



2900 North Menomonee
River Parkway
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53222-4597
www.mtmary.edu

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For More Information:

Monica Baer, 262-522-9687
mbaer@wi.rr.com
Susan Seiler, 414-256-1230
seilers@mtmary.edu

**‘Architecture of Fashion’ Exhibition Features
Mid-Century Couturier Classics**

*-- Mount Mary College Historic Costume Collection Demonstrates
How ‘Chic Shapes’ Sculpt Female Form --*

MILWAUKEE (July 30, 2008) – The most celebrated international fashion designers of the late 1940s, ‘50s, ‘60s and beyond used textiles and patterns to express how shape and form could create an intimate architecture for the body. Couturiers like Cristobal Balenciaga, Norman Norell, Adele Simpson, Geoffrey Beene and Chanel created garments that not only draped the body but also signaled the wearer’s place in society.

Mount Mary College has culled examples of these fashion icons’ work from its Historic Costume Collection for a yearlong exhibition titled “Chic Shapes: The Architecture of Fashion.” Visitors may view the exhibition without charge from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. weekdays from now until June 1, 2009. The exhibition is located in the college’s Walter and Olive Stiemke Memorial Hall, which is part of Notre Dame Hall, at 2900 N. Menomonee River Parkway.

The exhibition was assembled by Elizabeth Gaston, historic costume curator. She was inspired by a quote attributed to Christobal Balenciaga: “Designing to me is an art in itself with all the arts participating. You must be an architect for your sense of measure, a sculptor for your silhouette, a painter for your palette, and a musician to realize the rhythm and movement of the dress.”

“Just as in architecture, fashionable silhouettes evolve regularly throughout history, reflecting women’s changing lifestyles,” Gaston says. “During the 20th century, women were freed from their

whalebone and steel corsets and voluminous petticoats of the 19th Century. The postwar 20th century brought more comfortable fluid forms, created through new textiles and ingenious patterning.”

The exhibition features five sections, each defined by the shape that inspired the construction of garments and examples of the style influenced by that shape:

Column – A 1960s yellow linen shift dress by Norman Norell, a 1960s royal blue wool suit by Adele Simpson, a gold lamé empire silhouette evening gown by Irene and a 1960s white cotton piqué baby doll dress by Geoffrey Beene

Hourglass – “New Look” 1949 black taffeta dress by Nettie Rosenstein worn by the late Jane Bradley Pettit, a Milwaukee philanthropist

Sphere – Featuring a 1960s red chiffon bubble skirt, a 1970s Junior Sophisticates cape, 1890s gigot sleeves (also known as leg of mutton sleeves)

Cone – 1950s trapeze white wool coat, a 1950s A-line grey wool coat by Norman Norell and a 1968 yellow satin evening gown by Balenciaga

Inverted Cone – a 1980s red wool suit by Thierry Mugler and a 1990s suit by Chanel.

For more information, to schedule tours or to confirm the accessibility of the exhibit for viewing, please call 414-256-0164 or e-mail gastone@mtmary.edu

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Mount Mary College, located on an 80-acre campus in Milwaukee, is a Catholic college for women sponsored by the School Sisters of Notre Dame. The college encourages leadership, integrity and a deep sense of social justice arising from sensitivity to moral values and Christian principles. Dedicated to the development of the whole person through a program of studies based on the liberal arts integrated with career preparation, Mount Mary offers over 60 academic areas of study, including teacher education, occupational therapy, nursing, fashion, and interior design, and seven graduate programs. Its 1,700 students enjoy a 14:1 student/faculty ratio. Visit www.mtmary.edu.