



**Mount Aloysius College**  
**Grand Opening—Athletic Convocation and Wellness Center**  
**October 3, 2014**  
**Remarks of President Tom Foley**

Montesquieu once said that “it is only the adventurers who accomplish great things.” When Sister Mary Ann Dillon came to Mount Aloysius, she found a college high in spirit, sense of mission and community but a bit less than she preferred in the practical arts of admissions and course offerings, and even that within an aging infrastructure. Sister Mary Ann is an adventurer in the best sense of the word, and she went after those issues in a systematic, plan-ful way—ever confident that the resources would appear in time to match her lofty goals for the college. And so they did.

With the help of her Associate Deans and her Senior VP for Academic Affairs, she doubled the course and concentration offerings during her tenure.

With the help of her Admissions VP Frank Crouse and his marvelous staff, she increased FTE’s by almost 20% and almost doubled total head count at the College.

And with the help of successive and outstanding board chairs—Ed Sheehan, Joe Sheetz and Dan Rullo—and successive capital campaign leaders—Mike McLanahan, Dan Rullo, Ann Benzel, Adele Kupchella and Bill Polachek—she embarked on an aggressive Campus Master Plan, the culmination of which you see in this building today.

That plan had at least ten movable parts. I say movable, because not all could be done in the original planned sequence—for financial and other reasons. But whatever the order, that Master Plan became the blueprint,

- a blueprint which beautified the campus—see the welcoming brick façade at the entrance and the classic brick walkway that unites this campus and connects Old Main with its relatively new companion piece, the Library
- A blueprint which increased academic and artistic space—see Pearce Hall and the completely refurbished Alumni Hall
- A blueprint which enhanced residential and student space—with two new dormitories, a 40% extension onto the Cosgrave Student Center and much improved outdoor facilities and athletic fields
- And a blueprint which led to this Athletic Convocation and Wellness Center, the last step on that original ten point Campus Master Plan. It is 87,000 square feet. It contains two NCAA, PIAA approved gyms. It contains a state of the art Wellness Center, with 39 pieces of cardio equipment, a 14 station workout system, and free weights.

The ACWC holds a state of the art training room, home, visiting and student locker rooms, home-team workout rooms, and space for both food and bookstore services.

It also contains offices for two college VPs, for leaders of our division 3 athletic programs, the entire staff of our Institutional Advancement office and half of our business faculty

It also contains 3 classroom spaces, in which our faculty has already hosted 731 class meetings in 29 different courses, spread over 9 disciplines.

We are grateful to so many on this day.

- We are grateful to Sister Mary Ann and her colleagues past and present in the Sisters of Mercy. Please take time to go upstairs to the front entrance and spend a few moments at the mural that depicts their and our history at Mount Aloysius.
- We are grateful to board members past and present who believed in the mission and who gave that mission its legs sometimes and whose very presence on our campus gives our students hope.
- We are grateful to all who donated to the success of the Campus Master Plan and to this building today, people like Tony Misciagna and Louise and Ray Walker; the McLanahans, the Sheetzes, the Benzels, the Calandras, the Smiths—and so many others who have sponsored significant pieces of this building campaign; Governor Corbett who stepped up to the plate to help fund the most significant part of that campaign; our state legislators, our county officials from Cambria and the whole region (from whence 90% of our students come) and our supporters from the federal level who came all the way from Washington to be with us today.
- And we are grateful to our students, the lifeblood and purpose of this institution now for 161 years. They will learn in this building and they already do. They will play in this building and they already do. And they will make friendships that last lifetimes in this building and they already do.

We have one more group to whom we want to express our gratitude today. If you ever have a chance to pray at meals with the Mercys they are nothing if not inclusive. When they pray at meals they express their gratitude to those who serve the food, and to those that make it, to those who planted the food and to those who raked the ground around it.

And so today, we express our gratitude to those who made this building and dug the ground around it, to those who planned it and to those who watched over the multiple changes in these plans over the last two years. And so,

- We thank the leadership and the workers at PJDick—they not only finished ahead of schedule, they brought it in under budget; they kept the change orders with dozens of contractors well under 2%; and they stepped up and became major donors to the Capitol Campaign that funded this place. Thank you Cliff, Ralph, Joe, Ryan and Dave, and their whole team that dug this place right out of the ground.
- Most importantly, I want to thank our in-house team, all the people here at the College who already had full time jobs but who took on this major assignment so graciously—Shelley and Gerry, Bill Trexler, Rich Shea and Mike Shenk, Jane and Ryan and Kevin and the leader of this team Senior VP for Administrative Affairs Suzanne Campbell.

- We are also in great debt to our arts team, Dr. Don Talbot, Sister Giuseppe and our leader there Ann Benzel. Just magnificent.
- Special thanks to Senior VP for Administrative Affairs Suzanne Campbell who made my job so much easier. She was always on top of upcoming decisions—with the help of her team she would show up in my office on Fridays, tell me exactly how many decisions I had to make in the next week and give me whatever I needed to make the best decision possible. Let me ask Suzanne and her team to stand, be recognized and accept our thanks.

They say that gratitude is among the least articulate of emotions, especially when it is deep. I can only hope that these words today begin to show our gratitude to the hundreds of people who came together to make this day a reality. I like to quote Novelist Elie Weizel who says that “God made man because he loves stories.” I believe that especially on a day like today. Who thought we would get this done 15 years ago when the Campus Master Plan was first conceived? Who ten years ago? Who even five years ago?

On our mural upstairs, it says that “a school is four walls with tomorrow inside.” God made man because she loves stories—and this building will make thousands of new stories possible. Thank you everyone.