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BLUEPRINT of a Dream

Arthur S. DeMoss Learning Center

INSIDE...

p. 2 DeMoss dedication May 6, 1985
p. 3 Arthur S. DeMoss... The man who made it possible, DeMoss son honored
p. 4 The New DeMoss... A vision fulfilled
p. 5 Future plans for DeMoss, campus
p. 6 Building safely around students
p. 7 Honoring a life, fulfilling a dream
p. 8 Snapshots of DeMoss

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SPECIAL ISSUE
Three years ago, students were shown pictures of the future Arthur S. DeMoss Learning Center. We laughed. We did not think that Liberty University could build something that actually had architectural value. Coffee House parodied the building project, looking forward 10 years from now when the building is still in its beginning stages.

We stand corrected. The new DeMoss Learning Center is almost completely finished. With the exception of landscaping the front and/or making a parking lot in front, the building looks great. People from Lynchburg have commented that they are impressed with what Liberty has done with DeMoss.

Despite the problems the building project has caused — the muddy floors, the lack of parking spaces, etc. — most students are thrilled that Liberty is starting to look like a "real college." The problems with the mud, the parking, etc., are a small price to pay for bigger and better classrooms, faculty offices and library.

— Lee Ann Livesay (as adapted from the April 23 Champion)
Arthur S. DeMoss—the man who made it possible

By Diana Bell, editor in chief

It’s a part of every Liberty student’s vocabulary. “Where are you headed?” “To DeMoss.” We hear it every day and we pass it every day. It’s emblazoned across our main academic building. But do we even know who Arthur S. DeMoss was, much less why this building is named in honor of him?

Arthur DeMoss was known as a philanthropist, a doer of good deeds and a generous person. But he wasn’t always the selfless giver he is now remembered as. His first job was as a bookie and according to “Power for Living,” he ran two profitable “horse rooms” and owned three Cadillacs by the time he was 24.

His life changed after his conversion to Christianity. At the age of 25 he followed an unusual calling. Tony Campolo, former pastor to DeMoss and wife Nancy, remembered when DeMoss told him he was giving his life to full-time Christian service. In a 1999 Time magazine article, Campolo said he assumed DeMoss meant he was going to be a missionary. “Oh, no. We have enough missionaries. We need people who will make a huge amount of money to support missionaries,” DeMoss responded. He was also known for his evangelistic efforts among business people, whom he considered to be a neglected mission field, according to gospelcom.net.

And he did just that. DeMoss made his multi-million dollar fortune in the insurance business, National Liberty Life Insurance Co. He sold the insurance to conservative Christians through TV ads that featured Art Linkletter. He gave nearly half his salary to his foundation, the Arthur S. DeMoss Foundation, which he later founded in 1955. The purpose of that foundation was and is to this day to support Christian programs initiated and managed by the foundation that are evangelical and discipling in nature.

An excerpt from his writings posted on daughter Nancy’s Web site, revivourhearts.com, explains why he did this. “Now giving is not really dependent on how much income you have or how much money you have in the bank, or even how much faith you have. Rather it is related to how great and trustworthy is the living God who has promised to supply all of our needs.”

DeMoss and his foundation may best be known as the force behind the “Power for Living” TV commercials and magazine ads. These ads featured Christian celebrities such as Miss America Heather Whitestone McCallum and Yankee pitcher Andy Pettitte sharing their testimonies and pitching a book called “Power for Living.” Calling an 800 number was the way to get the book. According to Time magazine article printed in 1999, the foundation spent more than $27.8 million to air these commercials for six months.

Before the “Power for Living” campaign, the DeMoss Foundation made waves with its antiabortion ads. The first ran the tag line “Life. What a beautiful choice.” and featured babies that had not been aborted, but had been unplanned. Another ad featured a baby playing beside the image of an unborn baby (via sonogram) playing. “The only difference,” the ad says, “is that the baby on the left is already born and the baby on the right would very much like to be.”

The foundation also promoted youth abstinence in the “You’re Worth Waiting For” ads.

DeMoss died on a tennis court in 1979 at the age of 53. He left $200 million to the foundation. His wife Nancy is now the CEO of the foundation.

Now when students look up at the beautiful Arthur S. DeMoss Learning Center they will know the man it was named for. A man—who even after giving millions of dollars away—said, “I have not given Him nearly enough. I’m ashamed of myself. He has been so good to me.”

David DeMoss honored with David’s Place

Arthur S. DeMoss isn’t the only DeMoss family member honored by Liberty University. DeMoss’ son David also has a building named for him. David’s Place was built and opened in 1989 and was dedicated in memory of his son.

“David’s Place is dedicated to the memory of David A. DeMoss, a gentle and loving young man who died tragically in an automobile accident in January, 1988 while a student at LU,” Twenty Years of Miracles, the 25th anniversary book, said. According to the 1989 Selah, Mrs. Nancy DeMoss wanted people to remember David’s sweet, fun-loving personality in a way he would have appreciated and a student union was the perfect idea. She donated $500,000 to renovate the former physical plant warehouse that was originally where David’s Place now stands.

Renovations to David’s Place were made in 1998 and completed in September of 1999. A donation by the DeMoss family initiated the changes, according to the 1999 Selah. A computer controlled thermostat, a mural, new furniture, carpet and ceramic tile were the changes made inside. The volleyball courts were upgraded, basketball courts were added as well as additional lighting and a sidewalk made up the changes outside.

The DeMoss family has had a tremendous impact on this campus. These buildings stand as reminders of their Christian testimony and service to the Lord.
The impressive rise of DeMoss catches many motorists eyes while traveling on Rt. 460.

WINDOW DRESSING — An up close look at the Jeffersonian architecture of the DeMoss building.

The new DeMoss—another part of the vision fulfilled

Motorists who drive Route 460 on a regular basis have seen it grow. It took a few long months, but the colossal brick structure of the newly renovated Arthur S. DeMoss Learning Center has supplanted the Vines Center as the most noticeable building from the highway.

The vision for construction came five years ago, in 1997. Looking towards a future in which Liberty would support an academic environment that held over 10,000 resident students, plans for the most practical way to solve the lack-of-space problems were researched by the administration.

"The initial research phase indicated that the most feasible means of generating the necessary space was to build additional floors on the current DeMoss Learning Center," according to the Development and Alumni Affairs as stated on Liberty's Web site. The University determined that three additional floors would be needed on top of the original DeMoss building to have the capacity to hold students over the course of the next few decades; the cost of this building venture was $25 million.

According to Clark Jones, the student body president at Liberty, steps were taken during the construction of the first floor to allow for such a thing to take place. "DeMoss was strategically built back in the '90s to support additional floors," Jones said. After emerging victorious from a financial crisis as well as an accreditation crisis that nearly crippled the university in the mid-'90s, the university was poised for growth. The benevolence of an anonymous donor contributing to the DeMoss Project resulted in the funding for the growth, and the $12 million needed for the addition was received. In early November 1999, David Caswell, the assistant director of field operations, said that he "expected it [DeMoss] to be completed in two years."

In February 2000, the Liberty Champion reported that construction on the facility, which would be highlighted by columns and "Jeffersonian" architecture, would begin to take place in the near future. However, it would be nearly a year before ground would be broken.

A reason behind the sluggishness was that the original contractors, Coleman-Adams, was unable to devise a plan that would allow construction to take place without moving the students completely out of the existing DeMoss structure. According to J.O. Renalds, Liberty's Director of Field Operations, the contractors said that the ideal situation would be to shut the building down for six to eight months. But with the exception of scheduled academic breaks, DeMoss was occupied. Liberty needed a builder that could work around a busy DeMoss.

On Oct. 24, 2000, Kodiak Construction signed a contract with the university, saying that construction would take 425 days, ready in time for the Spring 2002 semester.

"The coordination between the contractors and LU was a major challenge," Renalds said. "The contractor said it was a 'formidable task' to expand the existing building, [and] the superintendent said it was the 'most challenging' project he's ever done."

"The contractor and sub-contractors showed the maximum effort to get this complex structure completed on time," Renalds added.

"Kodiak was a fit both financially and with the way that Liberty wanted it to be built," Jones said, citing that classes have gone on in DeMoss as scheduled and that fears of classes being held on Saturday mornings at 7 a.m. in the Vines Center, in portable trailers or even the movie theater never came to fruition.

"There has been very few complaints and total compliance from the entire university community," Renalds said. "The students were kind and considerate through the entire process. The spirit was terrific."

Although the construction was, at times, painstakingly slow, the facility gradually began its vertical ascension in early 2001 and with each passing day, it grows ever closer to completion.

"It's been a cooperative effort, between the students, staff and faculty," Renalds said. "Without the cooperation of all individuals, it couldn't have been a success."

"We've had the support of all departments: purchasing, accounting, budgeting," Renalds continued. "It wasn't a one person effort or a one group of people effort. It was a team effort."

Classes will be where?

One construction company said that the easiest way to make the expansion would be to completely shut the building down for six to eight months; meaning, there would be no classes held in the building. This never happened. Regardless, rumors spread about how classes would be held. Among those rumors:

- Increased number of night classes.
- 7 a.m. classes.
- Saturday classes.
- Classes in the Vines Center.
- Classes at Movies 10.
- Classes moved into portable trailers.

SPEAKUP What do you like best about DeMoss?

"As a nursing major, I like the new nursing department—more room for classes and equipment."
—Nina Mendell, Fr. Orange County, Va.

"More room for classes, and looks good from 460."
—Tom Dwight, Sr. Burlington, Iowa.

"It looks like a real college now."
—Angela Carter, Administrative Asst. Lynchburg, Va.

"It looks cleaner, especially with no carpets."
—Shannah Respass, Jr. Baltimore, Md.

"To me it's the convenience of having class rooms near the office."
—Dr. David Towles Spanish professor Lynchburg, Va.

"The columns. And it's given us so much more space and the opportunity for the School of Communications to be together."
—Dean William Gibbins School of Communications Lynchburg, Va.
Need a job? $$$$$

Building safety a priority around students

Kodiak Constructor's, Inc. worked with LU's field operations to maintain safety while students occupied the building.

By Traci Lawson, reporter

When Kodiak Constructor's, Inc. proposed to do what no other contractor said could be done, LU responded, "Prove it." And as the four-story Arthur S. DeMoss academic building gradually rose above the red dust, Kodiak has proved that DeMoss could be expanded while safely maintaining occupancy.

Planning for the DeMoss expansion began in 1997. The team in charge of the planning, headed by J.O. Renalds, director of field operations, worked with several local contractors until it boiled down to a choice between two contractors. One company could only do three floors instead of four. And they were going to use beams and brick. The other was going to do the same, but wrap the building in block and brick. The other was going to do the same but wrap the building with metal studs, siding and brick. Both agreed it could be completed in 18 months, but one said the building had to be cleared for six of those months.

Kodiak presented the most structurally and economically feasible project and promised that they could build without shutting down the building.

"When we first started getting bids from general contractors, our main concern was for the students, faculty, administration and staff," Renalds said. Renalds, who has held his position as director of field operations since 1979, said LU wanted to make sure that everyone, including the contractor and those occupying the building, was coordinated in the DeMoss expansion. Kodiak's safety officer put up warning signs and blockades where appropriate. Dave Caswell, assistant director of field of operations, in LU's full-time safety officer for the project. In addition, the superintendents and foremen constantly monitor the project. Regular carbon monoxide testing monitored the air quality when gasoline-powered machines had to be used in certain work tasks, and fans circulated the air out of the building.

Renalds said the biggest safety concern was the contractors, who operate heavy equipment and work at dangerous heights. He recalled that during the construction of the first floor in 1985, a mason dropped a block, which landed on the head of another mason, resulting in a split hard hat and scratches. The only accident reported to Renalds thus far is a minor fender bender in which a passenger vehicle backed into a backhoe. "Kodiak went overboard to make sure people were safe; we've been very fortunate," Renalds said.

As with building a home, LU had to call Lynchburg's building official, Mike Dooley, for inspection at each phase of construction. Renalds explained that this procedure was never an inconvenience, but rather, Dooley was more than willing to work with the DeMoss project. He said that building officials are concerned with life safety issues because if something were to go wrong, it ultimately falls back on them. In addition, the fire inspector had to make sure that temporarily blocked exits were easy to get out of if needed. "Everyone puts their heads together to make sure the safety of the people were met," Dooley commented.

"It's been a real team effort," Renalds agreed. The biggest safety obstacle, he said, was coordinating use of the building with renovation. Renovation involved very heavy pieces of structured steel and 400-ton cranes and man-lifts. Matters were complicated with special events in the Vines Center, parking and traffic control. If he had to do it all over again, Renalds said he would prefer to start DeMoss expansion from the ground up instead of building on.

Renalds' job has been awfully busy, sometimes requiring 18-hour workdays or longer. His duties as director of field operations, which include directing construction, inspection, maintenance, grounds, building services and transportation, have not been paused for the DeMoss expansion. Renalds also noted the contributions of Charles Spence, maintenance manager for LU, Dr. Boyd Rist, Dr. David Barnett and John Peterson, facilities manager for LU, who performed above and beyond their regular duties for the duration of the DeMoss project.

Still, he concluded that the faculty and students were the ones who suffered the most, and he said he had very few complaints. For Renalds, the DeMoss expansion has been a successful cooperative effort. "It took more time, but in the long-run, we didn't want to take chances in damaging people, and communication was excellent. The support and leadership of the University administration, the efforts and cooperation of all supporting academic and staff departments and the student body were responsible for this project's success," Renalds asserted.
### Arthur S. DeMoss
- **Learning Center donated and constructed:** 1985
- **David's Place is constructed in memory of David A. DeMoss:** 1989
- **David's Place renovations are completed in September:** 1998
- **Construction of the additional three floors of DeMoss begins in the fall:** 2000
- **Arthur S. DeMoss dies:** 1979
- **David A. DeMoss dies in a car accident:** 1988
- **GMAC's "IN THE NUMBERS!" Presented By Jim Martin Pontiac-Buick-GMC:**
  - 0 — The number of men’s and women’s outdoor track championships other than Liberty have won.
  - .4 — The number of consecutive men’s tennis championships Charleston Southern has won.
  - 6 — The number of Big South schools that field a softball team.
  - 16 — The number of men’s and women’s outdoor track championships Liberty has won.

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"I have not given Him nearly enough. I'm ashamed of myself. He has been so good to me."

Arthur S. DeMoss
1926-1979

PHOTOS BY JOHN FISHER AND TAMMY RENNER