

# Library Named in Honor of Bishop O'Keefe

**T**HE NEW-as in "new" St. Ambrose Library—is gone. That's not to say the newness has worn off, it's simply that on Homecoming Sunday **1996**, the University's showplace became O'Keefe Library-named in honor of the Most Rev. Gerald O'Keefe, retired bishop of the Diocese of Davenport. More than saving the structure from having an adjective for a name, this simple act of honoring Bishop O'Keefe serves as a fitting tribute to a beloved leader and also as testimony to the strong relationship between the Diocese and St. Ambrose.

The dedication ceremony drew a crowd—alumni, friends, staff and students—to share an historic day



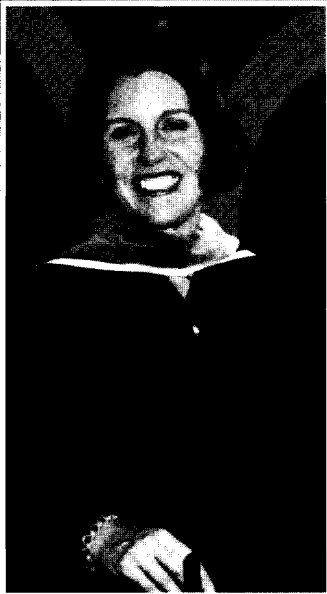
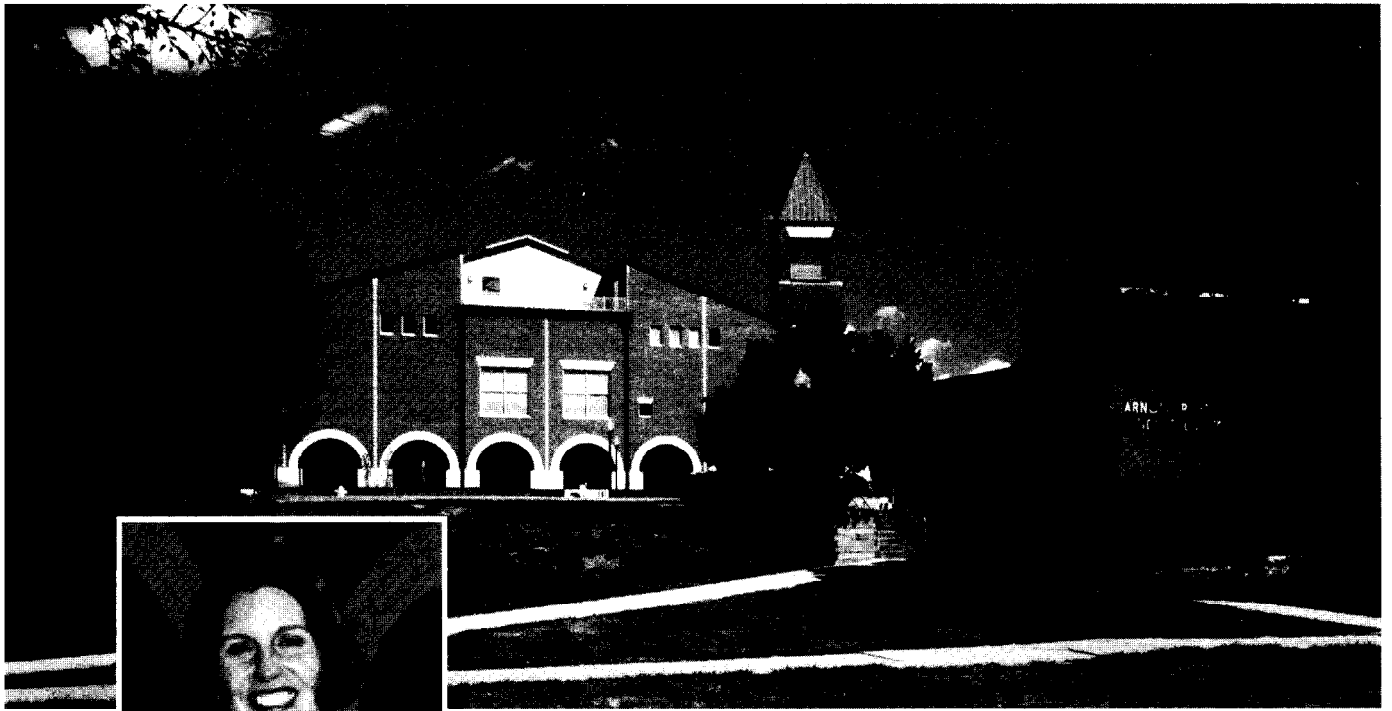
which began with Homecoming Mass. In his homily, Bishop O'Keefe noted that "The wisdom of the ages" is preserved and passed on to us through libraries. "Libraries are not only for our own enrichment, our own knowledge, but for the honor and glory of God, the source of knowledge and love."

Following Mass, Bishop O'Keefe and his successor, Bishop William E. Franklin, led a colorful procession to the library. The ceremony began with Dr. Edward Rogalski's acknowledgment of all who made the library possible—especially its planners, builders and benefactors.

The program's keynote speaker was Chicago Public Library Commissioner Mary Dempsey. She called construction of the library "a proud chapter in St. Ambrose history," adding that, "Centuries of art, music, literature, economics, law, history, politics, medicine, science, philosophy live here in this beautiful place. It is so very gratifying to see how highly these holdings are valued by the St. Ambrose community."

She also noted that the library is much more than a repository for books: "Dreams will be dreamed here. Great works of literature will be read here. And perhaps written here. Scientific discoveries will be assisted here. Human potential will be realized here," she said.

Dempsey concluded her remarks with thanks to those who contributed to the library campaign, noting their efforts would benefit St. Ambrose for years to come: "Well done St. Ambrose and well done you donors to this building campaign. Your planning



Mary Dempsey, O'Keefe Library dedication keynote speaker

"Centuries of art, music, literature, economics, law, history, politics, medicine, science, philosophy live here in this beautiful place"

and your generosity will enlighten and sustain generations of men and women both while they are here and after they graduate and begin to put into practice the values and the education they acquired here.. This building and its collections will endure."

During the ceremony Dempsey also received an honorary doctorate of public service in recognition of her professional work as well as her active role in civic organizations and Catholic charities. Dempsey's honor continues something of a family tradition-her husband, attorney and St. Ambrose alumnus

Philip Corboy '46, was given an honorary Ambrose doctorate in 1978.

Following Dempsey's remarks Bishop Franklin spoke of how fitting it was for the building to be named in Bishop O'Keefe's honor, characterizing his predecessor as a humble, quiet and devoted leader. He also noted the naming continues a St. Ambrose

tradition of recognizing former bishops of the Diocese by associating their names with campus buildings, providing a symbolic reminder of the strong ties between Diocese and University.

For his part, Bishop O'Keefe responded to the proceedings with typical modesty. Lending a note of humor to the occasion he said his reaction could be summed up by the words of one of his grandnieces, who said of the honor, "That's cool!"

As leader of the Diocese of Davenport, Bishop O'Keefe served as the chairman of the St. Ambrose Board of Directors for 27 years, until his retirement in January 1994. Plans for the library were envisioned and initiated under his leadership. And during Homecoming 1996, he was the one to give the building a dedication blessing. For all who know and love Bishop O'Keefe, there could be no prouder name for such a wonderful campus resource.