A Normal School to “The Finest Place We Know”
1922 - 2022

May 3, 2022
Thank You

• Dean Whaley, Provost Todd, faculty and staff

• Happy National Teacher Appreciation Day!

• Dr. Harry Sparks
  – President: 1968-73
  – Educator, Superintendent
  – State School Superintendent
  – Faculty member at MSU
Cris Ferguson (Co-Chair)
Jordan Smith (Co-Chair)
Dr. Tina Bernot
Jackie Dudley
Cami Duffy
Jill Hunt
Ashley Ireland
Minae “Mia” Ishijima
Dr. Robert L Jackson
Chelsea Jones
Molly Logsdon
Carrie McGinnis
Dr. Jeff McLaughlin
Kim Newbern
Sarah Marie Owens
Shawn Reynolds
Dr. Don Robertson
Darren Russell
Dr. Tim Todd
Shawn Touney
Dave Winder
Think about 1922…

- Our region and state…isolated – very rural
  - Approx. 2,500, Approx. 20,000, Approx. 2.4M
- 87 (approx. 850) vehicles/1,000 people…speed
- Roads
- Train service
- Rivers
  - Bridges
    - Not until 1932
- Introduction
Barriers
Normal Schools/Teachers Colleges

• Dr. Horace Mann
  — Legislator, Educator, College President
  — Father of Common Schools
    • Common School Movement
    • Secretary of Massachusetts Board of Education
  — Horace Mann Schools/Buildings
  — Mid 1800s – early 1900s

• Today, there are 272 public, comprehensive universities rooted in Normal Schools

Source: Boston Public Library Massachusetts Digital Collections
Rural Kentucky

- Miller School
  - Calloway County
  - Typical “public” school
Rainey T. Wells

- 1875 – 1958
  - Dr. Ralph Woods described him as “Dynamic, talented, humane and farseeing”
  - Southern Normal School, Huntingdon, TN
    - Degrees - Law and education, 1890-1898
  - University of Kentucky
    - 1927, LL.D.
  - Married Tennessee “Tennie” Daniel
    - Three children
  - Edgewood - 1918
The Early Roots

- **Calloway Normal College**
  - Kirksey, KY
  - Founded by Rainey T. Wells
    - 1899
    - Age 24
    - Murray to practice law
  - Closed 1913

- **Legislator (1902-1904), State Tax Commissioner, statewide contacts**
CALLOWAY NORMAL COLLEGE

This institution of higher learning was established by 1899 under the leadership of Rainey T. Wells, later president of Murray State Teachers College. Land for college was deeded to trustees in 1899. Students came from a wide area and boarded in private homes in Kirksey. The school operated as a teachers college until 1913. Over.

Presented by Kirksey and Calloway Friends
The Beginning

• 1920 General Assembly…1921 Report
  – Formed an “Educational Commission”
  – Governor Edwin Morrow
  – Two new sites…far eastern and western parts of state
  – “More and better teacher-training schools”

• Dr. Wells saw an opportunity…

• Towns in Pennyrile and Purchase Regions expressed interest…
  – Benton, Clinton, Hopkinsville, Mayfield, Murray, Owensboro, Paducah, Princeton and others
Representative Lee Clark

- Farmer, Legislator
- Close ally of Dr. Wells
- Legislature:
  - 1922-26
  - 1930-32
The Beginning

• Governor Morrow’s Charge – 1922:
  – “It is time for grim determination and a high resolve to remedy educational conditions in Kentucky. **Education is an investment. Ignorance is a tax.** Hold fast to the good. Take no backward steps.”

• Senate Bill 14
  – Senator Brig Harris (Ashland)
  – Two new Normal Schools
Next steps…

• Dr. Rainey T. Wells went to work…
• A major campaign:
  – March 8, 1922
    • “county-wide canvas”
  – $117,000
  – Approx. $1.8 million today
  – 1,352 Donors
    • $1 to $2500
  – Guaranteed pledges
    • Bank of Murray
    • First National Bank
The Commission decided...

- May 31, 1922...Dr. Wells made the presentation...last...
  - Something no one else had...
    - “It is not what the people of Murray have promised to do but what they have already done that counts.”
      - Presented two checks – $100,000 to start the campus
      - 350 homes were secured for up to 2,000 students
      - 18 acres purchased – an option for 12 more...
      - Classroom arrangement with Murray City Schools

- Friday, September 17, 1922, Murray was chosen
  - Western State Normal School
    - Murray State Normal School
• August 1, 1923, Dr. John W. Carr was hired as the first President
  – Retired in 1940
• State Supervisor of High Schools
  – Department of Education
The Challenges…

• “When he (Dr. Carr) arrived in the summer of 1923, he was the only visible asset that Murray State Normal School had. There was no building, no faculty, there were no students, no facilities.”
  – Paducah Sun-Democrat, 1959

• First classes
  – September 24, 1923
    • 202 students
First Board of Regents

- Dr. John W. Carr
- Laurine Wells Lovett, Benton
- Thomas Stokes, Murray
- Prentice Thomas, Cadiz
- James Wilson, Mayfield
- Dr. McHenry Rhoads
  - Not pictured
  - State School Superintendent and Chair
“The work of this institution has only begun….I want to see this faculty continue to develop in not only teaching ability, but heart power – the ability to lead and inspire….I want to see the fullest opportunities furnished to students…and [for them] to express themselves in science, art, music, literature, play, work, religion and especially in the teaching of children….I want to see young men and women who will become effective leaders….I want to see all of these things and more.”
• University Press of Kentucky
• [www.kentuckypress.com](http://www.kentuckypress.com/)
• Wrather West Kentucky Museum
  – Centennial Exhibit
  – Thursday, April 21, 2022, opening