

Alfred University to dedicate venerable Kanakadea Hall as tribute to the Colls

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Kanakadea Hall, the oldest academic building still in use as such on the Alfred University campus, will be dedicated as the Edward G. and Carole Hulse Coll Center at 5:30 p.m. Friday, Oct. 19, as members of the Alfred University Board of Trustees gather for their annual fall meeting. Alumni and friends donated more than \$2.3 million for the renovation project in honor of President Emeritus Edward G. Coll, Jr., and his wife, Carole Hulse Coll, who spent 18 years as the University's "first couple" prior to their retirement in June 2000. In February 2000, the AU Board of Trustees resolved to name the building in their honor, citing their "unwavering and loyal service to Alfred University." Edward Coll's "vision of what (Alfred University) might become and his commitment to achieving that goal (brought) unprecedented prosperity and acclaim to this great and venerable institution of higher learning," according to the Board resolution, which Chairman Robert R. McComsey will present during the Oct. 19 ceremony. "Carole Hulse Coll has quietly and steadfastly labored for the betterment of Alfred University as its First Lady, lending her charm, grace, humor and intelligence to the betterment of its cause," the trustee resolution said. President Charles M. Edmondson will preside over a ribbon-cutting ceremony and then officially dedicate the building in the Colls' name. A reception at Kanakadea Hall will follow the ceremony. Originally built in 1884-85 as a grammar school for the Alfred community, Kanakadea Hall was renovated during the 2000-2001 academic year, and re-opened this fall. In addition to two classrooms and a seminar room on the first floor, it houses faculty offices for the Division of Human Studies. A fire in 1907 destroyed the attic and tower and damaged much of the second floor. The University gave the community a parcel on Park Street for a new school, and took possession of what became Kanakadea Hall in exchange. It was renovated - without the tower - at a cost of \$3,400, and opened as a University classroom and faculty office building in November 1908. In the most recent renovation, the tower has been restored, along with other turn-of-the-century touches on the exterior and landscaping to complement the appearance. Within, the warmth and golden color of old wood and the sturdiness of old stone are complemented by newer materials to make the structure function as a 21st-century academic building. The project is appreciated by faculty who have long made Kanakadea their academic home. "The new Kanakadea puts a tuxedo on a hardy draft horse. And it fits," said Dr. Gary Ostrower, a member of AU's Class of 1961 and professor of history, who attended classes in the Kanakadea as a student and now has his offices there. "The renovation preserves the historic character of the building while elegantly introducing us to the 21st century. A parent once said of the old Kanakadea, 'Doesn't the University respect the Division of Human Studies?' The new Kanakadea answers that question with a flourish, 'We love it.'" It is the return of the tower that Dr. Stuart Campbell, professor of history, appreciates most. Lowering the roof line resulted in a "frumpy look that hid the soaring spirits that make for higher education," he said. "For someone who has been in Kanakadea since 1965, the makeover incites a case of rapture," said Campbell. "I almost cried upon entering the front door this summer when the work was completed. Kanakadea is an architectural jewel, newly polished, but we lost the old building's funkiness (funky is not bad) along with the shabbiness (which was quite bad)." Testimony to its gem-like character is given by the jealousy the building now elicits from those who don't have offices here," said Campbell. "In short, she (the building) is back and better than ever." "There is no question Kanakadea Hall is more attractive, and most impressive was the way the architects and carpenters were able to retain the character of the building while making it new," said Dr. Vicki Eaklor, professor of history and chair of the Division of Human Studies, which makes its home in Kanakadea. "We did not want a sterile office building, but a place that reflected both the excitement of the new (as in new ideas) and the traditional nature of our disciplines, and this is it. It is beautiful, in the best sense of an overused term." Speaking for the faculty during the Oct. 19 ceremony will be Dr. Thomas Peterson, professor of religion. Other participants include President Charles M. Edmondson; Robert McComsey, chairman of the Board of Trustees; and Ed and Carole Coll.