O
n Thursday, the first Instant, the public Commencement was held in the College of this City, before a vast Concours of People, of all Banks and Distinctions; and the Degrees, conferred on this Occasion, were as follows, viz

Bachelors of Arts. Patrick Alison, Thomas Bond, Lindsay Coates, Robert Goldsborough, Whitnel Hill, John Johnston, Thomas Mifflin, Robeson Yorke.

Masters of Arts. Rev. Mr. Jacob Duché, Rev. Mr. James Latta; Josiah Martin, junior, Francis Hopkinson and John Morgan, Esquires; Mr. Hugh Williamson, Mr. Samuel Magaw, and Mr. Joseph Montgomery.

At the same Time also, the honorary Degrees of Master of Arts were conferred on the following Gentlemen, viz. Rev. Mr. Samuel Davies, President of the College in New-Jersey; Rev. Mr. Philip Reading, at Apoquinimink; Rev. Mr. Thomas Barton, at Lancaster; Rev. Mr. Samuel Cooke, at Shrewsbury; Rev. Mr. Robert M'Kean, at Brunswick; Rev. Mr. Samson Smith, at Chestnut-Level; Rev. Mr. Matthew Wilson, in Kent County.

The Orations, Disputations, and other Academical Exercises, were agreeably intermixed with sundry Anthems and Pieces of Psalmody, sung by the Charity Boys, attended with an Organ, which the Liberality of the Town lately bestowed. At the Close of the whole, the Audience was most delightfully entertained with two Anthems sung by several Ladies and Gentlemen, who have not been ashamed to employ some of their Leisure Hours in learning to celebrate their Maker’s Praises with Grace and Elegance.

One of the Students, who received his Master’s Degree on this Occasion, conducted the Organ with that bold and masterly Hand, for which he is celebrated; and several of the Pieces were also his own Composition. In a Word, the whole gave great Satisfaction to strangers as well as others; and certainly such Improvements in useful Science and polite Arts, in this Part of the World, must give a very high Pleasure to every ingenuous Mind.

The University of Pennsylvania proudly proclaims itself one of the “ancient Ivies” and indeed, it is. In 1760, there were just six institutions of higher education in the American colonies and Penn had already been among them for more than a decade. Benjamin Franklin had been Penn’s founder and first builder. In 1749 he had called for the establishment of a “Public Academy in the City of Philadelphia” and organized a group of Philadelphia’s wealthiest and most prominent citizens as Trustees for the accomplishment of that purpose. In 1750 he led the Trustees in acquiring control of a bankrupt 1740 educational trust fund and its substantial, but unfinished building. In January 1751, after nearly a year of construction and preparation, the Academy’s first students enrolled and the first faculty began to teach. In September of that same year, the obligations of the educational trust fund were met when, in the same building, Franklin and the Trustees opened a charity school for the children of Philadelphia’s working poor.

From the moment of their inception, both the Academy and the Charitable School flourished. Franklin and other Trustees brought this to the attention of Thomas and Richard Penn, the brothers who had inherited the Province of Pennsylvania from their father and who were formally known as the “Proprietaries and Governors in Chief” of the Province. In 1753 the Penns rewarded Franklin’s initiative by granting a corporate charter to the “Trustees of the Academy and Charitable School in the Province of Pennsylvania” and by making

250 YEARS AGO: Francis Hopkinson (1737-1791) was one of the most talented and most distinguished of Penn’s 18th century graduates. A member of the first graduating class, that of 1757, he afterwards trained in the law, served in the Continental Congress, and signed the Declaration of Independence. He was also an accomplished artist, musician, and playwright. It was he who played the new organ at the Commencement of 1760 and who, according to the newspaper’s account, “conducted the Organ with that bold and masterly Hand, for which he is celebrated; and several of the Pieces were also his own Composition.” Engraving by James Barton Longacre from a painting by Robert Edge Pine.

Collections of the University Archives and Records Center.
250 YEARS AGO: William Smith (1727-1803), who officiated at the Commencement of 1760, was named Professor of Logic, Rhetoric, Ethics and Natural Philosophy in 1754 and served as Provost of the College from 1755 until 1779 and a second time from 1789 to 1791. Portrait by Edward Dalton Marchant, 1871 (copy of the original by Gilbert Stuart).

One Hundred Fifty Years Ago

The Commencements of 1860

The annual commencement of the medical department of the University of Pennsylvania took place yesterday afternoon, at the Musical Fund Hall. Prior to the commencement exercises, the graduates, professors, trustees, &c., gathered in the rotunda of the University building, to take part in the ceremony of presenting to the board of trustees the portrait of George B. Wood, M.D., LL.D., professor of medicine and clinical medicine, on the occasion of his retirement from the chair he had so long occupied. Dr. J. Campbell Shorb, of Maryland, made the presentation speech. After referring to the retirement of Professor Wood, and the regret of the class at hearing of his intention to leave the chair he had occupied so long, he said: “It was under the promptings of this feeling that a meeting was called in the University on the evening of the 29th of November. A preamble was read expressive of the deep regret of the class at the departure of Dr. Wood, of our lasting gratitude to him, and of our desire that, as a parting legacy, he would allow us to have his portrait painted and placed in the Wistar and Horner Museum. Resolutions were read and adopted appointing a committee to convey to Dr. Wood the wishes of the class. In a kind and grateful letter, he granted our request; the painting was immediately commenced, and finished some four or five weeks since.”

After the ceremony of presenting the portrait was concluded, the graduates formed in procession and, preceded by the professors and officers of the University, they proceeded to Musical Fund Hall, where they were greeted by a full audience, of which a very large portion was composed of ladies. After the performance of appropriate music, prayer was offered by Rev. Albert Barnes. John F. Frazer, LL.D., Vice Provost of the institution, then conferred the degree of Doctor of Medicine upon the following-named gentlemen:

[The reporter then listed the names of the 169 graduates, with the states of their respective residences.]

The Valedictory Address was delivered to the graduates by Dr. Joseph Carson, Professor of Materia Medica and Pharmacy.

He congratulated the graduates on having, at last, reached the object of their hopes. He spoke at length, of the practice and science of medicine, of its advance, and of the relations existing between the physician and his patient.

At the conclusion of the valedictory, the audience separated, after a benediction and music.

Philadelphia Press
16 March 1860

The Commencements of 1860 show clearly the rise of professional education at Penn in the mid-19th century; particularly the forging of a major enterprise by the School of Medicine. The School’s faculty had proprietary control of the institution; they collected tuition, paid the School’s expenses, and divided the profits among themselves. They had grown the number of the School’s graduates from less than ten in 1795 to sixty-five in 1810, to 111 in 1825, to...
168 in 1840, and then held steady at about 170 for the past two decades. In the 1859-60 academic year the School of Medicine enrolled 528 students, representing twenty-three states, the District of Columbia, and seven foreign countries. The faculty had funded the design and construction of the medical buildings on the Ninth Street campus and they supplemented their lectures with clinical instruction at the Pennsylvania Hospital, at Eighth and Spruce Streets, just four blocks away. In short, the School of Medicine conducted its affairs largely independent of the Provost and the Trustees of the University. Until the final decade of the 19th century the unique status of the School was well illustrated by its academic calendar – considerably shorter than that of the College – and its stand-alone annual commencement.

In 1860 the School of Medicine combined its commencement with a ceremony honoring the retirement of its senior professor of medicine, George Bacon Wood. Wood was much more than a medical professor; he was more nearly a medical statesman. He was Penn educated, with degrees from both the College and the School of Medicine. He had been a member of the medical faculty for twenty-five years, during which time he had also been Attendant Physician of the Pennsylvania Hospital. He was President of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, a past President of the American Medical Association and in 1859 had been elected President of the American Philosophical Society. In 1863 he would be elected a Trustee of the University and in 1865 he would endow the School of Medicine. The medical Class of 1860, in commissioning a portrait of George Bacon Wood and donating it to the University, had justly recognized one of the great 19th-century figures at the University of Pennsylvania.

The School of Medicine conducted its 1860 commencement in a manner more familiar to us today than did the College. The ceremony’s emphasis was not so much the academic attainments of the students – though the conferring of the M.D. degree certainly acknowledged that achievement. The emphasis was rather on the commencement speaker and the significance of his address for the newly-credentialed graduates. By 1860 Joseph Carson had been a member of the School’s faculty for ten years, serving throughout that time as Professor of Materia Medica and Pharmacy. Perhaps more importantly, at least on this occasion, he was George Bacon Wood’s protégé. Carson was an able and accomplished scientific thinker and writer. He had edited the American Journal of Pharmacy for fourteen years. In 1865 he would author and publish the centennial history of the School of Medicine. On this occasion, however, his aim was to inspire in the School’s graduates a life-long dedication to the highest ideals of the medical profession. The long quotation from his address, which was published in the Philadelphia newspapers and quoted above, strongly suggests that his oratorical skills were thought equal to the task. Joseph Carson was the model of the modern commencement speaker.

The commencement of the Department of Arts of the University of Pennsylvania took place yesterday morning in the presence of a large audience, at the Musical Fund Hall. The faculty and students walked in procession from the college building to the Hall, which they reached about ten o’clock. Some choice music by the Germania Orchestra preceded the opening of the exercises. After a prayer, the order of exercises was as follows: Greek Salutatory Oration, David B. Willson; “Utilitarianism,” Theodore H. Reaktir; “Mountains,” Woodruff Jones; “The Caesars and Napoleons,” Archibald H. Engle; “The Diamond Necklace,” George W. Powell; “The Just Aims of Youth,” George M. Bredin; “The Dissolution of Empires,” Robert White; “Non Sibi, sed Bono Publico,” Charles Morrison.

[The reporter then listed the names of the fifty-six graduates, beginning with the Bachelors of Arts, continuing with the Masters of Arts, and concluding with the Bachelors of Laws.]

The Degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred on Rev. James Lloyd Breck. The Valedictory was delivered by William W. White.
The most striking feature of the University Commencement of 1860 was its adherence to tradition. The ceremony of July 1860 was virtually indistinguishable from that of a century earlier. The public procession in academic garb, the entrance into a grand auditorium, the accompanying music, the initial student address in Greek, the six student addresses in English, and the valedictory were all borrowed directly from Penn’s first commencements. Likewise, the undergraduate curriculum in 1860 was little different from its counterpart in 1760. While professional education – led by the School of Medicine, but by 1860 also including the Law School and the School of Engineering and Applied Science – was transforming the landscape of American universities, the liberal arts and sciences were mired in the past. Another generation would pass before this too would change.

FIFTY YEARS AGO:
The Commencements of 1960

During the middle years of the twentieth century, Penn held two, regular graduation ceremonies: the Mid-Year Convocation and the annual Commencement. The University typically conferred several hundred degrees at the Mid-Year Convocation, which permitted it to be held in Irvine Auditorium. The annual Commencement was much the larger of the two – the University typically conferred more than 2,000 degrees – and it was held in the Municipal Auditorium (where the Ruth and Raymond Perelman Center for Advanced Medicine now stands). The traditions observed at both events were similar in several respects to those held by the College a century and two centuries earlier – the participants still dressed in academic regalia; the procession, accompanied by music, was still an extraordinary parade; the awarding of degrees still symbolized the achievement of a lifelong credential of enormous importance – but the program was now focused – like that of the School of Medicine in 1860 – on the inspirational leadership of the speaker and the recipients of honorary degrees. Student “orators” had given way to those who had been successful and become prominent in American and international life. In 1960 Penn’s Mid-Year Convocation and its annual Commencement adhered closely to this new statement of educational values. It is the model that continues to the present day.

600 Penn Graduates Get Degrees Today

Dr. George B. Kistiakowsky, special assistant to President Eisenhower, will speak at graduation exercises for 600 University of Pennsylvania students Saturday morning and will receive an honorary degree himself. Dr. Kistiakowsky, on leave as Professor of Chemistry at Harvard University to advise the President on science and technology, will receive an honorary Doctor of Science degree.

Honorary Doctor of Law degrees will be conferred upon State Supreme Court Justice John C. Bell, Jr.; Dr. Millard E. Gladfelter, president of Temple University; and Dr. Jonathan E. Rhoads, former provost of the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Rhoads is a professor at the University’s School of Medicine and Graduate School of Medicine. He is director of the Harrison Department of Surgical Research.

University president Gaylord P. Harnwell will confer both the honorary and academic degrees. The 600 graduates represent 15 schools of the University. Dr. Charles C. Price, Professor of Chemistry at the University, will present Dr. Kistiakowsky at the honorary degree ceremony. Horace Stern, former Chief Justice of the State Supreme Court, will present Justice Bell. Dr. Loren C. Eiseley, university provost, will present Dr. Gladfelter. Dr. I.S. Ravdin, Penn’s vice president for medical affairs, will present Dr. Rhoads.

Philadelphia Inquirer
Saturday morning, 13 February 1960

In February 1960 George Bogdan Kistiakowsky (1900 – 1982) was the highest ranking scientist in the U.S. government. Eight months earlier President Dwight D. Eisenhower had named Kistiakowsky his Special Assistant for Science and Technology. Kistiakowsky had won international honors as a research scientist, concentrating on the kinetics of chemical reactions. During World War II he had developed the device which through the use of chemical explosives had detonated the atomic bomb. He was a native of Kiev, in the Ukraine, who, as a young man, had fought on the losing side in the Russian revolution.

50 YEARS AGO: Freshman Convocation and Opening Exercises. The students pictured in this view were walking east on Spruce Street (with Houston Hall in the background), on their way to Irvine Auditorium, where, at Noon, on Friday, 16 September 1960, University President Gaylord P. Harnwell welcomed 1,385 members of the freshman class to the University of Pennsylvania. In the fall of 1960 the freshman class was composed of 1,023 men and 362 women, selected from a total applicant pool of 6,259 high school graduates. Photograph by the “Philadelphia Inquirer.”

Collections of the University Archives and Records Center.
In his address at Penn’s Mid-Year Convocation, he spoke both to scientific advance and to national security:

To accomplish two of the objectives stated in the Constitution – to provide for the common defense and to insure domestic tranquility – we have marshaled strong human resources. Many brave and imaginative men and women are helping to push outward the boundaries of knowledge and to reduce frontiers of ignorance. I need not discourse on the scientific and technological contest with the Soviet Union, which today involves our national prestige, and tomorrow, perhaps, our very survival.

Kistiakowsky continued to serve as Special Assistant to President Eisenhower until the end of the President’s term in January 1961. He served on the advisory board to the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency from 1962 to 1969, but resigned as a foreign policy adviser in 1967, when he made public his views against the Vietnam War. Still later, he was chairman of the Council for a Livable World, a Washington-based group seeking to reduce the danger of nuclear war through arms control. He retired from his Harvard professorship in 1971.

The Commencement of 1960 featured a speaker of great, national influence. John Jay McCloy (1895 – 1989) was chairman of so many boards and had his hands in so many ventures that he was once called the informal “chairman of the Establishment,” a group that “fixes major goals and constitutes itself a ready pool of manpower for the more exacting labors of leadership.” McCloy was a lawyer and diplomat, who advised American presidents from Franklin D. Roosevelt to Ronald Reagan. He was conservative in outlook, but not partisan. “I saw my public service in terms of getting things done,” he later said, “I never considered myself a politician, but rather a lawyer, so the question I asked myself in the various jobs I had was, ‘What should we do to solve the problem at hand?’ Then I tried to proceed accordingly.” Pragmatic, versatile, and reliable, McCloy would, within a year’s time, be named President Kennedy’s chief disarmament adviser and negotiator, a position he used to help create an atmosphere of respect and civility which could lead to peaceful relations between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

McCloy Assails Eisenhower Critics In Penn Address

‘Political Aspirants’ Hit For Summit Attacks

Former U.S. High Commissioner for Germany John J. McCloy Wednesday lashed out at the “spate of gratuitous criticisms” of President Eisenhower that followed the summit collapse. Speaking at the University of Pennsylvania’s 204th commencement exercises, held in Convention Hall, McCloy blamed “columnists and some political aspirants,” but mentioned no names. “The tone of some of these,” he said, “made one feel the commentators were quite put out that Khrushchev so behaved in Paris that it was difficult to place all the blame on the President.”

“Now, if as seems to be the case, we face the prospect of a continued Soviet pattern of vilification in connection with our exchanges and attempts to negotiate differences in this deadly serious business of maintaining peace, how much more necessary is it that the Free World furnish enlightenment and well-considered action which educated and courteous officials are capable of providing.”

50 YEARS AGO: Hill College House, enclosed center court. The most striking interior feature of architect Eero Saarinen’s design was the feeling of great open space given by its center court, enclosed only by a wall of glass. Photograph taken in 1960 by Lawrence S. Williams, Inc., Photography, Upper Darby, Pennsylvania.

Collections of the University Archives and Records Center.
McClory, now board chairman of Chase Manhattan Bank, New York, and chairman of the board of trustees of the Ford Foundation, called attention to the demand on the part of many commentators for a grand restatement of our national purpose. “The vigor of the Communist methods and objectives,” he said, “the economic resurgence of the entire Sino-Soviet bloc, the whole impetus of the scientific revolution have caused these people to express a need for new inspirational symbols to stimulate our progress.”

“The stir that is occurring in the under-developed areas of the world, the sense of revolutionary expectancy on the part of so many that their lot is about and ought to be radically changed, the threat of nuclear war, the missile gap, the economic challenge, all have made many of us wonder what our destiny is to be.”

“It is a matter of personal dedication rather than restatement of purpose of which we stand in need,” he said, and urged the graduates to equip themselves to perform public service “when the demand and opportunity arises.”

Dr. Gaylord H. Harnwell, president of the university, presided at the exercises, at which 2,353 degrees in course were awarded. Honorary degrees were given McClory; Dr. John W. Knutson, assistant surgeon general and chief dental officer of the U.S. Public Health Service; Lauriston S. Taylor, chief of the division of atomic and radiation physics, National Bureau of Standards; Dr. Jacob Viner, professor of economics at Princeton University; Dr. Nelson Glueck, president of Hebrew Union Jewish Institute of Religion; and Dr. Eric A. Walker, president of Pennsylvania State University.

Dr. Harnwell called attention to the Rev. Andrew H. Neilly, 70, retired United Presbyterian clergyman, who was among the graduates of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. The clergyman received a long ovation.

Philadelphia Inquirer
Thursday morning, 16 June 1960

TODAY
Penn in 2010
Continuing to Drive Progress in a New Decade

Despite the largely disenchanted events of the past ten years – recently dubbed by Time Magazine as “the Decade from Hell” – we at Penn have avoided 21st-century ennui by cultivating creativity, collaboration, and innovation. In the new millennium, we forged ahead in teaching, research, and service. We also opened 14 new buildings, completed the historic acquisition of the former postal lands, and launched our ambitious campus development plan, Penn Connects.

Our partnerships to create a more vibrant and safer West Philadelphia thrived. In recognition of our ongoing efforts to engage with our neighbors and community leaders, the Survey of Best College and University Civic Partnerships recognized Penn as the “Best Neighbor” among national colleges and universities. This first-place award made special mention of our university-assisted school model, our service learning curriculum, and our Penn Connects master plan.

We also strengthened our academic research collaborations in Africa, Asia, Europe, and South America. In Botswana, we helped to build institutional capacity to mitigate the devastating effects of HIV and AIDS and partnered with the University of Botswana, the Ministry of Health, and Princess Marina Hospital on clinical care, research, and education. In China, we built upon our longstanding collaborations with eminent universities and expanded our strategic partnerships with Tsinghua University and Shanghai Jiao Tong University.

In 2009, we made significant progress toward reaching our Penn Compact goals and rounded out the “aights” with a series of noteworthy achievements. To honor our ongoing commitment to increasing access, we expanded our financial aid budget, implemented a no-loan policy for all aid-eligible undergraduates, and again increased base stipends for all graduate students. Our current year’s tuition increase was the smallest at Penn since 1968.

While attracting the finest students and scholars to Penn, we also hired eminent faculty members and completed capital projects in areas of strategic importance. Two new Penn Integrates Knowledge professors joined our ranks this year: Daniel S. Och University Professor Dr. Shelley Berger, a world-renowned genetics researcher, and Dr. Karen Glanz, a globally influential public health scholar.

The Annenberg Public Policy Center opened, providing a beautiful new forum for students and scholars, and the long-anticipated Roberts Proton Therapy Center brought state-of-the-art cancer care to our advanced and integrated medical center.

Now, we begin a new decade together, uplifted by our achievements and optimistic about the future. We will continue to make a Penn education accessible; we will continue to integrate knowledge and seek innovative ways of addressing complex problems; we will continue to build a culture that fosters academic eminence, and we will continue to engage with local and global communities as we work to improve the world.

Milestones give each of us an opportunity to reflect on the past and look ahead to the future. We made it through the “Decade from Hell” together and, in the process, managed to move our University closer than ever to eminence. With the Penn Compact as our guide, we will drive ever greater progress far into the future.

President Amy Gutmann
excerpted from Almanac
12 January 2010

In 2010 the Penn Compact with its threefold theme – increasing access, integrating knowledge, and engaging locally and globally – leads the University of Pennsylvania into the future. It does so in partnership with the campus building plan, Penn Connects, and the $3.5 billion capital campaign, Making History. Working together these three initiatives promise to achieve President Gutmann’s objective for Penn: from excellence to eminence. Today, as the University community celebrates the Commencement of 2010, it is useful to reflect on the institution’s oldest traditions and to recognize that Penn is keeping faith with the best of its past.

Mark Frazier Lloyd
Director
University Archives and Records Center