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Olivet Presidents: A History of the Office of the President

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OLIVET PRESIDENTS

A History of the Office of the
President

Introduction

Information for this book was acquired from the Olivet Nazarene University Archives Department. Sources include minutes from the Board of Trustees Meetings, letters, university yearbooks (the Aurora), the school's newspaper, (Glimmerglass), and several obituaries in newspapers and funeral programs.

This book gives the reader an overview of each president during their years in office. The last pages are a collage of photos taken during various stages of several of the presidents' lives.

Biographical information about many of the presidents in greater detail may be obtained from the Olivet Nazarene University Archives Department upon request and by appointment only.



25 yrs. old—summer before graduation
from Yale

A. M. Hills 1909-1910 was elected President of the Illinois Holiness University during a Board of Trustees meeting on May 1, 1909. He resigned from office "after a lengthy discussion with the board" during a trustee meeting on March 14, 1910. (Some trustees were "afraid of heresy" because of Dr. Hills' views on post-millennialism.)

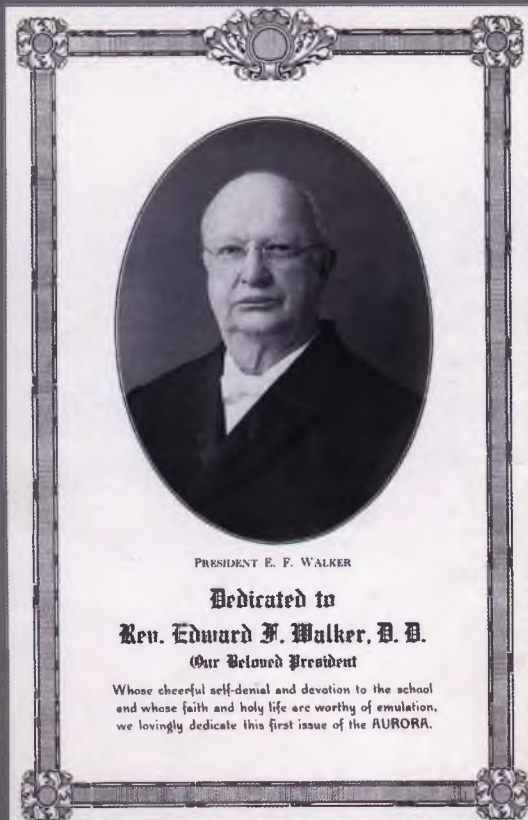
Note: Fred Mesch (professor) was "given charge for the Academic work" the previous school year of **1908-1909**. There was no president.



Ezra T. Franklin 1910-1912 served 2 yrs. as president. When the school became affiliated with the Nazarene church, Franklin left.

The school which was supported by only a few men, mostly local farmers got into financial stress and was taken over by the Nazarene Church. My brother was invited to continue as Pres. provided he would transfer to the Nazarene Church, but being unwilling to change his membership he returned to Astoria as the Pres.

excerpt from a letter written by Franklin's brother to Prof. Carl Mc Clain (author of I Remember).



page from the 1915 Aurora Yearbook

Dr. E. F. Walker, a general superintendent of the Church of the Nazarene, accepted the presidency in addition to his other duties. A graduate department was added and school continued. At the Chicago Central District

excerpts from documents concerning Dr. Walker's acceptance twice.

Will you see immediately that all things be "done decently and in order"?
 I regret that I cannot go at once to Olivet, for it is quite important
 that some one be there with the authority and the responsibility to do some

things that may be necessary at this time, or see that they are done. But I
 presume that they who have been attending to things in the absence of a presi-
 dent will continue so to do as necessary.

Will Elmer be there soon? And will not Prof. Warner, and Prof. Hoover,
 and Prof. E. P. Ellyson help, until I can get straightened around? I hope
 that they can and will help out in the present emergency.

I will settle in the "saddle" just as soon as possible; but in the meantime,
 as well as afterwards, all must pull together, helping all they can.

E. F. Walker 1912-1915 accepted the presidency in 1912. He was also serving a term as General Superintendent of the Nazarene church at that time. He was popular, as evidenced from the page honoring him in the 1st Aurora yearbook. Mary Nesbitt writes in a letter, "Walker was a great friend to children and took much interest in them". On March 3, 1914 Dr. Walker resigns in a Board of Trustees meeting. On August 19, 1915 Dr. Walker accepts the presidency a 2nd time. Then, on March 4, 1916 Dr. Walker resigned a final time. He wanted to withdraw his resignation but the withdrawal was not accepted by the board.

John Norris was voted into office on **April 1, 1914** (just two days after Dr. Walker's resignation). Three days after voting him in, the board conferred an honorary degree of Ph. D. to John Norris. On March 31, 1915 the board rescinds the degree.

elected president

A motion was made, properly seconded, and duly carried that Rev. J.H.Norris be elected as President and Dean of Philosophy, and that Rev. E.P.Ellyson be elected as Vice-President and Dean of Theology, of I.H.U., for the ensuing year.

A motion was made and carried that the Board of Trustees commend the work of our Business Manager, and indorse his plans.

A motion was made and carried that Rev. J.H.Norris assume his duties as President of the University June 1, 1914.

Rev. J.H.Norris was excused from further attendance upon the Board of Trustees at this time. Rev. I.G.Martin was also excused. A motion was made and carried to adjourn to meet at 8-00 A.M., April 1, 1914.

degree rescinded

Olivet, Ill, March 31st, 1915.

Minutes of meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Illinois Holiness University held as per By-laws.

Meeting convened on March 31st, 1915 at 9 a.m.
Meeting opened with a good season of prayer in which several members led. The following members answered to the roll call;

L. Milton Williams.
E. S. Benner
I. G. Martin
H. B. Horrell
H. C. Wilson
E. S. Cunningham
E. F. Richards
C. W. Surber
W. T. Richards
E. G. Anderson

Brother Paul Moore entered after the roll call.

Minutes of the Executive Committee Meetings held since the last regular meeting of the Board were read and approved.

It was properly moved, seconded and carried that we rescind the action taken April 3, 1914 conferring the degree of Ph. D. on John H. Norris.

Brother L. Milton Williams gave a verbal report of

Photo of John Norris N/A

On June 4, 1915 the "hearty support of the whole board" was given to **Rev. A. L. Whitcomb** of University Park, Iowa to serve as president. However, he suffered conflict as to whether or not to serve due to God's call for him to remain in full-time ministry. By August 19, 1915 Walker had again accepted the presidency. (See photos below.)

Photo of A. L. of Whitcomb N/A

for President was cast.

Before the results of the ballot were made known by the tellers, it was properly moved, seconded, and carried that whoever was elected President would be given the hearty support of the whole Board. Tellers reported Rev. A. L. Whitcomb of University Park, Iowa, elected as President for the ensuing year. Motion made, seconded and carried to make the election unanimous.

The financial needs of the school were again given

Brother Williams as to my convictions and gave him authority to secure my release, I may be mistaken brethren, and it distresses me to give you, but the conviction has grown upon me for five weeks that I should be free to the work of the ministry, and so I request that you release me as President of Illinois Holiness University, that I may follow what I believe to be the will of God for me.

Very sincerely your Brother
A. L. Whitcomb.

SEPTEMBER 9, 1915.

Adjourned meeting of the Board of Trustees of Illinois Holiness University convened September 9th, 1915, at 6:45 P. M. pursuant to the call of the Chair; the following members being present:

L. HILTON WILLIAMS	I. G. MARTIN	F. E. RICHARDS
W. T. RICHARDS	PAUL F. MOORE	C. W. SURBER
H. C. WILSON	E. G. ANDERSON	E. S. BENNER

The minutes of previous meeting read and approved.

The resignation of A. L. Whitcomb as President of the Illinois Holiness University was accepted. It was moved by Brother Wilson and seconded by Brother Benner that we resent the action of the Board in conferring the degree of Doctor of Divinity on the above and that he be notified to that effect.

The cash report of the Treasurer was read and accepted.

Moved, seconded, and carried that we extend to Brother Williams a vote of thanks for his faithful services as President of the Board.


On motion, properly seconded and carried, Rev. E. F. Walker was elected President for a term of five years, at a salary of two thousand dollars a year.

Moved, seconded, and carried that Brother Williams conduct the inaugural service of Dr. Walker on Sunday, September 12th.

On motion, meeting adjourned.

the matter, yet after you had definitely and frankly resigned and would not listen to your filling the position, in view of the grave emergency and our earnest solicitation, Dr. Walker has accepted the position and will throw himself into the work of building up a great school.

In addition to Norris and Whitcomb, **Dr. E. P. Ellyson** served as president and acting president throughout the overall time of Walker's term(s). The exact dates that he served are sketchy and difficult to piece together. However, in a chronological study of the presidency, it has been shown that Dr. Ellyson served in the aforementioned positions after Whitcomb's resignation until Walker could put his current affairs in order and return to Olivet.



Faculty

REV. E. P. ELLYSON, D. D.

Acting President and Vice-President Illinois Holiness University. Professor of Philosophy, Social Science, Biblical Theology.

He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper—Psa. 1:3.

Aurora yearbook 1914



DR. EDGAR P. ELLYSON


Dr. S. T. Ludwig
2923 Troost Avenue
Kansas City, Missouri

To the Family of Dr. E. P. Ellyson:

Sorry to hear of the passing of Dr. E. P. Ellyson. His contribution to Olivet as President and Professor of Theology will live as an eternal reward in memory of him. May we assure you of our sincere sympathy and prayers.

Harold W. Reed, President
Olivet Nazarene College

letter written by Dr. Reed



Aurora

FACULTY REPRESENTATIVE, PROF. M. E. ELLYSON

EDITORIAL

ESTHER CARSON	EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
ALBERT L. WALTERS	ASSOCIATE EDITOR
T. W. WILLINGHAM	ASSOCIATE EDITOR
JOSHUA C. BREUNINGER	ART EDITOR
BRUCE DEISENROTH	STENOGRAPHER

MANAGERIAL

WILHEM C. SURBER	MANAGER-IN-CHIEF
J. GLENN GOULD	FIRST ASSISTANT
RALPH SURBER	SECOND ASSISTANT
NAOMI ANDERSON	STENOGRAPHER

PUBLISHED BY THE

Students of
Illinois Holiness University
Nineteen Fifteen

Aurora yearbook 1915

Dr. B. F. Haynes of Kansas City, Missouri was voted into the office of the president on March 29, 1916. He was hired with an understanding that he be "allowed to continue his editorial work in connection with the Herald of Holiness".

Dr. Haynes and some members of the faculty had disagreements that could not be resolved and Dr. Haynes resigned.

Moved by Brother Anderson, seconded by Brother Schurman that we enter into a contract with B. F. Haynes as President for the ensuing five years. Motion prevailed.

excerpts from Board of Trustees meetings



At a special meeting of the Board of Trustees of Olivet University, held July 11th, 1917, the following resolution was adopted.

After careful, prayerful and prolonged consideration of the extremely unfortunate controversy that exists between Dr. Haynes and certain members of the Faculty, we the Board of Trustees, feel that we have been unable to fix the blame for this sad condition.

We therefore reluctantly and with deepest sorrow accept the resignation of our highly esteemed President, Dr. B. F. Haynes.

It is the sense of the Board that we express to Dr. Haynes our highest appreciation for valuable services rendered, and also assure him of our sincere love and confidence, and we are thankful to God and to him for his devotion and loyalty to the great cause we represent.

It was agreed that the salary of Dr. Haynes continue until September 10th, 1917.

Following Dr. Haynes resignation, the office of the president went through a busy succession of candidates. **Rev. M. E. Borders** was asked to fill the vacancy left by Dr. Haynes. "He concluded (in a speech to the Board of Trustees) that he could not see his way clear to accept it." **Professor Hoover** became 'acting' president in September 1917. In December of 1917, **R. T. Williams** was invited to take office and did not accept. President Hoover remained in office. Then, in an evening session of the Board in March 1918, Borders was (again) asked whether he would fill the presidency. He accepted. However, on September 2, 1918, Borders offered his resignation and it was accepted. In the same meeting **Prof. L. C. Hawkins** was elected acting president. He was in office a short time and resigned. **Dr. Akers** became acting president until Dr. Moore was voted in.



Rev. M.E. Borders

photo of Dr. Akers N/A

photo of Hawkins N/A



J.E. Hoover

J. E. L. Moore was unanimously voted into the office of President of Olivet University on January 9, 1919 during an evening session of the board of trustees. By the end of July of the same year, Moore was securely in office and was a working president. Dr. Moore had previously served as president of Central Nazarene College and Eastern Nazarene College. The finances at Olivet were of utmost importance to the president and he spent much time traveling to raise money. The Aeolian Ladies Quartet often aided him in this endeavor.

Then, in February of 1922, during an evening session of the board, President Moore made a statement that "he has felt for some time a leading and a call to other fields of labor, and feels that we should tender his resignation to take effect at the close of the school year."



RECOMMENDATION--Whereas, Dr. J. E. L. Moore, our esteemed President, has felt for some months that the providences of God were calling him to other fields of usefulness for our beloved Church; and whereas he has served the general and specific interests of our school with untiring efforts and deathless devotion for three years, bringing untold blessing to every department of our great institution: Be it resolved, that we, Trustees of Olivet University in session at Olivet, Illinois, February 3, 1922, hereby express our deepest appreciation, warmest love and utmost confidence in him and assure him that we appreciate his valuable service during these three years of hard work. In losing him we are giving to our general Church an accomplished scholar, as well as a preacher and evangelist equalled by few and surpassed by none. Be it further resolved, That wherever God's Spirit may lead Dr. Moore, our prayers and love and confidence shall follow him.

Signed, Board of Trustees, Olivet University
E. C. Anderson Sec.

Dr. John Matthews succeeded President Moore. He was a preacher during a revival service held during Moore's presidency. Matthews received 10 of the 12 votes cast. A service was held in the chapel and Rev. E. G. Anderson told the students of Dr. Moore's resignation and Dr. Matthews' new post. It was "undoubtedly one of the most gracious services held in a long time..." and the student body was clear on their approval of the board's choice in a new president.

By May 1922, Dr. Matthews had resigned and Olivet University was again in need of a president. On May 25, the board held a meeting in which they unanimously elected **Dr. J. B. Chapman** president. There is no record of Dr. Chapman's refusal but in a board meeting on May 26, **Dean Sanford** was elected president of Olivet University for a term of one year.

President N. W. Sanford served from 1922-1926. During the May 26 meeting of the Board of Trustees, his one year contract was rescinded and a new contract for a three year term was put into place. He was a well-rounded, accomplished man when he came to Olivet as a professor, head of the department of Philosophy and Psychology, Dean and also Registrar. He was an "affectionate husband and father" and "fond of flowers". President Sanford was also a deeply spiritual Christian who had received the blessing of Entire Sanctification.



There is much to be said about, and in favor of, **T. W. Willingham**. He served as president of the college from **1926-1938**. This happened just before midnight on the same day that he had (earlier) saved the college from financial ruin by bidding on and purchasing it during a foreclosure sale. Willingham masterminded the whole financial plan (which was complicated) to save the college and gave credit entirely to God for giving him the knowledge to bring about such a task. He believed in the gift of unknown tongues and that God gave him insight about coming events or how to handle situations. Chalfant and he once had a conversation in which Chalfant used the word fanaticism to describe Willingham's beliefs (although the two were friends). About the use of the word fanaticism, Willingham said that not everyone liked his revelations but he never quoted God on anything that didn't come to pass. He said there was a fanaticism in the starting of the school; that the central thesis was, "God leading them, and they weren't going to listen to anyone else..."

T. W. Willingham accomplished much during his 12 years of presidency:

- When he began his presidency, there were 4 teachers who held Master's degrees, 11 who held Bachelor's and 6 who had no degrees. At the end of his term, 13 had Master's, 6 had Bachelor's and none without any degree.
- The size of the library doubled, the entire collection was catalogued and a competent librarian was put in place.
- The physical equipment of the school was greatly increased.
- "Friendly" communication was kept with the University of Illinois (Olivet's accrediting agency) and students taking a full four years' work at Olivet were given a graduate standing at U of I after a summer term or 1 semester.

(cont'd)

This ready admission was also granted by many other universities throughout the Midwest.

- Olivet College "moved steadily from a Bible school type toward a College of Liberal Arts".
- While president, Willingham, by his own admission, paid tithes to his local church, he also paid another approximate tenth to the workings of the college. When he was finally voted out of office, he was given another 2 years' pay (in accordance with his contract) and the entirety of it (and more) went into the college coffers. He was a giver as evidenced in his obituary.

Willingham was a much-loved president. The students dedicated the 14th Aurora Yearbook to him.

TO HIM
WHOSE ABILITY AS FINANCIER
GUIDED OLIVET THROUGH THE CRISIS
WHOSE UNTIRING EFFORTS AS PRESIDENT
WHOSE PRAYERFUL EXHORTATIONS TO HOLY LIVING
HAS LIGHTED THE WAY TO A BETTER AND
MORE USEFUL LIFE FOR MANY
TO OUR STRONG COUNSELLOR
PRESIDENT AND FRIEND
T. W. WILLINGHAM
WE GRATEFULLY DEDICATE THIS
THE FOURTEENTH VOLUME
OF
THE AURORA



Dr. A. L. Parrott served in the office of the President from **1938-1945**. In 1939 a fire destroyed much of the campus which could have been the end of the college. However, Dr. Parrott located the empty St. Viator College campus in Bourbonnais, IL and together with the Board of Trustees purchased the property and moved. At this time the college changed names and became Olivet Nazarene College. Overall, this was an especially troublesome time for the school. Although the Board of Trustees supported the move, many others did not. In addition to this, the country was immersed in World War II. In addition to these accomplishments, Dr. Parrott:

- 1.) tripled the colleges' material assets
- 2.) doubled the annual income from church constituencies
- 3.) strengthened the faculty
- 4.) achieved formal accreditation from the University of Illinois and Illinois State Department of Education

At the end of his service, Dr. Parrott left the college debt free with the new campus paid off and with \$150,000.00 saved to build a new dormitory.

Sadly, in 1945, the student council formally decided they did not approve of the way that Dr. Parrott led the college. The Board asked for his resignation which he supplied in a gracious manner. The Board eventually realized its mistake.



Grover Van Duyn served the office of the presidency from **1945-1948**. President Van Duyn's years of service were fairly uneventful. There were no monumental catastrophes and yet, he had his share of presidential responsibilities. A "mature" night watchman was hired rather than using a young man attending the college. Students were dismissed because of smoking and others due to drinking. Also dismissed were students who failed to attend chapel. However, enrollment increased rapidly and a new girls' dorm had to be built. The library holdings were increased considerably. A new boiler and smokestack was a desperate need before cold weather set in. And so went the responsibilities and decisions of President Van Duyn until his written resignation was submitted to the Board of Trustees on May 24, 1948.





Dr. Selden Kelley served as President of Olivet Nazarene College from **1948-1949**. His transition into office was a smooth one as he and outgoing President Van Duyn agreed as to how and when that should occur. In December of 1948 President Kelley developed a sinus infection and spent time in a Chicago hospital. He then developed a "pulmonic infection". Throughout his lingering illness President Kelley set about the tasks of presidential business; making recommendations, purchasing property....until he died on April 9, 1949. The Executive Board of the college approved a request by the senior class to have Dr. Kelley's name on diplomas and certificates that were to be issued at commencement. The nearby Catholic grade school was closed on his funeral day out of respect and admiration. Dr. Kelley used every minute of his presidency to his fullest potential as evidenced in his last letter to the Board of Trustees. " I can say there has not been one minute...that I have not tried to crowd in two minutes of service..."

Dr. Harold Reed was president twenty-six years. He served from **1949-1975**. At the time of his retirement, his tenure was the longest of any college president in the state of Illinois. Dr. Reed's philosophy on doing his job well was that "the winds of intellectual thought have to blow through the mind of a college president or he'll go dead". During the summer months, he tried to read a book a week (mostly about the six major fields of study taught at Olivet). Within the first three years of his presidency, Dr. Reed had the college operating in the black financially. During his twenty six year term he gained full accreditation by the North Central Association, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, Master of Arts Program and the National League for Nursing. As president, Dr. Reed also constructed 13 buildings on Olivet's campus, and was active in the development and construction of Riverside Hospital. This was all accomplished with a loving wife by his side as they raised a son. It has been said of President Reed, "If you seek his monument, look around you".



Dr. A. Leslie Parrott followed his fathers' footsteps in the office of the president and served from **1975-1991**. In 1975 Dr. Parrott left the presidency (in which he served a 5 year term) at Eastern Nazarene College to lead Olivet from college status to university. The beautification of the campus was important to Dr. Parrott and upon the school's 75th anniversary, he commissioned a mural (7ft. x 70ft.) painted in the student center depicting the school's "roots". Dr. Parrott had a 4 point system that he utilized while he was president. 1.) Olivet should be "uniquely Nazarene"-denominational in commitment and ecumenical in spirit. 2.) The university should strive for excellence-from sweeping floors to planning programs. 3.) The university must be a service institution for the churches that support it and also for the local community. 4.) Olivet must meet the needs of students of all learning ability levels. Dr. Parrott was also a prolific writer. Dr. John Bowling commented, "His books, speeches, and study aids will lengthen his shadow for generations". By the time Dr. Parrott retired, he had signed 6,000 diplomas (half of all that had been awarded in the history of the institution at that time).



Dr. John C. Bowling 1991- The pastor of College Church (located across the street from Olivet's campus) awoke at 1:30 a.m. to the phone ringing. He answered and a secretary's voice said, "Dr. Bowling, Dr. Wiggs would like a word with you." Next he heard the chairman of the Board of Directors saying, "I am calling to inform you that the Board of Trustees has just elected you as the next president of Olivet."

Olivet Nazarene University has flourished under Dr. Bowling's care. Academics, new buildings, campus beautification and community relations are strong points for the current president. As Dr. Bowling resides in the office of the president, Olivet continues to be an institution where increasing numbers receive an "Education With A Christian Purpose".





Mr. and Mrs. Grover Van Duyn



Dr. and Mrs. Harold Reed



Dr. Selden Kelley's funeral



Dr. Leslie Parrott in his presidential
golf cart



Dr. Leslie Parrott enjoying a moment
of relaxation



A. L. Parrott preaching



Board of Trustees confers the degree
of Doctor of Divinity on President
Willingham in 1933



Dr. and Mrs. John Bowling



Sanford in the presidents' office



Dr. Bowling enjoying his presidency



Dr. Walker enjoying Olivet's maple camp.



A. L. Parrott in a humorous moment.



Sanford at a croquet game.



Newport W. Sanford (2nd from l.), Bud Robinson (2nd from r.), E. O. Chalfant (far r.), and others.



T. W. Willingham and E. O. Chalfant