

EBERHARDT HALL —RESTORED,

AUTHOR:
DEAN L. MASKEVICH
*is editor of NJIT
Magazine.*



(Left) Rain did not deter hundreds from attending the Eberhardt Hall rededication.

(Right) Cutting the ribbon at the front door of the Eberhardt Hall NJIT Alumni Center are (left to right) Alumni Association President John P. Gross '70, NJIT Trustees Peter A. Cistaro '68 and Elizabeth Garcia '73, Laurie Eberhardt, Henry Eberhardt and NJIT President Robert A. Altenkirch.

(Far right) Bernard Coopersmith '44 emphasized Fred Eberhardt's contributions to his community and alma mater.

RENOVATED, REDEDICATED

IT WAS A DAY TO REMEMBER THE PAST WITH PRIDE, TO CELEBRATE LIFE AT A GREAT UNIVERSITY IN THE PRESENT, AND TO LOOK FORWARD TO FUTURE ACHIEVEMENTS IN EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT. ON OCTOBER 7, 2005, SOME 300 ALUMNI, LEGISLATORS, FACULTY, STAFF AND MEMBERS OF FREDERICK EBERHARDT'S FAMILY GATHERED TO REDEDICATE THE EXTENSIVELY RENOVATED EBERHARDT HALL NJIT ALUMNI CENTER, A BUILDING RICHLY EVOCATIVE OF THE UNIVERSITY'S HISTORY AND CONTINUING CAMPUS IMPROVEMENT.



Charles R. Dees, Jr., vice president for university advancement, was master of ceremonies. Among those greeted by Dees in his opening remarks were Henry Eberhardt and Henry's wife, Laurie. A member of the first class to graduate from Newark Technical School — NJIT's predecessor institution — Fred Eberhardt was Henry's great uncle. "Today, we will formally reopen the doors of a building that has long been a part of the City of Newark, the NJIT campus, and the lives of generations of students and alumni," Dees said.

The work of many

Many firms and individuals contributed to restoring the Victorian beauty of Eberhardt Hall and

renovating it to meet NJIT's 21st-century needs with respect to alumni activities, administrative offices and conference facilities. Cody Eckert & Associates, Princeton, were the architects of record. Their responsibilities included renovating the upper levels as well as restoring wood flooring and moldings throughout the building. DF Gibson Architects, Newark, were consultants to Cody Eckert. Israel Berger & Associates, New York City, provided consulting services to NJIT for exterior restoration. A&J Consulting Engineering Services, Clifton, was responsible for mechanical and electrical design. Harrison-Hamnett, Pennington, performed structural engineering analysis. Turner Construction, Somerset, handled the building work.

David Gibson, president of DF Gibson Architects, spoke at the ceremony. Gibson outlined the architectural significance of Eberhardt Hall, an example of Victorian Gothic design rare in New Jersey. The work of the prominent architect John Welch, Eberhardt Hall was built in 1857. Originally the Newark Orphan Asylum, it included some of the period's most advanced construction features, such as hot and cold running water, gas light, steam heat

its original purpose. The following year the board allocated \$40,000 for closing the purchase and renovating the structure. By comparison, the 2005 completion of work on Eberhardt Hall is the capstone of a \$140 million building program at NJIT that has included a fifth residence hall, two additional parking levels, the new Campus Center, and Fenster Hall.

The Eberhardt project itself cost \$13 million — to which NJIT contributed \$7 million and the state \$6 million. “The numbers for the project are big,” Mauermeyer concluded, “but the value is bigger.”

More personal perspectives

Bernard Coopersmith '44 cited Fred Eberhardt's role in the founding and growth of the university, and his participation in the economic life of the area. “Mr. Eberhardt is forever entwined with Newark Technical School as a graduate, with NCE, which he was instrumental in founding in 1919, and through his 36 years as a trustee of both schools,” Coopersmith said. “His vision, and the vision and leadership of Presidents Cullimore, Van Houten, Hazell, Bergmann, Fenster and now Bob Altenkirch have taken that small engineering school to the forefront of the nation's top research, technological universities.

“Mr. Eberhardt was the president of Gould and Eberhardt, a major Newark manufacturer of machine tools such as shapers and gear cutters. The company was a major machine tool supplier to the auto industry, and a supplier to many other companies during World Wars I and II. Gould and Eberhardt eventually employed 250 people and its growth paralleled the rise of Newark, and adjacent towns, as a major East Coast manufacturing center.”

Although enterprises like Gould and Eberhardt no longer comprise the economic foundation of the region, Coopersmith said, the same entrepreneurial spirit and commitment to technological innovation is once again raising Newark to prominence as a national center of university education, transportation, research, communication and information technology. The new Eberhardt Hall Alumni Center, he said, is a “fitting tribute to the vision of Fred Eberhardt and to the men and women of NJIT.”

John P. Gross '70, current president of the Alumni Association, reflected on the significance of the Eberhardt Hall NJIT Alumni Center for all graduates,



(Left) Enjoying the new University Club after the rededication ceremony

(Right) Touring newly reopened Eberhardt Hall NJIT Alumni Center

and an early fire-extinguishing system. Newark College of Engineering purchased the building in 1947 and named it in honor of Fred Eberhardt, who served on the Board of Trustees from 1910 until his death in 1946.

In describing the restoration of Eberhardt Hall, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Buildings, Gibson spoke about the care taken to ensure period authenticity. While no information was available about the exact appearance of the building's interior, the colors are very typical of the era. Further, the wall and ceiling coverings reproduce patterns introduced by Christopher Dresser, arguably the 19th century's foremost designer of residential and industrial environments. Great attention was also paid to facets of design such as reproductions of elegant gas lighting fixtures subtly adapted for electricity.

Henry A. Mauermeyer '72, '74, senior vice president for administration and treasurer, focused on the financial resources needed for work on the three-story, 35,000-square-foot structure. But he first presented some fiscal history. Mauermeyer recounted how, in 1947, the Board of Trustees authorized an offer of \$58,000 for acquisition of the Newark Orphan Asylum, by that time no longer used for

and for those who will join their ranks in the future. “These beautiful surroundings allow the university and the association to serve and interact with our friends and classmates in ways not previously possible,” Gross said. “The center at Eberhardt will also allow us to connect with the faculty and administration in social settings. I know that our active alumni members will use and enjoy the center, as this stately building welcomes all current and future alumni to return often to their alma mater to participate in its activities and events and strengthen their bond with the university.”

In closing remarks before the ribbon cutting that officially reopened the doors of Eberhardt Hall, NJIT President Robert A. Altenkirch said that a unique, inspiring awareness of the future has always been a dominant thread in the interwoven histories of this building and the university that has grown around it. “Consider that it was built to provide a better life for children who would have endured great hardship and possibly died if they weren’t sheltered at the Newark Orphan Asylum,” he said. “And when ownership passed to the university, Eberhardt Hall came to serve an institution whose mission in education and research has always been focused on building a better future for Newark, the State of New Jersey and our nation.”

As a graduate of Newark Technical School, Altenkirch said, Fred Eberhardt contributed to a future being shaped by technological pioneers like Edison, Ford, and Marconi. In turn, each succeeding class has helped to create the future with cutting-edge technologies of the day. There were NJIT graduates at the forefront of the scientific and technological advances of the 20th century, and young alumni are working on this frontier in the 21st. They will be joined by the women and men studying at NJIT today, and by those who will be students here in decades to come.

“So while the Eberhardt Hall NJIT Alumni Center honors the past through historic restoration, its adaptive renewal to serve our alumni and university community makes it very much a portal to the future. The hope is that current and future alumni will return often in the months and years ahead to experience the vibrant tempo of life on campus, to strengthen their engagement with their alma mater, and remain strong ambassadors for NJIT wherever their lives take them.” ■

