Remembering the COG as we say goodbye

Student Life Vice President Sue Weitz remembers one fall orientation with a student dance in the Spokane Room of the COG. The crowd was not just dancing, but bouncing, and the ceiling in Spike’s below sank every time they bounced. Weitz can laugh about it now, but at the time she thought the floor was falling in.

Ken Sammons, director of Plant Services, explained that the floor had a tendency to flex, and his crew added movement-restraining supports to ensure future safety.

This is one of many COG stories from the past 59 years. The COG was built in 1954. It will be razed in July to make way for a new University Center.

The COG, Circulus Omnium Gonzaga-orum, quasi Latin for a meeting place for all Gonzagans, has hosted many celebrations. The Bing Crosby statue dedication dinner in 1981 brought to campus Kathryn Crosby, Rich Little, Phil Silver and other luminaries. Some of the world’s greatest athletes dined at the COG during the 1990 Goodwill Games. Many of Gonzaga’s finest alumni have been honored there.

Some Saga/Marriott/Sodexo food service employees are legendary. Gladys Drovdahl, snack bar manager in the lower COG, was famous for her omelets. “Students knew they would always get a friendly ‘hello’ and ‘how are you doing’ at Gladys,” said Tracy Kelly, Saga Food Service director from 1980-87. “We named that lower snack bar in her honor (now Spike’s),” Kelly said. Maggie McCrow, Vera Castino and Betty Macdonald were other COG personalities.

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The last meal in the Marketplace will be served May 10. Between May 13 and June 16, Sodexo will move to the east side of the Boone Avenue Retail Center. The bookstore will move to the west side of the BARC May 13-19, opening on May 20. The Sub Connection will find a home in the former multipurpose room at Welch Hall. It will serve as a recreation and TV lounge for residents by night. Many items will be saved before the COG is demolished, including the cross on the building and the GU crest on the north side. Most equipment and furnishings will be saved for other campus use or donated to non-profit groups.

Also, the University is asking the city to vacate Boone and DeSmet from Cincinnati to Dakota, and Dakota from Boone to DeSmet. Faber House (Campus House) and the UMEC House will be relocated to other dwellings, with the current buildings removed to create a staging area for the contractor, and eventually a plaza connecting the Rosauer Center, Welch Hall and the University Center.
Sunderland overcame obstacles; quietly, effectively built success

When Jon Sunderland was hired at Gonzaga as assistant professor of physical education in 1979, one philosophy professor asked how he got his doctorate. “Did you have to do a certain number of push ups?” Back then it wasn’t conceivable that “someone in PE” could rise to dean of the School of Education.

Marge Anderson hired Sunderland as the first doctorally prepared faculty member in GU’s physical education program. He developed a master’s in physical education, which began in 1981. As athletics became bigger business around the country, a demand for trained sports administrators gave Sunderland a calling. He and Diane Tunnel developed Gonzaga’s graduate program in sports administration and later a bachelor’s program in sport management. He also developed a pre-physical therapy track, that led to the hire of faculty in exercise science, which eventually morphed into the human physiology department.

Sunderland has served 26 of his 34 years at GU in leadership roles, including department chair, associate dean and interim dean. Some of it was out of necessity; there was no one else to do the work. Some of it came out of passion for his calling.

Sunderland is the driving force behind the current master’s of education in leadership and administration for 30 teachers at Charles Lwanga College of Education in Zambia. He championed an Education track at Gonzaga-in-Florence, and was an early supporter of faculty efforts to find grant money to research dropout causes in middle and high schools in Spokane and student performance turn-around efforts in Sunnyside, Wash.

“I never expected to be at one place this long,” said Sunderland. “I am not Catholic, I was educated in public schools from cradle to doctorate. But I found something here that resonates in the culture that has kept me loyal to this place,” Sunderland said.

Highlights? “Being given the privilege to serve as dean and make a difference.”

Fun times? “A sport psychology class comes to mind. It was a night class. Most of the time I’d throw out a question and these kids were like clams. Nothing. But this one night was magical. Great discussions. Great ideas. A few years later, when Ronny Turiaf (former Zag basketball player, now San Diego Clipper) came back to graduate, we were together and I asked him if he remembered that magical night in class. Ronny said it was because the students were all tipsy . . . They’d gone to Jack ‘n Dan’s before class. Of course, I had thought it was my teaching,” Sunderland recalled.

And he took it in stride, like he has done repeatedly and successfully throughout his Gonzaga career.

Exemplary faculty honored

These faculty were honored at the 2013 Academic Honors Convocation April 23. Front row: Ann Ciasullo, English; Lazarina Topuzova, Organizational Leadership; Diane Tunnel, Sport and Physical Education; Mirjeta Beqiri, Business; Kristine Hoover, Organizational Leadership. Middle row: Jane Tiedt, Nursing; David Thorp, Human Physiology; Linda Schearing, Religious Studies; Marianne Pooleitner, Biology. Back row: John Sheveland, Religious Studies; Peter Pauw, Biology; Ryan Herzog, Business; Randy Williams, Special Education; Ken Anderson, Business. Not pictured is John Vander Beek, Math. Topuzova and Hoover received the Service Learning Award; Sheveland the Faculty Diversity Award; and Williams and Vander Beek emeritus status. The other 10 received Exemplary Faculty Awards.
Focus On … Bishops tab Ortiz

Fernando Ortiz, who didn’t speak English when he moved from Mexico to Los Angeles in 1990, tells a brighter marathon story than the one we’ve heard lately. He ran in four Los Angeles Marathons. The former St. John’s Seminary College student would wear a shirt promoting spiritual vocations, ‘I DO NOT RUN AIMLESSLY,” (1 Cor. 1, 19) and he and his brother seminarians would stop at parishes along the route and talk with people there.

After five years in the seminary he found his calling in psychology. Following a master’s degree from Santa Clara and a doctorate from Washington State, he taught psychology at Missouri and worked as a psychologist. In 2009, he became assistant director of Gonzaga’s Counseling Center, then director in 2011.

Last month, Ortiz was appointed to the National Review Board of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to assist the bishops in helping ensure that all children entrusted to the Church’s care are kept safe from the grave harm of sexual abuse.

“In the interview process they asked me to tell my story,” Ortiz said. “I was born and raised in Mexico until I was 18, and moved to L.A. as part of a parish exchange program. I was interested in exploring vocations, and there was a calling for bilingual priests. I first had to go through an ESL program at a community adult school in L.A., and to earn a high school equivalency diploma, and I had to develop the skills to navigate the educational system and adapt to the culture here.”

The U.S. Bishops liked his story . . . and the fact that his religious and professional passions are based in helping people.

“My life story, my academic training, my motivation to diverse populations and the needs of our church, this is a very humbling role,” Ortiz said. “Ultimately, this is about voicing the needs of victims,” a role that he has championed here at Gonzaga.

His first meeting with the National Review Board is in June.

Mission in action: CTA sponsors an “exemplary learning community” of faculty

“One irony of higher education is that while faculty may know a lot about their students’ learning, they don’t always know it in a systematic way,” said Pat Hutchings, Scholar in Residence with the Center for Teaching and Advising, describing some of the motivation behind the Center’s Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Initiative, a year-long program for faculty.

The initiative started in the spring of 2012 when 12 faculty members from of varying disciplines joined in a process of collaborative inquiry around teaching and learning. Over the year, each participant undertook a focused, carefully-designed study of some aspect of student learning in his or her classroom. Every three weeks, the cohort came together to critique, support, and learn from one another as they designed and implemented their projects. The result was a rich, interdisciplinary conversation that had faculty thinking carefully and intentionally about what they do and why.

As Bud Thompson, senior lecturer in Religious Studies, put it, “It helped us articulate what we think we’re after as teachers, and find those things that we share, even across disciplines.”

All participants report that the experience changed the way they think about their teaching and their classrooms. But it will also have broader impacts across campus, according to David Boose, director of the CTA and co-facilitator with Hutchings of the initiative. “This group is energized. The work they did is going to shape how they think about their own courses, but also department and core curricula, and how the classroom connects with the rest of the Gonzaga experience for our students.” Boose says that thinking formally about learning helps faculty build a “culture of reflective practice” that is at the heart of a Jesuit education.

But the greatest benefit of this initiative may not be its “products”—in terms of course and curriculum change. Rather, it may be the process that the initiative models. Academic Vice President Patricia O’Connell Killen, who attended one of the final meetings of the 2012-13 cohort, observed that the initiative lets faculty combine their roles as teachers, scholars and members of a community — roles that are often seen as separate and competing for time and attention. Bringing a diverse group of faculty together to investigate teaching in a scholarly way created exactly the kind of “exemplary learning community” Gonzaga claims to be in its mission statement. The second cohort of the initiative—with 11 new members—kicks off its year-long journey this month.
Timing helped save Westfield family from injury at Boston Marathon

A hamstring injury in February. A staph infection. Too quick a start in the Boston Marathon. Getting off late from work. And extra fencing for crowd control.

These are the factors that kept Alan Westfield, longtime ROTC instructor, and his two sons and other family safe during the Boston Marathon bombings. Westfield ran in Boston four years ago with his older son. This year, he planned to run with both sons, Jonathan and Nicholas. Alan strained his hamstring in February racing Gonzaga’s ROTC juniors and only had regained about eight miles’ endurance.

He snuck into the race at the Johnny Kelley Memorial on Heartbreak Hill, accompanying Jonathan. Nick was not in the race; a staph infection had interrupted his training. Father and son crested Heartbreak Hill, ran by Boston College, waving to Nick and his friend.

Coming past Fenway Park, Jon told his dad that he was off his timeline, didn’t think he could break four hours, that he had started his race too fast.

“I said, ‘Hey, just enjoy it. If you do 3:59, that’s great. Just enjoy yourself.’ All of a sudden we’re on Boylston, and he’s picking up his pace.” They run beneath the 26-mile banner.

“All of a sudden, front left, about 400 yards away, there’s an explosion.” Westfield grew up on the North Shore of Boston. He sees a puff of white smoke and is there’s an explosion. “When I heard the sirens, I knew that was a good game faces on.” He describes the swift approach of the Boston Swat Team and the police sharpshooters. "I would have been proud to be in that force. They had their game faces on.” He describes the small gestures of help onlookers offered. “People helping people. People holding onto people who were freezing. It was chilly, and they were in shock.


Meantime, her family had no idea where she was. “I was blessed in having a very remarkable mother,” said Dr. Goodall, who spoke of the “enormous treat” of world-renowned primatologist and conservationist Jane Goodall’s recent visit.

Gonzaga President Thayne M. McCulloh asked her to be part of the Gonzaga Presidential Speaker Series in this, Gonzaga’s 125th anniversary year.

“I was blessed in having a very remarkable mother,” said Dr. Goodall, who spoke of the “enormous treat” of going to a farm in the country as a 5-year-old.

While collecting eggs, she sought to witness the egg-laying process firsthand.

“Seeing a hen going into her little hen house thinking, ‘ah, she’s going to lay an egg and crawling in after her, big mistake,’” she recalled. “So, with squawks of, I suppose fear, she flew out. . . . So I crawled out and I went into an empty hen house and I hid in the corner at the back, sort of covered in straw, I suppose.

“And I waited. And I waited. And I waited,” she said.

Meantime, her family had no idea where she was and began searching for her as it grew dark outside. Suddenly Jane rushed toward the house covered in straw.

“How many mothers would have seized that child and said, ‘How dare you go off without telling us? Do you know how worried we would be? Don’t you dare do that again!’

Instead, Dr. Goodall said, her “wise mother” listened to her story of how a hen lays an egg.

“Now, if we look with hindsight at that story, isn’t that the making of a little scientist?” she asked. “The curiosity, asking questions, not getting the right answer. Deciding you have to find out for yourself. Making a mistake, not giving up, and learning patience. It was all there by the time I was five. If I hadn’t had that wise mother to support this curiosity, I might not be standing here today.”

For the full story, go to news.gonzaga.edu/goodalltalk.