

College namesake falls prey to accident

by David Baker

The St. Ambrose statue in front of Ambrose Hall was knocked over and damaged Nov. 16.

The statue was damaged between 6 and 7 p.m. Shortly after 7 p.m., the Rev. Drake Shafer, vice president for Student Services, Kevin Cavanaugh, director of campus security, and campus security guards were on the scene.

Shafer released details of the damage to *The Ambrose Magazine* Monday afternoon.

It was not a local person. It was a person visiting someone on campus during the weekend," said Shafer.

He also said damage caused had nothing to do with the St. Ambrose football team's 68-7 victory over Upper Iowa University. Local media had alleged Nov. 17 and 18 the damage was caused by an upset Upper Iowa fan.

Damage was also reported to police, but no arrests have been made as of yet.

Shafer said the person was alone in front of the campus. Trying to jump on the statue, the individual's weight knocked it off its pedestal.

The person then ran away from the campus. An Ambrose Hall resident saw the incident and notified campus security.

The back of the statue's head was damaged, but the sandstone statue's face was still intact. Shafer said it is not been decided what will be done with what is left of the damaged statue. The head and other remaining pieces are being stored by Shafer.

He said the statue could not be repaired.

"I have been able to get in touch with the person who did the damage and let him know he is responsible for replacement of the statue at the least."

Since the individual claimed the damage was an accident, college officials do not know if they will prosecute him.

Shafer said the individual's name has not been released yet.

He estimated replacement cost for a new statue will be \$3,000 to \$4,000. The Rev. Anthony Farrell, Ph.D., author of a book about St. Ambrose history, *Bees and Bur Oaks: 100 Years of St. Ambrose College*, said the statue's original cost was \$2,500.

Shafer said, "The person seemed sorry about what he'd done. He was well aware he had made one of the biggest mistakes of his life.

"He learned the lesson that when you horse around, actions have consequences."

Shafer said he has already been approached by people who want to contribute money to help purchase a new statue.

He said Pat McCoy, St. Ambrose Student Government Association president, is organizing the SGA to look into getting a new statue.

Shafer said. "The statue will definitely be replaced. My feeling is students, alumni and the entire St. Ambrose community should have an input into the purchase of a new statue.

"The statue represented something special for all of us at St. Ambrose. I think it's only fair we as a community make the decision."

Students, teachers and administrators paid last respects to the statue Nov. 17 and 18.

Shafer said, "It seems much like a death in the family. It was part of college life. There's nothing at the college that has been photographed more than the statue. It's one of the oldest non-building artifacts in Davenport I know of."

The St. Ambrose statue has stood in front of the campus since early October 1895. It was donated to the college by the Rev. Hayes, Imogene, Iowa,

and was imported from Europe. The statue's pedestal was donated by the Rev. James Davis, then bishop of Davenport.

Farrell said the statue's right hand had been missing since 1936, when a student accidentally pulled it off.

The statue is painted green each St. Patrick's Day, as a tradition, by graduating seniors.

What do St. Ambrose students think about what happened to the statue?

Dave Molloy, senior mass communications major, said, "I think it was a very stupid thing for someone to do. I hope they fine the person for the cost of the statue. He shouldn't have been playing around."

Tim Goodwin, sophomore mass communications major, said, "It's a really bad thing. It shows no respect for the school. It shows you can't have anything nice on campus."

Nora DeJohn, non-traditional student, said, "I think it's a shame. I'm happy to hear rumors it was an accident. I think it might influence other students to cut out the 'monkey business.' I hope the statue can be repaired or replaced."



Doug Niemeyer

The disembodied head of the St. Ambrose statue, among other pieces are being stored by the Rev. Drake Shafer.