



*The Virginia G. and
Kenneth M. Piper Hall:
Supporting academic achievement
and fellowship in a building rich
with history*

Preparing People to Lead Extraordinary Lives

LOYOLA
UNIVERSITY
CHICAGO





The Tiffany-style stained-glass window on the main stairway landing.

“Into your hands we give
The torch we have kindled
So hold it that it may
Illumine the path of the years.”

*Excerpt from dedication plaque of the
college library, Mundelein College classes of 1933-35*

Piper Hall, the home of Loyola University Chicago's Ann Ida Gannon, BVM, Center for Women and Leadership, is an architecturally unique building with a rich history as a private home and university facility.

Built in 1909 as the home of Albert and Cassie Wheeler, the building gracefully mixes several architectural styles. Philanthropist Cassie Wheeler possessed a remarkable artistic sensibility and eye for detail, as illustrated in the building's materials, including white Vermont marble, cathedral oak and mahogany, as well as the recurring motifs of nature that appear in Piper Hall's ceilings, carved woodwork and windows. Renowned Chicago architect D.H. Burnham said of the building, "Truly, this is a masterpiece."

The Piper restoration, completed in 2005, made the most of the building's traditions while transforming it into a place for modern study, work and social events. Originally a library, sitting room, dining room, breakfast room and kitchen, the first-floor rooms became a space for university lectures, receptions and other events. The second floor, once consisting of bedrooms and baths, and the third floor, originally used as a ballroom, underwent renovations that respect the building's architectural heritage and uniqueness while integrating technology appropriate to today's workplace. These floors and the lower level now serve as Gannon Center offices, research and gathering space, a seminar room, and the archives reading room and storage area. Original furniture from Mundelein College's earliest days is scattered throughout the building.

The restored
first-floor hallway.





Piper Hall's diverse history

Since it was built nearly a century ago, Piper Hall has undergone a wide variety of uses, from private residence to college library to multi-purpose building to its present role as the home of the Ann Ida Gannon, BVM, Center for Women and Leadership.



Students enjoy the sun on the side porch, 1937.



Carving on the main staircase.

1909—Albert and Cassie Wheeler build the mansion now known as Piper Hall along the Lake Michigan shoreline.

1916—Second owner Albert M. Johnson, president of the National

Life Insurance Co., purchases the mansion.

1934—The building is purchased by the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (BVMs) to house the library for the adjacent Mundelein





The mansion's library in use as a reading room, 1960s.



The intricate gold-leaf molding in the dining room.



The restored drawing room, now used for receptions and other events.

College, opened in 1930. Except for the addition of bookshelves and reading tables, the structure is kept in its original state through 1948.

1949—The second floor is remodeled to create a large reading room as the third

floor—once the mansion's ballroom—receives new bookshelves. An elevator is installed.

1960—The building's coach house is razed to make room for Coffey Hall, Mundelein College's new residence hall for students.



The post-restoration dining room.



The breakfast room in the mansion's days as the Mundelein College library.



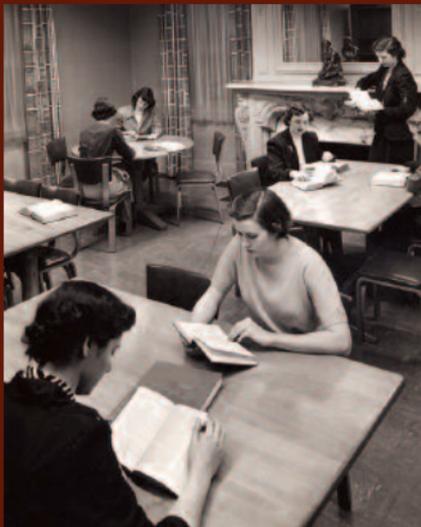
1969–Mundelein's library holdings grow to 48,000 volumes from the 1934 inventory of 12,000 books. The library moves to a newly constructed building, the Learning Resource Center, now the Sullivan Center.

1970s–The mansion briefly serves as “Gannons,” a coffeehouse for students.

1970s-'80s–Mundelein's Graduate Religious Studies program, Master of Liberal Arts program and Center for Speech Therapy occupy the building.



Three views of the second-floor master bedroom: During the renovation, 2005 (above); in use as part of the Mundelein College Library, 1950s; fully restored as the current Gannon Center gathering space (below).



Detail of the restored breakfast room ceiling (left).

1976–The building is renamed Virginia G. and Kenneth M. Piper Hall to honor generous benefactors of Mundelein College.

1990s–Following the Loyola-Mundelein affiliation, the ground

floor of Piper Hall is used sporadically for lectures, receptions and other university events.

2005–A four-year planning and restoration project is completed and the Gannon Center moves into its new home.





About the Gannon Center

Created in 1993 as a Loyola University Chicago nucleus for creating, growing and promoting women's programs, the Ann Ida Gannon, BVM, Center for Women and Leadership carries on the historical work of Mundelein College, a renowned Catholic women's college which affiliated with Loyola in 1991.

The Gannon Center's core programs are the Women and Leadership Archives, a center for collecting, preserving and making available primary source materials on women leaders; the multidisciplinary Women's Studies Program, first of its kind at an American Jesuit university; the Institute of Women and Leadership, which sponsors creative programs and research opportunities that strengthen and enhance women's leadership opportunities and skills; and the Mundelein heritage collection, which honors the college's tradition through physical mementos including furniture and art.