

CHAPTER **30**

The History and Traditions of BGSU

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History and traditions are part of the culture of every university or college. When you entered Bowling Green State University, you became part of its culture. Thus, it is very important that you have some understanding of BGSU’s history and its traditions. By doing so, the vision statement and core values are revealed, not as empty words and phrases, but as meaningful goals which have been part of this institution since its beginning.

When Bowling Green State University opened its doors as a teacher training (normal) school in 1914, its enrollment stood at 304, ten faculty had been hired, and the first two planned buildings (Williams Hall and University Hall) were not yet finished. Even then, President Homer Williams had both the vision and unyielding determination to build a university rather than a normal school. He believed in strong academic standards and fought many attempts to keep BGSU from becoming what it is today, a university in which excellence is continually promoted and valued. President Williams would be most pleased

1910	1914	1915	1916
Bowling Green is chosen by representatives of the State of Ohio as the location for a northwest Ohio normal school. The actual site is 82.5 acres, including the city park.	Classes are held at Bowling Green Normal School for the first time. Enrollment: 304. Orange and brown are selected as the school colors. The official University seal is designed. The first alma mater, “We Hail You, Dear Normal College,” is written by music instructor E.G. Hesser.	The first commencement is held. Thirty-five students receive degrees. Williams Hall, a women’s dormitory, is the first building completed.	The Bowling Green Normals play their first intercollegiate basketball game.

that, today, our vision statement is based on what he first began to envision in 1914; that Bowling Green State University should be the premier learning community in Ohio and one of the best in the nation.

You will discover that this chapter is perhaps somewhat different from the other chapters. What will you find in this chapter? Instead of a narrative history, you will discover interwoven through the pages a timeline, in which you will find dates and events considered critical in the establishment and development of BGSU. You also will discover the “who” behind all of those named campus buildings. You will become well-versed in BGSU traditions, and you can test yourself on the BGSU trivia questions posed in several locations throughout the chapter’s pages. Finally, the history and the traditions on which BGSU’s vision statement and the core values have been built will become meaningful and valuable for you.

History, traditions, and values all shape the character of BGSU. It may help to understand these concepts by considering your own family, where the “family tree” activities that you repeat year after year (especially at holiday times), and the basic beliefs you hold, are an important part of who you are today. BGSU is what it is today because of things that went on long before you arrived on campus.

IT’S TRADITION!

■ SYMBOLS AND SIGNS

The **nickname Falcons** was chosen for BGSU athletic teams in 1927. It was suggested by the sports editor of the *Daily Sentinel Tribune*, who thought the nickname was fitting because it was indicative of a powerful bird that was small in stature, its coloring represented the school colors, and, like the athlete, the falcon must go through a long period of training before battle. Freddie and Frieda Falcon are the campus mascots.

The **school colors**, burnt orange and seal brown, were originated by Professor Leon Winslow of the industrial arts department in 1914. He reportedly saw the color combination on a woman’s hat in the Toledo Union interurban trolley station and later recommended to the Board of Trustees that these colors be adopted.

Part of the spirit that is BGSU is **SIC SIC, the secret spirit organization**, whose members remain anonymous until they graduate. The group was formed

1919	1922	1927	1929
The first football team is fielded; it goes 0-3 in the first season.	The first Homecoming is held; more than 2,000 fans attend.	Falcons is suggested as a nickname for the University; it flies.	Bowling Green Normal School becomes a college, with 48 faculty, 957 students, and 8 buildings.
1920	1923		
A student newspaper, <i>The BeeGee News</i> , is printed for the first time.	The marching band performs for the first time.		

by President Prout in 1946 and consists of six students, two each from the sophomore, junior, and senior class. This group works in the early morning hours painting and erecting spirit signs.

On formal occasions, you might expect to see the **University mace**, created for the inauguration of President Jerome and still carried at commencement ceremonies and presidential inaugurations. On the head of the mace are engravings representing the six areas of learning: drama, art, literature, music, science, and commerce.

Also brought out for ceremonial occasions is the **pendant, worn by the president** with his commencement regalia. The pendant contains the University seal and the inaugural symbol, as an abstracted tree form, often referred to as the Tree of Knowledge and symbolizing growth and change.

The **official University seal** was designed by Professor Winslow (the same man who proposed the school colors) in 1914. It follows the design of the State Seal of Ohio and is divided into four parts: a mountain range, the brilliant sun, a bundle of 17 arrows representing Ohio's rank in the Union, and a sheaf of wheat to signify the great agricultural industry of the state. In 1958 the seal was revised by Glenn Christian, University purchasing officer, to include the buckeye (state tree) and the carnation (state flower). The seal is still the official logo of BGSU. You will find the largest version in the grassy area between the Administration Building and University Hall. Legend has it that couples who hold hands and walk around it to the right will marry, as will couples who stand on it and kiss. And beware—students who stand on it are likely not to graduate!



TRIVIA QUESTIONS

Today BGSU residence hall residents have a telephone in their rooms for unlimited personal use. However, prior to 1965, there was a time limit stating that "no phone call could last more than..."

- A. 3 minutes.
- B. 5 minutes.
- C. 7 minutes.
- D. 10 minutes.

Answer: B

1933	1935	1936	1937
A plan by members of the state legislature to turn the college into a mental institution is defeated.	Bowling Green receives University status, with 1,069 students in three undergraduate colleges or the newly formed graduate program. Every time BGSU plays the University of Toledo, fighting breaks out in the stands. Competition between the two schools is suspended until 1947.	The University Students' Association, the first all-campus student governing body, is formed.	The Falcons play their first football game in the stadium, which is now the grassy area between the Education Building and Jerome Library.

■ SILLY SONGS AND SERIOUS SENTIMENT

One of the first songs you will learn as a BGSU student was made famous by former Falcon football player Mike Weger, who sang “Ay Ziggy Zoomba” in the motion picture *Paper Lion*.

It’s not hard to remember the words!

Ay Ziggy zoomba zoomba zoomba
 Ay ziggy zoomba zoomba ze
 Ay Ziggy zoomba zoomba zoomba
 Ay ziggy zoomba zomba ze.
 Roll along with BG Warriors
 Roll along and fight for BGSU.

You will also want to remember the words to the Falcon fight song:

Forward Falcons
 Forward Falcons, Forward Falcons,
 Fight for victory.
 Show our spirit, make them fear it,
 Fight for dear Bee Gee.
 Forward Falcons, Forward Falcons,
 Make the contest keen.
 Hold up the fame of our mighty name,
 And win for Bowling Green!



TRIVIA QUESTIONS

Roommate assignments in the early years of the college were

- A. in the same room with the same person until graduation.
- B. by choice and changed every semester.
- C. assigned for the first semester and by choice the following semesters.
- D. in the same dorm with a different person ever year until graduation.

Answer: A

1938	1939	1941	1946
The brick house (now the Popular Culture Building) at the corner of College and Wooster streets is purchased and becomes the president's home. Having a Homecoming queen becomes a tradition.	The first men's dormitory, Kohl Hall, is completed.	Rules governing on-campus drinking, smoking, and telephone use are set. The first student union, The Falcon's Nest, is completed.	The secret spirit organization, SIC SIC, is formed.

And on a more serious note,

Alma Mater (written by Edith Ludwig Bell '51)
 Alma Mater, hear us
 As we praise thy name.
 Make us worthy sons and daughters
 Adding to thy fame.
 Time will treat you kindly,
 Years from now you'll be
 Ever dearer in our hearts,
 Our University.
 From your halls of ivy,
 To the campus scene,
 Chimes ring out with gladness
 For our dear Bowling Green.
 When all is just a mem'ry
 Of the bygone days,
 Hear our hymn, dear Alma Mater,
 As thy name we praise.

■ EVENTFUL EVENTS

Many activities are held year after year on the BGSU campus, but some have become hallmarks of your University.

What began as a freshman initiation, with first-year students wearing beanies and participating in a variety of activities to help them adjust to the Bowling Green community, has evolved into Welcome Week, an official orientation to the University. A part of the early fall activities is the President's Picnic, a tradition that began with the inauguration of Dr. Sidney Ribeau as president in 1996.

Later in the fall comes Homecoming, a celebration for all of northwest Ohio, but especially for current students and alumni. The celebration, which originated in 1922, kicks off with a pep rally and fireworks display and includes an annual parade, ending at the football stadium.

Since 1996 the major spring event on campus has been Dance Marathon, the University's largest fundraiser and the largest student-run philanthropy in the state. Students from virtually every organization, and many people from the community, become involved in this project, a joint effort with the Children's Miracle Network, to raise money for chronically ill children in northwest Ohio.

1947	1948	1950	1951
After a 22-year hiatus caused by violence, athletic competition resumes between Bowling Green and Toledo.	Fraternity row is completed and a contract is signed to begin construction of sorority row.	Freddie Falcon appears for the first time at a BG-Ohio University basketball game.	Women students are banned from riding in automobiles.

BGSU also celebrates diversity through a number of campus traditions, including African-American History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, and Native American Month.

Capping off each academic year is the Beyond BG senior celebration, a campus-wide festival to honor BGSU’s graduating seniors.

■ THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE NAMES

Residence Halls

Conklin Hall: Conklin Hall, completed in 1960, was built to serve as a men’s residence hall. It was named after Arch B. Conklin, who served as the first dean of students at Bowling Green State University. He continued in this position until he retired in 1960. As dean of students he oversaw the enrollment and housing of the returning veterans after World War II and the changes occurring in student life and student governance during the 1950s.

Founders Quadrangle: Founders, completed in 1957, was designed to serve as a women’s residence hall. Each of the four residence halls was named for a man who played a major role in the enactment of legislation that created Bowling Green State University.

- **Lowry Hall:** John Lowry, a state legislator, sponsored the bill in the Ohio General Assembly that created Bowling Green Normal School (later Bowling Green State University).
- **Mooney Hall:** Granville Mooney was the speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives at the time the legislation was enacted.
- **Treadway Hall:** Francis Treadway was president of the Ohio Senate at the time the legislation was enacted.
- **Harmon Hall:** Judson Harmon was governor of the state of Ohio when the legislation was enacted and he signed it into law.

Harshman Quadrangle: Harshman was completed in 1964 as part of University planning to double the housing capacity. It was named for Ralph G. Harshman, who was hired as a business professor in 1936 and became dean of the College of Business Administration in 1937. In 1951, he became dean (later vice president) of Administration and in 1961 was named president. He served as president until 1963, when he retired. Students suggested people for whom the halls should be named.

1957	1958	1960	1963
Founders Quadrangle and West Hall open.	The University seal is revised to its current look.	After a contest that lasts five years, the current Alma Mater is selected.	William T. Jerome, the University’s sixth president, moves his office into the newly opened Administration Building.

- **Anderson Hall:** Named after noted Ohio author, Sherwood Anderson, best known for *Winesburg, Ohio*.
- **Bromfield Hall:** Named after Louis Bromfield, novelist and conservationist. He owned Malabar Farm, on which he experimented with soil conservation and organic growing techniques.
- **Chapman Hall:** Named after John Chapman, better known as Johnny Appleseed, who roamed the Ohio frontier planting apple orchards and befriending isolated settlers.
- **Dunbar Hall:** Named after Paul Laurence Dunbar, the first African-American to gain national eminence as a poet. He was from Dayton, Ohio.

Kohl Hall: This building was the first residence hall built for men. It was completed in 1939 with an addition completed in 1962. It was named for Clayton Kohl, first hired as a professor of social sciences in 1920. He was the first member of the faculty to hold a doctorate and was instrumental in developing graduate degree programs. He was a respected teacher and scholar and an inspiring speaker who was well-liked by students.

Kreischer Quadrangle: Kreischer Quadrangle, completed in 1966, was the second of the large, co-ed complexes to be constructed on the campus (Harshman was the first). It was named after Ervin Kreischer, who served as the University's business manager from 1937-1965. In 1964 he became the vice president of finance and served in this position until his retirement in 1965. He was instrumental in obtaining legislation that allowed universities to sell bonds to fund the building of campus buildings, especially residence halls. (As with Harshman, students suggested people for whom the halls should be named.)

- **Ashley Hall:** James Ashley was an Ohio Congressman who introduced the impeachment resolution to remove Andrew Johnson from the presidency in 1867.
- **Batchelder Hall:** Ann Batchelder received an honorary degree from the University in 1950. She was a well-known journalist who served as food editor of the *Ladies Home Journal* for many years.
- **Compton Hall:** The Compton family included scientists and scholars. Karl served as chancellor of MIT, Wilson was president of State College of Washington, and Arthur was chancellor of Washington University.

1965	1967	1970	1971
WBGU-TV begins broadcasting.	Jerome Library opens (previously, the library was in McFall Center). Ground is broken for the Firelands campus.	Four students are killed by National Guardsmen at Kent State University during anti-war protests. Bowling Green is the only public college or university in the state to remain open that spring. The Gospel Choir is formed on campus.	Offenhauer Towers are completed. The Campus Fact Line answers its first call.

- **Darrow Hall:** Clarence Darrow was a famous criminal lawyer. He gained much of his fame when he defended Thomas Scopes in the widely publicized Scopes Monkey Trial (on the teaching of evolution) in Tennessee in 1925.

McDonald Residence Center: This women’s residence center was built in 1962 to house upper class women. It was named for Ralph W. McDonald, the president between 1951 and 1961. During his term of office, he improved the educational background and salaries of faculty and implemented a large building program.

Offenhauer Towers: The last of the large residential complexes to be built by the University was Offenhauer Towers. Twin towers that housed a co-ed complex were completed in 1971 to serve as upper class residence halls. They were named for Roy E. Offenhauer, who served as the University’s second president. He served only for one year and four months, as he was killed in an automobile accident.



TRIVIA QUESTIONS

Before the building of drainage ditches, much of Bowling Green was under water. Even the Indians who hunted here would not make their homes in the area they called

- Rattlesnake Pond.
- Black Swamp.
- Hull’s Trace.
- Muddy Waters.

Answer: B

The first classes convened in September 1914. However, none of the buildings on campus were completed. Where in Bowling Green were the first classes held?

- Wood County Courthouse
- Ridge Street Elementary School
- Armory Building
- Methodist Church

Answer: C

1975	1976	1978	1979
BGSU is listed in the <i>Guinness Book of World Records</i> when 3,376 students join hands to form the longest snake dance ever.	The Little Red Schoolhouse is moved to campus from its original site in Norwalk, Ohio.	The University Honors Program is established.	The Student Recreation Center and the Moore Musical Arts Center open.

Alice Prout Hall: Built as a women’s residence hall in 1955, it was named for the wife of President Frank Prout. During the time that her husband served as president, 1939-1951, she served as an adviser to many campus organizations and a gracious hostess for the official and traditional social events of the University. This hall is being dismantled as part of the expansion and remodeling of the student union.

Rodgers Quadrangle: Built as a men’s residence hall in 1955, it was named for E. Tappan Rodgers who served the University on the Board of Trustees from 1923-1928 and 1943-1961. He was a business and civic leader and publisher of the *Advertiser-Tribune*, in Tiffin, Ohio.

■ ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDINGS

Eppler Physical Education Complex: This complex, completed in 1981, is composed of three segments: the former Men’s Gym, built in 1926 and now named Eppler South; the former Women’s Building, built in 1938 and now named Eppler North; and, a center section, joining the other two buildings, which is Eppler Center. The center section is constructed on the site of the former University Natatorium. The complex was named for Gertrude M. Eppler who joined the physical education faculty in 1941 and became chair of the newly formed women’s Division of the Health and Physical Education Department in 1943. She served as chair until her retirement in 1969. During that time the division grew from a staff of three to a total of twenty full-time instructors and 300 female students majoring in health and physical education. The complex was renovated and re-dedicated in 1995.

Hanna Hall: This building was completed in 1921 and used as an elementary school for the training of new teachers. In 1959 it was dedicated to Myrna Reese Hanna who was the first woman elected to the Ohio General Assembly from Wood County. She was joint author of the 1929 bill changing Bowling Green and Kent from normal schools to state colleges.

Hayes Hall: This building was completed in 1931 as the Practical Arts Building and was remodeled in 1959. At this time it was dedicated to the nineteenth U.S. President, Rutherford B. Hayes, and his wife, Lucy Webb Hayes. The Hayes family resided in Fremont, Ohio.


1980	1983	1984	1985
The natatorium (swimming pool) is torn down to make room for the new Eppler physical education center.	For the first time two women are named to vice-presidential posts.	The Falcon hockey team wins the NCAA national championship.	Ronald Reagan visits BGSU. He is one of several current or soon-to-be presidents to visit the campus or city. Others were Warren G. Harding, Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, John F. Kennedy, Richard Nixon, and Gerald Ford.

Jerome Library: Completed in 1967, the new library was designed to serve the expanding student and faculty population. In 1983 it was dedicated to William T. Jerome, III, who served as president from 1963 to 1970. During his tenure, he oversaw a tremendous expansion of the campus and of the student population, led in the development of the institution's academic reputation, and provided leadership in keeping the University open and safe after the Kent State shootings in May 1970.

Johnston Hall: Originally built to serve as the University Hospital in 1942, Johnston Hall now holds offices for the School of Family and Consumer Sciences. It is named for Dr. H. J. Johnston, a physician from Wood County who served as a member of the University Board of Trustees from 1920-1935 and 1939-1945.

McFall Center: First built as the Library and Gymnasium in 1927, this building now houses the offices of the president and upper-level administrators. It was named in 1976 for Kenneth McFall, who came to the University in 1939, serving as dean of freshmen, dean of the College of Liberal Arts, University provost, University vice president, executive vice president, and secretary to the Board of Trustees. He retired in 1972.

Mileti Alumni Center: The Alumni Center, housing the offices of Alumni Affairs and Development, was completed in 1976 and built entirely with private monies. It was named for Nick Mileti in 1979. Mileti, a 1953 BGSU graduate, has been a long-time financial supporter of the University and served on the Board of Trustees.



TRIVIA QUESTIONS

At one time, both men and women who were discourteous in their smoking habits risked a fine of

- A. \$1
- B. \$3
- C. \$5
- D. no fine

Answer: C

1989	1990	1991	1992
Telephone registration is introduced to BGSU with the Star 90 system. BGSU graduates its 100,000 th student. The first student representatives are named to the University Board of Trustees.	Shuttle service is added as a sole-saving convenience for BG students.	A cultural diversity requirement is added to the University's general education core.	A newly renovated Fine Arts Center opens.

Moore Musical Arts Center: Completed in the fall of 1979, this innovative musical arts building was dedicated to Hollis and Marian Moore. Hollis served as president from 1970 until his untimely death in 1981. Both Hollis and his wife, Marian, were ardent supporters of the arts at the University and in the larger community.

Moseley Hall: Built as the Science Building in 1916, it was dedicated to biology professor, Edwin L. Moseley. Moseley was well-known as a caring and well-respected professor, whose research in the areas of climate prediction and the native plant life of northwest Ohio is still widely known today. Somewhat eccentric and miserly, he left his entire estate to the University to provide scholarships for needy students.

Olscamp Hall: Completed in 1994 and named for Paul J. Olscamp, who served as president from 1983 to 1995, this classroom building provides an environment in which technology is used to enhance teaching and learning.

Overman Hall: Overman Hall was built for the Chemistry Department and completed in 1951. An addition was built in 1960 and it has been renovated since that time. It is named for James Robert Overman, who served 42 years as professor of mathematics and first chair of that department, first dean of the College of Liberal Arts, and first college librarian.

Prout Chapel: The original suggestion for a university chapel came from students in 1948. By 1950, funds were secured and the chapel was completed in



TRIVIA QUESTIONS

Which building on campus supposedly looks like books and bookends?

- A. Jerome Library
- B. Business Administration Building
- C. Education Building
- D. Mathematical Sciences Building

Answer:

1993	1994	1995	1997
A brand new Field House and renovated Hayes and Founders halls are opened. Hayes Hall becomes the campus computer center; Founders, which had offered four- and six-person rooms, offers suite-style living to residential students for the first time.	Olscamp Hall opens, providing students with a new window to the world with its distance-learning capabilities.	BGSU adopts core values and a vision statement for the entire University community.	All residence halls are wired for Ethernet connections to the Internet.

1951. The chapel is used for weddings, music practice, individual meditation and for students who have no home church in Bowling Green. It was dedicated to Frank J. Prout, who was president at the time the chapel was built and was instrumental in securing funding for the building.

Saddlemire Student Services Building: Completed in 1969, this unique building serves as the center for most student-oriented activities as well as the University Bookstore. In 1995, it was dedicated to Gerald L. Saddlemire. He was instrumental in establishing what is now the graduate program in Higher Education and Student Affairs and served as a mentor to many now working in the student affairs area.

Shatzel Hall: Built originally in 1924 as a women's residence hall, Shatzel Hall now holds offices for several departments including Ethnic Studies, Romance Languages, German, Russian, and East Asian Languages. It is named after J. E. Shatzel, who was a member of the Board of Trustees, serving from 1914 to 1924.

Williams Hall: The first building completed when Bowling Green opened its doors as a Normal College was North Dorm, a women's residence hall. Finished in 1915 and soon informally called Williams Hall by students, the Board of Trustees officially named it for the first president, Homer B. Williams, in 1917. Today it houses offices for the departments of History, Political Science and Sociology.



TRIVIA QUESTIONS

This log cabin stood at the site of the current Student Union. It now stands in Portage, Ohio and is used as the American Legion Hall. Its name was

- A. Commons
- B. Faculty Club
- C. Falcon's Nest
- D. Gate Theatre

Answer: C

Have you noticed the street lamps in front of University Hall? These lamps were placed there to ensure the safety of BGSU coeds traveling campus late at night. These structures were nicknamed

- A. security lights.
- B. bug zappers.
- C. purity poles.
- D. lovers lites.

Answer: C

■ ATHLETIC BUILDINGS

Anderson Arena: The basketball arena in Memorial Hall is named after Harold W. Anderson. He was hired in 1942 as the head basketball coach and served in the position for 14 years. Under his coaching, his teams won national fame. They were invited to the National Invitational Tournament five times in six years and won three MAC Championships. He is one of a select few major college coaches whose teams have won more than 500 victories.

Charles Perry Field House: The Field House was dedicated to Charles E. Perry in May 1998. Chuck Perry graduated from BGSU and then returned as director of admissions, director of development and assistant to the president. He founded the Falcon Club and was a long-time supporter of BGSU athletics. After leaving BGSU, he founded Florida International University where he became the youngest university president in the nation.

Doyt Perry Stadium: Both the playing field and the football stadium have been named for one of the most successful and respected coaches in the history of college football, Doyt Perry. Perry, a graduate of BGSU, returned as head football coach in 1955. He coached until 1965. Under his coaching, the Falcons compiled a 77-11-5 record, winning several MAC Championships. His 1959 undefeated team was named the National Small College Champion.



TRIVIA QUESTIONS

In 1926 a student who ran in the halls, failed to clean the bathtub after use or to turn off the lights

- A. was fined \$1 for each infraction
- B. received demerits
- C. was "campused"
- D. was reported to the Dean of Women

Answer: B

When campus trees were trimmed or had to be cut down, President Prout would have them cut into firewood and delivered to

- A. Falcon's Nest
- B. his house or other faculty members' homes
- C. fraternity and sorority houses
- D. university heating plant

Answer: C