

DEDICATION OF THE WILLIAM L. HUTCHESON MEMORIAL FOREST

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Rutgers • The State University

In the name of the Trustees of Rutgers • The State University, I accept this gift and this trust. Rutgers solemnly and gratefully undertakes the task of preserving these woods as a natural forest, as a place of wonder and beauty, as a priceless laboratory in which future generations of students and citizens may increase their knowledge of nature and nature's laws, and grow in the wisdom modern man so sorely needs to live and work within them. We pledge ourselves to this trust in perpetuity. We are celebrating today the birth of a project which will, God willing, endure for centuries.

It is peculiarly fitting that Rutgers should undertake such a trust. Like the woods themselves, it has been part of the State of New Jersey since Colonial times. When Rutgers was founded, much of the State was covered by the same kind of forest. Conservation has always been of active concern to members of the University faculty, who have promoted the proper use and preservation of natural resources. And as the State University, Rutgers is pledged to devote its own resources of teaching and research to the welfare—intellectual, spiritual, economic, and recreational—of the people it serves.

Indeed, a university is the most appropriate agency—perhaps the only one—which can be trusted to undertake the long-range preservation and responsible use of such a priceless and irreplaceable part of our inherited natural treasure. Founded in the early middle ages, the universities have endured for centuries and will continue to endure for many more, as independent, incorruptible agencies of civilization, of which they are the most characteristic expression.

Universities are strongly conservative. They are the guardians and custodians of a great intellectual and cultural tradition, and as such resistant to passing political windstorms. The maintenance of museums, repositories of the physical remnants of vanished cultures, or instructive collections of rocks, plants and artifacts from all times and places, has long been recognized as a proper university function. If you like, you can look upon this woodland as a living museum.

But universities are also strongly progressive. They are our principal agency for orderly change. They are concerned always with the future, and dedicated to the effort to use intelligence constructively, making the future better than the past. Our modern civilization is uniquely dependent on science and technology, and it is from the universities that most of the new knowledge, and the trained personnel to discover as well as to apply it, must come. If you are so minded, you can regard these woods as another, and most valuable kind of scientific laboratory.

Whether we think of it as a museum, or a laboratory, or as something to be valued simply for its own sake, the project we undertake today is ideally suited to the role of a university. It links the past and the future in a continuum of civilized purpose.

Whenever we set out to preserve something of value, whether it be knowledge, tradition, or a painting, the process is essentially the same. The conservative and the progressive are complementary functions. Conservation is not hoarding; it is wise use. An empty house eventually decays and falls down. Tradition dies unless it is re-born in the hearts, minds, and habits of each new generation. Knowledge cannot be inert; it must be active, constantly renewed and enriched, constantly related to new needs and new experiences. Learning cannot be fully alive unless it is growing.

It is something of a miracle, for which all of us are profoundly thankful, that in this highly industrialized state a piece of unspoiled forest can still be found. It has survived the encroachments of men, farms, roads, factories and towns, to remind us of the American land as it was before the white man came. The love of our land is still strong, even among urban cliff dwellers, amounting at times to an acute nostalgia. But it is a deep and sound feeling, and its strength is shown in the response of so many people to the appeal for help, and in the sympathetic comment and widespread interest which this project has aroused.

The members of the University are grateful to every person and every organization whose gifts have made it possible to preserve the woods, and we are honored by the trust you have given us.

It is particularly gratifying, and particularly significant, that a trade union should endow a memorial of this kind to a former leader. Apart from the delightfully appropriate thought that it is the carpenters who have "spared the trees," this action by the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America is another indication that the great trade union movement has fully come of age, taking its proper share in the responsibility for our civilization by preserving natural resources, and endowing basic research. Basic research is absolutely essential to the continuance of our way of life; but because it is directly profitable to no one, it is not easy to get support for it. I congratulate the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners on their far-sighted, disinterested gift. I was struck also by a similarly public-spirited gift, in this case a memorial to William Green which the A.F. of L. has recently made to Ohio State University. One of its provisions was to offer scholarships to students in the liberal arts—another thing which is as essential to the continued health of our way of life as is lacking in immediate profit to the donors of the scholarships.

The trade unions, like the universities, have both a conservative and a progressive role. Perhaps that is true of all healthy organisms, and of all good human organizations. Trade unions are a natural social growth, an ecological adaptation, if you like, to the conditions of industrial society. They came into being as a part of the struggle for existence in the new and harsh environment of factories and towns and the impersonal labor market. They have, in a sense, built up a stronger social inheritance for what the group historians have called "the disinherited laborers," winning for labor an increasingly important role in our national life. The unions have grown and flourished because they perform an essential human function. Like the trees in this forest, they are now full-grown. They are thoroughly estab-

lished members of our co-operative, competitive, interacting social community, responsibly concerned both with its preservation and its continuing advancement.

This woodland will be guarded and preserved, and builders, lumbermen, firesetters, hunters, and other destructive human influences, will be kept out. But it will also be fully used, in ways which will not destroy or disturb the natural balance of the myriad inter-related living things which make it up.

Here is a natural laboratory for the education of students in the biological sciences, and the training of needed personnel. In it, long-range studies can be embarked upon, in the certainty that they can be carried through to distant conclusions. To those of us who are oppressed by the hectic tempo of modern life, there is something inspiring and reassuring in the idea of a century-long project. We can expect that, out of these woods, many useful and practical additions to our knowledge will come and perhaps some important theoretical discoveries.

But I hope also that the continuing, close study of ecology will do more than increase our practical and theoretical knowledge. I hope it will do something to give us more wisdom. We may perhaps begin to learn a natural piety, based on a deeper insight into man's position as part of the community of nature, not a separate being whose only responsibility is to exploit nature for his own often short-sighted ends.

I know that many of you who have given to the Fund for the Preservation of Mettler's Woods have not done so because you wanted merely to promote the biological sciences or increase the economic efficiency of forestry. Some of you may even be unmoved by the thought of the expected output of Ph.D. theses. You have given, I think, out of love for the woods.

But love is by no means irrelevant to research and education. Aldo Leopold, after a lifetime devoted to conservation, asked himself why we were still losing ground, in spite of all educational efforts, in the struggle to preserve our natural resources. He concluded that something was lacking in our approach to the problem, and that "something" was love: a feeling for, as well as an understanding of, the natural community of which we are a part.

But love and knowledge are not enemies. As we look forward to the preservation and use of these woods, we may echo the prayer of St. Paul, "That your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and judgment."