

Alumni, campus community remember NBC Village

by Natalie Johnson - Thursday, April 22, 2010

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For decades, Nelson, Breese and Clemans halls have provided a home away from home for thousands of University of Wisconsin Oshkosh students.

From 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, May 8, the campus community and UWO alumni will have the opportunity to reminisce and tour the dormitories one last time, before the three halls are torn down and replaced with a new suite-style residence hall scheduled to open in 2012. The five-story facility will provide 340 suites reserved for juniors and seniors.

“We have been touched by the positive memories alums have shared with us regarding their time in NBC,” said Tom Fojtik, UWO Residence Life director. “It is clear that the residents of these buildings have warm feelings about their on-campus experience at UW Oshkosh.”

If the halls could talk ...

Back in February 1978, UWO alumnus and former Breese Hall resident Doug Hutchings '82, posted signs across campus advertising a spring break trip to Florida. Patricia Ostrenga '80, who lived two floors above in Breese, showed up at Hutchings's room to sign up for the trip. The rest, of course, was history.

“I chased her around the beach that spring break, and we have been together ever since,” Hutchings said. “Funny thing, though. To this day, she remembers coming down to our room and meeting my roommate, but not me.”

For Sarah Edbauer '08, of Fond du Lac, simply hanging out with her roommate and neighbors across the hall are her favorite memories of Clemans. “We checked out live music, got to know Oshkosh and really grew tight as a group of friends.”

Edbauer also gained valuable experience serving as a Clemans Hall secretary and treasurer.

“It gave me experience with planning and following through on events and activities, which was important because I became a teacher after I graduated,” she said.

Dale Meinholz '08, made campus connections and gained leadership experience as secretary of Breese Hall. “My best memories were the times that I spent with friends in the dorms,” he said. “Breese really was a great community.”

A piece of history

Throughout University history, the three halls developed their own, unique traditions. The spirit and cooperation of the first residents of Clemans Hall, which opened in 1960, helped established the hall's

reputation for placing well in Homecoming and other campus contests.

Following its opening in 1962, Breese Hall quickly became known as the home for outgoing, friendly students interested in hosting hall cookouts, volleyball tournaments and dances.

The first residents of Nelson Hall, which opened in 1965, enjoyed educational movies and took part in intramural athletics. The hall hosts an annual haunted house that is open to the community.

At the May 8 event, a reception will take place in the Clemans Hall lobby, with a short program at 10:30 a.m.

“We are delighted to host the Nelson, Breese, Clemans alumni reception to offer alumni the opportunity to reflect on their residence hall days and see their old rooms one last time,” said UWO Alumni Director Christine Gantner. “These buildings hold many significant memories of college life for our alumni, and we are pleased that some of that history will be preserved in a time capsule as well as through a display in the new building.”

To attend the event, please RSVP by May 4 to alumni@uwosh.edu or call (920) 424-3449.

A limited quantity of mailbox plates from the NBC buildings are on sale for \$100 on a first-come basis. All but \$5 is tax-deductible. Proceeds will support the NBC Residence Hall Scholarship Fund and the historical display in the new residence hall. Donations in any amount are welcome.

Make checks payable to the UW Oshkosh Foundation and mail to UW Oshkosh Department of Resident Life, Gruenhagen Conference Center, attention Tom Fojtik, 800 Algoma Blvd., Oshkosh WI, 54901.

A block of rooms has been reserved for Friday and Saturday, May 7 to 8 in the Gruenhagen Conference Center for UWO alumni returning for the event. Please reference the NBC Alumni Reunion when making a reservation at (920) 424-1106.

More NBC history:

- Clemans Hall, the first male dormitory, was named after Earl Clemans. When it opened in 1960, the hall housed 208 male residents.
- Breese Hall was named after John A. Breese, music department chair and band leader. Breese wrote the music and words for the University’s fight song, "Hail Titans."
- Nelson Hall was named after N. Peter Nelson, a UW Oshkosh staff member from 1924 to 1962

UW Oshkosh alumni, faculty and staff are invited to share their favorite NBC memory by posting a comment below or e-mailing alumni@uwosh.edu.