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Archival Chronicle

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Centennial Perspectives: Unforgettable Faculty

"A college education is as good or as bad as the combination of personalities in the faculty and student body. Since the time of the Greeks, the purpose of education has remained fundamentally the same: to develop the whole personality. That is the true purpose of education, and everything else is just publicity."—Rea McCain.

As BGSU looks back on a century of development, it's easy to understand the importance of presidents and administrators in guiding that growth. Buildings named in their honor keep their memories alive (See [Centennial Perspectives: People](#) for biographies of some of these people). But it's often the faculty and staff who serve the university longest, who shape the curriculum, and who have the greatest influence on students both academically and personally. These are just a few of the hundreds of staff members who have left their mark on Bowling Green.

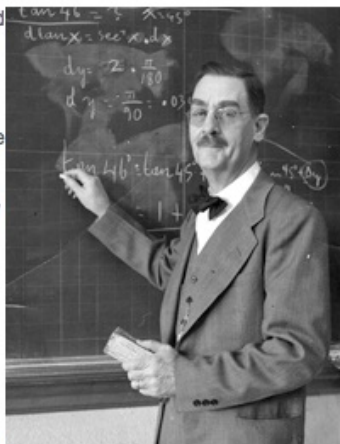


Dr. Rea McCain (1882-1973) was a member of the original faculty on the first day of classes in 1914. When the college's entire teaching staff numbered just ten, that made Rea McCain the English Department. A native of Lebanon, Ohio, she had taught in the public schools there before earning her master's degree at Columbia, where President Homer Williams recruited her. BGSU's first catalog listed the following courses under English: Composition, Grammar, English for the Lower Grades, Juvenile Literature, English for the Upper Grades, Teaching of Secondary English, Victorian Literature, Shakespeare, and Tennyson and Browning. As McCain recalled some fifty years later, faculty members often taught as many as twenty course hours per week and then taught two evenings as well as at an extension location in Toledo.

McCain directed the first plays on campus (continuing her role as drama coach until 1940), taught public speaking, and oversaw the debate teams; as the department grew, she continued as chair. She was instrumental in organizing the campus chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, the English Honor Society, as well as other local honor societies. During her career, it was estimated that she had taught more than 10,000 students. In addition to her teaching and administrative duties, McCain found time to complete her doctorate in English from New York University in 1931, with a dissertation entitled, "Travel in Italy as a Part of the Education of the English Gentleman." Travel was one of her personal interests, and she toured Europe many times over the years. After her retirement she traveled to Iceland on a freighter and drove to Alaska on the Al-Can Highway in

1953.

Dr. Frank C. Ogg (1899-1976), a native of Richmond, Virginia who grew up in New Mexico, joined the faculty in 1931, as an associate professor of mathematics. He served the university in many capacities, chairing the Department of Mathematics (1948-1965), the Research Committee, and the Golden Anniversary Celebration (1960). He was a member of the mathematics honorary societies Pi Mu Epsilon and Kappa Mu Epsilon. Chosen as Acting Librarian (1941-1943), Ogg was always a vital supporter of graduate and faculty research and University Libraries. In 1966, he and his wife Florence donated the funds for the purchase of three seventeenth-century volumes by Galileo for the Rare Books collection. In 1970, his work as an advocate of the library was recognized when the Frank C. Ogg Library of Mathematics and Science was dedicated in the new Mathematical Sciences Building.



Ogg was an active member of the Bowling Green community as well, holding memberships in Town and Gown Club and the Toledo Chapter of Torch International. But it was the affection in which he was held by his students that led to two profiles in the BG News. In these stories, it was revealed that:

1. Doc Ogg (the boys all call him Doc) is the most beloved math professor in the institution.
2. He confines his lectures to the room in which the class is held.
3. He has never been known to step in the wastepaper basket, upset that dinky book rack, or hold a class until 11:57.
4. ...It was not Sir Walter Raleigh "who discovered how good a pipe can be;" it was Doctor Frank Ogg...

The Department of Mathematics maintains a [profile of Dr. Ogg](#) on their website.



Miss Laura Heston (1894-1995) was hired by President Homer Williams in 1918 to "build up the Home Economics Department." And that she did. Serving as chair of the department for thirty-five years, Heston oversaw the expansion of course offerings and the construction of a building specifically for department offices and classrooms. The first woman faculty member to have an apartment and to own a car, Heston led faculty and students by her busy example. With degrees in Agriculture from the Ohio State University and the University of Chicago, she was affiliated with Phi Upsilon Omicron, the American Home Economics Association, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the professional education committee of the Ohio Restaurant Association. During the Second World War, Governor John Bricker appointed her to the Consumer Intelligence Committee for the Ohio Council of National Defense.

Thanks to the shortage of faculty during the early years, Heston was once assigned to teach two classes scheduled for the same time period. Fortunately, they were both clothing laboratories and met across the hall from each other—she hurried back and forth between the rooms to help students. At that time, all the faculty pitched in to help with graduation. She and foreign languages professor Caroline Neilson did all the decorating and flower arrangements for the ceremony, and Heston was to make certain that all the women's white graduation dresses were exactly the same height from the floor—eight inches. Heston remembered one graduate who, "after having her dress measured to the specified length, shortened hers to be a little bolder."

Active in the community until her death at the age of 101, Heston was a member of the Women's Club, the League of Women Voters, and the American Association of University Women.

Dr. James Paul Kennedy (1911-1995) was hired to teach piano and composition in 1936, and immediately made an impact on campus life. Within a year of his arrival, he was presenting solo piano concerts to rave reviews. A talented composer in his own right, his work won many national and international awards over the years. In time, Kennedy became director of all the vocal groups on campus—University Chorus, Collegiate Chorale, and A Capella Choir, and followed a heavy touring schedule with them. Music thus served as an ambassador program that spread Bowling Green's name far and wide. Choral programs were regular features of campus cultural life and brought nationally-known guest soloists to perform Handel's "Messiah" or Bach's "Christmas Oratorio" with university students.

Thanks to Kennedy's leadership the Music Department became the School of Music in 1957, became independent of the College of Education in 1970, and ultimately grew to become the College of Musical Arts in 1974, with Kennedy as its first dean. Attracting the best faculty and students, the College of Musical Arts is one of the few in the nation to offer a doctoral program. When he retired in 1978, Kennedy's forty-two years of service was the longest tenure by a faculty member in university history.

In addition to his membership in many professional organizations, Kennedy served as the choir director at Bowling Green's First United Methodist Church.



"If you get an education without music, you're not fully educated." —James Paul Kennedy



Lyman A. Stevens "Steve the Cop" (1888-1945) demonstrates the important role non-faculty staff members play in making the campus community a welcoming and secure environment for students. Lyman Stevens joined the staff of the university in 1925, first as a maintenance worker. In 1928 he was appointed police officer of the campus, a post with some law enforcement functions, but his primary duty was to maintain the security of the buildings and grounds. Stevens served in that capacity for the next seventeen years. For twelve of those years, he was the sole officer. Affectionately known as "Steve the Cop" to the students, he was a reliable member of every clean-up committee on campus, and "took to his official duties a kindliness and friendly interest that endeared him to students and faculty." Indeed, many former students made it a point to return after graduation just to visit with him.

The night watch gave Steve (seen seated in this photograph) a unique after-dark perspective of the campus, and first-hand experience with campus pranks. He once recalled how a co-ed had kept him busy in Williams Hall (then a women's dormitory) for nearly two hours by unlocking the doors as fast as he could lock them.

"Talent is 90 percent perspiration. One is successful because when the rest went home at six, he stayed all night and practiced." —James Paul Kennedy

A brief **bibliography** gives a glimpse into the professional and personal lives of these faculty members.

—Lee N. McLaird