

The Living Room...

...has American white oak raised paneled walls with an acanthus leaf crown molding. The fruit and flower motif of the fireplace mantle establishes the theme for the ornately carved overmantle, which contains an oval carved wooden frame. Originally, the frame held the portrait of John Raskob. A reproduction of Bronzino's "Portrait of an Aristocrat" replaces Mr. Raskob's portrait.

The Library...

...ceiling is barrel vaulted. American walnut raised paneling comprise the end walls. Two hundred and eighty lineal feet of glass shelving, divided by fluted walnut square-columned piers, comprise the side walls, which bear bronze sconce lights. The crowning cornice is from the Doric frieze. Hidden wall cabinets with roller units were used for storage of large scale documents.

John Jakob Raskob...

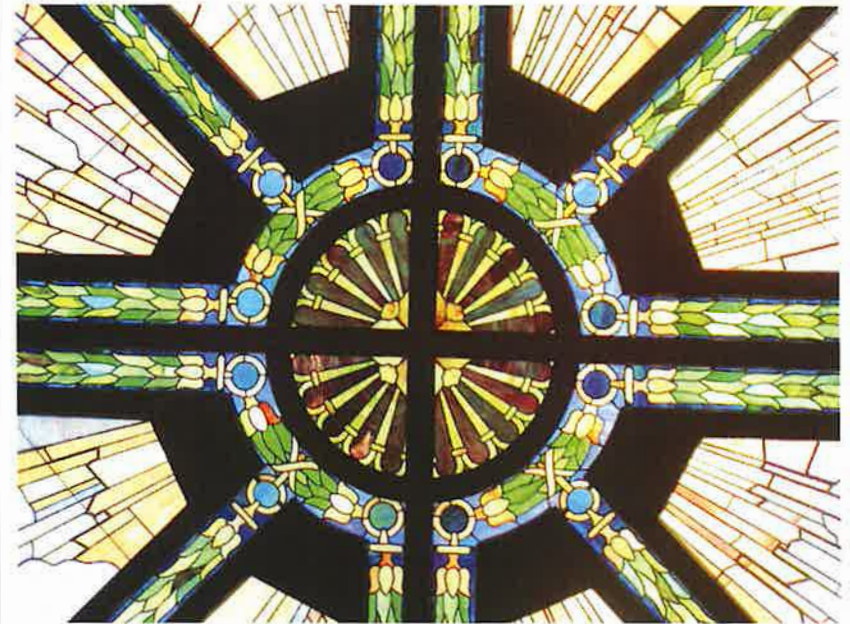
...was born at Lockport, New York, on March 19, 1879. Raskob was employed as secretary and stenographer to Pierre S. duPont in 1900. By 1902 he became private secretary to duPont, who had become treasurer of E.I. duPont de Nemours and Company. Raskob married Helena Springer Green in 1906, and they had 12 children. The Raskob family moved to Mansion House (the original estate house) at Archmere in 1910.

In 1912 Raskob became a director of the Hotel duPont Company, and the following year he became director of the Playhouse Company. He acquired stock in General Motors Corporation, and in 1915, he was made a director. In 1916 Raskob had Mansion House razed and commissioned the construction of the Patio. In 1918, Raskob chaired the Finance Committee of General Motors, and was made vice president of the corporation. A director of General Motors Acceptance Corporation since 1919, he was an instigator of installment buying. In 1920 Niagara University presented Mr. Raskob with an honorary degree (LL.D), in recognition of his achievements in finance and industry.

In 1930, Raskob became a director and the vice president of Empire State, Inc. The company operated the Empire State Building. Raskob had been the driving force behind the construction of the building. John Raskob became president of Empire State, Inc., in 1944, and at the age of 71, died at Pioneer Point Farms, Queen Anne County, Maryland, on October 5, 1950.

Archmere

The Estate



The 36 acre estate of Archmere, a prime example of the neo-Renaissance movement of America's early 1900s, follow the basic outline of 15th century Florentine Italianate villas. The architectural detail of the mansion house, called the Patio, is composed of examples of many of the finest buildings of Renaissance Italy.

The Patio Exterior...

...walls are made of smoothly dressed Kentucky limestone. Rectangular, hooded windows are symmetrically arranged, with Palladian windows on the southeast and northwest corners of the house. The design of the relief panel above the Palladian windows is derived from the lintel of the south entrance to Como Cathedral in Italy and is attributed to the Rodari brothers.

The Patio Interior...

...entrance hall is of warm toned Botticino marble, decorated canvas walls, and a high-vaulted ceiling, ornamented with low relief plaster panels. In one of the three center section panels is Diogenes, with his ever burning lamp, waiting for an honest man to enter.

The entrance hall opens into an interior courtyard, so that one can have an unobstructed view from the front entrance through the building, across the terrace to the natural arch of the trees on the Delaware River- hence the estate's name, Archmere.

Modeled very closely on Urbino, the Patio's ground floor consists of an open courtyard, surrounded by a continuous arcade with cross vaults carried on columns. The distance between the columns from center to center is equal to the distance from column to the wall behind it, is equal to the height of the column from the loggia base to the top of the capital. Renaissance architects saw these cubic masses as extremely important in relating the size of a building to a man's proportions. The column capitals are direct copies from the second cloister at Santa Croce in Florence designed by Brunelleschi and actually worked by Rossellino.

The Stained Glass Skylight...

...is an innovative, striking, and practical feature of the courtyard, protecting it from inclement Delaware weather. Designer Henry Keck, brother of Charles, the sculptor, was trained under Tiffany. The window design is a center sunburst, surrounded by a grape arbor with multi-colored parrots in each triangular division. Over 120,000 pieces of glass and over 2 tons of lead were used at a cost of \$11,912 in 1917. Its replacement value is determined to be well over one-half million dollars.

The mechanical aspects of the portable skylight were modeled on the Pan American building in Washington, D.C., begun in 1910. The Patio skylight was opened during the summer months and rolled into two lofts on the third floor, concealed by the hip roof. The skylight was permanently closed when a new protective roof was placed above in 1977.

The Common Rooms...

...fulfilled the Raskob's personal conviction that every real home should have four rooms, each contributing to the maintenance of one's life: a dining room *to nourish the body*, a music room *to strengthen the soul*, a living room *to stimulate the heart*, and a library *to cultivate the mind*.

The Dining Room...

...walls are covered with plain gold-toned English oak panels, with fruit and leaf hand-carved decoration. Eight paired pewter sconce lights illuminate the room. The cast pewter ceiling is made up of a repeating design of intersecting squares which are overlaid with green and burnished gold leaf. A Levanto marble fireplace adorns one wall. The flooring is laid in herring bone pattern. Prototypes for this pattern can be seen in the Palazzo Fierenze in Rome, the gallery of the Palace of Fontainebleau, and the Galerie des Batailles at the chateau of Louis XIV in Versailles.

The Music Room...

A high marble fireplace, stained to simulate alabaster, dominates the south end of the room. The carving of the posts is a direct copy from the Doges Palace in Venice.


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Mission Statement

Archmere Academy is a Roman Catholic, independent, college preparatory school inspired by the Norbertine tradition and a heritage of committed faculty, alumni, families, and friends. Archmere welcomes faculty and students of diverse religious and cultural backgrounds. Through dedication to academic excellence, social development, community service, and faith reflection, Archmere focuses on the education of the whole student. This philosophy encourages and supports the unique qualities and differences students in achieving the maximum level of their abilities. Understanding their moral obligation to the global community, young men and women graduate from Archmere prepared for college, career and vocation in life.

Archmere Heritage

From 1910 until 1931, Archmere was the beautiful country estate of John J. Raskob, his wife, Helena Springer Green, and their 12 children. Chairman of the Board of General Motors and Vice President in charge of finance for the DuPont Company, Raskob was recognized as one of the most successful and influential financiers of his time.



Archmere Academy Dedication, October 12,

Between 1916 and 1918, the Raskobs had constructed on their 48 acre property an elaborate home, The Patio, a fine example of Italianate, Renaissance architecture, and Manor Hall, a servants' quarters. While the Raskobs lived at Archmere, the house was alive with activity. During the presidential campaign of 1928, Archmere was the scene of many meetings of the Democratic National Committee. Raskob was campaign manager for the party's presidential nominee, Governor Al Smith of New York.

The history of Archmere as a college preparatory school began in the spring of 1932 when Bernard Pennings, Abbot of the Norbertine Order, made what must at the time have seemed a risky decision to purchase the Raskobs' Delaware River Estate for \$300,000. In the Spring of 1932, Rev. Michael McKeough, O.Praem. was assigned the school's first Headmaster. Three other Norbertines and three laymen joined Fr. McKeough to comprise the pioneer faculty. The school opened in September with an enrollment of 22 students; 16 freshman and 6 sophomores. Archmere was officially dedicated on October 12, 1932, the late Bishop Fitzmaurice of Wilmington presiding. Archmere's growth was a gradual but highly gratifying one to Fr. McKeough. By 1933, the enrollment had risen to 50 students and by 1934 to 72. In the summer of 1936, Fr. McKeough was succeeded as Headmaster by Rev. Daniel Hurley, O.Praem., who faced the challenge of guiding the school through the uncertain years of the Depression and World War II. Yet the enrollment continued to grow and minor changes were made to The Patio and Manor Hall to accommodate boarding students. In February 1939, the school's first gymnasium was completed and by September 1940 Manor Hall had been converted into a science center.



The 1930's for the pioneers at Archmere were a decade of triumph over early adversities. Archmere entered the 1940's with a sense of confidence well founded in its successful, although infant, years. During the 1945-46 academic year, illness forced Fr. Hurley to return to the Norbertine Order.

Abbey in West DePere, Wisconsin and in September 1946, Fr. Roger Paider served as Headmaster. At that time Rev. Justin I. O.Praem., who had taught in the school from 1937 to 1944, was recalled from Wisconsin to become the fourth Headmaster in Archmere's history. In his first year as Headmaster, Fr. Diny made the decision to consolidate the school's operations, turning it into strictly a four year college preparatory institution. The seventh grade was phased out during the 1946-47 school year and the eighth grade the following year. And student enrollment continued to grow, nearly doubling the 1940-41 figure of 72. Archmere continued its growth as a boarding and day school for boys. By 1952, enrollment had climbed to 158. In the same year, the Archmere's Fathers' Club was formed as a valuable ally of the Mothers' Guild, which had served Archmere from its tentative beginning in 1932. The Fathers' Club was primarily responsible for the construction of the athletic field and track in the spring of 1955. Archmere's expanding enrollment during the 1940's and 1950's placed a heavy strain on the existing facilities. In the 1950-51 school year, Archmere was working on arrangements for a new classroom building to accommodate more than twice the number of students currently enrolled. On October 12, 1957, the Archmere community celebrated its 25th anniversary. As part of the commemoration, ground was blessed and broken for St. Norbert Hall. It was dedicated on November 8, 1959. The school would enter the 1960's with a student body of 233 boys and a superior facility to accommodate not only them, but many more. Through the 1960's, Archmere's coming of age appeared in its curriculum. Through the anxious, emotional and intellectual years of the 60's Archmere kept to a sane course, adhering to its philosophy of teaching religious, academic, and moral fundamentals, while at the same time improving the quality of its course offerings. When the National Advanced Placement program began, Archmere's best students performed admirably on the exam in all subject areas.

Still further construction was required to meet the needs of an increasing student body and in 1966 the Field House was opened while plans were in the making for a dedicated science facility.

By the end of the 60's, the student body reached 394 (including a noticeable number of sons of alumni) and faculty members numbered 26 (eight Norbertines and 18 laymen).

The Justin E. Diny Science Center was dedicated on October 28, 1973. The classrooms and laboratories contain facilities in the disciplines of physics, chemistry, biology, and environmental science. The old science laboratory, Manor Hall, was now dedicated to the Arts, an expanding program of the 1970's which incorporated the school's chorus, band, theater, and studio art programs.

In 1975, facilities for boarding students were discontinued and for the first time in its history, Archmere became exclusively a day school. Archmere announced its decision to become a co-educational institution beginning in September of 1975. Fifty young women became a part of a student body of 372. The presence of girls at Archmere made an immediate impact. The composition of the faculty changed too, with 40 full and part time teachers, eight of whom were women. By 1980, Archmere's enrollment of 450 students was 45 percent girls. The faculty and staff increased to 50 men and women; these, 15 were Norbertines and 35 lay people, the total including eight Archmere alumni.

During the latter part of the 1970s, the school saw the need to establish a Board of Trustees. The Board held its first meeting on June 16, 1980.



The 1980s were years of growth and change. By 1982, major advances in curriculum and extracurricular activities were underway. When Rev. Joseph McLaughlin, O.Praem. became Headmaster in 1983, the continued expansion of programs in the arts and the enthusiasm of the students for new opportunities made plain to the Board of Trustees that the school's

facilities were inadequate to meet the demands of an eager, energetic administration, faculty and student body. At the same time, other curricular advancements - the new Computer Science program, the Writing Center, and a broader program in languages - all augmented the pressure to update and enlarge Archmere's facilities.

The result was approval by the Trustees to convert some present facilities in St. No. Hall to entirely new uses and to construct a major addition to the building. The library was too small to accommodate the needs of the student body but it would provide suitable space for the computer laboratory, faculty offices, and tutoring services of the language department. The auditorium, now also too small to seat all the students and faculty and too confined for the scale of recent drama productions, would conveniently house a new library and media center on two floors. The new construction would create a theater/auditorium to seat 700. Manor Hall, shared by both art and music students, would be available entirely for work in the visual arts.

Ground was broken for this project by Abbot Neitzel on March 17, 1982 and the new complex was completed in the fall of 1983. More than half of the student body became involved in the music and drama programs, creating a concert band and chorus, a choral group known as the Mastersingers and a Stage Band.

Since 1982, Archmere's student body has gradually grown to approximately 500 students. These students are challenged by the college preparatory program, and guided by 45 full-time and 8 part-time faculty. Over the past decade, Archmere has seen advancements in curriculum as well as athletics. Presently there are over 30 clubs & activities as well as 25 athletic teams.

In 1996, Rev. Timothy Mullen, O.Praem. '65 became the school's sixth Headmaster and the first alumnus to serve in this capacity. The 1990s have also seen a tremendous growth in technology. The campus was completely networked so that technology could be integrated into classroom instruction. The Writing Center and Computer Lab as well as the Science Labs have all been updated to keep pace with the demands of current technology. In the summer of 1998, the A.V. Room of the Library was converted into a high tech Computer Multimedia Center through a generous grant from the Longwood Foundation.



Groundbreaking for the Performing Art Center (1982)

On January 29, 2003, Fr. Mullen passed away unexpectedly and Rev. Michael Collins, O.Praem. '68 was appointed as Archmere's seventh Headmaster. Fr. Collins served Archmere as Headmaster from February 2004 until July 2004.

On July 1, 2004 the Board of Trustees selected Rev. John C. Zagarella, O.Praem. as Archmere's eighth Headmaster. His first introduction to Archmere was in 1990 when he taught Speech Communication and Religion for two years.

As Fr. Zagarella completed his first year as Headmaster, he was delighted and excited to be a part of Archmere's first capital campaign in over 20 years. The Campaign for Archmere: *Building on Mission & Heritage* was announced in October 2003. The Campaign's goal is to: complete the Justin E. Diny Science Center, including a media center and two-story physics lab for hands-on learning; the construction of a Student Life Center to house the campus dining and worship as well as consolidate student services center (health, guidance and counseling suite); renovations of the Gym's ground floor (women's and men's lockers, fitness center and coaches offices); and athletic field refurbishments. During Fr. Zagarella's tenure, the Campaign for Archmere was revived, and is nearing its \$6 million goal. Construction has begun on the \$15 million campus improvement project made possible by the Campaign. Under Fr. Zagarella's leadership, Archmere renewed its relationship with Daylesford Abbey, ensuring continued support for Archmere's mission as a Catholic school in the North

tradition.

After Fr. Zagarella's term as Headmaster, Fr. McLaughlin became Headmaster, once again, on July 28, 2006. Fr. McLaughlin taught at Archmere from 1970-1983, when he became the school's fifth Headmaster. During his previous service as Headmaster from 1983 to 1996, Archmere grew and prospered in many important ways. Since 2001, Fr. McLaughlin has served as Chaplain at Archmere.

The academic program currently offers a full curriculum to students including a highly successful honors as well as A.P. program which now includes 18 offerings. Students receive a great deal of individual attention in helping them to develop into the fine young men and women that Archmere seeks to graduate. An important part of the program today is community service involvement; accomplished through a combination of the religion curriculum and activities organized by the Community Service Club.

Archmere is never at rest. Yet the more Archmere has changed, the more it has remained dynamically in tune with the adventurous Christian spirit that led to its birth back in 1932. Archmere has blossomed and matured through the years precisely because Archmere's people, both Norbertine and lay, have never, in either rough or tranquil times, lost touch with the tradition encapsulated in their school motto, *PIETAS ET SCIENTIA* (Faith and Knowledge). The potent mix of dynamism and tradition has the formula for the success story of Archmere and certainly points the way to a similarly fruitful life in the years to come.

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archmere

Archmere, tycoon's home get state historical markers

Two Delaware state historical markers that document the history of Archmere Academy and "The Patio" on Philadelphia Pike in Claymont were dedicated Thursday. The mansion known as The Patio was once the home of John J. Raskob (1879-1950), financier, DuPont and General Motors executive, chairman of the Democratic National Committee and developer of the Empire State Building. The home was constructed in 1916 to 1918; the name "Archmere" was given to the surrounding estate because of the natural arch the trees formed over the Delaware River vista. It has been home to Archmere Academy, once a boy's boarding school and now a co-educational college preparatory school, since its founding by the Norbertine Order in 1932.