



Earl V. Thesken

December 11, 2006

Miami University and literally thousands of former students spread throughout the world have many forms of indebtedness to the thoughtful and effective Earl Valentine Thesken, Miami '30, Dean Emeritus of Educational Services, who died Monday (Dec. 11) in Easton, MD, from complications of Alzheimer's disease just four months shy of his 100'th birthday. His daughter Jane Thesken Anderson was at his side.

It is easiest to think of "Red" Thesken as father of three campuses. One of them has become a separate university.

When he returned to Miami "to stay" in 1955, his assignment to manage summer sessions and extensions turned into the building of thriving Miami Academic Centers for evening instruction at Dayton, Hamilton, Middletown, Norwood and Piqua. These were accommodating nearly 5,000 students by the time a new regional campus concept emerged. In the citation conferring on him an honorary Doctor of Laws degree, then Miami President Phillip R. Shriver said: "In development of regional campuses, Miami became a pioneer; Dean Thesken was the scout, trapper and settler."

"The pattern took shape: a community willing to raise earnest money could have a branch campus of an existing state university; state and federal money could be had if sufficient local money were raised. The first such campus in

Ohio began as a joint branch campus of Miami and Ohio State in Dayton. It opened as such in 1964, soon became the Wright State Campus, and went on its own as Wright State University in 1967. The Middletown Campus of Miami University opened in 1966 (as the first branch campus of a state university in Ohio), the Hamilton Campus of Miami in 1968 with Mr. Thesken as Miami's bridge with community leaders. He coordinated planning and construction. He recruited campus directors and proceeded to work with them and with academic department chairmen in the staffing of their campuses."

With his promotion to Dean of Educational Services in 1964 he came to have responsibility over summer school, conferences and conventions, continuing education, the Registrar's Office and the Admission Office as well as academic centers and regional campuses.

Through each of these activities, Dean Thesken pressed consistently for the development of continuing education as a service to the adult community and for the protection of educational opportunity for those with limited financial means. In recognition of these efforts, Miami named the science and technology building at the Middletown Campus, Thesken Hall.

Born at College Hill, April 13, 1907, he received the Bachelor of Arts degree from Miami in 1930 and the Master of Arts degree from Miami in 1943. He also attended Ohio State University. He began teaching math and business courses at North College Hill High School in 1932 and was its principal 1937-47. While there he met Caroline Slack of College Corner, IN, another Miamian that the future Mrs. Thesken, who was teaching science and physical education in Harrison, OH. He returned to Miami as assistant registrar in 1947, became associate registrar the following year and returned to North College Hill as Superintendent of Schools in 1952. He returned to Miami in 1955 and remained on its staff until retirement in 1972.

He was named to the Advisory Board of the U.S. Office of Educational Basic Studies in 1969 and was made a Fellow of the National University Extension Association in 1971 in recognition of service to that group. He also is a former president of the Kiwanis Club of Oxford and is also a member of Delta Upsilon fraternity, Phi Delta Kappa and Torch Club. Miami bestowed the Honorary Doctor of Laws degree on him in 1973. The Theskens split their time in retirement between Oxford and Tavares, FL, until Caroline's death in 1981. In 1986, Earl was married to Galen Glasgow Hoxie. She also preceded him in death in 2004.

Besides his daughter Jane Thesken Anderson of Arlington, VA and Sherwood, MD, he is survived by son David E. of Arvada, CO; a brother William of LaPlata, MD; three sister, Clara Dreyer, Theodora Schubert and Katherine Schneider, all of Cincinnati; five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held at the Miami University Sesquicentennial Chapel, Oxford at 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan 20, 2007. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that contributions be made to the Caroline Slack Thesken Scholarship for promising women science students, in care of Panuska Development Center, Miami University, Oxford, OH 45056.

Tribute Wall



“ *Earl V. Thesken*

October 26, 2023 at 06:42 PM



“ *Earl V. Thesken*

January 28, 2023 at 12:44 PM



“ *Earl V. Thesken*

January 28, 2023 at 08:03 AM