

Galvin Fine Arts Center

Few St. Ambrose students may be aware of the benefits that the Gaivin Fine Arts Center offers the St. Ambrose community, but even fewer are aware of the story of its completion.

The creation of the new building was, for the most part, in response to the poor accomodations for the music, art and speech departments.

The music department was located in an old building that was built in 1942 to teach naval cadets during World War II. The building was supposed to last only two to 10 years, but by 1960 its retirement was overdue.

“Not only didn’t they have enough space, all of the instruments and stuff were poorly protected. Anybody could have npped off a \$30,000 grand piano,” says John Schmits, associate professor of art.

The music department is now located in the west wing of Galvin.

The art department was located in Lewis Hall, where the psychology department is now. It is now in the ground and basement floor on the east side of Galvin.

The speech department, now in Galvin, was stationied in the basement of the McMullen Library.

“Galvin’s design was heavily in-

fluenced by other buildings in the midwest," says the Rev. James Greene, head of the music department. Greene says the horseshoe design was used to keep the music and mass communication departments separate because of their sound requirements.

In order for SAU to receive federal aid in the construction, the building has to contain facilities for teaching engineering.

When the building was completed, the large room at the north end of the basement became part of the engineering department.

"Unfortunately, six years after the thing was built, the field of engineering took a nose dive," says Schmits. The demand changed from civil to industrial engineering and SAU also changed its engineering program, moving engineering out of Galvin.

"The main advantage (of Galvin) to the departments is that they now have new facilities, more space and more storage," Schmit says. "It's the difference between day and night."

But the new addition to the Ambrose campus didn't happen overnight. The construction of Galvin began in the fall of 1968 with the removal of SAU-owned houses on the proposed site. The building was planned to open in the fall of 1969 but was finally completed in 1971. The total cost was \$1.9 million, \$462,000 was paid for with a federal grant.

"Between the strikes and the weather, it was a long time in coming," says Schmits. "People who worked and lived on the other side of the campus would make little tours once every month and see how things were going. They would say, 'It doesn't look any different than it did a month ago. When are you guys going to get in there?'"

However, the construction period was not without interesting events.

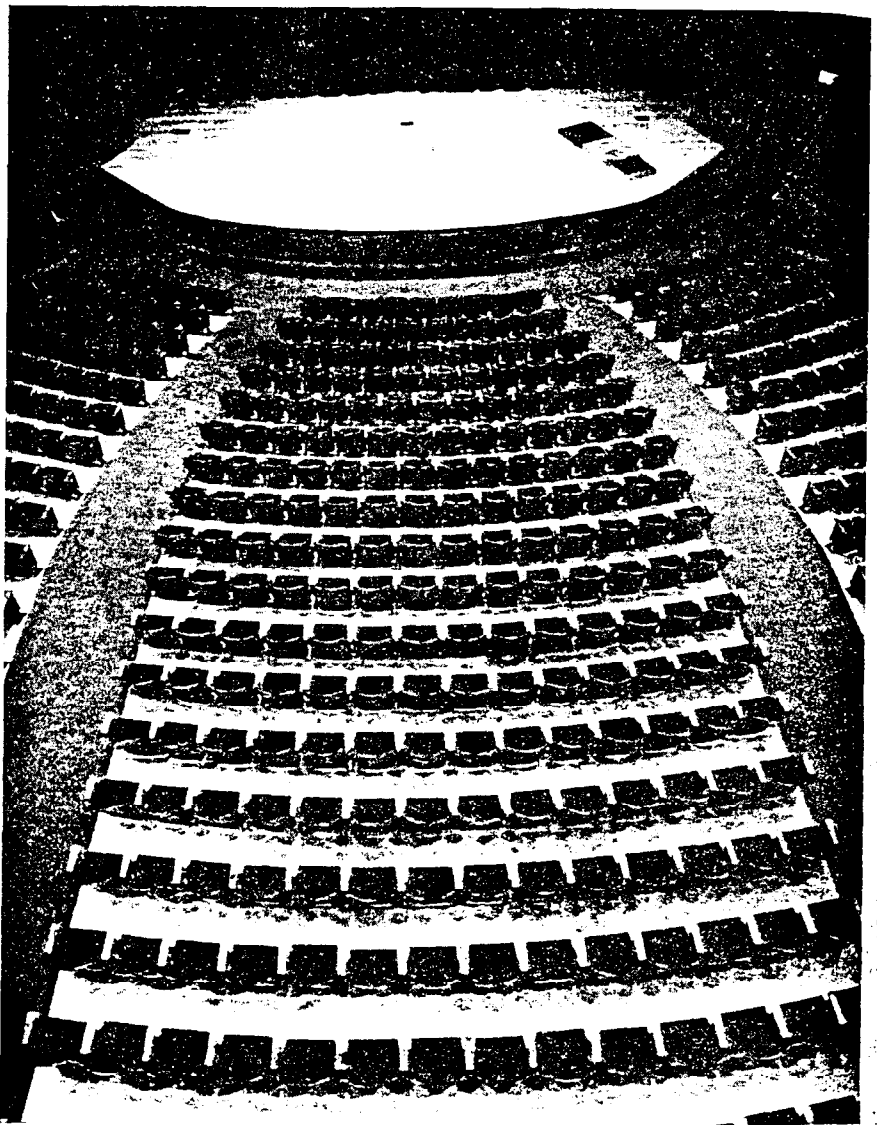
As with any construction sight, Galvin was a magnet for children who were bored with the usual playgrounds.

"We spent half our time looking out the window to see if there were any kids floating around out there," says Schmits as he recalls once when two neighborhood kids almost drowned while playing near Galvin's flooded foundation.

Greene remembers that the unlocked and exposed stairs to the roof of Galvin also attracted curious children in search of a new jungle gym.

"They had the Chippewa Iron Workers working on it, and that was fun watching those guys work," says Schmits. The workers traveled world wide working the high irons and are known for their daring practice of walking on high construction beams and riding on beams being lifted by cranes.

Shortly after completion, Galvin's first major event was Mozart's "Mass in C Minor."



On May 24, 1974, the center was dedicated to Paul V Galvin. Galvin, who died in 1959, was the founder of Motorola, Inc., and is credited with developing the first commercially successful car radio and developing the walkie-talkie during World War II. His widow, Virginia Galvin-Piper, donated \$350,000 as a gift to SAU for the new building.

Madsen Hall is named after Monsignor Cletus Madsen, the former head of the music department.

The Catich Gallery is named after the Rev. E.M. Catich known for his groundbreaking work in calligraphy.

Allaert Hall was named after Wilbur Allaert, who donated air conditioning and other items to SAU's TV-II.

"Wilbur Allaert was in the business of reclaiming dead animal carcasses and selling the fats and oils to chemical companies. He made good money. He donated money to SAU, and to thank him they named a section of the building after him," says Schmits.

The creation of the Galvin Fine Arts

Center has opened up new opportunities for SAU students. The most noticeable of these is TV-11.

The area now occupied by the TV-11 studios was originally planned to be filled with sand having only a crawl space to repair plumbing and electricity. The SAU-run television station was created in 1978 with some help from Cos Cable.

"Cos wanted to put a microwave on top of Galvin and we were able to negotiate a channel in return," says the Rev. Shepler.

The lavish studios of TV-11 have become a valuable training ground for students entering the field of broadcast media.

"Many schools don't have the equipment," says Shepler. "They just teach the theory."

The Galvin Fine Arts Center also has brought many benefits to the surrounding community. The auditorium, seating 12,000, is one of the larger auditoriums in the area and is often used for community events.