



Ventures

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New Center plans to capture the past; provide for the future, celebrate the present

The survivors of the Katrina hurricane disaster suffered many losses, even of life and home. One loss many of them still speak of centers around treasured family keepsakes: letters, pictures, documents, awards. The new Heritage Center at Marylhurst has provisions to protect these kinds of things, not only from natural disasters, but also from the scattering and movements of families or groups.

The extent of the Center reaches back to the very beginning of the Sisters of the Holy Names and forward to our latest ventures, including the foundation of the United States-Ontario province. Nearly every major town and city in Washington and Oregon has felt the presence of the Sisters and their work; has memories of their ministry and friendship.

"Our archives are all over the place. ... What a relief to have it all in one place at last."

— Sister Sue Woodruff, SNJM Archivist

However, no undertaking, such as that of the Heritage Center, takes place without tremendous support behind it. Adrianna Carr, development director for the Oregon Sisters, initially met with a planning group of Holy Names Sisters: Mary Breiling, Jane Hibbard, Kathleen Kircher, Laura Michels, Joan Saalfeld, and Celine Steinberger, Carole Strawn and Lynda Thompson. They were joined and immensely helped by the Marie-Rose Panel, community members from around the Pacific Northwest assisting with the development of this important project, Nick Corrado and Claire Doherty, Portland; Jack Crocker, Lake Oswego; Robert Watkins, The Dalles; Anne Zielinski, Salem; Mary Ann Zielinski, St. Paul; and Chrissy Murphy, Eugene. One of their principal objectives was to represent the interests and needs of their areas in shaping the resources that the Center would make available.

To help meet these aims, a general administrator was chosen. Tamra Brosseau, the newly appointed director of the Center, came to Marylhurst from Portland by way of New York, where she earned a master of arts degree in Historic Preservation Planning from Cornell University, and had the impressive (and long) title of Historic Preservation and Conservation Administrator of the Susan B. Anthony House in Rochester, New York.

Tamra intends to visit most of the places where the Holy Names Sisters lived and worked in the Pacific Northwest, in addition to going to Longueuil, Quebec, Canada, where the Community archives are kept.

She is anxious for the public to visit the new center; she considers the design excellent, with its vaults for archives that are temperature- and humidity-controlled and its rooms for study and research. In addition to the Holy Names Archives, she sees the Family History Project as an opportunity for families to find a permanent home for their own family story, preserving it for generations to come.



The Marie-Rose Panel and the planning team met in mid-September for a walk-through of the new Holy Names Heritage Center. Pictured are (from left) Adrianna Carr, Anne Zielinski (Salem), Claire Doherty (Portland), Nick Corrado (Portland), Tamra Brosseau, Sister Celine Steinberger, Sister Lynda Thompson, Sister Jane Hibbard, Bob Watkins (The Dalles), Sister Carole Strawn, and Mary Ann Zielinski (St. Paul).

The panel itself has met, visited various sites, participated in grant applications, and spoken about the project to various groups. According to Bob Watkins, "Membership on the panel has not been burdensome at all. I have met with the leadership team to learn about the development of the project and offer my perspective. I also had the opportunity to be a part of a gathering of supporters in The Dalles where the concept and the progress of the Center was featured. It has been a privilege to be included in a small way in this project and I look forward to being one of the first visitors."

Continued on page 2.

Continued from page 1.

Another panel member, Jack Crocker of Lake Oswego, says that he has great hopes for seeing that the Sisters' history in the Pacific Northwest becomes better known and appreciated.

The planning team, the panel and the new administrator all hope that the Center will become an important resource for local communities of the Pacific Northwest in the future. They envision a place where public meetings, lecture series, lunches with guest speakers, will take place regularly.



Oregon archivists Sister Sue Woodruff (l) and Sister Carole Strawn examine a few of the many artifacts now in storage waiting for a new home.

Panel member Nick Corrado sees the building and grounds as ideal for family reunions, as well as other group affairs such as weddings, group meetings, and so forth. He made one of the first family contributions to the Heritage Center where a room will be dedicated to the memory of his aunt, Bernie Mayer: a videotape of her life.

Two Sisters who eagerly anticipate the opening of the Center are Carole Strawn and Sue Woodruff, the archivists for the Holy Names Sisters in Oregon.

"Our archives are all over the place. I'm anxious to bring together the various pieces of history scattered here and there. Some are in two different warehouses; some in St. Ignatius Convent, some in the basement of the Provincial House. What a relief to have it all in one place at last," Sister Sue says.

Sister Carole adds, "I think the Heritage Center can be a vital opportunity for the Sisters of the Holy Names. With our commitment to education in the faith, social justice, care of the earth, and issues of women, we have a new and unique possibility to share our core values with the



Tamra Brosseau, new director of Holy Names Heritage Center, explains to Marie-Rose Panel members Nick Corrado (center) and Bob Watkins the efficiencies of the storage track system installed in archive rooms that maximizes floor space and filing capacity.

wider community. As we go forward with the inception of Heritage Center programs, these values must shape its direction. Thus, will we honor the heritage and future of the Sisters, families, and friends who have partnered and will partner with us."

The Sisters of the Holy Names came to Oregon in 1859, the year Oregon was admitted into statehood. The new Heritage Center will chronicle the 150- year story of both. It's a great one!