LA SALLE'S HISTORY IS FULL OF PROUD MOMENTS, IMPORTANT MILESTONES, QUIRKY ANECDOTES, AND COLORFUL CHARACTERS. AS LA SALLE TURNS 150, WE'VE SELECTED 150 REASONS TO CELEBRATE LA SALLE, AND WE PRESENT THE FIRST 75, IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER, IN THIS ISSUE. LOOK FOR PART 2 OF THE "LA SALLE LIST" IN THE WINTER 2012–13 ISSUE OF LA SALLE MAGAZINE. THANKS TO BROTHER JOSEPH GRABENSTEIN, F.S.C., ’73, UNIVERSITY ARCHIVIST, JOHN P. ROSSI, PH.D., ’58, PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF HISTORY, SEVERAL ALUMNI LEADERS, AND MANY LA SALLE STAFF MEMBERS IN ADVANCEMENT, ATHLETICS, ENROLLMENT SERVICES, AND STUDENT AFFAIRS FOR THEIR MEMORIES AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS LIST.

Promoting Social Justice
Several years after stepping down as President in 1932, Brother Elzear Alfred Kelly, F.S.C. (in photo, right), established the La Salle Civic and Social Congress, a labor management program that ran free courses for Philadelphia’s businessmen and workers. Br. Alfred created the “De La Salle Medal for Distinguished Service in the Cause of World Peace and Social Security”; President Franklin D. Roosevelt (seated at left, with Congressman James P. McGlynnery of Philadelphia, center) was the medal’s first recipient. Today, the Brother Elzear Alfred Kelly Social Justice Research Center awards grants for faculty scholarship on social justice.

Show Your Spirit
Tap-Off Rallies in the 1960s and 70s heralded the start of the basketball season with dances, concerts (Brooklyn Bridge and Iron Butterfly were two of the better-known acts), and a parade up Olney Avenue.
AN EARLY DISTINGUISHED GRADUATE
Bishop Philip McDevitt, Class of 1877, was the first priest alumnus of La Salle College. As a student, he was also known as the best player during aggressive games of handball played in the schoolyard.

Coffee with a Side of Innovative Conversation
A new space on campus in 2009 has sparked intellectual and inspirational conversations among La Salle’s faculty, staff, and students. Known as the Explorer Café, the interdisciplinary initiative poses thoughtful topics of discussion on ethics, science, technology, religion, and social justice during weekly programs in the renovated Holroyd Hall atrium. Discussions have covered issues such as ethics in science and genetics, the interaction of science and religion, and the responsibility to the poor.

‘C’ is for Cookie Jar
What do a religious statuette and a cookie jar have in common? Both were fashioned and painted by La Salle’s own student Brothers. Amid studies, recreation, chapel, and other daily activities, student Brothers living in the Anselm Hall Scholasticate, or house of studies, in Elkins Park, Pa., in the 1950s worked on a small quota of oven-baked ceramics. Both the religious objects and cookie jars were sold annually during a Fall Festival at Anselm Hall to raise money for the Christian Brothers community.

‘The Rosa Parks of Girard College’
When Marie Hicks heard that the 10-foot wall surrounding Girard College, an all-boys boarding school in Philadelphia, was built to “keep blacks out,” she got angry—and took action. She fought to enroll two of her sons at the school, and Girard College was forced to integrate in 1968. While working in one of La Salle’s dining halls, Hicks enrolled in classes and earned her bachelor’s degree in sociology in 1980, at age 58.
A ‘Fresh’ Start

In 2009, Fresh Grocer opened as the first supermarket in La Salle’s neighborhood in more than 40 years, thanks to a community initiative spearheaded by La Salle President Brother Michael J. McGinniss, F.S.C., Ph.D., ’70, Fresh Grocer, and Moreland Development. The Shoppes at La Salle retail center includes a Rite Aid pharmacy, GameStop, Dunkin’ Donuts, and Beneficial Bank in 80,000 square feet.

9/SHOWING COMPASSION IN HARD TIMES
To help out students’ families struggling during the Great Depression, and in spite of large debts the college was carrying at the time, administrators granted reductions or postponements of tuition payments during the 1932–33 academic year.

HONORED GUESTS AND A BIG ANNOUNCEMENT
Brother Daniel Burke, F.S.C., La Salle’s Academic Vice President at the time, invited famed Pennsylvania painter Andrew Wyeth (above, center) and art collector Lessing J. Rosenwald (above, right, with President Brother Daniel Bernian, F.S.C.) to accept honorary degrees and John Walker, Director of the National Gallery of Art, to give the speech at the 1965 Honors Convocation. That day, Br. Daniel Burke announced plans to build a “real art collection” for La Salle. His seed money for what would become the La Salle Art Museum 10 years later totaled $3,000.

Revamping Our Image
The blue and gold got a makeover in 2004 with the unveiling of La Salle’s new graphic identity. The University dropped its nameplate (left) in favor of a redesigned identity (right) that included a fracted chevron (a De La Salle family symbol), a new logotype, and more vibrant blue and gold colors.
SUMMeR 2012

Recognition for Service
La Salle was selected by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching for its 2010 Community Engagement Classification for the University’s ability to demonstrate mission, culture, leadership, resources, and practices that support community engagement. Fewer than 1 percent of higher education institutions in the country have earned this recognition.

What’s in a Name
A name change on May 24, 1984, transformed La Salle from a college to a university. The university designation better reflected La Salle’s size, variety of undergraduate and graduate offerings, relationship with the community, and faculty qualifications.

Like Night and Day
After World War II ended, “a tidal wave of education-starved veterans began to change the educational philosophy on campuses across the land,” according to La Salle Magazine in the fall of 1964. These soldiers and sailors worked during the day, so Comptroller Joseph Sprissler suggested to President Brother Gregorian Paul, F.S.C., that La Salle meet the growing demands for evening studies by establishing the Evening Division in 1946. As a result, La Salle became one of the first institutions in the Commonwealth to offer a formal and organized degree program in the evening.

A Little European Flair
After a long week of two-hour lecture courses and study, wouldn’t it be nice to unwind with a weekend excursion to attend a play in Paris or ski in the Alps? Hundreds of students did just that through the La Salle in Europe program, which began in the fall of 1960 and ran through the early 1990s in cooperation with Fribourg University in Switzerland.

Mike Mather Photo, courtesy of La Salle College High School
‘Walking Madonna’

Cast in bronze by British artist Dame Elizabeth Frink and donated to La Salle by the Class of 1988, the “Walking Madonna” was a fixture on the quad for nearly two decades. It was not universally beloved; the Collegian referred to it as “The Creepy Statue on the Quad.”

After another statue cast from the same mold was sold at auction for $750,000, “Walking Madonna” was moved indoors to the La Salle Art Museum in 2006 to protect it from the elements and from the occasional student prank.

The statue is now safely ensconced in the Art Museum’s Modern and Contemporary gallery.

20. THE ORIGIN OF ‘EXPLORERS’

Campus lore has long maintained that La Salle was given its Explorers nickname by a Baltimore newspaper in October 1931, but the truth, as usual, is a bit more complicated. Sportswriter Randall Cassell did allude to the La Salle football team “exploring” Annapolis as they arrived in town to play St. John’s College, apparently confusing La Salle’s namesake, St. John Baptist de La Salle, with French explorer René-Robert Cavelier Sieur de La Salle. Two weeks later, the Collegian launched a student contest to choose a nickname, and the winning “Explorers” was announced in March 1932. So, the writer may have planted the idea, but students ultimately chose the nickname. By the way, the explorer La Salle, who explored the Mississippi River in the 17th century, and St. La Salle, the 17th-century founder of the Christian Brothers, were not related.

Record-Breaking Numbers

In 1980, the largest freshman class was admitted to La Salle with 992 students.

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TWO SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

In 1955, La Salle formally established two schools: the School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Business.

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True to Her Word

Oct. 26, 1961, was declared Katherine Anne Porter Day by the Weber Society, an organization of English students. The Pulitzer Prize-winning writer and activist (author of Ship of Fools and Pale Horse, Pale Rider) visited campus for a seminar and an evening talk that drew a capacity crowd to the theater. She returned to campus the following year to accept an honorary degree.
Saluting Soccer in Knickers

An unusual but wildly popular student pastime, known as Knicker Soccer Day, was born in 1957. Started as a school spirit event by the Excitators, La Salle’s fan club, Knicker Soccer Day involved the “knickerization” of La Salle soccer fans and a crowd of women from neighboring colleges cheering on an afternoon soccer rivalry. The above photo from the early 1960s shows a variation of the Knickers theme—Bermuda shorts.

Paving the Way

John McCloskey, ’48 (right), and Joseph Sprissler (below) became Vice President for Public Relations and Vice President for Business Affairs, respectively, in 1960. They were La Salle’s first high-level administrators who were not Christian Brothers, and they were two of the first laypeople to fill such high positions at an American Catholic college.

28 // Honoring Our Heritage

Each March since 1995, the La Salle community has come together for a week to celebrate the founding of the University. Heritage Week, previously known as Charter Week, includes programs and activities that stress the Christian Brothers’ tradition of faith, service, and community.

PARTY AT THE PALESTRA

At Big 5 basketball games at the Palestra, you could count on an extra time-out—to clean up the crepe-paper streamers that fans threw in their school colors to celebrate their team’s first field goal. The NCAA halted the tradition in 1985 after other schools started tossing messier or potentially more dangerous items.

27 // Home Sweet Home

St. Albert and St. Bernard Halls opened in 1953 as the first residence halls at La Salle. At the time, the two dorms held approximately 130 students.

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

A Lasallian education isn’t confined to the borders of the greater Philadelphia area. The University offers an MBA program in Basel, Switzerland, and a communication graduate program in Prague, Czech Republic. Those graduating with a La Salle degree overseas have included students from Russia, Jordan, Albania, China, South Africa, Iran, Portugal, and Germany, among others.
INTELLECTUAL CURiosity

It’s not always about knowing the answer, but asking the right question—or more importantly, the impertinent question, according to late Honors Program Director John Grady (above). In the 1960s, Brother Daniel Burke, F.S.C., then Vice President for Academic Affairs, began steering “obviously gifted students” into special sections of his English courses, and the first Honors course was included in the 1962 College Catalog. Brother Patrick Ellis, F.S.C., further developed the Honors Program framework when he became the first full-time Director in 1964, but it was five years later, under Grady’s leadership, that the program took on the structure it has today. The La Salle Honors Program quickly became a model for colleges and universities nationwide.

Campus Legends

Loved by students and colleagues alike, dedicated teachers Roland Holroyd (left), professor of biology and long-time Chair of the Biology Department, and Joseph F. Flubacher, ’35 (above, left), professor of economics, received La Salle’s first Lindback Awards for Distinguished Teaching in 1961.

32 / GO TEAM!
The first team championship by a modern-day Explorer team was achieved by the track and field squad, which won the Middle Atlantic Conference championship in May 1950.

IMPROViNG PUBLIC HEALTH

La Salle’s Department of Nursing opened its Neighborhood Nursing Center in 1991 to provide quality educational and public health programs to underserved urban populations. La Salle’s nursing staff and graduate and undergraduate students participate in educational programs that emphasize health promotion, injury prevention, screening, and referrals for seniors, children, and families in the Philadelphia region.
Salvaging Architectural History
The La Salle Art Museum has transformed the cinder block lower level of Olney Hall into cozy gallery space, helped along by the rescue of chandeliers, wainscoting, mantles, and wooden doors from a mansion, Anselm Park, in Elkins Park, Pa., before it was demolished around 1974.

THE GLORIOUS ’LASPAM’
LaSPAM, a student-run political publication originally titled the La Salle Political Awareness Machine and later renamed La Salle Political Affairs Magazine, carried the tagline “Politics in a Can” and was published from 1987 to 2002.

A Mainstay in Philadelphia
Among Philadelphia schools, the only institution that has been granting baccalaureate degrees for more consecutive years than La Salle is the University of Pennsylvania.

Taking the Court
In 1930, varsity athletics became an integral part of life at La Salle with the kickoff of the first varsity basketball season.

36/A DEGREE ABOVE THE REST
The first graduate program, a master’s program in religion, was launched at La Salle in 1950, and six students officially earned their diplomas in 1953.

GREEK LIFE
Sigma Phi Lambda, established in 1935 to promote school spirit, was La Salle’s first fraternity and remains active more than 75 years later.
The Last Laugh

Collegian editors thought they were being clever when they published a unique April Fool's Day paper in 1973, temporarily renamed The Bazooka, with headlines such as “Burp Signs New Policy on Use of Facilities” and “Parking Melee Causes Student Government to Grapple Problem.” University administration got the last laugh, however, when a new Collegian issue was published two weeks later with a one-and-a-half page article devoted to the controversial jest articles, weighing the pros and cons of the stories published.

HONORING THE MUSIC MAN
Cy Coleman, the popular American composer, songwriter, and jazz pianist, visited campus on July 2, 1985, as the recipient of the Presidential Medal from Brother Patrick Ellis, F.S.C.

WE’LL LEAVE THE LIGHT ON FOR YOU
In the fall of 1946, when enrollment was still on the rebound after World War II, Evening Division Director Joseph Sprissler ordered all of the lights turned on in College Hall at night to give the impression of a booming program.

42/A FAREWELL TOUR
In the final entry in his journal before his death in 1964, Arthurian scholar T.H. White (The Once and Future King) recounted his Dec. 16, 1963, visit to La Salle, remarking that the students’ applause for him made his “heart turn over.”

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Named for a Shooting Star
A highlight of the interim presidency of Nicholas Giordano, ’65, was the dedication of the basketball court in the Hayman Center to basketball star Tom Gola, ’55, in 1998. Giordano served for one year while Brother Michael McGinniss, F.S.C., ’70, completed his final year as President of Christian Brothers University in Memphis, Tenn. Br. Michael was inaugurated as La Salle’s 28th President in 1999.

45/The Bobblehead Brothers
They’re icons for scores of former and current students, and now they are icons for your mantle—Brother Ed Sheehy, F.S.C., Ph.D., ’68, of the History Department, was “bobbled” in 2011 to pay tribute to his role as the moderator of the men’s basketball team, while Brother Gerry Fitzgerald, F.S.C., ’70, MBA ’82, of the Accounting Department, got the bobble treatment to commemorate the School of Business’ Friends of Brother Gerry Fitzgerald Golf Outing in 2012.
Constructive Changes on Campus

La Salle extended its footprint an additional 24 acres in the summer of 2007 after the purchase of the neighboring Germantown Hospital property. This acquisition established West Campus, providing new space for the School of Nursing and Health Sciences, the School of Business’ Nonprofit Center, and a number of administrative offices.

48/ HAVE HEART, WILL TRAVEL

In 2013, Project Appalachia, La Salle’s longest-running service trip, will celebrate its 37th year building and rehabilitating homes for the people of Appalachia.

49/A LEADER IN PSYCHIATRY

Francis J. Braceland, M.D., ’26, was one of La Salle’s most celebrated pre-med graduates. During World War II, he served as Chief of Psychiatry for the Navy, and his career accomplishments earned him the designation “Dean of American Psychiatry.”

46/ National Champs

La Salle’s field hockey team beat out Southwest Missouri State in 1980 to clinch the AIAW Division II national championship, the first national championship for a La Salle team since the men’s basketball team’s NCAA title in 1954.

47/ Once a Gym, Now a Bookstore

Wister Hall was initially designed to house just a 1,500-seat gymnasium and a swimming pool, but a need for more classroom space for the high school sank the plans for the pool and led to two stories being added atop the gymnasium. The gym became a library annex in the mid-1970s, and the campus bookstore opened in the space in 1989.

50/ TAKE THAT, IVY LEAGUE

La Salle’s campus superstars were once debaters. The debating team (above) built a reputation as one of the best on the East Coast and went undefeated in 1937, besting teams from Harvard, Yale, Johns Hopkins, Princeton, and Cornell.
A Social Pursuit

Football was a focal point of social life on campus in the 1930s and early 40s. Dances, bonfires, and rallies were occasionally held before or after games.

The Ultimate Recycling Project

After World War II, the government was looking to unload some of its war surplus, and La Salle was in need of more space for its booming student population. Thus, two “instant buildings” arrived on campus in pieces on flatbed trucks and were erected behind McShain Hall in 1947 and 1948. Leonard Hall, which had been the officers’ club at Camp Patrick Henry in Virginia, was reborn as La Salle’s first student union, and Benilde Hall, once an ordnance-related structure from Williamsport, Pa., housed much-needed classrooms.

The Farm and the City

Prior to 1984, the campus abutted a real working farm—complete with a cow that would become infamous and roosters whose crowing would seemingly rouse students in the dorms in the 1960s and 70s. The Belfield Estate, once home to renowned artist Charles Willson Peale, originated as a 600-acre parcel acquired from William Penn in 1684. The University had acquired pieces of the Belfield Estate as they were sold off over the years, but the Peale House remained a private residence until 1984, when La Salle purchased the last eight acres and converted the house into office space for the President and other administrators.

The Second Founder of La Salle

In need of divine intervention at a low point during the Great Depression, Brother Anselm, F.S.C., President from 1932 to 1941, is said to have buried St. Joseph medals under the football field and in other places. La Salle weathered the crisis, but the medals have never been found. Br. Anselm is widely credited for keeping La Salle afloat during the 1930s.

Treasured Collections

Started in the 1980s, the Connelly Library’s Special Collections include Imaginative Representations of the Holocaust, Imaginative Representations of the Vietnam War, Charles Willson Peale, Owen Wister, Bob Dylan, Contemporary Film Promotion Materials, and the Dunleavy Bible Collection. This exclusive gathering of research materials is easily accessible to students and alumni and has enticed scholars from around the world to visit campus.
Coming Together for Service

For several years beginning in the late 1990s, the La Salle community dedicated one Saturday in the fall to a mass community service effort. One year, Branch Out Day attracted 1,000 participants who volunteered for projects around the neighborhoods surrounding La Salle.

Advice Worth Taking

Inspired by the success of the University of Notre Dame’s football program in launching La Salle’s own team in the 1930s, La Salle administrators wrote to Knute Rockne, famed Notre Dame coach, for his advice on the hiring of a coach. Rockne wrote back, recommending his most recent team captain, Philadelphia native Tom Conley, who was hired as La Salle’s first football coach. Rockne wrote the letter several months before he was killed in a plane crash.

The JFK Connection

In 1958, while he was still a senator from Massachusetts, future President John F. Kennedy received an honorary degree from La Salle and spoke at the Spring Convocation. In his speech, he called for a strengthening of the American educational system “from the bottom up—with more and better schools, more and better teachers.”
Expressing Gratitude for Support

The President’s Reception, held annually to celebrate donors who made gifts of more than $1,000 to La Salle in the previous year, includes the induction of new members into the De La Salle Society. The society recognizes the contributions of individuals whose cumulative lifetime donations to La Salle total more than $100,000.

61//MOVIN’ ON UP

The former Bouvier mansion at 1240 N. Broad St., built by relatives of Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy, housed La Salle’s third campus location from 1886 to 1930.

62//Crushing the Competition

The Explorers solidified La Salle’s place on the college basketball map with a crushing 92-76 victory over Bradley College to claim the 1954 NCAA championship. In the first nationally televised NCAA game, the Explorers became just the third Eastern team in history to win a national championship thanks to players such as Tom Gola, ’55.

The Cosby Show

For 25 cents, you could catch a performance by comedian Bill Cosby when he stopped by the campus in 1965.
Celebrating St. La Salle

Beginning in 1955, May 15 was known as Founder's Day on campus, in honor of the feast day of St. John Baptist de La Salle, the founder of the Christian Brothers and the patron saint of teachers. The tradition ended in the late 1960s, when the spring academic calendar changed and St. La Salle’s feast day was moved to April 7, the date of his death. St. La Salle is still honored every April 7 with a Mass in the chapel.

FIRST LADIES
Margaret Keily Lennon (top photo, left) was the first woman hired at La Salle in an administrative role, starting as Assistant Registrar in 1946. The first two tenure-track female faculty members were hired in 1967; Diane Blumenthal taught in the Foreign Languages Department, while Minna Weinstein (middle photo, left) taught history. Weinstein won the Lindback Award for Distinguished Teaching just two years later, and she also became the first female full professor on campus. Barbara Millard (bottom photo, left) was the first woman to hold a high academic position as Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences from 1993 to 2001.

GRANTING NURSING A HOME
Although the Department of Nursing first started as an offshoot of the Chemistry Department in 1980, La Salle officially established the School of Nursing (later to include Health Sciences) in 1992. Since its start, nursing has grown to become one of La Salle’s largest majors by enrollment. It now includes graduate and undergraduate programs in nursing, nutrition, and speech-language-hearing science and a Doctor of Nursing Practice program.

A Builder of Landmarks
John McShain, of La Salle College High School’s Class of 1917, oversaw the construction of La Salle’s main campus at 20th and Olney, including College Hall, Wister Hall, the quad, and the Brothers’ Residence, in 1928. McShain was later the principal contractor for some key landmarks in Washington, D.C., including the Pentagon and the Jefferson Memorial, and La Salle’s McShain Hall is named for him.

Making Headlines
Student voices found their outlet with the first issue of the Collegian in 1931.
¿Habla Español?

Nearly 20 years ago, BUSCA—Bilingual Undergraduate Studies for Collegiate Advancement—developed as an offshoot of the University’s master’s program in Bilingual/Bicultural Studies, allowing La Salle to serve its local community by helping Philadelphia’s growing Hispanic population further their education. BUSCA is an associate’s degree program that prepares Spanish-speaking students for college-level studies at La Salle. In 2011, BUSCA was one of five national finalists for an award from Excelencia in Education, a nonprofit whose mission is to accelerate Latino student success in higher education.

Need to Move? Ask a La Salle Student!

Capitalizing on the energy and can-do spirit for which both college students and the Christian Brothers are known, administrators did not hire movers when it came time to relocate from 1240 N. Broad St. to the newly constructed campus at 20th and Olney in 1930. Instead, Brothers and students chipped in to move library books, desks, and other equipment the six miles up Broad Street by truck, car, and subway.

ALUMNI IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The John J. Finley, ’24, Award is bestowed annually on an alumnus or alumna who has made outstanding contributions to the Alumni Association. Its namesake (above) was known as “Mr. La Salle” for his dedication to the University. Recent honorees have included John J. Rooney, Ph.D., ’46, a Psychology Department faculty member for more than 60 years, and Finley’s son, Peter J. Finley, Ed.D., ’53.

Rivaling some of Philadelphia’s bigger and better-known summer theaters, the La Salle Music Theatre developed a reputation for professionalism and notable local talent from 1962 to 1988, thanks to the dream of Dan Rodden, ’41, associate professor of English. The community theater quickly established itself as a popular entertainment venue in Philadelphia, producing two musicals each summer, including Annie Get Your Gun, A Tree Grows in Brooklyn, Cabaret, and How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying. During the 1970 season, more than 23,000 people attended performances.

Working Hard On and Off the Field

La Salle has had 60 student-athletes named Academic or Scholar All-Americans in its history.