Alumni Help Celebrate 125 Years

The Catholic University of America community celebrated its 125th anniversary during Founders Week, which began with a University-wide party on April 10, the University’s official birthday. As the week of events neared its close, the blessing and dedication of the new Craves Family Alumni Center on Friday, April 13, and the Alumni Awards Gala on Saturday, April 14, showcased the importance of alumni to the University.

New Alumni Center

The home of the Office of Alumni Relations can now be found in Father O’Connell Hall in the space once known as the Rathskellar. The University pub, Father O’Connell Hall also once housed the student center and the south dining hall. “This spot is memorable, not just because of the ‘Rat’ but [because] this building was the crossroads of campus,” said Thomas Zoeller, B.A. 1985, president of the Alumni Association, as he welcomed alumni, faculty, staff, and friends to the dedication ceremony.

“It is appropriate that we are having this dedication during our 125th anniversary celebration,” he added. “These past few days almost have the feel of Homecoming — and why not, because as I always say, when you are here on campus, you are home.”

Also on hand for the dedication ceremony were Bob and Gerri Craves, for whom the center is named. Their continued generous support of the University made renovation of the new space possible. Bob Craves, B.A. 1965, trustee emeritus of CUA (pictured, center), is the co-founder of Costco Wholesale Corporation and of the College Success Foundation, which has funded college tuition for thousands of low-income students. (An interview with Craves appears on page 33.)

Cardinal Donald Wuerl, B.A. 1962, M.A. 1963, archbishop of Washington and chancellor of the University, blessed the new center (bottom photo) and took part in the ribbon cutting with Zoeller, Bob and Gerri Craves, and President John Garvey (top photo).

“The new center provides us with the space to host and welcome alumni back to campus for receptions and formal gatherings as well as informal visits. All alumni can call the new center their home on campus,” said Kyra Lyons, B.A. 1989, M.A. 1995, executive director of alumni relations.

The Office of Alumni Relations had been located on the fourth floor of McMahon Hall for more than a decade before its move to Father O’Connell Hall.

Saturday’s festivities honoring accomplished CUA alumni began with a Mass at Caldwell Chapel. At the gala that followed, the Alumni Association presented the 2012 Alumni Achievement Awards to Thomas Beckert, M.E.E. 1981; Ann Broglio, B.A. 1989; Annette Tyree Debiertie, R.N., Ph.D. 1999; Siobhan Fallon Hogan, M.F.A. 1985; Joseph Horaklin, M.C.R.P. 1979; and Samuel Mok, M.A. 1982. The Young Alumni Merit Award Recipient was Rev. James Shea, Ph.B. 1997; Ph.L. 1998; Joseph A. Kenny Jr., B.A. 1976, received the George J. Quinn, Class of ‘50, Distinguished Service Award.

The Cardinal Gibbons Medal, the highest honor bestowed by the Alumni Association, was awarded to Kevin Ryan, B.A. 1989. Ryan is the president and CEO of Covenant House, one of the largest charities in the Americas. He is a nationally and internationally recognized child advocate.

In his acceptance speech, Ryan said the honor was not for him but for Covenant House, an organization that helps more than 50,000 homeless and trafficked children and teenagers annually in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Nicaragua, Honduras, and Guatemala.

In an emotional speech, Ryan recalled how the stakes today, he said, are higher than ever for homeless and abused children. He said the most important thing individuals and Covenant House can do for the children is be “company” just like Veronica was for Jesus when she knelt before him and wiped his brow at Calvary. “She is just there, quietly and with genuine love. In one of his most painful moments, Jesus is reminded he is not alone.”

The honorees were all examples of “living lives of virtue in so many different ways,” said CUA President John Garvey. “We point you out to undergraduates as those people they should be and become,” he said.

While the evening had its emotional moments, it was also punctuated with laughter. “People are always in high spirits at these annual awards,” said Lyons. “But this year’s event was unique because several of the awardees were extremely funny, recounting hilarious stories about themselves and the University.”

The biographies of all alumni award recipients ran in the spring issue of CUA Magazine. You can find them in the digital editions of the magazine at http://cuamagazine.cua.edu. You can also view photo galleries of the awards gala and the alumni center dedication by going to the digital editions.
Alumni Family Gathers for its Grad

When Clare Martin (seated left) of Garrett Park, Md., stood Saturday, May 12, to receive her Bachelor of Philosophy degree, she had her own group of CUA alumni cheering her on.

Witnessing Clare’s achievement were Clare’s father and mother, George J. Martin (B.S. Arch. 1987, M.Arch. 1989) and Conn Lee-Martin (B.A. 1987), as well as her grandfather, George C. Martin Jr. (B.Arch. 1959), and brother George, a CUA sophomore majoring in philosophy. Also on hand were her grandmothers, Anne Martin and Ling Lee, and younger brothers, Patrick and Quinn.

Prior to Commencement, they all gathered at the Alumni Parent Champagne Breakfast, which was sponsored by the Office of Alumni Relations. The breakfast was held on the Psychyila Arbor outside the Craves Family Alumni Center.

The Martins are a CUA family in the truest sense. Clare’s parents met here. “I am grateful to CUA for my wife,” George Martin said. “Conn converted to Catholicism shortly after graduating CU after which her mom did and then her dad. She has been an inspiring witness to the faith, and Clare takes very much after her.”

In addition to being alumni, three members of Clare’s family are former CUA faculty members. Her father, George, taught at the School of Architecture and Planning part time from 1990 to 2002, and full time from 2002 to 2010, serving as associate professor and the school’s dean of undergraduate studies.

Her grandfather, George Jr., was a lecturer at the School of Engineering from 1976 to 2004 and in architecture from 2004 to 2010, and he was a co-founder of the Construction Management Program in the engineering school. He continues as an active member of the Senators Club, the University’s oldest alumni group.

And Clare’s late grandfather, Che-Fu Lee, was a professor in CUA’s Department of Sociology.

Clare says that when it came time to choose a college, Catholic University was an “easy decision” for her.

“CUA has an amazing philosophy school, and I think it was truly the best major for me,” she said. “It has prepared me not for one particular discipline or career, but for whatever my next step will be.”

Her education, she added, was “framed in the context of my Catholic faith — which has helped me discover not only how to do things but also why I do them.” — J.C.
Friday, Oct. 26
School of Engineering Luncheon
Noon – 1:30 p.m.
Pangborn Hall, Scullen Room

Department of Psychology Alumni Award
Presentation and Reception
5 – 6:30 p.m.
O’Boyle Hall

Class of 1962 Welcome Reception
6 – 9 p.m.
McMahon Hall, Foyer

Benjamin T. Rome School of Music Alumni Reception
6:30 p.m.
Hartke Theatre, Upper Lobby

Finian’s Rainbow (theatre production)
7:30 p.m.
Hartke Theatre

Halfway Home Happy Hour
8 – 10 p.m.
Clyde’s of Gallery Place
707 7th St., N.W., Washington, D.C.

Saturday, Oct. 27
Alumni Association Board of Governors Meeting
9 a.m. Breakfast/9:30 – 11 a.m. Fall Business Meeting
Craves Family Alumni Center

School of Nursing Homecoming Brunch
“Courage and Character, Leaders and Legends”
Linda Ohler, M.S.L.S. 2004
9 a.m.
Caldwell Hall, Auditorium

11th Annual NCSSS Homecoming Conference
9 a.m. – noon
Hannan Hall, Herzfeld Auditorium

Campus Tours
Office of Undergraduate Admissions
10 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.
McMahon Hall, front steps

Pre-game Tent Party
11 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Raymond A. DuFour Athletic Center

Homecoming Football Game
CUA Cardinals vs. Washington and Lee
1 p.m.
DuFour Center, Cardinal Stadium

Field Hockey Senior Game Day
CUA Cardinals vs. Drew University
1 p.m.
Location TBD

Class of 1962 Golden Cardinals Celebration Dinner
7 – 10 p.m.
Father O’Connell Hall, Great Hall

Young Alumni Party
8 p.m.
My Brother’s Place
237 2nd St., N.W., Washington, D.C.

Kelly’s Irish Times
14 F St., N.W., Washington, D.C.

Sunday, Oct. 28
Homecoming and Reunions Mass
Honoring the 50-year reunion, Class of 1962
11 a.m.
St. Vincent de Paul Chapel

Champagne Brunch
Honoring CUA’s Golden Cardinals
Noon
Father O’Connell Hall, Great Hall

Finian’s Rainbow (theatre production)
2 p.m.
Hartke Theatre

Register at www.CUAtoday.com (click “Homecoming and Reunions 2012”) and find reunion class events, additional, newly scheduled activities; fee prices (where applicable); times and locations; contact information; and the names of alumni who have registered for events. For more information, call 202-319-5608 or 800-288-ALUM.

A New Notion of Catholicism

The Council reshaped all phases of our Church’s life with a powerful articulation of the essence and mission of “Church.” The Council’s achievements reverberate to the present day and leave no aspect of Catholic living untouched.

Vatican II set out with an ambitious task to energize Catholics for the life of faith, update Church institutions, encourage unity among all Christians, and motivate all Catholics to reach out in service to the whole world. It sought to build an understanding of “Church” where everyone’s gifts and voices are valued in the noble mission of making Christ present to our world.

As one of the first lay graduates in theology at CUA during the 1960s, I, like so many Catholics of my generation, was captivated by headlines generated over the years of the Council’s convening from 1962 to 1965. It was exciting and challenging to try to absorb the Council’s revolutionary framework and a new notion of Catholicism, not as an institution, but as the “People of God” — connected, interdependent members of the Body of Christ.

The Council’s newly issued constitution in 1963, Lumen Gentium, claimed that the laity share fully in the life of the Church. This would eventually foster an explosion of lay involvement in all aspects of the Church’s life.

For me, as a lay student at CUA, it meant an invitation from the dean of the School of Theology, the late Father Walter J. Schmitz, S.S., to pursue a degree in theology and enter a field of study at the time peopleed almost entirely by clergy and religious. In time, I would complete a doctorate and go on to work for the Church at the national level and then later for an association of Catholic philanthropists.

What drew me to CUA was the invitation to study theology which was the excitement the Council had generated. Two areas of its work stand out.

First, the self-understanding of the Church articulated by the Council placed it squarely in this world, setting aside centuries of practice that involved denouncing what the Church found wrong about the world. Henceforth, it would commit itself to the hard work of sharing responsibility for the world’s well-being.

Surrounded by the growing strife of the war in Vietnam, racial discord and violence, and the superpowers of the United States and the Soviet Union threatening mutual nuclear annihilation, the Council summoned us to Christian engagement in peace making and advocacy on behalf of human dignity that touched deep chords in my young heart.

Second, the Council made it clear that laity would no longer be seen as mere helpers of the clergy. By virtue of their baptism they were to be fully empowered to participate in the Christian work of transforming the world. I concluded that theology would be the ticket to help make this happen, and so I gladly took advantage of this providential and pioneering offer.

The abundant clergy and religious of the 1960s and the expanding number of educated, culturally assimilated, wealthier Catholic laity who populated parishes in the American suburbs following their graduations from CUA helped usher in a half century of discussion, conflict, and collaboration about what it means to be Catholic.

CUA’s role as an incubator of leaders who were inspired to make the Council’s vision live in our Church is a treasured and distinguished legacy of which all alumni can be very proud.

— Francis J. Butler retired in February from the Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities, where he served as president for more than three decades. Prior to that, he was domestic policy director at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.