



## **NEW BRUNSWICK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

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### **Press Release**

#### ***Leaving 'Holy Hill' behind, NBTS develops a prime corner of College Ave.***

(New Brunswick, NJ) - New Brunswick Theological Seminary (NBTS) has made a bold and creative decision to sell more than half its land in order to assume a new place on the corner of College Avenue and Seminary Place, where it will build a new, beautifully landscaped campus and embark on a new future. The sale of this portion of the seminary land for \$30 million is a key component of the \$300 million College Avenue Redevelopment Project managed by the Development Corporation of New Brunswick (DEVCO) in partnership with Rutgers University and the Seminary.

About 200 members of the press and the public attended a groundbreaking ceremony on a stunning final day of July. "Thank you all for coming as we're building a new campus on this old property on which we have resided for over 150 years," NBTS President Gregg Mast greeted guests assembled in the historic Victorian Gardner A. Sage Library, "You'll get a chance to see how we will carve it out in new ways."

New Brunswick Mayor Jim Cahill led the remarks: "New Brunswick is honored and proud to be the home of the Seminary since the early 1800s. Like New Brunswick, the Seminary is diverse and attempts to address the needs and opportunities of a very modern, vibrant and certainly ever-changing world.

"As the first Seminary established in North America, New Brunswick Theological Seminary has provided exceptional ministry education for really thousands and thousands of students, sent forth from here to carry out the mission to transform people, institutions and society all for the better. So we look forward to the day in a year when the Seminary will have the facilities to enhance the teaching experience for students and teachers alike. New Brunswick remains committed to providing an atmosphere conducive to all your good work." –Cahill.

Christopher Paladino, president and executive director of DEVCO focused on the "larger than life" individuals who have imprinted the last 200 years of history of New Brunswick Theological Seminary, Queens College, Rutgers College, Rutgers University, and the newly merged Rutgers University and medical school. "Among names like Frelinghuysen, Hardenberg, Demarest, when the history of the next century is written, and a group like this gathers in the future, it will be names like Hanson and Mast that will be recognized for their contributions to this historic partnership."

“What makes a successful leader? There are people who see opportunity before the rest of us do. And most importantly, know how to act on it. In each step of this process, since the first morning in the winter when I was summoned to Morristown to his office, Jon Hanson has guided this process, helped us to see the opportunity, focused on the task at hand, what's important, and most importantly taught us all the importance of finishing the job. John has been an invaluable counsel without whom we would not be here today.

“President Mast has succeeded where others have come close. He broadened the vision, guided a rather cumbersome process that will result in a new building, but maybe more importantly, created an unlimited opportunity for the Seminary and the community that it serves. He's accomplished this with grace, a lot of patience, and most importantly, humor.” –Palladino.

Jon Hanson, Chairman of the Hampshire Real Estate Companies in Morristown, NJ is the Senior Consultant on the project for NBTS. Twenty years ago, Hanson and Mast served together on the board of Hope College. Hanson nodded at the former NBTS President Norm Kansfield in the audience. “I'm so glad to see Norm here, because that's how I first got drafted for this project. Somewhere between 15 and 20 years ago he appeared in my office in Hackettstown. Why me? My father-in-law was a Reformed Church minister.”

“When you do a project in the real estate development business, you must have a plan. And how do you stay on plan? Patience, perseverance, and most importantly, you have to have passion. All of us involved have passion about this project.”  
—Hanson.

Sandra Fisher, Moderator of the Board of Trustees of NBTS, read the lesson for the day, from the book of Genesis. And then the presidents of three student organizations--Association of Black Seminarians, Student Society of Inquiry, and the Korean Students Association--led the audience in a prayer litany.

Before sending the crowd out to dig up the old dirt for a new project, NBTS President Mast first addressed Palladino. "A year from now, Chris, we'll be sitting in our new building--we have a group of witnesses!" Then he reminisced about his own story. "In the fall of 1974, I arrived at NBTS as a student. The Class of 1974 looked a lot like the class of 1874. We were a homogeneous group. We lived on campus. Our professors lived on campus. When I returned as president seven years ago, 'Holy Hill' was still physically present, but that kind of residential community had disappeared. No longer do seminarians leave their homes and devote three solid years to ministerial formation. Most of our students are bi-vocational and second-career. So this move comes a little late. We're no longer a residential community. It's perfectly fitting that we come off the hill onto the main street of the city in which we work.

“We have become a multi-ethnic, multi-denominational and multi-generational community of faith and learning. Our new campus will communicate who we are--a Seminary in the heart of the city, with the city on its heart. Let us continue the journey --for God waits for us in a future filled with hope.” –Mast.

**New Brunswick Theological Seminary** is the first seminary in North America, founded in 1784. As a teaching institution of the Reformed Church in America (which will retain offices in the new building), the Seminary provides theological education to students from more than 20 denominations and a variety of ethnic backgrounds. On May 19, 2013, NBTS granted degrees to 45 graduate students in

programs of Master of Arts, Master of Divinity, and Doctor of Ministry in Metro-Urban Ministry. For lay leaders we offer a Certificate in Theological Studies program in English and Spanish. On May 20, 2013 the Seminary announced the sale of about five acres. The purchaser is New Brunswick Development Corporation which will develop the property on behalf of Rutgers University. The Seminary retained almost half of its property in order to build a new campus that is technologically smart and environmentally green. Construction includes a new 30,000 square-foot central building with a chapel, classrooms, offices, conference facilities, space for commuting students and a 100-car parking lot. The new campus will more fully support commuting students and innovative programs and will preserve the Gardner A. Sage Library, an exquisitely appointed Victorian book hall built in the style of a fourth century cathedral and dedicated in 1875. NBTS anticipates its new seminary building and campus will be ready for the fall semester of 2014. During and after the construction, full- and part-time students have the convenience of daytime, evening and weekend classes on its two campuses, the main campus in New Brunswick, New Jersey, and its New York campus at St. John's University in Jamaica, Queens. NBTS's student body is more than fifty percent female and more than fifty percent people of color.

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