

St. Vincent honors Dupres

Science pavilion bearing their names will enhance academics

BY JENNIFER REEGER
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Sis and Herman Dupre didn't bring snow to St. Vincent College from their home in Seven Springs on Wednesday.

But they did bring their entire family with them to celebrate the beginning of construction of a new science complex named after them.

"For a family that's known for creating a magical winter wonderland, God reserved one more day of a cold blast to make you feel at home," St. Vincent President Jim Towe said in welcoming the Dupres, who for decades owned and operated Seven Springs Mountain Resort.

The Dupre family joined with St. Vincent officials to break ground for the Sis and Herman Dupre Science Pavilion, an educational facility that will provide classrooms, laboratories and offices for the Herbert W. Boyer School of Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Computing.

The Dupres, their nine daughters, sons-in-law and grandchildren gathered under a tent overlooking the construction site yesterday morning for the ceremonial kick-off to construction.

The family donated \$7.6 million toward the project at Herman Dupre's alma mater. He studied industrial management and chemistry at St. Vincent.

"I went to school here; my

mother and father were married here," said Herman Dupre, a 1953 graduate. "St. Vincent is a big part of my life."

The new facility is part of an approximately \$40 million initiative that includes funding for a new endowment and instrumentation.

The Dupres' gift is part of the more than \$27 million raised toward the effort thus far.

The Richard King Mellon Foundation made a \$7 million grant for the project. Other major donors include the Katherine Mabis McKenna Foundation, Edward B. Dunlap Family, the CentiMark Foundation and the Benedictine Society.

Herman Dupre, who is well-known for holding many patents in artificial snowmaking, said the family felt their contribution to the college would be well-used in the science area.

"It's just so nice to promote scientific advancement here in western Pennsylvania," he said. "All of us are so proud to have St. Vincent in our midst."

The 102,000-square-foot facility consists of both new construction and renovation of existing facilities. The project will be completed in two phases.

"I think it reflects not only our commitment to the future of science and the contribution science makes to the world and its

importance to St. Vincent College, but the important relationship between the Dupre family and St. Vincent that goes back many years," St. Vincent Arch-abbot Douglas Nowicki said.

The first phase, which is fully funded, consists of nearly 45,000 square feet of new construction that will replace the former amphitheater and commons building with a new facility of laboratories, classroom and support facilities.

An 80-seat lecture hall with a 3-D digital projector, a planetarium and a digital imaging laboratory will be part of the new building. It is set to open in August 2010.

In the second phase, the college will expand and renovate more than 57,000 square feet in the existing chemistry, biology and physics buildings. The renovations are expected to be completed by the fall of 2011.

"All of this effort (is being undertaken) to create a place where our faculty and students can study math and science to understand and discover our world and our universe and to seek God," said Brother Norman Hipps, executive vice president and dean of the Boyer School.

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Sis and Herman Dupre, owners of Seven Springs Mountain Resort, are all smiles before the groundbreaking of a science pavilion at St. Vincent College in their honor.