

RESIDENCE HALL/ RECREATION CENTER

GLENN BEHNKE '74 SPENT THE PAST YEAR HOLED UP IN A TINY CONSTRUCTION TRAILER NEXT TO MERNER FIELD HOUSE. PICTURES FROM HIS DAYS AS A RUNNER AT NORTH CENTRAL COLLEGE HUNG ON THE WOOD-PANELED WALLS BEHIND HIS DESK, NEXT TO HIS FRAMED ALL-AMERICAN TRACK AND FIELD CERTIFICATES FROM 1972 AND 1973.

Surrounded by blueprints, hard hats and timetables, this alumnus, in tandem with a number of other North Central graduates, oversaw construction of a unique, one-of-a-kind building that will significantly impact North Central College and its track and field program for generations to come. The environmentally friendly, four-story building is the first in the nation to combine a residence hall with a recreation center on a college or university campus, built to the rigorous and innovative standards of “green” construction.

As a project manager for Mustang Construction, Behnke coordinated subcontractors' schedules, arranged delivery of materials and set up inspections—among other tasks associated with construction of the massive 201,439-square-foot structure. The position demanded a special set of skills to deal with public officials, neighbors and dozens of laborers from various trades working on the site simultaneously.

“This has been like a Ph.D. course,” Behnke says. “It’s been gratifying to see it go from a drawing to something real.”

It’s fitting that “Res/Rec” was dedicated during Homecoming 2009. For Behnke, his role in the project has been a homecoming of sorts. He studied history at North Central and, in 1974, became North Central’s first national champion in cross country by



winning the 6-mile run. That year he also claimed the College Conference of Illinois & Wisconsin championship in cross country.

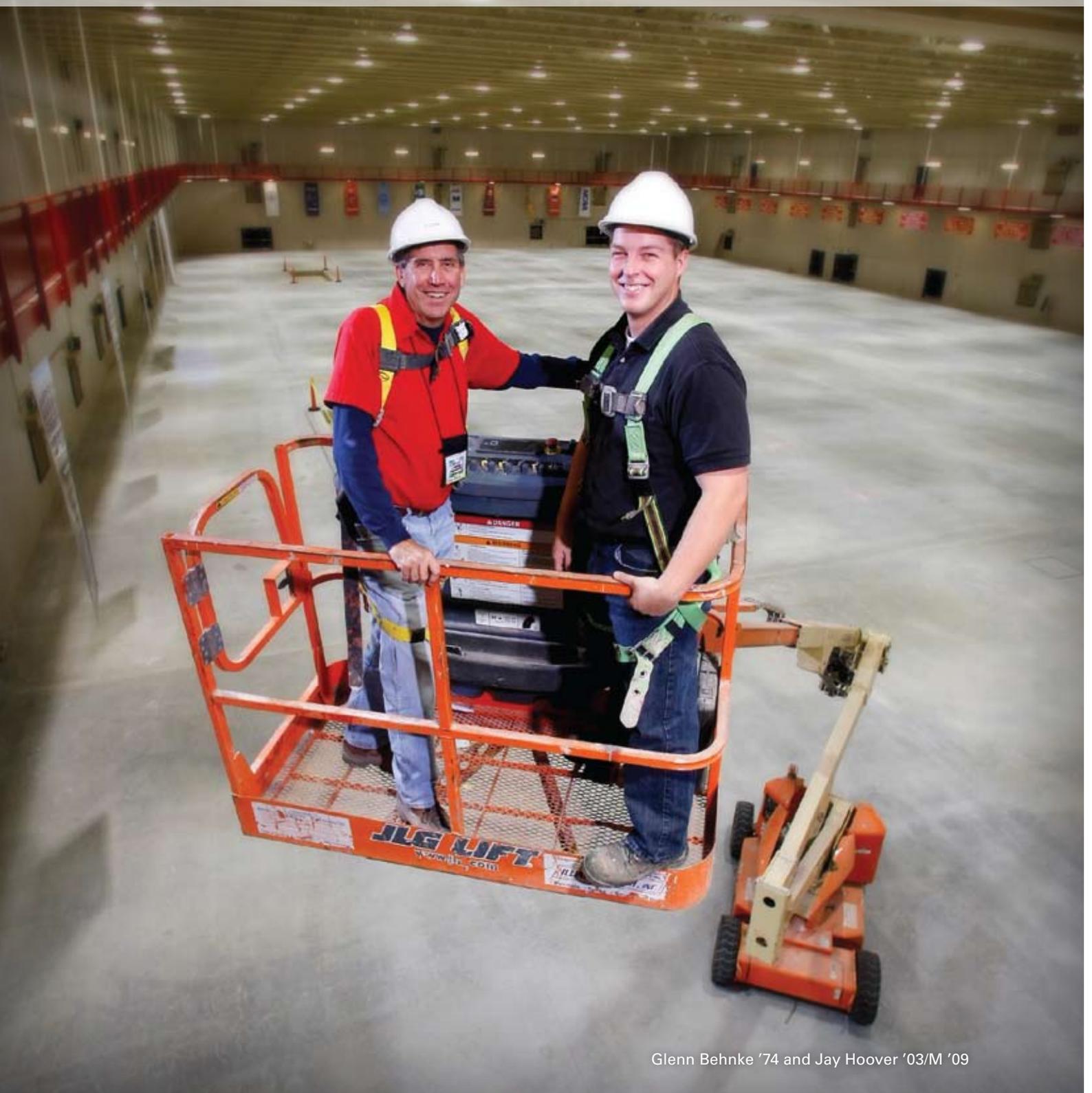
After graduation, Behnke worked in maintenance at North Central and later moved on to positions elsewhere. In 2004 he was voted into North Central’s

Athletic Hall of Fame as part of its inaugural class.

Two years later, when Dick Wehrli '56 was inducted into the Athletic Hall of Fame, Wehrli pulled Behnke aside. “Dick said to me, ‘We’re going to build this building, and you’re going to help us.’ I’m the only guy ever hired for a job at a Hall of Fame dinner.”

The dream of a new recreation center had been in the works since at least 1999, as were plans for a new residence hall for additional on-campus housing. But fine arts projects had priority in fundraising and scheduling. The decision to merge the two seemingly unrelated buildings preserved green space on the 59-acre campus and produced significant cost savings that moved up the timetable for proceeding. The College broke ground on the Res/Rec Center on May 17, 2008.

“We saved \$10 million with this idea alone,” says Wehrli, a Life Trustee of the College who chairs a group of construction-related companies that includes Naperville Excavating, Dukane Precast, Mustang Construction and Naperville Ready Mix.



Glenn Behnke '74 and Jay Hoover '03/M '09

Total residential square footage is **105,632**, including the unfinished fourth floor. The arena is **58,776 square feet** and the nonresidential and non-arena accessory areas (locker rooms, fitness area, storage, etc.) add up to **26,325 square feet**. With other interior areas included, the Center's total square footage is **201,439**.

Total number of Res/Rec **residents** in fall 2009 is **218**. Of that number, **less than half** (47) percent are **student-athletes**. The residence hall design groups rooms into **17 neighborhoods**, each with a common room, study area, bathroom and laundry facility.

With the completion of the Res/Rec Center in 2008-2009, **1,300 students** now live on campus, **up 10 percent**.

Wehrli has had leadership roles in several significant construction projects on campus, including the Wentz Concert Hall and Fine Arts Center and Benedetti-Wehrli Stadium, which also bears the name of fellow Life Trustee, Albert Benedetti '48, a partner in the group of construction companies.

Jay Hoover '03/M '09 also served as a project manager for Mustang Construction. He was involved in the construction process on an almost seven-days-a-week schedule in the final months, to overcome delays presented by a very wet building season.

"There's a strong sense of pride that comes from working on this building," Hoover says. "We've had hundreds of volunteers throughout this project, doing everything from cleanup and general site condition work to the landscape plantings to moving in beds, dressers and desks."

Another source of pride is the building's forward-looking design and construction, which is on target to achieve Silver certification through Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), the Green Building

Rating System developed by the U.S. Green Building Council.

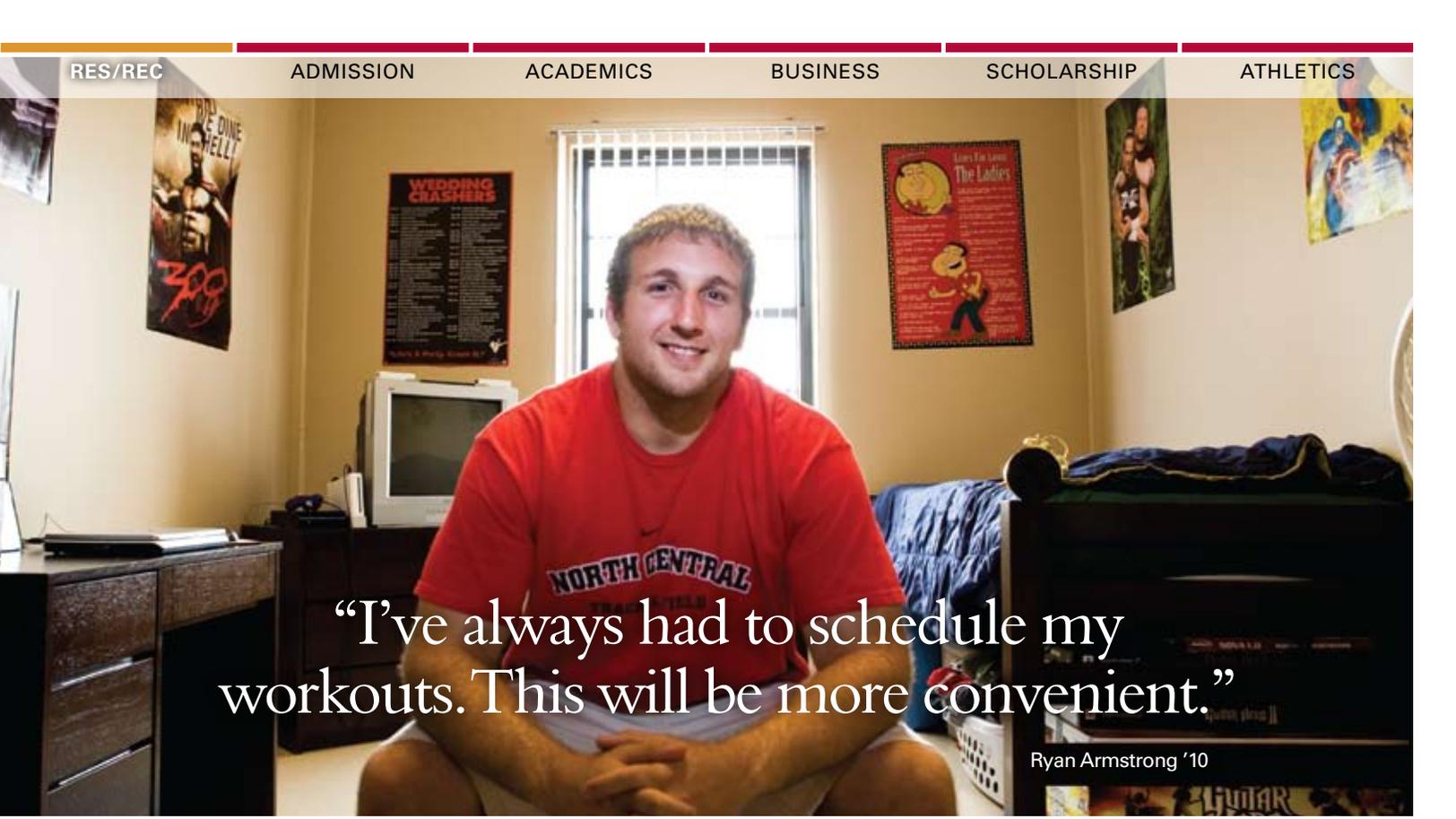
"Our thought in approaching this as a green project was to do a smart green project and not spend one penny more than we had to, but at the same time utilize existing technology and some cutting-edge technology," says Scott Wehrli '91, a College Trustee and secretary/partner with Dukane Precast.

A geothermal system heats and cools the building by taking advantage of the

temperature in the earth, which remains a constant 54 degrees. Water is pumped through pipes inserted into 650-foot deep wells, then circulated through tubing within the concrete floors of the residence hall. In all, the building features an estimated 88,000 linear feet—or 16.8 miles—of geothermal tubing and piping.

Using a geothermal system eliminates the need to service the Res/Rec Center with natural gas. There's no need for a furnace, and other utilities such as laundry dryers are electric. There are other innovative features, including





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Ryan Armstrong '10

copper hot-water pipes that snake around drainage pipes. When hot water from showers flows down drain pipes, some of the heat is transferred to warm the water that will be used by the next person taking a shower.

The Res/Rec Center also features LED motion-sensor lighting, high-efficiency windows and individual thermostats in each dorm room.

Students moved into two floors of the residence hall on September 14, 2009. Residents like senior Ryan Armstrong are looking forward to the completion of amenities like the fitness center. “I’ve been an athlete most of my life,” Armstrong says. “I’ve always had to schedule my workouts. This

will be more convenient.” The recreation center is scheduled for completion by January 1, 2010. In addition to the NCAA-regulation 200-meter indoor track, the facility features an elevated walking

legendary track and cross country coach Al Carius. The second-floor atrium above the building’s entryway features the Gramarosso Gallery, which will display histories of all 22 sports at North

collegiate indoor track and field programs. “As a former track guy, this is going to be great,” says Behnke. “Merner (Field House) was a premier facility when it was built, but that was in 1931.”

During Homecoming, the College appealed to alumni to help raise \$3.5 million needed to finish the project.

“It’s about carrying on the tradition of personal bests and excellence that Al has instilled in us, both on the track and in building us as better people,” Behnke says. “As fellow runners we have a responsibility to help finish this race strong, just like Al and Grammy taught us.”

See *Join the Race: Support the Res/Rec* at northcentralcollege.edu/watchusgrow. ■



Frank and Gina Gramarosso and family

track, four multipurpose courts (basketball, tennis, volleyball) and additional athletic training and fitness facilities.

The centerpiece is the six-lane Carius Track, named for

Central. The gallery is named for another revered coach, Frank Gramarosso.

The Carius Track fulfills a longtime desire to create facilities that reflect the success of one of the nation’s premier