

BREVARD COLLEGE

BREVARD, NORTH CAROLINA

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Contact: Sara Schmidt, Director of Communications

Phone: 828.641.0450

Email: schmidtsd@brevard.edu

Historic Campus Building Gets Upgrade in Honor of Women

BREVARD – The servant legacy of one Brevard College alumna continues to inspire current students. A smallish building in the middle of campus, the Mary Frances Stamey Memorial Infirmary is getting a facelift and a new use.

As it was intended at its dedication more than 80 years ago, the Stamey building is still being used in the service of others today. Erected in memory of a Brevard College alumna who died in 1946, members of the Institute for Women In Leadership (IWIL) have adopted the space.

IWIL is a student leadership program at Brevard College. Participants earn credit hours in their freshman and sophomore years and accrue volunteer hours until they graduate. With a focus on female leadership, the connection to the building's namesake seems a natural progression.

“Since being in IWIL, I have been able to gain confidence in my leadership skills and have decided to take on different leadership roles around campus such as being Student Government Association (SGA) Vice-President and being a peer leader,” said student Haylea Layne Miller. “I also volunteered at the Boys and Girls Club during the second semester of my freshman year.”

Mary Frances Stamey attended and graduated from Brevard College from 1938 until 1940 when it was a two-year institution. As a student, she participated in the Fireside Club and the Photo-Nature Club. At the time of her death, she was serving in World War II as a member of the Woman's Auxiliary Service Pilot's Corps.

Many community members paid tribute to Mary Frances at the building dedication ceremony on July 10, 1948. As *The Transylvania Times* reported from that day, “her life may have been short-lived but it was a life of service.”

Completed in 1948, the infirmary was part of an important expansion campaign for the college. Stamey’s family donated the money to fund construction, and the building was acclaimed for its many rooms and then-modern equipment, likening it to a small hospital. (Inside, the building feels much larger than it looks from the outside!) The original James Addison Jones Memorial Library was also built using funds raised through the same campaign.

The building was used off and on as an active infirmary with adjoining offices for various departments and needs until the past year. For a moment, the building’s purpose was uncertain. But then IWIL had an idea.

"Dee Dasburg was the Associate Dean for Students, Coordinator for Counseling Services, and IWIL Steering Committee Member since its inception in 2008. She brought the idea to me to use Stamey as a place for leadership before she retired. We loved the idea so much that we quickly put together a plan and submitted it to Campus Life for approval," said Katherine Parnell.

Parnell is the Chair for IWIL at Brevard College. “‘The HOLE,’ as we refer to it, stands for The House of Leadership and Education. Our hope is that it becomes *the* place for student leaders across campus to come together.”

With some minimal assistance from the Brevard College facilities crew, all of the walls inside have been repaired and have a fresh coat of paint. The appliances in the small kitchen are being replaced with donations and the upstairs carpet is scheduled to be removed next. Furniture donations are being spruced up to furnish lounge areas, a conference room, and a study room, and senior IWIL member with an art minor contributed a collaborative mural before graduating in December 2023.

“This is 100% a student-led project,” said Parnell. “The mural features animals that all incoming IWIL students are familiar with. They are used as a discussion tool for leadership styles.”

“Female leadership is so important because it makes others feel comfortable enough to step into the spot that they have been longing for in leadership or just life,” said IWIL member Cassidy Hutto. “Strong female leaders have paved the way and now we feel it is our duty to continue boosting women with this space.”

IWIL hopes to have their project completed by the end of the Spring 2024 semester so that the space is up and running to welcome students in Fall 2024.

Brevard College is committed to an experiential liberal arts education that encourages personal growth and inspires artistic, intellectual, and social action.

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