

THE COLLEGIAN

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Photo by Victoria Lybarger

COLUMN

Darbeth disregarded, deserves better

By Victoria Lybarger
Photography editor

As a Builder on her ninth semester here at Southwestern College, I'd like to say that I know a bit about our campus.

I've lived in Cole Hall and Honors Apartments. I've had classes in each academic building – including the basement of Stewart Field House and in White P.E.

While each building has its talking points, I'm focusing on Darbeth Fine Arts Center.

Some reading this may be wondering what Darbeth is, and others may spend most of their days there. Either way, we need to talk about it.

As a senior in high school, I came on a visit to Southwestern College to make sure it was my place. While on that visit, we took a tour. Darbeth was not a stop on that tour.

Tony Mendoza, religion and philosophy senior, has been a student ambassador on campus for the past three years. Mendoza said, "We first go from Beech to Mossman. Then from the Mound to the library. Next, we either go to Wallingford or Cole depending on the guest. Following the resident halls, we head over to Stewart Field House. We then

walk to Student Life and the cafeteria after that. To end the tour, go to Christy and stop at the top of the 77."

Allyson Moon, director of theatre, said, "As a fine arts institution, every single student should be brought to our fine arts building, just as they are shown Stewart Field House."

Moon has been a member of the Builder family for over 32 years. Before she was a faculty member, Moon was involved in summer theatre and helped with a show called "Horse Feathers and Applesauce."

"For me, [Darbeth] is an incredibly friendly building," said Moon. "But the reality is, when a place is used as much as this space is, you have to replace things. You have to recover the upholstery, you have to get new chairs and you have to repaint. The good news is that it's been used so much that we're at that point."

Darbeth Fine Arts Center is where the majority of the performing arts classes are held, along with a few communication classes. Music ensemble rehearsals, private lessons, art classes, theatre rehearsals and performances, 9 LIVES rehearsals and shows, an Autism Awareness concert, a weekly chapel service

and the Community Music School are just some of what takes place in Darbeth.

Many of these happenings are open to the public. I would say consistently, more events in this building are available for the public to attend than in any other on a weekly basis. That being said, the dirty bathrooms, squeaky chairs and broken floors don't accurately represent what Southwestern College has to offer.

Stephen Butler, former SC staff member of eight years, spent most of his days in Darbeth. His office and all classes he taught were in the building. During spring break of 2016, Butler took initiative and painted all of the upstairs doors in Darbeth. He hoped this would inspire others in Darbeth to put in time and effort towards making it a better place.

Butler said, "I also proposed an idea in a performing arts department meeting to the president that we could get a group of talented people in painting and construction to help fix some of the problem areas inside and outside the building," said Butler. Unfortunately, that group didn't form, and Butler's door painting was all that came out of that conversation.

With all that Southwestern has to offer, I so wish we, as a community, could put some energy into helping Darbeth Fine Arts become a place we put our pride – a place that everyone on campus knows about, goes to support their classmates during shows, a building that doesn't have to be described as "that round-looking building next to Christy on King's Drive."

Events held in Darbeth bring people together, they break down walls, they welcome everyone. Another thing that also does that is the Builder family. It's what we strive to do – who we strive to be. Bring people together, break down boundaries and welcome everyone.

Moon said, "I think about when this building really comes to life. It comes to life when there's a show, every Wednesday at chapel, at the end of the semester when there is an art show with student artwork from photography, stained glass, painting, drawing, ceramics. I love all of those moments and I wish we had that all the time. But those are incredibly rich, rich moments."

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