

# Elon takes leaps and bounds despite fire of 1923

**Shawna Foord**  
Reporter

Most of Elon's buildings are named after trustees and donors to the university, but some old professors are in the mix as well as all the former presidents.

Elon has grown leaps and bounds in recent years, but the biggest dilemma the college has ever faced was the fire that overtook almost every building on campus in 1923.

Our story begins with that fire.

It is not entirely known how the fire started, but it was discovered by some students who lived in the power plant located where the parking lot between Carlton and Haggard are now. Some students lived there rent-free in exchange for keeping up the plant. The original Alamance is the only building that burned down completely; all the others had to be razed and all were rebuilt.

In place of what is now Alamance, named for the town whose citizens donated the money for the building to be reconstructed, used to sit a building called Old Main. Within this building were classrooms, assembly rooms, offices and the library; people used to be able to drive right up to the front.

West used to have a dining annex, and there was a building next to it called East which was a women's dorm.

Elon once had a building called Alumni, located next to Old Main, where Powell sits now. This building was a combination men's dorm and gym with a basement science lab. There were poles in the gym floor to support the upper levels where students lived, so when other schools came to play Elon in basketball, they would often lose because they weren't used to playing on a floor with poles sticking up in the middle of the court.

One could watch what was going on below, looking over the balcony outside the rooms that en-

circled the gym on the second and third floors.

Today's Alumni Gym was named in honor of the students who fought and died in World War I and II. There is a plaque in the hallway leading up the gym with all those names on it as you enter.

There is a story behind the architecture of all Elon's buildings. The buildings, new and old, are very similar in appearance. The college hired a Burlington architect to redesign the buildings after the fire. He decided to space out the buildings and construct colonnades so people could walk from building to building and not get wet in rain or snow.

In keeping with tradition, when the Koury Center, and Belk Library were built, similar looking colonnades were added to give the campus a look that was uniform. A landscape architect was hired to create what we now see when we look outside.

Hook, Barney and Brannock are named after long-time professors at the college. A.L. Hook was a professor of physics and taught here for more than 60 years.

"He hold the record to date for the longest employment here." John Barney taught English and was a faculty member for 33 years. Ned Brannock was a professor of chemistry for more than 50 years as well.

Sloan Hall is named for professor Sloan. He taught religious studies and she taught foreign language.

All seven Elon presidents are remembered on campus. William Long was the first, followed by W.W. Staley, E.L. Moffitt, W.A. Harper, Leon Edgar Smith, James Earl Danieley and Fred Young.

Everyone from freshmen to seniors knows where these buildings and centers are located on campus. An interesting tidbit about Dr. Staley is that he worked at the school for 11 years without a salary.

Furman Moseley and his wife

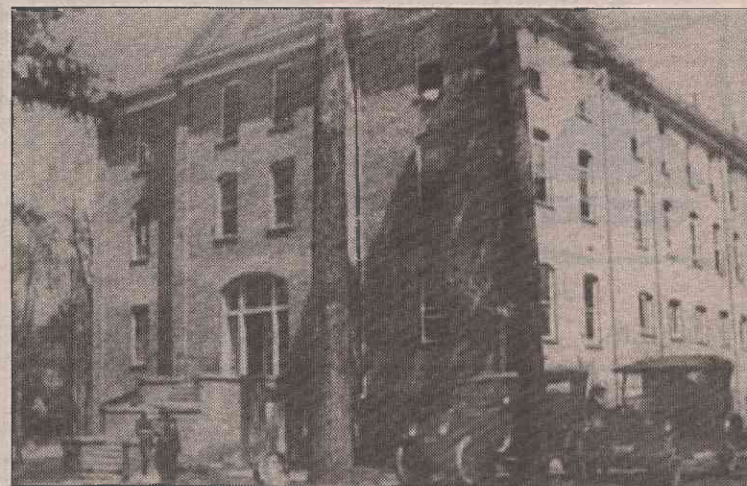
Susan, both Elon grads, are the names behind the student center. Moseley's money was made in the timber business, and he started the tradition of giving all graduates a tree upon their departure. The redwood was the original tree, but it was changed to an oak in accordance with the name of the university.

McEwen dining hall was named for James McEwen, an industrialist and civic leader in Burlington. The newly renovated school of communications building, was named for his wife, Iris Holt.

B.N. Duke and J.B. Duke contributed money to build the Duke building and named it for their mother.

This is the same Duke family that named the Durham University. The Faith Rockefeller Model center is named for the mother of the donor, Bob Model.

All of this information and more can be found on the second floor of Belk Library and in two books by Durward Stokes about the history and traditions of Elon.



North dormitory in the 1920s.



West dormitory in the 1950s.



Main administration building prior to 1923.

Photos courtesy of Elon Library archives

**WRITE FOR THE PENDULUM.**

E-mail: [pendulum@elon.edu](mailto:pendulum@elon.edu)

Stop by: Moseley 233

Call: x7247