

NEWS RELEASE

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University of Saint Mary to Bless & Dedicate New Apartment-Style Residence Hall

5 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 17, North End of Campus

(Leavenworth, Kan.)—One year to the date of its groundbreaking, Berkel Hall, the new \$4.7 million, 100-bed “apartment-style” residence hall at the University of Saint Mary, will be blessed and dedicated at an open public ceremony at 5 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 17, on the north end of the Leavenworth campus at 4100 South 4th Street. Following the ceremony, attendees will be able to take student-guided tours of the new residence hall. Refreshments will be served.

Berkel Hall is the first dorm to be built on USM’s campus since Maria Hall opened in 1964. Many local contractors were used in its construction. The last new building to open on campus was McGilley Field House, which opened in the summer of 2004.

Berkel Hall is named in memory of Antoinette “Toni” Berkel, beloved wife of USM Trustee Emeritus Charles Berkel. “Toni lived her life with dedication to her family, her friends, and her church. She generously encouraged and guided all to live up to their God-given potential,” said USM President Sister Diane Steele. And Toni’s granddaughter, Melinda Uhrmacher, is currently a sophomore pre-nursing student at Saint Mary.

“I think it’s great that the university is doing this, and my grandma would be very pleased,” Uhrmacher said. “She was a wonderful grandmother to me and a great family person. She was the glue that held us all together.”

The top floor of the three-story dorm is dedicated to the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, founders and sponsors of the University of Saint Mary. The second floor is dedicated to 1947 Saint Mary graduate Margaret Ann “Marnie” Burke, who passed away in the spring of 2008 and remembered the university in her estate. As a child, Marnie Burke was also educated by the Sisters of Charity. She lived her life as a Saint Marian—using her education to succeed in business and giving back to her community with many hours of volunteering.

USM President Steele called the official grand opening of Berkel Hall part of “a very exciting time in the history of Saint Mary. Our enrollment is strong; we have the university’s largest incoming freshman class on record this fall.

“It is important to provide contemporary housing on campus since studies show that students who live on campus have a higher graduation rate than students who do not live on campus. Students who live on campus are generally more involved in campus life, an essential element in students’ success.”

Frankie Walburn, a USM sophomore, said it was exciting to be one of the first students to live in Berkel. “I even put down the downpayment for my friend so we could be roommates,” he said.

The new residence hall features a wide range of amenities for students, including private bathrooms, kitchenettes, individually-controlled heating and air conditioning, cable, and high-speed internet access.

Maria Hall, USM’s other dorm, also underwent a \$1 million upgrade this summer. Improvements included new plumbing lines and cable access. With the opening of Berkel Hall, Berchmans Hall—the school’s oldest residence hall—is being repurposed for classrooms and offices.

The University of Saint Mary is a Catholic co-educational applied liberal arts university founded and sponsored by the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth. The University of Saint Mary is located at 4100 South 4th Street, Leavenworth, Kan., with additional locations in Overland Park, Shawnee, and Kansas City, Kan. Visit www.stmary.edu on the web for more information.

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