Miami Presidents
From 1810 to the Present Day
Miami University Archives
Robert Bishop is generally considered Miami’s first president. However, between Miami’s chartering in 1809 and opening in 1824, the Board of Trustees normally appointed a “President” to preside over meetings and act, on occasion, as a quasi-executive officer. Records of the period typically refer to “The President and Board of Trustees of Miami University,” implying that they were separate entities. This is an excerpt from the minutes of the 1810 Board meeting, which named Joseph Van Horne as Miami’s first “President”.

Joseph Van Horne
Miami’s First President?
1810
Scottish Presbyterian divine Robert H. Bishop became Miami’s president in 1824. His views on student discipline, theology, and slavery were progressive for his day.
Miami Campus During the Presidency of Robert Bishop
1838

Old Main with North and South Dormitories in the background.
In 1841, the Board of Trustees replaced President Robert Bishop with George Junkin of Lafayette College, Pennsylvania.
Unfortunately, no pictures or paintings of McArthur are known to exist. This is a copy of an 1848 student resolution urging McArthur to remain at Miami.
Erasmus MacMaster was at the head of the class when it came to memory power. Contemporaries agreed that MacMaster could easily recall the most minute details of discussions and meetings long past, and effortlessly recite entire literary works from memory.
One of Miami’s most successful executives, Anderson reversed the dramatic decline in enrollment that had occurred under Junkin and MacMaster. Anderson proved an affable, accessible administrator who won the respect and loyalty of his student body, which for two years included future United States President Benjamin Harrison.
Program for the Inauguration of President William C. Anderson
1849

Inauguration of
REV. W. ANDERSON, D.D.
President of the Miami University, at Oxford,
On Thursday, the 11th of Aug. 1849.

Order of Procession.
I. Students of the Miami University;
II. Alumni of the Miami University;
III. The Clergy who may be in attendance, and Graduates of other Institutions;
IV. Secretary, Treasurer and Collector;
V. Trustees of the Miami University;
VI. President, Professors and Teachers of the Institution;
VII. Citizens.
The Procession will proceed to the stand in the grove, where the Inauguration will take place.

Order of Exercises.
I. Music by the Band.
III. Music.
IV. Address by Prof. C. Elliott.
V. Music.
VI. Delivery of the Keys and Address to the President, by C. Anderson, Esq.
VII. Address by President Anderson.
VIII. Music.
IX. Inaugural and Concluding Prayer, by Rev. Dr. Scott.

One of the relatively few surviving documents from Anderson’s presidency in the Miami Archives. At that time, the new president was customarily given a set of “Keys” to the University.
Orange Nash Stoddard
President Pro Tem 1854
North Carolinian John W. Hall led Miami University during the Civil War. Hall was an able administrator and well-liked by his students. His later presidency was marred by the beginning of a long period of financial instability that would culminate in the University’s closure in 1873.
Miami Campus During the Presidency of John Hall
1858

Old Main, with North and South Dormitories. This is the first known photograph of Miami.
President Stanton had the misfortune to preside over Miami during a time of budgetary woes and falling enrollment. He had to spend much of his time devising ways to make Miami more attractive to a shrinking pool of male applicants. Stanton’s improvisations, which included a new military training program, failed to reverse the slide in University fortunes.
Stanton’s inaugural address dealt largely with the financial problems besetting the University. The new president warned that drastic and immediate measures were needed to reverse Miami’s fortunes.
Although appointed as “President Pro Tempore” by the Board of Trustees, Hepburn is normally included among the ranks of Miami presidents. He was the last president of Old Miami, which closed due to financial problems in 1873.
Robert W. McFarland
President Pro Tem 1885-1888

A long-time faculty member of Old Miami, Robert McFarland answered the call of the Board of Trustees to oversee the reopened institution in 1885. Like Andrew Hepburn, McFarland today is generally dubbed a president despite his technically Pro Tem status.
In 1888, the Trustees replaced President McFarland with 27 year-old Ethelbert Dudley Warfield. A Princeton graduate, Warfield hired several young faculty members from other prestigious Eastern institutions. Dubbed the “Dude Faculty,” they sought to remake Miami in the image of their alma maters. In addition to instituting a more demanding curriculum, they introduced Miami to a popular new eastern sport, football.
Ethelbert Warfield’s Acceptance of the Miami Presidency 1888

Livingston, N.Y.
July 25, 1888

Prof. R. H. Bishop,
Oxford, Ohio.

My dear Sir:

I have received your letter, which I delayed answering until I had reached a decision on the case of Miami University. I have

Finally decided to accept it, and I shall do all that in me lies by God's grace, to make that an honored institution a focus for the spread of Christian influences. I am well fitted in every respect that culture stems from the heart of the Gospel in the forms of the devices of the devil, that a college which gives secular learning without tincturing it.


An Ohio native, William Oxley Thompson graduated from Muskingum College. Thompson instituted New Miami’s first building program, resulting in the construction of a new science building and gymnasium. Miami also began receiving a regular state appropriation during Thompson’s presidency.
Miami Campus During the Presidency of William Oxley Thompson

circ.1895

Campus view from the southwest. Brice Hall and Old Main are in the foreground. The small building on right between the two dormitories is Old Egypt, the University science building that burned down in 1898.
William Jasper McSurely
Librarian and President Pro Tem
1899
Reverend David Tappan succeeded to the Miami presidency when William Oxley Thompson became head of Ohio State University. Perhaps the most notable event of his administration was the awarding of degrees in 1900 to Miami’s first women graduates.
Guy Potter Benton
1902-1911

Guy Potter Benton presided over a period of unprecedented growth in University enrollment and physical plant. A skilled recruiter and fundraiser, Benton spent much of his presidency traveling to promote Miami and to lobby state officials. Many of the new students Benton welcomed were women enrolling in the new Ohio State Normal College.
Miami President Guy Potter Benton and the Commencement speaker, Secretary of War William Howard Taft, are at the front of the procession immediately behind the University Marshal. The Old Main building (future site of Harrison Hall) is in the background.
In 1903, the nephew of Romeo Lewis offered Miami free use of the Lewis home as a presidential residence. Guy Potter Benton was the first president to occupy Lewis Place, which was purchased by the University in 1929.
Only Miami’s second lay president, Raymond Hughes shared President Benton’s commitment to growth. With his financial officer and right-hand man Wallace Roudebush, Hughes formulated the University’s first true long-range development plans. In addition to guiding Miami through the First World War, Hughes instituted the nation’s second artist-in-residency program at Miami.
Aerial view from the west. University is in background.
Edgar Ewing Brandon
President Pro Tem 1927-1928
Miami president and alumnus Alfred Upham continued the general policies of Raymond Hughes. During his tenure, day-to-day administration of the University was largely left to his chief financial officer, Hughes’ trusted colleague Wallace Roudebush. Together, Upham and Roudebush guided Miami through the Great Depression and the Second World War.
Announcement of Alfred Upham’s Selection to the Miami Presidency

1928
Upon America’s entry into the Second World War, President Upham opened Miami’s facilities for use by the U.S. Armed Forces. Trainees at Miami during the War included 570 civilian pilots; 4,314 Radio-Navy men; 1,165 Navy WAVES; 467 cooks and bakers; and 1,847 V-12, V-5 and NROTC personnel.
A. K. Morris
President Pro Tem, 1945-1946
Ernest H. Hahne came to Miami from Northwestern where he had been an economics professor and liberal arts dean. As Miami president he began modernizing the University’s antiquated administrative structure, much of which dated back to the 1910s.
Ernest Hahne’s Inaugural Procession on the Way to Withrow Court
April 19, 1947
Plagued by serious illness for much of his tenure at Miami, President Hahne nevertheless proved his administrative mettle on a number of occasions. For example, he deserves a good deal of the credit for the University’s successful accommodation of the thousands of veterans and their families who attended Miami under the GI Bill.
Clarence W. Kreger
Acting President 1952-1953
President Millett strikes a characteristic pose before the Edwin Fulwider mural in the Student Center. Millett modernized University administration and began an ambitious building program. Millett had a dominating personality but he relied heavily on a corps of exceptionally talented administrators, including Treasurer Lloyd Goggin and Alumni Secretary John Dolibois.
John Millett’s Inauguration at Withrow Court
October 23, 1953
In 1959 Senator Kennedy spoke to a University convocation at Miami Field just prior to beginning his run for the White House. Three years later Arizona Senator and future Republican Presidential candidate Barry Goldwater gave the Hammond Lecture at Miami. The Goldwater-Millet photo was taken by nationally known Oxford photographer George Hoxie.
Charles Ray Wilson
Acting President 1964-1965
Phil Shriver’s presidency coincided with the height of the national Civil Rights and Anti-War Movements. His conciliatory leadership during campus disturbances in 1970 was credited with helping to defuse a potentially violent situation. Today, “Uncle Phil” is one of the University’s most beloved individuals.
President Shriver Delivering His Inaugural Address
October 14, 1965
Anticipating that the University would one day be serving huge numbers of Baby Boomers, President Millett undertook a large expansion program, which culminated under President Shriver. Among the jewels of the program were the Middletown and Hamilton regional campuses that opened during the Shriver presidency.
Aerial View of the Oxford Campus During Phil Shriver’s Presidency
1967
Many Miami alums fondly remember Phil Shriver as one of their favorite teachers. After leaving the Presidency in 1981, he spent the next 20 plus years as a member of Miami’s history faculty. Courses taught by Professor Shriver included Ohio History, and his course on Miami History was always one of the most popular courses among students.
President Pearson is shown here with his wife Winifred. During his tenure, Pearson worked tirelessly to fulfill Miami’s commitment to faculty, staff, and student diversity.
Pearson calls for continuing commitment to liberal arts, science

President Paul G. Pearson called for a "continuing commitment to the liberal arts and sciences, the preparation of tomorrow's leaders to be thinking people, and modern technology through research." He said a university seeking excellence must continue to grow and strengthen in its mission.

vol. 1 no. 9
October 22, 1981

Inside... Wilson named vice president

The Miami Report on Paul Pearson's Inauguration
October 22, 1981
In 1985, Richard Moll cited Miami as one of a few elite public universities offering an education comparable to the best private institutions. The honor underscored the University’s efforts under Paul Pearson and subsequent executives to establish a national reputation for educational excellence.
Paul Risser assumed the presidency after Paul Pearson’s retirement. Risser remained at Miami for three years and is likely to be best remembered for his enthusiastic advocacy of computer technology.
Anne Hopkins
Acting President 1995-1996
As president, James Garland championed a more rigorous curriculum and a University commitment to research excellence. The Garland presidency also witnessed the beginning of a major new construction program to help Miami meet the demands of a new millennium.
Miami Student Announcement of James Garland’s Selection to the Miami Presidency
April 30, 1996

President Garland is pictured with his wife Carole.
On April 21, 2006, Miami trustees voted unanimously to hire David C. Hodge as Miami’s 21st president. President Hodge is shown here with his wife Valerie.
The New President Meets the Student Press
The New President Addressing the Cincinnati Alumni
In the Footsteps of Past Leaders and Moving Miami University Forward
Miami’s 21st President, David C. Hodge