

# A WALKING TOUR OF ST JOHN'S College



ST JOHN'S COLLEGE

ANNAPOLIS • SANTA FE

## About St. John's College

St. John's College is best known for its New Program—the curriculum centered on the reading and discussion of the great books of Western civilization from the works of Plato and Aristotle to those of Einstein and Faulkner. However, the college is also one of the oldest colleges in the United States, tracing its origins to 1696, when it opened as King William's School in the brand-new capital of Annapolis. The school, similar in concept to today's prep school, was folded into St. John's College in 1784 when the college was chartered by the State of Maryland. For the next 150 years, St. John's at times was a thriving institution and at other times struggled—through wars, low enrollment, the 1929 stock market crash, and what might have been the final blow, the loss of accreditation. By the mid-1930s, the college was in danger of closing for good.

In an effort to save St. John's, the college's board hired Stringfellow Barr and Scott Buchanan, two academics with revolutionary educational ideas, to revamp the curriculum. The pair implemented the New Program, a cohesive, interdisciplinary course of study with the great books as its foundation. In 1964, a second campus was established, in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Today, the New Program still thrives, as does St. John's College, one of the nation's most distinctive institutions of higher education.

*Begin your self-guided tour of St. John's College on College Avenue, at the replica of the Liberty Bell.*

## **1 Liberty Bell (1952)**

The U.S. Department of the Treasury cast 48 replicas of the Liberty Bell (one for each of the states that had by then entered the union) in 1952. The Annapolis Chamber of Commerce installed this replica on the campus. At its dedication, local business leader John M. Whitmore said, "St. John's College, just as the bell, is symbolic of liberty and of man's constant battle to become and to remain free."

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All St. John's students read the founding documents of the nation, including the Constitution, Declaration of Independence, and the Federalist Papers.

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## **2 Alumni Memorial Tablet (1920)**

Four hundred and fifty-two St. John's College alumni fought in World War I. This tablet honors the 24 who died in the war. The nation's first Army ROTC unit was formed at St. John's in 1917. Only West Point had more alumni serving as officers in the war.

*Next Stop:* Continue up the path to McDowell Hall.

## **3 McDowell Hall (c. 1744)**

In 1742, Maryland Governor Thomas Bladen began to build a grand Georgian mansion with a symmetrical facade on this elevated site. When the profligate Bladen ran afoul of the colonial assembly, construction stopped abruptly at the second-floor level. The unfinished shell became known as "Bladen's Folly." After the American Revolution, the new State of Maryland chartered St. John's



**THE BARR-BUCHANAN CENTER/WOODWARD HALL**

College in 1784 and gave the school the unfinished building and surrounding four acres. Two years later Joseph Clark, architect of the State House dome, was hired to complete the building. He added a third floor, cupola, and bell tower. The building was named for John McDowell, the college's first principal.

McDowell Hall housed the entire college for many years: classrooms, dormitory, lecture hall, grammar school, laboratory, and library. After a devastating fire in 1909, the building was reconstructed to its original specifications, a preservation victory for alumni.

The Seneca stone porch on the building's east side was added in 1903.

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In a 1766 letter, Thomas Jefferson referred to McDowell Hall as "the one public building worth mentioning" in the city of Annapolis.

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*Next Stop:* Walk east to the Barr-Buchanan Center/Woodward Hall.

## **4 The Barr-Buchanan Center/Woodward Hall (1899)**

Along with Randall Hall, Woodward Hall was one of two buildings added to the campus after the Civil War. During the war, St. John's College was taken over by the Union Army, first as the site of a camp for paroled prisoners, and later, as a military hospital. At the war's end, the campus and its buildings were in a sorry state. The Maryland Assembly gave the college a small grant to begin repairs, but the college had to borrow more to repair the damage and soon found itself burdened with debt. James T. Woodward, a New York banker, assumed the college's mortgage at favorable terms and made other generous gifts to the college. In gratitude, the college named its first post-war building after his father, Henry Williams Woodward.

Woodward Hall, designed by T. Henry Randall, architect of Baltimore's Lyric Opera House, was built to house the library; the physics, chemistry, and biology labs; and the armory. When the library outgrew Woodward Hall in 1996, the building was renovated and rededicated as the Barr-Buchanan Center to honor the founders of the New Program. The building now houses the Graduate Institute.

*Next Stop:* Walk to the left of the Barr-Buchanan Center to the Chase-Stone House.

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Long-time Annapolitans still miss the Liberty Tree, a tulip poplar that stood on the front lawn of the St. John's campus for about 400 years. It was under the Liberty Tree's branches that the Sons of Liberty met to hear Samuel Chase and other patriot-orators argue for American independence from Great Britain. The majestic tree succumbed to age and weather in 1999, when the college was forced to have it taken down.

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## **5 Chase-Stone House (1857)**

Chase-Stone House is named after Samuel Chase and Thomas Stone, two of Maryland's four signers of the Declaration of Independence, who were members of the college's first board of directors. Italianate in style, the Chase-Stone House was originally a duplex that housed the families of the president and vice-president. Modeled after a Florentine palace, Chase-Stone was built at the end of the Classical Revival period.

The building became a fraternity house in 1929 and remained so for a decade. After President Stringfellow Barr discontinued fraternities in 1938, Chase-Stone became a dormitory.

*Next stop:* Head back toward the center of campus to Pinkney Hall, on the east side of McDowell Hall.

## **6 Pinkney Hall (1858)**

St. John's College has many illustrious alumni, among them senators, governors, state legislators, and diplomats. George Washington sent his step-grandson and nephews here; Francis Scott Key was a 1796 graduate of the college. The only historical figure who can be traced to the original King William's School is William Pinkney, who served as Attorney General under President James Madison, as well as minister to both England and Russia.

The building wasn't occupied until after the Civil War, when the student population began to rebound. The building was designed by N.C. Starkweather to complement Humphreys Hall, on the opposite side of the quad, and complete the "Yale Row" that is a distinctive

feature of the campus. Renovated in 1942, Pinkney now houses dormitory rooms and administrative offices.

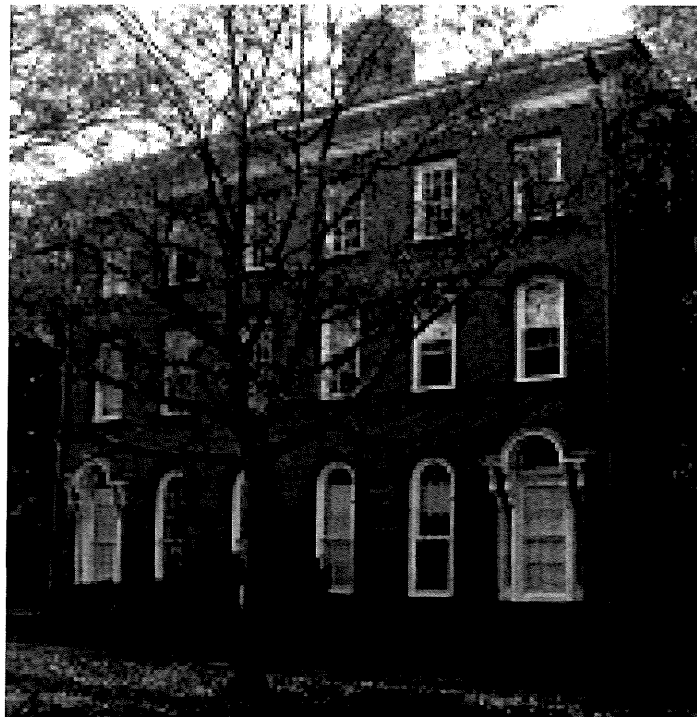
The cannon between Pinkney and McDowell Hall is from the War of 1812 and was dredged out of the Baltimore Harbor with 12 others.

*Next stop:* Just west of Pinkney is Randall Hall.

## 7 Randall Hall (1903)

Randall Hall combines Renaissance, Baroque, and Georgian styles into Beaux Arts style. Before a 1980 renovation, dinner was served on monogrammed plates by bow-tied student waiters. Named after alumnus John Wirt Randall, a local attorney, member of the Maryland State Senate, and member of the college's board, the building now houses dorm rooms, the dining hall and kitchen, and administrative offices.

CHASE-STONE HOUSE





CARROLL BARRISTER HOUSE

On the southern side of Randall Hall, facing College Avenue, is a rose garden named for long-time college bookkeeper Ruth Sutphin.

*Next Stop:* Walk north on the path that winds around the back of Randall to the Harrison Health Center.

## 8 Harrison Health Center (1972)

Annapolis architect James Wood Burch was praised for designing this building to blend seamlessly with the college's historic architecture. The health center is in the shape of a Greek Cross, the same shape used as the Red Cross symbol.

*Next stop:* Walk toward King George Street to the Carroll Barrister House.



## 9 Carroll Barrister House (c. 1724)

One of the oldest surviving residences in Annapolis, this building was home to Charles Carroll the Barrister (so called to distinguish him from the other wealthy and important Carrolls of Maryland). The house was originally located at the corner of Main and Conduit streets. In 1955 when the building was in danger of being torn down for commercial development, local preservationists raised the money to move the building. Carefully separated from the oyster-shell mortar that held it in place, the T-shaped house was divided into two sections, and the main block was rolled to the St. John's campus on a flatbed truck. The building was meticulously restored by the college.

Directly behind the house sits a fragrant boxwood garden, dedicated in 1984 to the late Kate Moore Myers, a St. John's benefactor.

*Next stop:* Return to the front of the Carroll Barrister House and, crossing the walkway, you'll see Iglehart Hall, the college gymnasium.

## 10 Iglehart Hall (1910)

The building that houses the college's gymnasium was named for alumnus Lt. E. Berkeley Iglehart, a distinguished army officer. While the New Program brought an end to most intercollegiate athletics (President Barr objected to the disruptive nature of such programs), the college boasts a thriving intramural program. Iglehart Hall houses a basketball court, weight room, dance studio, locker rooms, and a suspended, banked wooden track.

*Next stop:* From the north side of the gym parking lot, follow the path past the tennis courts to the French Monument and Hodson Boathouse.

**11 French Monument (1911)**  
When the French were marching through Annapolis on their way to the pivotal Battle of Yorktown in 1781, several soldiers died here and were buried on campus, near College Creek. The monument was erected in their honor. No one knows how many soldiers were buried here or who they were, but the monument stands as one of the first memorials in the country to the unknown dead.

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Present at the unveiling of the French Monument:

*President Taft*

*French Ambassador Jean J. Jusserand*

*Descendants of Lafayette and de Grasse*

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RANDALL DINING HALL



## 12 Hodson Boathouse (1934)

This Adirondack-style building was constructed in 1934 and renovated in 1989. On the main floor of the boathouse is an all-purpose room. The lower level houses boats used by the college's crew team, which takes part in intercollegiate regattas. Several boats are named for well-loved faculty members and other prominent college figures.

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Crew, fencing, croquet, and sailing are the only intercollegiate sports at St. John's College.

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*Next stop:* On your way back up the path to the main part of campus, you'll see Gilliam and Spector halls on your right.

## 13 Gilliam Hall (2004) and Spector Hall (2005)

These two modern dormitories were the first built on campus since the completion of Campbell Hall. Gilliam Hall is named for James H. Gilliam, Jr., an African-American businessman, civic leader, and philanthropist, who was a trustee of The Hodson Trust. The Trust provided generous support for the dormitory. Spector Hall is named for Philip Spector, the father of Warren Spector, a 1981 graduate of the college and President and Co-Chief Operating Officer of Bear, Stearns & Co. Inc. Mr. Spector's gift to the college made construction of the dormitory possible.

Designed by the Baltimore firm of Ziger/Snead, the two buildings draw from the historic architecture of the upper campus, but also are clearly contemporary. They feature modern geothermal heating and cooling systems.

*Next stop:* Cross the campus to Mellon Hall.

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## 14 Mellon Hall/ Francis Scott Key Auditorium (1958)

Mellon Hall is named in honor of Paul Mellon, a philanthropist, the heir to the Andrew Mellon banking fortune, and a student at St. John's for one year before he joined the service during World War II. The building was designed by Austrian-born architect Richard Neutra, a protégée of Frank Lloyd Wright, and a leading proponent of the Modern Movement. Most of Neutra's work was in the West, principally California. Mellon Hall is one of only three of his surviving buildings east of the Mississippi. Two later additions created an administrative wing and the Elizabeth Myers Mitchell Art Gallery. In 2002, a renovation/expansion project added classrooms, a new conference room, pottery studio, and faculty offices.

The Francis Scott Key Auditorium is a venue for lectures, concerts, plays, film series, and community events.

As you leave Mellon Hall and head back toward front campus, take the brick steps leading up to the quad and you'll see the New Program Seal in the landing. The Latin words are *Facio Liberos Ex Liberis Libris Libraque*, translated as, "I make free adults out of children by means of a book and a balance."

*Next stop:* Continue up the steps, turn to your right, and you'll see Campbell Hall.

## 15 Campbell Hall (1954)

After 250 years as an all-male school, St. John's admitted its first class of women in 1951. The Colonial Revival-style Campbell Hall was built as a women's dorm and opened in 1954. Although the decision to go co-ed



THE LIBERTY TREE

sparked some campus protests, the first class of 25 women surprised their male counterparts by succeeding admirably in their math and science work as well as in philosophy, literature, and all other parts of the program.

*Next stop:* Follow one of the paths on your right leading to the parking lot behind Campbell to visit some of the oldest buildings on campus.

## 16 Chancellor Johnson House (c. 1720)

Also known as the Reverdy Johnson house, this gambrel-roof house, a fine example of early 18th-century-style Colonial homes, was originally built at 9 Northwest Street as the home of Allen Quynn, a mayor of Annapolis. John Johnson, Jr., an 1821 alumnus, bought the house in 1931. Johnson served as Chancellor of Maryland from 1846 until 1851, when the position was abolished. The house remained in the Johnson family until 1917, then changed hands several times before ending up as the property of the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company. The company planned to raze the dwelling for an expansion, but the college joined a group of budding historic preservationists and had the house moved to the campus in 1937.

*Next stop:* Directly south of the Chancellor Johnson House is the Paca-Carroll House, the counterpart to the Chase-Stone House.

## 17 Paca-Carroll House (1857)

Named after two Maryland signers of the Declaration of Independence, William Paca and Charles Carroll of Carrollton, Paca-Carroll House was built during the same construction boom that produced Chase-Stone and Pinkney. Originally a duplex for faculty housing, this Federal/Greek Revival building became a fraternity house in 1929, and was converted to a dormitory in the late 1930s. An addition was completed in 1981.

*Next stop:* Turn back to the front campus toward Humphreys Hall.

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## 18 Humphreys Hall (1837)

This Gothic Revival building designed by noted Baltimore architect Robert Cary Long, Jr. is distinguished by its octagonal towers and was an early component of the college's Yale Row. Named for Hector Humphreys, one of the longest-serving and most effective of the college's presidents, the building housed science laboratories and dorm rooms during its earlier years. Today, Humphreys remains a dormitory. The college bookstore—open to the public—is housed in the basement.

*Next stop:* From Humphreys Hall, take the brick walkway toward the southwestern corner of campus for the final stop on your walking tour, the Greenfield Library.

## 19 Greenfield Library (1934)

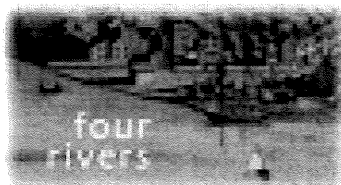
St. John's deeded this plot of land to the State of Maryland for \$10 in 1934 for the Maryland Hall of Records. Baltimore architect Laurance Hall Fowler designed the Georgian Revival building that served as the archives until 1984, when the state built a new facility on Rowe Boulevard. The college acquired the building to house a new library. Travis Price, a Washington, D.C. architect and 1971 alumnus, designed the renovation. The project involved adding a basement annex, gutting the central core, and restoring the perimeter rooms. In 1996, classes were canceled for a day so that students, faculty, and staff could ferry books across the front campus from the old library in Woodward Hall to the Greenfield Library, named for 1953 alumnus Stewart Greenfield. ❸

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