

HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO

The University of Toledo began in 1872 as a private arts and trades school offering painting and architectural drawing as its only subjects. In the 150 years since, the University has grown into a comprehensive institution offering more than 300 undergraduate and graduate programs to more than 21,000 students from around the world. The history of its development is a remarkable story.

In a pamphlet published in 1868 titled "Toledo: Future Great City of the World," Jesup Wakeman Scott articulated a dream that led him to endow what would become The University of Toledo. Scott, a newspaper editor, expressed his belief that the center of world commerce was moving westward, and by 1900 would be located in Toledo. To help realize this dream, in 1872 Scott donated 160 acres of land as an endowment for a university to train the city's young people.

The Toledo University of Arts and Trades was incorporated on October 12, 1872, to "furnish artists and artizans [sic] with the best facilities for a high culture in their professions." Scott died in 1874, a year after the university opened in an old church building downtown. The school was short-lived, however, closing in 1878 due to a lack of funds. On January 8, 1884, the assets of the university were given by Scott's sons to the city of Toledo and the school reopened as the Toledo Manual Training School. It offered a three-year program for students who were at least 13 years old in academic and manual instruction.

Dr. Jerome Raymond was appointed the first president in 1908. He expanded the school's offerings by affiliating with the Toledo Conservatory of Music, the YMCA College of Law and the Toledo Medical College, and he helped to create the College of Arts and Sciences. These changes moved the university toward becoming a baccalaureate-degree granting institution, but the school struggled through years of inadequate finances and legal battles over control.

In 1914, Dr. A. Monroe Stowe became president and led the University on its first organized path of development. He founded the College of Commerce and Industry (currently the College of Business and Innovation) in 1914, and the College of Education (today the Judith Herb College of Education) in 1916. Enrollment grew from 200 students to 1,400.

As evidence that the University was maturing, student participation in extracurricular activities increased. In 1919, Student Council was created, and two students started a newspaper called *The Universi-Teaser*. In 1915, the students petitioned for an intercollegiate athletic program. Football began in 1917, although the first game was a 145-0 loss to the University of Detroit. The sports teams received their nickname, the "Rockets," in 1923 from a newspaper writer who thought the name reflected the football team's playing style.

By the 1920s, Toledo University was a growing institution, limited only by the size of buildings that housed it. Classes were held in several small buildings downtown. In 1922, the university moved into an automobile mechanics training facility that had been constructed for World War I on the original Scott plot of land. While twice the size of the old buildings, this location was less than ideal. Its limitations became evident when an

enrollment increase of 32 percent in one year produced a critical shortage of space.

The prospects for a new, permanent home for the university improved in 1928 when Dr. Henry J. Doermann became president. His first activity was to initiate plans for a new campus. To pay for the proposed buildings, that year the city placed a bond levy before Toledo's voters. A campaign by faculty and students led to the levy's passage by 10,000 votes and less than one year before the start of the Great Depression. Doermann wanted the new campus to reflect the best design elements of European universities because he felt such architecture would inspire students. It took 400 men less than one year to build University Hall and the Field House in the Collegiate Gothic style.

While enrollments remained stable at the university during most years of the Depression, its finances were strapped. Dr. Philip C. Nash, who became president following Doermann's sudden death, instituted drastic measures to cut costs. Funds from the federal government's New Deal programs helped by paying for new buildings and student scholarships.

While the Depression decade determined in many ways if the University would survive, it was World War II and its aftermath that transformed UToledo into the modern university it is today. The impact of the war was felt almost immediately. The military contracted with UToledo to offer war-training programs for military and civilian personnel. Student life also changed with the war. With a dwindling number of male students, women assumed leadership roles on campus, and intercollegiate basketball and football were suspended. And, tragically, more than 100 UToledo students were killed in the war. After the war, the GI Bill of Rights provided a way to reward veterans for their service by paying their college tuition, and more than 3,000 veterans took advantage of the program at UToledo.

In 1947, Wilbur W. White replaced Nash, who had died the previous year. White proposed a progressive 10-year development plan, but he died in 1950 before any new buildings were completed. His successor, Dr. Asa S. Knowles, oversaw the completion of several buildings, including a new library in 1953. Knowles resigned the presidency in 1958. His last official act was to meet with Toledo City Council to discuss the future financing of the university. As a municipal university, more than 12 percent of the city's budget was allocated to it, and Knowles felt this was unsustainable. Council members suggested the university consider acquiring financial assistance from the state.

It was left to President William S. Carlson to pursue the issue. In 1959, bills introduced in the legislature for a state subsidy for Ohio's three largest municipal universities stalled, and the university's financial situation worsened. Fortunately, a 2-mill levy in 1959 passed by 144 votes, raising \$1.7 million a year for the university. But the universities of Akron, Cincinnati and Toledo all continued to press for state financial assistance and finally, on July 1, 1967, The University of Toledo became part of the state's system of higher education. In addition to tuition subsidies for students, state support provided capital improvement money for a campus building boom.

College students became more politically active in the 1960s, and student protests became frequent. Most at UToledo were peaceful, although protests in opposition to the war in Vietnam led to several arrests. In 1970, the campus remained calm following the deaths of four student protesters at Ohio's Kent State University. A protest led by African American students after the killing of students at Jackson

State University in Mississippi temporarily closed University Hall in May 1970, but this ended when Carlson met with the students and reached a peaceful accord.

UToledo marked its centennial in 1972 with a year of celebration. That year Carlson retired, and Dr. Glen R. Driscoll was selected as his successor. Driscoll oversaw further expansion of the University's physical plant. Centennial Mall, a nine-acre landscaped area in the center of Main Campus, replaced parking lots and Army barracks in 1980. In 1985, Driscoll retired and was replaced by Dr. James D. McComas, who continued the expansion of the University's facilities. His tenure at UToledo was brief, however, as he resigned in 1988.

Dr. Frank E. Horton was selected to be The University of Toledo's 13th president in October 1988. To meet the challenges of the 1990s, Horton began a lengthy strategic planning effort to chart a course of targeted, purposeful growth. To help achieve the plan's many goals, in 1993 the University launched a successful \$40-million fundraising campaign. The University continued to expand its physical environs with the renovation of commercial buildings into classrooms. The University also formalized its relationship with the Toledo Museum of Art with the completion of UToledo's Center for the Visual Arts on the museum's grounds. The University also built its Lake Erie Research Center at Maumee Bay State Park.

Significant growth in the 1990s was not only in buildings, but also in technology. The University joined OhioLINK, a statewide library network, in 1994. The internet became accessible in residence halls and offices. Technological improvements enabled students to register for classes and check their grades online. The University also began to experiment with offering classes via distance (online) learning.

In 1999, Dr. Vik Kapoor became the University's 14th president following Horton's retirement. Kapoor embarked on a restructuring program that included major resource reallocation and administrative reorganization. The Community and Technical College, established in 1968 on the University's Scott Park campus, was abolished. In June 2000, Kapoor resigned, and was replaced the following year by Dr. Daniel Johnson.

Johnson's agenda focused on reconnecting the University to the community through outreach and engagement activities, and the University's mission was rewritten to describe UToledo as a metropolitan research university. Planning began on a science and technology corridor to encourage research partnerships with businesses. Construction projects on Main Campus included renovations to several older buildings, including the Memorial Field House, which was transformed from a basketball arena into a classroom building; it reopened in 2008 after several years of standing empty.

In 2006, the University saw another fundamental change with the merger of UToledo and the Medical University of Ohio, which had been founded as a separate state-supported institution in 1964. As part of the merger, Dr. Lloyd Jacobs, who had been president of MUO, was named president of the merged university. UToledo became one of few universities nationwide to offer degrees in medicine, law, engineering, business, nursing, pharmacy and education.

In 2015, UToledo welcomed its first female president, Dr. Sharon L. Gaber. As the University's 17th president, Gaber worked to increase enrollment, retention, research and philanthropy, and oversaw the implementation

of an agreement to partner UT's medical education with ProMedica, a regional health-care system. Through increased collaboration with faculty, staff, students and the community, Gaber led the University in efforts to create and implement a new strategic plan, a diversity and inclusion plan, and a new multiple-campus master plan.

In 2020, the world faced a public health crisis with the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic. Like many universities and colleges, the University of Toledo transitioned to remote learning and operations in March 2020. It was an effort implemented by Dr. Gaber during what would be her final months as president of The University of Toledo. In late April 2020, she announced her resignation from the University.

Dr. Gregory Postel stepped in as Interim President in July 2020. Since then, Dr. Postel has successfully led the safe reopening of campus during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as helped stabilize the hospital finances following a tumultuous year for The University of Toledo Medical Center exacerbated by the pandemic.

Postel was also actively involved in securing the institution's second named college – the John B. and Lillian E. Neff College of Business and Innovation. He has assisted with a number of other private gifts to support the University.

At a special Board of Trustees meeting in March 2021, Dr. Gregory Postel was appointed the 18th president of the University of Toledo. As the University of Toledo approached its sesquicentennial, Dr. Postel identified eight key initiatives and appointed campus-wide working groups focused on creating a solid foundation upon which to build future growth.

In May 2024, The University of Toledo Board of Trustees named Mr. Matt Schroeder, UT's executive vice president for finance and administration and chief financial officer, interim president. Mr. Schroeder is committed to maintaining and enhancing this university and its excellent medical academic center.

Despite the challenges facing higher education in the 21st century, The University of Toledo today is a success story. Many of its faculty and academic programs have worldwide reputations, and its Main Campus and Health Science Campus are recognized as architectural gems. If the past is any indication, future challenges will be met and the institution will continue educating its students as accountable citizens and global leaders.