

A CRAFTED LEGACY:  
THE SELF-MEMORIALIZATION OF JOHN MOTLEY MOREHEAD III

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## **ABSTRACT**

Lindsay E. Oliver: *A Crafted Legacy: The Self-Memorialization of John Motley Morehead III*  
(Under the direction of Timothy Marr)

This paper explores the self-memorialization project of John Motley Morehead III (1870-1965) through his benefactions to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill during the 1930s through 1950s. An examination of the conception and execution of the Morehead-Patterson Bell Tower, Morehead Planetarium and Sundial, and Morehead-Cain Foundation reveals how Morehead sought to carefully engrave his name and memory into both the built landscape and the reputation of the University to promote a legacy of prestige through his own memory. This paper also examines relevant biographical details drawn from Morehead's personal papers, which have not previously been subject to academic examination, and offers a critical review of Morehead's legacy and contributions to the University as well as situates them within the philanthropic context of this period. Finally, it explores the implications of Morehead's self-memorialization project for contemporary philanthropy as a means of establishing legacy.

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## INTRODUCTION

*You will want, in departing, to leave behind your two footprints on the sands of time, both suitable for inscription on your monument. They are, first, "He got his share"; second, "He did his part." I don't know which of the two is the more important.*

John Motley Morehead III, *That's That*<sup>1</sup>

John Motley Morehead III (1870-1965) is best known at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in the present day for the Morehead Scholarships he established at the University, as well as other benefactions he presented including the Morehead-Patterson Memorial Bell Tower (1931) and the Morehead Building (1949), home to the Morehead Planetarium and the John Motley Morehead Foundation.

In 1945, Morehead established the John Motley Morehead Foundation, a private nonprofit foundation, which in turn built and gifted the Morehead Building to the University.<sup>2</sup> The Foundation also began awarding and administering the Morehead Scholarships—full merit scholarships to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill modeled after the Rhodes Scholarships at Oxford University. The first students were selected for scholarships in 1951 and became known as Morehead Scholars. After over six decades under Morehead's name alone, the John Motley Morehead Foundation was renamed the Morehead-Cain Foundation in honor of a

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<sup>1</sup> John M. Morehead, *That's That, The Remarks of John M. Morehead at the dinner for the graduating Morehead Scholars, Class of 1959*, John Motley Morehead Foundation, Morehead-Cain Foundation.

<sup>2</sup> Throughout this paper, John Motley Morehead III (1870-1965) will be referred to as "Morehead" or simply as "JMM." Morehead's younger cousin, John Lindsay Morehead (1894-1964), will be referred to by his full name or as "JLM." Other Moreheads will be identified by their full names, such as Morehead's father, James Turner Morehead (1840-1908). The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill will be referred to as "UNC" or "the University."

\$100 million gift from the Gordon and Mary Cain Foundation in 2007 to increase the number of scholarships awarded each year.<sup>3</sup> The Morehead-Cain Foundation today is still based in the Morehead Building, which sits in a prominent position on the University campus next to the town center of Chapel Hill on Franklin Street, and also houses the Planetarium and the Genevieve Morehead Art Gallery—named for Morehead’s first wife.<sup>4</sup>

As a member of the staff at the Morehead-Cain Foundation over the past several years, I began to learn about annual traditions passed down from the earliest years of the Foundation and of Morehead’s nickname, “Uncle Mot,” by which he had been known among relatives, friends, and students alike. But the nickname and institutional traditions do little to explain who John Motley Morehead really was, and today there is little public memory of Morehead outside of the awareness of the scholarships and buildings in his name at the University, with the exception of those still living who knew or met him.

This project had its genesis in the day I was first asked by a colleague whether I would be willing to come along on a trip to “the vault.” Venturing through the winding corridors of pale yellow painted walls, low ceilings, and large white pipes feels like walking below deck toward the engine room of a ship. Then there is the chamber filled with dusty cardboard box mazes, rows of filing cabinets, mountains of antique decor towering to heights far beyond my reach, and a wall as long as the entire room with shelves and stacks of old documents, pamphlets, and other publications reaching from floor to ceiling.

Here in the Foundation’s vault, filled with the monotonous drone of fluorescent lighting, among framed awards and certificates of honor stacked in dusty piles, medals from World War I,

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<sup>3</sup> See Sally Beatty, “Art Patron’s Gift Aids Morehead Scholarship,” *The Wall Street Journal*, February 15, 2007, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB117151274076009619>. Since the incorporation of the Cain grant, “Morehead Scholarships” and “Morehead-Cain Scholarships” are the same. Recipients of the scholarships are known as “Morehead Scholars” or “Morehead-Cain Scholars.”

<sup>4</sup> John Motley Morehead III and Genevieve Margaret Birkhoff-Smith (1878-1945) of Chicago were married from 1915-1945. This was Genevieve’s second marriage. Their marriage did not produce any children.

and a mayor's badge, were dozens of boxes of personal and professional papers that had resided untouched since Morehead's death in 1965. Among them are exchanges with practically every Governor of North Carolina of the twentieth century during Morehead's lifetime, letters from Presidents Herbert Hoover and Franklin Roosevelt, notes on ideas for inventions, proposals regarding World War I foreign debt repayment and Prohibition, as well as many exchanges with University officials, whom Morehead always seemed to have occasion to write. In these documents lie the foremost material remnants of Morehead's legacy, which tell the story of his odyssey to make his mark on the pages of history during his lifetime, in the United States and globally, but particularly in the state of North Carolina. Despite living most of his life in New York, Morehead's legacy in North Carolina remained a constant fixture of his imagination. With no children of his own to pass on the Morehead legacy he deemed so important to generations of his family, his legacy would have to speak for itself in the decades to follow. Today, these papers are among the only items left to tell this story, along with the structures he erected, and most notably, with what are now known as the Morehead-Cain Scholarships. Morehead's legacy continues most visibly through these scholarships, with over three thousand recipients in the seventy-five years since they were established. These papers currently reside at the Morehead-Cain Foundation, which granted access for this project.

Morehead hailed from a family of significant privilege and long North Carolina legacy, with four generations of family members at the University of North Carolina before him. Morehead's grandfather, John Motley Morehead I (1796-1866), was the Governor of North Carolina from 1840-1844, known for his expansion of the railroad system in North Carolina, and the father of eight children, which meant a rather large Morehead family presence in North Carolina as many of the children also established their own families in the state. In press releases, Morehead often proudly provided details about the lineage his family traced to the

Muirheads of Scotland as well as an ancestor Charles Morehead who settled in the Chesapeake Bay in 1630. He also claimed a familial connection to James Watt, the inventor of the steam engine, whose mother was Agnes Morehead.<sup>5</sup> These details were important to Morehead and frequently appeared in information he shared about his family as a means of communicating status and prestige.

Morehead was the only son of James Turner Morehead and Lily Connally Morehead and had four sisters. His sister Mary Kerr Morehead Harris was the first female judge in Virginia, and his sister Lily Connally Morehead Mebane was one of the first women to serve in the North Carolina State Legislature in the early 1930s.<sup>6</sup> Morehead was clear to his sisters that he felt women did not belong in politics, but despite that the fact that Lily was a Democrat and he was a Republican, he contributed financially to her campaigns and frequently offered her counsel on political matters regarding her campaigns for both the State Legislature and U.S. Congress.

Morehead's father had served as a Major in the Confederate Army in North Carolina during the Civil War and was also involved in North Carolina politics where he was elected to the North Carolina State Legislature during the Reconstruction era. Because Morehead came of age during this period of social upheaval and the Jim Crow era spanned the entirety of his life, it comes as no surprise that Morehead's views on race reflected sentiments of the time. Morehead wrote in his 1921 self-published volume on Morehead family history that from 1867-1875 his father "applied himself to rescuing the State from the evils that had overtaken our people and to establishing the Anglo-Saxons in control of public affairs. In this work he played an important

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<sup>5</sup> M.R. Alexander, "U.N.C. To Have Morehead Art Collection And First Planetarium In Any College," February 17, 1946, *University News Bureau*, University of N.C. 1946-1953 Folder, John Motley Morehead III Papers, Morehead-Cain Foundation.

<sup>6</sup> "Virginia's First Woman Judge Assumes Office," *The Washington Times*, October 8, 1922, *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers.*; Wade H. Lucas, "Legislative Personalities: No. 21 Mrs. Lily Morehead Mebane," *The State*, 21.



part and exerted a strong influence.”<sup>7</sup> This is one of the most open instances of racist rhetoric across Morehead’s writings and provides insight into his views on race as well as his father’s political motivations.

In the family volume, Morehead continued that as the Reconstruction era ended, his father directed his attention to his manufacturing operations in Spray, NC, where he owned a textile mill and hydroelectric plant that he had inherited from his own father, Governor Morehead. Morehead’s father formed a company with a chemist named Thomas Willson, the Willson Aluminum Company, with hopes of using the excess power to create new metallurgical processes which could be patented and monetized. According to Maurice Bursey, a former professor in the UNC Department of Chemistry, Willson and Morehead—who were working for his father’s company—produced an unknown substance and an unidentifiable gas while experimenting, which was later discovered by Venable and his graduate student, and later philanthropist, William Rand Kenan, Jr. to be calcium carbide. Kenan and Venable identified the gas as acetylene, and after further research refined a process that would allow the gas to be burned efficiently as a source of light.

Morehead and his father soon capitalized the discovery at Willson Aluminum Company, which later grew into Union Carbide Corporation and positioned the company at the forefront of the petrochemical industry. Kenan worked at Union Carbide at the beginning of his career and Morehead spent much of his life there.<sup>8</sup> Though this is generally the explanation of the economic process utilized by the Moreheads, details surrounding the discovery of the process have been

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<sup>7</sup> John Motley Morehead, *The Morehead Family of North Carolina and Virginia* (New York: Devinne Press, 1921), 69. <https://archive.org/details/moreheadfamilyof00more>. Morehead shipped copies of this volume to libraries across the country. See John Motley Morehead III Papers, “Genealogy.”

<sup>8</sup> Maurice Bursey, *Francis Preston Venable of the University of North Carolina*, (Chapel Hill: Chapel Hill Historical Society, 1989), 67-72.

disputed by Morehead, Kenan, and Venable, as well as other outsiders.<sup>9</sup> While the details surrounding the discovery may never be known, it became the foundation of Morehead and his father's business, which would eventually merge to become Union Carbide Corporation. Just as the generations of his family who had come before him as students, administrators, and professors at the University, Morehead now had his own ties and reasons for gratitude to the University, which had equipped him with his scientific education and positioned him for a career in corporate chemistry. Morehead and Kenan along with other UNC graduates were together known as the "North Carolina Carbide Boys," and made early careers out of working as chemical consultants and establishing factories in the acetylene and calcium carbide industries.<sup>10</sup> Despite this early camaraderie between Kenan and Morehead, they later drifted apart, becoming dueling benefactors of the University.<sup>11</sup> Kenan also established a charitable foundation in his will, some twenty years after Morehead.

Morehead worked in the chemical industry through the Gilded Age and into the Progressive Era, in which the "American belief in progress was buoyed along by the continued scientific and technological innovations of the twentieth century. Inventions ranging from the radio to motion pictures to the airplane captured the American imagination."<sup>12</sup> Emboldened with his industrial chemical experience, Morehead's imagination and dialogue with other inventors was just as active as he filed patents for inventions in the U.S. and Britain and tested ideas and

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<sup>9</sup> Ada P. Haylor, "Morehead, John Motley, III," NCPedia, 1991, <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/morehead-john-motley-iii>.

<sup>10</sup> Walter E. Campbell, *Across Fortune's Tracks: A Biography of William Rand Kenan Jr.* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Press, 1996), 104-105.

<sup>11</sup> Robert Cluett, *The Gold of Troy*, 27. Cluett, a younger cousin of Morehead, reports in his family memoir that Kenan never replied to a letter Morehead wrote him "inviting him to be the Best Man at his marriage to Genevieve." The details of this rivalry, however, are outside of the scope of this paper.

<sup>12</sup> Susan Breitzer, "Progress," *Encyclopedia of American Studies*, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018, <http://libproxy.lib.unc.edu/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/jhueas/progress/0?institutionId=1724>.

experiments. After working for Union Carbide Corporation and establishing himself in the chemical industry, in 1917 Morehead was introduced to Thomas Edison, who managed the Naval Consulting Board for World War I. Morehead volunteered his services to advise the U.S. Government on chemical matters and wrote a summary of his qualifications to Edison, which described his experience well up to that time:

Please accept my thanks for the interview you granted me yesterday. . . I am 46 years old, of independent means, a University graduate in Electrical and Chemical Engineering; am a consulting engineer by profession, retained by a number of the largest Water Gas, Oxygen and Acetylene companies in the United States, have had 24 years' experience in the handling of men and in the production of illuminating gas, calcium carbide, acetylene, and oxygen by both the electrolytic and liquid air processes.<sup>13</sup>

Morehead's offer was accepted, and he was ultimately commissioned by the U.S. Army, serving on the War Industries Board advising the government on "Industrial Gases and Gas Products."<sup>14</sup> Except for this period during WWI, Morehead positioned himself most permanently in New York, traveling between Rye, NY and New York City, working at Union Carbide. As the country transitioned from the end of the roaring twenties into the Great Depression, Morehead did not experience economic upheaval the same as the majority of Americans, as he lived a much more luxurious lifestyle in New York. Morehead worked to incorporate the village of Rye and became its first mayor from 1925-1930, at which time he was appointed by the Herbert Hoover administration as U.S. Ambassador to Sweden from 1930-1933.

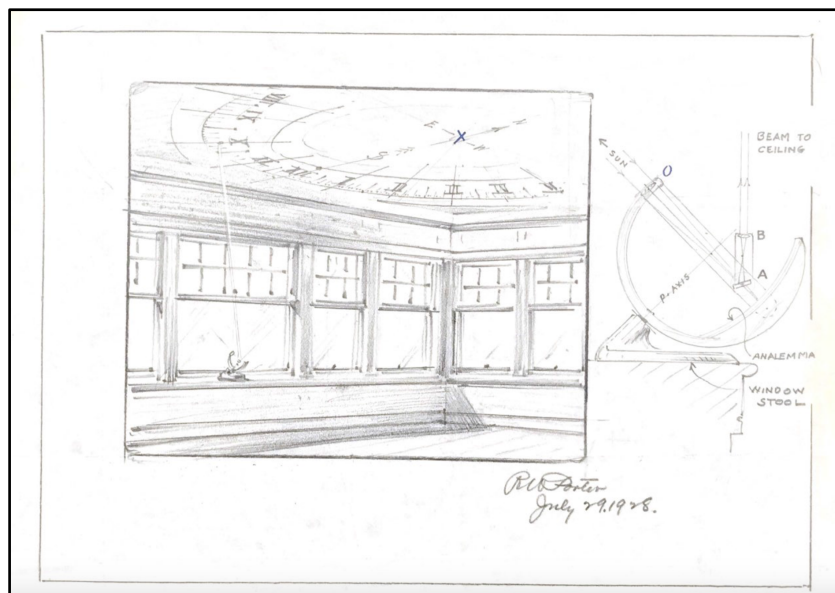
Morehead continued to be an inventor, tinkerer, and an incessantly curious person, never ceasing to ask questions and relentlessly seeking opportunities to answer them in creative ways. As a timepiece enthusiast, he was an avid collector of clocks, watches, and sundials, and was fascinated by chronographs and the study of horology. His collection of rare Patek Philippe

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<sup>13</sup> J.M. Morehead to Thomas A. Edison, May 22, 1917, Thomas A. Edison Papers, Rutgers University.

<sup>14</sup> *John M. Morehead, A Biographical Sketch*, John Motley Morehead Foundation, 1954; Ada P. Taylor, "Morehead, John Motley, III."

chronographs and other fine watches would today be the envy of any collector.<sup>15</sup> His financial status also facilitated his entrepreneurial spirit not only as a professional but as a hobbyist, enabling him to work with other thinkers like the amateur astronomer Russell W. Porter to dream of a sundial on the ceiling of his sunroom.<sup>16</sup>



Russell W. Porter Sketch to J.M. Morehead of sundial ceiling invention, 1928.<sup>17</sup>

A persuasive dealmaker, he commanded backroom conversations and thrived as a politician and diplomat, always advising and being advised, frequently engaging in political planning and lobbying, often having occasions to wonder and to scheme. From overseeing new deals at Union Carbide to writing nagging letters to the University about the condition of the boxwood hedges around the Bell Tower, no matter was too complex or mundane to warrant urgent telegrams, letters, or visits from Morehead. Morehead maintained a high level of energy

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<sup>15</sup> In 2005, one of Morehead's rare Patek Philippe chronographs auctioned for 1,210,000 EUR. See "John M. Morehead, Patek Philippe & Co., Geneva, No. 198434, case No. 416886," *Barneby's*.

<sup>16</sup> Russell W. Porter to J.M. Morehead, July 29, 1928, Sundial Folder, John Motley Morehead III Papers, Morehead-Cain Foundation. Porter was an arctic explorer and amateur astronomer who worked with George Hale on the Hale Telescope at Palomar Observatory in California.

<sup>17</sup> Russell W. Porter to J.M. Morehead, July 29, 1928, John Motley Morehead III Papers, Sundial Folder, Morehead-Cain Foundation.

even until the last year of his life at age 94, where he orchestrated an elaborate arrangement to listen by speaker system to the dedication ceremony of the City Hall building he donated in Rye, NY, as he was bedridden at home with a broken hip.<sup>18</sup> He remained a well-known figure in both the state of North Carolina and as a New York City socialite and philanthropist during his lifetime.

The model created to “justify super-wealth” by Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller, the “two men most responsible for creation of the modern corporation,” unquestionably informed Morehead’s philosophy for philanthropic giving.<sup>19</sup> Carnegie and Rockefeller both focused their giving in their foundations, which had become a popular means for distributing individual wealth. “At the beginning of the twentieth century, America had eight foundations. At the end of the century, it had more than forty thousand with total assets of 328 billion dollars.”<sup>20</sup> Carnegie is often quoted for his belief that “the man who dies rich, dies thus disgraced,” and believed that the rich should live modestly and restrict bequests to their descendants, while Rockefeller was driven more by religious belief, and did not agree with Carnegie about restrictions.<sup>21</sup> Morehead seemed to take an approach that borrowed some aspects from each, certainly not living with restriction, but he did restrict his bequests and gave the remainder of his fortune to his foundation.

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<sup>18</sup> City of Rye, *Dedication Program: New City Hall*, My Rye, December 5, 1964, <http://www.myrye.com/2014RyeOther/Dedication%20Program%20-%20New%20City%20Hall%20-%202012-5-64.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup> Milton Goldin, “Philanthropy,” *Encyclopedia of American Studies*, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018, <http://libproxy.lib.unc.edu/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/jhueas/philanthropy/0?institutionId=1724>.

<sup>20</sup> Milton Goldin, “Foundations, Philanthropic,” *Encyclopedia of American Studies*, edited by Simon Bronner. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018. [http://libproxy.lib.unc.edu/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/jhueas/foundations\\_philanthropic/0?institutionId=1724](http://libproxy.lib.unc.edu/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/jhueas/foundations_philanthropic/0?institutionId=1724).

<sup>21</sup> Goldin, “Philanthropy.”

Morehead's major contributions to the University were presented during a period in which philanthropy contributed to the University's emergence as a prominent public institution of higher education. But an examination of Morehead's benefactions demonstrates a carefully crafted and executed image of his legacy, which would memorialize Morehead at his alma mater for decades to come. While Morehead's benefactions were well-aligned with the University's growth and expansion plan begun by University President Edward Kidder Graham in the 1910s and continued by University President Harry Chase, Morehead's interests were heavily motivated in his North Carolina legacy. In studying Morehead's project of self-memorialization through his own philanthropy, it is possible to better understand the evolving perceptions of Morehead's past benefactions. How did Morehead construct and execute his legacy? And how successful was he in establishing the legacy he envisioned for himself through philanthropy? In exploring Morehead's legacy, we can also better grasp what Morehead hoped to prove, and to whom.

This paper explores the ways in which Morehead used his benefactions at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to curate a project of self-memorialization. Over the course of his life, Morehead made numerous donations to the University, but this paper explores contributions that fit the criteria of being significant both financially and physically. An examination of the conception and execution of the Bell Tower, Planetarium and Sundial, and Morehead-Cain Foundation reveals how Morehead carefully engraved his name and memory into both the built landscape and the reputation of the University to promote a legacy of prestige and greatness through his own memory. Each of these benefactions remain highly visible on UNC's campus.

In closely examining sources related to Morehead's life and work, it is clear that he valued the idea of erecting monuments to honor himself and his family, which he believed would mark the work of an accomplished man—an idea into which he placed a great deal of value. The

most significant biography of Morehead, *John M. Morehead, A Biographical Sketch* (1954), is eight pages long and was dictated by Morehead and published by his Foundation's trustees. This piece reads more like a corporate biography taken from a resume, as if to assure the audience of his qualifications for a job. Other brief biographies include *The Morehead Family of North Carolina and Virginia* (1921), also written by Morehead, the *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography* (1996) by Ada P. Haylor; and numerous online biographies of several paragraphs in length. Morehead's activity from the 1890s to early 1910s makes brief appearances in Walter Campbell's *Across Fortune's Tracks: A Biography of William Rand Kenan Jr.* as it relates to Kenan, but no other authors have explored the events of Morehead's life in any depth. Especially telling of Morehead's efforts to memorialize himself is the fact that he ironically remains the leading authority on his own story. While I do not provide a full biography of Morehead, I do hope to offer relevant biographical details I have discovered and collected from this inquiry into this single record as they remain relevant to the curation of his legacy. To date, no authors have critically reviewed Morehead's legacy and contributions to the University in their entirety, nor examined them within the philanthropic context of this period. This paper enters Morehead as a benefactor into the existing conversation regarding American educational philanthropy, in general, and the growth of the University's campus, specifically, in the early to mid-twentieth century.

Scholarship focusing on philanthropy, especially at universities, during the early to mid-twentieth century is essential for understanding the context from which Morehead's efforts emerged, as is the trend on the University's campus of erecting memorial buildings. Scholars contemporary to Morehead during this period, such as Merle Curti and Alfred Sacks, provide an overview of the common views on philanthropy at the time. Curti traces philanthropy and its emergence as a unique institution in postbellum America, especially compared to other parts of

the world, and adds a hint of excitement to understanding the appeal of the foundation to American benefactors during this time. Morehead breaks from some of the traditional philanthropic activities of donors, particularly in providing significant donations across focuses and disciplines. Meanwhile, Sacks offers a more critical look at the issues with foundations during this same period and what they deem “charitable,” acknowledging their role in supplementing services which governments do not have the ability to provide. On numerous occasions Morehead discusses making gifts to the University that the State of North Carolina would not be able to provide itself, and despite his foundation’s charitable efforts, the students awarded scholarships fit the qualifications in which he placed value. These two authors offer critical and contextual commentary on philanthropy during Morehead’s most active period. Edward Holley adds to the context of Morehead’s benefactions by arguing for the critical role of philanthropy at universities during this same period, when it was essential to UNC’s emergence as a national university. Holley provides context about UNC during the period Morehead became active as a benefactor, focusing on the role of philanthropy in UNC’s rise to prominence as a national university, particularly in the South. While Morehead is not evaluated in any of Holley’s greater historical pieces, his work provides context in which to interpret Morehead’s contributions to UNC. Holley outlines the challenges and “aggressive” competition universities faced against the Ivy League universities of the North and describes the impact of philanthropy in higher education as influential to the University’s prominence during the period from 1917-1950.

While these scholars provide historical context, Rebecca Rimel examines American philanthropy from that period to the present, arguing that its role has evolved over time. Additionally, Jill Pellew, Lawrence Goldman, and John Newsinger offer present-day context during an era of scholarship which examines the modern societal values that critique the actions



of the benefactors that made their educational institutions possible. These scholars particularly focus on the Rhodes Must Fall movement, which calls for the removal of Cecil Rhodes statues and other Rhodes namesakes, such as the prestigious Rhodes Scholarships to Oxford University, on the grounds that Rhodes was motivated by his self-professed white supremacist ideology to advocate for British colonialism in Africa. While Morehead's casually expressed racism is far from the racist legacy established by Rhodes, the Morehead Scholarships were modeled directly after the Rhodes, which puts the two into conversation about the legacy Rhodes transferred to Morehead and which, if any, of those ideals Morehead adopted. Even if this was not intentional on Morehead's part, the transfer of legacy calls into question what constitutes "merit" criteria for the early Morehead scholarships.

While current scholarship provides historical context on the role Morehead's type of philanthropy played at educational institutions in the United States and examines the shifting historical reputations of prominent benefactors, Morehead and the commemoration of his legacy are missing from this conversation. Additionally, an evaluation of Morehead's major contributions to UNC have not been fully assessed at once from a scholarly perspective. After defining the scope of Morehead's major benefactions at UNC, this thesis aims to examine Morehead's curation of his own legacy and create a dialogue about the legacy and commemoration of Morehead with regard to his own historical reputation.

## CHAPTER 1: MOREHEAD-PATTERSON MEMORIAL BELL TOWER

“It has been said that those who do not commemorate their fathers will not deserve to be remembered by their sons.”<sup>22</sup> In these remarks from an address in Morehead City, North Carolina, Morehead praised the accomplishments of his grandfather, the former governor of the State. This is a fitting introduction to the Bell Tower, which Morehead erected with Rufus L. Patterson, Jr. as a memorial to their families.<sup>23</sup> Morehead and Patterson each achieved financial success through their companies, Union Carbide Corporation and American Machine and Foundry, respectively. Patterson, who also moved from North Carolina to New York, worked in the tobacco industry at American Tobacco Company before founding American Machine and Foundry, commonly known as AMF, a major producer of recreational equipment.

The Morehead-Patterson Bell Tower on the University’s campus has been one of its most recognizable landmarks since its dedication in 1931. For the campus community, the Bell Tower has become reliable to chime on the hour or to play for special occasions, especially for football games or after significant UNC sports victories. While the lower arcade is easily accessible to visitors, the tower itself remains closed, except for the long-awaited opportunity graduating seniors are given to climb the tower each spring before their graduation. After its dedication, it

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<sup>22</sup> John Motley Morehead, *North Carolina is on the March, Address at the Dedication of the Harbors and Piers at Morehead City, NC, August 14, 1952* (Chapel Hill: John Motley Morehead Foundation, 1952), Morehead-Cain Foundation.

<sup>23</sup> Rufus L. Patterson, Jr. (1872-1943). Rufus L. Patterson, Sr.’s first wife, Marie Louise Morehead, was a daughter of Governor John M. Morehead. Therefore, Rufus L. Patterson, Jr.’s half-siblings were Governor Morehead’s grandchildren, which put him in close proximity the governor and his legacy. In 1895 he married Margaret Warren Morehead, another of granddaughter of Governor John M. Morehead.

was more regularly known as the Memorial Tower and served as a site of community gathering before football games or for Sunday afternoon picnics during bell concerts.

Before he joined efforts with Rufus Patterson to build the Bell Tower, Morehead was considering a building on campus to bear his name for many years, during the period from 1917-1950 in which Holley argues philanthropy was essential to the continued growth of universities throughout the country. Holley writes that to be “considered as a major university an institution has to have not only great scholars, but also the resources which enable those scholars to work productively: significant libraries, laboratories, research assistants, and the means of . . . publication.” He continues, “that means strong financial support from donors, foundations, and/or some agency of state and federal governments.”<sup>24</sup> Philanthropic contributions were just as important to UNC during this time. For the goal of retaining talented faculty, of earliest importance was the work of chemistry professor turned University President Francis Venable, who recruited talented professors in the scientific community in the early 1900s, as well as that of the Kenan Distinguished Faculty Professorships established by Mary Lily Kenan Flagler in 1917.<sup>25</sup> University President Edward Kidder Graham, whose tenure lasted from 1913-1918, also set plans in motion during this period to further campus development, which was continued in the 1920s under the direction of University President Harry Chase who led one of the most significant periods of University growth, elevating its reputation and expanding the campus.<sup>26</sup> By 1930, “Chapel Hill had emerged as the leading Southern university, a liberal voice in the region,

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<sup>24</sup> Edward G. Holley, “Philanthropy, the University Library, and UNC's Emergence as a Major National University,” *Libraries & Culture* 31, no. 2, (1996), 511.

<sup>25</sup> Holley, “Philanthropy, the University Library, and UNC's Emergence as a Major National University,” 511–531.

<sup>26</sup> Louis R. Wilson, *The University of North Carolina, 1900-1930: The Making of a Modern University* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1957), 248-250.; Kenneth Joel Zogry and David E. Brown, “Harry Who?,” *Carolina Alumni Review* 103, no. 5, (September/October 2014), 20-33.

and ranked among the leading fifteen or twenty universities on the national scene,” thanks in part to the philanthropic contribution that supplemented limited financial revenue from the State.<sup>27</sup>

During this period and in the several decades preceding it, campus memorials had also become a popular means of contribution to the University, including Memorial Hall (1885), Kenan Memorial Stadium (1927), Graham Memorial (1931), and Bowman Gray Memorial Pool (1938). While other buildings were constructed on the campus landscape and named in honor of individuals, these buildings have the distinction of being dedicated specifically as memorials. In 1885, the University dedicated Memorial Hall, which was constructed through raised funds to honor the memory of various North Carolinians. As original plans for construction of the hall as a memorial to UNC President David Lowry Swain—who led the University from 1831-1868—as well as to the University’s Confederate dead, began to stall, “a suggestion was made that an appeal be made to the representatives of those who had been associated with the institution in the past, and who, by honorable lives, either civil or military, were deemed worthy of commemoration within these walls by placing neat and well executed white marble tablets to the memory of such distinguished citizens.”<sup>28</sup> Through Memorial Hall, family members of past alumni were granted the opportunity to honor the memory of loved ones associated with the University without limiting the fundraising appeal to those who died in the Civil War. Memorial Hall would have been only several years old by the time Morehead arrived as an undergraduate student on campus in the late 1880s, and during his tenure as a student he would have seen public use of the hall by the University community and also visited the hall himself.

As a concerned alumnus, Morehead would have also been following the dialogue in the 1920s regarding the status of Memorial Hall, which had fallen into disrepair by that time, and for

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<sup>27</sup> Holley, “Philanthropy, the University Library, and UNC's Emergence as a Major National University.”

<sup>28</sup> “UNC Chief Executive Officers,” General Alumni Association. <https://alumni.unc.edu/unc-chief-executive-officers/>; University of North Carolina (1793-1962), *Memorial Hall Inaugural Proceedings, Wednesday, June 3, 1885*, 8.

which the University had discussed renovations. As University officials continued to accept memorial tablet contributions through the 1920s, the University community remained concerned about the status of the memorial tablets they had purchased to honor relatives and whether they would withstand renovations or demolition of the building.<sup>29</sup> After a demolition and reconstruction, the new Memorial Hall then reopened in 1931 in the same space, with old and new memorial tablets. It was in this same moment in 1931 that Morehead and Patterson dedicated a separate memorial to their families alone: the Morehead-Patterson Memorial Bell Tower. While Memorial Hall had been dedicated to many prominently regarded North Carolinians, Morehead and Patterson marked the memorial to their families as separate and distinct. This demonstrates the wealth that separated Morehead and Patterson from others in the midst of the Great Depression, when the national income had dropped from 87 billion dollars in 1930 to 9 billion dollars in 1931.<sup>30</sup>

Morehead thus saw himself as distinctive among the donors interested in and capable of donating to the University during this period. He was particularly interested in creating a building with a bell tower that would be named for him. As early as 1919, he wrote to University officials inquiring about the possibility of “The Morehead Building.” Morehead writes,

I have been thinking of the possibility of remodeling the south building at the University. I do not want to start anything official and this inquiry is quite personal. Do you think that, if I should hand around the hat among the old Governor’s descendents [sic] and got together enough money to remodel the south building and put it in the shape that the trustees have in mind and possibly add a wing or two to the backside with a tower and clock in front, the trustees would be inclined to accept this as a memorial to the Governor and call it “The Morehead Building”? . . . There are some fifty descendents [sic] of the

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<sup>29</sup> Rachel Kirby, “Memorial Hall,” *Names in Brick and Stone: Histories from UNC’s Built Landscape*. <http://unchistory.web.unc.edu/building-narratives/memorial-hall/>.

<sup>30</sup> Brian Black, “Great Depression,” In *Encyclopedia of American Studies*, edited by Simon Bronner. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018. [http://libproxy.lib.unc.edu/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/jhueas/great\\_depression/0?institutionId=1724](http://libproxy.lib.unc.edu/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/jhueas/great_depression/0?institutionId=1724).

Governor and I believe that by dividing the expense according to the various solvency of the different descendents [sic], we could probably get together a considerable amount.<sup>31</sup>

This early inquiry outlines well the vision he had in mind for benefaction to the University and prefaced what would come in the decades to follow.

Once he was certain the University would be interested in his offerings, he began pursuing the vision more fully by 1923, corresponding with University President Harry Chase and submitting his proposal to the University Board of Trustees.<sup>32</sup> During this earliest period of Morehead's philanthropic efforts, however, his own vision conflicted with that of the University. University officials declined to rename the building in his honor, which was a condition of Morehead's gift, but President Chase suggested that he consider the possibility of placing his bell tower on the "new library," known today as Wilson Library.<sup>33</sup> To this, Morehead responded that he would prefer his original proposal be reconsidered, but "If it cannot be done, I will give consideration to the suggestion of locating the bells on the tower to be built in connection with the new library."<sup>34</sup> Corresponding with the University's architect, Arthur Nash, regarding the possibility, Morehead writes, rather boldly, "The new library building certainly seems impressive in appearance, and it is a pity that it cannot be more centrally located. Why would it not be a good idea to move the South Building to the site now proposed for the library, and put the library

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<sup>31</sup> J.M. Morehead to Andrew H. Patterson, December 11, 1919, Bell Tower / NY Alumni Club Folder, John Motley Morehead III Papers, Morehead-Cain Foundation.

<sup>32</sup> J.M. Morehead Proposal to President Chase, and Board of Trustees, November 15, 1923, Bell Tower / NY Alumni Club Folder, John Motley Morehead III Papers, Morehead-Cain Foundation.

<sup>33</sup> Harry W. Chase to J.M. Morehead, December 4, 1925, Bell Tower / NY Alumni Club Folder, John Motley Morehead III Papers.

<sup>34</sup> J.M. Morehead to Harry W. Chase, December 1, 1925, Bell Tower / NY Alumni Club Folder, John Motley Morehead III Papers.

where the South Building now stands [?].”<sup>35</sup> Nash, working in conjunction with the architecture firm McKim, Mead, and White and engineer Thomas Atwood, was responsible for the University’s campus expansion during the 1920s, including Wilson Library and The Carolina Inn.<sup>36</sup> In this instance, Morehead lacked the foresight to appreciate that the expansion Nash was overseeing would change what would be considered most central on the campus in the years to come.

As planning continued, Louis R. Wilson, the librarian of the new library that would later be named for him, writes in his account of “The Saga of the Morehead-Patterson Bell Tower” that he personally vetoed the idea of the bell tower being constructed atop the library: “the ringing of the bells and chimes immediately above the reading rooms of the libraries in working hours played havoc with mental concentration and quiet study. In my mind, towers with bells and chimes were out. The committee on Buildings and Grounds went along. So Mr. Morehead had to look elsewhere.”<sup>37</sup> While the library had not been Morehead’s first choice, his determination remained as strong as ever.

As new buildings were being constructed on campus, University officials decided that the University flagpole, once located between Old East and Old West, should be relocated to a more central location, where Morehead again proposed a freestanding bell tower with chimes.<sup>38</sup> This proposal, too, failed to match the vision of the Trustees, Building and Grounds committee, and University administration, where they recommended pausing discussion temporarily as new plans for south campus were developing. Morehead’s persistence finally paid off when the

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<sup>35</sup>J.M. Morehead to Arthur C. Nash, December 12, 1925, Bell Tower / NY Alumni Club Folder, John Motley Morehead III Papers.

<sup>36</sup> “Nash, Arthur C. (1871-1969),” *North Carolina Architects & Builders: A Biographical Dictionary*, 2010. <https://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000500>.

<sup>37</sup> Louis R. Wilson, *Louis R. Wilson’s Historical Sketches* (Durham: Moore Pub. Co., 1976), 160.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

tower's current location was approved by the University, in the center of the newly zoned areas of the growing south campus. Morehead's unrelenting vision had also led him to collaborate with Patterson, two classes below Morehead, who also desired to build his name into the University, despite having attended for only one year. Patterson and Morehead, related by marriage, together strengthened the prestige of the legacy they proposed to build into the University landscape, with Patterson's relatives also having a longstanding presence at both the University and in the State. This nearly ten-year period of negotiation between Morehead's vision and that of the University demonstrates the ongoing power Morehead's name and wealth provided him to keep the attention of University officials, and the mutual interest of both parties: Morehead's vision of his own legacy, and the University's plans for campus expansion and growth.



Morehead-Patterson Memorial Bell Tower in 1931.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Photograph of the Morehead-Patterson Bell Tower, 1931, Bell Tower / NY Alumni Club Folder, John Motley Morehead III Papers. The photographer is unknown, but this same photograph is featured on the cover of the dedication program for the Bell Tower.



Given the drawn-out spectacle of Morehead's bell tower proposals, it is no surprise that a popular legend circulated on University tours today contends that when Morehead's attempt to place the Bell Tower on top of Wilson Library was denied, he intentionally sought its current position in order to line up with the library and create the appearance of a "snuffer" atop the dome. This is particularly apparent when viewed from Polk Place, at the center of the steps of South Building on campus looking in the direction of south. Lore further claims that the quest was personal, and came down to rivalry between Wilson and Morehead, with Morehead ultimately getting his revenge.

However, there is no evidence to suggest this effect was intentional. In 1938, correspondence between architects working on various University projects suggests it was an accidental discovery, with architect Arthur Nash writing, "I had a jolt today, when upon examining the library photograph which you gave me, I discovered that not only does the 'candle-snuffer' show above the library dome, but a portion of the tower balustrade, with two ornamental urns, shows also!"<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Arthur C. Nash to Charles T. Woolen, July 2, 1938, Folder 1047 in the Frank Porter Graham Papers #1819, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



Morehead-Patterson Bell Tower above the dome of Wilson Library, 1930s.<sup>41</sup>

The Memorial Tower was finally dedicated on November 26, 1931, on Thanksgiving Day to coincide with the University of Virginia Football game, as was tradition during this time.<sup>42</sup> The dedication program provides in great detail information about the program from 12:00 to 12:30 p.m. and songs selected for the “Concert on the Bells” from 12:30 to 2:00 p.m. as spectators prepared to make their way to the football game.<sup>43</sup> The program consisted of a Presentation of the Tower by Frank Patterson, a member of the Patterson family who was the editor of the Baltimore *Evening Sun*, which was accepted by Governor O. Max Gardner on

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<sup>41</sup> Joe A. Hewitt, “Louis Round Wilson Library: An Enduring Monument to Learning,” 2004. <https://library.unc.edu/wilson/about/wilsonhistory/>. Photograph by Bayard Wootten, 1930s.

<sup>42</sup> Memorial Tower Dedication Invitation, Bell Tower / NY Alumni Club Folder, John Motley Morehead III Papers.

<sup>43</sup> *Morehead-Patterson Memorial Tower, Dedicated November 26, 1931, at the University of the State of North Carolina*, Morehead-Cain Foundation.

behalf of the University and State, with special remarks made by George Gordon Battle, an attorney from New York and friend to both the Morehead and Patterson families.<sup>44</sup>

In his remarks, Gov. Gardner called the tower a “fitting memorial to the distinguished lines of Moreheads and Pattersons who have been intimately associated with the life of this beloved institution since it was first chartered and who throughout the history of North Carolina have played an important and constructive role in its upbuilding.”<sup>45</sup> In this speech the Governor solidified and validated Morehead’s legacy as a North Carolinian and contributor to the University, and by referencing the “upbuilding” of the institution and State also situated the Tower within this period of growth established by Holley and as a continuance of the family legacy as Morehead’s legacy. He continued, “One happy thought about each of them is this: Although neither has lived in this State for thirty-five years, to each of them during this thirty-five years North Carolina has been home and the University of North Carolina has been to them the heart of North Carolina.”<sup>46</sup> This brings attention to the status of Morehead as a New Yorker who continued to have interest in his legacy in the state of North Carolina, and through his gift to the University, created a foundation for establishing that.

In the “Concert on the Bells” from 12:30 to 2:00 p.m., twenty-eight songs were selected in addition to the four Morehead requested specifically for the dedication, including “The Bells of St. Mary’s,” “How Tedious and Tasteless the House When Jesus No Longer I See,” a favorite song of his mother and grandmother, “Sweet Genevieve,” in honor of Morehead’s wife

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<sup>44</sup> *Morehead-Patterson Memorial Tower*, Morehead-Cain Foundation.

<sup>45</sup> Edwin M. Gill, “Love and Loyalty of Friends to the University: Address Accepting the Morehead-Patterson Bell Tower Memorial,” *Public Papers and Letters of Oliver Max Gardner: Governor of North Carolina, 1929-1933*, (Raleigh: State of North Carolina, 1937), 364, *State Library of North Carolina*, North Carolina Digital Collections, <http://digital.ncdcr.gov/cdm/ref/collection/p249901coll22/id/425526>.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, 365.

Genevieve, and “The Old North State.”<sup>47</sup> For the Concert, Chester Meneely of the Meneely Bell Company in Troy, NY, which cast the bells for the tower and helped initiate the bell ringers, provided recommendations of “well-known national, patriotic and folk songs” for the program.<sup>48</sup> The enclosed list indeed ranged from national, patriotic songs such as “America” and “Over There” to minstrel songs, such as “Old Black Joe” and “Massa’s in De Cold, Cold Ground.” While Morehead removed some songs from the list, such as “My Old Kentucky Home” and “The Minstrel Boy,” many of the suggestions joined the final program.<sup>49</sup> These songs reflect popular sentiments of American culture in 1931, including representations of African Americans in minstrel songs. While these songs are a minor part of the program, they reflect the casual racism inherent in the fabric of daily American life and in the Jim Crow South and become a part of the dedication of Morehead’s legacy at the University.

Each of the original twelve bells atop the 172 ft. tower “built of North Carolina brick” was inscribed with the names of prominent members of their families “who have been identified with the University,” six bells for each family—odd numbers for Moreheads and even numbers for Pattersons. These are supplemented by tablets throughout the arcade and placed underneath bright blue Guastavino tiles to honor “the memory of those members of the respective families who have passed away,” including twelve honoring Morehead relatives and seven honoring Patterson relatives.<sup>50</sup>

The Morehead bell inscriptions include the names of twenty-three relatives, made up of sixteen men with their UNC class years, with the exception of his grandfather, the former

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<sup>47</sup> *Morehead-Patterson Memorial Tower*, Morehead-Cain Foundation.

<sup>48</sup> Chester Meneely to J.M. Morehead, October 30, 1931, Bell Tower / NY Alumni Club Folder, John Motley Morehead III Papers.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *Morehead-Patterson Memorial Tower*, Morehead-Cain Foundation.

governor, whose title is listed under Bell No. 1 as “John Motley Morehead, Class 1817, Governor of North Carolina, 1840-1842; 1842-1844.” Five women are also included, with their full names and years of birth and death on two different bells. Notably, these bells were last and also the two smallest on the Morehead side, No. 9 and 11. The Patterson bell inscriptions include six men, and specifically list out their accomplishments. For example, Bell No. 2 lists “General William Lenoir, Chairman of the first Board of Trustees of the University; 1789-1804.”<sup>51</sup>

The bell inscriptions engrave the names of these family members into the surfaces of the bells, which are made from “bell metal alloy composed of 78% New Lake Superior Copper and 22% block tin.”<sup>52</sup> These materials are meant to withstand erosion and last the test of time, but are obscured from visitors’ eyes at over one hundred feet from the ground, and are further protected by the enclosure of the top of the tower. The bells range in size from 56 inches to 24.5 inches in diameter and range in weight from 3,500 to 300 lbs., but despite their size and the level of detail that went into creating them, they remain inaccessible, their distance preventing them from being subject to public inspection. The inscribed bells are simultaneously featured prominently and inconspicuously, designed to be remembered, but out of sight, the names themselves are forgotten. While the names remain hundreds of feet removed from public access, the resonance of bells’ sounds remind listeners of the presence of the memorial on campus.

As though Morehead and Patterson anticipated this paradox, the tablets they featured throughout the arcade are placed at the eye level of the average visitor and meant to be read. While the bells are inaccessible, the tablets cannot be avoided. Morehead’s inscriptions include the names of twelve of the same family members inscribed on the bells, and include their occupation, class year, as well as years of birth and death. Meanwhile, the Patterson tablets

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<sup>51</sup> *Morehead-Patterson Memorial Tower*, Morehead-Cain Foundation.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

include the same information inscribed on the bells for each family member, with the addition of one. For example, the same inscription is listed for “General William Lenoir” on both the bell at the top of the tower and the tablet below in the arcade.

While the tower remains closed on a regular basis, it has become a tradition for graduating seniors to climb the tower at the end of their spring semester before graduation. Over the years, graduating students have also instituted the tradition of signing their own names onto the surface of the arcade walls. As if students wish to place their own names into the built memory of the campus, this tradition has continued over the years. While these vernacular memorials are visible to ground-level viewers, however, these names lack the permanence of the Moreheads and Pattersons and are periodically removed by the University.

After the Bell Tower had been incorporated into the campus for several years, Patterson proposed to Morehead that a “dedication tablet” be installed in the memorial to describe the dedication ceremony, the details of which remained a point of contention and discussion between Morehead and Patterson.<sup>53</sup> Patterson wrote to Gov. Gardner to notify him of their plans to include his name from the dedication program, writing, “It has been suggested that we follow the historical precedent of most of the Colonial buildings throughout Virginia and Maryland in giving what they term a ‘memorabilia’ of the circumstances.”<sup>54</sup> Correspondence between “Mot” and “Pat” reveals that Patterson reported to Morehead in 1934, “believe it or not, the criticisms of the Bell Tower are that our names are written all over the place and it has come to my ears that one detractor of some prominence has said that the cloister reminded him of the outside of a

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<sup>53</sup> J.M. Morehead to Rufus L. Patterson, August 23, 1934, Bell Tower / NY Alumni Club Folder, John Motley Morehead III Papers.

<sup>54</sup> Rufus L. Patterson to O. Max Gardner, September 20, 1934, Misc. Folder, John Motley Morehead III Papers.

country court house, with the notices posted.”<sup>55</sup> This demonstrates that Morehead and Patterson were aware of the visibility their new gift provided them, and also provides some insight into public opinions, with at least one person suggesting that the abundant tablets throughout the cloister appeared cluttered or oversaturated, as if the donors had attempted to honor too many family members. When Morehead and Patterson disagreed on the text of the dedication tablet, Patterson continued, “after years of peace, I am not going to war with you on such a matter.”<sup>56</sup> Despite their numerous exchanges over the issue, their disagreement was over minor syntax choice and phrasing describing the dedication program, which ultimately describe the donors, speakers, and date of the dedication.

In 1935, Francis Bradshaw, the University Dean of Students, wrote to Morehead on behalf of the University bell ringer, Mr. Puckett, inquiring about a guestbook and leaflet for the tower’s many visitors.<sup>57</sup> During its early years, the Bell Tower was open to visitors on Sunday afternoons, which Mr. Puckett oversaw during his tenure as bell ringer. Morehead responded to Bradshaw, however, that he and Patterson had decided it would “not be in good taste . . . as it would look too much as if we were advertising the tower and through it ourselves.”<sup>58</sup> This is ironic given the men’s awareness about their own images, and the effects of this self-publicity and flashy exercise of wealth during a period of financial turmoil in which the State and nation were continuing to grapple with the Great Depression.

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<sup>55</sup> Rufus L. Patterson to O. Max Gardner, September 20, 1934, Misc. Folder, John Motley Morehead III Papers.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Francis J. Bradshaw to J.M. Morehead, March 13, 1935, Bell Tower / NY Alumni Club Folder, John Motley Morehead III Papers.

<sup>58</sup> J.M. Morehead to Francis J. Bradshaw, August 1, 1935, Bell Tower / NY Alumni Club Folder, John Motley Morehead III Papers.

Morehead, the product of a longstanding family legacy in North Carolina, had been primed from a young age to consider how he might continue and contribute to that legacy in his home state. As Morehead approached middle age in the 1910s, he began to act on instituting the legacy he had envisioned for a number of years in North Carolina at the University, which had provided him with the credentials that he took pride in and included him in the succession of family members who had graduated with the same distinction.

The dedication program of the Tower promised that it was “the intention of the families to install additional tablets to the memory of other members of the respective families as occasions arise,” and today the University’s fund remains active to allow family members to contribute to the memorial.<sup>59</sup> While Morehead’s obsession with the boxwood hedges throughout his lifetime was the source of many dozens of letters regarding their status, upkeep, appearance, and repair, the University in 2019 made the decision to remove the hedges. The *Carolina Alumni Review* reports that for “perhaps the first time in its 83-year history, the Bell Tower is without its boxwood hedges,” citing safety concerns from the “fortress” created by the hedges and that it is “a historically underused asset” in an area of high pedestrian traffic.<sup>60</sup> According to the campus landscape architect, Jill Coleman, “We’re a different campus than when those [boxwoods] were planted.” Despite Morehead’s attempts to shape the campus through his benefactions, their use has changed over time, with some adapting better than others. The caption for the photograph of the Bell Tower with removed boxwoods reads, “Nothing is permanent except change,” which may have been difficult for Morehead to accept, since he along with Patterson intended for the memorial to their families to last in the built landscape of the campus. Additionally, the bell-ringing process has changed, though still run by the Department of Music, it has become

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<sup>59</sup> *Morehead-Patterson Memorial Tower*, Morehead-Cain Foundation.

<sup>60</sup> David E. Brown, “Breathing Room: The Bell Tower’s Hedges Are Gone,” *Carolina Alumni Review* 108, no. 2 (March/April 2019): 32.



mechanized, with a 14-note keyboard still managed by a master bell ringer.<sup>61</sup> In the Morehead-Patterson Memorial Bell Tower, Morehead established a memorial to his own name that has at least lasted the test of time for eight decades, despite the continually changing campus surrounding it.

While the story of the Bell Tower provides a glimpse into Morehead's determination and interest in making an impact on the University, it is only one example from this period in which Morehead was constantly engaging in political maneuvering. In 1930, Morehead was appointed as U.S. Ambassador to Sweden under the administration of U.S. President Herbert Hoover, with whom he was acquainted as an active participant in Republican Party politics. It was during this time that the University would require a replacement for President Harry Chase, a role for which Morehead's correspondence reveals he was being considered. Given Morehead's interest in his North Carolina legacy and the University, this would prove to be the ultimate position to exert the most power and influence. The plans seem to have been managed by other Morehead relatives living in North Carolina, who reported to Morehead that the idea had gained significant traction in Raleigh, even with Governor O. Max Gardner. J. Lathrop Morehead wrote to Morehead, "the general feeling among the alumni is that we must have a business man [sic] as the next President. . . I think this position would surely lead to others. . . It is a chance of our life time for our family to again break into the leadership of the State, and only you can do this, and it will be in a way which is so large and worth while [sic]."<sup>62</sup> This reflected the ongoing discussion at the time about whether a businessman or academic should become the next University President. However, the Morehead plans were never to be. Morehead responded, "I

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<sup>61</sup> Elizabeth Barbour, "Master bell ringer plays Morehead's tunes," *The Daily Tar Heel*, October 19, 2015, <https://www.dailytarheel.com/article/2015/10/master-bell-ringer-plays-moreheads-tunes>.

<sup>62</sup> J. Lathrop Morehead to J.M. Morehead, February 25, 1930, Stockholm Correspondence 1930 Folder, John Motley Morehead III Papers.

made some tentative inquiries in Washington and it was intimated any suggestion of a resignation within twelve months would be regarded as bad faith.”<sup>63</sup>

The Hoover administration would not permit Morehead’s resignation, and so his family’s plans were eventually abandoned. A candidate for University President did emerge, Frank Porter Graham, who ultimately secured the position and proved to be an instrumental figure for the University, and with whom Morehead would work in the years to come to build his legacy at the University and in North Carolina.

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<sup>63</sup> J.M. Morehead to J. Lathrop Morehead, February 25, 1930, Stockholm Correspondence 1930 Folder, John Motley Morehead III Papers.

## CHAPTER 2: MOREHEAD PLANETARIUM AND SUNDIAL

Morehead's major benefactions to the University of North Carolina occurred in the midst of significant societal turmoil, highlighting his financial stability during the Great Depression at the time of his Bell Tower gift, and in the aftermath of World War II at the time he established the John Motley Morehead Foundation and donated the Morehead Building and Morehead Scholarships.

JMM began a conversation with UNC System President Frank Porter Graham, as early as 1937 about making a significant monetary contribution to the University.<sup>64</sup> Looking back on the undertaking, Graham wrote, "I recall. . . in a walk on your beautiful place in Rye you talked over with me your plans for a great endowment for your Alma Mater."<sup>65</sup> Graham, in his role at the University, proved to be instrumental in confirming Morehead's benefactions on behalf of the University. Morehead said of Graham's contributions to his projects, "In the naming of those to whom we are indebted for their contributions to the [Morehead] building you left out the name of one, Frank Graham, whose interest and advice and sustained encouragement the completion of the building is largely due." Morehead responded to Graham's detailed account of the Morehead contributions, "I will add this letter to my personal file in connection with the Morehead

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<sup>64</sup> Frank P. Graham to J.M. Morehead, March 10, 1951, Folder 2300: 1959: University of North Carolina: Scan 6, in the Frank Porter Graham Papers #1819, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. This three-page letter accounts with great detail Graham's memories of JMM's plans to create the scholarship foundation and establish the Morehead Building.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

Building, that it may become part of the permanent history of that undertaking.”<sup>66</sup> Morehead wrote these words with a seeming self-awareness of the future audiences who would read both Graham’s letter and his own three-page response to it, deliberately crafting the narrative surrounding the creation of the Morehead Building as if it were written for the pages of a history book. Morehead’s interest in his legacy found a suitable companion in Graham, whose interest was to continue to develop the University.

Once the idea for the Morehead Building and scholarships had proven feasible, Morehead set his plans in motion. In 1946, Morehead submitted his proposal to the University Board of Trustees to give the University a planetarium building and collection of distinguished portraits, which they unanimously accepted.<sup>67</sup> According to the meeting minutes,

Mr. Morehead, in describing the planetarium, said it would be similar to the five now in the United States. Its size is about 60 feet in diameter and will be the same as that of the famous Hayden Planetarium in New York. The building will have a large gallery on the main floor which is to be called the Genevieve B. Morehead Gallery, in memory of Mr. Morehead’s late wife. . . Mr. Morehead said he was particularly anxious to provide a planetarium for his Alma Mater because he felt it would be of lasting interest and would add to the public service of the University, since no other University in the United States has one.<sup>68</sup>

Through the Planetarium at the Morehead Building, Morehead established not only a center for scientific education and study, but also furthered his own aims to continue his family legacy in North Carolina and at the University. The Morehead Building was dedicated in 1949.

The meeting minutes from Morehead’s original proposal continued, “Mr. Morehead also told the Trustees that he had set up the Morehead Foundation to administer the building trust and

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<sup>66</sup> J.M. Morehead to Frank P. Graham, April 13, 1951, Folder 2300: 1959: University of North Carolina: Scan 3, in the Frank Porter Graham Papers #1819.

<sup>67</sup> “Minutes, February 11, 1946,” Board of Trustees of the University of North Carolina (System) Records, 1932-1972, Collection Number 40002, Volume 3, University Archives at the Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 192.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, 192-193.

devote any unused moneys to scholarships for outstanding young men.”<sup>69</sup> The John Motley Morehead Foundation and Morehead Scholarships are also an essential element of Morehead’s lasting legacy at the University and will be explored further in the next chapter.

Morehead was interested in planetariums for years before building one at the University, and in 1935 joined the Astronomy and Planetarium Committee at the American Museum of Natural History in New York for the new Hayden Planetarium.<sup>70</sup> It had been funded by Charles Hayden, another New York businessman and philanthropist. This experience undoubtedly informed his later decision to model the Morehead Planetarium after the Hayden Planetarium. A series of letters reveal that Morehead suggested a biblical quotation for inscription upon the walls of the Hayden Planetarium, which was overruled by the other members. Morehead suggests that he made the recommendation in an offhand comment at the meeting but proceeded to write to other committee members as well as Charles Hayden himself, as if to further his case.<sup>71</sup>

Morehead wrote to A. Cressy Morrison, a Union Carbide executive and chemist:

This is the first and second verses of the nineteenth Psalm, and is - “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.” . . . Other members thought that a quotation from the Bible might not be appropriate. This however, is from the Old Testament, so it could not be objected to by Jews, and there are a great many people, myself among the lot, who believe that the firmament is really the handiwork of God, all created within six days.<sup>72</sup>

Morrison, in whom Morehead would have seen an ally on the committee, was known for his scientific opinions with Christian views, such as *Man Does Not Stand Alone*.<sup>73</sup> The inscription

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 193.

<sup>70</sup> “Administration of the Year 1935,” The American Museum of Natural History, New York, Misc. Folder, John Motley Morehead III Papers.

<sup>71</sup> J.M. Morehead 1935 correspondence in Misc. Folder, John Motley Morehead III Papers.

<sup>72</sup> J.M. Morehead to A. Cressy Morrison, March 26, 1935, Misc. Folder, John Motley Morehead III Papers.

<sup>73</sup> “A.C. Morrison, 86. Union Carbide Aide,” *The New York Times*, January 10, 1951, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1951/01/10/issue.html>.

was not adopted at Hayden's Planetarium, but foreshadowed the religious themes that would appear in Morehead's own planetarium. While Morehead's suggestion was rejected in New York, it would be accepted without reservation in North Carolina at the planetarium built in his own name. Indeed, Morehead chose to inscribe the same quotation he had proposed in New York above the entrance to the Planetarium: "The Heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth His handywork." This minor example illustrates a greater theme throughout Morehead's activity as a benefactor: whereas he was forced to compete with other wealthy philanthropists' interests in New York City, his interests in North Carolina were more unique. For example, there were no other donors making philanthropic contributions as significant as the planetarium during this time, and this reflected Morehead's desire and ability to elevate the prominence of North Carolina. Curti argues that American philanthropists during the period of Morehead's philanthropic activity contributed to advances in humanities and social sciences as well as natural sciences, but frequently in only one of these areas, and generally steering away from art.<sup>74</sup> In his gifts of the planetarium to advance the education of North Carolinians, Morehead also combined the \$125,000 art gallery, which was uncommon among American philanthropists at the time.<sup>75</sup>

This expression of Morehead's religious views in relation to the Planetarium also reveals some of the underlying ideology that motivated Morehead to incorporate Christian references in his own planetarium. Curti describes mid-twentieth century American philanthropy, or private giving for public purposes, as deriving "much of its ideology, its law, and its institutional

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<sup>74</sup> Merle Curti, "Tradition and Innovation in American Philanthropy," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 105, no. 2 (1961), 153-154, JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/985626](http://www.jstor.org/stable/985626).

<sup>75</sup> After the gift of the Planetarium and art gallery, the University recruited Morehead to write to the William Hayes Ackland Trust to ensure them that the potential creation of the Ackland Art Museum would not replicate the Morehead Art Gallery, even providing Morehead with a draft. From J.M. Morehead to Trustees of the Last Will and Testament of William Hayes Ackland, May 9, 1946, University of N.C. 1946-1953 Folder, John Motley Morehead III Papers, Morehead-Cain Foundation.

organization from Judaeo-Christian tradition as well as from English common and statutory law and experience.”<sup>76</sup> Morehead continues this Judeo-Christian tradition in conjunction with the propagation of his legacy.

Frank Porter Graham, the University System President, said of Morehead’s motivations, “Mr. Morehead has always been a religious man. He believes that the function of a great university, in the last analysis, is the study of the universe. And he feels that through the study of the heavens both young and old may find new interests, greater understanding, and fresh inspiration in today’s world.”<sup>77</sup>

In the late 1930s, as Morehead continued developing his idea to build a planetarium, the University arranged for a meeting with the Harvard astronomer Harlow Shapley.<sup>78</sup> Morehead expressed his plans to Shapley to build either an observatory or a planetarium in North Carolina and asked which he would recommend. “Shapley suggested that a planetarium would be better—because he felt the people of North Carolina were among the ‘most astronomically ignorant’ people in the United States.”<sup>79</sup> Unsurprisingly, Morehead quickly came to the defense of North Carolinians when Shapley called into question the citizens who validated his family legacy. “Morehead responded that if Shapley would amend his statement to say that the people of North Carolina were among the ‘most ignorant in astronomical matters,’ he would build a planetarium.”<sup>80</sup> So began Morehead’s project.

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<sup>76</sup> Curti, “Tradition and Innovation in American Philanthropy,” 146-156.

<sup>77</sup> Alexander, “U.N.C. To Have Morehead Art Collection And First Planetarium In Any College.”

<sup>78</sup> “History,” Morehead Planetarium & Science Center.

<sup>79</sup> James G. Manning, “The Role of Planetariums in Astronomy Education,” *Astronomical Society of the Pacific Conference* 89, (San Francisco: Astronomical Society of the Pacific, 1996), 80.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.; “History,” Morehead Planetarium & Science Center.

While Morehead had decided upon a planetarium, the year was 1945, and in the immediate aftermath of World War II, obtaining planetarium equipment proved difficult, especially when all of the best planetarium equipment was made in Europe. This was echoed in a University press release after the building had been announced that read, “It may not be possible to open the Planetarium immediately, as the rare Zeiss Planetarium instrument, which costs \$75,000 alone, is built only Germany, and it is difficult, if not impossible, to have one built at the present time.”<sup>81</sup> Having strong ties in Sweden and throughout Europe from his time as U.S. Ambassador years earlier, Morehead used his connections to test the possibility of obtaining equipment, and implored University President Graham to use his position to make inquiries on his behalf as well. Morehead sent Graham an article in *The New York Times* entitled “U.S. Plans To Sell German Machines,” to see if “planetaria projectors” would be covered.<sup>82</sup> Following Morehead’s direction, Graham wrote to U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, Donald Russell, to inquire about the possibility of obtaining planetarium equipment from Germany:

There are a number of these instruments in Cities of Germany, to wit: Dusseldorf, Bremen, Neurenberg, Hanover, Leipsig, Jena, Dresden, Manheim, Berlin, Hamburg and Stuttgart. I am wondering therefore if we could not obtain one of these instruments from Germany so that our Government could credit the consideration for the same against the bill for reparations.<sup>83</sup>

Russell responded that it would “be impossible to obtain planetarium equipment from Germany as reparation. The Potsdam Protocol provides only for the removal of industrial capital equipment as reparation. It may prove possible, of course, to purchase such equipment in

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<sup>81</sup> Alexander, “U.N.C. To Have Morehead Art Collection And First Planetarium In Any College.”

<sup>82</sup> John L. Morehead to Frank P. Graham, November 26, 1945, University of N.C. 1946-1953 Folder, John Motley Morehead III Papers, Morehead-Cain Foundation.

<sup>83</sup> Frank P. Graham to Donald Russell, November 1945, Folder 1049 in the Frank Porter Graham Papers #1819, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



Germany.”<sup>84</sup> While their attempts in Germany were unsuccessful, Morehead remained determined and was ultimately able to secure the Zeiss equipment through a connection in Stockholm. Together, Morehead and Graham used their connections to pursue planetarium equipment under the most difficult of circumstances, demonstrating the alignment of Morehead’s own personal legacy with Graham’s dedication to providing opportunities to the University.

A University press release in 1946 praised Morehead as one of the University’s “most distinguished sons and the scion of one of the State’s oldest and foremost families of builders.” This language emphasizes the characteristics Morehead also deemed important to his legacy. It continues, “If you are one of the countless other millions of Tar Heels and Southerners who have not had access to the five Planetaria [sic] located in as many big cities over the country, this enlightening, awe-inspiring, and stimulating experience may soon be yours for the asking.”<sup>85</sup> This rhetoric about the importance of developing the South also appears in Morehead’s writings, with Morehead emphasizing the importance of perpetuating service to the “State of North Carolina, the South, and the Nation.”<sup>86</sup> By providing a planetarium to the University, press coverage solidified for the written record that Morehead had added to the “prestige and public service of the University, as no other educational institution in the United States has a Planetarium at present.”<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Donald Russell to Frank P. Graham, December 29, 1945, Folder *ibid*.

<sup>85</sup> Alexander, “U.N.C. To Have Morehead Art Collection And First Planetarium In Any College.”

<sup>86</sup> John Motley Morehead Foundation, *Trust Indenture and Supplemental Indenture of December 20, 1950*, Morehead-Cain Foundation.

<sup>87</sup> Alexander, “U.N.C. To Have Morehead Art Collection And First Planetarium In Any College.”



The Morehead Building by Eggers & Higgins, c. 1945.<sup>88</sup>

In 1949, Morehead's Planetarium was a revolutionary addition to the University as the only planetarium located on a college campus, located in a prime location near Franklin Street, which was negotiated by Morehead and his younger cousin, John Lindsay Morehead, with Frank Graham.<sup>89</sup> Morehead had insisted upon a superior facility, true to his vision. While Morehead had negotiated the position of the Bell Tower for years, the three-million-dollar planetarium complex was able to be sited at Morehead's first choice. Though the University had initially recommended a location near the law school, the Moreheads were successful in persuading Graham and the University to agree to the present location. The architecture firm Eggers and Higgins of New York, renowned for their work on the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, DC,

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<sup>88</sup> The Morehead Building by Eggers & Higgins, 1945, Morehead-Cain Foundation.

<sup>89</sup> Frank P. Graham to J.M. Morehead, March 10, 1951, Folder 2300, in the Frank Porter Graham Papers #1819, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

completed the building, which was dedicated in 1949 after seventeen months of construction.<sup>90</sup>

The planetarium equipment was the best available, the Zeiss Model II, and the *Daily Tar Heel* as well as other publications provided ongoing commentary related to the opening. “No other University in the world can boast of having as a unit of its educational and cultural plant a similar installation,” wrote the Planetarium’s director, Roy Marshall.<sup>91</sup> The staff also elevated the Planetarium and therefore Morehead’s associated image, with Marshall bringing expertise and experience to the role, having previously worked at the Alder Planetarium in Chicago.

The Planetarium continued to feature Christian themes throughout the building, shows, and promotional materials. In addition to the Bible quotation above the entrance, the names of Planetarium shows reflected Christian themes, such as “Star of Bethlehem”—one of the longest running shows, “Let There Be Light,” and “Eastre [sic].”<sup>92</sup> These names demonstrated the connection between the study of astronomical science and philosophical and theological questions about the creation of the universe, to which the Planetarium curriculum clearly took a stance. This reflected the ideology Morehead had expressed on many occasions regarding the natural sciences and specifically of astronomy. If there was any question as to the intent and purpose of the building, Morehead erected a dedication tablet in the Morehead Building, indicating that his benefactions in the building “come into noble conjunctions here, lighting up for youth, through all generations, the truth, the beauty, the faith, and the hope of man’s world and God’s universe.”

Like the dedication ceremony for the Bell Tower, the Morehead Building, too, attracted a high degree of ceremonial pomp and circumstance to Morehead’s delight, with speeches from

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<sup>90</sup> “History,” Morehead Planetarium & Science Center, <http://moreheadplanetarium.org/about/history>.

<sup>91</sup> Roy K. Marshall, “Planetarium Is Thing of Beauty, Not Observatory,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, May 10, 1949. Newspapers.com. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/68018400>.

<sup>92</sup> Kaitlin Henderson, “Memorial Hall,” *Names in Brick and Stone: Histories from UNC’s Built Landscape*. <http://unchistory.web.unc.edu/building-narratives/morehead-planetarium/>.

Governor Kerr Scott, Gunnar Dryselius—a Swedish diplomat who had assisted Morehead in obtaining the Planetarium equipment, University Chancellor Robert House, now U.S. Senator Frank Porter Graham, and Morehead himself. In his remarks, Morehead said, “It is all here, it is all in place, it is all furnished, and it is all yours.”<sup>93</sup> This phrasing was characteristic of Morehead’s addresses made of congruous phrasing. Graham’s remarks, which Morehead again helped to craft, emphasized Morehead’s family lineage from Scotland and established him in succession of that legacy, and as bestowing his “greatness” upon the University. In language more poetic and characteristic of Graham, he connected the Planetarium and the universe to the legacy of Morehead, saying, “The conjunction of the stars in their courses, revealed in the Planetarium, suggests to us the conjunction of persons, ideas, engines, enterprises and nations, revealed in the heritage, life, services and aspirations of John Motley Morehead III, devoted son and benefactor of the University of North Carolina.”<sup>94</sup>

The *Daily Tar Heel* published a special “Planetarium Supplement” in May 1949 in honor of the Planetarium’s opening, featuring ten full-length articles about various aspects of the Morehead Building, Planetarium, the Bell Tower, and art gallery, and in addition, each of the advertisements purchased throughout the supplemental insert featured commentary about the Planetarium, such as “Seventh in the World - Congratulations U.N.C.!” by University Cleaners and “Another Step Forward, Congratulations to the University!” by the Goldston Lumber Company.<sup>95</sup> While the excitement of the community continued, it did not last indefinitely in the following years. As tends to be the case with innovative technology, the once cutting-edge Zeiss

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<sup>93</sup> Lynn Nisbet, “Around Capitol Square,” *Statesville Daily Record*, May 10, 1949, Newspapers.com, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/38490504>.

<sup>94</sup> Frank Porter Graham, “Following is the address of United States Senator Frank P. Graham,” *Addresses and Reports of Frank Porter Graham*, no. 28, University News Bureau, 1949.

<sup>95</sup> “The Daily Tar Heel Planetarium Supplement,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, May 10, 1949, Newspapers.com. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/68018392>.

projector began falling behind the newest technology after its first decade, and needed to be upgraded, which Morehead again funded.<sup>96</sup>

The Planetarium still did not feel complete to Morehead, and in 1956 he added the Sundial, which he believed would help the Planetarium and the University remain at the cutting edge of science innovation and technology. While technology was becoming increasingly mechanized, Morehead valued what Frank Graham identified as “Old World” ideals, reimagining an ancient time-keeping tool as innovative. Given Morehead’s obsession with time and timekeeping devices this benefaction was perhaps the most reflective of Morehead’s personal interests. Morehead directed Joe Hakan, the chief for UNC campus construction during the 1950s and 1960s, to spend hours measuring the exact location the Sundial should point North, working together with U.S. Geological Survey to arrange for the most accurately situated measurements possible.<sup>97</sup> Morehead reportedly expressed to Hakan that he wanted the sundial to be “so accurate that he could rely on it to catch a train.”<sup>98</sup>

As if Morehead longed for the ceremonies associated with his previous benefactions, the same was planned for the dedication of the Sun Dial, where speakers again included the University Chancellor Robert House, Governor Luther Hodges, Frank Porter Graham, and Morehead. Morehead was proudest of Graham’s lecture, “Suns and Sundials,” in which he provides a grand overview of the history of sundials and situates Morehead’s sundial within it. Having known Morehead for many years at this point, Graham would have known this was exactly the type of speech that Morehead would have loved: a history lesson ending with Morehead’s mark on that history. When Graham casually mentioned the idea of publishing the

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<sup>96</sup> “History,” Morehead Planetarium & Science Center.

<sup>97</sup> J.M. Morehead correspondence, Sundial Folder, John Motley Morehead III Papers.

<sup>98</sup> Joe Hakan, “Morehead Sundial,” *The Carolina Story: A Virtual Museum of Carolina History*, 2006. <https://museum.unc.edu/exhibits/show/public-art/morehead-sundial>.

speech, Morehead had him reach out to his contacts still in U.S. Congress to have the speech text published in the U.S. Congressional Record. Within this speech Graham also discussed in detail Morehead's attempts at creating synthetic diamonds. In a letter years earlier, Morehead addresses Graham's reference to an additional potential gift of \$23 million to the University, writing,

I was indeed offered this amount if I could make 3 karat diamonds at \$3.00 a karat. The offer still holds good, and I am confident I could get much more than that for a process instead of into the 6 sided crystal of graphite. . . The diamond has much more value today for industrial purposes than ever before, and its use as a gem is very secondary, indeed. . . The cost of the diamond prevents its use in any except a most limited field. . . The artificial production of the diamond for industrial uses is the capital prize in all synthetic chemistry. I have been working on it since just after the first World War, have invested something like \$300,000 of my own money in it the last 33 years.<sup>99</sup>

Here, Morehead again participates with Graham in the writing of his legacy while also sharing details about his potential synthetic diamond fortune that was never to be successful. While Morehead's image included a narrative about being a chemist, his own chemistry ventures had not proven successful as a foundation for further business opportunities since his chemistry work in the 1890s, which even then had been the discovery of others. Morehead's interest in diamonds since the early twentieth century foreshadowed the parallels to come between Morehead and British mining magnate Cecil Rhodes, whose legacy of the Rhodes Scholarships he admired as a model for his own scholarships.

In July of 1956, Morehead responded to a press inquiry regarding the conception of the Sundial at the Morehead Planetarium. Answering questions through the Planetarium director, Tony Jenzano, Morehead wrote, "This is the largest regular sun dial in the United States, and except for some big stone monuments, like the pyramids, or other buildings . . . is the largest in the world."<sup>100</sup> For several years this sundial at UNC *was* the largest in the United States, but

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<sup>99</sup> Letter from J.M. Morehead to Frank P. Graham, April 13, 1951, Folder 2300: 1959: University of North Carolina: Scan 3, in the Frank Porter Graham Papers #1819.

<sup>100</sup> Letter from J.M. Morehead to A.F. Jenzano, July 23, 1956, Sundial Folder, John Motley Morehead III Papers.

while impressive, his second claim does not share the veracity of the first. This comparison of the sundial to the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World reflects the monumental hierarchy in which he envisioned his benefaction to his alma mater entering.

A photograph among Morehead's belongings depicts Morehead as the primary subject of the image, taken at the Sundial Dedication Ceremony. The sundial itself is too large to fit into the frame, but Morehead stands in the center, in front of the sundial. Just as Morehead envisioned his sundial as the largest, he stands firmly as the largest person in the photograph. While the gnomon of the sundial looms in the background, Morehead himself acts as a gnomon of sorts, casting the shadow from his own body upon the sundial. If the sundial is largest, Morehead is even larger than the largest in this image, as the angles and proportions of the photograph are such that the individuals in the crowd behind him are nearly half his size. The presence of the photographer on the far right demonstrates the interest of the press in the sundial, which was widely publicized around the state as well as the country.



John Motley Morehead III at the Sundial Dedication Ceremony on June 23, 1956.<sup>101</sup>

The photographer of this image is unknown, as it was among various photographs taken at the dedication in Morehead's personal collection, but one cannot help but wonder if Morehead himself arranged for the photograph to be taken in this way. The image offers a glimpse into 1956 using the lens through which Morehead viewed the world: one in which his presence and reputation loomed large, and in which his benefactions were the largest and most significant of their kind. Morehead continued to Jenzano, "Bigger ones have been made, but they are of a temporary nature."<sup>102</sup> Conceding that other larger sundials had been created, he reframed the focus on the adjusted categorization and the permanence of his structure. In doing so, Morehead engraved his legacy into the built landscape of the University campus using the largest, biggest sundial anyone ever saw in 1956.

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<sup>101</sup> Photograph of John Motley Morehead III at the Sundial Dedication Ceremony on June 23, 1956, Sundial Folder, John Motley Morehead III Papers.

<sup>102</sup> Letter from J.M. Morehead to A.F. Jenzano, July 23, 1956, Sundial Folder, John Motley Morehead III Papers.



As symbols, the sundial and planetarium reflect a duality in the image Morehead conveyed as both religious and scientific. The sun, stars, and the concept of time carry religious and scientific meaning, and the sundial and planetarium are representative symbols of this project and assist Morehead in navigating the image that he is both a man of science and a man of religion. In this way he is both a New Yorker, Northerner, successful businessman, and chemist, as well as a North Carolinian, Southerner, religious, and confident in his convictions about the creation of the universe.

As one of the most technologically advanced Planetariums in the world, the Morehead Planetarium attracted the attention of NASA as a facility to support the nation's space program, and "between 1959 and 1975, nearly every astronaut who participated in the Mercury, Gemini, Apollo, Skylab and Apollo-Soyuz programs trained at Morehead." The Planetarium director Tony Jenzano once claimed that "Carolina is the only university in the country, in fact the world, that can claim all the astronauts as alumni."<sup>103</sup> While Morehead never lived to see his benefaction attract this national acclaim, it aligned with the superior vision to which he aspired for North Carolina, and during its fiftieth year, the Planetarium had received over five million visitors.

Over the years, however, the numbers of visitors declined as access to planetariums throughout the country increased. While it was one of six in the United States in 1949, in 2019 it is one of over two hundred planetariums in forty-four states. The Planetarium rebranded in 2002 as the Morehead Planetarium and Science Center, to "no longer just be a gateway to the stars, but rather a gateway to all the sciences, exposing audiences to fields like genetics, virtual reality and nanotechnology."<sup>104</sup> While this matches Morehead's quest to be remembered, it also reflects the

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<sup>103</sup> "History," *Morehead Planetarium & Science Center*.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*; Henderson, "Memorial Hall."

declining interest in planetariums, which nevertheless today remain a popular destination for school field trips across the state of North Carolina. Today, Morehead's legacy through the planetarium is primarily a result of the ongoing educational impact on visitors. This rebrand serves as a mechanism for survival in a changing world, with a transition taking place over time from value added by the building and planetarium itself to the impact of its educational mission. The educational impact of Morehead's legacy is also reflected in the scholarships that bear his name, the recipients of which embody his universal aims as those individuals go on to make their own impacts at the University, in North Carolina, and beyond.

### CHAPTER 3: THE MOREHEAD-CAIN SCHOLARSHIPS

In addition to giving the Morehead Building to the University, Morehead established the John Motley Morehead Foundation, which would co-reside in the building with the Planetarium. The Foundation sought to “sustain and enhance the excellence” of the University of North Carolina by recruiting talented students to attend, beginning with graduate scholarships in 1951 and undergraduate scholarships in 1953. University President Frank Porter Graham observed that “Mr. Morehead’s creed is that ‘the way to build a great country is to build great leaders.’”<sup>105</sup> With over three thousand alumni from the scholarship program in 2019, it is perhaps his most significant legacy at the University as the number of alumni increases each year.

While Morehead was content to continue constructing buildings named in his honor, it was his younger cousin, John Lindsay Morehead, who encouraged him to consider administering scholarships as part of his endowment. Morehead was twenty-four years JLM’s senior and had acted as a father figure for JLM after his father, John Motley Morehead II, passed away in 1923. After attending the esteemed Woodberry Forest School in Virginia, JLM attended UNC for a year, but then transferred to the University of Virginia, where he took a great deal of pride in playing on the football team and later serving in World War I.<sup>106</sup> Traces of these experiences could be seen later in the work of the Morehead scholarship program. From his offices in Charlotte, JLM “directed the operations of the Leaksville Woolen Mills, of which he was

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<sup>105</sup> Alexander, “U.N.C. To Have Morehead Art Collection And First Planetarium In Any College.”

<sup>106</sup> Edward French, “Morehead, John Lindsay,” *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, 1991, <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/morehead-john-lindsay>.

president and chairman of the board from 1929 until his death,” and which had been inherited from the Morehead family.<sup>107</sup> John Lindsay Morehead is credited with being the “architect of the Morehead Scholarship plan,” and Morehead-Cain Foundation lore claims that when JMM began considering building a bell tower in every county of North Carolina, it was JLM who recommended he consider the greater impact of an alternative such as a scholarship program.<sup>108</sup> John Lindsay Morehead became Morehead’s leading officer and enabler in North Carolina while JMM remained in New York, especially as JMM’s age progressed. Despite JMM’s advanced age, he travelled frequently to Chapel Hill under the direction of JLM, in whom he placed a great deal of trust.

As Morehead considered the possibility of establishing a charitable trust, he began gathering research on foundations and their grant recipients. In the 1930s, even in the midst of the Great Depression, a possible foundation was on Morehead’s mind as he consulted only close friends and trusted associates about the idea. This coincided with the growing landscape of American charitable foundations at the time, which were propelled during the early twentieth century when landmark 1913 United States tax code changes permitted a “tax exemption to giving for acceptable philanthropies.”<sup>109</sup> As a result, Sacks writes, “large foundations, with funds that enable them to act upon a scale not previously possible, have been leaders in the search for new ways in which philanthropy may serve useful purposes.”<sup>110</sup> Furthermore, as Sacks notes, charitable foundations were desirable for wealthy benefactors due to their exemption from the common law “rule against perpetuities,” which would otherwise prohibit a donor from

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<sup>107</sup> French, “Morehead, John Lindsay.”

<sup>108</sup> Morehead-Cain Foundation, “John Lindsay Morehead,” *Who’s Who at Morehead-Cain*, 2015. Morehead-Cain Foundation.

<sup>109</sup> Curti, “Tradition and Innovation,” 146-156.; Sacks, “The Role of Philanthropy,” 516-538.

<sup>110</sup> Sacks, “The Role of Philanthropy,” 517.

controlling a bequest beyond the lifetime of a living beneficiary. For major donors, this marked a substantial benefit, in that they could ensure their resources were put to use advancing their desired goals—and legacies—well into the future, unlike virtually any other way to use their financial resources.<sup>111</sup> A foundation could, in theory, continue to operate for as long as its resources were managed well enough to do so. For Morehead, this meant that a charitable foundation could advance his goals and legacy for potentially “centuries,” whereas another form of bequest would not be controllable beyond the lifetime of a beneficiary such as JLM.<sup>112</sup>

The legal framework of a charitable foundation was a conundrum for Morehead, in that it was one of few paths to ensure a degree of control over the purposes to which his money would be used for a theoretically infinite amount of time, but it would also ultimately rely on others to carry out his instructions after his lifetime. Morehead wrangled with the fact that he could not have full control over the unforeseen future, and was suspicious of the North Carolina legislature, which made him hesitant to tie the Foundation permanently and irrevocably to the University.

In 1933, Morehead made exchanges with Daniel L. Grant, a former secretary of the University’s Alumni Association, who highlighted well the advantages of Morehead establishing a Foundation at the University.<sup>113</sup> Morehead’s correspondence with Grant shows that Morehead felt concerns related to the recent UNC consolidation and worried that the state legislature might make further changes to the University. Clearly Morehead had a degree of distrust of the way the North Carolina legislature might direct the University in the future, perhaps due to the

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<sup>111</sup> Sacks, “The Role of Philanthropy,” 517–528.

<sup>112</sup> Frank P. Graham to J.M. Morehead, October 25, 1945, Folder 1049, Frank Porter Graham Papers #1819.

<sup>113</sup> Daniel L. Grant to J.M. Morehead, November 11, 1933, Misc. Folder, John Motley Morehead III Papers.; “Historical Information,” General Alumni Association of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Records #40134, University Archives, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. <https://finding-aids.lib.unc.edu/40134/>; Frank P. Graham to J.M. Morehead, October 25, 1945, Folder 1049, Frank Porter Graham Papers #1819.

divergence in policy views between the staunch Republican Morehead and the solidly Democratic-controlled legislature. Grant writes to Morehead,

It seems to me that experience has shown in setting up perpetual funds, that both of two extremes are to be avoided. On the one hand, gifts that are rigidly hedged about with restrictions and predetermined control may later lose their focus and their greatest usefulness. This has been repeatedly shown in American experience and in experience abroad. On the other hand, the absence of any control whatever often leads to bureaucracy and abuse. Somehow the administration of funds should be kept alive and vital even though the general objectives are predetermined.<sup>114</sup>

From these letters, Morehead concedes he cannot manage every aspect of control over this element of his legacy, but recognizes there is more control of his future legacy in allowing a Foundation established at the University the ability to leave if its trustees should choose to do so. In deciding to permit the Foundation's trustees the ability to move resources away from the University, Morehead sought to preserve as much control as was possible. Ultimately, Morehead valued that the structure of the Foundation gave it increased leverage to make decisions independently of the University.

The idea that the Foundation's indenture might provide the Board of Trustees with the power to move funds away from the University was so alarming that Graham elegantly and repeatedly wrote to Morehead to ask him to reconsider creating a separate foundation, expressing his preference for an endowment under the direction of the University's board of trustees and drafting an indenture for such plans on Morehead's behalf, and warning that "the whole university world frowns" on the "Duke indenture with regard to a discretionary withholding of funds, which amounts to a control by a secondary board of trustees."<sup>115</sup> Graham continued to lobby Morehead by suggesting that Cecil Rhodes did not doubt the future of Oxford University, or that the du Ponts, who established du Pont Fellowships at the University of Virginia, did not

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<sup>114</sup> Daniel L. Grant to J.M. Morehead, November 11, 1933, Misc. Folder, John Motley Morehead III Papers.

<sup>115</sup> Frank P. Graham to J.M. Morehead, August 27, 1945, Folder 1049, Frank Porter Graham Papers #1819.

doubt “the future development or worthiness of University of Virginia.”<sup>116</sup> Morehead responded to Graham that there were some elements of his own indenture draft that would not change, including that he would not limit his trustees to UNC “because I do not wish to bind their hands in the future administration of this trust under conditions which I cannot now foresee.”<sup>117</sup>

Accepting the advice he had received to model his foundation after the indenture of the Duke Endowment and decidedly pleased with the options it provided, Morehead established the John Motley Morehead Foundation on November 21, 1945, which also established the trustees of the Foundation and called for the creation of the Morehead Building. This would allow work to continue for several more years before scholarships would be administered to students. In the indenture, Morehead calls for “my trustees to name the building which I have caused them to give to the University, The Morehead Building” in honor of the “four generations of Moreheads of my family” who have contributed to the University of North Carolina as students, instructors, and trustees, and “labored for the advancement and welfare of the University.”<sup>118</sup> JMM’s references to family are entwined with the creation of the Foundation for the purposes of administering the scholarships and in the language of the indenture, emphasizing the importance of continuing the legacy of his family. Left unspoken here, as in many other places, is the fact that JMM did not pass on his name and legacy to any biological children of his own. In authoring and enacting this indenture, Morehead established what he most certainly would have believed to be many thousands of children—sons—of his own to bring what he believed to be honor to his family name and home state of North Carolina.

The Morehead Foundation conducted business from JMM’s offices in New York at his Union Carbide building and John Lindsay Morehead’s offices in Charlotte until the Morehead

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<sup>116</sup> Frank P. Graham to J.M. Morehead, October 25, 1945, Folder 1049, Frank Porter Graham Papers #1819.

<sup>117</sup> J.M. Morehead to Frank P. Graham, November 2, 1945, Folder 1049, Frank Porter Graham Papers #1819.

<sup>118</sup> John Motley Morehead Foundation, *Trust Indenture and Supplemental Indenture of December 20, 1950*.

Building opened in Chapel Hill in 1949. JMM's research folders alone reveal a great deal about the type of legacy JMM envisioned for himself and that JLM envisioned for them both, with files collecting information about the Carnegie Foundation of business and steel magnate Andrew Carnegie as well as the Rockefeller Foundation of the Rockefellers of American oil industry royalty. Looking to these models, the two Moreheads saw the potential for JMM's legacy to be an equal to the legacies of these men. Prominently featured was the file of the Rhodes Foundation, which includes some of the most significant documents related to the creation of the Morehead Scholarships. As the Rhodes Scholarships established at Oxford University by British magnate Cecil Rhodes emerged as the clear model, the Rhodes Foundation generously "opened their books" to the Morehead Foundation.<sup>119</sup>

Cecil John Rhodes (1853-1902) is commonly regarded as one of the more controversial figures of the nineteenth century. A British mining magnate who controlled ninety percent of the world's diamond trade before his death, Rhodes served as a British colonial monarch in Africa, campaigning against African populations to establish what is today Zimbabwe and Zambia, and is regarded today by many as an "architect of apartheid."<sup>120</sup> While Rhodes left behind a racist legacy on a large area of the globe, in his will, he also established the Rhodes Scholarships. Through his scholarships, he called for grants to administered to men for graduate study at Oxford to fully cover tuition and costs, which was a remarkable and innovative "first" in benefactors of his magnitude.

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<sup>119</sup> Foundations Folder, John Motley Morehead III Papers, Morehead-Cain Foundation.; Morehead-Cain Foundation, "John Lindsay Morehead," *Who's Who at Morehead-Cain*, 2015, Morehead-Cain Foundation.

<sup>120</sup> Robert I. Rotberg, *Founder: Cecil Rhodes and the Pursuit of Power* (Cary: Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 1988). ProQuest Ebook Central. <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/lib/unc/reader.action?docID=716693>.; Stephen Castle, "Oxford University Will Keep Statue of Cecil Rhodes," *The New York Times*, January 29, 2016. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/30/world/europe/oxford-university-oriel-college-cecil-rhodes-statue.html>.



Among the influential Rhodes documents included in JMM and JLM's research files are the Last Will and Testament of Cecil John Rhodes, a blank sample Rhodes application, promotional materials, documents related to districts for nominations, selection criteria, and newspaper clippings from the 1940s and 1950s about the scholarship and the aggregate impact of the scholarship recipients.<sup>121</sup> The meaning of these items together during the Morehead research phase confirms that a consideration of the Rhodes program contributed to the vision of the Morehead scholarships. It was then JLM that Morehead charged with the responsibility of carrying out the logistical elements of their vision for the scholarships.<sup>122</sup> As one of the childless Morehead's closest younger male relatives, JLM became a confidant of Morehead. It was fitting that as JMM's age progressed he would entrust John Lindsay Morehead to help facilitate his legacy at the University.

The Moreheads looked to the will of Cecil Rhodes for guidance, which dictates the establishment of the scholarships and the process by which recipients would be selected to receive the scholarship. Rhodes indicated that after a detailed nomination process through defined districts throughout the world and a review of a candidate's qualifications, the selection committee was to make recommendations to the trustees, who would ultimately make decisions about recipients.<sup>123</sup> This same process is outlined for the Morehead in a 1952 copy of the *Alumni Review*, which describes how the scholarships are finally being launched after years of planning. After being divided into districts, regional committees of North Carolina make nominations, undergo a review process by a selection committee which then makes recommendations, and

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<sup>121</sup> Foundations Folder, John Motley Morehead III Papers.

<sup>122</sup> John Lindsay Morehead remained involved until his death in 1964, only a year before JMM himself died.

<sup>123</sup> Cecil J. Rhodes, *The Last Will and Testament of Cecil J. Rhodes*, 1901, *Archive.org*, 38. <https://archive.org/details/lastwilltestamen00rhodiala/page/38>.

“final selection of the Morehead Scholars is to be made by the Morehead Trustees.”<sup>124</sup> Just as the Rhodes process has remained remarkably unchanged over the decades, so has the Morehead-Cain process, which still functions this way at its most basic level.<sup>125</sup>

In his will, Rhodes described that, “Students who shall be elected to the Scholarships shall not be merely bookworms.”<sup>126</sup> As the Rhodes selection model emerged to inform the scholarship foundation and ideal candidate, Morehead was inspired by articles about what the Rhodes scholarships accomplished. An annotated article among these items from *The London Times* reads of Rhodes candidate qualifications, describing “The Ideal Man.” “These were: (1) literary and scholastic attainment, (2) fondness for, and success in, manly outdoor sports, (3) truth, courage, devotion to duty and sympathy for and protection of the weak, and (4) the exhibition during school days of moral force of character and an instinct to lead and to take an interest in other men.”<sup>127</sup> As this 1952 article indicates, these qualities remained remarkably unchanged from Rhodes’ will, and followed into the Morehead scholarships.

In a Morehead Scholarship promotional pamphlet, the first page opens with acknowledgements that “attributes desired in Morehead Scholars follow generally those required for the Rhodes Scholarships to Oxford University. . . We are adapting partially the Scholarship plan of the Rhodes Trustees to the undergraduate level at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.”<sup>128</sup> It then describes how the scholarship modeled and modified the “methods of selection and procedure.” It should then come as no surprise that Morehead’s criteria were as

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<sup>124</sup> “Statewide Committees Launch Morehead Plans,” *The Alumni Review* 40, no. 8, (May 1952), 6.

<sup>125</sup> “Prospective Scholars,” Morehead-Cain Foundation, 2019. <http://www.moreheadcain.org/prospective-scholars/>.

<sup>126</sup> Cecil J. Rhodes, *The Last Will and Testament of Cecil J. Rhodes*, 37.

<sup>127</sup> “The Rhodes Scholars,” *The London Times*, March 4, 1951, Foundations Folder, John Motley Morehead III Papers.

<sup>128</sup> *The Morehead Program at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*, The John Motley Morehead Foundation, September 1963, 2.

follows: “(a) Scholastic ability and attainments, (b) Qualities of manhood, truthfulness, courage, devotion to duty, sympathy, kindness, unselfishness and fellowship, (c) Evidence of moral force of character and of capacities to lead and to take an interest in his schoolmates, and (d) Physical vigor as shown by participation in competitive sports or in other ways.”<sup>129</sup> Over the years, the Morehead scholarship criteria have been altered slightly, but in 2019 remain as follows: “leadership, character, scholarship, and physical vigor,” with the note that “due consideration is given to nominees with physical limitations.”<sup>130</sup> This note recognizes both the problems inherent in the original criteria and the possibility that those problems may still be present to an extent in the modern criteria.

The Rhodes model establishes a concise view of an ideal male candidate. In adopting this model, the Morehead scholarship also adopts a specific view of merit based on these criteria. While these criteria are meant to offer a level playing field without regard to financial need, other factors contribute to inequitable access for candidates, such as not having access to the wealth or education that allowed these students to attend prestigious private schools or to be nominated in the first place. In adopting this model for Rhodes’ ideal candidate, Morehead also adopts criteria that favor the masculine elite. Additionally, JLM’s early work to recruit prestigious private boys’ schools to become nominating schools from along the East Coast, particularly in New England, created a foundation for nominating relationships that have lasted through the decades, many of which still exist today.

By transferring the legacy of Rhodes to that of Morehead, Morehead also adapted a legacy of exclusion, with value placed on traits of masculinity afforded traditionally to those of privileged societal status, particularly young white men. Noticing this, the Foundation hired the

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<sup>129</sup> *The Morehead Program at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*, The John Motley Morehead Foundation, September 1963, 10.

<sup>130</sup> “Apply,” Morehead-Cain Foundation, accessed March 17, 2019, <http://www.moreheadcain.org/apply>.

University football coach Bob Fetzer to work on the staff, whom the trustees believed might better connect with the young men than the older men running the program. With these favored qualifications and traits were the implication that Morehead Scholars were to be both intelligent and athletic. During the early twentieth century the use of physical criteria was rooted in anti-Semitism and homophobia at institutions of higher education.<sup>131</sup> Universities throughout the country established physical criteria as well as quotas for Jewish students during the 1920s and 1930s, a period when anti-Semitism was rampant in academic communities in the United States. Rhodes' qualifications, mirrored in Morehead's qualifications, reflected this greater trend at universities, though they were perhaps not as explicit in their meaning. No evidence suggests the Morehead program had anti-Semitic intentions in adopting this criterion from Rhodes, but that the use of physical criteria at universities has historical significance is important to acknowledge.

While physical criteria of demonstrating a certain amount of "physical vigor" were used in the United States in both the North and South during this period, the limitations of the Jim Crow South also imposed regulations onto an otherwise unstated restriction of race for the scholarship. While the Morehead criteria did not explicitly state that race or religion would not be a factor, early Morehead scholars reflected the same traits of white men and generally the population of the University during the early years of the program. Data on African American enrollment at the University demonstrates that African Americans represented only 0.2 percent of the student population when the scholarship first began selecting students for UNC in 1951, and by 1975 African Americans were about 6.6 percent of the student population.<sup>132</sup> Rhodes deliberately mentions in his will that race and religious beliefs are not to be considered, claiming

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<sup>131</sup> Leonard Rogoff, *Homelands: Southern-Jewish Identity in Durham and Chapel Hill, North Carolina*, (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2001), 133.

<sup>132</sup> Nicholas Graham, "Historic African American Enrollment at UNC," *History on the Hill*, April 21, 2016, <https://blogs.lib.unc.edu/hill/index.php/2016/04/21/historic-african-american-enrollment-at-unc/>.

that a candidate would not be “qualified or disqualified” based on race or religious opinions.<sup>133</sup>

Despite this, Alain Locke was the only person of African descent to receive the Rhodes Scholarship in 1907, and would be the sole black recipient for another six decades.<sup>134</sup> While the Rhodes stated it explicitly did not consider race and the Morehead left the consideration more ambiguous, recipient data suggests race was given consideration in the earliest years of both programs, which favored white men.

The Morehead finally awarded scholarships to African Americans in 1973 and women in 1975 after years of intense public scrutiny and pressure from the state and University community to be more inclusive. Leading up to that moment, a three-part series in the *Daily Tar Heel* in 1973 revealed some of the building tension, with headlines such as “Morehead discrimination: opposition rises” and “Female unlikely for Morehead honor,” with one story alleging that Foundation staff had instructed a high school not to nominate a female candidate, which they denied.<sup>135</sup> One op-ed in response, entitled “Trustees to blame, not Morehead,” alleged,

So Morehead was a male chauvinist. Hot damn. He was probably racist too, but that did not deter the trustees of the scholarship from naming several black Morehead Scholars in 1973. It is the fuddy duddies who run the program now who should be branded and roasted as male chauvinist pigs due to their senile thinking and male superiority complexes. ... Were their heads so giddy from the debilitating aftereffects of riotous stag parties that they missed Billy Jean King tromp Bobby Riggs?<sup>136</sup>

This is just one example of the ways in which the Foundation would have to grapple with the legacy that Morehead had worked to construct up until his death in 1965 in light of developments Morehead did not anticipate such as the Civil Rights Movement and Second-Wave Feminism.

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<sup>133</sup> Cecil J. Rhodes, *The Last Will and Testament of Cecil J. Rhodes*, 38.

<sup>134</sup> “Alain Locke,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, accessed March 29, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Alain-LeRoy-Locke>.

<sup>135</sup> Bunky Flagler, “Female unlikely for Morehead honor,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, October 26, 1973, Newspapers.com. <https://universityofnorthcarolinaat Chapel Hill-newspapers-com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/image/67851300/>.

<sup>136</sup> “Trustees to blame, not Morehead,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, October 27, 1973, Newspapers.com. <https://universityofnorthcarolinaat Chapel Hill-newspapers-com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/image/67851406/>.

The Morehead Scholarship, from the time of its founding through today, has covered the full cost of attendance to the University, including tuition as well as room and board for four years for undergraduate study. While graduate fellowships were offered in its earliest years, the program shifted its focus to funding full-time undergraduate students. The program also expanded beyond the United States to include a British program, Canadian program, and a process for international applicants, which remain today. Similar to the Rhodes Scholarship, the Morehead-Cain Scholarship has become a program of national importance in higher education and is one of the cornerstones of the success of the University today as it recruits talented students to attend from across the world. It also continues to build a group of accomplished alumni across professions and disciplines with lifelong ties to the University.

Toward the end of his life, Morehead's presence at the Foundation events became largely ceremonial as JLM oversaw the day-to-day operations as the chief officer of the program. JMM emerged for special occasions, such as to address the body of Morehead Scholars at the annual Senior Dinner, which still occurs today in the State Dining Room of the Morehead Building. In one address, entitled "That's That," which was particularly well circulated thanks to copies bound and printed by the Morehead Foundation, Morehead provided advice to young men about how to achieve success in the world, conveying not only his own legacy, but the legacy he wished for those men.<sup>137</sup> Morehead notably remarked that he "would not recommend early matrimony," which comes across as a recommendation but was a policy upheld by the Foundation that if violated, would result in the termination of a student's scholarship. Morehead Scholars were not allowed to get married or to have children, which Morehead believed would take away from a serious student's studies, a policy that was not removed until 2015.

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<sup>137</sup> John M. Morehead, *That's That, The Remarks of John M. Morehead at the dinner for the graduating Morehead Scholars, Class of 1959*, John Motley Morehead Foundation, Morehead-Cain Foundation.

Morehead's eventual legacy through what is today known as the Morehead-Cain Scholarship culminated in the unique combination of pressure of legacy he carried from generations of his family, his own vision and experience, the adapted legacy of Rhodes, and also the careful enabling of others, including that of Frank Porter Graham and JLM. This legacy of the scholarship, in adapting that of Rhodes, also adapted one in which "merit" excluded those who do not meet specific qualifications of scholastic ability, as well as of physical ability and other characteristics. While Morehead's benefactions on the campus of the University are largely attributed to his own drive, University official Frank Porter Graham was essential in receiving and managing the University's relationship with Morehead, and therefore making his benefactions possible, especially that of the Foundation. As is recounted in letters between Graham and Morehead, Morehead's vision depended precisely on an ideal location for The Morehead Building, without which his legacy may not have been established the way it is known today.

In the decades that followed, Morehead's Foundation would continue to experience changes, taking on Morehead's estate after his death, managing the financial ups and downs of the stock market, soaring tuition costs, increased competition for recruiting talented students, and numerous other factors that contributed to the need to create a more sustainable existence in order to survive long-term. After nearly six decades without fundraising, the Foundation created a scholarship fund and began fundraising in 2005. Then in 2007, the Morehead Foundation became the Morehead-Cain Foundation in honor of a \$100 million gift provided by the Gordon and Mary Cain Foundation of Houston, TX, which it utilized in order to remain competitive, adding new aspects to the program and also increasing the number of scholarship recipients each year.

In a development that neither JMM nor JLM could have anticipated, the program they created and modeled after the Rhodes scholarship became its own model for undergraduate scholarships in the United States. Such scholarship programs as the Jefferson Scholarships at University of Virginia, Robertson Scholarships at Duke University, Park Scholarships at North Carolina State University, Hesburgh-Yusko Scholarships at Notre Dame, and over thirty other programs were modeled after the Morehead (and later Morehead-Cain) program. A number of these programs were even created by Morehead-Cain alumni, which further extends the reach of Morehead's legacy. In this way, versions of Morehead's legacy that he received from Rhodes have continued to filter into programs and institutes of higher education that boast prestige in the selection of their candidates.



## CONCLUSION

*My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;  
Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!  
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare  
The lone and level sands stretch far away.  
Ozymandias by Percy Bysshe Shelley<sup>138</sup>*

Through Morehead's benefactions it is clear that he sought to craft a specific legacy for himself that consisted of successfully following the expectations established by generations of Morehead lineage, and passed on from his grandfather. These efforts helped to fulfill his image as a North Carolinian, despite having lived in New York for nearly all of his life; fulfill his ideals about what it means to be educated citizens in "astronomical matters"; facilitate imagery related to his being a "self-made" man, and leave behind the ultimate markers on what he called "the sands of time"—in this case, the Bell Tower and Morehead Building, including the planetarium, sundial, and scholarship program.

While Morehead received the recognition for the buildings and scholarships that bear his name, it is worth noting that this legacy was made possible by others who enabled his vision. Along the way, the self-construction of Morehead's legacy also required the support of various enablers, including Frank Porter Graham and John Lindsay Morehead. While John Lindsay Morehead was essential in designing and creating the Morehead Scholarships, it is Frank Porter Graham who deserves the distinction of helping to cultivate his decades-long relationship with Morehead, steer the University toward the direction of its own vision, and in turn assist

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<sup>138</sup> Percy B. Shelley, "Ozymandias," *Shelley's Poetry & Prose*, 2002.

Morehead with the creation of his legacy. Despite not being awarded any official access to the University as a trustee or official, Morehead maintained relationships with the highest levels of leadership in the State as well as the University. The privilege granted by his family name offered him direct access to the highest administration at UNC at all times which served as an important tool for creating the image of his own legacy. In 1959, the North Carolina General Assembly further memorialized JMM, calling for a joint resolution to elect JMM as an “honorary life-time member of the Board of Trustees of the University of North Carolina.”<sup>139</sup>

As the evidence presented demonstrates, Morehead was concerned with details and obsessed with his image, the concepts of time, and particularly with family legacy—what he received from his father and grandfather and how he compared to them. But building that legacy required Morehead to navigate certain contradictions: born with privilege but aiming to create a self-made image; wanting to be seen as a serious chemist but excelling as a businessman at Union Carbide; despite living in suburban New York and commuting to his company in New York City, he was concerned with his image in North Carolina. We have also seen that he aimed to become President of UNC, but because it would have reflected poorly on the administration of U.S. President Hoover, he was unable to pursue that position. Instead, he embarked on an ambitious project of making an impact on the University, and through it advancing his other legacy goals, including his family name, promoting science and religious vision, and the cultivation of students he felt would be valuable to the university, promoting the South, and advancing the country.

From the perspective of today, it is clear that despite Morehead’s meticulous planning, many changes have taken place and unanticipated developments have interceded. Morehead has

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<sup>139</sup> North Carolina General Assembly, *A joint resolution providing for the election of John Motley Morehead as an honorary life-time member of the Board of Trustees of the University of North Carolina* (Raleigh: General Assembly of North Carolina, 1959), Morehead-Cain Foundation.

generally made tremendous impact in the State of North Carolina and at the University, but it is not ultimately the exact impact that he planned and envisioned.

For example, while the Morehead-Patterson Bell Tower remains an aesthetically pleasing campus landmark today, it does not carry forth Morehead's name and his family's memory in the way that was envisioned. The University campus has been redesigned since the Bell Tower was erected, and many campus visitors today wear earphones that render the bells less audible. This demonstrates that, unlike a foundation, which can pivot and evolve away from its early history, a benefaction that is a physical object cannot be easily changed to match times and surroundings.

The Morehead Planetarium demonstrates that a benefaction can undeniably have a massive impact on a university or institution, yet that impact might not ultimately have the same longstanding legacy because as time progresses even something as modern as a planetarium used by the United States space program can, within decades, seemingly become as much of a relic as a sundial. The Planetarium continues to exist today as a forum for the teaching and enjoyment of astronomy, but it does not function with the same purpose as the revolutionary object created and envisioned by Morehead.

Turning to the Foundation, the central irony of the Foundation is that it is the benefaction that was the least likely for Morehead to be able to micromanage. As a result it gave him some trepidation in life and only came about due to JLM's persuasion but is now the most lasting and impactful part of Morehead's legacy. Morehead knew a foundation as a legacy project offered a promising route because it could be structured to exist in perpetuity, but it was challenging for him to know he was designing something that he could not fully control the operations of for all time. The Foundation over time became Morehead's greatest legacy project and impact and advanced many of his intended goals, but it was by virtue of the fact that it was something that was not subject to his permanent control and was actually able to evolve and grow outside of

some of the purposes that he had intended to design it to advance. For example, Morehead clearly did use the Foundation while he was alive to advance his vision of the South, masculinity and code of conduct, and gender and racial issues. But in time those have fallen away from being a part of his legacy as the University and society have changed. The foil to the Foundation in this sense is the Bell Tower, where at the dedication ceremony Morehead selected and approved of songs, some of which are today controversial. While a campus object is often not able to avoid the circumstances surrounding its dedication, a foundation is able to evolve past and overcome founding challenges if it must. Through the Foundation, Morehead made an impact equivalent to or greater than that which he might have made in the University presidency he did not ultimately pursue.

In conclusion, Morehead was meticulous in his philanthropic project, and he was obsessed with the concept of time and issues of legacy, but a contemporary accounting shows that, over time, names fade, legacies are muddled, edifices and objects lose their relevance, and while charitable foundations are susceptible to the same forces, their legal protections give them the potential to support an extended legacy and impact, although one necessarily different from that which the benefactor would have specified. Morehead's footprints remain on the sands of time today primarily because of the charitable foundation that he built. Instead of bell towers across the state which would by now be obsolete, the Foundation reinforces the University's standing nationally and globally as strongly today as it did at its founding.

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