A Boston College Chronology*

1857 Father John McElroy, S.J. purchased property in the South End of Boston for a new college.

1863 Gov. John A. Andrews signed the charter of Boston College, April 1. First meeting of the Boston College trustees was held on July 6.

1864 Boston College opened on September 5, with Father John Bapst, S.J., as president and Father Robert Fulton, S.J., as dean. Twenty-two students admitted.

1877 First Commencement was held. Nine students received A.B. degrees, June 28.

1883 The Stylus, the College literary magazine, founded.

1907 Father Thomas Gasson, S.J., named president; purchased 31-acre Lawrence farm in Chestnut Hill for new campus.

1913 Gasson Hall completed. First graduation held at the Heights, June 18. Four classes enrolled in Gasson in September.

1918 Conscription and voluntary enlistment for World War I reduced the College enrollment to 125 in October, down from 671 two years earlier.

1919 Boston College won its first major football victory, 5-3 over favored Yale at New Haven. First issue of The Heights, student weekly, printed November 17.

1923 Baseball team beat Holy Cross 4-1 before 30,000 at Braves Field, June 18.

1924 Summer School started.

1925 Graduate School of Arts and Sciences started.

1928 Bapst Library opened, the fourth of the early Maginnis and Walsh buildings. Weston Observatory, the seismological station, founded.

1929 Law School opened at 11 Beacon Street. Boston Evening College started as “Boston College Intown” at 126 Newbury Street, Boston.

1935 Greek requirement for the A.B. degree dropped.

1936 Graduate School of Social Work opened at Newbury Street.

1938 School of Management opened at Newbury Street as the “College of Business Administration.”

1940 Cotton Bowl vs. Clemson (3-6) first bowl game.

1941 Cardinal O’Connell purchased the Liggett estate, the upper campus, and gave it to the College.

1946 To accommodate post war enrollment, army surplus barracks became dormitories on the site of present Campion Hall; a larger office/classroom building was erected on the site of McGuinn, and a recreation building on the site of Cushing Hall.

1947 Construction begun on the first permanent building since the completion of Bapst in 1928, to house the College of Business Administration (occupied in September 1948). The School of Nursing opened at 126 Newbury Street.

1949 College acquired small reservoir (lower campus) Hockey team won national title at Colorado Springs.

1951 Lyons Hall was completed in July.

1952 The School of Education opened in September in Gasson Hall. Doctoral programs were begun in Economics, Education, and History, the beginning of increased emphasis on graduate education.

1954 Law School moved to St. Thomas More Hall on the Chestnut Hill campus.

1955 Claver, Loyola, and Xavier Halls opened, first campus residences constructed by BC. The School of Education moved into Campion Hall.

1957 Graduate School of Management founded. Alumni Stadium dedicated September 21.

1958 Latin no longer required for the A. B. degree. The College of Arts and Sciences Honors Program and the Scholar of the College Program were begun. The original gymnasium, Roberts Center, and the first hockey rink, McHugh Forum, were opened.

1959 The Board of Regents, advisory to the trustees and administration, was established.

1960 The Nursing School occupied its campus building, Cushing Hall. Three more student residences, named for the early bishops of Boston, Cheverus, Fenwick, and Fitzpatrick, were completed.

1961 McElroy Commons opened.

1963 The Boston College Centennial Convocation was addressed by President John F. Kennedy on April 20. The Self-Study of the College of Arts and Sciences led to a new core curriculum, a reduction in the course load, election of department chairmen, the establishment of Educational Policy committees, and sabbaticals.

1964 Carney Hall opened. Welch, Williams, and Roncalli residences were occupied.

1966 Higgins Hall was dedicated in November.

1968 The Board of Regents joined the Jesuit trustees to form the Board of Directors, October 8. The Black Talent Program was started, precursor to AHANA Student Programs.
1970  Women admitted for degrees in all undergraduate colleges. The modular residences were placed on the lower campus. PULSE, an academic/social action program, was started. The Campus School for multi-handicapped children was begun.

1971  The office of president of Boston College and rector of the Boston College Jesuit community were separated on January 1. Installation of Omicron Chapter, Phi Beta Kappa took place on April 6.

1972  Father J. Donald Monan, S.J., succeeded Father W. Seavey Joyce, S.J., as president, September 5. The trustees voted to eliminate the Board of Directors and to expand the Board of Trustees to include laymen, November 19. The newly structured Board of Trustees, with 35 members (13 Jesuits), elected Cornelius Owens ’36 chairman. The Women’s Center was established.

1973  The Long-Range Fiscal Planning Committee presented to the Trustees a plan for balanced budgets for the succeeding five years.

1974  Newton College of the Sacred Heart became part of Boston College (announced March 11).

1975  The Law School moved to the Newton Campus. Edmond’s Hall was occupied in September.

1976  The New Heights Advancement Campaign to raise $21 million was begun in April. Over the next five years more than $25 million was raised.


1982  Walsh Hall residence dedicated to former president Michael P. Walsh, S.J., October 7.


1985  The E. Paul Robsham, Jr., Theater Arts Center was dedicated on October 25.

1986  Dedication of renovated Bapst Library, dedication of Burns Library, April 22. Goals for Nineties (planning document) published. Alumni Association moved to Alumni House on the Newton Campus. St. Patrick’s Day dinner took place in Washington honoring Speaker Thomas P. O’Neill. Speakers included President Ronald Reagan, former President Gerald Ford, and Bob Hope. Two million dollars was raised for BC scholarships. Five-year $125 million Campaign for Boston College started. The dismantling of McHugh Forum was begun to make way for Conte Forum.

1987  The Graduate School of Management’s doctoral program in finance was approved by the Trustees. The Jesuit Institute, funded by a $1.5 million gift from the Jesuit community, was established to support exploration into the religious and ethical questions that emerge through the intersection of faith and culture.

1988  The first students enrolled in the new Nursing Ph.D. program. The Music Program became a department of the College of Arts and Sciences. Vouté Hall and its companion student residence were occupied. The Museum of Art was opened in Devlin Hall.

1989  Congressman Silvio O. Conte ’49, was present for the dedication of Conte Forum. The School of Management became the Carroll School of Management in honor of Wallace E. Carroll ’28. Sister Thea Bowman was awarded an honorary degree and AHANA House was named for her in October. Roberts Center was razed to make room for the Merkert Chemistry Center.

1991  Wing added to Campion Hall, with major renovation of the original building.

1992  The Eugene F. Merkert Chemistry Center dedicated. The Campaign for Boston College completed, exceeding the $125 million goal by over $11 million.

1993  Renovated Devlin Hall welcomed occupants: the Department of Geology and Geophysics, the Department of Fine Arts, the Art Museum, and the Admission Office. The football team beat Notre Dame at South Bend, 41–39, when Notre Dame was ranked No. 1 in the country. Renovation of Fulton Hall was begun. The Department of Theater was established.

1994  Graduate programs in Nursing and Education separated from the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences. Father Monan established a University Academic Planning Council to map university strategies. A garage for 900 cars was completed behind St. Mary’s Hall. The stadium seating capacity was enlarged from 32,000 to 44,500.

1995  On October 6, 1995, the trustees elected Father William P. Leahy, S.J., to succeed Father J. Donald Monan, S.J., as president. Fulton Hall reopened, enlarged and transformed exteriorly to match the Gothic style of the early buildings.

1996  The Law School’s new library was completed and opened on the Newtown campus in January. U.S. News & World Report ranked Boston College 16th among the nation’s teaching universities and 37th in the national university category. The student residence at 70 St. Thomas More Road was named for her in October. Roberts Center was razed to make room for the Merkert Chemistry Center.

1997  In a rating of graduate schools, U.S. News & World Report placed Boston College Law School 22nd in its field, while the Graduate School of Social Work was ranked 14th, the School of Nursing 27th, and the School
of Education 28th. In March, Father Leahy was homilist at the annual St. Patrick’s Day Mass at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross.

1998 The formal opening of the Irish Institute and the Irish Studies Program was held at Connolly House. Work began on a three-year project to renovate and expand Higgins Hall, which houses the Biology and Physics departments. *U.S. News & World Report* rated the BC schools of law, education, and nursing among the top 25 in their fields. BC undergraduates won more than 20 prestigious national fellowships, including a dozen Fulbrights and a coveted Marshall Scholarship.

1999 BC’s School of Education was named the Carolyn A. and Peter S. Lynch School of Education in recognition of the couple’s gift of more than $10 million. For the fifth consecutive year, BC was ranked among the top 40 national universities by *U.S. News & World Report*. The McMullen Museum of Art’s exhibition Saints and Sinners: Caravaggio and the Baroque Image attracted more than 65,000 visitors to the campus. BC announced a $400 million “Ever to Excel” capital campaign.

2000 The annual *U.S. News & World Report* survey ranked Boston College 38th among the nation’s 228 national universities. BC, Notre Dame, and Georgetown were the only Catholic universities in the top 40. Geoffrey and Rene Boisi committed $5 million to establish the Center for Religion and American Public Life, directed by social scientist Alan Wolfe. BC appointed Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom to share the Norma Jean Calderwood Chair in Islamic and Asian Art.

2001 The BC School of Nursing was renamed the William F. Connell School of Nursing in honor of longtime trustee, William F. Connell, ’59. A $2 million grant from the Lilly Endowment supports a BC program to encourage students to integrate faith and career. BC established a permanent Dublin home, on St. Stephens Green, as a resource for the University’s Irish Studies Program.

2002 Boston College received a record number of undergraduate applications for the 2002-2003 academic year, with more than 21,000 applicants for the approximately 2,200 available seats. In the April issue of *U.S. News & World Report*, the Carroll Graduate School was moved up two places to rank as 39th in the nation. BC’s Law School remained in 22nd place nationally, and the graduate program of the Lynch School of Education moved up to 21st position. The former Evening College was renamed the Woods College of Advancing Studies in honor of longtime dean, Rev. James A. Woods, S.J. President William P. Leahy, S.J., announced that Boston College will develop a “special academic focus” to examine issues confronting the Catholic Church. The initiative, called “The Church in the 21st Century,” was officially launched in September 2002.

2003 The Boston College “Church in the 21st Century” initiative attracted national attention and local interest with its series of conferences and seminars. BC’s “Ever to Excel” fundraising drive surpassed its original $400 million goal by generating more than $440 million in gifts and pledges from approximately 90,000 donors. The 22,424 applications for approximately 2,200 places in the Class of 2007 set a school record, surpassing the previous year’s total of 21,131 applications. BC announced it would withdraw from the Big East and accept an invitation to join the Atlantic Coast Conference.

2004 In June 2004, Boston College completed its acquisition of 43 acres of land and five buildings in the nearby Brighton area from the Archdiocese of Boston for $99.4 million. BC also purchased St. Stephen’s Priory from the Dominican Friars, encompassing 78.5 acres on the Charles River in Dover, to be used as a retreat and conference center. President William P. Leahy, S.J. took the Church in the 21st Century program to Los Angeles, Phoenix, Dallas, Atlanta, Naples, and Chicago, to provide alumni an opportunity to discuss issues confronting the Catholic Church. The Board of Trustees approved a 6 percent increase that raised tuition to $28,940 for the academic year 2004-05.

* References to presidents and Board of Trustee chairmen are minimized in this chronology since they are listed elsewhere in this Fact Book.

Source: University Historian and Public Affairs