

Acknowledgements

“It is not easy to write, with entire impartiality, the history of an institution in which one has been, for any considerable time, a personal actor.”

Those words of Daniel Putnam in 1899 hold true 100 years later, for this, the third volume about the history of Eastern Michigan University. Putnam wrote the history of what was then the Michigan State Normal School at its golden anniversary, just as it was becoming the Michigan State Normal College.

Putnam wrote that he knew personally nearly every teacher who had ever been connected with the school. One-hundred years later, such a task is impossible. No one volume can capture the contributions of the hundreds of faculty, thousands of students and countless others who have crossed Eastern Michigan University’s path.

And so we present a series of snapshots – a portrait, if you will, of Eastern at 150. As with any portrait, we have attempted to capture a complete image, knowing full well that the medium we have chosen makes that impossible. Again we echo the words of Daniel Putnam: “No one can be more sensible than I am of the imperfections of this history.” Like Putnam, though, we hope to advance the cause of education and the importance of preserving our history.

In 1971, Egbert R. Isbell produced a thorough manuscript that chronicled the school’s history through 1965. Putnam’s and Isbell’s works provided a critical foundation for the information about the institution’s early years used in this text.

Primary source material was obtained from the University Archives, with outstanding service provided by Archivist Rosina Tammany and Archives Assistant Maria Davis. Minutes from the State Board of Education and the Eastern Michigan University Board of Regents also served as primary sources.

Student Media archives, including the Normal College News, Eastern Echo and Aurora yearbook, supplemented primary research, along with files from the offices of Public Information and Sports Information. Other sources are acknowledged within the text.

Susan C. Charnley of Ypsilanti helped organize volumes of data and somehow managed to weave dry reports and historical data into fluent prose. Her work on the

various colleges, as well as on student activism and the war years, are among her substantial contributions.

Images were culled from the University Archives, Student Media files, and from the offices of Public Information and Sports Information. Many images from recent history were taken by University Photographer Dick Schwarze, who was instrumental in locating and duplicating them. Each of these has been scanned and logged in a database, to be given to the University Archives to facilitate future research and reproduction.

We thank the countless individuals, departments and organizations that contributed background information and historical documents to enrich the text. We learned quickly in our research how deeply so many people feel about the institution.

Our colleagues within the Division of University Marketing and Student Affairs provided endless support and assistance, as did others from throughout the University too numerous to mention.

We quickly learned that no one document can begin to capture the rich history of Eastern Michigan University. Volumes could be written on each college alone, as well as on the hundreds of faculty and staff, and on the thousands of students and alumni.

Our first hope is thus to have provided an overview of the major events and players of the school’s first 150 years. Our research has shown that, institutionally, we have not done a particularly good job of chronicling all that is important about our history. Our second hope, therefore, is that this volume will generate additional interest and research, so that the rich history of Eastern Michigan University will become even more thoroughly chronicled, and more widely shared.

Laurence N. Smith and Paul C. Heaton
Ypsilanti, Michigan
August 1999