

**ORIGIN OF THE INSTITUTE OF THE LIBERAL ARTS --
AT EMORY UNIVERSITY**

**James Harvey Young
April 11, 2003**

The "Great Books" concept as an addition to higher education in America began at Columbia University about 1920. Impressed students carried it to Chicago where its chief advocate became Robert Maynard Hutchins, ~~who~~ ~~became~~ chancellor of the University of Chicago. One of his chief aides was the university's president, Ernest Cadman Colwell, who had come to Chicago from Emory. When President Goodrich C. White brought Pomp Caldwell back to Emory, ^{as vice-president, Colwell} ~~he~~ brought with him his ideas that generated the Institute of the Liberal Arts (ILA). I remember what may have been the beginning course, held in the evening in the basement of the History Building with all the faculty members of the new Institute present, as well as the first two students. The intellectual fare was the ancient ^{and later} classics in translation.

Another early course met at Pomp Colwell's home, with intellectual worthies from the community invited to speak and then engage in discussion. Ralph McGill, editor of Atlanta's leading newspaper, was invited twice. Inasmuch as McGill did not drive, I went to his home near Piedmont Hospital to get him, and returned him at the end of the

evening's session. This began a friendship that led to such things as a letter from ex-Marine McGill to new Marine Walter Young, when the latter arrived in Vietnam.

Another early course presented faculty members from various departments giving their disciplines' interpretations of three abstract but powerful words. Half the scholars defined "truth;" the other half addressed "myth" and "symbol." The presentations prompted brisk discussion.

The ILA's director at the time, Will Beardslee, deemed ^{revised} the papers given in this course worthy of publication and made arrangements with Prentice-Hall. Will edited the manuscript, assisted by Tom Altizer and myself. Dedicated to Pomp Colwell, the book, Truth, Myth, and Symbol, came from the press in 1962, a notable announcement of the ILA's existence.

The ILA expanded in both breadth and depth. The other day I checked on dissertations I had directed between 1961 and 1982: there were 14, ^{half by men, half by women,} including "The National Association of Colored Women," "The Debate over National Prohibition," and "Fundamentalist Reactions to the Civil Rights Movement."

The founders are, of course, proud of the Institute's continued contributions, warranting a ceremony such as the one we are beginning. 2

Institute of Liberal Arts Ph.D.s
Dissertations Directed by James Harvey Young

- 1961 Jones, Bartlett C., "The Debate Over National Prohibition, 1920-1933"
- 1966 McCowen, George S., Jr., "The British Occupation of Charles Town, 1780-82"
- 1966 Wilson, Harold S., "McClure's Magazine: An Intellectual Study of Reform Journalism"
- 1970 Deaton, Dorsey Milam, "The Protestant Crisis: Truman's Vatican Ambassador Controversy of 1951"
- 1970 Fagg, Daniel W., Jr., "Carolina, 1663-83: The Founding of a Proprietary"
- 1971 Lyon, Elizabeth Anne Mack, "Business Buildings in Atlanta: A Study in Urban Growth and Form"
- 1972 Blackwelder, Julia K., "Fundamentalist Reactions to the Civil Rights Movement Since 1954"
- 1973 McFadyen, Richard, "Estes Kefauver and the Drug Industry"
- 1973 Hay, Kenneth, "Five Artists and the Chicago Modernist Movement, 1909-1928"
- 1978 Hamilton, Tullia, "The National Association of Colored Women, 1898-1920"
- 1979 Baccus, Gillian Royes, "Another Pittsburg: A case Study in Production Research for a Documentary Film"
- 1979 Schissel, Carla M., "The State Nurses' Association in a Georgia Context, 1907-1948"
- 1979 Brown, Marsha, "Elias Wiley and the Religion of Art: Poetry and Social Attitudes in the 1920s"
- 1982 Darney, Virginia Grant, "Women and World's Fairs: American International Expositions, 1876-1904"