The consensus has long been unanimous: Gettysburg College needs new athletic, recreation, and fitness facilities. In February 2004, the Board of Trustees identified such facilities as the College’s most critical capital project — and since then plans and funding efforts to make it happen have been underway.

Now, those plans are getting closer to becoming reality. Architectural drawings have been completed for 120,000 square feet of new construction, to be attached to the west side of the present Bream/Wright/Hauser athletic facility. The final result will be a single, comprehensive Center for Athletics, Recreation, and Fitness.

A competitive necessity
“A new Center for Athletics, Recreation, and Fitness is not a luxury,” President Katherine Haley Will said in a recent letter to alumni. “It is an absolute necessity for Gettysburg College.”

David Wright, director of athletics, wholeheartedly agrees. “The Center is an immediate competitive necessity for the College,” he said. “Our present facilities are inadequate in size, scattered around campus, and in the case of the swimming pool, deteriorated past the point of sustainable viability.”

The fact that most of the College’s athletic facilities need improvement has definite implications for admissions. Recent surveys show that the quality of athletic and recreation facilities is of increasing importance.
having a facility that allows more students and student-athletes the opportunity to workout, train, and participate in intercollegiate and intramural events can only improve the demands we now face on campus. Currently, Gettysburg students and student-athletes who use the gyms, pool, and fitness centers have to go to three different buildings. The Center will provide all users with one building that encompasses athletics and fitness. With so many institutions in our conference and our region building multimillion dollar recreation and athletic facilities, a new athletic center will certainly help us to continue to compete for the best student-athletes.”

Alena Keckler
Head Volleyball Coach/Fitness & Wellness Coordinator

Making The Center a reality

The estimated cost of the new Center for Athletics, Recreation, and Fitness is $25 million — a sizeable sum, but already alumni and friends of Gettysburg College have stepped forward with large and small gifts to help make The Center a reality.

As this issue of Gettysburg went to press, nearly $7 million had already been raised for The Center. Of that sum, three alums have taken a leadership role, together providing nearly $4 million in gifts for The Center.

A $1.2 million challenge

The first major gift for The Center was given by John Jaeger ’65, a current member of the Board of Trustees, who offered a $1.2 million challenge toward this project. “We greatly appreciate this gift,” President Katherine Haley Will said. “It is an inspiration for all of us to participate in this important construction.”

In his role as trustee, Jaeger has seen for several years the pressing need for building a great athletic and recreation space for our active campus community. Nearly 25 percent of the College’s students participate on one of the 24 varsity athletic teams fielded by Gettysburg, and more than three-fourths of all students take part in an extensive intramural and club sports program. “Because our students are so active, we need to provide a wide array of opportunities for recreation and fitness to them, including weight training, aerobic activities, swimming, spinning, and yoga,” Jaeger said.

Jaeger made his challenge to all alumni and friends of the College as a way to show you how important he believes this project is to the students at Gettysburg. He will match gifts to The Center dollar for dollar, up to $1.2 million.

College’s largest single outright gift

Most recently, Gettysburg received a gift of $2 million for the Center for Athletics, Recreation, and Fitness from Robert Ortenzio ’79 — the largest single outright gift made by a living individual in the history of the College.

Ortenzio, who is chief executive officer of Select Medical Corporation in nearby Mechanicsburg, was an All-America wrestler for the Bullets and was inducted into the Gettysburg College Hall of Athletic Honor in 1999. “Athletics was an important part of my education experience at Gettysburg,” Ortenzio said, “and I am happy that I can support this important project — a project that will further the strong athletic tradition at the College.”

The new Center will also add vitally needed recreation and fitness space for all members of the campus community. “Generosity of this magnitude is rare and special, and we are very thankful to Bob for his extraordinary gift,” President Katherine Haley Will said. “It is the largest single outright gift made by a living individual in the history of Gettysburg College, and it will benefit students for generations to come.”

At Gettysburg College, Ortenzio excelled both in the classroom and on the wrestling mat. In 1978, he received the Marguerite Fisher Memorial Award for earning the highest grade-point average among all varsity athletes. He also held the College’s record for career wins with a tally of 97-17-3. He earned NCAA All American status three times and placed third in the NCAA Tournament. He was also a three-time Middle Atlantic Conference (MAC) champion and a two-time winner of the Outstanding Wrestler Award at the MAC Tournament. He was inducted into the Gettysburg College Hall of Athletic Honor in 1999 and received the Young Alumni Achievement Award for Career Development from the College in 1994.

He currently serves as an alumni representative on the Strategic Planning Committee for the College.

After graduating from Gettysburg with a major in political science, Ortenzio attended Dickinson School of Law in Carlisle. From 1982 to 1996, he served as vice president and general counsel to Rehab Hospital Services Corporation, and from 1996 to 1997 he became co-founder and president of Continental Medical Corporation. In 1997 he became CEO and president of Select Medical Corporation, a provider of specialty health care that operates 97 specialty hospitals and approximately 650 outpatient rehabilitation clinics and provides medical rehabilitation services to nursing homes, hospitals, acute-care hospitals, and other post-acute care settings. The company was founded in Mechanicsburg in 1995 and employs 20,000 people throughout the United States.

This gift is only the latest chapter in Mr. Ortenzio’s long history of generosity directed toward his alma mater,” said Victoria Dowling, vice president of development and alumni relations. “We hope others will emulate Bob’s consistent support of Gettysburg College and in so doing will contribute significantly to the College’s commitment to providing a superb liberal arts education that includes the development of the whole person.”

For Ortenzio, the project forms a personally meaningful link between his passion for athletics and his alma mater. “Gettysburg College does an excellent job of providing a top-notch, training athletes in a Division III environment, and it is my hope that this gift will further those efforts,” he said.
Perfect timing

As the spring issue of Gettysburg was going to print, the College received an additional major gift for The Center from Robert “Bob” Garthwait Jr. ’82, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Garthwait P’82, and the Cly-Del Manufacturing Company of Waterbury, Conn. Bob is president of the company.

For Garthwait, there was a sense of “perfect timing” with his gift. “I’m very involved with strategic planning and buildings and grounds at Chase Collegiate School, where I attended K-through-12,” he said. “Consequently, I’m aware of the need for good facilities to attract good students. For the last several years at least one of our students has applied to Gettysburg College. For me, a new athletic and recreation center is the next logical step at Gettysburg, and I wanted to support that project. The fact that this is my 25th reunion year also made it seem like this was just the perfect timing for my gift.”

“Gifts like those of Bob Garthwait are truly helping to build a lasting legacy for current and future generations of Gettysburgians,” President Will said. “His generosity will go a long way toward advancing Gettysburg’s strategic objectives and initiatives.”

While a student at Gettysburg, Garthwait played recreational tennis, golf, and intramural Greek football, but described himself as more of a “spectator” when it came to varsity sports. Nevertheless, he has always liked athletics and understands the need for sports and recreation at college. “In the competitive world of today,” he said, “sports are definitely a drawing card for students. Gettysburg needs new athletic facilities if it is to compete for top students.”

The Cly-Del Manufacturing Company, founded by Bob Garthwait’s grandfather in 1939, is a metal goods manufacturer, specializing in a range of products that include pen and pencil parts, ammunition components, garden tools, and electronic parts. It is also the largest North American supplier of battery components for alkaline batteries. “You’ll also see our products at Christmas time,” Garthwait said. “We produce a variety of small jingle bells that are used in the hobby and craft industries.”

“In addition to his gift to The Center, Garthwait has also made a sizable contribution to the Gettysburg Fund in honor of his 25th reunion. “Our class was the sesquicentennial class, and our 25th anniversary now coincides with the College’s 175th Anniversary celebration,” he said. “I have lots of good memories from Gettysburg College, and I made lots of good friends. Again, the timing just seemed perfect for our gifts.”

Stephen Rudisill estate helps fund The Center

As we went to print we learned that the College received a check for $588,165.97 as the final distribution from the estate of Stephen C. Rudisill — a gift that brought the total giving to the College from the Rudisill estate to $1,338,165.97.

The College has received permission to use $1 million of this gift toward the construction of The Center, with the remaining $338,165.97 to be used to fund the Rudisill Scholarship — featured in the winter issue of Gettysburg.

“We are deeply appreciative of Stephen’s gift,” President Haley Will said. “Through his generosity, future students at Gettysburg College will be helped in so many ways, while at the same time the connection of the Rudisill family to Gettysburg College will be memorialized.”

Stephen Rudisill was a friend of the College from Hanover, Pa. His gift will be used to name the Athletic Hall of Honor in The Center.

“The benefits of a new athletic and recreation center will be extensive. The percentage of Gettysburg students involved with intramurals, club sports, and fitness activities has never been higher, and the sheer number of participants speaks to the importance placed on physical fitness by Gettysburg College students. A new facility will provide the opportunity to enhance and expand our fitness and intramural programming in a way that will affect the entire College community.”

Nathan Bashaw
Director of Campus Recreation/Assistant Baseball Coach

Support The Center

The new Center for Athletics, Recreation, and Fitness, with state-of-the-art design and innovative facility utilization, will strengthen Gettysburg College’s leadership position among the nation’s top liberal arts colleges. The Center will become a location of vibrant campus activity and engagement, and its construction will become a milestone in the institution’s history.

Lend your support now to The Center. To make a gift, please contact Wayne Webster at 800-238-5528 or wwebster@gettysburg.edu. You can also make your gift online at www.gettysburg.edu. Click on Make A Gift.