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St. Michael's College/College of Santa Fe Santa Fe, New Mexico 1947-2009

E-Travel

The best source of information is *No Halls of Ivy: The Gritty Story of The College of Santa Fe 1947-2009* by Richard McCord. E-Yearbooks has available the 1980 *Paladin*, the school yearbook. I also consulted *O Brothers, Where Art Thou? A Brief History of the College of Santa Fe* by Jennifer Levin. The ad is from the *Albuquerque Journal*.

St. Michael's College SANTA FE, N. M.

The 42nd year will open September 4, 1900. The College is empowered by law to issue first class Teachers' Certificates to its graduates, which certificates are to be honored by school directors in the Territory of New Mexico.

BRO. BOTULPH, Director.

History

Opening in 1859, St. Michael's College was the first chartered educational institution in New Mexico. But it was not until 1947 that Brother Benildus, with a faculty of 14 Christian Brothers, opened a four-year college. Some of those first 148 students were brothers-in-training; some were lay students attending under the G.I. Bill; most were poor, local, and Hispanic.

Within a year S.M.C. students were editing a publication called *The Lance*, were presenting concerts by their College Chorus, and were forming organizations such as the Latin-American club. By 1964 enrollment had reached 801, and a year later St. Michael's had attained accreditation by the North Central Association. In 1966 St. Michael's admitted female students, and that same year made a name change to College of Santa Fe.

The late 1960's were a period of optimism as officials began planning for an enrollment of 2,000 by 1973. But the end of military draft caused enrollment to fall, and a cutback on federal funds for education and a period of inflation plunging the college into financial difficulties.

The 1980 *Paladin* shows a campus with more than 40 faculty—including only four Christian Brothers—teaching in nine academic divisions—business administration, health and physical education, humanities, performing arts, social science, math, nursing, and education.

The performing arts students staged five plays including *Fiorello*. The diverse student body of around 900 had access to six social fraternities/sororities, plus three other social organizations. In addition, the campus included nine academic/religious/interest organizations.

The creation of Santa Fe Community College in 1983 cut into the enrollment of local students. And despite the increased programs in performing arts, full-time enrollment seldom exceeded one thousand. Over its last decade the indebtedness of the school continued to rise to almost \$40,000,000. Efforts to have the state of New Mexico acquire the school failed in 2008. After the college closed in 2009, the city of Santa Fe acquired the campus for lease to the Laureate International Educational group.

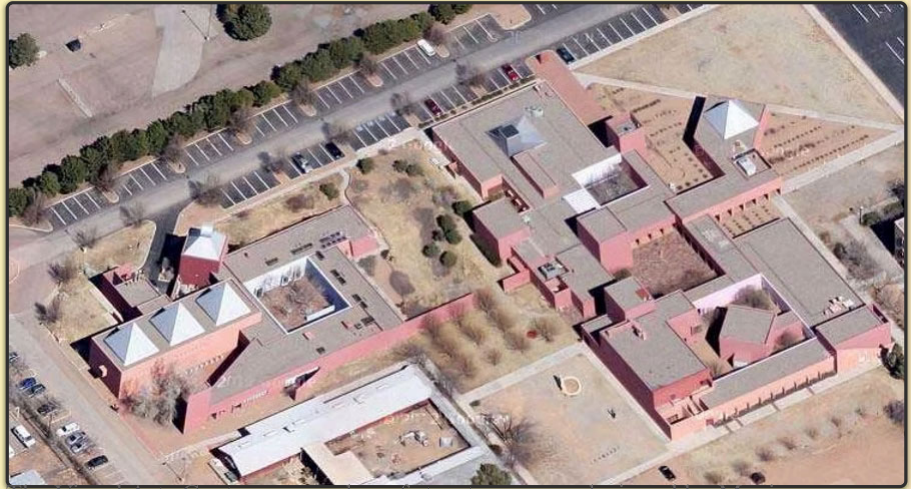
The school reopened that fall with a new focus as the Santa Fe University of Arts and Design. That edition too failed in 2018.

Bricks and Mortar

The 2,200-bed Bruns General Hospital was completed in 1943 on 200 acres of land provided by the city of Santa Fe. It treated many of the survivors of the Bataan Death March. After it was decommissioned in 1946, Brother Benildus was awarded 104 acres and 51 buildings—almost all temporary frame barracks buildings—as a site for St. Michael's College. For more than a decade, these structures served the college as classrooms, administration, dormitories, library, theater, and gymnasium.

In 1959 the College began its first permanent building, Benildus Hall, named for the first president. The two-story tan brick building became home to the library and classrooms.

Over the next four decades various donors—including the actress Greer Garson and her husband, oil man E.E. Fogelson—provided funds for campus buildings, including a new library, theatre, studio, and visual arts center.



The Visual Arts Center, a complex of structures, was designed by Mexican architect Ricardo Legorreta in 1995. Note the "deeply hued earth colors." The Google image was supplied by Mary Ann Sullivan of Bluffton University. <https://www.bluffton.edu/homepages/facstaff/sullivanm/newmexico/santafe/university/university.html>

Sports

Team Name: Red Knights

Colors: Red and Gold

Brother Benildus envisioned St. Michael's as becoming the "Notre Dame of the West." Basketball was instituted the first year, with football and baseball to follow in 1948; golf, tennis, and track were to be added later. St. Michaels quickly became a member of the New Mexico Intercollegiate Conference.

But the inexperienced and underfunded Red Knights enjoyed little success. The first football team had only one win and a tie. In three seasons the only conference win was a 1950 Homecoming victory over Highlands University. Football was dropped at the onset of the Korean War and never reopened.

By 1980 *The Paladin* shows only volleyball and men's and women's basketball teams. The men's basketball team later qualified for the NAIA tournament in 1983. There the Paladins upset fourth-ranked Cumberland 76-65 and Texas Wesleyan 71-65 before falling in the quarterfinals to eventual champion Charleston 67-62. In a cost-cutting measure all sports were dropped in 1986.

Following a Five million dollar gift from the Shellabarger family for tennis facilities, College of Santa Fe instituted a very successful tennis program in 2003. After finishing second in the NAIA tournament in 2004, the program was disbanded in 2006.



1980 Women's Basketball team. Image from the *Paladin*. Courtesy of *e-yearbook*. <http://www.e-yearbook.com/sp/cybb>

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