

THROUGH THE YEARS

As first demonstrated by Captain Heman Oviatt in the early years of Western Reserve College, endowed professorships are gifts that keep on giving.

Professorships are one of the most lasting gifts that can be made to the University. While students, faculty, staff—and even buildings—may be on campus for only a finite period of time, an endowed professorship can provide a more permanent legacy of scholarship, teaching, and research. This is as true today as it was in 1826, when the Board of Trustees of Western Reserve College passed a resolution that would allow anyone to endow a named professorship with a gift to the school of \$5,000.

In 1837, Western Reserve trustee Captain Heman Oviatt endowed what is now the oldest named professorship at Case Western Reserve University. Oviatt established the endowment with an initial bond of \$10,000. He then raised an additional \$3,000 from other donors and paid semi-annual interest for the professor's salary.

Originally created as the Oviatt Professorship of Sacred Rhetoric in the Department of Theology, the professorship was first held by the Reverend Henry Nobel Day.

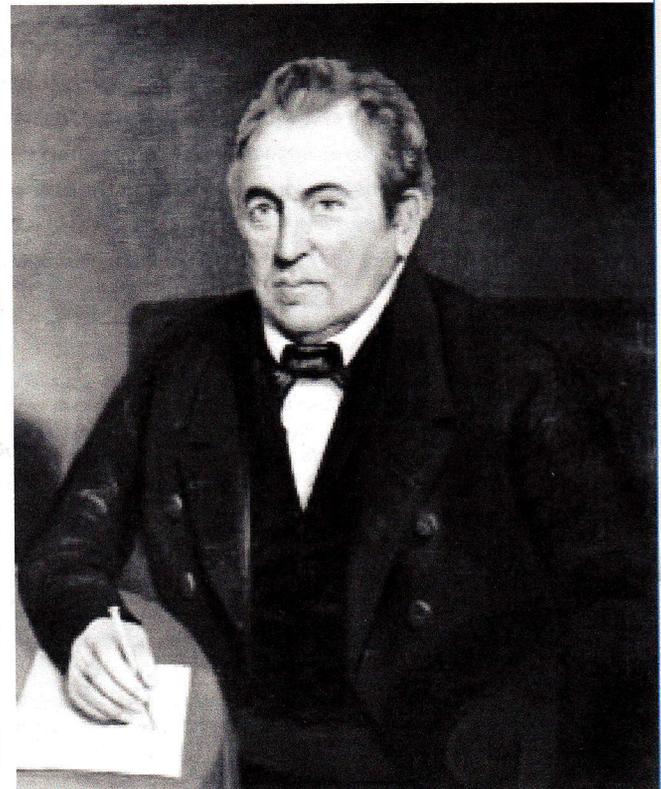
In 1853, the theology department was closed. To ensure that his endowment would continue, even as courses or departments might change, Oviatt wrote to the Board of Trustees on April 19, 1853: "In the present state of the College, and the prospect of students for years to come, it is desirable to use all reasonable economy in an effort to revive and carry on the College, I am wishing, and it seems to me desirable, that the Professors in the Theological Department should give instruction in the Collegiate Department, as the exigencies of the College may require. And I hereby express it as my desire that the Professors on my endowment give such instruction in the Collegiate Department."

That year, the professorship was renamed the Oviatt Professorship of English, the title by which it still stands. Gary

Lee Stonum is the current Oviatt Professor and chair of the Department of English. ★

The Other First

Almost fifty years after Heman Oviatt established his professorship, Laura Kerr Axtell donated \$100,000 to establish



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