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MSU-O

A new approach to higher

This is a landmark month in the history of a landmark institution. Michigan State University, in its first century, pioneered the patterns for agricultural and for land-grant colleges; both instruments that made public higher education a reality in America.

In its second century, with the opening of classes this month at Michigan State University-Oakland, it is fathering another, equally significant enterprise. The birth of a new university is in itself a once-in-a-generation event, with all that it connotes in opportunity to build, unfettered by existing structures or vested academic interests. This one is being built on a principle evolved in over a year of study at East Lansing and at Meadowbrook Hall, on the 1,400-acre Oakland County estate which Mr. and Mrs. Alfred G. Wilson donated, along with a two-million-dollar building fund, to make MSU-O possible.

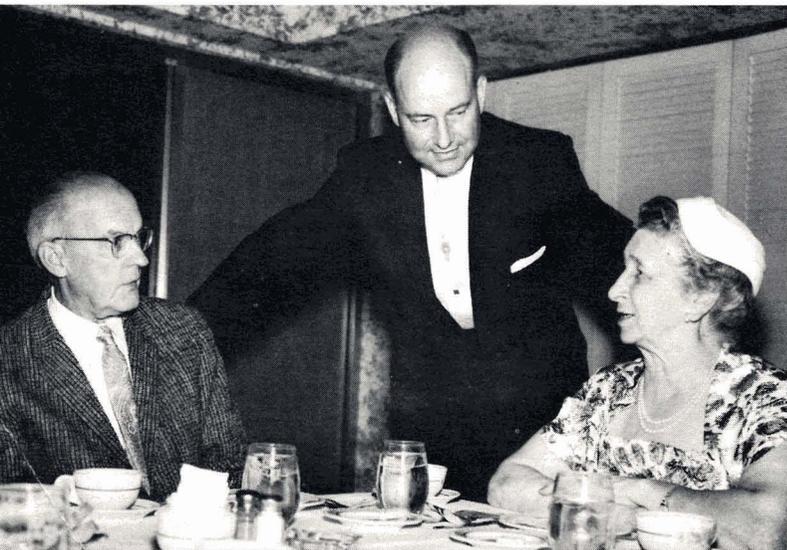
More than a score of the nation's leading educators and distinguished citizens worked with MSU-O's new Chancellor, D. B. Varner, and Dr. Thomas H. Hamilton, both vice presidents of M.S.U.; with faculty members from the East Lansing campus, and with a group of community leaders named by M.S.U. President John A. Hannah to try to shape their ideal of a university. No transcripts were made of their sessions, to help encourage complete freedom of expression.

This university's primary job was to be to educate the mounting student population of Oakland and Macomb Counties, the fastest-growing area of the Nation's second fastest-growing state. This area now has 50,000 college-age youngsters, and by 1970 will have 103,000. MSU-O's starting enrollment of 500 (all freshmen), will jump to 3,000 in four years and to 10,000 or more in a decade, and will continue to climb.

The curriculum that emerged from the year's studies reverses higher education's 80-year trend to proliferation, specialization, and professional training. MSU-O moves back toward the basic, fundamental, liberal arts

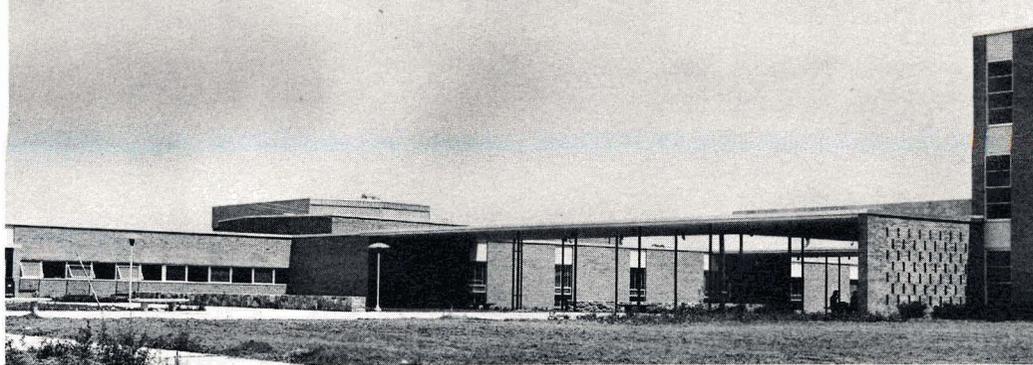
COVER:

The Paul A. Miller family. Provost Miller holds Tom, who will soon be four, while Mrs. Miller turns the page for 14-year-old Paula. On pages four and five of this issue, Dr. Miller answers some questions about the Office of the Provost.



Left to right: Don E. Ahrens, Vice President of the MSU-O Foundation and Chairman of the Finance Committee; Chancellor D. B. Varner, Vice President of Michigan State University, and Mrs. Alfred G. Wilson, Donor, with her husband, of Meadowbrook Farms—site of the MSU-O Campus, and of \$2 million for its first administration and classroom building.

education



ideal. It reflects a widening uneasiness that our society has been devoting little of its interests and energies to things of ultimate worth and much to the material incidentals. It says in effect that the university's responsibility is first and foremost to develop the intellectual and moral fiber essential to making the society of man function well.

MSU-O thus is to be a liberal arts institution of the highest quality and most rigorous standards. But its job is to develop the abilities of the average good, as well as the superior youngster, rather than of a highly-selected elite. It will have a relatively simple curriculum and will offer four undergraduate degrees: in teacher education, business administration, engineering science, and liberal arts. In due time, graduate degrees will be added.

There will be no separate administrative setup for teacher education and there will be little emphasis on pedagogy. Rather, teacher education will be a responsibility of the whole university. Similarly, business administration will have no courses in techniques, such as accounting. The emphasis will be on producing a citizen-businessman with broad understanding of the role he plays. In engineering, the effort will be to provide the broad scientific and mathematical underpinnings that will enable men to handle large ideas, and projects. It will leave the training in fast-changing technologies and specialties to the corporations or to professional schools.

Every student will be required to take at least half of his work in liberal arts. This will include sequences in the development of Western civilization's ideas and institutions, in foreign cultures (especially non-western) and in the social sciences. Students will have a rigorous freshman course in literature and composition. Written work will be stressed everywhere. So will self-learning. Students must demonstrate command of, not just credits in, a foreign language. As seniors they must take a "Great Issues" course in a few carefully selected issues of paramount significance.

Fifty-five percent of the first freshmen are from the top quarter of their high school classes, and nearly all are in the top half. In a poll of their program preferences, nearly one-half have said they plan to take Russian, and nearly one-third mathematics.

The facilities consist of a 39-room classroom building and a connecting structure housing the start of a library, laboratories, administrative staff and faculty offices. This is being built with the \$2,000,000 donated

by the Wilsons. A \$700,000 self-liquidating student center building housing cafeteria, student lounge, book store and student publication offices is also being finished. Chancellor Varner hopes funds can be obtained to begin work this year on a projected \$1,500,000 library building which will be the dominant feature of the campus.

The faculty which must make these intentions come alive is a first-year staff of 25 that surely for its age, which averages about 33, is unsurpassed anywhere. The oldest is 41-year-old George T. Mathews, principal architect of Columbia University's famed courses in Contemporary Civilization. They also include William Rhode, the first man to earn a Ph.D., in political science at M.S.U., and half a dozen men whose department heads describe them as the best of their generation or among the four or five best men they'd ever taught. Twenty-two members of the faculty have their doctorates.

Dean of the Faculty is 39-year-old Dr. Robert G. Hoopes, who taught at Harvard, Yale, and Stanford and was Vice President of the American Council of Learned Societies when Mr. Varner lured him, like the others, with the prospect of helping build a new university. Columbia Graduate Dean Jacques Barzun has called Dr. Hoopes the most brilliant man of his age in the field of English.

The faculty will be free to try pertinent ideas, and if the ideas happen to be revolutionary that won't outlaw them. For example, credits are not going to be equivalent to the number of hours a student sits in front of an instructor, says Dean Hoopes. The basis of courses will be reading, syllabi and discussion.

"The aim," he declared, "is to render the professor dispensable at the earliest possible moment. This is to be a place of the mind, and the mind is an activity not a repository. In this spirit, we invite students to come and learn with us."

Loren Pope, author of the article on MSU-O which appears on these pages, is Assistant to Chancellor D. B. Varner. Before coming to Michigan State University-Oakland, Mr. Pope was Education Editor of The New York Times.

