

Preserving One of Seattle's Wonders



Kevin Daniels, here inside the Daniels Recital Hall, also has done significant service work in New Orleans since Hurricane Katrina.

By Autumn Jones ('10)

"For me, it all began when I was very little," said Kevin Daniels ('79), Gonzaga Regent. "I was standing alongside a railroad track in Nampa, Idaho, and watched an old steam engine power by." Trains to buildings, his interest in preservation prevails.

The Daniels Recital Hall is a favorite success story. When Daniels came on the scene, the city of Seattle had issued a demolition permit for the then First United Methodist Church. "Another developer was prepared to buy the property and demolish it to make room for a high-rise office tower," said Daniels. "We decided we could design a high-rise tower yet save the church for future generations. My partners understood the importance of preserving such an architectural wonder."

His firm, Daniels Development, has handled other Seattle preservation projects including the Union Station, Starbucks Center and the Cadillac Hotel in the Klondike Gold Rush National Historic Park.

"The congregation of the Methodist church dates back to the start of Seattle in 1853 and was the first organized religious congregation in the city. Its founders are the same as the founders of the city of Seattle. So the historical significance of preserving this link to the past is easy to understand," said Daniels.

Now a performance hall with exceptional acoustics, it is intended as a resource for artists who can't afford other venues. "Our intention is to bring much-needed nightlife back down to the central business district," Daniels said. A series of Thursday noontime concerts draws regulars and first-timers.

Other plans for the hall are in the works, but protecting the landmark and allowing public access will remain high priorities for Daniels. "Its current use allows the public to see one of the most magnificent interior places in all of Seattle," he said.

Daniels serves on the Board of Trustees for the National Trust for Historic Preservation in Washington, D.C., as a board member of the Seattle Foundation and as co-chair of the Pioneer Square Main Street organization. He also is involved with the Gonzaga Business Forum and Seattle Alumni Chapter.