

ARCHIVES

INFORMATION ON MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY-OAKLAND

1. The Wilson Gift to Michigan State University

In January of 1957, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred G. Wilson announced that they were giving their beautiful 1400-acre estate (Meadowbrook) in Oakland county, Michigan, plus \$2 million to Michigan State University for the purpose of establishing a branch university. In addition to the 1400 acres, the estate consists of Meadowbrook Hall, one of the world's fine residences; the modern, smaller home of the Wilsons (Sunset Terrace); plus several other residences and farm buildings. The \$2 million was for the purpose of constructing the first academic buildings for the new university.

Prior to this gift, Dr. Sarah VanHoosen Jones had given the University 350 acres of land in Oakland county, located 5 miles northeast of Meadowbrook. Following the Wilson gift, the University has acquired an additional 200 acres immediately adjacent to the Wilson property.

In total, then, Michigan State University now owns almost 2000 acres of land in Oakland county, plus several buildings, and now has under construction the first academic building for this new university. A \$750,000 Student Center is also under construction and will be completed by September of 1959. *University of MSU of 1959*

2. The Educational Potential of the New University

The Meadowbrook Estate is located in the eastern part of Oakland county, near the Macomb county line. In relation to existing population centers, it is three miles east of Pontiac (population 80,000), three miles west of Rochester (population 5,000), and 25 miles north of Detroit.

The combined population of Oakland and Macomb counties is currently in excess of one million, and it is predicted rather conservatively that by 1980 this combined figure will be approximately two million. Demographers estimate that currently almost 50,000 young men and women between the ages of 18 and 24 live within easy commuting distance of this new campus, and that this figure will exceed 100,000 by 1970.

The staggering potential of this area is underscored by the fact that there is not now a single post-high school educational institution, public or private, in either county - except for a new community college in south Macomb county.

Adding to this potential in another dimension is the highly advantageous location of the top research headquarters of the automotive industry. Twelve miles away is the new General Motors Technical Center; less than three miles away is the new site for Chrysler's proposed center for research; and Ford's new proving grounds and testing center is about twelve miles distant.

3. The Michigan State University-Oakland Foundation

In accepting the Wilson gift, President John A. Hannah of Michigan State University announced the appointment of a committee of approximately 50 community leaders from the two counties to assist in developing the new university along the most productive possible lines.

This committee has subsequently been incorporated into the Michigan State University-Oakland Foundation and will serve in a permanent advisory and supporting role to the official governing board of Michigan State University and Michigan State University-Oakland. The membership of the Foundation includes such outstanding community leaders as John F. Gordon, President of General Motors Corporation; Mrs. L. L. Colbert, wife of the President of Chrysler Corporation; Mr. Theodore Yntema, Vice President for Engineering at Ford Motor Company; Mr. James Zeder, Vice President for Engineering at Chrysler Corporation; the key bankers in the area; the newspaper publishers; the labor leaders; and the leaders in community education. The group includes a total of 50 such persons, and they are giving us enthusiastic support and counsel.

As an example of their enthusiasm, one of the committees of this Foundation is helping think through the program development. It has been mutually agreed that the new institution should offer a 4-year undergraduate program leading to graduate work at the earliest feasible date, and that it should begin in the fall of 1959 with a freshman class. It was the recommendation of this group that programs should be offered in four areas - liberal arts, business administration, teacher education, and engineering science.

In order to make the most of our opportunity to build something new and fresh on the American educational scene, this committee has sponsored four seminars - one on each of the subject matter areas. They have brought together some of the leading thinkers in the country to share with this committee and with MSU administrative people their views as to how they would proceed to develop a program to meet the needs of the next generation or so. The unique feature of this whole undertaking is that there are absolutely no restrictions except those which are voluntarily imposed.

In view of this, counsel has been sought from such people as Dr. Lee A. DeBrudge, President of California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California; Dean Frederick E. Terman, College of Engineering, Stanford University, Palo Alto, California; President Eric A. Walker, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania; Dean C. Richard Soderberg, College of Engineering, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts; and Dr. Newman Hall, Professor and Chairman of Mechanical Engineering, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut. These gentlemen, of course, counseled on the subject of engineering science.

Similar seminars have been conducted in the fields of business administration and teacher education, again drawing upon some of the key people in America, including Dr. Henry T. Heald, President and Director of the Ford Foundation, New York City; Dr. Henry H. Hill, President of George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tennessee; Dr. Francis Keppel, Dean of Education, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts; Dean George L. Bach, Graduate School of Industrial Administration,

Carnegie Institute of Technology, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Mr. Theodore V. Houser, Chairman, Board of Directors, Sears, Roebuck and Company, Chicago, Illinois; and Dr. Frank C. Pierson, Professor, Department of Economics, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania.

The concluding seminar was in the field of liberal arts and included such guest panelists as President Milton S. Eisenhower, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland; President Sarah G. Blanding, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York; Dr. Henry Steele Commager, Professor of History and American Studies, Amherst College, Amherst, Massachusetts; Mr. Henry R. Luce, Editor-in-Chief, Time, Incorporated, New York City; and Dr. Ralph W. Tyler, Director, Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford, California.

I give you all this by way of background and to say that we believe we have an unusual opportunity if we are wise enough to do those things which should be done.

4. Basic Decisions

- a) We will begin with a freshman class in the fall of 1959.
- b) The early years will be devoted to establishing a first-class undergraduate institution, with graduate work to come later.
- c) The new campus will have almost complete autonomy.
- d) Degree programs will be offered in Liberal Arts, Business Administration, Teacher Education, and Engineering Science.