

AU Press Releases

'Ann's House:' creating a special place for Alfred University students

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Ann Moskowitz is getting a new house.

Alfred University Trustee Joel Moskowitz, a 1961 alumnus, is having the new campus residence hall built in honor of his wife, Ann. The new facility, to be known as Ann's House, will be built on the site of the former Lambda Chi Alpha/Kappa Sigma house on what was once called "Fraternity Row."

"Through their continued generosity to Alfred University, Joel and Ann Moskowitz are providing our students in the future with a residence hall that will be the nucleus of a living-learning community," said Alfred University President Charles M. Edmondson.

Construction is expected to begin in spring 2008.

"I'm really happy" about this project, said Ann Moskowitz when contacted at her home in Corona Del Mar, CA. Not only will the new residence hall help the University's bed crunch, but it will also keep more students living on campus, she said.

She's also happy about having "her" house compliment "Joel's House," created three years ago when the couple funded an overhaul of the former Sigma Alpha Mu fraternity house into a residence for 22 students.

Residents of Joel's House are all students dedicated, in one way or another, to serving their community. No decision has yet been made on qualifications to live in Ann's House, which will house about 50 students, said Ann.

She will be accompanying Joel when he attends the fall meeting of the AU Board on Trustees on campus Oct. 18-20. They will likely discuss plans for Ann's House and perhaps make decisions on groundbreaking and requirements for the student residents while in Alfred.

Ann's House will contain about 50, single rooms, said Edmondson, explaining the propensity of today's students to opt for smaller housing units and single rooms.

"The smaller halls give students a better living-learning experience, and lead to greater student satisfaction and retention," he said.

Initially, Edmondson said, the University hoped to renovate the former fraternity house, but it proved too dilapidated for restoration to be feasible.

"Rather than invest money into an older structure, the Moskowitzes suggested, and the University agreed, that we should build new," said Edmondson.

With their latest gift to the University, the Moskowitzes hope to repeat the success of Joe's House, now one of the most popular residences among University students. When Joel's House was dedicated in May 2005, Ann Moskowitz recalled that the original name proposed was Moskowitz Hall, but she rejected the name in favor of Joel's House because she wanted something that reflected the "warm and homey feeling we wanted." In a community, you always say "I'm going to so and so's house," said Ann. "Joel's House is the perfect name because Joel's heart is here at Alfred, and we wanted people to think of this place as a home, not a hall."

There's also a message implicit in the name, said Ann. The message: "This is somebody's house, treat it with respect."

Besides, being a realist and knowing how young people think, all Ann could envision was the students shortening the formal Moskowitz Hall to "Mouse House." She didn't want that.

"What you won't see – but will feel – is the spirit that grew in Joel's House as residents became friends, and then almost family," said Robert R. McComsey, then chairman of the Board of trustees, at the dedication." That's important. When we talk to our students, they say how much they feel at home at Alfred University and grow to love the community in which they live. Places like Joel's House intensify those connections that tie them to each other and to the University through the bonds of friendship."

A University task force on housing also recommended smaller residence halls and additional "special interest" houses in which residents share a common interest. The University already has several special interest houses, including the Honors House, Hillel House, the Language House, and the Environmental House, as well as Joel's House.

With the University annually anticipating more than 600 incoming students – first-year and transfers – and with the residency requirement increasing from four to six semesters, "we are facing an increased demand for housing. Ann's House will help us meet that demand," said Edmondson.