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Founded in 2024, the *Studying the History of Higher Education (SHHE) Journal* offers students and emerging scholars of the history of higher education a venue to publish their historical research and to promote dialogue in the academic community. Through mentorship, peer collaboration, and a commitment to academic excellence, our editorial team aims to foster a supportive environment where students and other budding historians can refine their research skills, disseminate their findings, and make meaningful contributions to the field of higher education history.

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Editorial Introduction

Exploring the History of Higher Education

Snejana Slantcheva-Durst

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *Studying the History of Higher Education Journal* (SHHE), published under the auspices of the Russel Center for the Study of Higher Education of the University of Toledo's Higher Education program! The *SHHE Journal* offers students and emerging scholars of the history of higher education a venue to publish their historical research and to promote dialogue in the academic community. Through mentorship, peer collaboration, and a commitment to academic excellence, our editorial team aims to foster a supportive environment where students and other budding historians can refine their research skills, disseminate their findings, and make meaningful contributions to the field of higher education history.

For this first *SHHE Journal* issue, we focused on archival research that sheds light on significant developments in the history of higher education. Each article in this issue shares an intriguing higher education story from the past and brings insights from a journey of historical discovery and interpretation of existing primary and secondary sources. Our contributors scoured the archives, rummaged through institutional materials, combed newspaper articles, worked through individual narratives (both their own and those of others), and chased institutional histories to bring their stories to us.

The issue begins with an account of the origins and evolution of the University of Toledo's Higher Education program and its Russel Center for the Study of Higher Education, which host the *SHHE Journal*. The establishment of higher education studies at the University of Toledo marks a significant milestone in the institution's history. Founded in 1960, the Higher Education program was amongst the pioneers of doctoral education at the municipal Toledo University. Its faculty awarded two of the first doctoral degrees ever granted by the university (in 1962 and 1964), bestowed the first PhD degree to an African American student at the university (1971), and launched the first interdisciplinary research-based Center for the Study of Higher Education in the

state of Ohio (1967). Despite these achievements, the program's unique origins and early accomplishments of its faculty and students have remained under-acknowledged.

The next four articles then follow a chronological order. Dana Parcher's archival research, showcased as the second article in this journal issue, focuses on a period of time during World War II when the University of Colorado Boulder hosted a Japanese language school. Between 1942 and 1946, CU Boulder's language school trained urgently needed officers in the Japanese language who contributed significantly to the war efforts. The article reviews the factors behind the school's formation and the actions of its organizer Commander Albert E. Hindmarsh. Parcher's historical analysis offers a unique glimpse into the diversity of war-time involvements of institutions of higher education as well as into the U.S.-Japanese tense relations prior to and during World War II.

Next, Lee Richards' article recounts the experiences of four faculty members of the Methodist Theological School in Ohio (MTSO) who, alongside African-American students and other faculty, were jailed for their integration activism in Jackson, Mississippi in March of 1964. The four faculty members included Van Bogard "Bogie" Dunn, Everett Tilson, Paul Minus, and Jeffrey Hooper. All four were outspoken supporters of racial equality and travelled to Jackson to protest racist church practices. Their actions played a pivotal role in organizing for change across the Methodist church and its subsequent desegregation.

The fourth article, authored by Carolani Green, focuses on the creation of the Human Sexuality Office at the University of Michigan, the first official LGBTQ+ center at a university in the United States. The Human Sexuality Office opened in the Fall of 1971 spearheaded by graduate student Jim Toy, but also with support from local LGBTQ+ groups and university staff, students, and faculty. Green's historical essay traces the opening of the office, the role of its main founder Jim Toy, the resistance against it, its first year in operation, and the national attitudes and gay rights activism during the 1960s and early 1970s.

The journal issue ends with Donovan Nichols' retrospective on the emergence and evolution of Blue Crew, a secret spirit society at the University of Toledo. Nichols roots his narrative in his recollections as one of the society's co-founders and in archival resources. Blue Crew's unique characteristics and dedication to enhancing school spirit set it apart from other institutions' secret

societies. Founded in 2000, Blue Crew consists of 10 student members whose identities are hidden behind masks, wigs, and overalls. This secret society is devoted to building community and improving the campus culture by promoting university traditions. Today, Blue Crew is a thriving society with over 130 total initiated members, an alumni association, and an endowment fund that financially supports its members and activities.

The historical essays in this inaugural journal issue represent a wide diversity of topics, locations, time periods, and perspectives. We trust you will find them informative and engaging!

Snejana Slantcheva-Durst, PhD
Editor-in-Chief

"In Great Degree of Spirit"[1]: The Beginnings of Higher Education Studies at The University of Toledo

Snejana Slantcheva-Durst[2]

Abstract

The University of Toledo's Higher Education program and its Russel Center for the Study of Higher Education host the *SHHE Journal*. This first article provides a historical account of their origins and growth. The beginnings of higher education studies at the University of Toledo marks a significant milestone in the institution's history. Introduced in 1960 at the doctoral level, the Higher Education program was amongst the pioneers of doctoral education at the municipal Toledo University. Its faculty awarded some of the first doctoral degrees at the university and established the first interdisciplinary research center on higher education studies in the state of Ohio. Drawing on archival resources and secondary research, this article examines the broader context of doctoral education in the United States and Ohio, the visionary leadership of the education faculty who championed the cause of graduate education, and the expansion of the program through its own department and research center. Despite many challenges, the Higher Education program and its research center thrived and evolved over the decades. Today, the program boasts more than 650 graduates while its alumni serve institutions of higher education nationwide.

Keywords: higher education program, doctoral degrees, The University of Toledo, state of Ohio, center for the study of higher education

As an academic field of inquiry, the study of higher education spearheaded doctoral education at The University of Toledo. Introduced in 1960, the doctoral program in Higher Education awarded two of the first doctoral degrees ever granted at The University of Toledo (in 1962 and 1964), bestowed the first PhD

[1] The quote comes from Giesecke, 1961.

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degree to an African American at the University of Toledo (1971), and pioneered the first interdisciplinary research-based Center for the Study of Higher Education in the state of Ohio (1967). Introducing doctoral studies at the municipal Toledo University in 1960s was not a small feat. On the one hand, the city of Toledo's focus, and funding capabilities, fell far from graduate studies. On the other hand, only a handful of institutions in Ohio had ventured into doctoral education at the time, while the state itself did not prioritize research and graduate education. However, following the National Defense Education Act of 1958, the federal government was starting to allocate funding to university research and graduate education. This emphasis on graduate training combined with positive changes at Toledo University itself: increased city funding and new leadership. In this context, the initiative to introduce doctoral education arose.

One college pioneered doctoral education at Toledo: the College of Education. In 1960, it offered doctoral degrees in seven areas, including higher education. The Higher Education program thus spearheaded graduate education at the university. Through trial and error, its faculty shaped an innovative curriculum and fought for its approval. Seven years later, in 1967, the faculty further bolstered higher education studies with a unique research center devoted to college and university research. The milestones of the higher education studies program and its faculty have remained under-acknowledged. This article aims to shed light on them. To retrieve the story of the origins and evolution of the Higher Education program at Toledo University, I explored the rich archival resources of The University of Toledo's Canaday Center, the university historical accounts, and secondary research on doctoral studies in the state of Ohio and the country.

Doctoral Education in the United States and the State of Ohio

The Soviet Union's launch of Sputnik in 1957 turned all attention to university research and doctoral education (Geiger, 2019; Thelin, 2019). In 1958, the U.S. government passed the National Defense Education Act, which allocated unprecedented amounts of funding for scientific research and doctoral training. Federal support for American universities to graduate students with PhDs in a variety of disciplines – the future professors across diverse institutions

of higher learning – represented the most "remarkable shifts of the 60's," and yielded a fast rate of "doctoral production" by all types of universities (Baker, 2020; Kidd, 1972, pp. 64-65).

In Ohio, only four institutions offered doctoral degrees prior to 1960: the Ohio State University, the University of Cincinnati, Western Reserve University, and the Case Institute of Technology; three quarters of the awarded doctoral degrees came from the Ohio State (OBOR, 1966). In the late 1950s-early 1960s, state officials gradually developed and implemented strategies to increase research and development capacities in higher education, especially at public institutions. Two influential reports swayed state legislators in that decision: the one from the state-funded Industrial Development Committee, and the other from the U.S. Department of Defense; both reports pointed to Ohio's limited research and development capabilities that resulted in gradual loss of military contracts and in the state's "astonishingly low" commitment to research universities" (Baker, 2020; Ohio General Assembly, 1962, p. 25). As the runner-up for state governor in 1962, James Rhodes asserted that "We have only just crossed the threshold of the golden age of science," and "we need brainpower to continue these magnificent advances" (Rhodes, 1962). One of Governor Rhodes' first moves after winning the gubernatorial elections was to create the Ohio Board of Regents (OBOR). In 1963, OBOR emerged as the state's higher education planning and coordinating board, whose main functions included the oversight of the growth of higher education especially at the doctoral level (OBOR, 1966). In fact, it was the "interest on the part of the state and municipal universities in graduate work [that] prompted the establishment of OBOR" (OBOR, 1966, p. 95).

The Initiative to Introduce Doctoral Education at the Municipal Toledo University

At the end of the 1950s, and in the midst of growing national and state support for research and graduate training, the municipal Toledo University found itself on the brink of change. A new President, William Carlson, took the university reigns in September of 1958 ("His period of service longest," 1972). A new Dean of the College of Education, George Dickson, had stepped into the position in the fall of 1957 (University of Toledo, n.d.). And in October of 1959,

the residents of the City of Toledo amended the university's charter to increase its income by $800,000, up to an estimated $1.729 million (Floyd, 2022, p. 137; Office of the President, 1960). These factors and individuals combined behind the initiative to extend Toledo University's education to the graduate level. For a municipal institution of average size in the Northwest corner of Ohio, introducing doctoral training would require very different resources, commitments, and energy than the ones utilized up to that point.

It was the College of Education, the largest Toledo University college at the time, that spearheaded the introduction of doctoral studies in 1959 (Office of the President, 1959). At their own initiative, Dean George Dickson and his faculty team of the College of Education Committee on Graduate Study, Robert Gibson, Anthony Deiulio, and K.C. DeGood, forwarded ideas on the introduction of doctoral degrees to President Carlson, who then promptly followed up with a letter to the Commission on Colleges and Universities of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools (NCACSS) - one of the six regional accreditors of higher education institutions and the predecessor of the Higher Learning Commission. The letter notified the commission that the College of Education intended to extend its graduate program to the doctoral level.

Perhaps not surprising, that letter was not met with enthusiasm. A quick retort followed. On July 7, 1959, the Commission's Assistant Secretary John Forbes responded to President Carlson's letter: "We must pass on to you the sad news," he wrote, "that our Executive Board, at its June meeting, voted to discourage your institution from engaging in doctoral work until further study of that problem had been effected…" (NCACSS, 1959).

Undeterred, in December of 1959, Toledo University's faculty and Board of Directors formally approved the proposal to offer doctoral degrees in education (Office of the President, 1959; COE, 1959). The proposal included "Higher and Teacher Education" as one of the major areas of study. The local newspaper, the Toledo Blade, got wind of the proposal and in a December 27 editorial blasted the idea as overly ambitious. "To begin acquiring [doctoral program] now with limited means," wrote the Blade editor, "is to court the likelihood of diluting the quality of undergraduate offerings that are the foundation of a municipal university. It is a risk that TU – and the Toledo area young people to whom it was dedicated – can ill afford" (p. 6).

Disturbed by the article, two days later, Dean Dickson and the faculty swiftly defended the decision. On December 29, they published a response asserting that "we are not attempting to develop research professors; rather, we are trying to prepare college teachers and professionally trained personnel for public schools systems" (COE, 1959a). Indeed, continued their reply, the need for higher education professionals and administrators across public school systems in Northwest Ohio and the broader region was urgent. Growing student enrollments and flourishing colleges and universities necessitated fast increase in training for teachers, administrators, and educational professionals. The Teacher Placement Bureau of the College, the Dean and faculty argued, "received requests for 300 persons to serve on college faculties across the nation" (COE, 1959a). Increasingly, such positions either required a doctorate or listed the doctorate as being highly advantageous. For the 400,000 young Toledoans, the response ended, Toledo University presented the only opportunity for advanced degrees (Office of the President, 1959; COE, 1959a).

The Launch of Doctoral Studies at Toledo University

And it was so that without the approval of the university accreditor or the endorsement of the local media, doctoral classes in education started on February 1 of 1960 (Hickerson, 1972, p. 320). Two weeks before the first doctoral student arrived in the College of Education, Assistant Secretary John Forbes from the accrediting commission sent another letter to President Carlson searching for a solution to the university's "launching an upward extension of programs on February 1 without proper authorization from the Commission" (NCACSS, 1960). He proposed that a commission representative officially visit the university soon, and in case the visit went well, report back to the commission in June. "We will welcome the visit," responded President Carlson a week later (Office of the President, 1960), but "we also insist that we are ready and strongly motivated to offer doctoral studies." "In the last decade," wrote the President,

> the College of Education has experienced a rapidly increasing demand and enrollment at the graduate level… from 93 in 1953 to 265 in 1959 … even greater increase in summer 186 in 1954 and 417 last summer… Over 180

> inquiries from well qualified persons had been received by the end of 1957, which prompted the College to begin self-study leading to the establishment of doctoral degrees. Financially, the University is in the best condition it has been for years… (Office of the President, 1960)

Although undeterred to offer doctoral degrees, President Carlson and Dean Dickson still heeded the warnings of the Blade editor and the accrediting commission. For them, "a consultant" from an established research university with national standing could be employed to provide an official stamp of the doctoral initiative (Office of the President, 1962). A candidate emerged in the Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies of the University of Chicago: Dean Giesecke. He officially accepted the invitation to consult on doctoral education in April of 1960 (Office of the President, 1960a). In addition, President Carlson brought prominent speakers on doctoral education to visit campus and present their findings: Earl J. McGrath, Executive Officer of the Institute of Higher Education, Teachers College, Columbia, former U.S. commissioner of education, and author of the popular article "The Doctoral School and the Decline of Liberal Education"; and Jacquies Barzun, the graduate dean of Columbia University who wrote scathing articles about the status of graduate education in the country (Office of the President, 1960b).

The approval and accreditation of doctoral programs in the College of Education took four years. All the while, the college "drove doctoral programs in the dark" (COE, 1961a; Giesecke, 1961a). Institutional support was weak as the Graduate School, created in 1963, and the Graduate Council (the official houses of doctoral programs) were in their infancy (Graduate School Catalog, 1967-1968). And no other college would yet venture into doctoral training; it was not until 1965 when the first Arts and Sciences doctoral programs enrolled their first five students (The University of Toledo, 1975). Criticism was also abundant. Above all, as consultant Giesecke's warned, were the "not too clearly perceived" distinctions between the PhD and EdD degrees (Giesecke, 1961). "In my judgement," Giesecke elaborated,

> the Education faculty is much more nearly ready to direct acceptable work leading to a professional doctorate (the Ed.D.) than it is to direct work to prepare research scholars (the Ph.D.)…. Professional training is one thing,

> but scholarship consists in great degree of spirit; it is almost a way of life that it takes time to create and absorb; it is learned more from example than precept.

From his perspective, the TU faculty had limited experience in directing doctoral research, and there was a need to invite "distinguished professors at other institutions to help you evaluate some of the first dissertations and dissertation examinations." Especially confusing for him was the degree on College Teaching, as, according to consultant Giesecke, "new programs in education should come from established institutions such as Chicago, Harvard, Stanford who have the prestige to do so, and … not from smaller universities" (Giesecke, 1961).

Despite the criticisms and challenges, however, enrollments steadily increased (COE, 1961a; Giesecke, 1961a). In 1962, an accreditation visit report acknowledged the viability of the educational doctoral programs (NCACSS, 1962). In 1964, the enlarged college moved to the newly constructed Snyder Memorial building (CSHE, 1971). By 1968, the college featured "the most advanced" doctoral programs at the university, offered in six areas: counseling, educational administration, curriculum and teaching, physical education, foundations of education, and higher education; all of these had "been granted preliminary accreditation by the North Central Association" (University Relations, 1968a). A decade later, by 1970-1971, the College of Education included 162 doctoral students (from amongst the 310 total for the university) and had conferred more than 106 doctorates (Graduate School, 1971).

Figure 1
Snyder Memorial, 1964

Note: The building housed the College of Education and the Higher Education Program in 1964 (SCHE, 1971).

The Higher Education Doctoral Program

Thus, in 1960, higher education studies pioneered Toledo University's doctoral training. Two of the first doctoral degrees, granted between 1962 and 1964, were in higher education studies; the recipients: Richard Perry and Beverly Robinson (University of Toledo Libraries Catalog). In addition, the first African-American to receive a PhD degree from the university, Samuel Creighton in 1971, came from the higher education studies program as well ("Biggest graduating class," 1971).

As a specialized field of study that leads to a graduate degree in college/university administration and teaching, higher education has a long history. Not much is known, however, of the programmatic origins of the field (Goodchild, 1996). Similar to most professional fields, for a long time, college administrators and faculty learned their craft on their own, through trial and error (Wright, 2007). Organized courses in college and university issues in the United States and Europe first appeared in 1893, offered by Granville Stanley Hall, the President of Clark University in Wooster, MA (Goodchild, 1996; Koelsch, 1987). Founder of the first all-graduate university in the country, G. Stanley Hall advocated for university reform and created the study of "higher pedagogy" to train a new generation of university administrators and faculty who would transform American universities (Goodchild, p. 1). In the 1920s, his programmatic ideas were embraced by six other universities starting with the Ohio State University in 1918, Teachers College, Columbia (1920), the University of Chicago (1921), the University of Pittsburg (1928), the University of California Berkeley (1929), and the University of Michigan (1929) (Goodchild, 1996, p. 16).

At Toledo University, in February of 1960, students enrolled for the first time in both PhD and EdD degrees in Educational Administration, Higher and Teacher Education, and College Teaching. Four of the 39 tenure-track faculty in the College of Education taught higher education-focused courses: three professors - George Edmond Dickson, Dean of COE; K.C. DeGood (Administration and Supervision); and Frank R. Hickerson (Administration and Supervision) – and one associate professor: David S. Rosenburg (Administration and Supervision). One year after the start of doctoral studies, there were 12 doctoral candidates in the Higher Education major area – the third

most popular area, after Administration (18 candidates) and Guidance (also with 18 candidates). In addition, 17 of the 54 doctoral students altogether (across 7 areas + 1 as not declared) had declared higher education as a minor area (the most of all other minor declarations). Of the 54, 12 of the candidates worked or had worked as college teachers. Their geographic distribution was: Ohio - 47; Michigan - 4; West Virginia - 2; and Foreign - 1 (COE, 1961).

Expansion and Growth in Higher Education Studies

Although studies in higher education had a large appeal and student enrollment, until 1967, faculty were housed in different college departments. That year, however, the college created a special Department of Higher Education. In addition, a brand-new research center for the study of higher education accompanied the new department. The news on the new department and the research center reached the Blade, which mistakenly reported that the College of Education planned to discontinue its existing departments, and that other colleges might lose their own graduate training programs as a result of the announced changes (“Office of higher education,” 1967). Stirred by several incorrect statements in the article, Dean Dickson responded with corrections on December 13, 1967 (COE, 1967). In his response, he calmly assured the public that neither department closures nor plans to overtake other colleges’ graduate training were involved. “Two units were created,” he noted, “a department of higher education and a Center for the Study of Higher Education as a parallel development to the department” (COE, 1967). This center, he continued, would allow interdisciplinary collaboration amongst faculty in other disciplines and those in higher education “with no need for joint appointments, split budgeting between colleges, or other unnecessary confusion… The Center is not a threat to the regular activities of faculty in other disciplines” (COE, 1967; Hull, 1972).

Both the new department and the novel center signaled growth and expansion of the higher education studies. One major development that contributed to this expansion related to Toledo University’s change of status from a municipal university to a state supported one. The university’s decision to join the state system of higher education was necessitated by the institution’s growing financial uncertainties. Lack of reliable municipal funding had threatened the university efforts to grow as well as expand graduate studies. By

the mid-1960s, the state's commitment to public higher education and graduate training was at all times high. According to the OBOR's Master Plan, "A major objective in state higher education policy should be to strengthen and expand resources for graduate study at the doctoral level degree" (OBOR, 1966, p. 9). By 1967, Ohio's General Assembly had approved an additional 19 PhD programs at six public institutions on top of the ones approved in 1963 (Baker, 2020).

As a municipal institution, Toledo University was entitled to some, albeit limited, funding from the state of Ohio, but the state policy of financing municipal universities was constantly subject to opposition from the state universities, especially the Ohio State (Floyd, 2022, pp. 146-147). Indeed, in a letter from November 18, 1965, the Toledo University Provost shared his fears that "OSU will scoop all support from the state." Dean Dickson's worries (COE, 1965) echoed the Provost's, sharing his apprehension that "The Ohio State University… consistently uses every manipulation possible to secure budgetary dominance among higher education institutions in this state… which will continue to insure such budgetary dominance" (COE, 1965, p. 1). Dean Dickinson was also acutely aware that "Graduate development definitely appears to be the sine qua non of future higher institutional greatness in Ohio and elsewhere," and "The future of the University of Toledo at the graduate level is being determined as much by our actions or lack of them as it is being determined by factors outside of this institution" (COE, 1965, p. 2).

Toledo University's financial uncertainties and the enormous struggle of the institution to secure limited funding from the state pushed the university towards rescinding its municipal status and applying to become a state-supported institution (University of Toledo Board of Directors Minutes, 1965). For the university leaders, that change would reflect the institution's expanding services to the whole state, well beyond the municipal boundaries. It would also offer "some assurance of income expected to expand with enrollment growth and with the growth of graduate programs. Municipal tax support provided by a general property tax levy was unable to afford any such promise." On July 1, 1967, the university officially became a state-supported university and its assets were assumed by the state of Ohio (Floyd, 2022).

The New Department and the Center for the Study of Higher Education

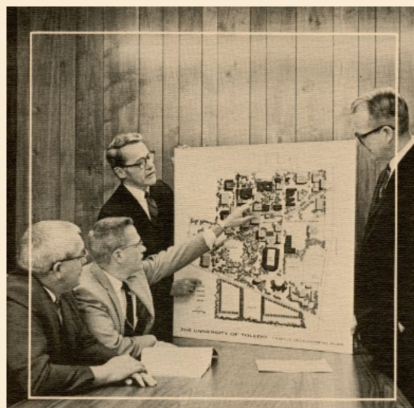
The confluence of favorable developments thus led to the creation of the Department of Higher Education and the Center for the Study of Higher Education in 1967. Five faculty were the core of both: Richard H. Davis, the first acting chairman of the department, Richard R. Perry, John H. Russel, Richard White, and Dean George E. Dickson (COE, 1967). The department offered only doctoral courses; no master's level courses were available (COE, 1967). The department worked in a symbiotic relationship with the university leadership and administration. In reality, nationwide, it was typical for the faculty in higher education programs to come largely from administrative ranks who often did not possess advanced degrees in the field of higher education. It would not be until the end of the 1970s that degrees in higher education for faculty tenure appointments emerged as a requirement. All higher education faculty at the University of Toledo were active administrators. In fact, staying a full-time faculty in the department was not an option in those early years. John Russel taught only for a year before becoming also the assistant to the University Provost, and then assistant to President Carlson responsible for accreditation ("Dr. Russel named," 1966; Public Information Office; 1977; The University of Toledo, 1968; University Relations, 1966). And Robert Sandin, who joined the university in 1968 as professor of higher education and took over the direction of the research center, was quickly appointed VP for Academic Affairs the following year (University Relations, 1969b).

The faculty's administrative responsibilities and engagement benefited the Higher Education department. The close relationship with the senior decision-makers allowed the department to run a special innovative and competitive program for interns, fully funded by the University General Fund from its start in 1967 (University Relations, 1967, 1968, 1969). Doctoral interns were selected as full-time doctoral students for three years. The selection committee included the COE Dean and Associate Dean, the Provost, the Dean of the Graduate School, the Director of Institutional Research, and faculty. Interns received a waiver of instructional fees (for 60 credit hours beyond a master's degree), a stipend of $3600 for the 1st year, $4000 for the second, and $5000 for the third and final year (University Relations, 1967, 1968, 1969). And each was assigned to a different administrative university unit every year while also taking

courses. Four interns joined in 1967, six in 1968, another six in 1969, and four in 1870. Commenting on the internship program's "remarkably successful track record," in 1970 John Russel summarized: "The program has attracted doctoral degree candidates to the University of Toledo from 14 colleges and universities in nine states and Canada," given them "a chance to be immediately and directly involved in University operations, and it has provided a point of entry into university administration for minority group members who are urgently needed in this field" (University Relations, 1970).

The Center for the Study of Higher Education itself embraced a bold agenda from the start. His founder and first chair, John Russel, joined the faculty in September of 1965. With degrees from Harvard University and the University of Chicago, experiences as a U.S. Department of Education officer, a dean and acting president of Shimer College, IL, and an associate professor at the University of Denver, he brought much expertise and initiative to the program ("Dr. Russel named," 1966; Public Information Office; 1977). Russel taught in the PhD program in Higher Education for four years, while also serving as the Provost's assistant; then worked for 2 years as assistant to President Carlson; and then in 1971 became Department Chair of the Department of Higher Education.

Figure 2
John Russel and Higher Education Students



Note: John Russel is standing, third from the left (CSHE, 1961).

The research center conducted studies on higher education, specifically focusing on the development of liberal arts colleges in Northwestern Ohio and southeastern Michigan; provided guidance to the efforts of regional colleges to enhance instructional resources and their capacity for conducting institutional research; secured grants, including federal grants under the Developing Institutions Title of HED Act of 1965; and hosted prominent speakers ("Administers grant on study," 1972; CSHE, 1972a; CSHE, 1975; Hull, 1972;

University Relations, 1969a). The first of its speakers was the Chancellor of OBOR, John Millett. The center published Critique, a quarterly memorandum featuring manuscripts on practical issues of higher education, and a monograph series (CSHE, 1972, 1972a; CSHE, 1975; “Seven liberal arts,” 1974). Both were distributed amongst 600 presidents, deans, trustees, and other college and university professionals around the country (CSHE, 1972a; Hull, 1972; Source: Dr. John Reid, the 1978 Director of the Center).

In the summer of 1972, the center moved to “tight but workable facilities on the third floor of Libbey Hall,” and in 1974, it aligned itself better with the Department of Higher Education (CSHE, 1975; Hull, 1972a), expanding its mission to include more in-house team research as well as contribute to doctoral training. When in 1977 John Russel retired, students and alumni lobbied to name the center after him (The University of Toledo, 1977 and 1977a; “Department and Center news,” 1977). The John Russel Center continued to function as a research hub for the Higher Education Department and to publish a Center Newsletter three times a year (John Russel Center, 1979). Upon John Russel’s death in 1991, the Russel family established a scholarship fund in his name to support graduate students and higher education research initiatives linked to the Russel Center (The University of Toledo, 1991).

Figure 3
The Russel Center for the Study of Higher Education, 2023

Note: Photograph taken by The University of Toledo marketing department.

The Legacy of the University of Toledo’s Higher Education Program

Successes and challenges accompanied the higher education studies program in the next several decades. A master’s degree soon became part of the program’s offering. In the mid-1990s, the doctoral program faced an existential threat and fought to justify its existence with the overwhelming support of its surrounding community, students, and alumni (Katsinas, 2007). In the period

1994-2000, the program saw its largest increase in doctoral enrollment of any doctoral program at the university, and pioneered an innovative program - the Community College Fellowship. Designed to mimic the internship program from prior years, the fellowship was officially launched in 1997 and, for several years, served as a bridge between the university and the surrounding community colleges (Personal discussion with Dr. Ron Opp, March 16, 2023). Growth continued in the mid-2000s as the program adjusted to the demands of the 21st century and the rising competition. Today, the program boasts more than 650 graduates, of whom more than 250 doctorates, and its alumni serve institutions of higher education in leadership positions across the state of Ohio and the country.

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"…adapt a large part of the institution to the Navy's special needs"[3]: The Navy Japanese Language School at the University of Colorado Boulder

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Abstract

The onset of World War II drove the American government to seek support from universities across the nation to educate officers in the service in the language and customs of Japan. The University of Colorado Boulder played a significant role in hosting the U.S. Navy Japanese Language School from 1942 to 1946, and in training officers in the Japanese language. Many of the school's graduates contributed significantly to the war efforts. This article explores the origins and evolution of the Japanese Language School at CU Boulder, providing a historical overview of the factors behind the school's formation and the actions of its organizer Commander Albert E. Hindmarsh. Rooted in primary and secondary sources, including those from the University of Colorado Boulder libraries archives, the article traces the school's establishment in the context of the strained relations between the U.S. and Japan, and discusses the invaluable role of its graduates to the war effort. In addition to teaching the Japanese language, the school and its teachers played a critical role in fostering positive relationships with the locals and addressing stereotypes. Graduates, both men and women, forged careers in diverse fields, becoming ambassadors for Japanese culture and language. The legacy of the Boulder school lives on in the various Japanese language programs existing across the country and in the personal transformations of those involved.

Keywords: Japanese language school, World War II, University of Colorado Bolder, navy officers

As soon as World War II erupted, the federal government of the United States turned to the nation's university campuses for assistance in the enormous

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[3] The quote comes from Hindmarsh, n.d., p. 14.

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mobilization effort (Geiger, 2019). United under the American Council of Education (ACE), American institutions of higher learning committed themselves to aiding in the war efforts through "our faculties, our students, our administrative organizations, and our physical facilities" (Cardozier, 1993, p. 6). Colleges and universities across the United States pledged their physical and intellectual assets to the World War II mobilization effort providing campus training programs and advanced technological research. Between 1942 and 1946, the University of Colorado Boulder hosted the U.S. Navy Japanese Language School where U.S. Navy officers received training to become fluent in the Japanese language. The school included more than 160 mostly Japanese American teachers and trained more than 1,650 men and women many of whom provided invaluable aid to the war effort (Arntson, 2003; Breese, 2009; Hays, 2008). Tracing the emergence and development of the Japanese Language School at the University of Colorado Boulder, and the actions of its organizer, Commander Albert E. Hindmarsh, offers a unique glimpse into the diversity of war-time involvements of institutions of higher education as well as into the U.S.-Japanese tense relations prior to and during World War II. In this article, I provide a historical overview of the factors behind the formation of the U.S. Navy Japanese Language School in Boulder, the decisions behind its location and structure, and the actions of its organizers. The story is rooted in an array of primary and secondary sources. Several primary documents, available from the University of Colorado Boulder archives, provide the backbone of the story anchored by the Regents of the University of Colorado Boulder's minutes.

The decades preceding World War II witnessed growing tensions between the United States and Japan. Breese's (2009) historical overview documents the U.S.-Japanese strained relations in the pre-war time. Japan's success in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904 altered the balance of power in East Asia, causing many around the world to begin seeing Japan as a world power. Attitudes toward Japan, especially those in the West, changed, seemingly, overnight. The United States started to see Japan as a rival, and suspicions of Japan's actions increased.

Slesnick and Carole (2006) traced historically the tense relations between America and Japan. They estimated that the Japanese started immigrating to the United States, settling mostly in Hawaii and California, around the 1920s. The increasing rates of Japanese immigration attracted rising discontent across

America. Seeking raw materials to further its growing industries, Japan invaded China in the 1930s. The U.S. criticized Japan's aggression and relations continued to decline as Japan's eagerness to gather more resources only intensified. The U.S. also imposed strict sanctions against Japan; the limitations on the sale of scrap iron and aviation fuel to Japan further worsened relations between the two countries. As Breese (2009) notes, because of the United States' economic interest in China, "Japan and the U.S. were becoming more enemies than friends" (p. 14).

The worsening relations between the two countries affected the American Japanese language schools in Japan, founded in the early 1900s. Historians (Hays, 2018; Slesnick & Carole, 2006) have documented the existence of these schools, which allowed the U.S. Navy, Army, and the State Department to train small numbers of officers. The Navy school in Tokyo, led by the chief sensei Naoe Naganuma, taught American students conversational and military Japanese over a three-year course of study. However, in an act of revenge to worsening relations with the U.S., Japan retracted diplomatic immunity for American officers studying Japanese at the Tokyo language school. Officially, the school was terminated in 1941, around the same time that the U.S. demanded that the Japanese withdraw from areas of China and Indochina and Japan began planning their attack on Pearl Harbor.

According to Breese's (2009) report, beyond the small number of trained officers, the U.S. military had limited abilities with which to communicate with individuals in Japan while visiting the country. They mainly relied on "missionaries and native interpreters to communicate" (p. 37), leaving them feeling vulnerable. Sensing the upcoming war between the two countries, the U.S. knew that success would depend on the intelligence and knowledge of both Japanese language and culture. As tensions rose between the two countries and talk of war became more prevalent, the U.S. military placed a major focus on educating officers in the Japanese language.

As Slesnick and Carole (2006) documented, by the time the attack on Pearl Harbor occurred in December of 1941, 99 officers were trained to speak Japanese. However, because the school had closed in the summer of 1941, those men were engaging in a variety of roles, some no longer even active in the navy or army, and were scattered across the entire world. Just after the war began, the navy and army combined had a total of 65 officers whom they could use to

gain intelligence on Japan. Training officers in the Japanese language became crucial, and the search for a replacement for the Tokyo school began. Although Naganuma knew that teaching officers Japanese may be used against Japan in the case of war, he believed that "full sharing of knowledge is the only course to world peace" (Slesnick & Carole, 2006, p. 29).

In its search for a new Japanese language school for military officers, the U.S. military looked across the United States. It was Navy Commander Albert E. Hindmarsh, a former law professor and graduate of the Tokyo Japanese Language School, who perceived the urgent need for officers who were fluent in Japanese (Kuhara, 2018). Commander Hindmarsh's role in the successful relocation and establishment of the Japanese Language School in the United States has been widely acknowledged. In January 1945, the President of the United States recognized Hindmarsh for his "vision, energy, organizing talent and executive ability" (Forrestal, n.d., para. 2) in the formation of the school and awarded him the Legion of Merit Award (Forrestal, n.d., para. 2).

In his report on the history of the University of Colorado Boulder Japanese Language School, held in the University of Colorado libraries archives, Hindmarsh stated that in December of 1940, he realized that "in the event of war...the number of naval officers competent in the Japanese language would be woefully inadequate to meet the needs of the Service" (Hindmarsh, n.d., p. 1). Hindmarsh also discovered "that there did not exist in the Navy Department in December 1940, any working file or list of civilians who were competent in Japanese" (Hindmarsh, n.d., p. 1), so he started thinking of solutions to anticipate the need for such trained individuals (Hindmarsh, n.d.). The idea for the establishment of a brand-new language school, located in the United States, formed as a result of his anticipatory mindset, the fact that so few graduates of the Tokyo Japanese Language School remained, and his determination that their current knowledge lacked in quality (Hindmarsh, n.d.).

In December of 1940, Hindmarsh shared his idea of establishing a Japanese language school in the U.S. with Captain A. H. McCollum, "Head of the Far Eastern Section, Office of Naval Intelligence" (Hindmarsh, n.d., p. 1). The original plan aimed to utilize current U.S. educational systems to help produce translators, but Hindmarsh found the teaching methods and techniques not to his standards (Hindmarsh, n.d.). He went as far as to describe them as functioning "in a state of unmitigated confusion" (Hindmarsh, n.d., p. 2) and

was disappointed in their lack of practical methods, teaching materials, and standards (Hindmarsh, n.d.). Additionally, universities were hesitant to comply without a guarantee from the U.S. Navy that graduates of the potential programs in the U.S. would have stable long-term employment (Hindmarsh, n.d.). The difficulties surrounding the discussions with existing institutions and language schools pushed Hindmarsh to create an "intensive course designed to produce competent translators and interpreters" (Hindmarsh, n.d., p. 2). The course plans involved a detailed year-long course structure, including materials and a curriculum. The proposed shorter length of the program, as compared to the 3-year-long language course of the older Tokyo school, was necessitated by the urgency of the situation. Hindmarsh shared his plans with the Naval administration, and in February 1941, he received the authority to institute and administer such training courses (Hindmarsh, n.d., p. 1).

Hindmarsh explored different settings for the location of his proposed school (Hindmarsh, n.d.). At that time, only eight institutions in the United States offered some sort of Japanese language course (Kuhara, 2018). Of the eight, Hindmarsh decided on two: Harvard University and the University of California Berkely (Hindmarsh, n.d.). Instruction began at both schools on October 1, 1941 (Hindmarsh, n.d.). However, Harvard's Japanese Language School dissolved in less than a year for two reasons. As Breese (2009) reported, one of the reasons for its dissolution was the tension over the teaching method used by the program at the time, which emphasized speech over writing. The second reason involved the heightened anti-Japanese sentiment across the country and due to the internment of Japanese Americans on the West Coast. The anti-Japanese sentiment followed the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, causing the nearly 120,000 persons of Japanese ancestry living in the US to be forced to leave their homes and live in camps during most of the war (The National WWII Museum, n.d.).

At the University of California Berkely, language instruction started in October of 1941 but just four months later, the Japanese Language School at the University of California Berkeley faced a major upheaval. As Arnston (2003) reported in her detailed account of the developments, on December 7, 1941, Japan attacked the U.S. Naval Base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii and triggered the United States' entrance into World War II. As a result of the attack, on February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order No. 9066,

which required the removal of Japanese Americans from California. The order demanded the evacuation of "over a hundred thousand Japanese Americans from the West Coast" and meant "the end of the JLS [Japanese Language School] at Berkeley as nine out of its twelve instructors were of Japanese ancestry" (p. 30). Nearly all Japanese were banned from immigrating to the U.S. Many Japanese immigrants and Japanese-American citizens who already lived in the U.S. were forced to evacuate amid increasing suspicion of and racial prejudice against them. Because of the country's dire need for interpreters and translators, the language program at UC Berkeley had many supporters. In an attempt to save the program, the President of the University of California Berkeley "urged military authorities to exempt the JLS instructors from evacuation orders in order to keep the school up and running" (p. 33). This worked for a brief time as "the school was allowed to keep its instructors at Berkeley and classes continued as usual" (p. 34). However, relocation of the University of California Berkely Japanese Language School soon became inevitable.

In light of the challenges with both of the language schools that Hindmarsh initiated, a new destination had to be found quickly and Hindmarsh faced the challenge. He, in the words of Slesnick and Carole (2006), "was a smart and resourceful man" (p. 91) and had "kept in reserve" (Hindmarsh, n.d., p. 14) the University of Colorado Boulder as a possible location for the school. Colorado was "one of the few Western states and universities that did not bar Japanese residence or attendance" (Hayes, 2008) and "Governor Robert Carr had 'welcomed' Japanese to Colorado" (Hayes, 2008). With President Roosevelt's Executive Order in place, Colorado became one the few states available to host the Japanese Language School. In addition, the University of Colorado Boulder's President, Robert Stearns, "was looking for Navy Schools to offset both the draft and the enlistment drain from university enrollment" (Hayes, 2008, para. 3). In reality, President Stearns had already begun partnering with the navy on training facilities housed at the institution, making it an ideal place to host the Japanese Language School (Hindmarsh, n.d.).

Hindmarsh had anticipated President Roosevelt's order, so "when evacuation began on 24 March 1942, he had already begun negotiating with the University of Colorado at Boulder to host an expanded Japanese language school" (Slesnick & Carole, 2006, p. 91). In fact, the minutes from a Board of Regents meeting, held on March 20, 1942, reflected an understanding of the role

the university played in the future of the Japanese Language School. The meeting minutes read, "Due to the recent Federal order evacuating American born persons of Japanese ancestry…from west coastal regions, the Presidents of the west coast Universities are seeking the cooperation of other Universities in accepting students affected by the order" (University of Colorado Boulder Board of Regents, 1942, p. 32). The minutes also shared that after a discussion, "it was moved by Regent Campbell that a number (within the limits of our facilities) of such students be accepted" with certain limitations; such limitations included that students had to pay "non-resident tuition," have FBI clearance, and be "eligible to attend classes the subject matter of which is a confidential nature" (University of Colorado Boulder Board of Regents, 1942, p. 32). The minutes reported on a vote of five members in favor and one member, Regent Cole, opposed (University of Colorado Boulder Board of Regents, 1942). The meeting minutes concluded with "the President declared the motion carried" (University of Colorado Boulder Board of Regents, 1942, p. 32).

Executive Order No. 9066 was signed just one month prior to the March 20, 1942 Board of Regents meeting, illustrating Hindmarsh's desire to move quickly and his ability to do so. Additionally, notes from President Stearns' Collection in the CU Boulder archives contain an original draft of the history of naval activities written for the press. This document states that the program of the Japanese Language School at the University of Colorado Boulder was approved as a site on March 12, 1942, prior to the Board of Regents meeting, by the Chief of Bureau of Naval Personnel (History of Navy Activities on University of Colorado Campus, 1944). Hindmarsh's speed in gaining this approval indicates his prior knowledge of the University of Colorado Boulder's ideal location for the Japanese Language School. It also emphasizes another element in the establishment of the program: that the Navy considered the training of officers in the Japanese language to be that of a "secret weapon" in the war (Slesnick & Carole, 2006, p. 92). As Slesnick and Carole (2006) further documented, the move to Boulder was not public information until after the move was complete. Students were told what they could or could not say; press releases were shut down; and the Boulder community was not given any notice that Japanese teachers and their families would be living near the university. Once instruction began, President Stearns made an announcement on the goals of the school: "The purpose of the school is to give instruction in the Japanese language for

military purposes, so as to enable the Navy to function with the highest efficiency in all phases of its conduct of the war with Japan" (Stearns, 1942, as cited by Slesnick & Carole, 2006, p. 92).

On May 31, 1942, Hindmarsh met with President Robert Stearns of the University of Colorado Boulder, to sign a contract to bring the JLS to Boulder, Colorado (Hindmarsh, n.d.). The original contract, found in the Regents minutes from June 6, 1942, states that the Regents of the University of Colorado Boulder and the U.S. Navy would partner for "the organization and administration of an intensive course in the Japanese language for Navy students at the University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado beginning on or about June twenty-third, 1942" (University of Colorado Boulder Board of Regents, 1942, p. 64 Addendum 1). Regents minutes from June 6, 1942 indicate that President Stearns "asked for ratification…[in] making a contract with the U.S. Navy for the organization of an intensive course in the Japanese language for Navy students" (University of Colorado Boulder Board of Regents, 1942, p. 64) and "it was moved by Regent Campbell that the action of the officers of the board in signing the contract be ratified" (University of Colorado Boulder Board of Regents, 1942, p. 64).

The contract does not indicate that all was completed for the school's transition. Minutes from a Regents meeting held on July 10, 1942 share a proposed budget for the Japanese Language School (University of Colorado Boulder Board of Regents, 1942, p. 69). For one year, the budget assumed an income of $107,400 from tuition and expects teaching salaries to cost $70,360 (University of Colorado Boulder Board of Regents, 1942, p. 69). Interestingly, minutes from an August 21, 1942 Regents meeting reveal that President Stearns received a second contract from the U.S. Navy on July 1, 1942 (University of Colorado Boulder Board of

Figure 1
Students at the Naval Training School (Japanese Language) at the University of Colorado Boulder, 1943

Note: Shown are sailors in uniform on parade. Source: Boulder Public Library.

Regents, 1942, p. 83). This new contract asked for terms "resulting in a considerable decrease in the remuneration which the University will receive" (University of Colorado Boulder Board of Regents, 1942, p. 83), so President Stearns stated that the university "stand[s] upon the original contract" (University of Colorado Boulder Board of Regents, 1942, p. 83). No further discussion of contract changes appear following this date. Similar to Commander Hindmarsh, President Stearns thus emerged as an influential figure in the establishment of the Japanese Language School at the University of Colorado Boulder. From early talks in the beginning of March 1942 to the signing of the contract on May 31, 1942, Stearns acted as a leader in ensuring the school's swift review by the Board of Regents.

While the University of Colorado Boulder may have been the grounds for the school, decisions involving the organization and administration of the school did not fall under their purview. The selection of faculty and students, as well as the curricular decisions, all were controlled by the navy (Slesnick & Carole, 2006). Hindmarsh assumed direct responsibility for the security of the students, upholding their secrecy, and recruiting and investigating all students and teachers involved (Slesnick & Carole, 2006). Even with so much control falling on that of the navy, Hindmarsh (n.d) described university leadership as "completely cooperative… adapt[ing] a large part of the institution to the Navy's special needs" (Hindmarsh, n.d., p. 14). In terms of the selection of textbooks, teaching materials, and the recruitment of students, Hindmarsh oversaw this along with Glen Shaw, Chief Japanese Language Expert with the Office of Naval Intelligence, who assisted in thoroughly interviewing and screening students (Kuhara, 2018). Students were offered the status of ensign at the least and were paid a monthly stipend, along with coverage of their tuition, room, and board (Kuhara, 2018). By December 1942, 300 students were enrolled in the course at the University of Colorado Boulder (Hindmarsh, n.d.).

Following the U.S. Navy Women's Reserve Act, signed by President Roosevelt in 1942, Hindmarsh recruited women for the Japanese Language School in Boulder in much the same way as he had done with male students. The women reservists were known as Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES). Hindmarsh interviewed 600 women interested in taking language courses at a university (Slesnick & Carole, 2006). The 88 women chosen were expected to complete the program in the same amount of time as

Figure 2
WAVES Students at the Naval Training School (Japanese Language) at the University of Colorado Boulder, 1943

Note: Students shown are WAVES participants saluting to other women in uniform. Source: Boulder Public Library.

their male counterparts and, in 1944, a total of 68 graduated (Slesnick & Carole, 2006). The students' backgrounds varied. Some were born or raised in China or Japan (Breese, 2009); some worked for the federal government and saw a chance to contribute to the war effort; and others left their careers to join the Navy and help (University of Colorado Boulder University Libraries, 2018). Although the women were not legally allowed to serve overseas, they contributed greatly to the war efforts. For example, they were responsible for translating Japanese documents and interpreting broadcasts (Slesnick & Carole, 2006). Many entered Japan-centered careers after the war. Some worked as Japanese Language Officers and many became navy ensigns working in various areas within the navy such as the offices of Naval Intelligence and Naval Communications in the Office of Naval Operations (University of Colorado Boulder University Libraries, 2018).

Teachers came to Boulder less than a year after the attack on Pearl Harbor (Breese, 2008). As Irish (1952) documented, at that time, Boulder was a city with very few Japanese-Americans. While they generally lived in the community without segregation or limitations in finding housing, they also engaged in the community through volunteer war-efforts. Many of them also taught Japanese customs at local community centers and churches (Arnston, 2003). Irish (1952) reports that their efforts did much to enhance the relationship with the community and many residents found "considerable satisfaction" (p. 10) from the purpose of the school and the publicity accompanying it. Additionally, the students highly respected their instructors and cultivated personal friendships with them, which also aided in the overall support from residents of Boulder.

Hindmarsh (n.d.) found "the spirit of the university and the town" (Hindmarsh, n.d., p. 14) accommodating. According to Arnston (2003),

“Initially, opinions in Colorado were divided towards Japanese Americans” (p. 55), with many Coloradoans displaying the same sense of mistrust as most Americans; however, President Stearns and other university leaders sought to “sell the community on the idea…by appealing to residents’ patriotism for the war effort” (p. 58). Hindmarsh’s report contains a copy of the full-page advertisement published in the Daily Camera serving as evidence of their effort. The advertisement asked Boulder to help house the Japanese Language School instructors (Arnston, 2003) by declaring, “The United States Navy asks Boulder to meet the most important quota Boulder has ever been asked to meet…and immediately” (Hindmarsh, n.d., Appendix 9, p. 1). The advertisement concluded: “And now let’s keep up that outstanding record and add houses and apartments for the U.S. Navy!” (Hindmarsh, n.d., Appendix 9, p. 1). The advertisement was approved by President Stearns, as well as the Mayor and other city officials, and demonstrated the initiatives that university and city leaders pursued to establish and legitimate the Japanese Language School in Boulder, Colorado (Hindmarsh, n.d.).

More so than its help with the war, the Japanese Language School served as a place of transformation. Irish (1952) found that the combination of a favorable community, along with highly selected groups of individuals, and the connections made from living physically near one another caused favorable changes in the attitudes of Boulder residents toward Japanese-Americans. Additionally, many graduates helped others establish a more welcoming mindset toward the Japanese. According to Breese (2009), some adopted Japanese children, orphaned during the way, and others helped set up student exchange programs. One of the most important outcomes for many graduates included the relationships they formed with their teachers. Students came to respect and value these individuals whom they had previously only known as a “hated enemy” (Breese, 2009, p. 70). This influenced many officers who entered the War to do so with a newfound appreciation and empathy for Japanese people (Breese, 2009), converting officers into those with a better understanding of the people of Japan.

While many were surprised that the program could train and graduate competent linguists in less than a year (Arnston, 2003), impressive was also the way in which the program changed the lives and career paths of so many of its graduates. Breese (2009) provided an account of graduates’ post-war paths.

Many graduates of the Japanese Language School went on to have flourishing post-war careers. Many turned their experience as a student into a "lifetime career devoted to the study of Japan" (p. 80). Some even helped create other Japanese language studies programs and schools across the U.S., certainly impacting generations of students to come. In 1982, CU Boulder extended that same effort in the founding of the Department of Asian Languages and Civilizations offering students degrees in Chinese and Japanese, focusing on educating its students to be diverse voices that confront misconceptions of Asian culture (University of Colorado Boulder Asian Languages and Civilizations, n.d.).

With the end of the war, many veterans would be returning to Boulder, and the school would need to be relocated again to accommodate for their return; its new home was in Oklahoma (Breese, 2009). The Boulder school officially closed in 1946 (Pineau, n.d.), but the legacy of its efforts and outcomes lives on in the various Japanese language programs that now exist across the country and in the personal transformations of so many involved. The creation, execution, and presence the school left on the community and the university marks a collaborative and transformative moment within the history of the University of Colorado Boulder.

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The Methodist Theological School in Ohio and the "Easter Assault on Racial Barriers"[5]

Lee Paul Richards[6]

Abstract
This article traces the stories of four faculty members of the Methodist Theological School in Ohio (MTSO) who, alongside other individuals, were jailed for their integration activism in Jackson, Mississippi in March of 1964. The four faculty members included Van Bogard "Bogie" Dunn, Everett Tilson, Paul Minus, and Jeffrey Hooper. All four were outspoken supporters of racial equality before their arrest, and the persecution they and their fellow protestors faced did not prevent them from voicing their position. Their actions played a pivotal role in organizing for change across the Methodist church and its subsequent desegregation. This historical analysis discusses the events around the arrests in Jackson, Mississippi, and the consequences thereafter. The narrative is based on archival sources and available research on the period.

Keywords: Methodist Theological School in Ohio, civil rights protests, Jackson, Mississippi, theological professors, integration, activism

It was March 29, 1964, Easter Sunday in Jackson, Mississippi. The devout, arrayed in their finest clothes and eager to celebrate the Easter holiday, headed to their local congregation. Known for the Gothic Revival architecture that set it apart as a beautiful landmark, Capitol Street Methodist Church had been standing a dignified watch over the neighborhood for 50 years (Malvaney, 2011), though it has subsequently fallen into disrepair (Figure 1).

As parishioners ascended the front steps and greeted one another, they would have been welcomed in by friends and guided by ushers into the

[5] The phrase comes from "Seven ministers held in Jackson," 1964, p. 14.
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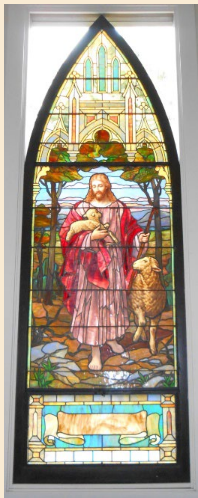
sanctuary. Once seated in the pews, they could enjoy the morning sun illuminating the details of the stained-glass windows. One of these windows remains intact today (Figure 2), albeit relocated to a neighboring congregation (Parkway Hills United Methodist Church, n.d.).

Figure 1
The Capitol Street Methodist Church, Jackson, Mississippi

Note: This is the front entrance of the now-dilapidated church (Elmalvaney, 2011).

Figure 2
The Good Shepherd



Note: A stained-glass window originally adorning the Capitol Street Methodist Church in Jackson, Mississippi (Parkway Hills United Methodist Church, n.d.).

By March of 1964, across Mississippi churches, Sunday mornings had become established as the usual time for staging conflicts over race and racial discrimination (Lyon, 2011). It was on Sunday mornings when African-American students, along with their White allies, would peacefully stand in protest to demonstrate their resistance and ecclesial disobedience throughout the city (Elford, 2023). It was common to see those protests and 'Kneel-ins' outside of churches demonstrating church segregation practices. And it was no different on that March Easter Sunday. After having been barred from entry into the church, two African-American college students accompanied by seven professors from four Methodist seminaries, stood on the steps of Capitol Street Methodist Church under the disapproving glower of those who fought to keep their congregations and communities racially homogenous

Figure 3
Tougaloo College Students and Northern Ministers Turned Away from Capitol Street Methodist Church, October 27, 1963.

Note: Photograph from Dupont, 2013.

(Figure 3; Dupont, 2013; Lyon, 2011).

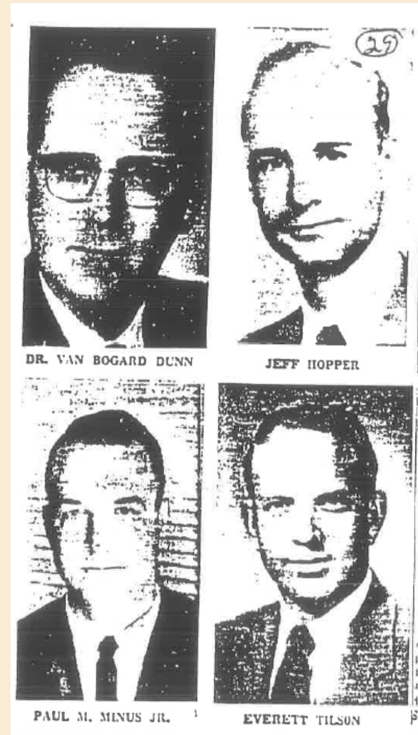
On the following day, The New York Times recounted the events. In the journalist's account, the ministers from the North "attempted to attend the 11 A.M. services with two Jackson Negro youths"; however, at arrival, the usher stood in front of them preventing them from entering the church "ordering them to leave." The police soon joined, and the usher asked a policeman, "Officer will you take them away." And so the policeman did, arresting the protestors "on charges of disturbing public worship and trespassing on church property" ("Seven ministers held in Jackson," 1964, p. 14). The welcoming embrace of friends and helpfulness of the ushers extended only to White Christians; Black Christians, and their supporters, were greeted by the same individuals with exclusion and hostility.

Nine individuals were arrested for their integration activism on that day. Amongst their ranks were four faculty members from the Methodist Theological School in Ohio: Rev. Dr. Van Bogard "Bogie" Dunn (Dean), Rev. Dr. Everett Tilson (Professor of Old Testament), Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Hopper (Assistant Professor of Theology), and Rev. Dr. Paul M. Minus Jr. (Assistant Professor of Church History). A photograph of the four professors (Figure 4) accompanied one of the newspaper articles about their arrest ("Theological school quartet arrested in Jackson, Miss.," 1964). Three additional professors representing Union Theological Seminary, Drew University, and Garret Evangelical Theological Seminary were also in the group of the arrested. These seven professors were attempting to join the worship service in the company of Bobby

Talbert and David Walker, two African-American students at nearby Tougaloo College, precipitating the eruption of hostility and the arrests of the students and professors (Jones, 1964).

Figure 4

The Four Arrested Professors from the Methodist Theological School in Ohio



Note: Newspaper photograph of the four Methodist Theological School in Ohio professors arrested for their attempt to integrate Capitol Street Methodist Church in Jackson, Mississippi ("Theological school quartet arrested in Jackson, Miss.," 1964).

An article published two days after the arrest in The New York Times describes the trial and release of the imprisoned men ("Seven Methodist clerics assail their church," 1964). The presiding judge was not concerned with whether any physical altercation had erupted. Instead, the primary issue was "whether or not a congregation had the right to worship in their own manner…[T]he judge would conclude, the disturbance of public worship came by the mere presence of African Americans seeking to worship at an all-white church. The race of individuals, not their actions or words, constituted the disturbance" (Lyon, 2011, p. 110). All nine men were "found guilty in Municipal Court of disturbing public worship and were sentenced to six months in jail and a $500 fine. They were released under $500 bond pending an appeal to County Court" ("Seven Methodist clerics assail their church," 1964, p. 26). An additional newspaper account revealed the source for the bail: people "associated with the seminary [MTSO] raised $4,000 bail from personal funds, and sent it to Jackson" (Jones, 1964, p. 1). Nevertheless, it was not until approximately seven months later that the U.S. Court of Appeals in New Orleans "overturned the Jackson judge's verdict, and [they] no longer had

to face the prospect of spending six months in a Mississippi jail" (Methodist Theological School in Ohio, 2014, p. 16).

The two African American students from Tougaloo College, Talbert and Walker, did not figure prominently in the newspaper accounts. Most news relegated them to minor supporting roles. However, their movement played a pivotal role in organizing for change (Methodist Theological School in Ohio, 2014). That their story has been almost forgotten in the detailed account of what happened to their allies, all of them well-educated White males, tells a story of its own. Indeed, most sources on the events of the day only mention that seven professors were arrested for their activities. Perhaps as an exception, one article from The Ohio State Lantern noted, however, that all nine individuals (the seven White ministers plus the two African-American Tougaloo College students) were placed under arrest (Jones, 1964). Even the personal archive of the late Dr. Everett Tilson (one of the jailed professors from the Methodist Theological School of Ohio) included news featuring only the ministers. There I found a photocopy of an article from The Delaware [Ohio] Gazette, which named the four professors from MTSO, along with their ages and the addresses of their places of residence, and mentions that "none of [their] wives…were available for comment" ("Theological school quartet arrested," 1964). I also found Tilson's hand-written note on the events: "I, 3 of my colleagues & 3 other meth. theological school professors were jailed on Easter Sunday (3-29-64) for trying to integrate the Capitol St. Meth. Church in Jackson, MS" (Tilson, 1999, p. 100). The article also noted that the men "carried the following written statement" (presumably written on handbills to be passed out):

> Jesus said, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." [John 12:32] To exclude some of those whom Christ would draw unto Himself on Easter, the feast of His resurrection, because of color is a violation of human dignity; it is an affront to the Christian conscience; it is a denial of the faith, it is heresy. We are here, as Methodist Christians, to protest this denial of our Lord's resurrection. We call upon all Methodists to affirm the Lordship of the risen Christ by welcoming to His church all those whom He invites. ("Theological school quartet arrested," 1964)

Similar to other news describing their aims and commitments, both *The Delaware*

Gazette article and Tilson's notes did not give any indication that the details were an inaccurate representation of the events of that day. And so the story remained for the next five decades, until, in a series of pronouncements, the details of that arrest publicly emerged. In his Commencement Address at the Methodist Theological School of Ohio for Class 2014, the Rev. Dr. Paul Minus shared "…details of [this] act of civil disobedience, which drew national attention, and discussed how it helped shape MTSO" (Methodist Theological School in Ohio, 2014).

Figure 5
Rev. Dr. Paul Minus Delivering Commencement Address to MTSO Graduates, 2014

Note: Commencement photo. Source: MTSO.

In his address, Minus recounted the events in vivid detail. When they reached the church steps on that morning in Jackson, Mississippi, ushers stopped them and informed them that "it was the congregation's official policy that whites could worship there but not blacks." One of the MTSO faculty, Bogie Dunn, requested to peaceful remain on the steps, "blacks and whites" together but the request was rejected and a threat followed: "if we did not leave," Minus reported, "they would ask the police to arrest us." And so it happened; Bogie Dunn announced that the group would not leave, and the ushers turned to the police to arrest them all. "This conversation," continued Minus, "lasted only two or three minutes. No one raised his voice. It was strangely civil – in fact, it was so low-keyed no one inside the church could know what was happening outside" (Methodist Theological School in Ohio, 2014, p. 15).

In addition, an earlier, 2011 study of the event by Carter Dalton Lyon, published as "Easter in Jackson, Mississippi, 1964" in the Methodist History journal (2011), also offered different details. Lyon collected his insights through audio recordings with people present at the events as well as through later interviews with participants in the events. His findings noted:

> The integrated group…noticed as many as a dozen police officers around the church that began to converge behind the ushers when they sighted the

> group. As the team approached the front steps of the church, a set of ushers hastily ran down and one of them told the group to stop and not come any further. The ushers then formed a line across the stairs and Talbert, Walker, and the seven ministers reciprocated by spreading out along the sidewalk and the grass. After a member of the team appeared to try to walk around the line of ushers, James Cox, the spokesman for the ushers barked, "No end runs!" (p. 108)

With three lines of men, that is, a line of nine would-be worshippers seeking entrance, a line of ushers arrayed on the steps blocking them, and a line of police officers positioned beyond the ushers, this tense moment could easily have turned violent. Rev. Dr. Van Bogard Dunn, the Dean of Methodist Theological School in Ohio, pressed on:

> speaking for the group, [Dunn] announced, "We are Methodist Christians who would like to worship the Risen Lord with you in this church today." Cox responded, "You aren't going to integrate this church. The policy of the official board of this church is to deny admission to all Negroes. You can stand here all day, but you aren't coming in this church." Recognizing the opening, Dunn asked, "Do you mean we can stand here?" The usher clarified, saying, no, they must move on. When Dunn asked why they could not just stand there, Cox explained, "No questions and no answers. If you don't move on at once, I will ask the police to put you under arrest." Dunn restated the desires of the group to worship at the church. Cox then turned to one of the policemen behind him and gave him unambiguous instructions, saying, "Officer, take them away." (Lyon, 2011, p. 108)

The faculty members were outspoken for the cause of racial equality and integration before their arrest, and the persecution they faced for this cause in no way prevented them from further voicing their words and actions (Clark et al., 1964). Contemporary sources give us access to some of their statements immediately after their release. One such example comes in Everett Tilson's essay, where he openly claimed that the Methodist Church lacked concern for the "plight of the Negro in Mississippi and lacks the vision or the will to do anything about it" ("Seven Methodist clerics assail their church," 1964, p. 26).

Tilson went on to argue that the Church was inconsistent with its values, for it was “a strange contradiction that a church would send missionaries to Asia and Africa and not welcome people of African descent to their worship” (“Seven Methodist clerics assail their church,” 1964, p. 26).

The Methodist Theological School of Ohio, Integration, and Civil Rights: “We Could not Remain on the Sidelines"[7]

While some civil rights activists were in pursuit of desegregation, their opponents thought the “race problem” was satisfactorily resolved through their de facto segregation practices. Within the Methodist Church, these were embodied in the “Central Jurisdiction," a 1939 ecclesial innovation permitting local congregations to exclude African-American Methodists by assigning them their own bishops, congregations, conferences, and denominational structures (Hahn, 2018). The Central Jurisdiction was the Methodist equivalent to the concept of “separate but equal” and resulted in the treatment of African-Americans as “sacrificial lambs of unity” (Hahn, 2022, p. 6). For this reason, “[a]lmost as soon as the Central Jurisdiction was established, attempts began to get rid of it” (Butler, n.d., p. 2). Increasingly, with the change of time, it was becoming harder to close eyes to injustices that aimed to protect the status quo. As Dr. Carolyn Renée Dupont, Associate Professor of History at Eastern Kentucky University, observed:

> Mississippi's once-placid religious communities transmogrified into civil rights battlegrounds. Many believers passed the civil rights years conflicted and confused, and debates over the meanings of spiritual commitments wracked local congregations. As local leaders feared that the centrifuge of racial turmoil would hurl their parishioners in a thousand directions, Mississippi religious life devolved into a tortured, splintered, and ravaged affair. (2013, p. 12)

The Methodist Church bore deep and longstanding scars over matters of

[7] Drawn from Paul Minus’ 2014 Commencement Address: “We believed that the God of justice and mercy was somehow involved in this struggle, and we knew that we could not remain on the sidelines” (Methodist Theological School in Ohio, 2014, p. 15).

race, as evidenced by the role race and racism played in its schisms and reunifications (Hahn, 2022), but there was a growing conviction that there could be no peaceful coexistence between the faithful proclamation of the Gospel message and systems of racial segregation and oppression. The conflict was increasing in intensity between national leaders in the Methodist Church who were supportive of desegregation efforts and laypeople who embraced the Central Jurisdiction as a means to perpetuate their exclusionary practices (Elford, 2023). The result was tension over "…equality, and constant haranguing against denominational leaders constituted a central feature of religious life during the civil rights years. Intense conflict between layfolk and national religious leaders revealed the strength of religious commitments to segregation and white supremacy…" (Dupont, 2013, p. 12). As social institutions sought to preserve the hallmarks of their segregated southern White culture, they fought to prevent integration from encroaching on their congregations (Lyon, 2017). They might not have liked that the military had been integrated, but could do nothing to stop it (Executive Order 9981, 1948). They might not have liked that public schools were being integrated, but they would do their best to discourage it from happening in their schools (Brown v. Board of Education, 1954) Places of worship had become the last bastion of their White identity, such that "many White churches in the South had informal policies that excluded Black worshippers" (Elford, 2023, p. 1).

What had compelled the professors from Delaware, Ohio, to Jackson, Mississippi to travel down there in the first place? Minus tells us they were simultaneously influenced by and influencers of societal developments in which they perceived God at work. The Methodist Theological School of Ohio professors themselves were united in the conviction that the world was:

> undergoing far-reaching change: Longstanding patterns of oppression and injustice were being overturned by powerful new forces affirming human dignity, freedom and equality. That, we believed, was the great, defining fact of our time. We believed that the God of justice and mercy was somehow involved in this struggle, and we knew that we could not remain on the sidelines. (Methodist Theological School in Ohio, 2014, p. 15)

According to Minus, he and his colleagues were part of a broader social

movement inviting northern ministers to stand in solidarity against the perpetuation of racism in the South, as there was a "...tiny minority of Methodists in Mississippi [who] thought we might be helpful in their struggle to overcome segregation in the churches" (Methodist Theological School in Ohio, 2014, p. 14). Minus tells us that the organization "leading the struggle against racial segregation in Mississippi Methodism was concentrated among leaders at Tougaloo College…[where] residents were accustomed to hearing about drive-by shootings into the homes of Tougaloo faculty and staff" (Methodist Theological School in Ohio, 2014, p. 14). Bobby Talbert and David Walker, who had invited the MTSO faculty and others to help in their struggle, played a role in organizing the "ten-month-long church visitation campaign led by students and faculty at nearby Tougaloo College" (Lyon, 2011, p. 99). According to Lyon (2011), their goal was to:

> overcome the barriers of segregation by attempting to worship and engage in dialogue with white Christians at the city's all-white Protestant and Catholic congregations. Ushers at most of the churches routinely barred their entry, citing recent votes by their lay boards to maintain a racially-exclusive attendance policy. (p. 99)

For Methodist advocates of desegregation, their sit-ins, kneel-ins, and efforts to integrate congregations were part of the social movement to undermine the social structures that protected racial discrimination (Elford, 2023). Dupont (2013) noted that between October 1963 and the end of March 1964, Jackson police made more than 30 arrests of individuals seeking to enter segregated worship services, many of them at Capitol Street Methodist Church. Lyon (2011) wrote, "weekly showdowns in front of Methodist churches highlighted the problem of racial segregation in local congregations and within the structures of The Methodist Church itself, a reality that activists hoped would finally spur an end to the policy…" (p. 99). Minus provided further insight into the thinking of Methodist advocates of desegregation: "…first-hand experience of the Southerners' determination to preserve the old ways…[could make] leaders from elsewhere be effective allies in the effort at the Pittsburgh General Conference to turn our denomination more vigorously against racial segregation" (Methodist Theological School in Ohio, 2014, p. 15). The attempts

to accompany African-American worshippers into segregated churches were sincere yet understood as a means to call attention to the problem and build a national consensus for the Methodist Church to change its ways (Lyon, 2017).

Legacy and Influence on the Methodist Theological School of Ohio: "The House of God Must be Open to the Whole Family of God"[8]

The Methodist Theological School in Ohio admitted its first students in the fall of 1960 and celebrated its first graduating class in 1963. The four faculty members, who played a central role in our story, Van Bogard "Bogie" Dunn, Everett Tilson, Paul Minus, and Jeffrey Hooper, were present at MTSO from early in its foundation. Each of these men had his unique individual history and professional trajectory; yet they were all united by a shared commitment to racial equality and social justice, animated by their understanding of their Methodist faith and of the Gospel proclaimed by Jesus Christ. The MTSO website refers to the school's ongoing commitment to social justice activism: "During its formative years in the turbulent 1960s, MTSO established a legacy of Christian concern for social-justice issues. Uncowed by the prospect of arrest and persecution, faculty and students protested racial discrimination, both in the South and closer to home" (Methodist Theological School in Ohio, n.d., para. 3). That MTSO has carried forward this legacy into the present day is evidenced by their statement of distinctiveness:

> MTSO is deeply committed to transformative, sustaining justice as an expansive theological vision consistent with the creative, renewing, resurrecting activity of God in the world. To this end, we create a new imagination for the church of the future through creative work in institutional programs, relationships and resources to promote equity, justice and integrity. We intentionally connect with social justice movements that attend to sustainable social change, transforming both church and world. (Methodist Theological School in Ohio, n.d.)

An editorial published April 15, 1964, in The Ohio State Lantern helps us better understand this commitment to social justice as being rooted in religious

8 Drawn from the handbill of the same title distributed at the 1964 Methodist General Conference (Clark, et al. 1964).

faith ("Public worship," 1964). The editor presented a contrast between the activist, living, incarnational faith advocated by professors Dunn, Tilson, Minus, and Hopper, and the others arrested in Jackson, and the faith advocated by one of their detractors, Otis Maxfield. A Columbus-area minister, Maxfield used his local television show to decry the activism of the MTSO professors as misguided; for him, "...people anywhere must solve their own problems. Whenever we invade other people's territory, no matter how good our motives are, we raise antagonisms, rather than solve them" ("Public worship," 1964, p. 2). The editor of The Ohio State Lantern took Maxfield to task for his statements, noting that the governing documents of the Methodist Church themselves contained statements incompatible with racial discrimination and segregation, concluding that the "racial problem…is not geographical, nor can it be sidestepped. Such problems, whether we like it or not, are everybody's problems" ("Public worship," 1964, p. 2).

Around the time of the events in this article, one contemporaneous account suggested that the Methodist Theological School in Ohio was not immediately aware of or supportive of the actions of the professors who traveled to Jackson. John Mount, the President of the MTSO Board of Trustees, stated: "The men went to Jackson as individuals over their vacation and acted as free, individual Christians. They were in no way acting for the seminary…so it is not a school issue" (Jones, 1964, p. 1). He noted that the school was "planning no aid to the four professors [and] the seminary trustees would make no comment and take no stand until they had heard the facts" (Jones, 1964, p. 1). Nevertheless, Paul Minus reflected that they traveled to Jackson knowing "we were expressing commitments that ran deep and wide in this school; we knew we had your support…the first message from the outside world we received in the Jackson jail was a telegram of support from Methesco students" (Methodist Theological School in Ohio, 2014, p. 14).

Dr. Clyde Manschreek, another professor at MTSO, responding to a reporter's question as to whether his colleagues' faculty positions were in danger as a result of their actions, replied, "Endanger them? If it does anything it might enhance them" (Jones, 1964, p. 8). Indeed, it gave them leverage in rallying others to their cause, including at the Methodist General Conference in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania from April 25 to May 9, 1964, where "[a] plan to abolish the all-Negro Central Jurisdiction of the Methodist Church was debated

for nearly eight hours" ("Methodists debate ending segregation," 1964, p. 16). The debated proposal called for the voluntary re-integration of the Central Jurisdiction congregations into segregated regional conferences by 1967, or threatened a call for a general abolition of segregation at the 1968 Conference ("Methodists debate ending segregation," 1964).

Among the documents in the archive of Professor Everett Tilson, I found a one-page handbill titled "The House of God Must be Open to the Whole Family of God," authored by the seven professors involved in the 1964 Easter integration efforts in Jackson, Mississippi. This document argued that the practice of the Methodist Church "reflects flagrant disregard of the Gospel" and that the "full force of racial prejudice in The Methodist Church has been demonstrated in Jackson, Mississippi in recent months" (Clark et al., 1964, p. 1). Without making it explicit that the authors were among those persecuted, the seven professors maintained that bishops, ministers, and laypeople were "turned away, and, in some instances, arrested and persecuted at the request of the representatives of the churches" (Clark et al., 1964, p. 1). This document called to account not just the church ushers, but the pastors overseeing those local churches, the district superintendents overseeing those pastors, and the bishops overseeing the Methodist Church. The professors argued that because the "...denomination has acquiesced in patterns of segregation, all of Methodism is guilty" (Clark et al., 1964, p. 1).

It is very likely that the professors distributed this pamphlet as they took part in "a large, peaceful demonstration urging delegates to end racial segregation in the Methodist Church. As it turned out, some progress was made down that road, but we were disappointed that delegates did not go further" (Methodist Theological School in Ohio, 2014, p. 16). While the proposal to integrate the denomination was "overwhelmingly approved," one contemporaneous account described a thousand protestors who staged a "singing, swaying kneel-in" decrying the proposals as not going far enough to reverse the racial divide ("Kneel-in scores Methodist stand," 1964, p. 78). As the account summarized, for the demonstrators outside carrying signs reading "Methodism + Segregation ≠ Christian Witness" (Figure 6) or "…placards bearing the words "The Central Jurisdiction Must Go,"…the conference should have settled for nothing short of the immediate abolition of the Negro division" ("Kneel-in scores Methodist Stand," 1964, p. 78).

Dunn, Tilson, Minus, Hopper, and others who faced persecution, opposition, or oppression under the segregationist system tolerated by the Methodist Church charted a course of action for those who would follow. As revolutionaries, they saw congruency between the tenets of their Methodist faith and the movements for social and racial justice. As a result of the struggles of those activists, four years later, at the 1968 Methodist General Convention in Dallas, Texas, the Methodist Church embraced the understanding that racial segregation was inconsistent with biblical teachings and the Methodist doctrine, and that it was unjustifiable for a church that claimed to be open to all people; this claim officially signaled an end in the Methodist Church's toleration of segregation (Hahn, 2018). In his 2014 Commencement Address, Minus observed:

Figure 6
Protestors during the 1964 General Conference of the Methodist Church

Note: The protestors are calling for an end to segregationist policies during the 1964 General Conference of the Methodist Church ("Kneel-in scores Methodist stand," 1964).

> Whatever impact our experience in Jackson might have had on Methodism in Mississippi, its impact on me and on others connected to our Easter Sunday witness was profound. It pointed us firmly in the direction of lifelong, active involvement in the struggle for racial justice and racial reconciliation. It solidified deeply held convictions about the Gospel, the church's mission and our own ministries. It gave us an abiding awareness that our lives can make a difference – and with that came a peace and joy that the world can neither give nor take away. (Methodist Theological School in Ohio, 2014, p. 16)

The stories of these professors, their allies and co-conspirators, the institutional development of the Methodist Theological School in Ohio, and the Methodist church overall are intertwined. These experiences were

transformative not merely for the individuals involved but for the MTSO community as a whole. Furthermore, their persecutions, proclamations, and publications shined a light on the incompatibility of segregation and systemic racism with Methodist doctrine, setting the stage for the subsequent desegregation of the Methodist Church. This crucial foundational narrative has helped the Methodist Theological School of Ohio to maintain its identity and trajectory as an institution deeply committed to social justice; it has inspired generations of faculty, staff, and students thereafter.

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A Pioneer Campus Center: The Creation of the University of Michigan's Human Sexuality Office

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Abstract
This essay focuses on the creation of the Human Sexuality Office at the University of Michigan, the first official LGBTQ+ center at a university in the United States. The Human Sexuality Office opened in the Fall of 1971 spearheaded by graduate student Jim Toy, but also with support from local LGBTQ+ groups and university staff, students, and faculty. This historical essay traces the opening of the Human Sexuality Office, the role of its main founder Jim Toy, the resistance against it, and its first year in operation. In addition, the essay provides an overview of the environment surrounding the office's opening, including national attitudes and activism regarding the LGBTQ+ community during the 1960s and early 1970s. I rooted this historical analysis in primary and secondary documents from the University of Michigan's Bentley Historical Library and its collection of documents related to the Human Sexuality Office, now known as the Spectrum Center, and its founder Jim Toy.

Keywords: Human Sexuality Office, Spectrum Center, first LGBTQ+ college center, Jim Toy, historical narrative

On October 2, 2019, James (Jim) Toy, one of the founders of the University of Michigan's Human Sexuality Office, shared his recollections of the office's early days in an official interview. At 79 years of age, Toy's memories were in depth and his interview revealed a complete and engaging story, full of struggles as well as achievements. He shared trials and obstacles they had faced and overcome, stating that "we just kept on meeting and trying to pull the history together" despite resistance, even from campus administrators. Widely recognized as the first university center for LGBTQ+ in the United States, the

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University of Michigan's Human Sexuality Office emerged in 1971 through the continuous efforts of Jim Toy. Toy's 2019 interview is housed in the University of Michigan's Bentley Historical Library, along with a plethora of primary and secondary documents that have been collected over the years in connection to the Human Sexuality Office. These documents are known collectively as the Jim Toy Papers and provide the foundation of this historical essay.

Figure 1

Oral History Interview with Jim Toy, October 2, 2019

Note: Photograph taken from Oral History Interviews, 2019-2020, Spectrum Center (University of Michigan) records, 1976-2012, 2019-2021 (Toy, 2019).

Gay rights became a prominent issue in the United States during the 1960s with increased political activism and visibility in news reporting. Several significant events, including the 1969 Stonewall Uprising, propelled the gay rights movement during this time, including the formation of the Gay Liberation Front. Although new gay rights groups emerged at this time and activism was at a high, there were no official university offices that supported homosexual students until the opening of the Human Sexuality Office in 1971. The Human Sexuality Office, founded by Toy and supporters, and backed by the University of Michigan itself, became the first gay and lesbian center at a university in the United States. This historical essay traces the creation of the Human Sexuality Office, the actions of its main founder, the resistance against its opening, and the success of its first year in operation.

Within the United States, the decade leading up to the creation of the Human Sexuality Office was slowly progressive in homosexual visibility and rights. Gay rights activists worked throughout the 1960s to gain more equality with their heteronormative peers and were successful, for example, in getting some states to do away with anti-sodomy laws that targeted gay males

(Duberman, 2019; History.com Editors, 2023; Jourian, 2023; Library of Congress, 2023). Activists also worked to gain more recognition from the public, for instance getting the first documentary about homosexuality made in 1961, titled The Rejected (Christian, 1961; History.com Editors, 2023). However, even as gay life and rights was becoming more visible and somewhat accepted throughout the country in this decade, life for people who identified as non-heterosexual was fraught with harassment and discrimination (Duberman, 2019; History.com Editors, 2023; Jourian, 2023; Library of Congress, 2023). This decade of progress would lead to an environment of quasi-acceptance that would enable the Human Sexuality Office to open within the next few years.

A significant event in gay rights history happened in 1969, the Stonewall Uprising, which would heavily influence the gay rights liberation movement. On June 28, 1969, the police violently raided Stonewall Inn, a gay club in New York City. Although gay clubs, including the Stonewall Inn, were raided on a regular basis, this time the patrons and neighborhood residents decided to fight back, creating a rebellion that lasted over six days (Duberman, 2019; History.com Editors, 2023; Library of Congress, 2023). The Gay Liberation Front, a group devoted to gay rights and seen as the start of the gay rights liberation movement in modern America, emerged partially in response to the Stonewall Uprising (Duberman, 2019; History.com Editors, 2023; Library of Congress, 2023). The Gay Liberation Front was viewed as a radical group in general, but other similar groups appeared around the same time, including the Mattachine Society, Gay Activists Alliance, and Radicalesbians (Duberman, 2019; History.com Editors, 2023). To mark the one-year anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising in 1970, New York community members marched in the streets in support of gay rights (Duberman, 2019; History.com Editors, 2023). The day became known officially as the Christopher Street Liberation Day and has since been considered the first ever gay pride parade in the United States (Duberman, 2019; History.com Editors, 2023; Library of Congress, 2023). The formation of these groups, the public acts of gay rights activism, and the media reporting on these events, all brought more visibility of gay issues to the general public and contributed to the rising sensitivity in the national attitude towards homosexuals.

The Human Sexuality Office at the University of Michigan emerged as a result of the gay rights activism in the late 1960s. Its creation is closely linked to

one of its founders: Jim Toy. Toy had arrived in Ann Arbor around 1960 “to go to graduate school in the music school,” in his words, “and I dillied around with my studies,” which led to his continued presence by the time 1970 rolled around as a graduate student (Toy, 2019). He was still attending the University of Michigan, but in town he regularly met with people of the homosexual community, usually at a local bar, though at the time many of them did not specifically consider themselves to be gay or part of a group (Toy, 2011; Toy, 2019). In the year prior, Toy and some friends first established the Detroit Gay Liberation Front (Toy 2011; Toy 2019; Zheng, 2022). Soon thereafter, during a nationally covered anti-Vietnam War rally in Detroit, Toy publicly came out as gay, the first person known to have done that in the state of Michigan (Toy, 2011; Zheng, 2022). A month after the Detroit Gay Liberation Front was formed, Toy helped form the Ann Arbor Gay Liberation Front (Toy, 2011). In his interview, Toy stated of these events:

> A group of several students who formed first the Detroit Gay Liberation movement, and then when it became clear that we needed to do something in Ann Arbor, we created the Ann Arbor Gay Liberation Front and we needed meeting space. So, I went to a secretary in student affairs and said, "How do we get a meeting space?" And she said, "Write me a memo." Which I did and we got meeting space. (Toy, 2019)

In Ann Arbor, the group continued gay rights activism on and off campus; they held official gay and lesbian meetings, organized dances, and worked to increase their group’s general visibility in town (Office of Special Services & Programs, 1971; Spectrum Center, n.d.; Toy, 2011; Toy, 2019). As a student on campus and a known leader within the local Gay Liberation Front, Toy would request meeting rooms on campus from a secretary for gay and lesbian students to meet (Toy, 2011; Toy, 2019). His requests soon attracted the notice of administration (Toy, 2011; Toy, 2019). When Toy requested to hold a large state-wide conference for homosexuals on campus during the 1970-71 school year, he received an official rejection from the University of Michigan’s President (Toy, 2011; Toy, 2019). In his interview, Toy recalled:

> The letter said, "I forbid use of University of Michigan facilities for this," I

> think he said, "gathering." The letter's somewhere in a file, I don't remember the exact wording. "Because it would not be educational and it would bring police presence to campus." Now whether or not educational and bringing police presence to campus were his ideas or the ideas of his superiors in the U of M bureaucracy, I do not know. (Toy, 2019)

However, a fellow member of the Gay Liberation Front who worked for the university had keys to the student union, and so the group held their conference on campus regardless of the President's rejection (Toy, 2011; Toy, 2019). The university sent a spy to the conference who Toy believed was secretly an ally, as that spy reported back to administration that the group was nothing to worry about and would disappear if ignored (Peterson, 1971; Toy, 2011; Toy 2019), but the group never did. Though some university administrators may have been displeased with the gay rights activism on campus such as the President, other administrators, faculty, staff, and students themselves lent support to Toy's cause (Toy, 2011; Toy, 2019).

This support for Toy and his allies would lead to the opening of the Human Sexuality Office. In his interview, Toy reminisced on this time. "I think," he shared, "my experience of receiving support and advocacy was gradual. I don't remember any particular one-time focused event that made it clear that we had a lot of support going for us" (Toy, 2019). However, perhaps one event did mark a turning point. During one of the many times Toy requested a meeting space on campus for his group, one of the secretaries he regularly communicated with said, according to Toy, "Jim, there's an office here advocating for women students and an office advocating for black students. Don't you guys want an office?" (Toy, 2011). Toy asked the Ann Arbor Gay Liberation Front whether they would, and they did (Toy, 2011). So it came to be, in 1971 Toy requested an official office space at the university, with two student representatives to advocate for gay and lesbian students on campus respectively (Office of Special Services & Programs, 1971; Spectrum Center, n.d.; Toy, 2011; Toy, 2019).

In response to Toy's official request, on May 19, 1971, Chi-Chi Lawson, the Assistant to Vice-President of the Office of Student Services, sent a memorandum to University of Michigan's Vice-President for Student Services Robert Knauss (Lawson, 1971). The memorandum detailed Toy's request for the hiring of two staff assistants for homosexual students and suggested potential

housing of these staff assistants within the Office of Student Services (Lawson, 1971). The memorandum further cited evidence from a national research team for the United States government, specifically the Final Report of the Task Force on Homosexuality from the National Institute of Mental Health originally published on October 10, 1969, to promote the creation of a supportive space for homosexual students; the report strongly asserted that supporting homosexuals was beneficial to society at large (Lawson, 1971). The memorandum argued for the need to have student advocates for the student homosexual population on campus and outlined the staff assistants' job description as follows:

1. Peer Counselor.
2. Information and referral person.
3. Coordinator of the special services within the divisions of the Office of Student Services for the needs of homosexual students.
4. Liaison between the homosexual community and the University.
5. Coordinator of educational programs and activities (i.e. academic courses, speaking engagements, gathering and dissemination of information).
6. Advocate for abolition of sexual oppression. (Lawson, 1971)

According to the job description, the two staff assistants for homosexual students would serve as peer counselors and advisors to the gay and lesbian communities on campus, but would also work as coordinators, liaisons, and advocates (Lawson, 1971). The memorandum ended with a list of 12 people who supported the opening of this office and the staff assistant positions; the 12 supporters included administrative staff at the University of Michigan and Jim Toy (Lawson, 1971).

The University of Michigan (1971) also released an extensive report titled "Background for the Appointment of the Two Student Assistants for Programming and Services in the Area of Homosexuality" on September 23, 1971. This report officially declared the hiring of two students to work for the Office of Special Services and Programs (OSSP), under which the Human Sexuality Office was housed, both financially and in terms of physical location (University of Michigan, 1971, p. 1). The report provided an overview of the growing American consciousness of minority groups, rising from the protests

of the 1960s and provided some specific examples including discriminatory acts against Black Americans, before going into discrimination against homosexual persons (University of Michigan, 1971, pp. 1-2). It also cited the US Task Force on Homosexuality funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, which studied mental health aspects of homosexuality and advocated for supporting this minority group for the overall betterment of society (University of Michigan, 1971, pp. 2-3).

The background report then discussed the history of laws against homosexual acts, and the repeal of such laws in several states and England during the 1950s and 1960s as a reflection of the growing awareness of gay rights (University of Michigan, 1971, p. 3). The report stated that "In 1966 the North American Conference on Homophile Organizations (NACHO) was formed" and connected with groups and newspapers across the nation, pushing the ideology that homosexuality was not a medical condition or defect, but just another aspect of sexuality (University of Michigan, 1971, p. 4). The report further explained how NACHO worked to change public perception of homosexuality throughout the United States (University of Michigan, 1971, p. 4). The report then explained how the University of Michigan had already officially recognized the Gay Liberation Front and Radical Lesbians as student organizations in previous years, and that 50 such student groups existed around the country (University of Michigan, 1971, p. 5). At the end of the report, the Office of Student Services (OSS) reasserted its decision to endorse this new student advocate program by stating, "These appointments represent a commitment by OSS to be aware and attentive to the concerns and problems of homosexual students on campus, and to treat these concerns with rationality and balance" (University of Michigan, 1971, p. 6). This comprehensive report used a lot of the information from the initial memorandum request to Vice-President Knauss and provided multiple quoted references to respected medical and scientific organizations that endorsed recognizing and providing aid to homosexual students, and by extension creating an office on campus to do just that. The report reads as an extensive justification and rationalization of the University's decision to create the Human Sexuality Office.

The Human Sexuality Office was granted office space and opened in Fall of 1971 under the OSSP. It included two student employees, Jim Toy represented gay males and Cynthia Gair represented lesbian females (Spectrum Center, n.d.;

Toy, 2011; Toy, 2019; University of Michigan, 1971). Originally, Toy requested two full-time salaried advocates; however, they had to settle for part-time positions even though they actually worked full-time hours (OSSP, 1971; Toy, 2019). As Toy recollected, "We were given a space... With a file cabinet and I think a desk and two chairs... for two people, and I specifically said a woman and a man because we were aiming for gender parity" (Toy, 2019). Besides peer counseling, Toy and Gair helped provide educational information to the university and the local community, especially surrounding harmful stereotypes of homosexuals (Bennedetti, 1971; Toy, 1972). They also helped coordinate students to resources and acted as general liaisons and advocates for the homosexual community on campus (Bennedetti, 1971; Lawson, 1971; Spectrum Center, n.d.; Toy, 1972; Toy, 2011; Toy, 2019).

The office had the support of fellow students and the community. Toy stated that the office would also advocate for the community beyond the university, including the larger Ann Arbor community (Bennedetti, 1971; Lawson, 1971). In his interview, Toy stated:

> Day to day, we were, as I recall, largely supported because this was, in my jargon, the tag end of the radical years and so students at least were largely supportive of what we [were] trying to do. As for the faculty, we had faculty allies. (Toy, 2019)

Despite having this support and unofficially advising students and homosexuals in Ann Arbor for years, Toy felt that he and Gair did not know what they were doing when they first opened the office simply because there had never been an office like theirs before (Toy, 2011; Toy, 2019). They represented the first homosexual office ever opened on a university campus in the United States and were pioneers for their community.

Even though the Human Sexuality Office had opened with the support of the University of Michigan, the office still had to justify itself to the public throughout its first year of operation. On November 19, 1971, a few months after the office opened, the OSSP sent a document titled "For Immediate Release" that reiterated the hiring of Jim Toy and Cynthia Gair (OSSP, 1971). The document explained that since the Spring of 1971 the gay movement in Ann Arbor had been demanding representation at the University of Michigan

campus, and since Radical Lesbians and The Gay Liberation Front were officially recognized as student organizations by the university, this office was the logical next step in representing these students on campus (OSSP, 1971). The report was very pointed in its backing of the office and its two employees, stating, "With the limited University funds available to them, Gair and Toy hope to function as peer advisers to gay persons, build a library of gay literature, communicate with gay groups across the country, serve as a clearinghouse for gay activities and information of both local and national interest, and, in every other way possible, seek to implement programs necessary for the liberation of the gay community" (OSSP, 1971). The message of this report was clear, the Human Sexuality Office was on campus to stay, championed and housed by the OSSP.

Nearing the end of its first semester of existence, the Human Sexuality Office also got local support in local newspapers. The Michigan Daily published a very short article titled "Gay Advocates Named to New OSSP Offices" on December 10, 1971 (Bennedetti, 1971). The article described the office's structure and details of employment and included quotes from the director of OSSP Elizabeth Davenport and Vice-President for Student Services Robert Knauss, as well as Toy and Gair (Bennedetti, 1971). Davenport and Knauss stated the facts of employment and provided informational tidbits on the office, painting it as just one of many programs for the students at the University (Bennedetti, 1971). These statements illustrate how the University of Michigan wanted to portray the office to the public as just another regular service provided to students.

Similarly, although much longer in length, the Detroit News released an article written by News Higher Education writer John E. Peterson (1971) on December 28, 1971, titled "The Gay Scene at Michigan." Peterson (1971) started by explaining the standard details of the office and employees, but then went into the rising national awareness of gay rights of the time, especially among universities, as explanation for the political environment in which the office was opened. He then quoted extensively from Davenport and Knauss, using the same information that the Michigan Daily article used, but went more in depth and detail (Peterson, 1971). Knauss elaborated on the medical community's views on homosexuality, including those that believe homosexuality was a mental illness to treat, but asserted that himself, Davenport, and other University officials viewed these students as just another group in need of

representation (Peterson, 1971). Davenport also explained that according to a Kinsey report of the time, around 8% of America's population identified as gay and that the University of Michigan was a miniature representation of the country, so if the numbers were reflective that around 2,600 of the 32,900 university students would identify as homosexual (Peterson, 1971).

Toy and Gair were interviewed for the article and agreed with those numbers, but stated that they wanted to "point out that only a small percentage of those are 'liberated enough to come out of the closet'" and explained how the small and fluctuating numbers of students attending gay meetings on campus showed the fear the community had in being identified as homosexual (Peterson, 1971). In the article, Toy and Gair acknowledged that attitudes on campus were more tolerant than before, but that many forms of subtle and overt discrimination still existed (Peterson, 1971). Gair asserted that the office was important to build a sense of community, provide aid, and educate the public about damaging false myths, for instance "homosexuals being child molesters" (Peterson, 1971). Toy even related an experience where he gave peer advice to a questioning student who discovered he was heterosexual through the advising process provided to him (Peterson, 1971). Through these detailed accounts, interspersed with quotes of support from university administration and referrals to the science and rationality of homosexuality and gay students on campus, as well as through descriptions of the operations of the office and its goals to help anyone regardless of sexual orientation, this lengthy Detroit News article presented the Human Sexuality Office as something needed on campus and not as something to be feared by the masses.

Not all reporting of the time on the Human Sexuality Office was supportive, however. A nationally syndicated columnist and churchman from across the country in California named Rusell Kirk released an article through the Los Angeles Times titled "Sodom and Lesbos come to Ann Arbor." The article appeared on January 12, 1972, and denounced the office (Kirk, 1972; Toy, 2011). Kirk argued against the creation of such an office on campus, stating that it promoted the homosexual agenda and that, in his words, "Various U. of M. administrators murmur that 'homosexuals are merely another group emerging from repression'-- like Negroes, Mexican-Americans, Indians, women, and so on. They don't trouble themselves with the nice distinction that while there's nothing immoral about being black, brown, red, or female--well, being a pervert

is something else" (Kirk, 1972). Kirk also condemned the University of Michigan's President Fleming for allowing this group on campus (Kirk, 1972).

In a direct rebuttal, the Vice-President for Student Services Knauss drafted a response five days later, on January 17, 1972, titled "Homosexual Programs" (University of Michigan, 1972). In this rebuttal Knauss responded directly to Kirk's press release by name, advocated for the University's Human Sexuality program by referencing the Task Force on Homosexuality report again, and brought in American Law Institute's removal of homosexual acts as a crime for an example of how national attitudes were changing in regard to homosexuals (University of Michigan, 1972). Knauss ended by asserting that the Office of Student Services supported all student groups and their educational needs, including homosexuals (University of Michigan, 1972).

The Human Sexuality Office continued to receive university support and had a successful first year of operation through 1971-1972. Toy wrote an annual report for the office in which he gave a very brief overview of their first year of operation, before detailing the program's objectives (Toy, 1972, p. 1). He stated that the ultimate goal of the office was to help create a society that had no discrimination based on sexual orientation (Toy, 1972, p. 1). Then Toy discussed their job duties for students and the local community, including peer advising, education, information and organizational services, liaison, advocacy for gay rights, publicity, and planning, all of which were in place from the office's inception (Toy, 1972, pp. 1-2). Toy ended the report with the following statement: "We believe that our program, which is unique in the nation, has achieved an enviable success. We hope that we may continue to be attentive to the problems of homosexual students and that we will treat their concerns with rationality and balance" (Toy, 1972, p. 2). With this noteworthy statement, Toy acknowledged the Human Sexuality Office as the first in the nation, a pioneer center of assistance for his community. Toy echoed the same words that had been previously used by the university in their background for appointment document, words that urged people to view homosexual students and their needs with "rationality and balance"; his statements showed a continuation of the university's unified defense of the office and Toy's work. This report encapsulated the culmination of the office's opening and its successful first year of operation as the first of its kind.

The Human Sexuality Office at the University of Michigan emerged during

a turbulent time of rising gay rights and visibility throughout the country. It was a pioneer office and program as a support center for homosexual students in higher education. Led by Jim Toy and supported by the University, the Human Sexuality Office, the first ever university-based LGBTQ+ center, was a success and opened the door for other support centers at universities around the country.

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The Myth Behind the Mask: Blue Crew Secret Spirit Society at The University of Toledo - Recollections of a Founder

Donovan Thomas Nichols[10]

Abstract
This article traces the history of the origins and evolution of Blue Crew, a secret spirit society at The University of Toledo (UToledo), through the recollections of one of the organization's co-founders. Secret societies have existed on U.S. college campuses since 1750; however, Blue Crew's unique characteristics and dedication to enhancing school spirit set it apart from other institutions' secret societies. Founded in 2000, Blue Crew consists of 10 student members whose identities are hidden behind masks, wigs, and overalls. This secret society is devoted to building community and improving the campus culture by promoting university traditions. This article provides a rare glimpse at the organization's beginnings and its positive influence on campus. The co-founder's firsthand account pairs with archival resources to detail the creation, development, and unique characteristics of Blue Crew, including its purpose, name origins, hidden identities, distinct uniforms, "demasking" process, and challenges experienced throughout the years. Today, Blue Crew is a thriving society with over 130 total initiated members, an alumni association, and an endowment fund that financially supports its members and activities.

Keywords: Blue Crew, secret society, school spirit, campus traditions, The University of Toledo

While The University of Toledo (UToledo) features many time-honored traditions, one of its student organizations captures the attention with its mysterious aura and irresistible appeal. Blue Crew is a secret spirit society that was founded in 2000 to enhance school spirit and excitement at UToledo. Over its first quarter century of existence, this student organization of anonymous

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Figure 1
Blue Crew's Co-Founder Donovan Nichols as "Hollywood"

Note: "Hollywood" dressed for the Blue Crew alumni game at the UToledo basketball game on November 25, 2014. Photograph provided by Donovan Nichols.

members has evolved into a well-known entity on campus with a thriving alumni association. The Blue Crew masked student-members can be seen at numerous events and activities, always bringing energy and firing up the crowd. Through its members' dedication and activities, Blue Crew has gradually bloomed into a fun campus tradition that is revered by students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors, and community members, collectively known as "Toledo Rockets." My connection with Blue Crew began in my freshman year of college as a founding member of the organization. For four years, I served as an active member of Blue Crew under the assumed nickname "Hollywood" (Figure 1). This article details the history of Blue Crew by utilizing stories found in institutional documents, archival sources, and, above all, my personal recollections as a co-founder of Blue Crew secret society.

Blue Crew is a 10-member secret spirit society consisting of students at The University of Toledo who are dedicated to instituting, reviving, and maintaining UToledo traditions (The University of Toledo, 2016). The purpose of this student organization is to "build a strong sense of community within the entire University that branches from a select circle of individuals who display exceptional UT spirit" (Nichols & Rodriguez, 2000). Blue Crew strives to "represent the Rockets of today, Alumni of the past, and Spirit of the future" (Nichols & Rodriguez, 2000). The organization embodies extraordinary school

spirit at events and activities on campus and throughout the world. Furthermore, Blue Crew aims to stimulate involvement in UToledo's traditions and promote opportunities for students to enjoy their college experience.

Mysterious aspects of Blue Crew have intrigued non-members for years, such as its members' hidden identities, unknown on-campus office location, and secret rituals. While there will always be certain aspects of the organization that will remain secret, some information about the veiled group has been revealed to the public over the years. This article reviews demasked facts and shares stories on the creation of Blue Crew, the reason behind their hidden identities and distinct uniforms, the ways in which Blue Crew became a tradition, the challenges the organization overcame, the establishment of the Blue Crew Alumni Association, and the positive influence Blue Crew has had on UToledo. Established at the turn of the millennium, Blue Crew is a unique student organization that was created to meet a specific need at UToledo, to boost school spirit. The mystery of the group has played a significant role in its success as well as its challenges. The secrecy has allowed its members to bond over a common experience; however, it has sometimes unintentionally caused non-members to feel excluded. Ultimately, Blue Crew believes the benefits of their secrecy outweigh the cost of exclusion. This article shares the story of Blue Crew.

Secret Societies in Higher Education

Secret societies have been a part of the collegiate experience in the United States for over 270 years. The oldest-known secret society was founded in 1750 at the College of William and Mary as the F.H.C. Society, also known as the Flat Hat Club (William & Mary, 2024; The Flat Hat, n.d.). According to William & Mary (2014), a famous member of the Flat Hat Club was Thomas Jefferson. While the F.H.C. Society temporarily disbanded during the American Revolution, a new secret society, called Phi Beta Kappa, was founded in 1776 at the College of William & Mary (Nowicki, 2014; The Flat Hat, n.d.). Phi Beta Kappa originated as a secret debating society "to give members the freedom to discuss any topic they chose, no matter how controversial" (The Phi Beta Kappa Society, n.d., para. 3). Recognized as the first collegiate fraternity, Phi Beta Kappa became the model for other Greek letter fraternities and sororities. The reputation as the most famous and most powerful collegiate secret society,

however, has gone to Skull and Bones, founded at Yale University in 1832 (Leung, 2003; Nowicki, 2014). Due to their mystery and reputation, the Bonesmen, as they are known, served as the premise for a movie called "The Skulls" (Leung, 2003; Nowicki, 2014). According to a CBS News 60 Minutes story (Leung, 2003), this notorious secret society's members have included some of the most powerful individuals of the 20th and 21st century such as presidents of the United States, Supreme Court justices, high-ranking politicians, spies, and titans of industries. Knowledge of the organizations' power and privilege beyond college that has been shrouded in mystery has caused much distrust of secret societies among non-members (Leung, 2003).

While non-members may know that secret societies exist, only the society members know the true nature and inner workings of their mysterious organizations. Even though some aspects of a secret society's information may be public, there is still much that is kept secret. According to Daraul (1962), "not all secret societies are entirely secret" (p. 9). Many of their members may be known, their objectives may be stated publicly, or their teachings may be available to all. Simultaneously, these societies shroud select information and knowledge in mystery to non-members and only share these secrets internally. Secret societies tend to contain exclusivity of membership; they use signs, passwords, and codes; they have an objective; and their members share experiences of the rituals and belief of the society (Daraul, 1962). Due to the mystery of these organizations, non-members may be skeptical or hold negative feelings towards secret societies. Daraul expresses that it is "undesirable activities" and "their very air of mystery" which gives secret societies a reputation of being "strange," "abnormal," and "anti-social" (p. 10). Although the secrecy of these organizations may cause a negative reputation with non-members, these societies remain secret because of the positive bond that insider knowledge creates among their members. The connection that members feel with each other and the organization aid in a secret society's sustained existence on campus. An organization's longevity may help turn a secret society into a campus tradition.

Traditions at higher education institutions connect one generation of students to the next creating in the process a stronger university culture. According to Merriam-Webster (2024), tradition is "the handing down of information, beliefs, and customs by word of mouth or by example from one

generation to another without written instruction" (def. 2). Different campus traditions include symbols, cultural meanings, myths, ceremonies, and rituals; many of them serve as "cultural makers on college campuses" (Manning, 2000, p. 1). Some examples of campus traditions are fight songs, cheers, homecoming, annual events, mascots, and painting a spirit rock. Support for positive campus traditions helps an institution create positive change within its culture, as well as transform the ways in which individuals view the school. In this light, the primary philosophy behind the establishment of Blue Crew was to influence a positive cultural change on UToledo's campus by enriching its traditions and increasing school spirit.

The Creation of Blue Crew

My involvement with Blue Crew started in my freshman year at The University of Toledo. Jason Rodriguez and I established Blue Crew out of our desire to help UToledo become a more spirited and vibrant campus. In 2000, as freshmen in the Leadership UT program, we "recognized the lack of a strong presence of school pride on campus" (Sanders, 2018). Therefore, we sought to change UToledo's culture by creating an entity on campus that would celebrate and honor UToledo traditions while boosting school morale.

To understand how to create a more spirited institution, Rodriguez and I researched current and past campus traditions. Our search pointed us to "a former group in 1995 known as the Rocket Fanatics led by Gregg Dodd" (Sanders, 2018). Rocket Fanatics was a group of spirited students who showed their campus pride by being enthusiastic and cheering at events such as football games. This spirited group was thriving while Dodd was a student; however, after he graduated the student organization eventually dispersed. Utilizing this knowledge, Rodriguez and I vowed to create a new organization that would continue to thrive well past our college days. As a result, we created a secret society that would hide the members' identities, which in turn would allow the next generation of students to seamlessly continue the organization after the current members graduate.

Our search of secret societies and student organizations throughout the nation and on our campus also gave us ideas on how to create a group that would be different than any other organization in existence. As the major

difference, our society would combine a sense of secrecy (i.e., hidden identities) with a public presence (e.g., speaking with people, attending events, and cheering loudly). The purpose of creating a hidden yet public presence was to overcome the natural exclusivity of a secret organization. Unlike other secret societies that may use secrecy to be purposely exclusionary, Blue Crew would utilize secrecy as a cue to its members to remain humble and remember that the organization and presence of school spirit would remain more important than any individual recognition. In addition, Blue Crew was designed to regularly interact with people to break down barriers and remain inclusive even though secret societies are naturally exclusionary. Allowing Blue Crew members to speak was essential to the purpose of the organization because it would enable the members to pass along spirit, history, and traditions orally through conversations with others.

Indeed, today, Blue Crew members not only attend events such as pep rallies and bonfires, but they also visit classes to teach UToledo chants, songs, and traditions (Figure 2) and randomly walk around campus to interact with students, faculty, and staff. And Blue Crew's hidden yet public presence is unique from other secret societies and student organizations in that other groups are typically either secret or vocal, but not both. For instance, students who serve as college mascots typically have their identities hidden but are not allowed to talk while in costume. On the other hand, members in spirit groups such as Rocket Fanatics and cheerleaders do not hide their personal identities and are encouraged to talk and cheer while in public. Additionally, student groups such as fraternities, sororities, and Blue Key at UToledo are deemed to be secret societies because they conduct secret rituals; however, they openly display their membership through avenues such as wearing clothing with the organization's logo. Similar to Blue Crew, Blue Key's purpose is to honor campus history and

Figure 2
Blue Crew and a University of Toledo Class, 2017

Note: Blue Crew teaching chants and traditions to a class of UToledo first-year students. Photograph by Donovan Nichols.

traditions (The University of Toledo, n.d.). However, unlike Blue Crew, the organization's members are publicly known, and they do not run around at sporting events to get the crowd excited about the game. Some secret societies such as Skull and Bones hide in the shadows and attempt to be secret and non-vocal by keeping their membership little known and refusing to speak publicly about the organization (Leung, 2003). While various secret societies and organizations have similarities to Blue Crew, no one organization contains the same multitude of characteristics as Blue Crew.

The organization that most resembles Blue Crew's structure and vision is located at Bowling Green State University – an institution that is ironically The University of Toledo's biggest sports rival. According to Bowling Green State University (BGSU; n.d.), a secret society called SICSIC was founded in 1946 to promote school spirit. Similar to Blue Crew, SICSIC members wear masks to hide their identities and promote campus traditions; however, unlike Blue Crew, SICSIC members do not talk nor vocally cheer at sporting events. In addition, SICSIC's membership is limited to six students, including two sophomores, two juniors, and two seniors (BGSU, n.d.) whereas Blue Crew has 10 members and students can join the organization during any year of their college career when a current member graduates and leaves the organization (Nichols & Rodriguez, 2000). Finally, SICSIC is a secret society that was created by the BGSU president and overseen by university staff, while Blue Crew was created by students and is fully managed by students. In sum, while various secret societies may seem similar to Blue Crew in certain ways, Blue Crew remains unique. It is a secret spirit society with hidden member identities whose purpose is to honor and promote UToledo's history and traditions, cheer loudly at sporting events to excite the crowd, encourage non-members to demonstrate their spirit for the institution, promote UToledo pride beyond campus, and involve all Toledo Rockets through diverse interactions and avenues in order to be inclusive of non-members even though the organization's secret membership is naturally exclusionary.

Origin of the Name "Blue Crew"

Rodriguez and I did not start our plans with a specific name in mind. The name Blue Crew was selected after we considered numerous potential names

including Blue Dudes, Yellow Fellows, Toledo Ten Society, Unity Ten, Rocket Boosters, Toledo Fros, Might Flight, and Phantom Rockets. Originally, Blue Crew was the name of a marketing campaign idea created by student Chad Worthington during his candidacy for UToledo Student Government President in 2000. After Worthington did not win the election, Rodriguez and I gained permission from him to use the name Blue Crew for our new student organization (Nichols, 2018).

Hidden Identities and the Uniform

Members of Blue Crew remain anonymous to the public throughout their entire active membership. They wear blue and yellow wigs, high-top Converse All-Stars shoes, gold masks, and painter's overalls (Latimer, C., 2017). The purpose of their hidden identities is defined in the society's Constitution, which states, "Blue Crew is masked in order to exemplify the notion that this organization is not a society of the spirited people, but a guild that represents the spirit which lies within each individual Rocket" (Nichols & Rodriguez, 2000). This secret society's members "wear the masks to signify that being part of the Blue Crew isn't about the individual" (ViÃal, 2013); rather, as a student journalist reported, "It's about the [UToledo] spirit…always being present" (Sanders, 2018). In addition, the mystery of the mask adds to the fun and intrigue of the organization because anyone could be behind the mask.

Figure 3
Blue Crew's Original White Uniforms, 2000

Note: Blue Crew posing with mascots, Rocky the Rocket and Muddy the Mud Hen, at the 2000 Homecoming Parade. White overalls were the first uniform for the organization during the 2000-2001 academic year. Photograph provided by Donovan Nichols.

The original 10 members of Blue Crew wore white uniforms (Figure 3) donated by Big Boy Restaurants. At the time, we gladly accepted the donated overalls even though they were not blue as we had desired. In our infancy, the

group did not have any money to buy uniforms and the uniforms were essential to the organization's secrecy. In our second year of existence, after receiving a university budget, Blue Crew bought new outfits and appeared for the first time in blue overalls on August 30, 2001 (Figure 4). We chose overalls as part of the uniform to signal that the Blue Crew members were always ready to work hard to ignite the pride in every Rocket. However, beyond the overalls uniform, each Blue Crew member is encouraged to design their own outfit and add accessories to express their masked persona.

Figure 4
Blue Crew's New Blue Uniforms, 2001

Note: Blue Crew's first appearance wearing blue overalls on August 30, 2001. Photograph provided by Donovan Nichols.

Nicknames are an important aspect of Blue Crew because they help the members remain anonymous. As ViÃal (2013) reported in her NBC video coverage, "Each member is hidden under an assumed identity and name." The nickname of each member is selected based on a trait or story regarding the member (Lewis, Tucker, & Woodcock, 2017). For instance, during one member's initiation at the end of singing the UToledo Fight Song he chanted, "T-O-L-D-E-O" (Linder, 2005). When given the chance to redeem himself, he accidentally spelled Toledo incorrectly a second time, so his nickname became "Deo." Blue Crew members callout to each other in public while in uniform, so nicknames were necessary in order to maintain anonymity. The pseudonyms helped protect the identity of each member until they were unveiled.

Demasking

Members may never say they are in Blue Crew until they have been properly unveiled through a process called "demasking" (Nichols & Rodriguez, 2000). When a member of Blue Crew is graduating and/or has fulfilled their commitment to the organization, they are allowed to demask. A student in Blue Crew must participate in the organization for at least four semesters or graduate

from UToledo to become an alumni member of the organization and unveil themself (Nichols & Rodriguez, 2000). Demasking is a ritual in which the member takes off their mask during an event to reveal their true identity to the public (Lewis et al., 2017). Blue Crew members have demasked at various campus events such as sporting events, student organization awards nights, Songfest, and RockeTHON (i.e., Dance Marathon). For instance, two members were honorably demasked by head coach Tricia Cullop at a UToledo women's basketball game (ViÃal, 2013) and another member was demasked during the third quarter of a UToledo Homecoming football game. Members themselves decide how they want to unveil their real identity to the world.

Blue Crew Becomes a Tradition

Blue Crew's visibility and active engagement has rendered the society into a well-known campus tradition. Blue Crew members have effectively exposed the organization to Rocket fans at numerous events, through word of mouth, and via news coverage. Blue Crew's first day in uniform happened on August 27, 2000 during a new University event called RocketFest (The University of Toledo Athletics, 2001). We spent that day running around UToledo's campus sharing the Rocket spirit with the Toledo community. However, the secret organization's first major public appearance was on September 2, 2000, during a nationally televised UToledo football game vs Penn State (The University of Toledo Athletics, 2001). Blue Crew members, including myself , rode the UToledo Alumni Association bus from Toledo to Happy Valley dressed as regular students. Then, similar to Superman, the students put on their uniforms in a secret location and reappeared as super fans. Blue Crew was exposed to over 94,000 people in person and millions through the TV as they pumped up the small Toledo section in Beaver Stadium and cheered the Rockets onto a 24-6 victory against the Nittany Lions. Blue Crew made its mark as the crazy spirit group that day during the second greatest victory in UToledo football history (Toledo Blade Company, 2017). On that day, the legend of Blue Crew was born; therefore, we consider September 2, 2000 our Founder's Day.

Blue Crew caught the most attention from other UToledo fanatics by attending every home and away football game as well as every home game for men's and women's basketball. During the first two years of Blue Crew's

existence, 2000 and 2001, The University of Toledo football team won 10 games each year and was ranked within the top 25 in the nation in the AP and USA Today/ESPN polls each year (The University of Toledo Athletics, 2015). The football team's success provided not only UToledo with a lot of national exposure, but also Blue Crew. The masked group of spirited students was seen on TV at least once per game and many times the announcers would mention Blue Crew by name and explain the purpose of the organization.

Numerous UToledo offices and staff members played an important role in Blue Crew's development into a campus tradition, including the Office of Student Activities, the Alumni Association, and the Athletics Department. The Office of Student Activities supported Blue Crew in becoming a registered student organization, gaining a budget, and connecting with other student organizations and offices on campus. The Alumni Association invited Blue Crew to its pre-game tailgates and alumni events, which positively presented the new mysterious organization to UToledo alumni and allowed the spirit group to interact with multiple generations of Toledo Rockets. The UToledo Athletics Department played a vital role in allowing Blue Crew to gain exposure and increase Rocket pride. In the infancy of Blue Crew, Athletics allowed the spirit group to run around the sidelines on the football field and in the stands to rally the fans during games. The masked fanatics helped ignite cheers with four of the five largest crowd attendances in Glass Bowl stadium history (The University of Toledo Athletics, 2015). These opportunities helped Blue Crew gain acceptance by the fans and in turn, the fans began seeing Blue Crew as an influential spirit group. Through Blue Crew's connection with the Athletics Department, the organization grew meaningful relationships with the student athletes and coaches. These mutually supportive relationships brought more excitement and spirit to the athletic teams. In addition, the athletes' and coaches' acceptance and promotion of Blue Crew provided validity to the budding organization.

Blue Crew and the Athletics Department have existed in a symbiotic relationship. For instance, the Athletics Department provided Blue Crew with tickets to the Toledo at Temple football game and a hotel stay in return for the group's help. To support athletics, Blue Crew spent two nights before the first UToledo football game of the 2001 season watching the stadium and ensuring that no vandals ruined the new field turf that was installed in the Glass Bowl.

The Athletics Department's public recognition of Blue Crew supported the organization in becoming a well-known spirit entity in Toledo. On November 6, 2001, "for their support to The University of Toledo Athletic Department and for being loyal fans," Blue Crew was honored as the "12th Man" for the UToledo football game (The University of Toledo Athletics, 2001, p. 137). Athletics announced the honor through the stadium speakers and in the game day program, which contained a full-page write-up that described the organization. Moreover, Athletics posted images of the spirit group in their facilities. On the main wall at the entrance of the Larimer Athletic Complex, which is home to the UToledo football team and academic center, there is a picture of a Blue Crew member directly above the word "Tradition" (Figure 5). All student athletes and coaches see this image when they walk into the building to workout, study, or attend team meetings. Another image of Blue Crew was placed above a food stand in the northwest corner of the Glass Bowl. These images and others like them helped solidify Blue Crew as a known campus tradition.

Figure 5
Blue Crew Picture on the Wall in the UToledo Larimer Athletic Complex, 2014

Note: Photograph by Donovan Nichols.

The organization gained local and national notoriety rapidly within its first few years of existence and continues to receive exposure. People have interacted with Blue Crew throughout the nation and internationally as organization members traveled to support the Rockets athletic teams at away games. The spirited group has traveled to games in 26 U.S. states, and Washington D.C. In 2018 and 2021, Blue Crew traveled to the Bahamas to cheer for the football team at the Bahamas Bowl. Blue Crew's dedication to UToledo and its Rockets has earned the organization recognition in local and national media sources. The Blade Toledo Magazine (Smith, 2007), UToledo Football programs, UToledo Admissions Brochure, UT News, Toledo Alumni Magazine (The University of Toledo Alumni Association, 2010), UToledo Athletics YouTube (Toledo Rockets, 2013), NBC 24 News (ViÃal, 2013), Toledo Matters

Podcast (Lewis et al., 2017), Cleveland.com (Lesmerises, 2009), CollegeFootballTour.com (Bauhs, 2017), and SBNation Hustle Belt (Bailey, 2017), have featured news on the society. Nationally, Sports Illustrated and ESPN (Figure 6) have provided extensive coverage as well.

Starting as an organization that mostly attended football and basketball games, Blue Crew has evolved into a spirited group that people expect to see at all major UToledo events and traditions. Through their service to the UToledo community, energetic presence, and years of appearances at various events and in the media, Blue Crew has become more recognized as a constant representation of UToledo's spirit and pride.

Figure 6
Blue Crew on National Television

Note: This football game was one of many times that Blue Crew was shown on national TV *(ESPNU, 2013).*

Challenges for Blue Crew Over the Years

While Blue Crew is currently a well-functioning, respected organization, the group has not always been viewed in a positive way. The organization has been through countless trials and tribulations over the years. Negative news articles, scary masks, a lack of membership, and getting through security at away athletic events have been a few of the obstacles in the way of Blue Crew's success. Drive, determination, and the will to never give up has helped the organization persist. Perhaps its greatest strength has been its members, all chosen for their utmost dedication to Blue Crew's cause.

Today, most people at UToledo know and respect Blue Crew as a positive force on campus. As Corey Latimer, student reporter for The Independent Collegian, stated in his 2017 article about Blue Crew, "They're the craziest ones at every football game, the loudest ones at the pep rallies, the most spirited of us all… they keep us high-spirited and full of school spirit year-round" (para. 1). However, when the organization first started, not only were some individuals not fans of Blue Crew, but a few people directly displayed

negativity towards the group. During Blue Crew's first appearance on campus in 2000, a student said to the group, "Who paid you guys to dress up, nobody on this campus has spirit" (D. Nichols, recollections, March 30, 2001). During the 2001 Homecoming Parade, one fraternity was extremely rude to the group. Multiple men from the fraternity threw candy at Blue Crew and one of the fraternity members even ran after and tackled a Blue Crew member (D. Nichols, recollections, March 30, 2001). In addition, many people would try to steal the Blue Crew members' masks and wigs (Linder, 2005) and some opposing fans would attempt to throw beer on the members.

Beyond physical violence towards the spirit group, written attacks from a student reporter, Matt Sanctis, were published in UToledo's school newspaper, The Independent Collegian. In one article Sanctis (2000a) stated, "At the top of the all-time list of annoying people…[is] Blue Crew, the overzealous wannabe cheerleaders for UT's football team…I really hate those people." He continued to call the society's members morons and said they "dance around the Glass Bowl like riddalin-addicted monkeys" (Sanctis, 2000a). Although Blue Crew has a strict rule against drinking prior to dressing or while in uniform, the student reporter's misleading analogy of the spirit group to drunken clowns was harmful to the organization's image. In a second article titled "Blue Crew could easily be replaced by drunken clowns," Sanctis (2000b) wrote, "there are a few people who have a little too much pride in their school…and their motivations become a little fanatical and, therefore scary…a perfect example of this is UT's Blue Crew." Sanctis (2000b) continued, "I feel like drunken clowns would be less frightening to small children and the elderly." Reading these negative news articles from this student journalist made me question if I had made a bad decision in starting the organization.

Sanctis' public dislike for the organization created unexpected misinformation and hardships for the group in its infancy. However, his comment about Blue Crew's masks being scary had some validity. A challenge with Blue Crew's hidden identities is that the masks unintentionally have a negative effect on people who have masklophobia, or an irrational fear of masks (Drlogy, 2024). While some children love Blue Crew (Figure 7), other children are scared of their intimidating masks. For instance, one of Blue Crew's members, "Peek-A-Boo," received his nickname when he, as a new member at his first event, tried to play football with a group of kids. A few of the younger

Figure 7
Blue Crew with Co-founder Donovan Nichols and His Son, Sawyer

Note: Photograph provided by Donovan Nichols.

kids screamed and ran away because they saw him as a scary man in a mask (Lewis et al., 2017). Not only are some children scared, but so are adults at times. Student reporter Sanctis (2000b) himself stated, “I know I’m scared of them.” Even though Blue Crew members are smiling under their disguise, people only see a stoic gold mask, which can be scary (Anderson, 2008). Though the look of Blue Crew’s masks has never changed since the organization’s founding, today less individuals are scared of the group because they recognize Blue Crew as a positive spirit organization.

Maintaining enough members to be a student organization at UToledo has been another issue for Blue Crew. At UToledo, a student organization must have at least 10 members to be officially registered. In addition, the number 10 has a secret meaning to Blue Crew, so the organization does not allow itself to have more than 10 active members. Unfortunately, only allowing 10 members in the organization at any time has created two challenges for Blue Crew. The first challenge is that Blue Crew needs to immediately replace members who leave the organization in order to maintain the minimum 10 members required by UToledo. Due to the limited number of membership spots, the second challenge is that the organization needs to be very selective in choosing new members to ensure they only recruit the most positive and dedicated students. Therefore, the organization must be selective, yet ready to bring in a new member at any time. At one point in Blue Crew history, the organization almost dissolved because of a lack of membership. In May 2005, Blue Crew was down to one member, “Deo.” Several members either graduated or left the organization for other reasons and Blue Crew failed to recruit new students to replace the exiting members. To salvage the organization, Blue Crew alumni supported the lone active member in recruiting a full roster of spirited students. Following this challenging situation, the organization worked on a new recruitment process to ensure outgoing members’ spots were filled upon their

exit from the group. As a result, Blue Crew is always on the lookout for potential new members and keeps a list of qualified students they are ready to initiate if an active member leaves the organization. This new process has been essential to the success and longevity of the organization. New members are found in a variety of ways, including in the stands at sporting events, through other student organizations, in class, and around campus. According to the Blue Crew Constitution, members are carefully selected based on the following qualities:

- Displays outstanding leadership abilities.
- Exemplifies pride in themselves, other students, the UT community, the Toledo community, their surroundings, and above all else The Rockets.
- Maintains good character.
- Reveals self-initiative to exhibit their inner pride without external influence. (Nichols & Rodriguez, 2000, p. 2)

On a few occasions in the past, Blue Crew has selected individuals who did not display the organization's high moral values during their active membership. In those cases, such members have been deactivated through a vote of the other active members (Nichols & Rodriguez, 2000). Blue Crew strives "to furnish Rockets with good moral direction, whether it is an outstanding fan on the field or a Good Samaritan in daily life" (Nichols & Rodriguez, 2000). The members of Blue Crew must be good role models and be able to teach others how to be positive Rocket Fanatics (Nichols & Rodriguez, 2000; Stever, 2003). Deactivation occurred more regularly during the early years of the Blue Crew than in recent years as the organization has become better at recruiting more fitting members.

Another major challenge for Blue Crew has been getting through security and into athletic events outside of Toledo. Following the September 11 tragedy and heightened sensitivity to terrorist threats, security officers at a few stadiums have not let Blue Crew into games. Several stadiums have instituted no mask policies, which has hindered Blue Crew from entering events. While the organization contacts the stadium security prior to every game to gain clearance, Blue Crew is not always allowed into every stadium (Lewis et al., 2017). For instance, members of Blue Crew traveled to Ball State University in 2017 and Fresno State University in 2018 for Toledo football games only to be

turned away by security. The students in Blue Crew still travel to games in which masks are not allowed; however, to not reveal their identities they attend as regular students, not Blue Crew. The organization works with the UToledo Athletics Department to gain access into games; however, sometimes even UToledo Athletics does not have the clout or authority to get Blue Crew into all away teams' stadiums.

Blue Crew Alumni Association

Blue Crew members eventually graduate and "go alumni," but desire to continue supporting their secret spirit society and The University of Toledo. While Blue Crew alumni are no longer active members of the organization, their undying pride for their alma mater remains strong. Over the years, the organization expanded into more than solely a student organization. In 2005, following the graduation of several of the group's original members, six of them met for the first time to discuss alumni initiatives for the secret society (D. Nichols, recollections, September 16, 2005). In 2006, Brian Weinblatt, CJ Murawski, and other alumni members formed a Blue Crew Alumni Association (The University of Toledo Foundation, 2017) to provide opportunities for Blue Crew alumni and their families to interact regularly through social activities and initiatives that financially support the active members and future generations, such as the Blue Crew Alumni Association Homecoming Gala (Figure 8). As Sanders (2018) reported, "Blue Crew has become such a phenomenon that has produced not only a more positively-fueled campus at UT, but also brought people together" (para. 14). The logo for the Blue Crew Alumni Association (Figure 9) displays the alumni's reverence for the mask and wig as a representation that the group's legacy is more important than any individual's success. There have been over

Figure 8
Blue Crew Active and Alumni Members at the Blue Crew Alumni Homecoming Gala, 2017

Note: Photograph provided by Donovan Nichols.

Figure 9
Blue Crew Alumni Association Logo

Note: Logo provided by Donovan Nichols.

130 members of Blue Crew in the past 25 years. Following their active years, members who met the requirements acquired alumni status. Alumni members tend to remain actively involved with the group because their fellow Blue Crew members become some of their best friends. Members of Blue Crew spend a lot of time together, especially on road trips to away athletic events, which helps them develop strong bonds with each other. I made many wonderful life-long friendships through my involvement in Blue Crew. For instance, two of the groomsmen in my wedding are Blue Crew alumni. In some cases, Blue Crew members have met their significant other in the organization, got married, and had children. Blue Crew alumni events have become family functions. Children of Blue Crew members grow up around Blue Crew and UToledo by attending sporting events, Homecoming parades, alumni cookouts, and other organization activities. Blue Crew's expansion from a student organization into an alumni organization as well has brought the families of its alumni together, which further strengthens the Blue Crew bonds.

A major responsibility of the Blue Crew Alumni Association has been to raise money to support the active student members. As University of Toledo Foundation records attest, gifts and pledges to the Blue Crew endowed fund continue to grow annually. The endowment, which will exist in perpetuity, assists active members with travel, tickets, uniforms, and other costs (The University of Toledo Foundation, 2017). Financial support from the endowment means a great deal to the current members. A former Blue Crew President known as "J-Soup" during his active years said, "It's rewarding to see an alumni group so committed and involved…this fund will strengthen our efforts in building UT pride" (The University of Toledo Foundation, 2017, p. 2).

Blue Crew's Positive Influence on UToledo

Blue Crew has created a positive influence at UToledo in countless ways. The secret society has heightened people's awareness of various events and

traditions, inspired individuals to be more spirited, motivated kids to attend UToledo, made people smile and laugh, helped people enjoy their UToledo experience more, brought positive media attention to UToledo, and energized fans at athletic events to influence the outcome of games. Children and adults alike have ventured to join the fun and emulated the school pride of Blue Crew by dressing like the spirit crew (Figure 10). An example of Blue Crew motivating a kid to attend UToledo, occurred when a young child named Scott Schwartz got his picture taken with Blue Crew at a basketball game (Figure 11). From that day forward, Schwartz desired to attend UToledo and join Blue Crew. Approximately one decade later, Schwartz enrolled at UToledo, joined Blue Crew, became president of the organization, and in turn paid it forward by inspiring the next generation of Rocket fans (Figure 12).

Figure 10
A Child Dressed Like Blue Crew for a Football Game, 2015

Note: Photograph by The University of Toledo Photo Services.

Figure 11
Blue Crew with Scott Schwartz, a Child who Loves The University of Toledo and Blue Crew

Note: The child in this photo can be seen as an adult in Figure 12. Photograph provided by Scott Schwartz.

Another tangible example where Blue Crew has positively influenced the Toledo Rockets is during athletic games. On multiple occasions Blue Crew has energized Toledo fans and the team when the Rockets were losing. The spirit group invigorated the crowd, which provided the players and coaches with the encouragement they needed to fight back and win games. During the 2001 MAC Championship game versus Marshall, UToledo was losing by over three

touchdowns and hopes of winning were severely diminished. Not willing to give up on the team, Blue Crew ran through the stands of UToledo's Glass Bowl stadium cheering and adding excitement into the crowd. The school spirit of the organization spread amongst the fans and encouraged the football team to stay positive. The team began to make miraculous plays such as kicker Todd France running for a touchdown on a trick play. In the end, Blue Crew was able to do its part in helping inspire the UToledo football team to overcome a 23-point deficit to win the championship. The positive influence Blue Crew has had on campus continues to be seen in championship moments and every day spirited interactions amongst Toledo Rockets. Blue Crew remains strong and will continue to dedicate itself to leaving the legacy of "igniting a flame of outstanding school spirit inside all [Toledo] Rockets" (Nichols & Rodriguez, 2000).

Figure 12
Blue Crew Members Who Demasked at UToledo's Songfest with Co-Founder Donovan Nichols, 2022

Note: Scott Schwartz, the child from Figure 11 is the Blue Crew member on the far right. Photograph provided by Donovan Nichols.

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