

**NORTHERN CELEBRATES ITS HISTORY
1949, 1999, 2024**

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Northern Michigan University has had two major celebrations commemorating its 50th and 100th anniversaries. The Golden Jubilee was celebrated in 1949. The first university historian for the event was Professor Francis Roy Copper of the Psychology Department who wrote the first history of the school. He used oral interviews with early faculty members as the basis for this manuscript. Unfortunately, prior to the celebration he passed away of a heart attack in January and his history was placed in the library and was not edited and published 50 years later. At this milestone, President Henry Tape hoped that the state legislature would provide money for a library and industrial arts building and \$460,000 was provided for the former.

In April, Tri Mu fraternity presented a revival of “Bright Lights” which focused on Northern’s first 50 years. At the same time one of the old-time faculty members, Wayne McClintock, professor of Industrial Arts and Physical Education retired. When he arrived in 1915 he had 4 Industrial Arts students, and in 1949 it had gone up to 85. In an editorial some students called for the establishment of ice hockey, “the king of winter sports,” but that would have to wait.

Highlights during commencement week in June started with the Administration Building dedicated as “Kaye Hall” and President Kaye’s son, Dr. John Kaye, and his family drove up from Menominee for the celebration. This was followed by the largest on-campus gathering – 370 alums representing every class since 1901, faculty and guests – attending a luncheon in the Lee Hall ballroom, and the formal dedication of Carey and Lee Halls. Rear Admiral Swanson, Surgeon General of the US Navy (Class of 1921), was the major speaker. At commencement

four individuals were given honorary degrees. In an editorial in the *Northern College News* the school was looking forward to the “next 50 years [that] the light of a good Northern education [would] continue to burn.”

Plans for the celebration of Northern’s Centennial in 1999 were started by President William Vandament in April 1994 at the meeting of the Centennial Committee that would oversee the celebration. The position of University Historian was created and President Vandament selected Dr. Russell Magnaghi for this position. He was charged with gathering and preserving University history, finding and saving University artifacts, sculptures and paintings found in “hidden” locations around campus. This was the origin of the present Beaumier Heritage Center.

The Peter White Lounge was created with a showcase focusing on Northern’s history. Over 100 oral interviews were made with students, faculty, and administrators including the presidents. The present Mace used in commencement ceremonies was created for the Centennial by Mr. Dale Wedig of the Art & Design Department . On the birthdate, April 28, dozens of photographs were taken across campus to illustrate student life at that time.

There were numerous publications promoting Northern’s history. The best remembered was, Magnaghi’s *A Sense of Time, The Encyclopedia of Northern Michigan University*. At the present time, Dr. Diane Kordich is editing and revising the encyclopedia so that it will be digitized and available to the world.

At the centennial celebration on April 28, 1999 former presidents James Appleberry and Bill Vandament visited the campus and a grand luncheon was held. President Bailey and a number of administrators had traveled to Lansing for a state celebration of Northern’s achievement. In September, celebrating the original start of classes in 1899 in the old city hall, a

grand banquet was held in The Superior Dome attended by hundreds of guests. President Bailey led the toasts hailing Northern's future. It was the grand finale of years of planning. President Vandament used this centennial celebration to take action to preserve and promote Northern's history and that of the Upper Peninsula.

Fostering part of the present quasiquicentennial celebration, Mr. Daniel Truckey, Director of the Beaumier Heritage Center, has developed a special exhibit at the Center focusing on Northern's past which I recommend visiting and has given the Sonderegger Symposium on November 8th a Northern theme which you are invited to. Last evening President Brock Tessman led the community in celebrating the 125th anniversary which will continue through the homecoming weekend. As in the past, everyone looks forward to Northern's growth and providing excellent education for generations of students. We move forward to 150 in 2024.