

# BREAKING NEW GROUND

***Boppell Hall sets the standard for  
21st-century residence halls***



Photo by Julie Riddle

**C**elebrity, however minor, wasn't among Carl Boppell's goals as a Whitworth student. He attended classes, studied diligently, and fell in love with his roommate's sister, whom he later married. But fame found Carl at 2:45 a.m. on March 8, 1927, when the soon-to-graduate senior discovered a fire on the third floor of Ballard Hall, which was then the men's residence hall.

Boppell and his roommate, Donald Beal, alerted Ballard's 18 sleeping residents and ensured their safe evacuation from the building before it was destroyed. Hours later President Walter Stevenson, who was traveling at the time, sent a telegram to campus in which he pledged to build "a new and greater Whitworth."

That spring Carl Boppell graduated from Whitworth quite a bit more famous than when he'd first arrived, and, true to President Stevenson's words, the stately brick residence hall was rebuilt the following year.

Little did Carl know that 74 years after his Ballard Hall heroics his son Chuck, '65, and daughter-in-law Karlyn (Allbee), '67, would play a key role in building a greater Whitworth for the 21st century.

Chuck and Karlyn are among 14 Boppell family members spanning four generations who have attended Whitworth; their roots run deep. As a Whitworth trustee, Chuck knew that the college's recent enrollment boom had stretched campus housing to the limit. Many juniors and seniors, after fulfilling their two-year residency requirement, were encouraged to live off campus to free up bed space for incoming freshmen.

The Boppells wanted to help. They did so by contributing \$2 million for the construction of Boppell Hall, a \$4-million, 29,000 square-foot residence hall located on the northeast corner of campus. Eighty-four upper-division students moved in shortly before midterms in October.

"For us to be able to participate in this residence hall is a real joy because Whitworth has been such a part of our lives and has meant so much to our family," Chuck Boppell says. "It was fun to give something with no strings attached so students could experience what our family has enjoyed at Whitworth."

A key factor in the Boppells' Whitworth education was the time they spent living on campus.

"Karlyn and I both lived on campus, as did our daughter (Tauni, '90)," Boppell says. "You don't get 100 percent of the Whitworth education if you're not living on campus at least

some of the years you attend."

The importance of having upper-division students live on campus is reflected in studies that show how those students play a critical role in shaping the values and attitudes of freshmen, says Dick Mandeville, associate dean of students.

"There is so much in student-development work that indicates that some of the most powerful and influential teachers on campus are the juniors and seniors," Mandeville says. "If they are all living off campus, you've lost the interaction that takes place in the residence halls, during shared meals, while walking to class, and in late-night bull sessions."

Juniors and seniors help new students adapt to the college, Mandeville says. They help students connect to faculty and staff, they influence younger students to get involved, and they also can have a maturing effect on incoming freshmen.

The college's desire to retain juniors and seniors on campus is reflected in the 1995 strategic plan spearheaded by Whitworth President Bill Robinson, which established the goal of providing campus housing for at least two-thirds of Whitworth's full-time traditional undergraduate population, says Tom Johnson, vice president for business affairs.

"At that time, in the mid-'90s, we only had about 58 percent of 1,450 full-time traditional undergraduates living on campus," Johnson says.

To reach its goal the college purchased houses adjacent to campus, which were turned into theme houses and which now provide approximately 50 additional beds for upper-division students. With the addition of Boppell Hall, 66 percent of Whitworth's current 1,574 full-time traditional undergraduates can now live on campus, Johnson says.

Because Boppell Hall was intended to house older students, its design was considered carefully, says Mandeville, who served on the building's design committee.

Student input through focus groups gave the committee a clear picture of what students wanted in a new residence hall: private bathrooms, storage space, kitchenettes, and a floor plan that provides privacy as well as sense of community.

Architects translated the students' desires into spacious, suite-style apartments containing a main living area with a sofa and chairs, as well as a table, sink, microwave and refrigerator. Each suite also has two bedrooms, which house two students per room; a private bath; and a storage room. While the cost to live in Boppell Hall this year is the same as the cost for other residence halls on campus, differential pricing may be put into effect next year, Mandeville says.

---

**By Julie Riddle, '92**

---

Photos by Don Hamilton



Photo by Julie Riddle

*Facing page: The front entrance of Boppell Hall on a sunny autumn day. Above left: Boppell Hall Health Coordinator **Adam Anderson**, standing, chats with roommate **Michael Howard** in their suite's lounge area. Above center: Roommates **Laura Dilgard**, left, and **Joni Meyers** enjoy their spacious sleeping area. Right: Boppell Hall President **Matt Cole** (left) presents a gold shovel to Whitworth Trustee **Chuck Boppell**, '65, at the October dedication ceremony for the new residence hall.*

"Boppell Hall is distinct," Mandeville says. "At other colleges you'll see standard double-loaded corridors and you'll see apartments off campus, but there's nothing in between. We wanted to build a residence hall that would appeal to a junior or senior who wanted a little more freedom and independence and yet wanted the advantages of living on campus. I think we hit the nail right on the head."

Senior education major Julie Axell lived in an off-campus apartment last year because she found residence-hall life to be too crowded and noisy. But Boppell's unique features lured her back.

"I agreed to move back to campus because my roommates and I would have more than one room to live in, we would have our own bathroom, and I've always wanted a bay window," Axell says. "I'm also doing my student teaching this semester, so I thought it would be nice to have the college do the cooking for me."

Axell was skeptical about returning to a residence hall, but her skepticism soon turned to appreciation.

"Living in Boppell is wonderful. I can always knock on doors if I want some company, but it is easy to stay in my room if I need privacy," Axell says. "I like being on campus again and being close to the HUB for food and mail."

Rick Davis, a junior computer-science major who lived in Arend for two years, now lives in a single suite in Boppell. Though he still considers himself a "Carlson Man," Davis plans to apply for a resident-assistant position in Boppell next year.

"In Boppell, everything is so nicely separated that noise is hardly ever an issue," Davis says. "Boppell is perfect for almost any type of individual; every student has the option to move into a more active or less active room without ever leaving his or her own living space."

The increased privacy and independence that Boppell residents enjoy have challenged its student leaders as they seek to build community and establish a new identity for the hall.

"Boppell is a little different than other residence halls," Mandeville says. "Since there isn't a resident director living in the hall (Boppell's advisor, Nicole Boymook, lives in a college-owned house nearby), the residents have to take more initiative to build community."

Boppell President Matt Cole began uniting the building's residents long before their new home was finished. Several times during the summer the junior political-studies major e-mailed construction photos to each resident. Once classes

began, Cole and Boppell's three resident assistants held an ice cream social at Boymook's home and a dessert party in the HUB.

"In other residence halls, the first few days of the fall semester are spent building community through events like 'tradition,'" Cole says. "Due to the overall uniqueness of Boppell and because residents couldn't move in until mid-semester, the RAs and I thought it was important to build community as early as possible."

Now that students are settled in their new home, Boppell's student-leadership team is establishing activities and traditions that spark enthusiasm and support from residents.

The team has hosted events including hall dinners, a Saturday-morning pancake breakfast, a self-defense training night, and weekly worship services, says junior religion major and Boppell resident assistant Rebeka Trefts.

Across campus Boppell residents can be seen wearing their new sweatshirts, which provide ample evidence that the hall's inaugural members are a community united in appreciation for their new digs; emblazoned across the back of the sweatshirts is "The First, The Few, The Fortunate."

"We have also created a flag to represent Boppell and we have a newsletter, *The Five Star*, as well as community-service projects that we do together," Trefts says.

These efforts to distinguish the hall's role on campus and to shape its identity for generations to come are a tribute to the Boppells and to their legacy at the college, says Whitworth President Bill Robinson.

"The students who occupy our newest residence hall live in great quarters that bear a great name," Robinson says. "Boppell Hall might be the most visible way Chuck has poured himself into Whitworth over the past 20 years, but it takes second place to the leadership he has given. In a very tender way, Chuck and Karlyn Boppell have their arms around this college." ■