Halfway around the world -- in fact about as far as you can get from Viterbo's Murphy Center Dan Hale was earning 16 credits of college credit he would never forget.

Hale, recipient of the prestigious Dr. Scholl Scholarship, is a biology major from Hartford who had never left the U.S. before landing in Kenya last fall as part of a solo experience set up by Viterbo's global education office. After nearly four weeks of intensive study of African culture and the national language of Swahili, Hale, who plans to become a physician, began his month-long independent study with the Flying Doctors” stationed in Nairobi. This non-governmental organization composed mostly of Nairobans and some foreign volunteers, travels to neighboring villages evacuating residents too sick to be helped in primitive rural medical facilities. The absence of electricity and running water and a lack of medicine, supplies and know-how made for a timeless setting where churches and homes served as hospitals and herb-toting shamans functioned as doctors.

At the time, Hale was the only student who worked with the Flying Doctors.” During his stay with them, he helped bring six critically ill villagers to Nairobi hospitals. The most serious of these cases occurred during his last week overseas. It involved the birth of a set of Siamese twins who were joined at the abdomen. The account was published in the Kenyan national newspaper. By the time Hale and the physicians arrived, the new mother had lost a lot of blood. As they landed, the whole village had lined up along the runway in gratitude and pure curiosity for many had not seen a plane in years. Local police were summoned to break up this crowd of bystanders so that the Flying Doctors” could proceed with the evacuation.

The fate of these three patients is still unknown to Hale since he left the country shortly after delivering them to a Nairobi urban medical facility. He hopes to hear word of their successful recovery soon. Though not pining for television and the much-accelerated lifestyle of his homeland, Hale missed family and friends. Being away was the most challenging part of my trip. Though meeting new people took the edge off my homesickness, there was always this underlying loneliness, not that it was negative, but rather reinforcement of my love for those close to me.”

Throughout his visit, gentle, trusting Nairobans welcomed the young traveller. There I learned to be hospitable. In addition to tea, a meal and a place to stay they gave me all their time,” says Hale of his host family. Even in the largest and most modern of Kenyan cities, there is a comfortable, ponderous pace to life. Asking directions from someone usually meant a guided tour through bustling streets to your destination and people did not hesitate to go several blocks out of their way to help bewildered tourists.
One of my favorite experiences was time spent in a small village with no electricity where life literally revolves around the sun, creating time to get in touch with oneself and with nature. The experience was calming; we rose and slept in sync with nature; we walked and talked a lot," remembered the 21-year-old adventurer.

The pinnacle of his journey was a trek up Mt. Kenya, the second highest mountain in the country. The three mile climb was challenging but I was well rewarded when I stood and looked down upon a carpet of clouds," affirms Hale. He and his six fellow hikers did not encounter any dangerous beasts while on the mountain, though the oatmeal in their backpacks created a curious attraction to some rambunctious monkeys. They made a steal but it didn't matter. The oatmeal was stale anyway," laughs Hale. On the more civilized side of things, Hale had much human contact. He particularly enjoyed a question and answer session at a secondary school in a small village. His audience was intrigued by racism, welfare and other government programs, and the economy in the U.S. And yes, even last year's O.J. Simpson trial became a topic for discourse. The media used the trial and the war in Bosnia as bad examples of things that would never happen in Kenya. These events served as propaganda for the government who played it up so that an outsider would think the states had fallen apart. I soon caught on to this tactic of blowing things way out of proportion," explains Hale.

Hale's circle of friends has just grown to encompass those he met along his journey, including his host families to whom he has written several times. Once he establishes himself as a physician, Hale plans to rejoin the Flying Doctors' and this land of fiery African sunsets where adventure, opportunity and tremendous need intersect.

The diversity of the people there has made me more aware of the world we live in. This understanding is not just academic; it is a part of life and it becomes part of who you are,"said Hale who is now settling back into life as a traditional Viterbo College student. One final semester and then it's off to medical school. Then, who knows when adventure will call?

Service Bound

Spring break equals warm weather, great tans, party time....well not always. That beeline to the nearest sunny beach will have to wait at least another year for 16 Viterbo students, who instead ventured to David Kentucky, the heart of the impoverished Appalachian Mountains, to tutor high school students, clean, paint and perform various other service projects.

An entire week was spent working at the David School, located in the isolated coal rich, dirt poor regions of rural Kentucky. The school enrolls students who have fallen through the cracks at public school. They are either so poor that they cannot attend school, or they have given up and dropped out of school.

The Outreach program was organized by Earl Madary (campus ministry) and intern, Sue Ernster. Juliana Eiken, a sophomore from Spring Grove Minnesota kept a diary, excerpts of which she agreed to share with Strides readers. The following is an edited and abridged version:

MARCH 2, 1996 DAY 1:

We arrived at David today in the early evening. There was a quick orientation at the David
school for us and two other college groups: Purdue and Loyola. We gathered in a small room to talk about the week. Excitement, laughter, smiles, and yawns of sheer exhaustion filled this room of almost complete strangers. I think this will be a great week.

**MARCH 3, 1996 DAY 2:**
We began working today by cleaning out our cabins. The three crews here began to mingle. We had to move donated household items to the David school for a rummage sale. I think we are all anxious to hear what our assignments are tomorrow. We had a great discussion tonight. We met more members of the David school staff. How dedicated and caring they are. We each said a prayer for the week, asking for guidance, openness, love, and great memories. A big day is ahead of us tomorrow.

**MARCH 4, 1996--DAY 3:**
The time has come! Today I stayed at the David High School to tutor. The David School is wonderful for these students. Many of them are happy there even if they don't like to show it all of the time. Most of them hadn't thought much about their futures. Some mentioned the armed forces or local mining. One young lady wants to be a pediatrician and I hope she makes it. She told me she goes to David not because of poor grades, but because she loves the teachers so much, as compared to her public school.

**MARCH 5, 1996--DAY 4:**
Since I stayed clean by tutoring in the school yesterday, I figured I should get dirty today. We started the day painting the gym and entrance of the new school. A visiting pastor held Mass in the David school after supper. Just like the old days; gathering in an old building and praising the Lord in communion, with what you have. It is a good reminder of how we should live our lives today. We did a little shopping at the David craft shop, which is run by the mission. They went out into the homes of the families in the area and taught crafts to the wives, which they now sell in the shop.

**MARCH 6, 1996--DAY 5:**
I helped give an assessment test to a man in his 30s who was there for the first time. He couldn't read, and so I helped him answer the questions. He had dropped out of school because he needed to work. To the public he may be perceived as a stupid man, but that he is not. He wants to learn to read and possibly go back to school. After supper tonight we had a bonfire. By looking into those flames we can see many things. We all will return with changed souls.

**MARCH 7, 1996--DAY 6:**
Because of the weather today, the David school was canceled, and because of road conditions nobody went out to the Adult Learning Centers. The power of one week of hard work, good laughs, and thousands of smiles is amazing, the bond that forms will always be there...the David School.

**MARCH 8, 1996--DAY 7:**
The final day. Again the school canceled classes because of inclement weather. These conditions also prompted an early start on our journey home. After goodbyes and thank-yous, we hit the road once again, and 16 hours later, were back in La Crosse. One more final prayer as a group, and then we were off to sleep in our own warm beds. This has been a most memorable week. I have learned so much about others, myself and the Lord. These words cannot do justice to what I have experienced.

*A run down building
Unsuitable say the inspectors*
but I say
UNBELIEVABLE
teachers with moon-sized hearts
students with star-twinkling eyes
maybe at times a mask is worn
but under it all is where the
David school lies.-
in the heart
in the soul
the frame may crack, or break,
or leak, or sway, but........
but the dedication, the determination,
the hope, the love, the accomplishments
lives come out different
lives are challenged
students are given the
KEY

**Brandenberger Salutes Student Volunteerism**

When asked about their priorities, a recent survey of the America's high school and college students revealed that young adults ranked making money to be more important than developing a meaningful philosophy of life. Years ago, the reverse was true.

Dr. Jay Brandenberger delivered that message to an audience comprised of students and their parents and friends who gathered at Viterbo College this winter.

Brandenberger, who is the Coordinator of Experiential Learning at the Notre Dame Center for Social Concerns, appeared in La Crosse as part of a volunteer recognition program for area youth. Despite Brandenberger's strong message expressing concern over today's values, his appearance and message was anything but an indictment of the students in the audience that evening. The 62 young adults who were honored were selected by their schools for exceptional volunteer service. Viterbo students included in the program were Susan Anderson, Tammy Brunkhorst, Kris Conners, Paula Flaskrud, Danielle Klingbeil, Angie Timm, Melinda Van Slyke, Ben Weiher, Scott White and Tessa Zappa.

I am not here tonight simply to praise the efforts of student volunteers," Brandenberger said. They know what they are about, and I sense they're not in it for the praise. I want to give context to their efforts and do so in light of the challenges we face as we enter a new millennium."

He proceeded to ask, What do we know about our current generation, one that has been labeled simplistically by popular culture as 'Generation X?'"
Brandenberger’s studies reveal that although members of ‘Generation X’ are active in the environmental movement and efforts to promote racial equality, only 28% consider keeping up with political affairs as important.

That level of disinterest concerns Brandenberger. Is ‘Generation X’ prepared to meet the daunting challenges before us as economic disparity continues to grow, nuclear weapons still point across oceans and our healthcare, welfare and education systems need attention and reform where one in five children live in poverty?” he asked.

After Brandenberger’s presentation, student representatives from each school were given a chance to respond. Viterbo junior, Angie Timm invoked memories of her early years in 4-H as the beginning of her awareness of the need to provide service. In today’s dangerously influential society, children need safe, exemplary paths to follow; to guide them away from prejudice, violence and rebellion. Volunteers can really make a difference for America’s youth."

The program was co-sponsored by Viterbo and the La Crosse Area Chapter of the Notre Dame Alumni Association which made possible Brandenberger’s visit.

**Criminal Justice Major Introduced**

To those familiar with Viterbo’s Franciscan mission, it is not surprising that the college has just added a criminal justice major to its roster, making the first significant curriculum change in decades.

Preparing students for employment in criminal justice is a natural extension of Viterbo’s quest for peace, integrity and equality. Viterbo offers the background needed to understand the ever-broadening spectrum of people and cultures with which the criminal justice system comes into contact,” said Dr. Roland Nelson, director of admission at Viterbo College.

Introduction of the Criminal Justice major also makes good business sense said Nelson who indicated prospective students have shown interest in the new program.

Nelson concluded that the Criminal Justice major was added in response to growing student interest. This enthusiasm coupled with a recent study which reveals strong employment and earnings potential for correction officers, police detectives and supervisors, and parole officers speaks for the viability of the program,” Nelson said.

Other new majors and minors are being bantered around as possibilities. Last year, Viterbo introduced Spanish as a new major, and barring any unforeseen problems, a minor in Environmental Studies will also be added to Viterbo’s new curricular offering.
There is a power in smallness

The mere 26 letters
of the alphabet
can be combined and juggled
into words and sentences
that carry the deepest thoughts
of one man to another.
The scant 10 digits
on a telephone dial
can be used to
put two individuals into dialogue
across the distance
of a continent or an ocean.

The fact
of smallness
therefore
must not automatically be taken
to be incapacitating.
Realize that
even if your group of workers,
your circle of friends
or your religious associates
have dwindled drastically in numbers,
few as they may now be,
they can be taken up
by the Holy Spirit
and used as His triumphant vehicle.

For
God works
in wondrous ways
His marvels to achieve.

From “Reflections: Path for Prayer”
by James Turro

Viterbo/FSPA history runs deep

Viterbo and the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration share a lot of common ground together. Their collective histories go way back, ever since 1890 when the Sisters founded what is now known as Viterbo College. However, that’s all about to change in the not-to-distant future. Viterbo faces a dilemma similar to that of other colleges founded by women
religious. Quite simply, there are not enough Sisters left in the order to replenish the ranks vacated by those retiring or leaving Viterbo for other ministries.

This reality comes as no shock to an astute observer. At its peak, the FSPAs numbered 1,170. As of March, 1996, that figure stood at 535, and many included in the current count are retired. Although the population of Franciscans steadily plummeted throughout the latter part of this century, education was always a priority and Viterbo could count on St. Rose Convent to supply a steady stream of nuns who were assigned or elected to teach and staff virtually all of the positions at the college. Just a decade ago, 37 Sisters were still listed as members of Viterbo's faculty and administration.

However, a hard dose of demographic reality is now on campus to stay. In fall 1996, only four Sisters will remain on staff full-time. (Several others teach or work part-time.) While a progression of well-earned, well-beyond-age-65 retirements have diminished the ranks of FSPAs at Viterbo, also gone is the hundreds of years of cumulative experience, commitment and Franciscan culture.

So what does all this really mean? And some big questions beg to be answered.

Can Viterbo continue to proclaim its Franciscanism without significant numbers of Franciscans on staff? Will the Sisters continue to influence and remain interested in the college they so steadily guided for over 100 years? What responsibilities do lay faculty and staff inherit as part of this demographic changeover?

Like a stone flung from afar which disturbs the glassy stillness of the pond, the ripples felt from decreasing numbers of FSPAs permeates from the central mission of Viterbo and affects all areas of campus operation. What these changes will ultimately mean are likely to depends on who you ask. We share comments from several individuals we interviewed for this special Strides report.

Sister Kathleen Kenkel: God's work showing through

Sister Kathleen Kenkel will be the only full-time FSPA faculty member employed by Viterbo College next year. (Several others work in administrative positions.) That singular distinction isn't necessarily bothersome. However, there are a few caveats to consider, she says, while carefully choosing the right words to express her inner conviction. "It's true. There's more of a challenge here than there used to be. I've seen more diversity and that's good; more individualism and that's good too. But, because of these factors, there is less unity. It's not unique to Viterbo and we see this breakdown of unity happening in other institutions, the church, healthcare literally wherever you go."

While pushing for individualism and pulling together for a common mission aren't necessarily the ingredients for harmony, Sister Kathleen is not at odds with the new reality. In fact, despite the heartburn that can go with dissent, she welcomes the ongoing change. It's exciting and requires faith in a future that is yet to unfold, she says.

"I see so much goodwill and dedication here. We may differ on how this is carried out, but that has to do with personalities rather than mission and ministry. The Sisters put in more than 100 years at Viterbo. I have great trust that this is God's work and we've been a part of it. We are dying out, but this is part of a greater plan," Sister Kathleen said in reflecting upon what lies in store for the FSPA order. As retirements and deaths serve as reminders that fewer
and fewer Sisters are available to pursue active ministry, Sister Kathleen sees hope in the evolution. "I grieve the loss of so many of my lifelong friends. The Sisters I know and knew are truly pillars. But even as I grieve, I trust.

“You know there is still a lot of support for Viterbo College from the FSPA community. We still value our institutional identity although we see it as no longer needing to be staffed by FSPAs. The decline in Sisters invites all people to be holy and evangelical not just the Sisters. Our community has had to let go and say others can do it too.”

Sister Kathleen, who is from Earling, Iowa, joined the Franciscan community in 1948. It was a different world and "pulling together for the common good" had a different meaning. So did the concepts of obedience and unity. "Back then, we were taught as Sisters, to smile, be nice, forgive. Personal expression was not encouraged. being Christian was, and you didn't have conflicts as a result. We offered any suffering up to God.

"Today our community encourages individual responsibility and is supportive and accepting of more diversity. Now we need to establish the balance between unity and individuality.” Maintaining the healthy balance Sister Kathleen refers to is not an easy task, she says. "There are dangers of course. What happens if we cease to be committed to the ideals of our founding institution? What if we forget our roots or allow individuality to take priority over community and collegiality?" are all questions she raises.

At 66, Sister Kathleen Kenkel, FSPA, fully expects to be at Viterbo next year, greeting and teaching another generation of students. That could change in the future ("After all, I don't have a retirement-at-75 plan) but now she feels called to the teaching mission in the Religious Studies Department at Viterbo College. "I've been at Viterbo twice. I left the first time in 1983. I was disillusioned with institutions and didn't think of Viterbo College as a future possibility. Then I interviewed with President Medland and was impressed with ideas on the pastoral dimension of this college. As a result I feel a greater call to this sense of ministry.”

Sisters Helen Elsbernd & Celesta Day-Seeking Franciscan partnerships

Over twenty years ago, Sister Celesta Day talked with Sister Kathleen about a position at Viterbo College. At Sister Celesta's urging, Sister Kathleen pursued and received a master's degree in theology from Notre Dame and returned to La Crosse to teach at Viterbo. Sister Celesta is no longer vice president of the FSPAs and her days of dispensing vocational advice to discerning colleagues are over.

It's the much bigger picture that has Sister Celesta's attention these days. As head of the Mission Effectiveness Program for the FSPA community, part of her job is to assure that the lay men and women who are employed at sponsored institutions such as Viterbo, have the chance to understand and practice the mission so important to her religious community. "Passing the torch” to the laity should be done responsibly, Sister Celesta believes. After all, how else can the tradition and mission continue if future leaders are not familiar with Viterbo's roots, which tell of the stories and traditions which give Viterbo a life of its own and a distinctive personality.
"I can remember very clearly," Sister Celesta said during an interview at St. Rose Convent, "that when Sister Grace Clare Beznouz died (for complete story see page ___) several Viterbo lay people said something like, 'There are fewer Sisters than ever here now. Who's going to continue these great contributions?' I said to them, 'You are.'"

It's really not all that different from certain times in the past. At one point, our order was down to 11 Sisters and they were not all professed. There are periods of transitions, and mission effectiveness is one way to negotiate with partners. We don't need to be the direct line, but we are involved in the process with our sponsored institutions.

"We didn't need to articulate that kind of thing when we had a lot of religious. You just assumed it was going to continue," Sister Celesta said reflecting upon the dramatic shifts in personnel that occurred at Viterbo in just over three decades. In 1961, math and chemistry instructor Catherine La Pante was appointed to the first full-time faculty position and Jim Larson and Jim Lawrence followed a year later. Many would follow in those footsteps.

The 70s were a time of major transition and Viterbo entered the decade with a faculty comprising of 39% laity. Ten years later the figure skyrocketed to 66%.

Viterbo was not alone. The huge shift in religious influence was being felt all across the nation. In 1966, 230 colleges were sponsored by women religious as opposed to 117 today.

Despite the decreasing population of Franciscans, the Viterbo community was still very centered around the Sisters who made up for their smaller numbers through the dominating, round-the-clock commitment and the forceful personalities of those who remained. Individuals such as Sisters Grace Clare, nursing; Marie Leon La Croix, theatre; Arita Dopkins, religious studies; Agnes Marie Nash, home economics; Celestine Cepress and Thea Bowman, English these names only represent a few of the hundreds of nuns who provided for the distinctive personality of Viterbo.

Sister Helen Elsbernd, now an FSPA executive officer, remembers her thirteen years as dean at Viterbo and what it was like during the 70s and 80s.

In hiring a lot of faculty, I spent considerable time talking about Catholic schools and the philosophy. I would indicate to applicants that they would need to be comfortable saying the Lord's Prayer before meetings," Sister Helen said.

Now, you don't need to say, 'Are you comfortable?' but rather, 'Can you help us with the mission?' It's not only a matter of who's the best in the discipline. There should also be an understanding of the meaning and values of the mission."

Sisters Helen and Celesta are anxious to promote partnerships wherever they can benefit the founding mission of the Franciscans. Viterbo remains fertile ground for these initiatives but the college is not the only focus. While the number of nuns are decreasing, St. Rose Convent is hardly ready to close its doors. If anything, the doors are opening wider and an excitement prevails. Several major remodeling projects are in process. The Franciscan Spirituality Center welcomes a steady throng of people from the community who attend workshops and programs centering around principles important to the Sisters. Affiliates, that is, lay men and women who share the core values and principles of the FSPAs, are encouraged to 'partner up' for the new millennium.
There's a lot of work to be done and like Sister Kathleen, both Helen and Celesta believe God's plans are continuing to unfold in new and different ways. Franciscanism, they remind listeners, actually began as a secular order.

Every religious organization has a peak," Sister Celesta said. It starts with an individual, grows over time, and then eventually starts to go on the downsize. What you have to do is go back to your roots for the stories and heroes which tell the Viterbo story and reflect the mission. Who were those first lay faculty, or others, like Sister Grace Clare, who ended an era? All these chapters belong to Viterbo." The concept of a book makes for a good metaphor. Sister Celesta knows that Franciscan ideals will continue to flourish if the new generation of Viterbo caretakers integrate what they learn from earlier written and oral traditions. That way, Viterbo's future will inevitably be different but still very Franciscan at a very critical time in the history of our country, she adds.

Viterbo's role is to provide more than just a general education. There is the opportunity to do things that can't be done somewhere else. Viterbo can provide a quality education in an environment that has values where students learn not only to make a living but how to live in the secular world. So often it is easy to look at the knowledge part. But there's also service and faith included in the Viterbo crest and that's the challenging part to instill."

Sister Margaret Wagner—Resigning, not retiring

Sister Margaret Wagner, Viterbo's departing vice president for Student Life, doesn't plan to retire just yet. She's 65-years-young and simply "shifting gears" she says to answer another ministry calling. From caring for the day-to-day needs of students, Sister Margaret will be going to the FSPA Marywood Retreat Center in northern Wisconsin, to cook, manage food service and provide hospitality to visitors.

The job she's leaving and the job she's going to couldn't be more different, but that's the way ministry works, particularly when it includes Franciscan hospitality which the Sisters take with them wherever they go.

Sister Margaret leaves feeling good about many of the lay staff and faculty who are filling the ranks of the departing nuns. We can carry on this partnership together. The FSPAs looked at this in the 80s. We strongly emphasized collaboration with lay individuals. Actually this has already occurred to a larger degree at another sponsored institution, the Franciscan Health System. In that case, we created an office of Mission Effectiveness right at the hospital."

While there is a sadness in the Sisters' letting go, Sister Margaret sees a positive side to an otherwise difficult moment. Look at all the years and years the Sisters were here. We had such a strong impact. However, I believe there are lots of good people here. Administration and faculty who relate to people with reverence and respect. I think those elements are core to our mission statement and Franciscanism and it's something we constantly struggle with. I don't give a hoot about the words. It all comes down to how we treat people."

It's hard to let someone like Sister Margaret leave campus for a final time without having her share a story or two about the Viterbo she remembered years ago as a student.

Murphy Center was a new building then and the most elegant place was Room 417. All the famous speakers and presenters came there including the Trapp Family Singers....We never would have believed if you told us there would be the beautiful Fine Arts Center.
"I remember so many good teachers...Sister Celestine was superb and demanding. You worked but didn't mind it....There was Sister Rose Kreibich, now there was an excellent teacher who was so logical and had many human interests.

Our routine started at five minutes to 5 a.m. Then breakfast, classes and study, evening recreation, followed at 8 p.m. by more homework. Lights were out at 9 p.m.

We observed a modified silence, so although we visited, we didn't sit around talking unless it was about work. Occasionally there was a movie and on the weekend we would get caught up on laundry and take care of the cleaning responsibility we were all assigned.

Did you know the whole place was cleaned by the nuns? And when Marian Hall was built, we cleaned that too. I always got the bathrooms because I was young. Believe me, this place was spic and span." Although you get the impression Sister Margaret doesn't necessarily yearn for a return to those times or daily rituals, many early traditions the FSPAs established continue to be a source of pride.

Our education was always very important and we would sacrifice for it. We are a very well educated order. Many Sisters would get sent all over the country for masters' degrees and return to share what they had learned. That way, we enhanced our personal and community lives."

Father Tom O'Neill - Keeping the Franciscan tradition alive

Others will remain to create new stories and pick up on the traditions that began at Viterbo over a century ago. Father Tom O'Neill, director of Campus Ministry feels that a strong religious presence will always be a part of Viterbo. Maybe not always with an abundance of Franciscan Sisters, but through the empowerment of others.

In my lifetime, I've seen this happen over and over again," he says. The nuns were the only ones who taught me in grade school. That was thirty years ago. I went to a Jesuit high school. All the teachers were Jesuits. That changed. I also saw it when I worked at Saint Mary's College in Winona with the Christian Brothers. Now those numbers are way down.

"I see our role as part of a shared mission. Whereas it was members of the order, now it us who must share in the Franciscan mission. Originally, here as elsewhere, it is the religious order which starts an institution and others follow in those footsteps. It is now up to those of us who stay, to see and support the founders' purpose and intent."

As long as there is a need for Viterbo College, we will continue to exist and care for our students." After all, Father O'Neill adds, knowing that the roots run deep at Viterbo College, While the Franciscans might not always be here, our physical proximity to our neighbors to St. Rose Convent which is just across the street will always be there."

And, on the St. Rose side of the street, Sister Celesta Day holds great hope for the college so many Sisters strived to nurture and to build. She continues her work with the laity and keeps telling the stories and invites dialogue and integration to keep the Franciscan tradition which started at Viterbo College in 1890 alive and flourishing well into the uncharted 21st century.
We invite all our partners to respect others without regard for status. Francis did. There’s beauty and goodness which is also part of the tradition. Even if these ideals aren’t money generating, it’s the enrichment of life that’s important.”

Sister Celesta, mindful of changing times, welcomes the introspection that this new era will usher in. “I have the feeling people are ready for a reinstatement of tradition and ritual, not a lot, but some meaningful symbols. It’s a matter of timing,” she says.

Meanwhile, officials plan for the opening of another school year beginning this September, the 106th since Viterbo was founded. Greeting the approximately 1,500 students will be a new order comprised of a small number of Franciscan Sisters, a large contingent of lay men and women, one priest and one brother. A diversified group indeed, all united for the common purpose of bringing Viterbo into the 21st century, fulfilling that part of God’s greater plan known only to God.

The passing of a legacy: Sister Grace Clare Beznouz: 1923-96

An emptiness pervades the halls of Brophy Nursing Center. The matriarch of the Viterbo College School of Nursing who now after 40 years, is present only in spirit.

On February 9, 1996 Sister Grace Clare Beznouz, 73, died at Gundersen/Lutheran Medical Center in La Crosse. At her bedside were Sisters Rochelle Potaracke and Laurian Pieterek, Father Tom O’Neill and Vivien Edwards, dean of the Viterbo School of Nursing.

Though Sister Grace Clare had resigned as Chair of the Viterbo School of Nursing in 1989, she remained a constant presence in the department. She served as administrative assistant and professor until early November when injuries sustained from a fall incapacitated her. Sister underwent three surgeries to repair her shattered bones, but never truly recovered.

As fellow student, teacher, advisor and friend, Sister Grace Clare has touched the lives of those in the college community in profound ways. Her unwavering commitment to Viterbo was personified in her selfless nature. She embodied the spirit of St. Francis and was as committed to his teachings as she was to academics. Many in the Nursing department regarded her as a mother figure. Others certainly remember her at graduation time assisting with rehearsal and passing out caps and gowns, at the fine arts events that she never missed, or through her dedicated work on the Alumni Association Board. A kindred spirit, a matriarch and a legacy. Sister Grace Clare dedicated her life to Viterbo and will continue to live on in the hearts of those she has touched.

Unique partnership bears fruit

La Crosse voters said “yes” to a referendum which provided partial funding for a Health Science Center building which was supported by a five member consortium including Viterbo College. Other partners are Western Wisconsin Technical College, UW-L, Gundersen-Lutheran, and Franciscan Skemp Healthcare. A new $26 million dollar building which will offer a variety of health related programs, will be constructed near the UW-L campus.
According to President Medland, Viterbo’s involvement “assures that we will have a strong voice in long term future of healthcare in this region.” Initially, Viterbo’s involvement will be minimal as most of the funding for the building is derived from State monies and the taxpayer referendum. Viterbo’s nursing and dietetic programs will remain in Brophy Nursing Center but the new center will conceivably be the site of future clinicals and some health services for students.

The Center is expected to be completed by 1999.

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**High School Students Get a Jump Start on the College Scene**

There’s no telling who you might run across in class these days. Here to stay are the non-traditional older*” students who can be seen in large numbers lugging briefcases and backpacks up and down Murphy Center corridors. However, that’s yesterday's news. Now it's time to meet Viterbo’s ‘new kids on the block’.

I really get a kick out of telling people that I am going to college,” said Molly Crothers, and Aquinas High School senior who is studying Spanish at Viterbo College under a new state program which offers college opportunities for Wisconsin's brightest adolescents. This year alone, Crothers is joined by 20 other area high schoolers who are enrolled in the Post Secondary Enrollment Options program (PSEO) at Viterbo. Some have discovered it's not all that different although there are subtle differences which require an adjustment.

John Berger, who is from Logan High School, knows he needs to be ready when he walks into a Viterbo classroom. It’s more of an ‘on-your-own’ kind of thing, since instructors only give directions once,” said the seventeen year old who is enrolled in psychology and philosophy courses.

PSEO was created to provide worthwhile academic challenges for students with unusual abilities and to offer the opportunity to begin college work while completing their high school program.

The school district picks up the tab if no comparable high school course is offered in the particular district. Viterbo began participation in PSEO in 1993 and has since enrolled 43 students through the program. However, a variation of this program has been in existence at Viterbo since 1978.

Viterbo uses the current admission policy which examines student class rank, grade point average and ACT scores, to determine acceptance of PSEO-applying students. Every so often, exceptions crop up, one notable example is Ezra Wall, an eighteen year old from La Crosse, who has been home-schooled since second grade because his parents felt their involvement in his education should be greater and they wanted to have more say in what he was taught. Given that I have had no basis for comparison, my experience at Viterbo has reaffirmed that I am able to do the same work as everyone else. It's healthy competition and a good experience," he said. When asked about the greatest difference between the two modes of education, he laughed The teacher is not my mother.”
For the most part, students like Berger, Wall and Crothers, represent the majority of youngsters who enjoy the challenge and stimulation associated with the college environment. According to the associate director of admission Debra Anderson, Generally, they have been very appreciative and a large percentage of those who come as juniors continue on as seniors."

Occasionally, Viterbo admits a student who doesn't quite fit the profile needed for this program, said Anderson. Sometimes a student doesn't cut it academically, though equally as often it is a maturity issue. Good social skills are also an important factor in determining a student's success, and this is one reason that we now require them to register in person," she added.

Aquinas senior Mary Beyers found that she blended in rather well in her Spanish class. Many of the people in my class, including the instructor, did not even know I was in high school," she remarked. I have found that I have to work a lot harder in college than I do in high school. Instructors expect a lot more from you and you learn something different every day," said Lesley Kubistal who maxed out" on English classes at Onalaska High. She also expressed that her Viterbo experience has given her an advantage in knowing what the college scene is all about.

By the way, the Admissions Office at Viterbo isn't complaining the least about this onslaught of PSEO high schoolers on campus. Many will remain familiar faces on campus as nearly half of the seniors have applied full time for the fall of 1996.

Scholl Scholarship winner announced

Laurel Hansen of a Viola Wisconsin, was named the winner of Viterbo College's Dr. Scholl Scholarship.

Hansen indicated she plans to double major in biology and chemistry in order to pursue career plans as a family practitioner. The Scholl scholarship, Viterbo's most prestigious, is a full four year renewable scholarship valued at over $40,000.

Twenty-two students finalists from around the tri-state area travelled to the Viterbo campus to compete in the scholarship day.

Alum returns for presentation

Frances (Thunderchief) Steindorf ’80 returned to Viterbo College to share with students his interpretation of the American past which is quite different from the typical textbook version of U.S. history taught in the high schools.

Steindorf's appearance coincided with a month-long campus wide Diversity Days Celebration which featured a number of presentations on cultural and ethnic topics.
Spirituality is intricately interwoven into all aspects of Indian culture. I was told as a child that thunderbeams brought us here," reflects Steindorf as he tells his people's version of the creation story. Steindorf originally from west central Wisconsin, is of Native American and German descent, and a member of the Hochungra (also called Ho Chunk and Winnebago) nation. Steindorf explained to a history class of 50 Viterbo students that cultural differences are a timeless issue that still serve as a barrier to the Hochungra.

His mother left boarding school in the eighth grade after being constantly berated by European teachers for speaking in her native tongue. This did not muddle her perception of the importance of education, however.

This value is reflected in Steindorf's endless pursuit of knowledge. Executive director of the Education Department for the Hochungra nation, he is currently working towards a P.h. D. in educational administration. I never talked in class from K-12. It wasn't that I had nothing to say, but that in my culture it is disrespectful to look someone directly in the eyes and we dialogue with a lot of silence," explains Steindorf. In college his instructors were amazed at the quality of his written work, because he seldom said a word in class.

Steindorf smiles now as he remembers being the new Indian kid on the block," though it is not difficult to see the pain beyond his jovial facade. He recalls how quickly the parents of his grade school classmates shattered their colorblind acceptance of him. He could see in their eyes reluctance to welcome a little boy that lived in a wigwam into their homes.

In high school, it was his intellect, musical and athletic ability that saved the contemporary spokesperson and songwriter from even deeper dejection. It was also spiritual strength and a commitment to his Hochundra heritage a heritage that has been misunderstood by generations. Our own Declaration of Independence refers to Native Americans as uncivilized, merciless indian savages." How can we be regarded as uncivilized?" asks Steindorf, For centuries we have had a very sophisticated social structure, with our own system of education, economics and religion."

History books tell of a mere fraction of what my people have endured. You've heard of the Cherokee 'trail of tears' but are probably unaware that there are hundreds and hundreds of trails of tears. My tribe was forced to move six times and 70 percent of us never made it to the final destination," says Steindorf who indicated its not his intention to evoke feelings of guilt, but rather to create an awareness of the problems which exist and to correct historical inaccuracies.

Wall of Fame Inductees announced

Five past members of the Viterbo community were recently inducted into the Wall of Fame. A ceremony honoring the recipients scheduled for February 3 was cancelled due to inclement weather, namely and unbelievably huge snowstorm. While snow-related problems kept most recipients away from La Crosse, the weather even affected ex-president Robert Gibbons who couldn't fly out of the San Antonio airport due to icy conditions. Weather aside, the well-
deserved awards still stand and the ceremony was rescheduled and held April__. This year’s recipients to the Wall of Fame are:

**Teri Wiesner**, volleyball, 1986-89. As a freshman she was named an NLCAA All-American and was named to the Upper Midwest Collegiate Conference All-Conference First Team in her freshman and sophomore years. As team captain her sophomore, junior, and senior seasons, she was recognized as an NAIA District Player of the Week. Her junior year she was also named to the District 14 All-Tournament Team and the Mid-East All-Region Team.

Wiesner’s performance in her senior season earned her the most awards. She was the MCC Player of the Year and earned a spot on the NAIA All-District and All-Region teams. Fittingly, her career culminated in her selection as an NAIA All-American Honorable Mention.

**Kenny Koelbl**, Men’s basketball, 1986-90. Lacking in height but not in heart, 5’7” Kenny Koelbl was a basketball coach’s dream player. Koelbl’s leadership, determination, and dedication embraced the essence of a true point guard. Koelbl started all 128 games of his collegiate career, and finished as Viterbo’s all-time assist leader and 1,000 point club member. Koelbl was also at the helm of four conference championship squads and a 94-34 career record.

Koelbl earned All-Conference honors in the Upper Midwest Collegiate Conference his first two seasons and in the Midwest Catholic Conference his final two seasons. His senior year was capstoned by his selection to the NAIA All-District 14 Team and as the Midwest Catholic Conference Player of the Year.

After his playing career ended, Koelbl brought his court sense and experience to the V-Hawk sidelines as an assistant coach under Rod Popp.

**Robert E. Gibbons**, Viterbo president, 1980-91. Dr. Robert E. Gibbons understood the value of a strong athletic program, and during his tenure as president of Viterbo College from 1980 to 1991, he provided the nurturing environment which allowed the V-Hawk tradition to truly take flight. He first suggested the inscription, Of the soul the body form doth take, which appears above the entrance to the Student Activity Center. That quote by English poet Edmund Spenser very much embodies the holistic approach to athletics espoused by Robert Gibbons.

Under President Gibbons’ leadership, the Student Activity Center(SAC) was built in 1986, allowing for the integration of athletics with the rest of the campus community. Participants in sports, intramural and recreation programs, finally had a facility of their own to call home. To go with their new surroundings, the 76ers as they were known then, took on a different name, the Viterbo V-Hawks."

When Bob Gibbons finally bid goodbye to Viterbo College, he closed an important chapter in the development of a premier small college athletic program, known from that point on, as one of the best in the Midwest.


The Popp record stands on its own merit and needs no embellishing: Five conference titles in six years, two prestigious National Catholic Basketball Tournament crowns and four 20+ game-winning seasons. Overall, the V-Hawks posted a phenomenal 139-56 record during his tenure
and Popp-led teams garnered unparalleled media exposure including rankings as high as 7th national NAIA polls.

Excitement and intensity were never in short supply when Rod Popp was in the coach's corner. He established the intra-city rivalry between Viterbo and UW-L and proceeded to rack up three straight victories for the V-Hawks. Time and again, the underdog V-Hawks were matched against highly touted UW system opponents. Eventually Viterbo victories became so regular they were no longer regarded as upsets.

Popp also served in a dual capacity as Director of Athletics during his years at Viterbo and established a legacy few will regret.

Aaron Gibbons, soccer, 1986-89. Twice an NLCAA All-American, Aaron Gibbons was the first Viterbo athlete to have a jersey number retired. Gibbons' tenacious play earned the respect of players, coaches, and fans alike. A quiet leader who led by example with his steady performance on the practice field and on the game field, Gibbons captained the V-Hawks his sophomore, junior, and senior campaigns.

At the time of induction, Gibbons ranked fourth on the all-time scoring list at Viterbo and is the school's career assist leader. His four years at Viterbo produced consecutive winning seasons and the school's first District 14 championship.

In 72 career games, he scored 24 goals and had 47 assists. Gibbons is perhaps best remembered for his performance in the clutch; eleven of his goals were game-winners. He possessed the playmaking mentality and had the ability to take the game over with one shot.