



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **HISTORICAL MARKER DEDICATED AT MOUNT DE SALES ACADEMY**

Tuesday, May 16, 2017 (MACON, GA)—More than 140 years since its founding by the Sisters of Mercy, Mount de Sales Academy, with Historic Macon Foundation, dedicated a marker commemorating the Academy's historical significance to the Macon community. The Academy also held a ribbon cutting to celebrate the unveiling of an 18-month transformation of its main campus.

In keeping with downtown Macon's revitalization efforts and College Hill Corridor projects, including the growth at Mercer University, the Academy added student-focused outdoor areas, plazas, and renovated green spaces to the campus. These improvements were made possible by the Phil J. and Alice S. Sheridan Foundation and have enriched the Academy's beauty while preserving its history.

Speakers at the dedication and ribbon cutting included Macon-Bibb Mayor Robert Reichert, who proclaimed May 16 as Mount de Sales Day; Chris Sheridan with Sheridan Construction; and Ethiel Garlington with Historic Macon.

Chris Sheridan, a trustee of the Sheridan Foundation, values the legacy of the Sisters of Mercy. He said, "The Foundation and Sheridan Construction were motivated and guided by the example of the Sisters of Mercy who dedicated their lives to making wherever they went a better place. This transformation and celebration reminds us that our task on earth is to follow the example of those intrepid Sisters."

In 1871, five Sisters of Mercy arrived in Macon from Columbus and opened a small school, where they taught Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish children while also operating a free school to serve the poor in the basement of St. Joseph Catholic Church. The work of the Sisters was a precursor to the Bibb County Public School System, where two of the Sisters worked for more than 30 years.

Mount de Sales was chartered in 1876. The Academy was the first school in Macon to integrate (1963) and was the first to be named a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence (1991).

"Historic Macon is thrilled to help Mount de Sales share their incredible story with the new marker dedication. Historic Macon is lucky to have partners, like the Academy, that are committed to preservation and the stewardship of their properties," said Ethiel Garlington. He continued, "Mount de Sales and its supporters are proof that preservation is a community-wide effort and when successful, it impacts the entire area."

Mount de Sales' location allows for unique educational offerings with community partners. For example, select senior students can participate in an intensive healthcare internship at Navicent Health. Additionally, through the school's Mercy in Action program, students work with organizations such as Rebuilding Macon and St. Peter Claver food pantry.

President David Held said, "The Academy is very proud to be an integral part of downtown Macon, and our school community reflects the rich history and diversity that comes with being part of an urban center. The renovations to our campus are a reflection of what is taking place throughout the city, and we look forward to our next 140 years as one of the historic cornerstones of our great city."

For a video about the Academy's facilities and transformation areas, visit the school's YouTube site: <https://youtu.be/ZeKdD3UomI4>

### **About Mount de Sales Academy**

Established in 1876, Mount de Sales Academy, an independent Catholic School sponsored and inspired by the Sisters of Mercy, is a diverse college-preparatory community of learners—students and teachers alike—who are poised to discover, challenged to innovate, and motivated to serve.

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Members of the Phil and Alice Sheridan Foundation board along with Ethiel Garlington of Historic Macon unveil the historical marker. (l-r) Sheridan Foundation Trustees Pat Meyer, Stephanie Glawson, Chris Sheridan; Historic Macon Executive Director Ethiel Garlington; Sheridan Foundation Trustee Alicia Sheridan Kelly.



Campus transformation ribbon cutting. (l-r) President David Held, holding the proclamation; Student Body President and Senior Will Pounds; MDS Trustee Craig Murphey; Mayor Robert Reichert.