

Thoroughly Modern Minerva

By CAROL FLAX



Take a look at UAlbany's new logo — a fresh, forward-looking design to represent a University on the move!

The centerpiece of the logo is a

newly illustrated, modern-looking Minerva, a symbol of the University with whom generations of alumni have strong emotional ties.

"The University at Albany has changed a great deal in the past 159 years," said President Karen Hitchcock at the new logo roll-out on Fountain Day last April 10. "I am proud to unveil the University's wonderful new logo — which we believe truly captures our important history as well as our bold vision for the future."

Minerva, the Roman goddess of wisdom, first appeared on the University seal around 1913. Since 1960 the Latin motto has been "Wisdom both for its own sake and for the sake of teaching." There have been many renderings of the seal over the years, but the most recent design, done about a decade ago, was proving inadequate for its many reprint requirements, said Catherine Herman, UAlbany's associate vice president for Media and Marketing, who oversaw the remake. She said the choice of blending the University at Albany wordmark (UAlbany as the informal name) with a symbol sprang from the

desire for a logo that would serve and unite all facets of the University.

"Minerva seemed the perfect choice for a symbol that would forge old with new," Herman said.

The new identity is the result of the work of a campus-wide identity committee that included alumni, students, deans and professional staff who guided the design team in producing the new seal and logos. The identity committee also aimed to foster a flexible identity system and guidelines that aid in the consistent use of the design.

The Albany-based firm of Oberlander Design created the logos and identity system. The new identity will be phased in over the next several years.

Like the University at Albany, Minerva's come a long way. She is known to generations of alumni, although many recent alumni and current students don't know much of the statue's history and how ingrained in the culture of the school she has been.

Early records and remembrances don't survive, but the statue of the goddess of wisdom, with her helmet and staff and an asp curling around her feet, is thought to have been purchased sometime in the late 1880s. The seven-foot-plus white plaster statue was probably purchased with funds from \$1 fines that were collected from students who missed their exams.

Minerva, known to generations of alumni as the University's official symbol, is the centerpiece of a new logo that captures UAlbany's traditions and vision for the future.



Mark Schmidt

Guardian of Minerva

Kay Hotaling
B.A. '67

The statue of Minerva made her first home at the 88 Willett Street location of UAlbany's predecessor, the New York State Normal School. In 1906, when the building



Charles Wurthman saved Minerva.

caught fire, a brave janitor, Charles Wurthman, saved Minerva from the burning building by throwing the statue over his shoulder and staggering outside with her. He's immortalized in a photo with the graduating class of that year.

Later the statue was moved to the rotunda of Draper Hall, where she stood for more than six decades. Those were Minerva's heydays. She was a popular meeting place for the students of the New York State College for Teachers, who coined the phrase, "Meetcha at Minnie." Minerva trivia and traditions were outlined in the freshman handbooks through the mid-'60s. In 1962 Minerva achieved national fame when an article about the college appeared in the *Saturday Review* and the statue was photographed for the cover.

During a period of about 25 years — from the early 1940s to the mid-'60s, when freshmen typically went through "hazing" and were identified by the "beanies" they had to wear — many Minerva-related traditions existed. For example, freshmen were not allowed to pass before the eyes of Minerva, but rather had to walk on either side of the statue to get where they needed to go. Freshmen caught passing in front of her were typically made to publicly recite, sing or show homage to the statue.

In 1966, the Class of 1967 found out that they it was going to be moved to a new campus on the far western fringes of Albany. "It was an unsettling time," said Kay Hotaling, B.A.'67, M.S.'70. "And made more so when we learned that Minerva would not be accompanying us to the new campus." The modern architecture of Edward Durrell Stone was a stark contrast to the brick and ivy of the campus downtown. "We felt that the administration at the time wanted to eliminate all the trappings of the past, and that included Minerva," said Hotaling, now a canon of the

Episcopal Diocese of Albany. "We seniors even refused to buy class rings until they replaced the new Carillon design with the traditional engraving of Minerva." The seniors also decided that they wanted to bring the statue with them to the new campus and paid for her transportation and a much-needed makeover. They named themselves the "Guardians of Minerva," and since that time many class members have worked to honor and revere a statue they feel symbolizes all that is excellent about the University.

Hotaling remembers visiting the campus in the early 1980s and seeing the statue, then in front of the library, covered with Post-It notes. Students used the statue as a bulletin board for everything from personal messages to flyers announcing parties. So Hotaling gathered the Guardians once more. They raised some funds and in 1987 organized a rededication ceremony. The fragile plaster of Paris Minerva was placed in a Plexiglas protective case. Today she stands in a place of honor in the lobby of the new Library.