

COLLEGE RECREATION The Sandra A. and William L. Richter Center:

Donor's Pledge Invigorates SBU's Historic Campus

By PAUL RAGUSA
Managing Editor

When William L. Richter first approached the then President of St. Bonaventure University (SBU), Robert Wickenheiser, he had one thing in mind: Make a contribution to the campus that would immediately improve the quality of life for students for generations to come.

"I think Bob really understood the retention value of having a recreation and sports building on campus," says Richter. "I was sold on the idea immediately and made a \$3 million cash donation, so the school could begin plans for the project while the money accrued interest."

But Mr. Richter's involvement in the project did not end there, and little did he know then of how much of himself he would put into this project. "I really got caught up in this project from the beginning, and wanted to make sure that the focus be put on the students and their needs."

According to Robert DeFazio, director of Campus Recreation/Intramurals and Club Sports, "Mr. Richter was focused on how he could directly contribute to the student experience at St. Bonaventure University."

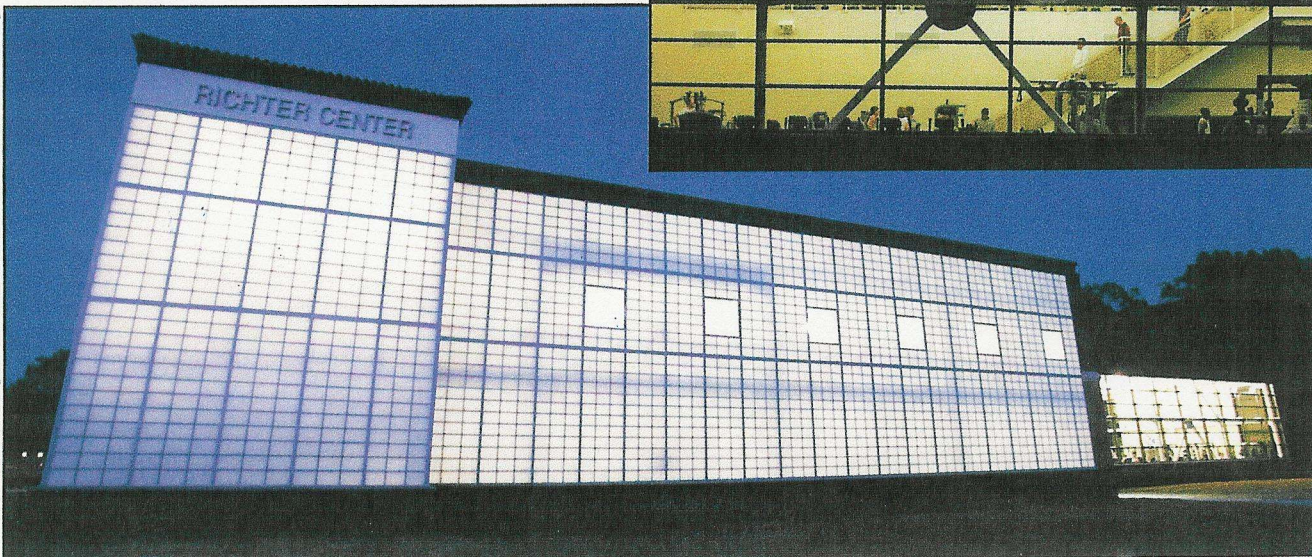
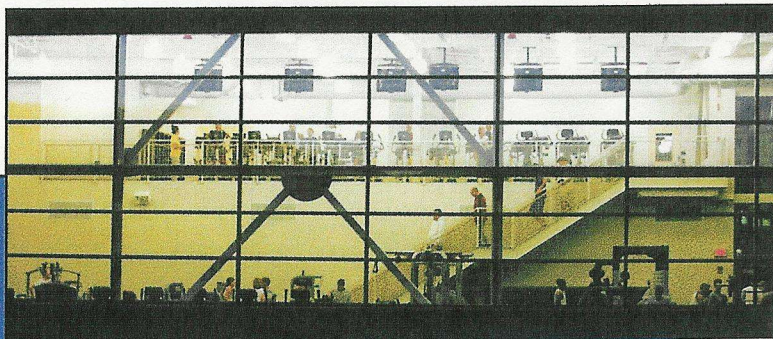
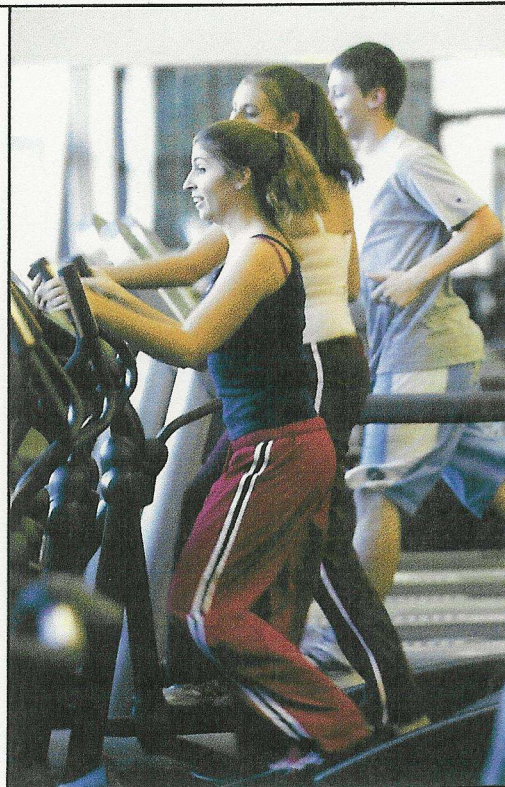
In addition to joining the college's Board of Trustees, Richter was allowed to be on the building committee and be a part of the process, which was rewarding for him on many levels. "From the early stages of meeting with architects and contractors all the way to the grand opening, it has been a great experience for me."

The Sandra A. and William L. Richter Center dedication and grand opening took place on Sept. 30, 2004, and Mr. Richter says that he felt like a proud parent as he watched the students go into the building for the first time. "We made a point of letting the students go in first because this place is for them. Just to see the look on their faces and to hear them saying things like, 'awesome,' was truly rewarding and made it all worthwhile for me."

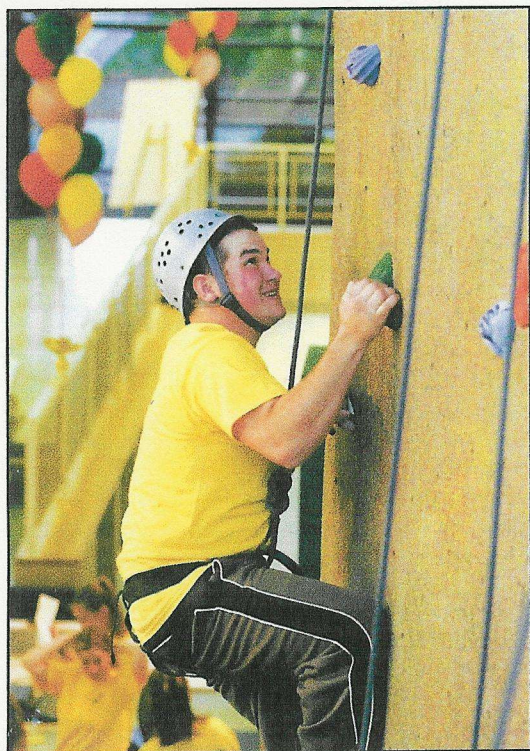
DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

The announcement to the university community that a new student recreation center would be built came in April of 2002. For students who had to travel a mile off campus to use the fitness center, it sounded almost too good to be true.

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Photos by C. Melvin, St. Bonaventure University



"Before the Sandra A. and William L. Richter Center, students and staff members used a university-owned fitness center about a mile off campus," explains DeFazio. "Close, but often too far for the residential campus that houses 75 percent of the students, this facility had served its purpose over time, but had become outdated along with its equipment."

St. Bonaventure University (N.Y.) compiled a list of well-known architectural firms, both regionally and nationally, and submitted its vision to them. "We asked for proposals from each firm describing what it would take to complete our vision," says DeFazio. "Our committee, comprised of faculty, students and administrators then reviewed all the documentation submitted by these firms. Three firms were asked to come to campus and present to the committee. After this process the committee identified Cannon Design of Buffalo, N.Y. as most closely meeting our criteria for the project."

One important aspect of the design that had to be addressed was integrating the new facility into such an historic campus. "There were a couple of main design elements St. Bonaventure committed to that are reflective of our well-established campus architecture," notes DeFazio. "The roof would have Florentine-style clay tiles and the exterior would include red brick to complement other buildings on campus."

According to Mike Mistriner, Cannon Design, "We really tried to get an understanding of the history of the campus — with the brick and the terracotta roofs — and we asked ourselves, 'how will this new building work with the other buildings — what is the relationship we are trying to create?'"

One thing was certain: The Richter Center would be the hub on campus — the center of activity. The building is part of a master plan that includes a

SIDELINES

SBU Richter Center at a Glance

Grand Opening . Sept. 30, 2004
 Construction 15 months
 Architect Cannon Design, Buffalo, N.Y.
 Contractor Duggan & Duggan General Contractors, Allegany, N.Y.
 Total Cost \$6.2 million.
 Funding Sandra A. (Sanzo) Richter, who is an alumna of the University, and William L. Richter, University trustee, supplied the lead gift of \$3 million. Private donors through fund-raising efforts raised the remaining amount. Each undergraduate student pays a student activity fee, \$200 of which goes toward the annual operating costs of the Richter Center.

Key Employees

Rob DeFazio Director of Campus Recreation/Intramurals and Club Sports — oversees all aspects of the Richter Center.
 Carrie Fidorko Recreation Assistant — provides support in student scheduling and office work.
80 to 90 student employees per semester

Facilities

- Gymnasium (19,780 sq. ft.)
- Lower Fitness (3,900 sq. ft.)
- Upper Fitness (1,650 sq. ft.)
- Racquetball/Squash (840 sq. ft. each)
- Multipurpose/Exercise Room (1,900 sq. ft.)
- Track (1/10th mile)
- Men's, Women's, Unisex Lockers

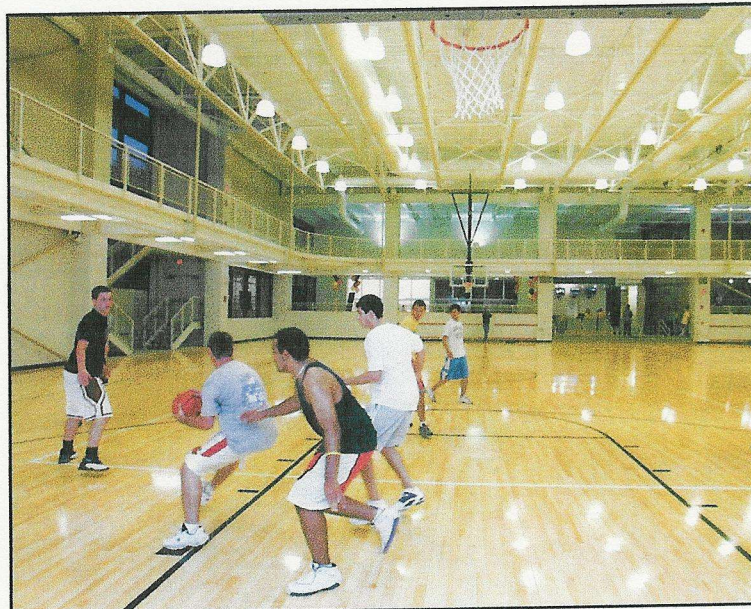
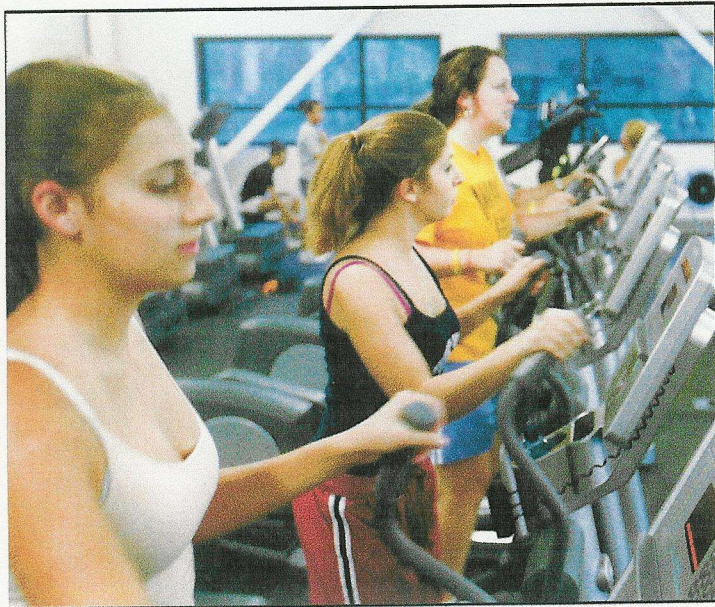
Equipment Lineup

Fitness/Strength:

Cap	Olympic Power Bar (4), Spring Collar (4), Dumbbells (5 - 100 lbs.)
Concept2	Rower (4)
Hammer Strength	Selectorized
Hampton	Grip Plates (2.5 - 45 lbs.)
LeMond	RevMaster Spinning Bike (5)
Life Fitness	Cardio and Selectorized
Paramount	Multi-Hip
StairMaster	4600 CL (3)

Other:

Broadcast Vision	Entertainment System
Dodge-Regupol	Resilient athletic flooring in fitness areas
Keymaster Pro	Proximity-card access with photo identification.
Lyon	Lockers
Muzak	Satellite Music System
Nicos	Climbing Wall
Porter	Backboards
Robbins Sports Surfaces	Fluid-applied flooring for track and 1 gym court
	Maple flooring in 2 gym courts and group exercise room
Spero FX	Compact fluorescent lamp fixtures
Sports Imports	Volleyball equipment
The Court Company	Squash Courts
Tru Track	Moveable sports wall



student center and larger dormitory space, which will be linked with the Richter Center as the focal point.

“Taking the needed time in the planning stages and getting everyone involved in the process from early on and throughout the process was the key to the success of the Richter Center,” says Mistriner.

“We are fortunate to have had an exceptional design team, and the care and effort in the design phase are very evident now and will pay off for decades to come,” says DeFazio. “We have made almost no changes (we will add one more drinking fountain) to the design elements of the building and are extremely satisfied with the results.”

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION

The lighting in the Richter Center is of the highest standards while being energy efficient. Upon entering the two and one-half story atrium, architectural up lighting is used to flood the space with light. Track lighting accents the juice bar and climb-

ing wall located in this area.

The gym area, which consists of three basketball/multi-use courts and a running track, is lit by Spero FX series compact fluorescent lamp fixtures. These fixtures are designed to allow for multilevel lighting by providing multiple circuits in each fixture. The compact fluorescent lamps also provide an instant-on feature, which means no waiting for lamps to warm up.

Light levels in the gym area can be adjusted based on the ambient light level in this area of the facility. The fixtures each contain four circuits that can be independently operated via switch banks located in the facility. As an additional feature, selected fixtures contain emergency lighting ballasts to provide egress lighting during a power outage, which eliminated the need for separate emergency light fixtures.

A noted feature to the architecture of the building is an opaque glass wall. To take advantage of this feature, accent lighting was installed below the running track to light the wall.

The two-story fitness area is lit with fixtures similar to the gym area. To take advantage of the natural light in the fitness area — which features a floor to ceiling window wall — photo eyes sense the ambient light levels and turn on a series of lamps in each row of fixtures.

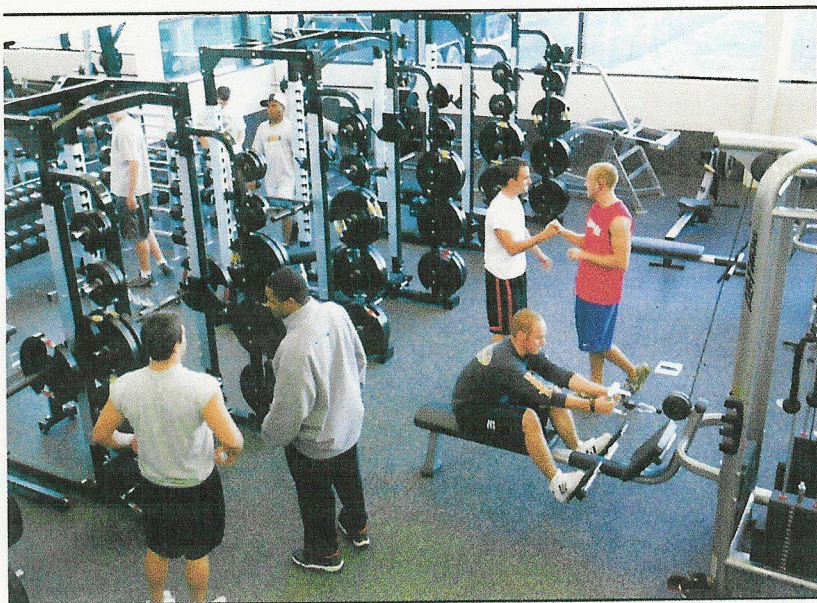
The use of energy efficient compact fluorescent lamps, occupancy sensors, and electronic timer switches has allowed the facility to maintain maximum light levels using the least amount of energy.

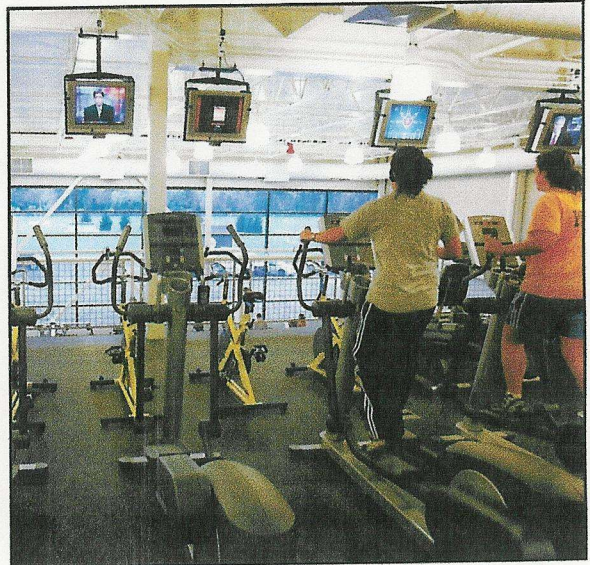
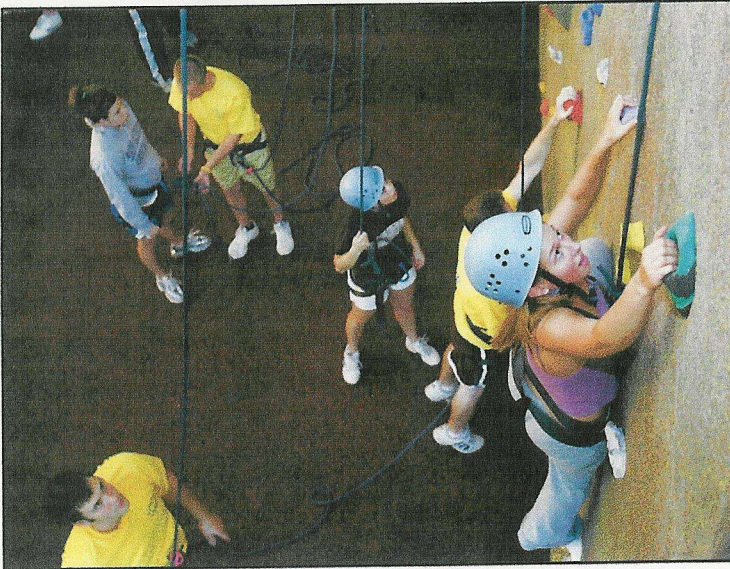
THE TOUR

One major focus of the design was to make the building open and welcoming not only when entering but in each area as well, notes DeFazio. “Everyone enters and exits the main doors. As you approach the main doors there are large windows that allow you to view the entire three-court gymnasium, giving you the feeling of being in the building before you enter the building.”

Upon entering the Richter Center one walks down a gradual slope that provides sight lines to many areas.

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On the left there are two courts with movable back walls to allow for racquetball or squash. On the right there are three basketball courts, each with the capability for volleyball. Two of the courts are hardwood, and the third one, which is synthetic, can be set up to accommodate three badminton courts. Above the gymnasium is a three-lane, 1/10th of a mile track.

"You may view these areas as you walk down the slope but may not enter each area until you approach the check-in counter," notes DeFazio, which helps with management and security. Just past the check-in counter there is a 26-foot x 29-foot rock wall. Once past the rock wall, the lower fitness area on the left offers state-of-the-art equipment, including free weights, cardio and selectorized equipment. The lower fitness area leads to the upper fitness area, consisting of all cardio equipment, with each machine featuring Broadcast Vision capability.

Large windows in the upper fitness area look out to the athletic fields and the Allegany River and hills beyond, so those working out can enjoy scenic views, and those on the outside can clearly see activity inside the building. Behind the upper fitness area is a group exercise room with mirrors and ballet bars. The facility also has offices and men's, women's and unisex locker rooms.

NEW AGE IN PROGRAMMING

"The greatest strategy to a successful program is having a great building such as the Richter Center to begin with," says DeFazio.

Intramural programs offered within the Richter Center are basketball, volleyball, badminton, racquetball/squash, floor hockey and soccer leagues.

"The new facility has allowed us flexibility in scheduling," explains DeFazio. "We can schedule at will rather than waiting for athletic teams to complete practices. We also can offer volleyball, badminton, racquetball/squash, wallyball and rock climbing where in the past we did not have the space or time for these activities. The greatest asset is that we now have a place for open recreation 24 hours a day."

DeFazio went on to note that members of the university community, especially the students, have taken great pride and

ownership in the Richter Center. "Participation has risen based just on the fact that there is a place to go. There are so many options now that they did not have in the past. We get over 300 to 400 more people per day than at the old fitness center."

Those that have access to the Richter Center are full-time undergraduate students and full-time university employees. Full-time graduate students may purchase access to the facility. "We are averaging more than 500 participants per day and oftentimes passing the 600 mark," notes DeFazio. "The first few days following the winter break have brought in over 750 participants each day."

The fitness center is the most popular attraction thus far. "There are 48 pieces of cardio equipment and 40 pieces of weight equipment not including our free weights, so no one really has to wait to get on a machine."

Wallyball, which is played inside the racquetball courts, and pickleball are both very popular and provide students with some alternative games to participate in. In addition, many students enjoy the indoor soccer goals and "love the freedom of kicking a ball around inside," says DeFazio.

Group exercise classes are also very popular, including yoga, Pilates, kick boxing, high energy, cardio tone, total body, walking, body sculpting and abs.

To staff the building and programs successfully SBU relies heavily on its students. "Students must know the practices and procedures put in place and execute them," notes DeFazio. "The maintenance and custodial aspects of the building are also very important. The temperature must be comforting, the showers always hot and the lights always on. The facility must remain clean and presentable. The cleaner the facility, the more welcoming it is and the longer the equipment, especially cardio machines, will last."

SBU uses anywhere from 80 to 90 student employees per semester to work in the Richter Center, serving as student supervisors, fitness monitors, equipment-checkout and front-desk monitors.

But the students would be the first to tell you that they are just grateful to have such a wonderful building to help take care of and run.

Somewhere right now, William Richter is beaming proudly.