

McCann Center framework

MaristLand



Jack Gartland indicated that the McCann would not be ready to support the McCann Center project for two years, as it was committed to the McCann Golf Course and the McCann Ice Skating Arena at the Civic Center. This gave the college the leisure to plan.

At first we thought of a *Butler* building, a pre-fab unit which might easily be constructed. Paul Canin explored over a dozen different manufacturers. Richard Foy contacted a specialist in sports arenas from Hofstra University to locate places in the US which had innovative designs. He and his wife visited

Oral Roberts University in Tulsa Oklahoma. The facility was innovative in that it is served occasionally as the venue for the Oral Roberts television shows, which normally were filmed in Los Angeles. In the times when the show moved to Tulsa, the teams practiced in a *basement* under the main floor which had the same dimensions including height as the main floor.

Graceland College, a small college operated by the RLDS (Reformed Latter Day Saints) in Lamoni, Iowa. The athletic complex together with the student union was housed in a huge oversize plastic dome, with the dome about 12" thick. The unit had been in operation for five years with no leakage in a very cold section of the country. Graceland is best known for being the college of Bruce Jenner, the Olympic decathlon champion.

Next he visited Mercer Island near Seattle, Washington. Here he saw domes kept upright via air blowers (now similar to many tennis installations). When he asked a young lady if they ever had snow, she replied that they had about two inches about five years ago.

Laverne College (now University) in La Verne CA about 35 miles east of Los Angeles. We were shown two tents, one housing a theater, the other a combination athletic center and student union. La Verne enjoys mild southern California weather, and heating such a facility would be a problem in Poughkeepsie.

So Paul Canin, the architect, issued several requests for proposals, expecting that a *butler* type edifice would be the winning choice. It happened that there was a lull in construction at that time. A Baltimore regular steel company bid on the project. It did the engineering design and won the bid. So Marist has a standard engineered building which has held up nicely for over 35 years.

When it came time to design the interior, Louis Greenspan, who worked with the McCann Foundation, located a large shipment of wood in Maine. The first floor was designed with an asphalt composition, so the wood was used for the walls. This gives the interior a distinctive look and feel. A wood floor was installed later.


 gem interior

Photo above taken April 2012. Photo below taken shortly after the gym was opened.



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photo by digitized version of Kodak slide. Interior photo by Richard Foy March 2012.

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McCann Center pool

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View of the pool soon after its opening in 1977. Marist had to contend with a problem in the design. Most college pools were two pools, one for diving, and one with a 25yard (or 50 yard) length, as most college meets were run in yards, not meters. Yet the move towards metric was beginning. How to avoid obsolescence yet compete with its current fellow colleges?

The solution was to create one pool, with a moveable bulkhead. This would permit races at the yard distances but also races at the meter distances.



A 2010 view of the pool in use for women's water polo shows the bulkhead in a different position to create a regulation length venue for water polo.

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early photo digitized from Kodak slide; 2010 photo by Richard Foy

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McCann Center dedication

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Ron Petro at right speaking to a guest on the day of the dedication of the James J McCann Recreation Center



Marty Ligouri, Olympic miler, was the invited speaker at the dedication. On stage, from right to left: Ron Petro, basketball coach, William J Murphy who spearheaded the development of varsity athletics in the 1960s, Richard Foy (wearing glasses). At the back, right to left, Student Government President, Father Richard LaMorte.



Marty Ligouri, Olympic miler, was the invited speaker.



Roy Ketchum, chairman of the Board of Trustees. Roy was a strong supporter of educational activity; there is a secondary school in southern Dutchess names in his honor.



Ron Petro, basketball coach, flanked by Marty Ligouri the invited speaker and Howie Goldman the director of athletics. Howie deserves the most credit for the functional design of the McCann Center.



Guests at the dedication ceremony.

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photos digitized from Kodak slides.

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