

# A Walking Tour of Centre College

Consistently ranked among the nation's top 50 leading undergraduate institutions, Centre College is also among the oldest. Centre was chartered by the Kentucky Legislature on January 21, 1819. Some of Kentucky's most important citizens sat on the first board of trustees, including future abolitionist James Birney and surgical pioneer Ephraim McDowell. Isaac Shelby, a Revolutionary War hero and the state's first governor, was Centre's first board chair.

The College opened its doors in the fall of 1820 with a single building—Old Centre—a faculty of two, and a student body of five. There are now approximately 1,215 students and 110 faculty members. The 152-acre campus includes more than 60 buildings and spreads across four of Danville's six historic districts. Two buildings are listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places; 11 others are included in National Register districts.

During its first century, Centre concentrated on the education of young men. In 1925, it took over Kentucky College for Women, but it maintained separate campuses for men and women until 1962.

The College began a residential program in London, England, in 1990, followed by a second program a year later in Strasbourg, France. A Latin America program, based in Merida, Mexico, began

in 1998. Centre also maintains popular exchange programs with universities in Japan, England, China, and Northern Ireland. No wonder *U.S. News & World Report* consistently ranks Centre among the top 15 in the nation for percentage of students who study abroad.

Centre alumni include two U.S. vice presidents, a chief justice and an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, at least 13 U.S. senators, and others who have achieved prominence in all walks of life. Their loyalty toward their alma mater is legendary. Since 1984, Centre has set national records for alumni giving, ranking No. 1 in 16 of the past 26 years.

And what of Centre's name? Certainly it reflects the College's location in the middle of the state. However, nobody today knows if Centre's founders intentionally selected the spelling they did or simply used one of two choices equally common in 1819. For modern questioners, perhaps Ann Landers answered it best. In a column about American versus British spellings, she wrote: "As for centre, that also belongs to the theatre of the absurd—except in the case of Centre College in Kentucky, which happens to be one of the finest small schools in the nation."

Please print all 6 pages.



Old Centre

**The walking tour will take about 45 minutes.** Begin at **Old Centre (1820)**. The first building of the College, Old Centre is listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places and included in the Smithsonian Guide to Historic Places. The six-column Greek Revival front portico and wings were added to the original Federal building in 1841, while the back (west) portico came nearly a hundred years later, in 1940. Over the years, Old Centre has included classrooms, student rooms, a dining hall, and a grammar school, as well as a law school (1894-1912) and library. During the Civil War, first Confederate and then Union troops used the build-

ing as a hospital before and after the nearby Battle of Perryville. Old Centre now houses the offices of the president, vice president for academic affairs, and vice president for college relations. Now cross Walnut Street.

The first building you will come to is **Franklin W. Olin Hall (1988)**. Olin Hall was built with a \$3.5-million grant from the F.W. Olin Foundation of New York City. It houses chemistry, physics, math, and computer science programs. In the foyer is a Foucault pendulum, which demonstrates the rotation of the earth beneath the plane of the pendulum's swing.



Olin Hall

From the front steps, look left to see **Palace of Memory (2000)**, a granite and earth-mound outdoor sculpture by Maine artist Tom Chapin, commissioned by faculty, staff, and friends of the College to mark the new millennium. Hidden on the face of the sculpture is a series of inscriptions; "a shorthand version of what it is that Centre is remembering," says the artist.



**Breckinridge Hall**

As you leave Olin you will see several residence halls to the right. Directly past Olin is **Breckinridge Hall (1892)**. Named after Reverend Robert J. Breckinridge, who was one of the founders of the Danville Theological Seminary (which built Breck Hall), as well as a leading advocate for public school education in Kentucky.

Although Centre and the seminary were independent institutions, they enjoyed close ties until the seminary moved to Louisville in 1901. A 1908 fire destroyed much of the original building. The building is supposedly haunted; the Breck ghost was particularly active in the 1970s.

Next to Breck is **Nevin Hall (1968)**. Nevin Hall traditionally houses freshmen men. Hugh Nevin, its architect, was a trustee who designed eight Centre buildings. Beyond Nevin is **The Quad (1962)**. This group of three residence halls (Stevenson/Vinson House, Cooper/Ganfield House, and Lamotte/Tyler House) was built to house Centre's six fraternities. Although the fraternities moved to new quarters in 1995, the area is still sometimes called the Old Fraternity Quad.

Continuing on the path, you will come to **Young Hall (1970/2010)**. Named for two Centre presidents, John C. Young and his son William Young, Centre Class of 1859, Young Hall houses the biology and psychology programs, with a small natural history museum located in the basement.

The building stands directly in front of the site of the first Young Hall, which had been built in 1909 and destroyed by fire only days before its scheduled demolition in 1970. A new two-story addition to the



**Young Hall (expected completion in 2010)**

building will add 40,000 square feet of space to this campus facility dedicated to instruction and research in the sciences.

As you continue toward the next building, you will see **The Flame (1969)**. The 11-foot, 2,000-pound bronze sculpture by Belgian artist John Somville and alumna Dottie Smith, Centre Class of 1969, symbolizes the lamp of knowledge on Centre's seal. Smith donated The Flame in honor of Centre's 150th anniversary and in memory of her father. "Running The Flame" is a popular (late-night) campus tradition.



**Crouse Hall, including Doherty Library**

Next is **Crouse Hall (1967/2005)**. Centre trustee George P. Crouse and his wife, Eleanor, were generous and loyal benefactors of the College. The front and main section of Crouse Hall is occupied by **Grace Doherty Library**, originally built with the help of a \$1-million grant from the Henry L. and Grace Doherty Charitable Foundation of New York City. In



**Sutcliffe Hall**

addition to the library, Crouse Hall includes classrooms, faculty offices, and The Vahlkamp Theater (a small movie theater). In 2005 “The College Centre” (a multi-million-dollar expansion of Crouse Hall and Sutcliffe Hall) created a state-of-the-art academic and athletic complex.

Past the arch is **Sutcliffe Hall (1915/1962/2005)**. Built in 1915 as the Boyle-Humphrey Alumni Gymnasium. The original name recognized an earlier athletic facility that honored two donors from the Class of 1866. The 1915 name also acknowledged the alumni whose gifts enabled the College to rebuild after a fire destroyed its new facility shortly before the scheduled opening. In 1962, the building was dramatically expanded and renamed to honor then-board chair Elbert Gary Sutcliffe, Centre Class of 1917, and his wife, Edith McClure Sutcliffe, Class of 1912. The building was expanded again with the 2005 College Centre project (see above). Centre’s tradition of exciting basketball stretches throughout the life of the building. The early days saw Colonel victories over such teams as the Kentucky Wildcats and the University of Tennessee. During the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, Sutcliffe was host to a number of NCAA Division III tournaments, including the women’s “Final Four” in 1989. Sutcliffe includes three gyms, the Buck Fitness Center, athletic offices, and the Hall of Fame Cafe. Behind Sutcliffe is the football field.

To the left of Sutcliffe is **Old Carnegie (1913)**. Built as the College library (the industrialist Andrew Carnegie provided \$30,000



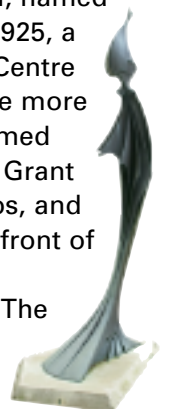
**Old Carnegie**



**Norton Center for the Arts**

toward its construction), Carnegie served that purpose until the construction of Doherty Library in 1967. It currently houses the Center for Global Citizenship and Career Services, as well as a special-occasion dining room. Carnegie is listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places.

Walk along the path between Carnegie and Sutcliffe, then cross College Street to the **Norton Center for the Arts (1973)**. Each year, the Norton Center offers a breath-taking array of entertainment: cellist Yo-Yo Ma, dancer Mikhail Baryshnikov, trumpeter Wynton Marsalis, raconteur Garrison Keillor, actress Lynn Redgrave, singers Dolly Parton and Art Garfunkel, Broadway musicals, and the Boston Pops (thrice), to name a few. In October 2000, vice presidential candidates Dick Cheney and Joe Lieberman faced off in the Norton Center for the year’s only vice presidential debate. When it opened, the building was called simply the Regional Arts Center or RAC (which is why drama students are still occasionally referred to as “Rackies”). In 1982, it was renamed in honor of Jane Morton Norton of Louisville, a Centre trustee and arts patron. The 85,000-square-foot complex was designed by the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation and includes the 1,500-seat Newlin Hall, named for Chauncey Newlin, Centre Class of 1925, a New York City lawyer and chair of the Centre board. At the back of the complex is the more intimate 350-seat Weisiger Theatre (named for Emma Weisiger, Class of 1875) and Grant Hall, which includes classrooms, studios, and offices for drama and music faculty. In front of the Norton Center is **Ex Astris (1978)**, designed by Louisville artist Tom Lear. The name means “from the stars.”





**Campus Center**

Across Walnut Street is the **Presbyterian Church**. Although long an independent institution, the College has historic ties to that church.

Cross College and Walnut streets, then walk along the front of the **Campus Center (2009)**. This two-story, 50,000 square foot facility was a \$15-million project, made possible by a gift to the College. The Campus Center includes the new Cowan Dining Commons, named for John Rice Cowan, Centre Class of 1890, a physician and 18-year chair of Centre’s board of trustees. It also contains a Grille/Snack Bar and a Starbucks coffee shop. The second floor houses the Student Life Office and contains a designated space for student organizations, meetings, and gatherings. Throughout the building are other socializing areas for members of the Centre community; they include informal seating areas, fireplaces, and a gaming area that includes pool tables and Wii game systems. The patio in front of the Campus Center is used each June for the stage of the Great American Brass Band Festival, an annual extravaganza that features bands from around the country—and the world—as well as Danville’s own Advocate Brass Band.

Cross Main Street at the light (there is a button to turn it red). Directly ahead of you are the **North Campus Residence Halls (1962/1963)**. This three-building complex was built to house women students after true co-education finally came to Centre with the closing of the women’s campus on Lexington Ave. Students moved into Acheson/Caldwell and Cheek/Evans (both facing Main Street) in January 1962. Yerkes (perpendicular to Main Street) was not ready until October 1963. The buildings are named for people associated with Kentucky College for Women. Men now live on some of the floors.



**Pearl Hall**

Behind the residence halls is the soccer field. Overlooking the field are the **Hillside Houses (1974)**, apartment-style student residences.

Further up is **Pearl Hall (2008)**. This 146-bed residence hall was made possible by a gift from Centre trustee Robert Brockman, Centre Class of 1963. Pearl Hall has been certified LEED GOLD for its environmentally friendly design and construction. This was Kentucky’s first LEED GOLD award and is the highest LEED rating for any residential facility in the state.

On the corner of Main and South Fifth streets is the **Ruby Cheek House (ca. 1860)**. The ground floor contains office space for retired professors and is also the location of the public safety office. Upper-class students live upstairs. For many years it was the home of Judge Samuel Cheek, Centre Class of 1920, and his wife, Centre music teacher Ruby Moss Cheek, Centre Class of 1929, who left the house to the College in her will.



**Ruby Cheek House**

Main Street will take you to shops, restaurants, and the **Centre Bookstore** and the **Hub Coffee House and Café**, on the corner of Main and Third. To return to campus, retrace your steps along Main Street.

Just past the North Campus residence halls, look across the street for a glimpse of **Sinking Spring**. The spring was part of seven acres deeded to the Centre trustees for \$400 in March 1819, soon after the College’s founding.

Archaeology classes began excavating in 1998. Among the most notable discoveries is a Fort Ancient arrow point that dates to a.d. 1200.

On the far corner of Main Street and St. Mildred's Court is the **Overstreet House (1971)**. The residence of the College's academic dean, it was built with a gift from James W. Overstreet, an electrical manufacturing company executive from Columbus, Ohio. At least two Centre presidents had lived in an earlier house on the site, which subsequently burned.



**Craik House**

On the corner of Main Street and Maple Avenue, is the **Craik House (1853)**. Centre presidents have lived in this brick Italianate house with its Greek Revival portico (added in the

early 1900s) since 1938. The College bought the house in 1937 with a bequest in honor of his class from Henry Craik, Centre Class of 1890. The College's 14th president, Robert L. McLeod, was the first president to move in. It is now home to Centre's 20th president, John A. Roush, and his family.



**Horky House**

Cross Maple Avenue to the **Horky House (ca. 1850)**. Centre's admission and financial aid offices have occupied the Horky House since 1992. Built as

a private residence, it was purchased and substantially remodeled with a bequest from Danville contractor John Horky, Centre Class of 1932.



**Chenault Alumni House**

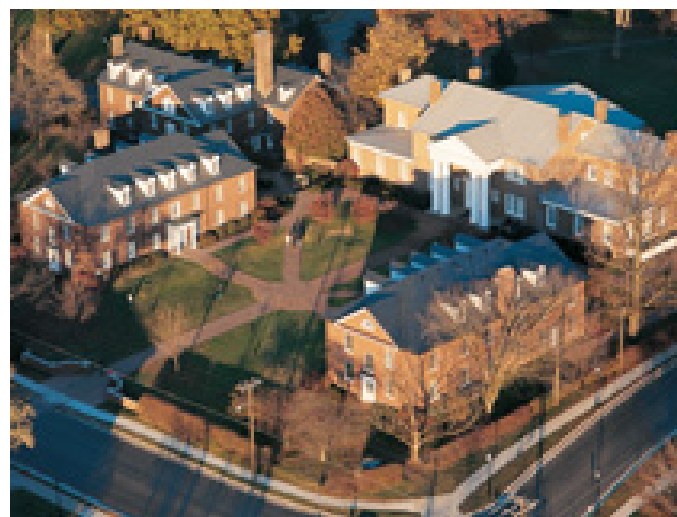
Next door is the **Chenault Alumni House (1904)**. Built as a private residence, this Colonial Revival building served for 30 years (1932-62) as the chapter

house for Phi Delta Theta fraternity. The College acquired it in 1979 and dedicated it in 1982 to the memory of banker and Centre benefactor Carroll C. Chenault



**Bingham Hall**

Jr., Centre Class of 1920. Retrace your steps past Horky House and cross Main Street at the light. As you walk along Maple Avenue you will reach **Bingham Hall (1988)**. The residence hall was made possible by a \$1-million gift from the Mary and Barry Bingham Sr. Fund, which the Bingham set up following the sale of their Louisville *Courier-Journal* newspaper to Gannett Inc.



**Old Centre Quad**

(Left to right: Wiseman Hall, McReynolds, Old Centre, Boles Hall)

Turn and look across the street for a view of the **Old Centre Quad**. To the left of Old Centre is **Wiseman Hall (1940)**. It is named for Centre trustee Guy E. Wiseman, Centre Class of 1885, whose bequest made the building possible, and originally housed freshmen. It remains a residence hall upstairs. The registrar's office is on the ground floor.

Facing Wiseman is its mirror image, **Boles Hall (1997)**. Ewing T. Boles, Centre Class of 1916, was a prominent Ohio investor and chair of the Centre board of trustees. The building houses the offices of finance and human resources. Boles Natatorium, across the street from Sutcliffe Hall, is also named for Mr. Boles. Between Old Centre and Wiseman Hall is **McReynolds Hall (1940)**. Named for James C. McReynolds, a U.S. Supreme Court judge and friend of the College, it was originally used as a dormitory and dining hall.



McReynolds Hall

After construction of the Cowan Dining Commons in 1962, McReynolds housed the infirmary. It is now a residence hall, with the Information Technology office on the ground floor.

Between McReynolds

and Old Centre is the memorial garden and **Columbarium (2000)** for special friends of the College. As you leave the memorial garden you will walk along **Benefactors Plaza (2008)**. Included in the Plaza are the names of members of Centre's donor recognition organization, the Lifetime Giving Society. A fountain depicting the **Three Graces (2008)** of Greek and Roman mythology is at the center of the Plaza. The Three Graces represent the daughters of Zeus and Eurynome of Greek mythology and the aspects of the spirit of giving: gracefulness, peace and happiness. As you leave this area and turn left, you will reach the end of Maple Avenue. To the right is **Greek Row**. On the right-hand side of the street are houses for three sororities (1994): in order from the top of the street, Kappa Alpha Theta, Kappa Kappa Gamma, and Delta Delta Delta. Houses for the four fraternities (1995) and Alpha Delta Pi, Centre's fourth sorority, are across the street: in order from the top of the street, Sigma Alpha Epsilon, Phi Kappa Tau, Sigma Chi, Alpha Delta Pi, and Phi Delta Theta. The fifth house currently serves as student housing. Beyond the field hockey field behind the fraternities, you can see the **Jones Visual Arts Center (ca. 1930s)**. This green and white striped building was originally a warehouse for the Jackson Chair Company. After extensive renovation, it reopened in 1998 as the home for Centre's art program. The JVAC includes a state-of-the-art hot glass studio and the AEGON Gallery. It is named for Louisville stockbroker Clarence Jones, Centre Class of 1924, whose \$3.25-million bequest helped fund the project.

Continuing east down Walnut Street brings you to **Walnut House**. The campus Post Office and print shop are on the ground floor, while students live



Three Graces

upstairs. Of greater interest is the C6-H0 painted on the side wall, a legacy of Centre's most famous football game. In 1921, Centre's Praying Colonels upset Harvard University (at Harvard) in a football game that made headlines around the nation. At the time, Harvard had not been defeated in five years. The final score—Centre 6, Harvard 0—was painted throughout town by jubilant Colonel fans.



Walnut House

Next is the **Breeze House (ca. 1900/1997)**. Built as a private residence and later used as a boarding house for railroad employees, the building was renovated by the College in 1997. It is currently home to the Communications Office. The name honors William H. Breeze, Centre Class of 1945. A former Centre trustee, he returned to his alma mater after a career as an insurance company executive in Cincinnati in order to serve as vice president for external affairs, acting president, and a number of other important roles.



Combs Center Warehouse

At the end of the street is the **Combs Center**, often called the **Warehouse (ca. 1902)**. It is named for Leslie L. Combs II, Centre Class of 1925, a Lexington horse breeder whose bequest helped convert a turn-of-the-century hemp warehouse into a modern student center. Original plank flooring, brick walls, and one-foot-square oak columns that run from the basement to the third floor remain.

Walk back along Walnut Street to return to Old Centre, where you started the tour.



For more information about Centre College write, call, or e-mail

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