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*Voorhees Hall: A Symbol of Women's Education at Hope College*

By Natalie Fulk

Throughout the history of Hope College, Voorhees Hall has been seen as a symbol of the inclusion of women in the college. When Hope College was founded in 1866, it was a college specifically for men. However, in 1878, women were permitted to study in the college, and Sarah Gertrude Alcott (Whiteneck) and Frances F. C. Phelps (Otte) were the first women to graduate from Hope College in 1882.¹ Over the years, more women enrolled and graduated from the college, but the numbers were very small, especially compared to men. Dr. Gerrit J. Kollen (1843-1915), the third president of the college, attributed this to not having a place for women to live on campus. He stated that "we must make suitable arrangements to give these girls as nearly as possible the advantages of refined, Christian homes or see them leave for other institutions."² Hope College recognized that women were a valuable part of its student body and this recognition gave way to actively making sure women had a place on campus with the building of Voorhees Hall.

*Elizabeth Rodman Voorhees (1841-1924)*

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the college administrators began to see a need for a women's dormitory in which the women outside of the area could live. At the time, the only dormitory on campus was Van Vleck Hall, which housed men. In the school year of 1906-1907, only nineteen women were enrolled in the college, and almost all of them lived in the Holland community.³ If Hope wanted to compete with other colleges in bringing in more women, it would need a place to house them.⁴ As a result, President Kollen decided to raise funds to build a women's dormitory. He

had many connections out East, and on one of his ventures there, he personally went to the home of Elizabeth Rodman Voorhees.

Elizabeth Rodman Voorhees was born in 1841 and was the daughter of a wealthy ship owner, John Rodman.

She grew up in Bedminster, New Jersey, which is where she met her future husband, Ralph Voorhees (1838-1907). They met through singing in the choir at church and grew close. However, in 1864, Ralph woke up and was blind in one eye. He went to the doctor and was told that he would soon be completely blind. Afterward, John Rodman rejected any idea of the two marrying because he did not want his daughter to have to take care of a blind man the rest of her life. However, the two started a secret engagement in 1870 and were engaged for seventeen years until John Rodman died in 1887. After that, Elizabeth and Ralph married and moved to a farmhouse in Clinton, New Jersey. She had already inherited her father's fortune

when he died, but she came into even more money seven years later when she inherited a substantial amount of her uncle's fortune. Instead of living extravagant lifestyles, Elizabeth and Ralph decided to use the money to support good causes. They were known for their philanthropic work and their special attention to Christian education and the advancement of women's education, and had financed and donated money to many Christian organizations and colleges.⁵

Keeping their history of support in mind, Kollen thought that the Elizabeth and Ralph would be the perfect people

(continued on page 2)

From the Director



This issue features two articles about iconic campus buildings that have impacted Hope College over the years: Dimnent Memorial Chapel and Voorhees Hall. I hope you will enjoy and learn from both articles, which were written by two of our student assistants, Natalie Fulk and Nathan

Longfield. We will continue to spotlight key events, buildings, and programs in our articles as Hope College approaches the sesquicentennial of its founding on May 14, 2016.

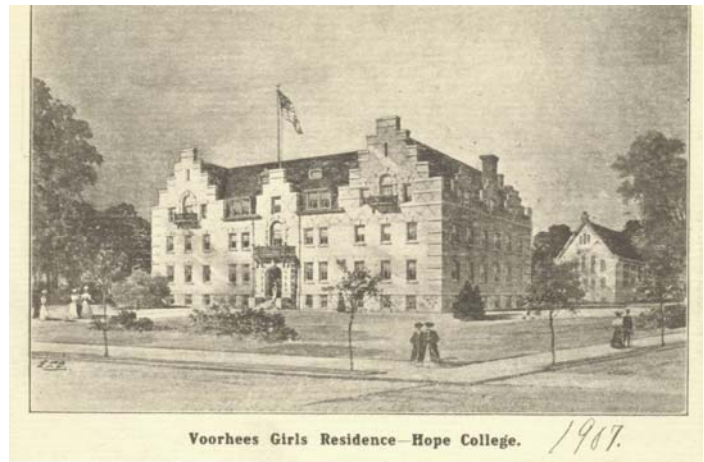
Geoffrey D. Reynolds

Voorhees Hall (continued from page 1)

to ask to support a women's dormitory at Hope College. His visit paid off, and in the fall of 1905 they agreed to donate \$100,000 to Hope College on an annuity basis, \$35,000 of which was to be used specifically for the dormitory. The college gave them a bond of \$100,000 with an annuity of five percent,⁶ which meant that Hope paid them interest on the money they invested. However, Elizabeth and Ralph never accepted repayment.⁷

Construction for the building began in 1906, and the hall was finished in 1907. The dedication ceremony for the building was held on June 18, 1907, in Carnegie Gymnasium. There were commencement speeches by Rev. Oscar M. Voorhees, the nephew of Ralph Voorhees who represented the couple; Edmund W. Booth, of the *Grand Rapids Evening Press*; and Rev. Ame Vennema, D.D. (1857-1925), then president of the general synod of the Reformed church and later succeeded Kollen as president of Hope College. Also, rather fittingly, throughout the dedication there were performances by ensembles of women singers from the college, including a solo by President Kollen's daughter, Miss Estelle Kollen.⁸ The building was opened in the fall for female students, and thirteen women lived there its first year.⁹ Also, because there were not enough female students to fill the rooms at first, the first floor rooms were opened to unmarried faculty members as an option for housing. There were worries that Voorhees Hall was much too big for the amount of female students at the time, and was a waste of money because there was extra space in the hall. However, by the 1920s, the dormitory was filled to capacity, making the building well worth the investment.¹⁰

Although the red brick and Bedford stone exterior of the hall has remained the same throughout the years, the interior was much different when it was built than it is



now. The architect who designed the building was Hope's own biology professor at the time, Samuel O. Mast (1871-1947). He designed it in the Flemish architectural style, which was a tribute to Hope College's ties to the Netherlands.¹¹ The first floor had rooms for students, a suite for the dean of women, music practice rooms, a large reception hall, and a dining hall. The second floor contained more rooms for students and the suite for the matron, a position filled by a woman who lived in the hall and helped the dean of women. On the third floor were more rooms for students and two larger rooms designed for the ladies' literary societies. All three floors had women's bathrooms. The basement had a kitchen, laundry room, storage rooms, three maid chambers, a men's bathroom and coat-room, and a room designed for a potential domestic science classroom.¹² It was outfitted with the best modern accessories, like running water, steam heating, and the most exciting of the conveniences at the time, electricity.

Along with serving as the dormitory for female students, Voorhees Hall had many other functions. The music department was moved from Van Raalte Hall to Voorhees Hall because more room was needed in Van Raalte Hall for lecture rooms.¹³ The college was also considering adding a domestic science department, the study of household skills like cooking and sewing, to the area of available studies, so rooms in the basement were set aside for that, and for meetings of women's societies. On the first floor, the main feature was that it had a dining hall that could seat one hundred and eighty students, so dinners were held there every day for all of the Hope students.¹⁴ The reception hall was also used for meetings and parties for the students, and Voorhees Hall became the social hub of campus.

Before the construction of Voorhees Hall in 1907, the women on campus were led by the "Lady Principal," Mrs. Christina C. Van Raalte Gilmore (1846-1933), the daughter of the founder of Hope College, Albertus C. Van Raalte (1811-1876). She was in charge of mentoring, disciplining, and being a role model for the



Voorhees Hall dining room and male wait staff, ca. 1914

female student body of Hope. In 1907, Gilmore, a widow, moved into Voorhees Hall and her job title was changed to “Dean of Women.”¹⁵ However, she retired in 1909 after a long career of helping young college women. In her place, Mrs. Winifred Durfee (1861-1950) was hired as an English teacher, but also as the new dean of women, a position she would hold until 1936 and for which she was famous around the campus. Durfee watched over the women of Voorhees and was stern in making sure that they were following the rules of the hall, but she was also a guide for them in their journey through college.

During Durfee’s time, the rules of Voorhees Hall were rather strict by today’s standards. There were rules concerning when the women had to get up and how late lights could be on. They also had to sign out whenever they left the building, and men were only allowed in the building at certain times, mainly for meals, picking up women for dates, or visiting in the reception hall for an allotted amount of time. The dinners, in which the entire student body participated every day, were formal affairs. Students had to wait in the reception hall until Durfee entered the dining room, and then they could enter and sit in their seats, which were assigned by Durfee. Then a male student was asked to pray before the meal. Students were expected to dress formally for dinner.¹⁶ However, dinner was still known as a social event and a good bonding time for the students. Durfee was respected throughout the college and was known for her love for her students and her dedication to their well-being.

Besides being known for her rigid rules, Durfee was also known for her rivalry/friendship with Dr. John B. Nykerk (1861-1936). Nykerk, a professor of English and music and also the dean of men, was one of the bachelor professors who had moved into a suite on the first floor of Voorhees Hall when the college was having trouble filling the dorm with just students. However, even though by the 1920s the dorm was filled to capacity with women each year, Nykerk continued to live in the all-

female residence hall.¹⁷ He was jokingly referred to as “the bachelor who lives in the henhouse” and lived there until his retirement in 1936.¹⁸ Durfee wanted Nykerk to move out and make more room for students like the rest of the unmarried professors had done, but despite the bickering that ensued because of this long-standing argument, the two were good friends. They both taught English, and as deans of men and women, they had many similarities and consequently spent a great quantity of time together. They even retired in the same year together, 1936.¹⁹ Nykerk’s stay in Voorhees Hall has remained known throughout the years. Some people even say that after his death he continued to refuse to leave Voorhees Hall and now roams the halls as a ghost.

Even after more women’s dormitories were built throughout the years, Durfee Hall in 1950, Phelps Hall in 1960, Gilmore Hall in 1963, and Dykstra Hall in 1967, Voorhees was still considered the symbol of the growth of education for women at Hope and still served as a dormitory for women. However, by 1967, the students living there were starting to be affected by the age of the building. It had only one cylindrical, slide-like fire escape that had been there for many years, and the women living in the hall were worried about their safety in case of a fire. They even protested and paraded in front of the president’s house to petition for safer conditions.²⁰ The college then repaired the fire escape and made it usable again. Afterward, the board started looking into remodeling the building and making it safer, and even considered tearing it down. Luckily, that idea was rejected, and instead the college decided to remodel the building in two stages during the summers of 1968 and 1969.²¹ However, this plan was halted due to lack of funds, so the only safety measure taken was the repair of the fire escape.²²

The need for Voorhees Hall to be updated and renovated was made apparent after a small electrical fire early in the morning on February 20, 1969. Girls had to evacuate from their rooms. Further inspection by the fire marshal revealed that there were many safety concerns with the building.²³ Therefore, after the fire marshal deemed the building unsafe as a residence hall, the college decided to relocate the residents of Voorhees Hall until they decided what to do with the building.²⁴ Sixty-three of the women and the head resident of the dorm were moved to the Warm Friend Hotel downtown, while the rest of the residents were either moved into empty rooms in Durfee Hall, Dykstra Hall, and Phelps Hall or two recently purchased cottages that the college readied for them.²⁵ Hope College then had to decide what to do with Voorhees Hall.

Soon after the fire, Hope administration decided to use Voorhees as offices for faculty on a trial basis for one

year. They did not need to remodel Voorhees to do this because fire precautions were not as strict for office buildings as for residence halls.²⁶ After this, it remained an office building as the administration debated on whether to remodel it and keep it as a dorm, make it an official administration building, and even on whether or not to tear it down to make way for a new building. However, in 1979, ten years after the fire evacuation, the college decided to renovate it and return it to its original use as a dorm for women or for women and men. They recognized its importance as a symbol of Hope College's dedication to co-education.²⁷

First, the college had to raise funds for the estimated \$1.3 million project of restoring the building. The board of trustees and select alums started a campaign called "Revitalize Voorhees" to raise funds. It did this through donations from alumni and other interested groups, and through a new method of selling tax-exempt bonds and then paying them back.²⁸ Fundraising took about two months and then the renovation started in the spring of 1980, with the goal of finishing by March of 1981. The renovation included keeping the exterior of the building the same, except for removing the ivy that had accumulated over the years. The interior changed quite dramatically. It added rooms for the handicapped, meeting and conference rooms in the basement, typing rooms, a landscaped court in the back, two room-suites, an elevator, a new heating system, windows and roof, and general work on the mechanical and electrical systems.²⁹ The project finished in March of 1981.

In April of 1981, the Campus Life Board decided that Voorhees would become a co-ed residence hall, despite unfavorable views from some people who wanted it to stay true to its all-female roots.³⁰ The first people who lived in the newly renovated dorm were actually not current Hope students, but alumni and parents of graduating seniors who came and stayed in the dorm during the alumni day/commencement weekend that April.³¹ The dorm was opened for students in the fall of 1981. The dedication of the building was held on September 26, 1981. The theme for the dedication was "Women of Hope," and it focused on specific female alumni of Hope for their devotion to the advancement of opportunities at Hope College. Wings and rooms of Voorhees Hall were named in honor of these women.³² Even though Voorhees would from then on be a co-ed dorm, it was still the symbol of female students at Hope College.

Today, Voorhees Hall still maintains its legacy of representing Hope College's commitment to co-education. With its construction, Voorhees Hall helped Hope College grow as an institution and enrich its student body with the availability of housing for women

not from the area. It has faced its share of trials over the years in concerns over whether the building was needed in the first place, changes in its function, and debates about tearing it down. Yet despite all of these, it has kept its place on campus as a beautiful piece of architecture with historical sentimentality for the entire college community.

Notes

¹Wynand Wichers, *A Century of Hope, 1866-1966* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), p. 90.

²Dr. Gerrit John Kollen, quoted in Laura Shears, *Elizabeth Rodman Voorhees*, 2008.

³Wynand Wichers, *A Century of Hope, 1866-1966* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), p.137.

⁴Laura Shears, *Elizabeth Rodman Voorhees*, 2008.

⁵Laura Shears, *Elizabeth Rodman Voorhees*, 2008.

⁶Gerrit John Kollen, *President's Annual Report on Hope College to the Council of Hope College*, April 25, 1906.

⁷Laura Shears, *Elizabeth Rodman Voorhees*, 2008.

⁸"The New Ladies' Dormitory," *Holland City News*, June 1907.

⁹Laura Shears, *Elizabeth Rodman Voorhees*, 2008.

¹⁰Laura Shears, *Elizabeth Rodman Voorhees*, 2008.

¹¹Hope College, *Revitalize Voorhees*, Brochure, 1980.

¹²Gerrit John Kollen, *President's Annual Report on Hope College to the Council of Hope College*, April 24, 1907.

¹³Gerrit John Kollen, *President's Annual Report*, April 25, 1906.

¹⁴Dan Stid, *The Tradition of Voorhees Hall*, March 19, 1985.

¹⁵Laura Shears, *Christina C. Van Raalte Gilmore*, 2008.

¹⁶Isla Van Eenenaam, *Tales of Voorhees*.

¹⁷Laura Shears, *Elizabeth Rodman Voorhees*, 2008.

¹⁸Hope College, *Revitalize Voorhees*, Brochure, 1980.

¹⁹Laura Shears, *Winifred Durfee*, 2008.

²⁰"Remodeling, Enlarging of Voorhees Planned," *Hope College Anchor*, January 6, 1967.

²¹Lynn Jones, "Voorhees Renovation to be Done by Fall," *Hope College Anchor*, December 13, 1968.

²²Tom Hildebrandt, "Voorhees Fire Ousts Coeds," *Hope College Anchor*, February 21, 1969.

²³Tom Hildebrandt, "Voorhees Fire Ousts Coeds," *Hope College Anchor*, February 21, 1969.

²⁴Hope College Office of Information Services, "Voorhees to Remain a Residence Hall," *News from Hope College*, December, 1979.

²⁵Jean DeGraff, "Voorhees Refugees Pleased," *Hope College Anchor*, March 7, 1969.

²⁶"Voorhees Hall Used as Offices for Next Year," *Hope College Anchor*, April 18, 1969.

²⁷Hope College Office of Information Services, "Voorhees to Remain a Residence Hall," *News from Hope College*, December, 1979.

²⁸Rusty Yonkers, "Ivy Hall to Live Again," *Hope College Anchor*, February 14, 1980.

²⁹Rusty Yonkers, "Ivy Hall to Live Again," *Hope College Anchor*, February 14, 1980.

³⁰Kim Mooi, "Voorhees Becomes Co-Ed," *Hope College Anchor*, April 16, 1981.

³¹Hope College Office of Information Services, "Voorhees Hall Readied for Alumni Weekend Opening," *News from Hope College*, 1981.

³²Jennifer Stenczynsky, "Voorhees Dedicated to Women," *Hope College Anchor*, October 1, 1981.



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Dimnent Memorial Chapel: The Story and the Symbols

By Nathan Longfield

Dimnent Memorial Chapel stands tall in the middle of Hope College's campus as a symbol of the centrality of the Christian faith in its mission. Originally named Memorial Chapel, it was renamed Dimnent Memorial Chapel in 1959 in honor of the president under whom the chapel was built. Driven by a need for a larger worshiping space, President Dimnent raised the money to construct the chapel. At the chapel's dedication in 1929, Rev. William Bancroft Hill (1857-1945), a Reformed Church in America pastor who taught at Vassar College, and major donor, stated, "If Hope College stands as a witness to the belief that religion without education is a peril, this chapel, the most beautiful and commanding of buildings, is witness to another equally important belief, which is that education without religion is a failure and menace." This chapel has stood as a symbol of that belief ever since.



President Edward D. Dimnent (1876-1959) served as Hope's fifth president, from 1918-1931. During this time, Dimnent saw the need for a new chapel to hold the growing student body during chapel, which at this time was mandatory. In a letter to Mrs. Elizabeth Rodman Voorhees (1841-1924), past donor of Voorhees Hall, Dr.

Dimnent expressed his concern and frustration with the current faith life of the students. He believed that better facilities could be a facet of improving this. He wrote, "Our college chapel [Winants] was built in 1892 and has a seating capacity of 300. By the use of the YMCA Annex, I have managed to

provide 443 seats. Our student roll last year, including all, was 603." He went on to write that he thought attendance at chapel, which was lower than he wished, would increase if the proper space was provided for the students and visitors.

Dimnent enumerated the purposes of the chapel as: "A building suitable for the religious uses of the College for the work of the Department of Religious education. . . . A College YMCA and YWCA" and "a Building for Community Religious Gatherings and Social Service Organizations." In this letter, Dimnent estimated the cost of the chapel at around \$200,000. The final cost of the chapel totaled around \$404,000, equivalent to about \$1.5 million today. The depression and financial problems that President Dimnent inherited made the completion of the project extremely impressive, as all costs were covered despite final costs being more than double the original estimates. Dimnent's commitment to this project was again displayed as he provided the final \$100,000 to cover the cost overrun.

William K. Johnston (1855-1945), from Chicago, was hired as the architect. He had designed Hope College's Graves Library and Winants Chapel in the early 1890s, and designed the new chapel in a "modified American Gothic Style." Anyone who has seen Dimnent Chapel knows of the impressive windows, organ, and bell tower. Before we examine the beauty of the chapel as it currently stands, it is worth noting one feature of the original design that was removed. In the original blueprint, the chapel not only had the back balcony, but also had balconies that ran along the sides of the chapel. However, these were removed to avoid obscuring the beautiful stained glass windows (except for the two windows on the west end), leading to some of the added cost on the project.

The stained glass windows are one of the most prominent elements of Dimnent Memorial Chapel. The windows were designed by Signor G. A. Zucci, an Austrian from Italy who specialized in the stained glass windows of medieval cathedrals. Zucci understood the significance of those windows and brought a rich knowledge to the project while working for George Hardy Payne Studio of Paterson, New Jersey. Dr. Elton Bruins, a leading Hope historian and professor emeritus, suggests that, given the symbolism in the windows, Dimnent undoubtedly had a great deal of impact on the windows' design as well.

Each side of the chapel has six windows, each window with two Biblical figures and Christian symbols in the middle. Along the north side of the chapel, going from the back to front of the chapel are pictured: on bottom, Simon the Zealot, and on top, John the Baptist followed by Philip and Samuel as a boy. In the third window,

Matthew stands beneath Jeremiah. The fourth window pictures Mary holding Christ as an infant, and above is Jesus as a boy teaching in the temple. Next, James is displayed below Isaiah. Lastly, Paul stands above Peter.

On the south side, the back window has David, whose picture is obscured by the balcony, above Bartholomew. The next window has Moses bearing the Ten Commandments standing above Andrew. The third window has James beneath Zechariah and the fourth window, once again, holds Mary, cradling a slightly older Christ child, beneath Christ the Shepherd. In the fifth window, Ezekiel is pictured above Thomas. The last window contains two portrayals of John. The bottom shows a young John holding a book as author of the gospel, and the top displays an older John on the Island of Patmos where he received his revelation.

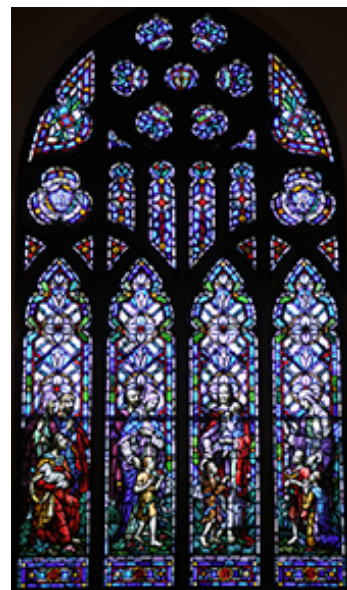
Each of these windows contains not only the symbols with each figure as part of their story, but also significant religious symbols in the middle such as the Bible, a winged torch, anchor, chalice, lily, lamp, dove, Ten Commandments, a sheaf of wheat, the tree of knowledge, and the cross and crown, among others. Each window has five symbols in the center tier, and each symbol has some significance for the Christian faith and tells a story. While some, like the Ten Commandments and Bible, are clear, other symbols like the lily, which symbolizes the Trinity, and the wheat, which could symbolize a number of stories, are less clear. In *Chapel Talks on Christian Symbols*, Paul Hinkamp (1885-1970), a Hope College professor from 1918-1956, suggested that the wheat symbolizes God's provision of bread.



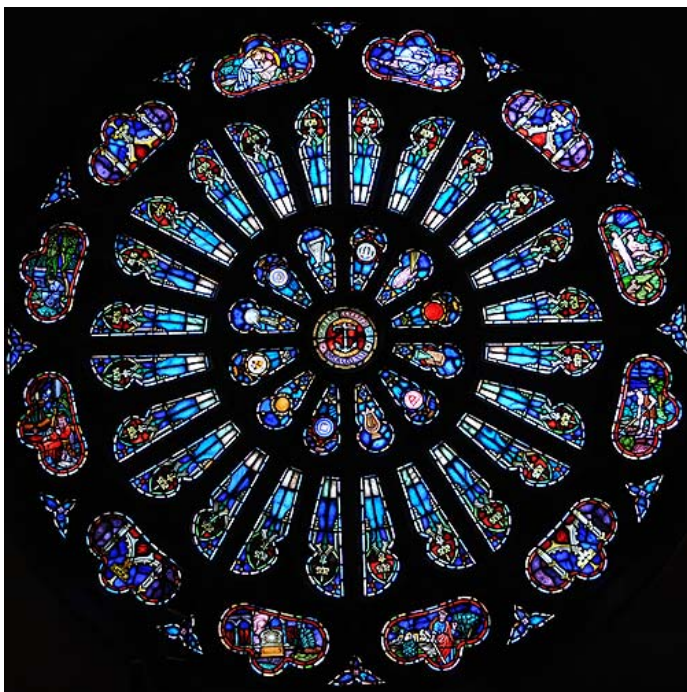
The beauty of the windows does not stop with these twelve windows. In the front of the chapel stands the chancel window. The window is centered on Christ, especially his interaction with children. The top of the window includes the symbols IHS and XP. IHS stands for Iesus Hominum Salvator, Latin for Jesus, the Savior of Men, a symbol serving as a reminder of the incarnation. The second symbol XP, or Chi Ro, are the first letters of Christ in Greek. Christ means Anointed and, when associated with Jesus, or Savior, it means Messiah, Redeemer, and Savior.

Lower in the window are four images, three of which display Christ interacting with children. The third picture from the left is an image of Christ with the children, and on either side of him are parents bringing their children to Christ. The picture on the far right is that of the shepherds, the first people to hear the declaration of Christ's coming. The shepherds are also holding a lamb, which, while logical for shepherds, Elton Bruins noted in a video on the chapel that he sees deeper symbolism in the picture. He suggests that the lamb connects to John the Baptist's declaration of Christ as the Lamb of God.

However, the beauty of all of these windows pales in comparison to the Rose Window that stands in the back of the chapel. Set in stone, each circle of petals in the windows symbolizes another story of significance to the school or faith. In the center of the window is the Hope College seal. The seal was adopted in 1866 when the school was incorporated, and the well-known anchor stands at the middle. The anchor has been a central symbol of the college since Hope and Holland's founder, Reverend Dr. Albertus Van Raalte, wrote that the school was his anchor of hope for the future. This use of anchor is based on Hebrews 6:19 and hope comes from Psalm 42:1, the scripture referenced in the seal itself. This formed the motto of Hope: Spero in Deo, translated Hope in God, which is inscribed along the outside of the seal.



The next ring is a seal of six other universities and academic symbols, representing the history of education, especially education associated with the Christian faith. The first seal is the seal of the University of Leiden, a Dutch university and Van Raalte's alma mater. The other five universities are all schools founded in America. The next seal is Rutgers University, the first school founded by the Dutch Reformed Church in America. Rutgers' connection to the RCA seems to be why it is placed first before the next four schools, which appear chronologically: Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and the University of Michigan, the only originally secular university to be included. If the window is examined closely, it shows that it lists the University of Michigan's founding date as 1837 instead of 1817. Bruins suggests that this was because 1837 was when Michigan joined



the union. Interspersed between each college are panes with academic symbols: a palette for the arts, a metric for geometry, a harp for music, a sun for astronomy, lab equipment for chemistry, and a scroll and pen for literature, demonstrating the wide spectrum of a liberal arts education.

The last ring, starting from the top going clockwise, tells the story of God's people, from creation to the birth of Christ. The first picture shows the creation of the world. The second depicts Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. The ground and water are smooth as they sit surrounded by animals. The third picture displays the life of humanity as the result of the fall, showing a man toiling to till the ground, based on the punishment in Genesis 3:17-19. Interestingly, on close examination, this picture also depicts a snake wrapped around a tree in the background. Additionally, the contrast between this depiction and the previous are drastic in that the ground is now rough and filled with thorns.

The fourth photo shows God's redemptive plan with Israel with a depiction of Abraham's call out of the Ur of Chaldees. This picture has also been suggested to be Moses, who leads the people out of Egypt, but the timeline and picture would make Abraham a logical choice and the background does not look like Egypt. The fifth picture does have a more Egyptian background and depicts the Ark of the Covenant, symbolizing the covenant formed with Israel on Mt. Sinai and the people's deliverance from Egypt. The next picture shows the glory of Israel with a depiction of Solomon seated on a throne and robed in splendor. He has scrolls at his feet to symbolize his wisdom and knowledge and the background displays his wealth.

The seventh picture shows the exile of Israel, depicting an Israelite crying beneath a tree in Babylon, calling to mind Psalm 137:4: "How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?" This ring of the church's story is drawn to conclusion by the nativity scene, the completion of God's redemption in sending Christ into the world.

The glory and beauty of Dimnent Chapel is not limited to the windows. The furniture is also noteworthy. All the furniture in the front of the chapel was hand carved. The pulpit and chairs were carved by an RCA mission school in Katpadi, India, founded by Rev. Bernard Rottschaefer (1884-1967), a 1906 Hope College graduate, to train young Indians in the craft. The pews have also proven the test of time, still holding firm. However, there have been some changes to the internal structure of the chapel. For example, the front stage was expanded to accommodate orchestras and larger groups. While Nykerk Hall of Music was built a few decades after Dimnent, more space was needed over time until the new Jack H. Miller Center for Performing Arts was built in 2015. Amazingly, other than the technological and safety improvements, very little has changed in the chapel building and design since it was well built and has been well maintained.

The musical instruments of Dimnent are also spectacular with quality organs and chimes filling the chapel and campus with music. Outside the chapel, you can still hear the Westminster chimes ring from the bell tower. The chimes were not a part of the original plan and led to the addition of twenty extra feet on the bell tower to accommodate the donation. The chimes were given by the McLean family in memory of Ida Sears McLean. The set consists of twenty-two pipes and cost about \$10,000. The chimes were contracted out to Deagen Chime Co. of Chicago. As part of this research, I was able to tour the chapel and see the chimes, which stand right beneath the top of the bell tower. While the chimes are protected by a screen from animals, they are still open to the elements and have to be tuned each year. Additionally, beneath the stage of the chapel by the organ blower, there is a small stand that controls the hymns that play out of the bell tower during the day.

The blower controls the majestic Skinner organ, a romantic organ made by The E. M. Skinner Organ Company in Boston. It has four ranks, or rows, of keys, and consists of 2,932 pipes which are stored on either side of the stage and the southwest corner of the balcony. The Skinner organ has stood the test of time remarkably well. A donation of William and John Arendshorst, the organ originally cost \$25,000. The restoration of the organ in 2006 cost \$750,000. The urging of Professor Huw Lewis and the decision of President James Bultman

to invest in the organ led to the restoration project by the Thompson-Allen Company. The company had to lay out all of the pipes across the pews before they were shipped to be restored in New Haven, Connecticut. This restoration elevated Hope's organ to one of the top three Skinner organs in the country.

The Skinner is not the only organ housed in the chapel. In 1971, the Pels and Van Leeuwen Organ Builders from Alkmaar in the Netherlands installed a Class Tracker organ in the balcony. A letter to the board of trustees in 1970 reports that the organ was a gift from the father of a former organ student at Hope, who was appreciative of the instruction his daughter had received. The letter also noted that since the Skinner is a romantic organ and this is a Baroque organ, it would improve the variety of organ performances in the chapel. The organ cost \$42,500 and is self-contained in an oak case. The Tracker has fewer pipes than the Skinner, though it still contains 1,700 pipes.



*Pels and Van Leeuwen
Organ in balcony, ca. 1971*

While the story of the chapel is spectacular, the chapel cannot be fully appreciated until seen. Spending time in the chapel when the sun is shining through the windows, or just observing the beauty of the Rose Window will produce a new appreciation of the majesty of Dimnent Memorial Chapel. However, much of the chapel is not readily available to see, so I will take you along on my walk through the restricted areas.



and the chimes, machines that seem to be the originals as you can see the Deagan name on the top of the casing.

I was first led up the back stairs into the lower part of the steeple, onto a platform which, according to my guide and past eyewitness reports, used to have notes written on the wall from students who had previously sneaked into the tower. Through a door on your left, you can see the machinery that controls the clock

From there, you can see out onto the roof and above the ceiling of the chapel and gain access to the attic above. While safety prevented us from exploring further, we could see the original design as well as newly implemented systems, like the sprinklers in the attic. My guide also informed me that they used to have to lower the chandlers from the roof to replace the lights. Now they use lifts to replace the lights once a year for Vespers.

Next we climbed up the tower. After unlocking numerous safety locks, we climbed up to the chimes. The chimes are imposing and from around them you can see through the grating to look out over the campus.

We next climbed from the chimes onto the roof of the chapel tower. Surrounded by high parapets, we were able to see out from the majestic tower. My guide showed me the light cases that make the crosses shine across campus at night. He also pointed out that the turrets have lightning rods for protection. The view from the top is majestic and is rivaled only by the Rose Window in beauty. We then returned inside the chapel to see what makes the organs run, including the large blower and pipes of the Skinner organ.

Dimnent Chapel symbolizes the centrality and focus that faith must have in both education and life as it is placed at the middle of, and rises above, the rest of the campus. Its high steeple shines with the crosses at night and the chimes ring out the melody of hymns throughout the day. The strong foundation represents not only strength, but also displays the beauty of the stained glass windows and the sounds of the powerful organs. Originally built because of a need for a larger place of worship and given far more seats than there were students at the time, Dimnent now stands full through the week as the campus gathers to worship. The chapel rightfully holds the name Dimnent Memorial Chapel, as President Dimnent was able to afford to build a chapel that has stood at the heart of Hope College since 1929. Dimnent will continue to stand there many years to come, proclaiming through its magnificence and beauty the centrality that faith must have in the life of the college.



Nathan Longfield was born and raised in Dubuque, Iowa. He is in his senior year at Hope College, majoring in religion with minors in both management and mathematics. After graduation he plans to go to seminary to pursue ordination as a minister.

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Reception area in Voorhees Hall, ca. 1930s