

THE KEYSTONE, JOHN MEDITZ

The idea for a fine arts museum at Fairfield University may have been on the table for a number of years, but it wasn't until University Trustee and alumnus John Meditz '70 spoke up and expressed his passion for the idea that the earnest planning for the museum began. His donation of \$2.5 million is the foundation on which the project is being built. "Expressing an interest in it," he joked, while discussing the museum during a telephone interview. "Any time you show an interest in something, you literally end up paying for it." He laughed.

But the Middle Ages, and its art and architecture have always been a passion for Meditz, who is the Vice Chairman of Horizon Asset Management Inc. in New York, and was recently named as the "Outstanding Philanthropist of the Year" by the New Jersey chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals. Growing up as boy, he recalled, he would visit his aunt and uncle who lived in the north end of the Bronx. "We would visit The Cloisters, and I was always impressed with the place, and with the art, with the content." He said, adding. "In part, I'm a frustrated architect."

And so Bellarmine Hall with its Tudor and Norman elements is a building that Meditz also has an affection for. Bringing the art of The Cloisters to Bellarmine, further enhancing Bellarmine Hall's character and appeal is also part of what attracted Meditz to the project, as well as the enhancement of the University's teaching capacities where the Medieval period is concerned, an area that remains a period of fascination for Meditz, who describes himself as a history buff. "The Middle Ages is a particularly interesting time frame."

The lead donation was announced in June at the University's Magis Dinner in New York honoring Meditz for his support of Fairfield and the museum in particular. In making the announcement, Fr. von Arx said: "John has been a longtime and loyal supporter of Fairfield. His selfless generosity has had a profound impact on countless lives. He truly reflects the Jesuit teaching of 'being men and women for others.'"

As well as serving as a Trustee to the University, Mr. Meditz is the Vice Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Palisades Medical Center in North Bergen, N.J. and Chairman of the Palisades Medical Center Foundation. He is a trustee and Treasurer of the Weehawken High School Scholarship Committee, Chairman of the Weehawken Planning Board, and the Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Xavier High School, as well as a volunteer and supporter of other agencies and projects.

As for the future of the Bellarmine Museum, Mr. Meditz hopes that the first phase of museum construction will only mark the beginning of a growing and expanding collection. "It might be nice to have an extension on Bellarmine at some point," he mused, and laughed, "and for someone to get interested in that."

