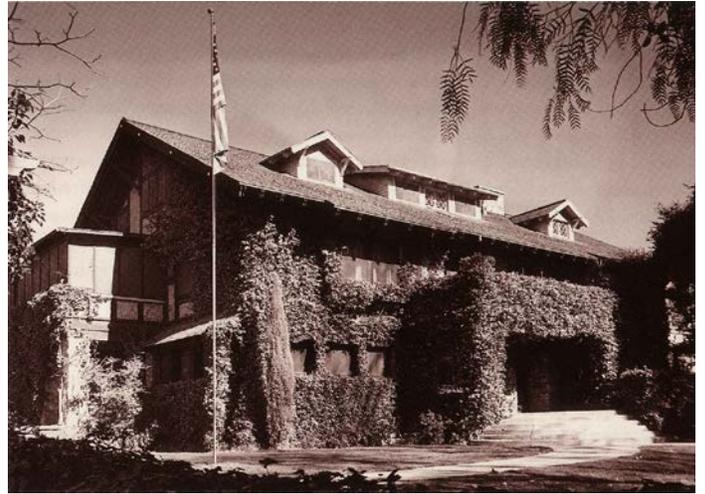


The Claremont McKenna College Story

An Idea Becomes a College

In the true spirit of the “Can Do” attitude so prevalent following WWII, the pioneering founders of what is now Claremont McKenna College received approval from the Board of Fellows of the Claremont group on June 4, 1946 to begin the Claremont Undergraduate School for Men. It was the fourth college in the Claremont group. With roughly \$88,000, mostly in pledges, 15 acres of rocky, brush-covered land on which sat a lone house, and a “school director” committed to teaching summer school at Harvard, the founders quickly set about to launch their great vision.

As early as 1922, the President of Pomona College had planted the seeds for the establishment of a group of colleges modeled on Oxford/Cambridge. However, after the founding



Story House, the former residence of Sarah Bixby Smith, was the first residence hall, commons, and gathering point for students and faculty.

of Scripps College for Women (in 1926), the planned launching of Claremont Undergraduate School for Men was stalled by the Crash of 1929, the Great Depression, and WWII. With the end of the War, and the G.I. Bill in place, the time seemed ripe to put the long-considered plan for a men’s college into action. So, in September of 1946, just 90 days after receiving approval, using borrowed facilities from Pomona College and the lone house on the property, Claremont Men’s College opened its doors with seven faculty members and 86 students, most of whom were WWII veterans.

It was an interesting collection of students that first gathered on the CMC “campus.” For example, Morris Slack ’48 was a B-17 and B-24 pilot in the South Pacific. Not only did he experience ditching his B-24 in the Pacific, he also was forced to bail out of a C-47 (the military version of a DC-3) over the Himalayas in the middle of the night. He was



The basement of Bridge’s Auditorium on the Pomona College campus provided a barracks- like dormitory and the lounge area quickly became known as Coconut Grove.

discharged with the rank of lieutenant colonel, the same rank as George C.S. Benson, the school director. Thornton Hamlin '50 served aboard the submarine U.S.S. *Parche* (SS-384), Robert Eachus '48 won his commission in a tank destroyer battalion and Jack Goddard '50 survived the bombing of Pearl Harbor while serving on the battleship U.S.S. *Maryland*. Later, he served in the Pacific theater of war as



Metal barracks acquired in 1946, were ready for occupancy in early 1947.

commander of an LST and as a beach master in military landings at such places as Saipan, Lingayen Gulf, and Okinawa. Stanton "Pete" Welsh '50 was a flight engineer on a B-29. His plane was to leave San Francisco for the South Pacific on August 9, 1945. He spent August 8 in San Francisco watching the Market Street celebration of the end of the war. Robert Emmett '50 later admitted to hearing about the new school while serving a short stint in the naval brig. In fact, it was from the brig that he applied and received his letter of acceptance.



Student volunteers clearing the campus of rocks.

While many of CMC's first students were veterans, so too were many of the first buildings. Story House, the lone building on the property and formerly the home of pioneering California author Sarah Bixby Smith, served as dormitory, commons, and central point of identity. In 1946, the College acquired six surplus, pre-fabricated metal barracks to use as veteran housing and classrooms. In the summer of 1947, the Federal

War Surplus Administration turned over to the College a mess hall from the Army Air Force Santa Ana Base. With the mess hall came a lot of surplus Army mess equipment. One veteran student commented that the campus looked "just like Guam."

CMC Today

In 1976, CMC became coeducational, changing its name to Claremont McKenna College in 1981 in honor of its

most visionary and founding trustee, Donald C. McKenna. With an on-campus enrollment of approximately 1,250 students, CMC is currently the youngest and smallest college ranked in the *U.S. News & World Report* top 20. More than 13,000 alumni have bolstered that recognition through their success. Fully 70 percent of CMC graduates go on to advanced degrees at prestigious institutions and one in eight graduates now holds a position in top management. In doing so, they also do honor to the Claremont McKenna College motto: "Crescit cum commercio civitas" (Civilization prospers with commerce).

CMC is a highly selective, independent, coeducational, residential, undergraduate liberal arts college with a curricular emphasis on economics, government, and public affairs. Unlike so many other colleges, which champion either a traditional liberal arts education or the acquisition of professional and technical skills, CMC builds bridges between the two. By combining the intellectual breadth of the liberal arts with the more pragmatic concerns of public affairs, based on principles established by



CMC's Crown Hall houses 115 students in a Leed silver certified facility.

founding President George C. S. Benson, CMC helps students acquire the vision, skills, and values they will need to lead society. As expressed in the College's mission statement, CMC seeks to "educate its students for thoughtful and productive lives and responsible leadership in business, government, and the professions, and to support faculty and student scholarship that contribute to intellectual vitality and the understanding of public policy issues."

In its approach to education, CMC considers itself a balanced institution and not "ideologically focused". It does not attempt to graduate students who are conservative, liberal, or someplace in between. Rather, CMC attempts to enable students to research, analyze, think critically, formulate their own conclusions, and defend their positions with clarity and reason. CMC believes that this kind of education takes place in an academic environment where students are exposed to opposing and competing viewpoints, healthy debate is welcome, and where



Students participate in an Athenaeum discussion with Archana Sahgal '99 on "From Mid-Quad to the White House: The Power of Networks to Build Inside and Outside Power."

students should not feel intimidated because of their particular beliefs or positions. This balance is further exemplified by a faculty that contains a broad spectrum of opinion.

CMC is a member of the prestigious Claremont Colleges, a consortium of five undergraduate colleges and two graduate institutions. Based on the Oxford/Cambridge model, The Claremont Colleges represent the only planned consortium in the United States offering CMC students diverse opportunities and resources typically found at much larger universities.

Unique to American undergraduate higher education, CMC houses 11 cutting-edge Research Centers and Institutes where students work side-by-side with CMC faculty, researching real-world issues, testing theories, co-authoring scholarly articles, and presenting papers to academic bodies, corporations, political organizations and government agencies.



CMC students presenting a business plan during the annual business plan competition.

CMC is also home to two highly-regarded off-campus study programs. The Washington D.C. Semester offers CMCers high-impact, full-time internships in the offices of elected officials, government agencies and public interest groups. The Silicon Valley Semester places CMCers in the heart of entrepreneurship, innovation and technology with full-time internships in leading technology companies. Additionally, students in both programs have opportunities to interact with leaders in their fields, take courses with CMC faculty and write a major research paper.

The Athenaeum (the Ath) is the setting for perhaps the most active and unique speakers program of any college in the country. Four nights a week the Ath presents legends and luminaries from politics, science, business, the media, literature, and more. The Ath has hosted such distinguished leaders as Anderson Cooper, Bill Clinton, Newt Gingrich, Bono, Fareed Zakaria, George Will, Peggy Noonan, Jesse Jackson, and Mitt Romney. And rather than just giving a lecture and leaving, these prominent leaders from every field of human endeavor sit down to dinner and interact with students, sharing their thoughts and wisdom while listening to what students have to say. Following their talk, it is not uncommon for the visitor and students to retire to a small sitting room for additional give and take.



Recent graduates celebrate Commencement in front of the Athenaeum.



Students studying and relaxing in the lounge of a CMC dorm.

In September 2007, Robert A. Day '65, the founder and chairman of The TCW Group, Inc., pledged a \$200 million personal gift to establish CMC's Robert Day School of Economics and Finance and its unique programs. This was the largest recorded gift to a liberal arts institution, the largest gift in the field of finance and economics, and among the top 20 largest gifts ever given to a college or university. Through his generosity, the Robert Day School of Economics and Finance now offers multiple programs, including a Master of Arts in Finance degree.



Professor Jack Pitney, the Crocker Prof. of Politics chatting with student.