

# HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY

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Washburn University was established in February 1865 as Lincoln College by a charter issued by the State of Kansas and the General Association of Congregational Ministers and Churches of Kansas. A two-story brick building on the northeast corner of 10th and Jackson Streets was soon erected and the first classes began in January 1866. In 1868, the school was renamed Washburn College, in recognition of a \$25,000 donation by Ichabod Washburn, a church deacon and resident of Worcester, Mass.

The university was granted a permanent location in 1865 when Topekan Col. John Ritchie donated a 160-acre site, which at the time was a considerable distance southwest of the city. Construction on the first building began in 1872, with occupancy taking place in 1874. For the next two decades, college President Peter McVicar conducted an aggressive development campaign. His efforts resulted in the establishment of numerous Victorian limestone structures which characterized the campus for the next 90 years.

Expansion of the school was constant. The School of Law was organized in 1903, as was a School of Fine Arts and a medical school, which educated physicians until 1913. During the next three decades structures such as the Mulvane Art Museum, Benton Hall and Whiting Field House were added to the campus. In June 1966, a tornado struck Topeka and several historic buildings on campus were demolished. The Washburn community rallied and financial support from friends and alumni made possible the rebuilding of many school facilities during the coming years. Today, university facilities offer more than one million square feet of modern academic and support space.

In 1941, the citizens of Topeka endorsed Washburn by voting to establish a municipal university, supported in part by the city and governed by a local board of regents. In 1952, the Washburn Board of Regents officially changed the name of the school to Washburn University of Topeka. In 1999, the university's primary funding was moved from city property tax to county sales tax sources, with the school retaining status as a municipal subdivision of the state. In addition to local financial support, Washburn has received state funds since 1961, which have been coordinated by the Kansas Board of Regents since 1991. Washburn is governed by its own nine-member Board of Regents.