

Fontaine Hall

Fontaine Hall



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Fontaine Hall was named after Brother Paul Ambrose Fontaine, a long-time Dean and then president of Marist College. Brother Nilus Donnelly supervised a volunteer army of Marist Brothers who worked on building the college during the summer months. College student brothers also worked on the project during the fall and spring semesters, which were lengthened by one or two weeks to allow small teams to help Brother Nilus all year.

During the construction of Fontaine Hall, on a blistering hot summer's day, two groups of student brothers were applying perma-stone to opposite sides of Fontaine. A hose used to wet the cement was accidentally held so that the water arched over the roof sprinkling the other group of brothers. Declarations of war were issued. Both armies met on Fontaine's roof with water hoses and buckets of water. Twenty minutes later the liquid skirmish was over. Both sides returned to work, happy in victory, but also much wetter and cooler.

The original Fontaine Hall was attached to the chapel by a passageway. Long laminated beams radiating out from a single pillar supported the wooden ceiling, mirroring the type of construction used in the chapel. An award-winning curtain of glass allowed for panoramic views of the Hudson River.



The main floor housed a circular study hall with an open space in the center. A room on the north side housed "Our Lady's Library." This collection of books relating to the Blessed Virgin was organized by Brother Cyril Robert, the college librarian. It was absorbed into the main collection when the library was moved to Donnelly. In the northwest corner was a visitor's suite with office, dining room, bedroom and balcony. It was often used for small group meetings.

The lower floor contained a dining room and kitchen which served meals to the faculty and 120 student brothers. Dominating the staircase connecting the study hall and dining room was a unique crucifix. The Christ figure's wrists were nailed instead of the palms of His hands. This scientifically correct approach reflected the Marist Brothers' scholasticism and search for the truth.



In 1958 an addition to Fontaine Hall was constructed because St. Ann's Hermitage was considered unsafe. This steel frame

addition of four stories became the new dormitory for the student brothers. When the Benoit and Gregory houses were built, this addition to Fontaine Hall was modified to accommodate the offices of the Humanities Department.

Eventually, Fontaine Hall and its addition had to be demolished to make room for the construction of the Cannavino Library.

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last updated on June 10, 2004

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From the beginning, Marist Heritage has been a collaborative effort.

We appreciate the contributions of the Marist Brothers and the Marists All community, who by supplying information and personal memories, have given vitality, scope and depth to this project

Under the guidance and direction of Dr. Brian Henry Desilets, the initial web pages were designed and created by the following Marist College students: Michele van Brero (Hermitage, St. Peter's, Kieran Gate House, Greystone, Marist Brothers Builders, Our Lady Seat of Wisdom Chapel).....Tage Haun (Bech Homestead, Marian, Donnelly).....Fang Fang Xu (Boat House, Byrne House, Kirk House).....Courtney Gutt (Bech Family History).....Vij lyer (Cemetery).....Rahkee Chopra (Fontaine Hall).

All the final Marist Heritage web pages were either created, revised, rewritten and/or reshaped by John Patrick Noone, who is solely responsible for any errors contained therein.

We thank Richard Branigan for proofreading the Marist Heritage web pages.

We recognize the contributions of our consultants: John Ansley for his input on the format and contents of the various web pages. Also Victor VanCarpels for his frequent consultations and guidance in the graphics included in this CD. His patience and dedication while working with us made the overall results more professional.

We are grateful to Barbara McMullen for the use of the Ecommerce facility at Marist College.

We are indebted to the McCann Foundation which provided the funds necessary to make this project a reality.

John Patrick Noone, editor
November 15, 2002

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