consider a labyrinth. The dedicatory plaque that hangs nearby says it all “. . . where you are, I have been . . . where I am, you will be.” As generations of new AU students discover the labyrinth, walk its circuit and reflect upon their progress, I hope they will feel a sense of oneness with those who came before and those who will follow. Perhaps, in time, they will understand the sacredness of the journey they began on campus and the importance of continuing with faith their pilgrimage to the center of all meaning.

**A**





# Labyrinth helps students on the path **to discover what matters**

A 50th anniversary, whether it marks a birth, a marriage or a graduation year, is a special milestone. It provides an opportunity to pause and reflect upon the events that have helped shape the lives of individuals and groups, even of societies themselves.

That's why scores of alumni, current students, faculty, staff and AU friends gathered on Saturday, October 14, during the 2017 Homecoming Weekend to witness the dedication of the university's new labyrinth, a gift from the Class of 1967, which celebrated its 50th reunion this year.





“As a class we felt that we needed to give something back to the university in appreciation of everything the institution has given us,” said John Fenlason ’67, a member of the class committee that helped plan the reunion and coordinate the fundraising effort.

“Our class gift is intended not only to give witness to our brief time here but also to build on the university’s timeless values of character and scholarship,” he said.

“A labyrinth is a fitting symbol of our students’ journey of discovery, of finding what matters to them

personally and professionally,” he continued. “We know that AU students have a strong desire to serve others, to belong to a community of faith, and to reflect upon their lives and experiences — just as we did in 1967 and just as students did when Aurora College first opened its doors here in 1912. The labyrinth can be an aid to our students on their journey.”

#### A path of discovery

Forty feet in circumference and made of thousands of individually sized brown and red concrete

pavers, the labyrinth nestles amid the trees near the southwest corner of Aurora’s main campus at Prairie Street and South Evanslawn Avenue.

The location is appropriate — quiet and accessible yet spatially related to the Wackerlin Center for Faith and Action, itself devoted to cultivating the religious and spiritual life of AU students.

Labyrinths are incorporated into the religious practice of many faiths as aids to both prayer and meditation and as symbols of life as a journey. The inscription that

accompanies the Class of 1967’s gift reflects that heritage:

Labyrinths long have been symbols of life’s journey. The builders of the great cathedrals at Chartres, Reims and Amiens relied upon this imagery to communicate their Christian message. Labyrinths remind us that paths are rarely straight. They twist and turn, challenging the faithful traveler to retrace, reflect and set off anew in pursuit of Truth.

**“Where you are, I have been...  
Where I am, you will be.”**

#### The strength of tradition

Class gifts are a time-honored tradition at Aurora University. Various classes have contributed special landscaping and benches that adorn campus, and alumni from three classes helped raise the \$600,000 necessary to purchase the hand-built, 1,230-pipe Opus 119 organ now in Crimi Auditorium. Most recently, the Class of 1965 raised \$100,000 to name the living room in the Hill Welcome Center.

According to Fenlason, almost 60 members of the Class of 1967

rallied in support of the labyrinth, raising more than \$50,000 in just three years.

“It was very much a team effort, not only from the reunion committee but also the class as a whole,” he said. “A lot of people put a lot of energy and creativity into making this a reality. We hope that the labyrinth will have a lasting impact at the university.”

**A**





# Architects of Growth

When Ted Parge started working at Aurora University in January 2001, one of the first things he noticed was a lack of students on the Quad — and it wasn't because they were avoiding the cold.

"Back then, there just weren't that many students on campus during the day," the former executive vice president explained.

In fact, there weren't nearly as many students enrolled at AU then as there are now and many of those were graduate students attending night classes.

Now, 17 years later, that picture has changed dramatically. This fall the university welcomed its largest-ever freshman class — 797 strong, according to Donna DeSpain, senior vice president for enrollment — and there's hardly a time when the Quad isn't full of students hustling to class, studying under a tree or playing Frisbee.

The university has grown physically, too, most recently through the acquisition of 80 acres near the main campus for the new Spartan Athletic Park.

New buildings, including the Institute for Collaboration, Centennial Hall, the Ellsworth and Virginia Hill Welcome Center, and the John C. Dunham STEM Partnership School, as well as renovations of existing buildings, such as Perry Theatre and the award-winning redesign of George Williams College's

Mabel Cratty Building, have seemed almost routine at both campuses throughout the past two decades.

At the same time, the university has expanded its educational reach as well as its social and cultural impact — all while strengthening its goal to help students discover what matters and build their lives around it.

How has this transformation happened and how has it affected Aurora University, its students and the communities it serves?

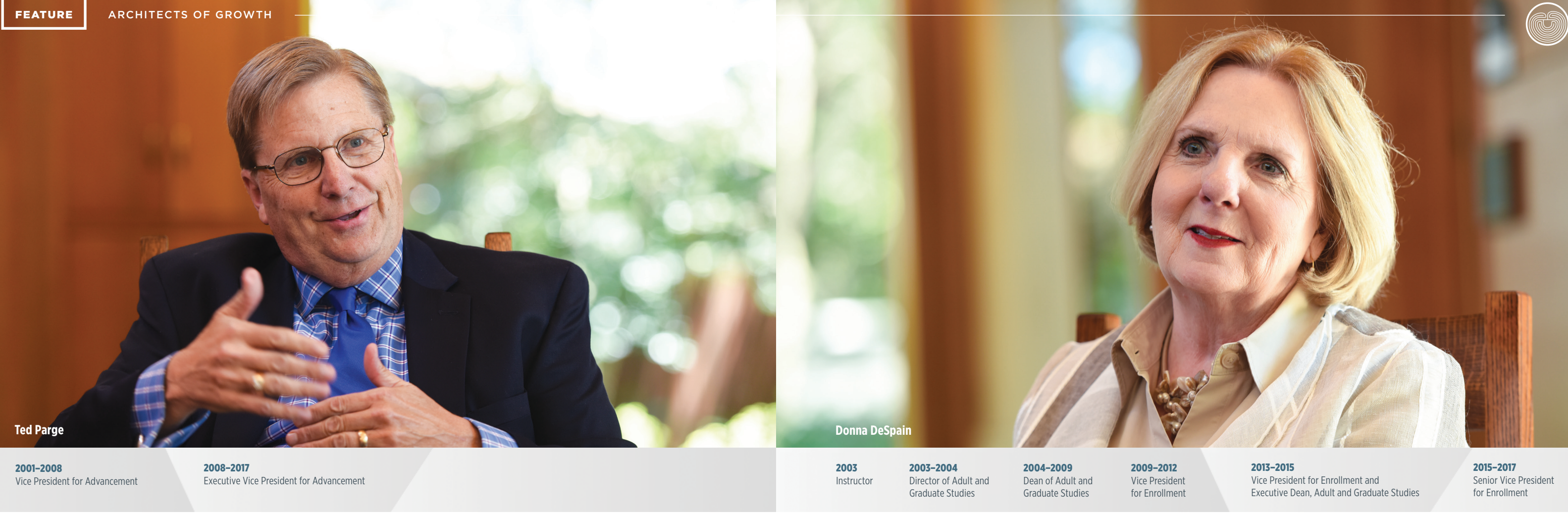
Recently, Parge sat down with DeSpain to discuss and reflect upon those very questions.

Parge, who retired from his full-time position in June, and DeSpain, who will retire in December after almost 15 years at AU, have unique perspectives on the university and the changes that have occurred here during their combined 32 years.

"I have enjoyed the privilege of working with many wonderful colleagues at Aurora University," said President Rebecca Sherrick. "Ted Parge and Donna DeSpain are two of the finest people I know. They have worked tirelessly to set and hold AU on a pathway to success. Thanks to their work, even more students have benefited from our distinctive combinations of 'value and values.'"

The following are remarks from the conversation between Parge and DeSpain.





Ted Parge

**2001–2008**  
Vice President for Advancement

**2008–2017**  
Executive Vice President for Advancement

Donna DeSpain

**2003**  
Instructor

**2003–2004**  
Director of Adult and  
Graduate Studies

**2004–2009**  
Dean of Adult and  
Graduate Studies

**2009–2012**  
Vice President  
for Enrollment

**2013–2015**  
Vice President for Enrollment and  
Executive Dean, Adult and Graduate Studies

**2015–2017**  
Senior Vice President  
for Enrollment

**Aurora University Magazine: What changes have most impressed you during your career here?**

**Ted Parge:** Well, I think the most astonishing change has been in the physical environment. We’ve gone from not having a room anywhere on campus large enough to hold the entire faculty and staff to having a campus — I should say campuses — full of beautiful, accommodating buildings that offer ample room for university and community activities. That has had a remarkable effect on visitors and especially on alumni who haven’t been on campus for many years, both here and at George Williams College. It’s extraordinary.

**Donna DeSpain:** I would add to that the beauty of the landscaping itself. I’m a gardener and I can attest to how much work it takes. I walk by the roses and daisies along the sidewalk by the library every day in the spring and summer. They’re lovely. These kinds of things are an expression of who we are and how much we care. They’re what give our students and families their first impression of Aurora University, even before they talk to anyone.

**TP:** Place matters. We’ve been very intentional about the physical environment because it does matter so much. Facilities like the Wackerlin Center for Faith and Action, Hill Welcome Center and Crimi Auditorium and the programs and activities that go on in them give our students the opportunity to get away from the day-to-day, to have experiences that encourage reflection. Those things have to be a part of the student experience, and I think now the campus addresses that. And similarly, as far as the community is concerned, our campus is now a place you would want to come to for a Celebrating Arts and Ideas event or to hear speakers like a Gen. David Petraeus or a David Axelrod at one of our Town Square Series events.

**AUM: What attracted you to AU?**

**TP:** I had read in the newspaper that a new president had arrived at the university and that she was interested in building an arts program up in Lake Geneva at the George Williams campus. That’s what attracted me. She talked about building audiences and utilizing that campus in new and different ways. I was fascinated by that because my background was in the arts.

It was very apparent, even in my first interview with her, that President Sherrick was an academic entrepreneur — very scholarly, very sensitive to the academic and social responsibilities a university has, yet well-versed in enrollment and the business side of running a large, complex organization. That’s a very powerful combination.

**DD:** I saw the possibilities in Dr. Sherrick’s vision. We had a lot of systems here that were broken, and I knew that I had something to contribute.

**TP:** A lot of our early work was directed at helping to shore up some of the university’s existing systems, including enrollment, development and various business processes, along with creating more market-responsive academic programs and developing a strategy to engage the outside world. These elements helped shape the organizational foundation upon which the university has grown ever since.

Aurora University is on a very sound footing. We’ve weathered a lot, from the Great Recession of 2007 to the state of Illinois’ suspension of MAP funding. We’ve been able to continue, to grow, and we’re stronger for it.

**DD:** A strong foundation has also allowed us to be more deliberate in what we do. We don’t have to chase money or offer courses that aren’t part of a liberal arts core. We can be very intentional in pursuing our mission.

**TP:** In the first few years that I was here, we also spent a lot of time rediscovering the Aurora College legacy. For me it was fascinating. It helped us tell our story. It wasn’t about creating anything new, just digging deep and recovering the roots of both Aurora and George Williams. Everything comes out of those roots — character, scholarship, faith, citizenship, serving those who serve others. That enabled us to start talking about the transformative power of learning.

**AUM: At the time, did you imagine that Aurora University would become what it is now?**

**TP:** I don’t think anyone could have imagined it becoming what it is today, but you could see that it was on the right trajectory. You could feel a sort of organic ownership developing among the faculty and staff, a sense that everyone knew they had a stake in AU’s





success, and that continues today, which again I think speaks to that strong foundation.

**AUM: The Aurora University mission statement emphasizes the transformative power of learning. What have you learned here?**

**DD:** Everything you do changes you. It adds a piece to who you are. The folks I've worked with, the people I've known, the place itself have all transformed me. I don't think you can work here and not be transformed, not if you've opened yourself up to the possibilities.

I tell people who come to work here that if you have a heart and work really hard, you can have a wonderful life at AU. You have the opportunity to take on many different jobs. For someone who is entrepreneurial and loves challenges and working with new programs, new people, new ideas, it's a perfect place.

**TP:** I've learned that "long-view" type work takes time and patience. It requires you to let go of the illusion of control. You have to be willing to give something a try and do your best with it. It may work and it may not work, but you are going to learn all along the way.

Donna, you mentioned the opportunities to work in different areas. I think that AU has worked very hard to create an environment to support that. Over the years I've seen a lot of very smart people come to AU. They bring various passions and strengths to the table; they work together and the university builds off their talents.

**DD:** I think we're all given permission to follow our own paths. If we have an idea, we're encouraged to pursue it. For folks who like change and the opportunity to own something, that's important.

**AUM: Ted, you mentioned the Celebrating Arts and Ideas program and the Town Square Series, both of which you were instrumental in developing. How do these contribute to the university's mission?**

**TP:** One of the reasons we launched and expanded the Celebrating Arts and Ideas program and more recently the Town Square Series was to bring a variety of opinions together around critical issues that our students will encounter as adults, such as immigration, K-12 education, health care and politics.

The university is able to leverage our region's resources to the benefit of the community and to

our students, giving them opportunities and experiences like these that otherwise they would not have had. Making them available — free of charge — distinguishes AU as a true university, a safe place for ideas and thoughtful exchanges. It's an example of AU's identity as a private university with a public mission.

**DD:** I think, too, that with these programs, our new facilities and the landscaping, our alumni have begun to feel more welcome here and at George Williams College. We're seeing more and more alumni attending Homecoming. They come to Arts and Ideas events; they come to hear the speakers; they come to Music by the Lake. They take pride in their institution.

**TP:** That growing sense of pride also affects how our alumni perceive the value of their degree. That's a great barometer of success.

**AUM: What is AU's obligation to its students?**

**DD:** We're obliged to help students graduate with an understanding of what's possible for their future. We help them become informed citizens who can effect change in the world. We offer them the tools, awareness and resources they can use throughout their changing lives — because life does require continuous learning — and we do it with great intentionality and great care. We want them to be better able to handle what the world throws at them. We want them to be educated citizens who can make good decisions.

**AUM: How does the faculty play a role in that?**

**TP:** Of course we expect our faculty members to be experts in their content areas. But our most successful faculty also bring the outside world into the classroom. They are academic entrepreneurs who make those connections so that our students are not surprised when they step out into the real world. They are invested in the students individually and collectively.

They are mentors, encouragers, good listeners and good questioners for our students as they craft their journeys.

**DD:** They fit AU's mission, and part of that fit is the desire to help students discover what is important in their lives. Our faculty and staff walk alongside students and help them become who they want to become — who they are destined to become. And they work hard. We recently hired a faculty member who had worked at a competing institution. He attended one of our recruiting open houses, held on a Saturday,

at which there were other AU faculty members. He said he was astounded because no faculty member at his previous school would have ever come to such an event on a weekend. Our faculty know that recruitment is everyone's business. They get it.

**AUM: What is your hope for AU's future?**

**TP:** I think my biggest hope, really, is that the university continues to look outward, that it doesn't get mesmerized by looking inward. The university has been very successful in creating an organization that is flexible

enough to go in whatever way is necessary. If we can continue to be on the cusp of what's coming, always moving forward, remaining fluid enough to adjust to and anticipate new needs — I think that's going to be essential.

**DD:** I agree. I think in the future we need to be very mindful of what new markets are developing. We really don't know what higher education is going to look like. Disruption is going on all the time, and although AU has been very good about holding down tuition cost and providing scholarships, the entire industry has been under fire about the cost of a four-year degree. We have to remain very cognizant of that. These are the things that are pushing us into the future and we need to be ready.

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—Ted Parge





**TP:** You're right, higher education is increasingly becoming a commodity. I think it's critical that we always offer something more than a commodity. We have to have the "whats," but we also have the "whys." It's not only important to our students, it's important to the country.

I do think we are well-positioned to serve the changing population, and that's an advantage. AU and GWC have been doing that for a long time.

**DD:** Whenever someone asks me what I do, I tell them that I sell dreams — and AU will continue to do that. And those dreams are not just for students. They're for the many generations of students and families that will come after them.

The relationships that we form with our students and our families are to me what AU is all about. Parents trust AU enough to give us their children for four years. That's an awesome responsibility.

**TP:** You've hit on an important piece — relationships are key. Part of AU's value proposition is the openness, that sense of real caring that is apparent here. Families value our authenticity.

**AUM: How important are AU's relationships with the broader community?**

**DD:** I think they are critical. In fact, between Aurora University and George Williams College we have more than 30,000 alumni, and many of them live and work right here in the Fox River Valley. So our role as a source of teachers, nurses, social workers, not to mention our graduates who go on to work in local businesses, is huge. Aurora University is an economic engine for the region.

I think the STEM school is a sterling example of AU's place in the community. Teachers come here to learn how to teach STEM subjects then return to their own schools. STEM education is important to the students as well as to the community and the country. And now we're engaged in replicating our success with the STEM school in other communities throughout the state.

Our students also play a big role in AU's relationship with the community through internships, practicums and student teaching. They also do a lot of volunteer work at local food banks, homeless shelters, schools and retirement centers. Our students even created an on-campus food bank, Libby's Place, to help with food insecurity among students here at AU.

**TP:** I think that serving the community is part of the foundation I mentioned earlier. There are the physical things — the new buildings, the business systems — but it's more than that. There's an invisible network of people behind it. Building community is all about chemistry, teaming up with the right people, the right partners, whether they are corporations, foundations, donors or schools. It's building trust, creating synergy. You always want one and one to be more than two.

The STEM school is a great example of collaboration with the larger community. So is Perry Theatre, which was renovated in 2006 in partnership with the Community Foundation of the Fox River Valley. For me, perhaps the best example is the Institute for Collaboration, which was built in 2003 with a \$10 million grant from the federal government. That was a highly unusual achievement for a small private college like AU, and it was a turning point for us. The building's physical presence is imposing, and the collaboration involved in its creation as well as the work that has come out of it — the STEM school, for example — really gave momentum to the concept of AU being a private university with a public mission.

Early in my career here we talked about AU being a laboratory, engaged with the community, serving the community's needs. Here we are 17 years later and we are still pursuing ways to do that.

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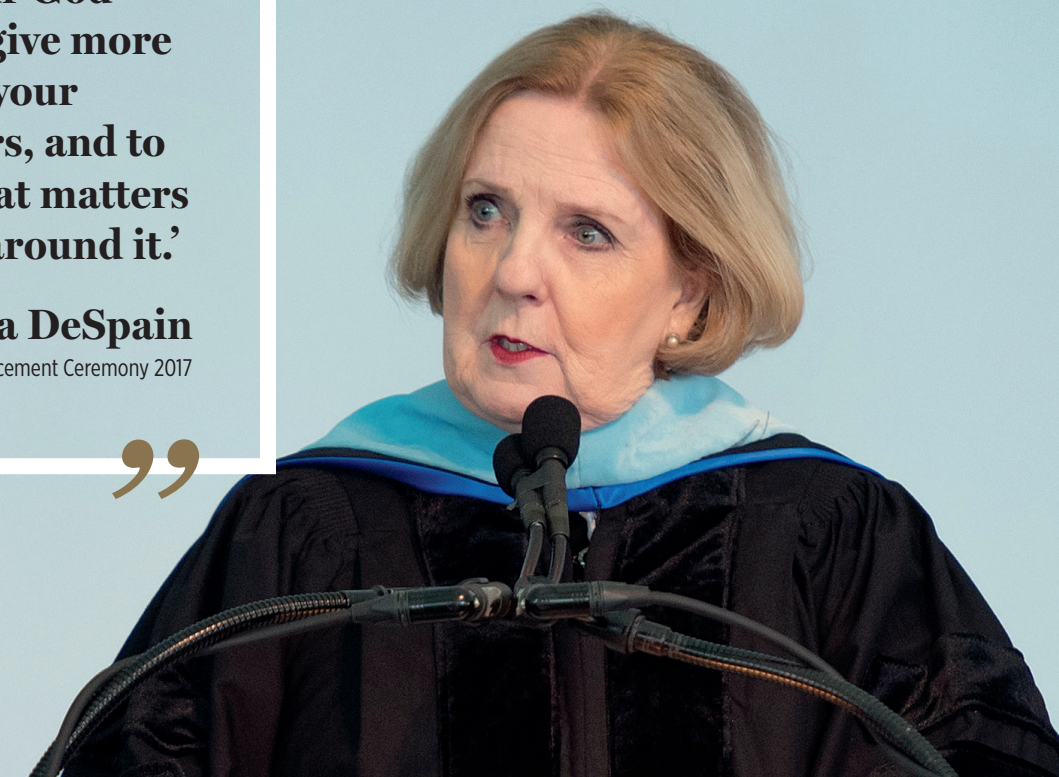
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**Each day, thank your God for another day to 'give more than you get,' to let your light shine for others, and to always 'discover what matters and build your life around it.'**

**—Donna DeSpain**

Graduate Commencement Ceremony 2017

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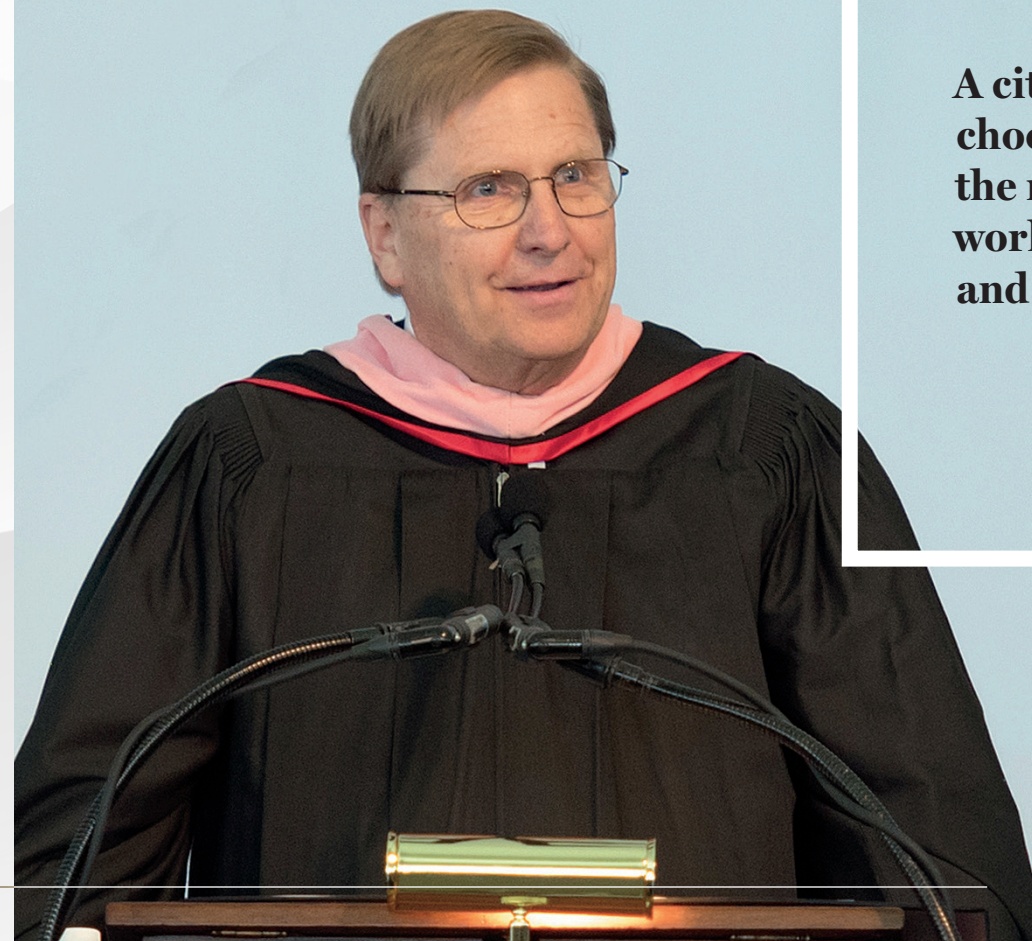
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**A citizen ... is one who chooses to create the life, the neighborhood, the world from their own gifts and the gifts of others.**

**—Ted Parge**

Undergraduate Commencement Ceremony 2017

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The mystery of

# FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT

and the George Williams  
College campus



**T**om McReynolds, a longtime GWC employee, recently “rediscovered” a file folder in which its contents, largely forgotten since the early 1930s, could have turned the lakeside campus into a mecca for lovers of 20th century modern architecture.





Landscape architect Franz Aust took this scale model of Wright's cabins to his meeting with the YMCA College trustees in 1931.



The folder, tucked away in a filing cabinet just outside McReynolds's office in the Weidensall Administration Building, held a number of faded floor plans and elevations for three new cabins to be built somewhere on what is now the George Williams College campus. It was then known as a camp and summer home of the YMCA College based in Chicago. The folder also contained an itemized cost estimate and a photo of a three-dimensional model depicting how the cabins would have looked when constructed.

It also included a browning, type-written letter, dated February 9, 1931, addressed to the cabins' architect, one Frank Lloyd Wright — the same Frank Lloyd Wright who is today considered by many to be the greatest architect the United States has ever produced.

McReynolds, a lifelong fan of Wright's work, holds a bachelor's degree in history and has spent a lot of time studying GWC's past during the 18 years he has worked there.

Despite his frequent forays into GWC's archives, however, he had never suspected a Wright-GWC connection — that is, until recently, when AU President Rebecca Sherrick just happened to mention that she had seen the documents some years before.

"After that, it took me about 30 seconds to find the folder," he said. "It was filed under 'F' for 'Frank Lloyd Wright Cabins' in a filing cabinet that was literally 10 steps away. As someone who likes to think

he knows a little bit about the college's background, I was pretty stunned."

Wright was no stranger to the Williams Bay area, having designed the 1911 Hotel Geneva, located in downtown Lake Geneva (it was demolished after a fire in 1970) as well as several still-extant homes on Delavan Lake, a few miles northwest of campus.

The GWC cabins, with their concrete walls and high-pitched wood and canvas roofs, are aesthetically quite different from these earlier Prairie-style works. Designed to sleep four in close quarters, they are modular, highly geometric and seem as though they were intended to fit together like cells in a honeycomb. The price for all three: \$2,580 — an even \$3,000 with furnishings included.

It seems unlikely that Wright actually designed the cabins with the YMCA camp in mind, said McReynolds. His research shows that the cabins are almost exact duplicates of those Wright designed in 1929 for the San Marcos Water Gardens, a "motor inn" planned for Chandler, Arizona, just outside Phoenix. (The GWC cabins were to have fireplaces and chimneys;

#### Tom McReynolds

has spent nearly 20 years at GWC and currently serves as director of business operations. A lifelong fan of Frank Lloyd Wright's architecture, McReynolds has a degree in history from UW-Madison and is a founding member of the Williams Bay Historical Society.

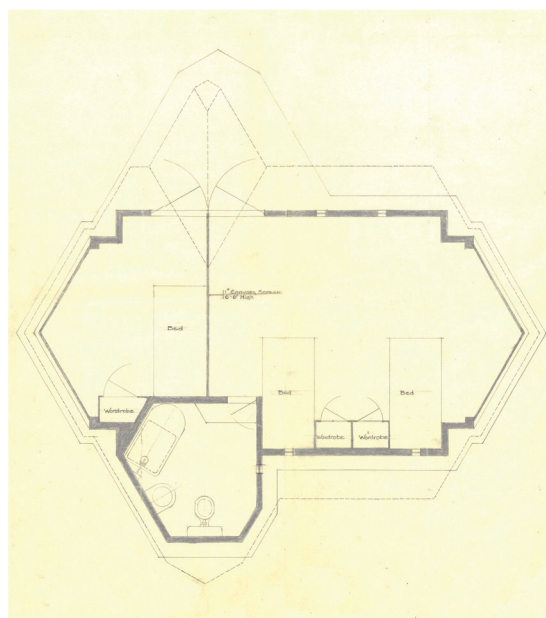
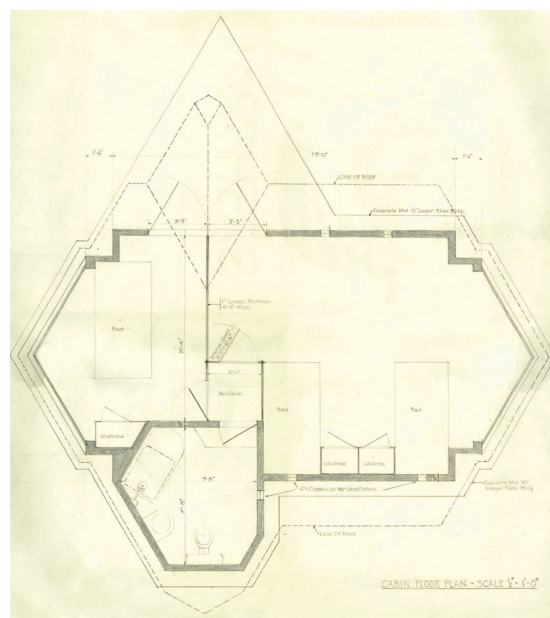
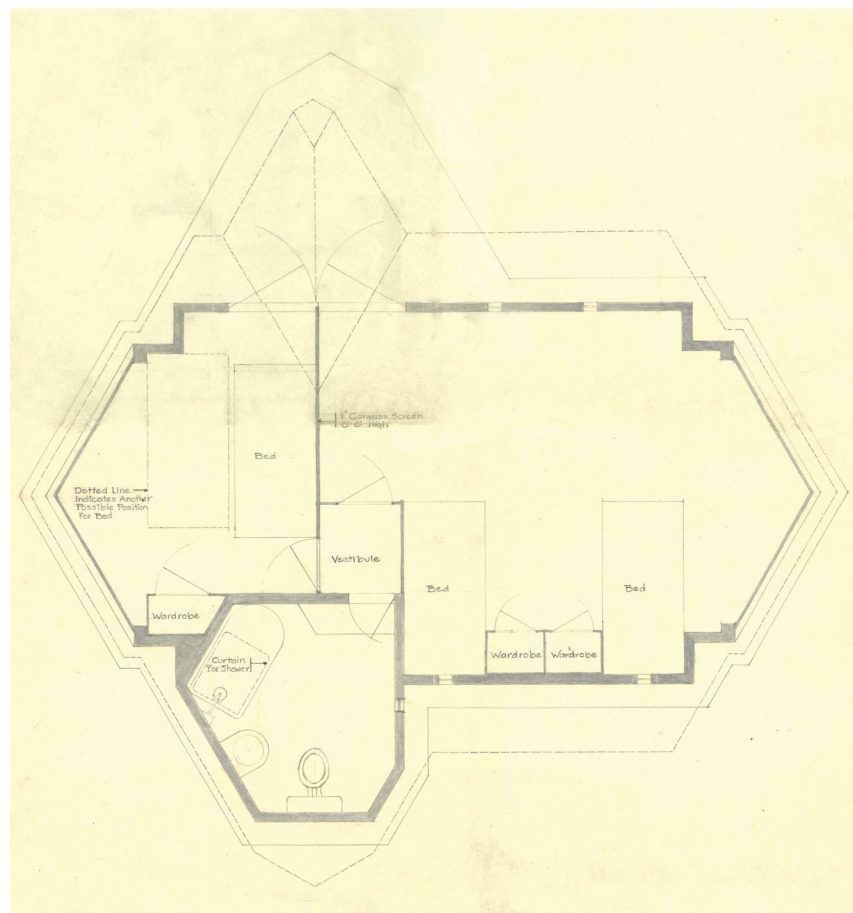
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—Tom McReynolds”

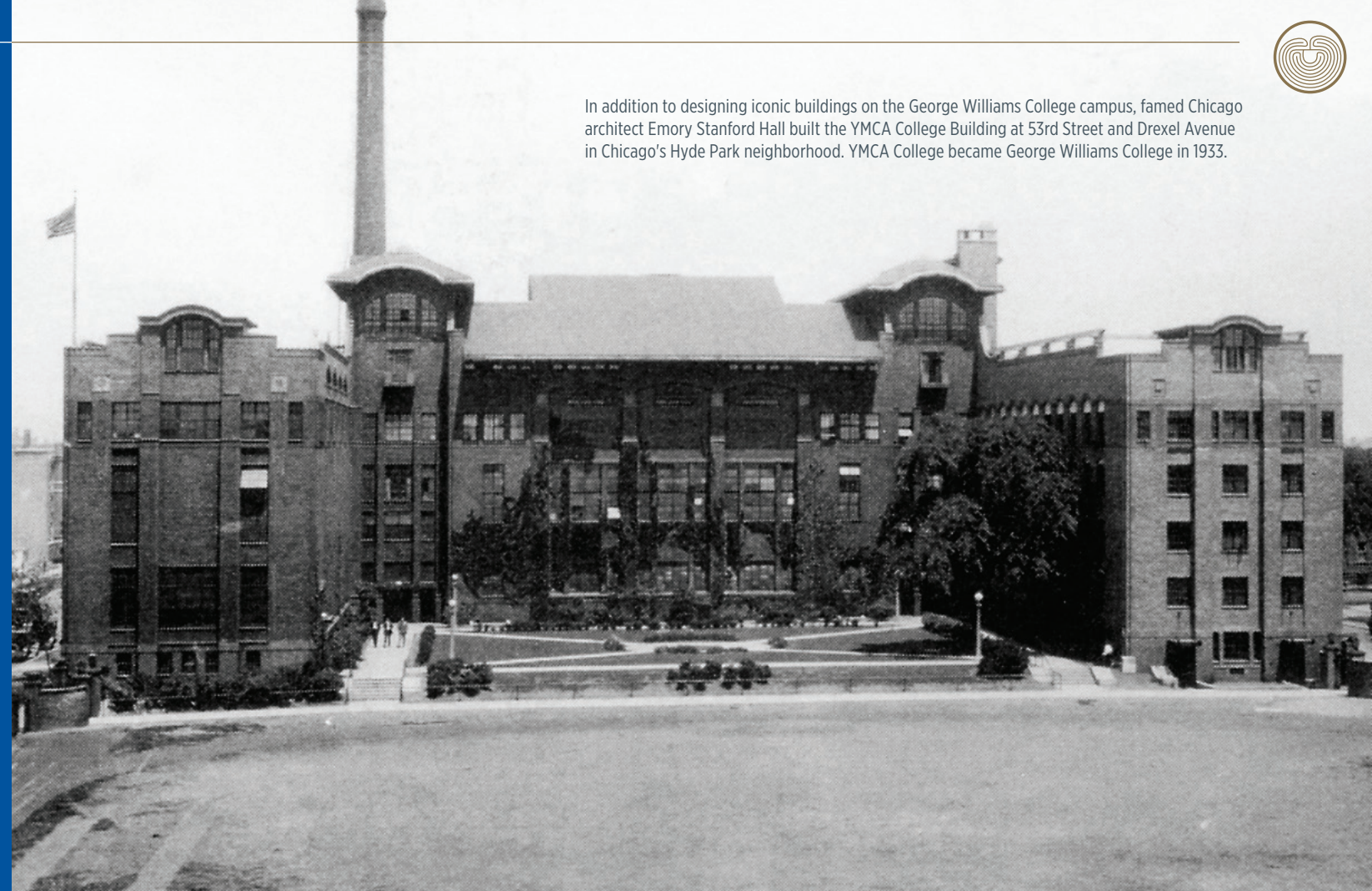




## CABIN FLOOR PLANS



In addition to designing iconic buildings on the George Williams College campus, famed Chicago architect Emory Stanford Hall built the YMCA College Building at 53rd Street and Drexel Avenue in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood. YMCA College became George Williams College in 1933.



the Arizona cabins lacked them.) The San Marcos project was never built, a victim of the deepening Depression and also because the client balked at Wright's insistence on using canvas as a roofing material.

According to McReynolds, Wright's link to the YMCA camp was landscape architect Franz A. Aust, a colleague who was also a close friend of Benny Bentsen, the camp's manager at the time. (Incidentally, Aust was later to design Bentsen Chapel, dedicated to his friend, which graces the hillside behind Lowrey Hall.)

As the documents indicate, Aust represented Wright during negotiations for the project, presenting the designs and models to the YMCA camp's Board of Directors during a meeting in Chicago on February 7, 1931.

"I had a most interesting time down in Chicago with the models for the Lake Geneva situation," he wrote Wright two days later. "The Board of Directors ... are very anxious to go ahead with the units ... but raise two or three questions regarding some. ..."

But there the documentation dries up. Wright never replied to the letter, or at least there's no record that he did. And the cabins were never built.

Perhaps those "two or three questions" quashed the deal — in the letter Aust does indicate that the directors were concerned about the idea of a canvas roof — or maybe the money just ran out.

McReynolds has enlisted the help of the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation to see whether their files might yield an answer.

Despite the Wright cabins that never were, the GWC campus still features several original buildings designed by Chicago architect Emory Stanford Hall, including the Weidensall Administration Building, Brandenburg and the Ingalls Children's Building. Hall and Wright were colleagues who shared office space for more than a decade in Chicago's Steinway Building. Examples of Wright's Prairie School design are evident in these iconic buildings. The Children's Building, now undergoing renovation, was erected in 1929 in memory of Ruth Ann Ingalls. She was the daughter of industrialist J. Kibben Ingalls, whose Wright-designed mansion still stands in River Forest, Illinois, just outside Chicago.

A





# Aurora University American Marketing Association prepares future leaders

With a membership roster of nearly 100 students, the Aurora University chapter of the American Marketing Association isn't the biggest one in the country — but it is the best. In fact, the group was named International Collegiate Chapter of the Year at the AMA's 2017 International Collegiate Conference last spring in New Orleans.

Many reasons led up to the honor, which is bestowed upon a chapter for its work during the academic year. Under the theme of "Make a Name for Yourself," AU/AMA members demonstrated success last year in the areas of professional development, community and social impact, communications, membership, fundraising and chapter operations.

Former AU/AMA president **Hajar Zaki '15** is a campaign manager for a leading global business-to-business marketing agency in Chicago. Through AU/AMA, Zaki was able to prepare for a career that involves identifying clients' different needs and solving their individual marketing challenges.





**Because service learning is such an important part of the overall AU experience, AU/AMA members weaved volunteerism into their community outreach efforts.**



Highlights of the chapter's achievements include creating a social media strategy for the League of WWI Aviation Historians and forming an integrated marketing communications plan for a family-owned business in nearby Sycamore, Illinois.

But the work did not stop there. Because service learning is such an important part of the overall AU experience, AU/AMA members weaved volunteerism into their community outreach efforts. More than 1,800 hours were donated to community initiatives, including fundraisers, coat and food drives, research projects and a marketing competition benefiting local nonprofit organizations.

The work of the AU/AMA chapter was recognized among 200 competing colleges and universities from throughout the United States and Canada, including Penn State, Temple University and longtime AMA collegiate powerhouse, the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. AMA, the world's largest and most prestigious professional marketing organization, has 370 collegiate chapters and more than 11,000 student members.

Several AU/AMA members brought home individual honors from the Big Easy as well. Former chapter president Kelly Hauge, who graduated with degrees in business and marketing, was named the 2017

AMA Student Marketer of the Year. Student peers recognized Hauge for her superior leadership, service to AMA, academic achievement and community involvement. She coordinated AU/AMA's collegiate conference last fall, bringing together 200 students from 18 colleges and universities. The conference, designed to enhance students' marketing skills, consisted of a series of breakout sessions, professional panels and competitions.

This year's AU/AMA president, senior Caitlin deRuiter, collected a \$5,000 scholarship as winner of the 2017 EBSCO Marketing Scholar Award. She wrote an essay describing her professional development through AMA and explaining how she is prepared to make contributions as a leader to the marketing profession and society.

AU/AMA teams also received recognition in the national website competition, overall chapter communications and for a public service video about pet adoption for Kane County Animal Control.

As the trophy case outside chapter faculty advisor Brian Vander Schee's office in Dunham Hall attests, AU/AMA regularly competes in — and wins — collegiate marketing and sales competitions across the country. Yet, being a part

of AU/AMA competitions isn't just about winning.

According to Vander Schee, the competitions provide students opportunities to practice what they have learned in the classroom. In doing so, they address the same types of problems they will face as professional marketers after graduation — experiences that not only crystallize theoretical concepts learned in the classroom but ones that build their confidence, professional networks and résumés.

As a result, students are experiencing success after graduation.

Erica Hankes, a 2016 graduate who majored in psychology and minored in marketing, is now an assistant insights manager with a full-service business-to-business marketing and advertising firm. It's a position that enables her to apply the research and analytical skills she developed as a student to clients' branding efforts.

Marketing major and former AU/AMA president Hajar Zaki '15 is a campaign manager at the same company, where she helps direct clients' media and digital strategies.

Both credit their involvement in AU/AMA for helping to hone some of the practical marketing skills they now use every day as well as for helping to build their self-confidence and personal brand.

These alumni, and so many others involved with AU/AMA past and present, truly are embodying the theme of the chapter: They are making a name for themselves.

**A**

**Brian Vander Schee,** professor of marketing, has advised the AU/AMA chapter since 2009. Vander Schee has received five national teaching awards for marketing — the only educator in the country to reach this milestone.





## A visible and lasting tribute to the transformative power of learning

The Aurora University tradition of excellence continues this fall in a very distinctive way. Student-athletes have begun practicing and competing at the new Spartan Athletic Park, an important investment that is transforming the AU experience and inspiring success.

Building upon a long history of AU athletic achievement and pride, the new park reinforces AU's commitment to the student-athlete experience. The complex will also help with the recruitment and retention of gifted student-athletes and coaches.

For current students, the new park is helping shape legacies. "Spartan Athletic Park is a symbol that student-athletes are valued and appreciated," said senior Taylor Arcivar. "I chose AU in part to play on the new women's lacrosse team. It was an opportunity to participate in

something special. Now with the new home field, I'm truly part of a great athletic future."

Spartan Athletic Park, which spans 80 acres, is located less than a mile south of campus. Phase I — softball, soccer/lacrosse/football fields and facilities — is complete. Plans call for moving into the next stage this spring, when development of a new baseball stadium is slated to begin. Subsequent phases of the athletic park project will focus on meeting the needs of AU's track and field and tennis teams.

For more information about Spartan Athletic Park, visit [spartans.aurora.edu](http://spartans.aurora.edu).

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AU Choir Tour  
Figge Art Museum  
Davenport, Iowa



Music Department Christmas Concert  
Crimi Auditorium



Music major Grace Politowicz '18

## Choirs hit the right notes

When Lisa Fredenburgh joined Aurora University seven years ago as chair of the music department and director of choral activities, she saw an opportunity to rekindle a tradition that has meant so much to alumni and students.

"Touring was a missing piece of the music program at AU," she said. That changed in 2012 when the University Chorale performed in Mendota, Illinois, marking the centennial anniversary of the move of the college from Mendota to Aurora.

"Since the centennial celebration, traveling has been a central experience for our choir members, and I expect they will be telling future students about the time they sang at that cathedral in Indianapolis or swam in Geneva Lake during the Wisconsin tour. When we see alumni on our tours, they always remark about how they grew on those choir tours. I know our current students will have similar stories," said Fredenburgh.

Representing AU on tours is a testament to the music program's increased presence on campus. Music students not only sing at convocations or concerts, they now infuse the entire campus with their enthusiasm and artistic thinking.

Fredenburgh adds that the quality of the music being produced is very impressive. The AU Band, a popular presence at athletic events, is now performing concerts. The University Chorale is 48 members strong. Music majors are graduating and obtaining full assistantships for graduate study, or are being employed in musical fields shortly after graduation.

"Aurora University is very intentional about supporting the arts on the campus," said Fredenburgh. "As a result, music is taking a big leap. With the program more established, we expect to build it to the next level — in both numbers, and most especially, in the pursuit of expressive musical excellence."

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**Lisa Fredenburgh**, chair of the music department and director of choral activities, has wanted to teach since she was in grade school. Today she shares her love for music with students through enriching curriculum and also with the greater community as the founder and director of the Fox Valley Orchestra Chorus.





# Celebrating the life and legacy of Roger Parolini

Roger K. Parolini was an Aurora University institution, serving students, faculty and staff in a variety of capacities for more than six decades. He passed away June 9, 2016, at age 90.

In memory of Parolini's profound impact on Aurora University, the university is establishing a Parolini Endowed Professorship in Music. AU will match all gifts to this new endowment fund, ensuring that music will continue to occupy a prominent place in the university's liberal arts curriculum. Roger and his wife, Marilyn, have provided more than 100 years of service to the university. Their unwavering commitment to their faith, to music and to the university inspired generations of students at Aurora University.

Roger and Marilyn's influence continues to inspire today's students. "Roger knew that music study was a nearly perfect vehicle for transforming lives of students toward paths they couldn't imagine at first," said Lisa Fredenburgh, chair of the music department and director of choral activities. "Every time I had the opportunity to speak with him — every story I have heard about him — it was conveyed that he felt music is both humbling and joyful. I treasure my conversations with Marilyn, too. She is always at our concerts, reminding us that it is a lifelong pursuit to express and experience what it is to be human in the form of beauty. Roger and Marilyn showed and continue to remind us that we can live our philosophy."

The Parolini Endowed Professorship in Music will generate income in perpetuity and by doing so will continue the commitment to music that Roger demonstrated during his tenure as choir director, professor and administrator.

Every additional gift to the endowment ensures the tradition of music at Aurora University continues into the future.

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Donations to the Parolini Endowed Professorship in Music can be made at [alumni.aurora.edu/paroliniendowment](http://alumni.aurora.edu/paroliniendowment).



In the first half of my letter, I shared the story of the labyrinth dedicated at this fall's Homecoming celebration in Aurora. George Williams readers will recognize that a like project is underway in Wisconsin, the renovation of the Ingalls Children's Building for use as a chapel. Dollars for the small iconic structure were a gift from the parents of Ruth Ingalls, who died of tuberculosis at the age of six. For years, the building housed a summer kindergarten program. With its location just steps away from Mabel Cratty, once known as the Women's Building, Ingalls bespeaks the familial ties that bind one generation to the next.

The new chapel will accommodate a congregation of fifty worshippers. Large folding doors will allow others to participate in a service or event from their seats on an adjacent patio. A covered pergola will connect Ingalls to the Mabel Cratty courtyard, enabling guests to move easily between the two buildings. From a symbolic perspective, the chapel will embody the spirit that inspired the Y movement as well as the promise made by Weidensall, Lewis and Brown to create a summer institute dedicated to learning and reflection on the shores of Geneva Lake.

Many other projects are in the works on our campuses. The first phase of the Spartan Athletic Park (softball, soccer/lacrosse/football facilities as well as parking and circulation) is complete. Now crews have launched the next stage of development (Gate House, baseball and tennis). A new Student Success Center that will house integrated academic advising, internship and career development services is planned for the parcel immediately east of the Hill Welcome Center. And dreams of a new gymnasium for George Williams and a new library/learning commons in Aurora are taking shape. Faculty colleagues are at work on a number of innovative academics, including engineering, environmental studies and writing. All are intended to ensure that AU students have the resources, programs, services and support necessary to realize their aspirations.

Our many projects flow directly from the mission of Aurora University as "an inclusive community dedicated to the transformative power of learning." As the 2017 fall semester dawned on college and university campuses across America, we again experienced the moral urgency associated with education. Immediately I was heartened by the relevance and timelessness of our purpose and the enduring quality of the promises we make to students. The historic commitments of Aurora College and George Williams College are as relevant, as imperative, now as when the two organizations were founded. Our new labyrinth and chapel are powerful witnesses to the steadfast convictions that nurture the soul of our university.

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