

Ramblings

Message from the President

March 2021

You may have heard the news that West Chester is celebrating its sesquicentennial this year. We're very proud of all that our faculty, staff, students and alumni have accomplished during these past 150 years and can't wait to celebrate with you. Later this year, we'll be inviting you and all of our alumni to a series of events – in-person, hybrid and virtual – to mark this very special anniversary.

Today West Chester is a public comprehensive university and academic powerhouse that offers 118 different undergraduate programs, 91 master's degree and four doctoral programs to 17,000-plus students. But in 1871 when the Normal School at West Chester first opened its doors, its academic goals were quite specific -- to serve as a training academy for elementary school teachers. One hundred boarding students and 30 day students made up that inaugural class enrolled in a two-year course of study.

By the way, if you're wondering about that choice of name, our founders weren't implying that the new institution was average or ordinary. "Normal" was simply a term used to describe schools that trained teachers. (WCU is in good company – UCLA and Arizona State started as normal schools, too.)

While 1871 may have marked the first day of class, it was even earlier that the Normal School officially was founded. On March 10, 1870, the Pennsylvania General Assembly passed an act "to authorize the Trustees and Contributors to the West Chester Academy to become a State Normal School."

West Chester University is marking the occasion with our first-ever Charter Day of Giving on March 10. Giving Day provides alumni, and all donors, the opportunity to make a difference by selecting the fund or program that personally means the most to them. For some, that might be *Fund to Finish*, which provides emergency aid to students when it matters most, which could mean aid for that last course needed to graduate. For others, it could be a gift to the *Excellence Fund* for a specific WCU college or school, or to the *Dowdy Multicultural Center Fund* to help cultivate and sustain a socially just, equitable, and inclusive campus community for all students.

The best part about Giving Day is that every gift, small or large, counts; collectively they all help us reach our larger goals. In our virtual environment, West Chester University's Charter Day of Giving is great way to get involved and show your Ram Pride...from wherever you are.

To learn more, visit <http://www.wcufoundation.org/day-of-giving/>. Thank you for your support!