IN PURSUIT OF PREEMINENCE: THE WOODRUFF GIFT AND THE RISE OF EMORY UNIVERSITY'S STATUS 1980-1994

by

TIMOTHY MICHAEL DOYLE

(Under the Direction of Charles B. Knapp)

ABSTRACT

This dissertation considers the advancement of Emory University towards elite status during the 1980s. Focusing on the period following the reception of a $105 million gift from a foundation controlled by Robert and George Woodruff, the topic traces the strategies employed by Emory's leadership, principally President James T. Laney. Various resource allocation decisions are investigated in detail within the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences with the goal of enhancing prestige. Similarly, I examine changes to the university's institutional structure, principally the creation of the Carter Center of Emory University and the closing of the Emory University School of Dentistry, which occurred within this time frame and for the same general reasons of maximizing resources to enhance the university's profile.

These series of decisions occur within the university's wider history and are placed within the context of the city of Atlanta, since the gift in many ways was intended to enhance the city's wider reputation. Emory's advancement mirrors that of the metropolitan area during this same time period, suggesting a correlation between institutional and location reputation, culminating with Emory's admission into the Association of American Universities in 1994 and Atlanta's hosting of the Centennial Olympic Games in 1996.

I apply various interpretive frameworks to the narrative events, primarily the concepts of "garbage can" decision making, "striving for prestige" theories and rhetorical analysis. These methodologies reinforce the actual transformation of institutional culture resulting from the adaptive processes that follow the disbursement of the Woodruff gift funds and the associated decision-making process.

INDEX WORDS: Emory University, James T. Laney, Robert W. Woodruff, academic prestige, Atlanta higher education, Carter Center, Michael C. Carlos Museum, Emory University School of Dentistry.

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AB, Wabash College, 1986

MA, Emory University, 1994

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2011

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December 2011

DEDICATION

To my parents. Every day I feel my father’s presence and my mother’s absence.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply grateful to the many people who made this dissertation happen. The faculty of the Institute of Higher Education (IHE) at the University of Georgia have been uniformly patient and accepting of my circumstances commuting from Iraqi Kurdistan and all that entails, particularly the complete reliance on electronic communication. Special thanks to the Associate Director of the EdD program, Dr. Elisabeth Hughes, whose perceptive balance of challenge and support kept me motivated and working through the deadlines: her support was absolutely essential. Likewise I owe my gratitude to my current employer, the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani (AUIS), for its tolerance of a faculty member and Enrollment Management Director traveling back and forth to the United States every six weeks: I hope to repay that debt through my service—however useful to AUIS—and my personal obligations to Dr. John Agresto, past provost of AUIS and Dr. Athanasios Moulakis, AUIS' current president and provost.

Research support from the staff at the Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library (MARBL) at Emory University was profoundly accommodating. My particular thanks to Kathy Shoemaker and Liz Chase who welcomed my use of the various collections regarding sensitive topics of Emory's own history and made the electronic transmission of over a hundred pages of key documents from Atlanta to Sulaimani possible. Again, the dissertation could not have happened within the scheduled time frame without their dedication. I am also grateful to former Oglethorpe University student and now masters-level library and information systems student, Chloe Edwards, who agreed with aplomb to serve as my *Atlanta Constitution* research assistant.

Thanks to Chloe for exhuming all those microfilmed articles in the collection of the University of Texas at Austin.

A special thanks to my editor and formatter, Amy Andrews. Her comprehensive and tireless efforts were always timely and delivered with the best humor and insight imaginable. I simply could not have gotten my work turned around from Sulaimani, Iraq to Athens, Georgia without her efforts. This dissertation, such that it is, is far better for her work. I'm similarly grateful to my cohort colleague Kathy Pharr for recommending Amy to me.

I am indebted to my other colleagues in the first Executive EdD cohort for their good humor and true collegiality during the past two years: I have learned from each and every one of them. Special thanks to Brooks Seay who took the time to interact with the MARBL staff on my behalf and arrange for the transmission of my documents in person. Also I would like to thank Dr. Anne Rosenthal, associate professor of Communications and Rhetoric Studies at Oglethorpe University, for her insights regarding Kenneth Burke's discourse theories and the IHE's Dr. Charles Knapp for his insights into the connections between Atlanta's business elites and higher education. Many of the theories and sources regarding higher education first came to my attention in Dr. James Hearn's Higher Education Management course, EDHI 9050: I remain truly indebted to him.

Most of all I would like to thank two men. First, my father, Dr. James T. Doyle, has been an unwavering source of support in my long, long journey towards completing a doctorate. His inspiration, advice, and knowledge have been a bedrock for me through the dramatic turns my life has taken these past few years. And finally, a heartfelt thanks to the late Doug Toma, whose sparkling personality, deep knowledge and boundless enthusiasm were purely infectious to all of us in the program. I will never forget the many kindnesses large and small he showed me, most

relevantly his suggestion of the very topic—in almost complete form—that became this dissertation.

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CHAPTER 1

AN INTRODUCTION TO ACADEMIC PRESTIGE AND STRIVING FOR STATUS

Emory University's rise to prominence during the 1980s represents the culmination of various characteristics that reach back to its foundation and the origins of the city of Atlanta itself. The story centers on the city and university's intertwined quests for advancement and how they reinforce one another's drive for achieving perceived greatness. Both a reflection and beneficiary of Atlanta's ambition to be "the next great international city," Emory during this time frame seeks to be a correspondingly "great international university." The symbiosis between the overlapping leadership cohorts allows for a remarkable alignment of objectives: Atlanta's corporate elite eventually believes that having a respected research university serves as a hallmark of the desired status; Emory's institutional leadership intends on leveraging its connections among the city's leading businessmen for resource enhancements. Yet the costs of such relationships can be high: universities and corporations play different roles within communities, even within ones as ambitious as Atlanta's. A university that aligns its mission to corporate benefactors exposes itself to criticism about values and compromised missions; Emory will encounter problems as well as opportunities related to its adoption of a business model suggested and supported by Coca-Cola's magnates as it ascends close to its intended level of prestige.

Emory is representative of virtually all higher education institutions—from elite Ivy League universities to open enrollment community colleges—that have been concerned about their reputations on their own campuses and among outside audiences. While the status of a

school's particular departments or programs may vary, taken as a whole, an institution's leadership knows it cannot escape being judged through the lens of a prevailing image. Some schools manage to endure as obscure local institutions while others operate on a global stage, but almost all share a concern for their prestige. This concern manifests itself in dynamic processes, since simply protecting it rarely suffices: leadership must appear as actively working to enhance its institution's prestige or run the risk of being held responsible for any erosion in status. As KerryAnn O'Meara asserts, this ongoing pursuit is relentless and multifaceted: "each year colleges and universities strive to increase their national standing in the academic hierarchy, and the behavior associated with this 'striving' has taken many forms."[1] With all this varied activity, advancing in rankings becomes an "arms race" with a zero-sum of winners and losers when viewed in toto. The consequences of these myriad changes are unknown as a whole but represent a massive effort for the higher education industry when considered on an annual basis.

Although all categories of institutions attempt a range of strategies with varied success, a handful of colleges and universities have risen dramatically through this competitive process. Additionally, while movement among the bulk of schools clustered in the community college and regional institutional ranks may churn in the middle and bottom of the rankings, the advancement of an institution into truly elite status among research universities and liberal arts colleges is an occurrence notable for its rarity. With so many institutions vying for advancement, the ability to crack the top twenty-five from a significantly lower rank appears vanishingly rare. The investigation of such movement may be valuable in explaining the decisions and actions necessary to achieve such a shift and serve as a cautionary tale for those lacking the resources and circumstances that may be necessary to attain this achievement. Hypothetical causes abound

1. KerryAnn O'Meara, "Striving for What? Exploring the Pursuit of Prestige," in *Higher Education Handbook of Theory and Research* 23 (2007): 122.

for explaining this phenomenon: visionary leadership; resource allocation; transformative gifts; innovative strategy; regional dynamism; or simple luck, among others. Thus, focusing on the institution most associated with this movement in the late twentieth century may suggest avenues and insights into this topic that consumes so much of the higher education industry's efforts.

This dissertation will center on Emory University's strategy that resulted in its advancing into the elite ranks of any American institution from 1979 to 1987, as measured by various university prestige indices. The principal questions guiding this study are:

- What initial strategies did the leadership employ to enhance Emory's prestige using the resources made available to it through the 1980 Woodruff gift?
- In what ways did Emory's administration align its ethos, strategies and tactics with Atlanta's leadership to conform to status indicators?
- Which elements of the university benefited and which suffered through the 'striving' toward elite status, and how did these changes alter the internal and external communities' perceptions of Emory?

Specifically, I will study how President James Laney (1977-1993) obtained and leveraged the then-largest gift in higher education to advance reputation-enhancing initiatives, while closing down elements that did not improve rankings and cost money. He sought and obtained the transferal of the corpus of the Robert W. Woodruff Trust, then $105 million in Coca-Cola stock, to Emory University as a foundation internal to the university. I will recount how he empowered committees led by faculty members to evaluate all programs while focusing personally on innovations that were high-profile reputation builders. This will lead to an account of the Lamar Committee (1981-86), comprised of external academics working as consultants, who produced a comprehensive report advising Emory and its myriad liberal arts and sciences

programs on this singular question posed by Laney: "What will it take to move this department, this school—this university—to preeminence?"[2] The recommendations in this report shaped choices Laney made, and I will examine their implementation and the resulting repercussions for several academic programs within the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. Some departments benefited through this process by gaining endowed chairs and enhanced facilities; others endured downgrading or even complete closing based on the work of the external academic consultants.

Following the discussion of the Lamar Committee and its legacy, I will survey several strategic opportunities that allowed Emory to improve existing institutions, add new ones and even terminate existing ones with the goal of leveraging the resources necessary to raise prestige. Specifically, I will outline the following: the decisions and internal discussions relating to the enhancement of the Emory (now Michael C. Carlos) Museum, with attention to gift cultivation and positioning the institution in Atlanta; the negotiations, responsibilities, and problems resulting from establishing the Carter Center of Emory University, affiliated with the Presidential Library; and the internal discussions and public controversies related to the closing of Emory's school of dentistry in the mid-to-late 1980s. I will examine how the differing programs within the university were evaluated in terms of costs and relevance to Emory's quest for prestige, seeing what was necessary for investment, what spurred new initiatives, and what doomed longstanding programs.

I will evaluate this strategy through various theoretical frameworks including the "garbage can theory" of anarchic institutions' organization and suggest how much of the resulting decisions were attributable to Laney's overarching objectives and what were unintended results of the process. Further, I will investigate how Laney tailored his message

2. Emory History "The Impact of 'The Gift,'" Emory University, http://emoryhistory.emory.edu/people/guidinglights/WoodruffGift.html (accessed December 9, 2010).

through rhetorical adjustments when he appended different themes to identical goals to suit diverse audiences. I will briefly mention analogous examples of other institutions that made similar individual choices, but I will focus on how Emory's choices follow a comprehensive strategy and how opponents of specific decisions perceived the process. The resulting transformation came with some costs, as the institutional culture shifted along with the increased selectivity of both the student body and faculty hires, bringing Emory into conflict with elements of the surrounding neighborhoods through the Carter Center's construction and the reduction of community services through the dental school closing. More widely, I will contextualize how this phenomenon reflected the general pursuit of prestige and status for the city of Atlanta, the self-proclaimed capital of the "New South," and stands as a product both of anarchic organizational decision making and a cleared-eyed result of civic boosterism through targeted philanthropy. I will briefly contrast this account with Vanderbilt University's relationship within the wider Nashville community to demonstrate that institutions in the same broad categories of institutional type, region, and prestige level choose very different strategies in pursuit of the same advancement and achieving similar results. I will connect this broader theme to Laney's co-optation of a city hungry for prestige and advancement by investigating his appeals to Atlanta leaders and Emory Board of Trustee members and how this fits into the historical context of Atlanta as a commercially-oriented city that Emory mirrors rather than opposes. Ultimately, I will suggest that Emory and Atlanta are two enmeshed power structures that, while gaining positive repute through the 1980s and receive endorsement in the early 1990s (through membership in the AAU and selection as the Centennial Olympic Games host for 1996 respectively), have yet to ascend to the highest levels they sought.

I find this topic compelling since I witnessed some of it personally and was a minor participant in some of the decisions through my presence on campus as a student and employee from 1986-94. I personally witnessed Emory acquire significant adjacent property, close its graduate dental program, and intensify its relationship with the Carter Center. I was a graduate student, president of student government (1989-90), employee of Emory (1987-94), and a doctoral candidate in the history department, which gained significantly as an existing "strong" department capable of aiding the institution's reputation-building. More generally, I am interested in how prestige and goals link the university and the city of Atlanta, where I lived for twenty-four years. Since the higher education industry is demonstrably obsessed with prestige and rankings, Emory's status as one of academia's greatest examples of advancement makes it a crucial case study in understanding the possibilities and limits related to such advancement. I am confident that the ten years I have been unaffiliated with Emory lend me enough perspective to view the institution critically yet knowledgeably, allowing me to combine my experience with external observation.

Other people interested in this topic would include college administrators under pressure for protecting and advancing prestige; people interested in the transcending story of institutional rankings; city/university alliance builders who may see an example of how urban elites share some but not all interests; and management theorists, since Emory under Laney generally succeeded in reconciling often tense relationships between elements like trustees and faculty, while assigning clear winners and losers in its decision-making process. The year after Laney departed Emory to serve as ambassador to South Korea, the university received an invitation to join the Association of American Universities, the clearest indicator of Emory's enhanced status.

An historical approach to the topic will allow for an evaluation of the decisions made once the moment passes and whether Emory set, followed, or defied trends in higher education. For example, I will consider the motivation for Emory's closure of its dental school and geology department and the elimination of its library science's master of science degree, while simultaneously granting transformational resources to traditional humanities and cutting-edge life sciences programs as potential reputation enhancers. Similarly, I will assess the internal decision-making that funded the creation of the Michael C. Carlos Museum of Art and Archeology and the Carter Center of Emory University—two distinct initiatives within the university that grew from modest beginnings to signature Emory institutions. The decisions that led to the creation of these and the downsizing or abolition of other aspects of the university, examined as a whole, will demonstrate the range of options and initiatives taken by Laney in his quest for Emory's advancement. He was willing to create, improve, diminish and close programs as he and his advisors saw fit: the overarching question considers if these were the right decisions and what were their costs and benefits.

Further, I will chronicle Emory's sponsorship and appropriation of symbols related to status enhancement at the local, regional, national and international levels. Its relationship to the Atlanta power brokers on its board, its claim to regional primacy, its hunger for national rankings, and its yearning for international renown emerges as its story unfolds. Its greatest asset, acquired during the narrow time period considered (1979-87), serving as the hosting institution for the Carter Center, Jimmy Carter's presidential library, functions as a deliberate launching pad for international visibility, while co-branding itself as a Methodist university doing good works. I intend to demonstrate through this and similar instances that the university pursued a comprehensive, intentional and calibrated strategy that succeeded in advancing the university

into an elite level while making business-oriented decisions regarding other elements of the university unlikely to enhance its image. These changes came with some controversies, and I will outline the conflicts arising from tactics such as associating with the Carter Center and the closing of the dental school.

General accounts of Atlanta history abound, as well as specialized work focusing on Coca-Cola and the Woodruff family. I will rely on these and primary source documents (many available electronically) to establish the wider context of higher education's role in Atlanta and how Emory rises to its level of respect within that community. I will draw on external rankings for the framing of the topic, and then investigate institutional minutes, preserved memoranda, and other documents in archives. Other external assessments of Emory (newspaper and magazine articles, book profiles and the like) will serve as supplementing resources illuminating Emory's image management. I anticipate learning how dramatic change is envisioned and executed by individual leaders who are grounded in the resources of an institution and its surrounding region. Further, I hope that principles supporting institutional transformation, perhaps less dramatic but still significant, will emerge when breaking down the phases of Emory's success.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction and Overview

The evidence existing to trace the rise of Emory University to national prominence from 1979 to 1987 is extensive but scattered. At this point, no comprehensive account and analysis of Emory's emergence has pulled together the institutional, public, personal and rankings records of the key participants and institutions involved. Added together, these sources will establish a comprehensive profile of Emory during this time period and suggest responses to an analytical framework.

Atlanta Context Sources and Related Biography

The city of Atlanta and its surrounding regions served as the focus for several academic and popular histories leading up to its international spotlight moment in the Centennial Olympic Games of 1996. Similar to this watershed event, Emory's advancement from a sleepy second-tier institution to one with global ambitions mirrored that of its metropolitan area's thrusting to prominence as the host of the Olympics. In these historical accounts Emory, prior to Laney's tenure, rarely appears to seek a high profile in the city, choosing a more low-key relationship with the urban area in favor of a more regional or international profile. Two divergent accounts consider Emory's rise indirectly through the prism of Atlanta at large. Frederick Allen's Atlanta Rising: The Invention of an International City 1946-1996 mentions Emory briefly, primarily as a

recipient of Coca-Cola funded support.[3] Allen portrays Atlanta, like Emory, as somewhat ill-defined in the early 1970s and fragmented, but experiencing a refocusing and expansion that accelerated throughout the 1980s. Otherwise, little has been written concerning Emory and its relationship with the city, philanthropy, or its rise to prominence in general beyond brief statements on Emory's website or in its glossy publications. A former journalist and columnist for the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, Allen lived in Atlanta for many years and was personally acquainted with many of the personalities he covered. He also served as a political commentator for CNN and had been one of the city's most well-known media personalities.

A far more negative account of Atlanta appears in Charles Rutheiser's *Imagineering Atlanta*.[4] Like Allen's work, it was published in 1996 as a tie-in with the Centennial Olympic Games, but it was far more vituperative than Allen's affectionate and populist portrait. Rutheiser, writing then as a Georgia State professor of urban studies and a trained cultural anthropologist, confronts many of Atlanta's myths and self-distortions, serving as a balancing critic of Atlanta's civic boosterism that often, at worst, amuses Allen. Currently serving as a senior fellow at the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Center for Economic and Community Opportunity, Rutheiser critiques the suburbanized and disengaged neighborhoods around Emory, and he traces the often overlooked history of the historically African-American private colleges and universities that were truly distinctive of Atlanta's higher education innovations at an early phase. In Rutheiser's view, Emory's regional reputation and middling status, for much of its history, reflects the parochialism and inherent conservatism of private Methodist elites in Atlanta. When Emory receives the Woodruff gift, Rutheiser frames the university as going on a "spending spree" and

3. Frederick Allen, *Atlanta Rising: The Invention of an International City 1946-1996* (Atlanta: Longstreet Press, 1996).

4. Charles Rutheiser, *Imagineering Atlanta* (New York: Verso, 1996). Rutheiser holds his Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins in Cultural Anthropology from 1990.

trying to buy respectability—an accusation that stings but serves as a provocative counterpoint to Allen.

F. Stuart Gulley's 2001 biography, *The Academic President as Moral Leader: James T. Laney at Emory University 1977-1993*, is rather hagiographic in tone and primarily concerned with Laney as an ethicist president who leads Emory to greatness through a moral vision.[5] Gulley has little interest in the systems of decision making beyond portraying Laney's decisions as grounded in his ethical and theological training, and the work is virtually devoid of investigation of difficult institutional decisions, such as the closing of the dental school, which faced strident opposition. Additionally Gulley soft-peddles a series of difficult crises Emory experienced in the early 1990s that resulted in negative national press exposure (in newsweeklies in addition to both the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and the *New York Times*) that prompted Laney to reshuffle some of Emory's upper administration and may have hastened his departure to Korea. Regardless, it is a revealing exploration of Laney's achievements, primarily since Gulley served as president of another private Georgia Methodist school, LaGrange College, and brought analogous insights based on his own experiences. Many of his citations refer to personal conversations that he tape recorded with Laney and those associated with him, making transcribed quotations invaluable evidence to consider when the speakers reflect upon their intentions following key events.

As a counterpoint to the extensive discussion of Atlanta and Emory's relationship, I will briefly suggest the case of Nashville and Vanderbilt University's relationship. The pairing of another Southern inland metropolitan area and its ambitious private university with Methodist roots will illustrate the possibilities available to Atlanta and Emory. The differences between the

5. F. Stuart Gulley, *The Academic President as Moral Leader: James T. Laney at Emory University 1977-1993* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 2001).

experiences suggest a range of options that exist for these cities and universities, with the choices made reflective of their respective contexts, histories and leadership. I will rely upon three texts that are comprehensive assessments of their various subjects that approach the material from two different authors. The most through history of Vanderbilt University, Paul K. Conkin's *Gone with the Ivy: a Biography of Vanderbilt University*, indicates clearly from the title alone the elite aspirations and achievements of the university.[6] Published in 1985, it occurs during Emory's meteoric rise but prior to either institution's appearance in *U.S. News & World Report*'s rankings. This work functions in many ways as the "official" history of Vanderbilt, relying on personal interviews, archival sources and other documents to serve as the definitive institutional record of the university. It was apparently written with the cooperation of the institution and many of the surviving individuals discussed; thus it may be suspect of potential biases or omissions seeking to protect Vanderbilt's reputation. However, the text appears forthright regarding the most comprehensive and controversial topics. In particular, a thirty-five page treatment of James Lawson's case appears, recounting how an African-American Vanderbilt University divinity student was expelled by the personal decision of the university's chancellor, Harvie Branscomb. The text chronicles the university's decisions, civic advice, and Lawson's background, all shedding light on Nashville's civil rights movement and the corporate and political decision-makers influencing related events. Lawson's role as a leader of the city's sit-in actions appears as a reflection upon the university, compelling Branscomb's eventual actions that, in retrospect, cast the institution in a conservative and frankly racially reactionary light. The subsequent incidents recounted in the text, including the alleged "Stokely Carmichael riots" of 1967 and the destruction of neighborhoods adjacent to the university as "urban renewal" projects

6. Paul K. Conkin, *Gone with the Ivy: A Biography of Vanderbilt University* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1985). Press, 2001).

through the 1970s place Vanderbilt at the center of a series of divisive events quite different from Emory's town-gown relationships.

A pair of books authored by Bill Carey, while lighter in tone and scholarship, relate additional insights into both the university and Nashville's corporate culture. Titled *Chancellors, Commodores, & Coeds: A History of Vanderbilt University* and *Fortunes, Fiddles & Fried Chicken: A Nashville Business History* respectively, they rely on many newspaper accounts while drawing from other secondary sources, including Conkin's, for his treatment specific to Vanderbilt. Combining his two accounts will portray a comprehensive portrait of the university's relationship with the city. His general point of view seems to indicate the following: "Throughout most of the twentieth century, Nashville society revolved around two poles on opposite sides of the cultural world—country music and Vanderbilt University."[7] This suggests a relationship quite unlike Atlanta's with its principal industries and Emory University, illustrating the particular nature of the latter's experience.

Journalistic Assessments of Emory

Newspaper accounts provided the literature most immediate and explicit of all the sources when evaluating Emory. What these accounts lack in depth and analysis is compensated for by their immediacy, allowing the reader to understand the impact of the stories covered as they happened, and the links between the university and the wider region. By far, the most extensive coverage occurred in the *Atlanta Journal* and the *Atlanta Constitution*. These two papers combined newsrooms in the early 1980s while maintaining separate editorial boards, so interpretations differed between editions while basic coverage was pooled. Every major Emory

7. Bill Carey, *Fortunes, Fiddles & Fried Chicken: A Nashville Business History* (Franklin, Tennessee: Hillsboro Press, 2000).

event appeared in print in the newspapers as well as additional articles of local interest and general coverage of college students in the region. For example, the February 8, 1985 front page article "Plan to Close Dental School Is Protested/Emory Accused of Being Deceptive about Decision" appeared in both editions. Summarizing the two sides, the *Atlanta Constitution* reported the following:

> The administration said the dental school, the first in the South when it was established in 1944, could not attract enough qualified applicants and had a deficit of $600,000, with even larger annual losses looming. But on Thursday, the dental faculty alleged the university wants the school's building for a medical research facility, which the administration has denied. The faculty also rebutted statements by Emory President James Laney that qualified applicants could not be found and that other private dental schools are closing. 'The faculty is overwhelmingly opposed not only to the decision but the manner in which it was made,' said Dr. Joseph Konzelman, chairman of the oral medicine department and faculty spokesman. 'There are misstatements and equivocations.'[8]

It describes both sides of the dispute, with subsequent articles expanding the coverage as the school heads toward closure with opponents of closure's views presented as responses to Emory's administrative explanations. I will compare the newspaper coverage with the internal documents and the consultant reports regarding Emory's quest for status.

The stories in the *New York Times* presented a national picture of Emory and were generally more reflective than those in the Atlanta papers. While far less numerous, the national coverage was crucial for understanding Emory's emergence as a leading university known throughout the United States. Beginning with coverage in November 1979, which focused on the Woodruff gift, and concluding with coverage of Laney's departure for South Korea in 1993, the *New York Times* published various articles tying Emory to issues of national interest such as rankings, aspirations and gifts to higher education. A careful analysis of the rhetoric employed

8. David K. Seacrest, "Plan to Close Dental School Is Protested/Emory Accused of Being Deceptive About Decision," *Atlanta Journal* and *Atlanta Constitution*, February 8, 1985.

may reflect Emory's emergence as a nationally-known research university from a more regional reputation over time. For example, an early post-gift article revealed Emory's leadership's pursuit of prestige. After quoting Laney's desire to enhance the humanities, the *New York Times* reported:

> While such issues are being debated, the university has, in the last three years, identified several structural ingredients that are deemed essential to its 'fight for greater recognition.' These included the establishment of a new set of distinguished professorial chairs and merit scholarships for students. The chairs, Emory hopes, will lure faculty of international reputation, who would then serve as magnets to other scholars. The same is true of the merit scholarships, Dr. Laney said, noting that evidence of its success is shown by the enrollment this year of a number of students who had been headed for Ivy League schools.[9]

This article treated Emory as a regional institution trying to discern what advancing in status requires. This is evident from the simple title, "Education: Atlanta," as if a dispatch from some remote region that rarely contributes to the weekly "education" beat of the newspaper. I intend to trace the sequence of articles to detect any evolution of tone and terminology that reporters from the paper use to describe Emory. Taken together, these two collections reflect Emory's rising profile from purely regional to the national prestige rankings, and their clustering in later years represent evidence of Emory's emergence as a higher-status institution.

U.S. News & World Report **Rankings and Related Scholarship**

Internal documents archived at Emory will explore the university's desire to enhance its popular status through achieving a *U.S. News & World Report* top twenty-five ranking. The overlap of this ranking system's emergence with Laney's striving strategy gives the university's leadership an opportunity to reach the mass audiences older ranking or rating systems did not address. Previously, many attempts to measure and evaluate higher education institutions in the

9. Reginald Stuart, "Education: Atlanta," *New York Times*, October 8, 1981.

United States existed through the 1970s. However, these various forms of rankings and ratings were relatively obscure as the province of higher education academics and industry insiders. The attraction of relatively simple ordinal rankings rather than multi-dimensional academic ratings appeared when *U.S. News & World Report* jumpstarted an industry in 1983 with the publication of its first issue including higher education rankings. Revised in 1985, the rankings migrated to a spin-off publication, *U.S. News Ultimate College Guide*, for the third edition, with rankings announced in 1987 and the resulting book published in 1988. These first three editions were based solely on institutional reputation as evaluated by other college and university presidents with an average response rate of fifty percent for the first two years, ticking up to sixty percent for the 1987 issue.[10] Emory moving from unranked in 1983 and 1985 to appearing at number twenty-five in 1987, tied with the University of Texas at Austin.[11]

The totality of research regarding *U.S. News & World Report*'s listings of universities represents a cottage industry of higher education scholarship, most of it only tangentially related to this dissertation topic. However, Emory's adjustments in pursuit of elite rankings and their underlying criteria make a brief survey of the secondary materials concerning them necessary. E. Grady Bogue and Kimberely Bingham Hall's *Quality and Accountability in Higher Education: Improving Policy, Enhancing Performance* details the context and appeal of *U.S. News & World Report*'s evolving ranking system. An update from Bogue and Saunder's 1992's *The Evidence*

10. A clear overview of the rankings scholarship focusing on the emergence of *U.S. News & World Report*'s efforts appears in Luke Myers and Jonathan Robe, *College Rankings: History, Criticism and Reforms, A Report from the Center for College Affordability and Productivity*, March 2009; http://www.centerforcollegeaffordability.org/uploads/College_Rankings_History.pdf (accessed November 5, 2009). For these statistics, see page 17.

11. See Figure 1 at the close of this chapter for the first ten years of *U.S. News & World Report*'s rankings of universities in the American South.

for Quality: Strengthening the Tests of Academic and Administrative Effectiveness,[12] it considers the topic in its third chapter, "College Rankings and Ratings: The Test of Reputation." Locating the emergence of ratings in the early twentieth century between the phenomena of earlier institutional accreditation and later follow-up studies of client satisfaction, they see the widespread and rapid popularization of rankings as an expression of American desire for quality while the costs of higher education escalated. They explain in detail how *U.S. News & World Report* creates the market and readjusts it ranking system in response to criticisms.[13] This source reports the two major methodological changes that took place during the 1988 publication of the fourth version. For *U.S. News & World Report*'s initial edition of *U.S. News Ultimate College Guide* (where all subsequent rankings are shared), its staff solicited opinions from academic deans and admissions officers as well as presidents to report on the perceived reputation of institutions of their own respective type. These staff would rank the ten "most prestigious" institutions in their category.

Additionally, Bogue and Hall indicate that the reputation component becomes only twenty-five percent of the ranking. The other seventy-five percent consists of a variety of quantifiable "objective" data based on inputs and outputs. The index adds factors such as graduation rates, selectivity, faculty quality (measured through rank and publications, among other criteria), and educational resources such as library holdings in response to criticisms that a purely reputation-based survey measured perceptions only. However, the various weights associated with these factors and even the fundamental inclusion of various ones such as those

12. E. Grady Bogue and Kimberely Bingham Hall, *The Evidence for Quality: Strengthening the Tests of Academic and Administrative Effectiveness*, New York: Wiley, John & Sons, Incorporated, 1992.

13. E. Grady Bogue and Kimberely Bingham Hall, *Quality and Accountability in Higher Education: Improving Policy, Enhancing Performance*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2003, 62.

enumerated and the exclusion of others (perhaps measuring family income or background diversity) left *U.S. News & World Report* open to criticism on methodological grounds.

Two publications from Marguerite Clarke in 2002 make virtually identical arguments critiquing *U.S. News and World Report*'s methodology. Focusing on the period of the "blended" reputation and quantitative factors, she examines the numerical differences implied by ordinal rankings in her articles "News or Noise? An Analysis of *U.S. News and World Report*'s Ranking Scores" and "Some Guidelines for Academic Quality Rankings."[14] Written for American and European audiences respectively, she confronts the appearance of statistical precision between rankings for universities and business schools. She concludes that while the latter have more reliability since they vary less and the former often are characterized by meaningless distinctions between similar institutions, neither was truly statistically meaningful when differentiating one school from another, or even within several ranks above or below a particular institution. Thus, the appearance of precision is "false." Describing minor changes in rank as "noise" that could be mitigated by using multi-year data, she dismisses them as not "clear signals of change in relative quality."[15] Rather, these fluctuations and strict ordinal rankings, she thinks, should be replaced by "quality bands" indicating more meaningful distinctions rather than the meritless one between, she postulates, number fifteen and number fifty. She asserts the following regarding the true difficulty in constructing meaningful rankings:

> It is evident that the choice of indicators is a non-arbitrary process that should be guided by, among other things, a knowledge of the strengths and limitations of the indicators being considered as well as their validity, reliability, and comparability for the schools or programmes to be ranked. The choice of a method for presenting this information in ranked format must be guided by, among other

14. Marguerite Clarke, "News or Noise? An Analysis of U.S. News and World Report's Ranking Scores," *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice* 21, no. 4 (Winter 2002): 39-48 and "Some Guidelines for Academic Quality Rankings," *Higher Education in Europe*, 27, no. 4 (2002): 443-459.

15. Clarke, "News or Noise? An Analysis of U.S. News and World Report's Ranking Scores," 46.

> things, an understanding of the nature of quality in the schools or programmes being ranked as well as the relationships among the quality indicators that are to be used.[16]

Thus, the complexity of the task is daunting, making the false but appealing ranking system pervasive: an alternative that understands "the nature of quality" in all the institutions ranked would be cumbersome and unlikely to sell magazines, books or drive website visits.

Leading Scholarship on Prestige, Striving, and Reputation Building

There is an abundance of material covering the topic of pursuing prestige and building an improved reputation. I have eliminated the quantification-focused analyses of rankings as outside the scope of this dissertation in favor of a qualitative approach. Foremost among these is KerryAnn O'Meara's magisterial article "Striving for What? Exploring the Pursuit of Prestige," in which she focuses on the pursuit of prestige, rather than its actual elements by characterizing "striving." Defining it simply as "the pursuit of prestige within the academic hierarchy," she clarifies this notion by adding that "striving behavior might include campuses amending their admissions process, reward structures, and resource allocation decisions."[17] Her mastery of the earlier sources appears comprehensive as she connects multiple articles and points of view throughout her essay. Her treatment of the goal of "striving" is clear: she asserts that improving ratings, particularly in *U.S. News & World Report* rests at the heart of the enterprise.[18]

Her response to the question "Does Prestige Matter?" seems particularly relevant in the context of Emory, since "why" it matters to Emory's leadership does not appear obvious beyond the simple desire to associate with a "better" institution that Atlanta specifically and the Deep

16. Clarke, "Some Guidelines for Academic Quality Rankings," 457.

17. O'Meara, 122.

18. Ibid, 125.

South in general seems to believe is deserved. She points out quite correctly that among the general public the perception that "prestige equals quality" is commonplace and this is perhaps shared by Emory's boosters.[19] However, she indicates that these ratings are driven by the statistical profile of incoming students rather than any inculcation of learning the institution imbues in its students. Thus, "prestige" in this sense captures at best the quality of the people a student will sit next to rather than the value added by the institution's pedagogy.

O'Meara's article lays out three tables: Characteristics of Striving Environments; Perspectives on Forces that Compel Striving; and Areas to Examine for Consequences of Striving Behavior. Each of these tables will be utilized in profiling Emory since each meets most, if not all, of the categories O'Meara includes in these works.[20] These tables demonstrate that Emory, in deeds as well as in statements quoted by Laney and other members of the university, "strove" for prestige without reservation or hesitation, making the attainment of greater prestige an apparent end unto itself rather than a path to fulfilling another objective. Further, these tables indicate that a host of institutions share elements of this phenomenon but that Emory's fulfillment of all aspects of a "striving environment" and "forces that compel striving" make it both well poised for striving and committed to comprehensive adoption of changes focused on ratings improvements.

A final area where O'Meara's work deserves consideration, in light of Emory's circumstance, lies in her consideration of "retrenchment" regarding curriculum and program offerings. She indicates that it is a commonality for schools seeking enhanced prestige to channel all available efforts toward this end: "less prestigious programs are cut and resources redirected toward higher ranked ones . . . Thus, institutions will often look critically at the curriculum and

19. Ibid, 126.

20. Ibid, 131, 145, and 170 respectively.

programs they offer, and what they need to offer to increase their prestige and act accordingly."[21] This statement and its wider context suggest a unifying explanation for the demise of programs such as Emory's library science master's degree, its physics PhD, and its undergraduate geology major—none contributed to the university's reputation sufficiently to justify the expense, and they were cut. I will apply this and her other methodologies for determining the ramifications of "striving for prestige" to the Emory case study.

Brewer, Gates and Goldman's *In Pursuit of Prestige: Strategy and Competition in U.S. Higher Education* suggests an interesting distinction between "prestige" and "reputation."[22] The former relies on "generators" which include external research grants and publications, marquee sports and student selectivity, while the latter stems from "consumer fulfillment" such as graduate school placement, student amenities and the like.[23] Based on a RAND Corporation-funded series of case studies, this work functions as a large-scale qualitative study that draws conclusions regarding the relative benefits and inefficiencies resulting from the pursuit of prestige rather than learning. Authored by economists who approach higher education as an industry, the study categorized institutions as "prestigious," "prestige seeking," or "reputation building." Elite schools that have achieved "prestige" behave cautiously, avoiding taking risks rather than reaching out to their communities in fear of expending their accumulated "capital" of status. Prestigious institutions focus on the long-term and cultivate academic "stars" through aggressive faculty recruitment and benefit programs. This status serves as the goal Emory aspires to and essentially achieves by the end of Laney's tenure as president.

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21. Ibid, 151.

22. D. J. Brewer, S. M. Gates and C. A. Goldman, *In Pursuit of Prestige: Strategy and Competition in U.S. Higher Education* (Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publisher, 2003).

23. Ibid, 12.

The "prestige seeking" category though is where Emory starts, and it serves as a useful lens through which to view its choices, such as its immediate funding of "Woodruff Scholarships" for outstanding students—both graduate and undergraduate—who were otherwise bound for Ivy League or similar quality institutions and its adoption of tactics designed to attract affordable faculty members in targeted disciples. Even Emory's enhanced athletic facilities—its first building project funded with Woodruff revenue—speaks to its attempt to carve out a niche as a NCAA Division-III force,[24] (underlined by its membership in the University Athletic Association created in the 1980s, with elite peers like The University of Chicago and New York University).

Furthermore, Brewer et al. indicate that "prestige seekers" such as Emory was in 1980 "do not build prestige in the student market by being innovative or by identifying and meeting new types of student demands. Rather, they build prestige by essentially mimicking the institutions that already have prestige."[25] I will examine this tendency toward isomorphism through a careful analysis of the instances when Ivy League schools are invoked by Laney, and when representatives of elite institutions are selected for service on boards like the Lamar Committee or recruited as accomplished scholars. I will recount how, while Laney tied events to Atlanta and Southern mythology, invoking service at times to regional and institutional exceptionality, he will look to the Ivy League—and to Harvard in particular—to mimic elite behavior, perhaps fulfilling this point outlined by Brewer, Gates and Goldman.

24. This may seem like a contradiction in terms, but this strategy serves elite liberal arts institutions like Williams College that promote an ethos of "amateurism" akin to that of the early Modern Olympic Games: sports for "gentlemen and ladies," safely screened from competing against "professionals."

25. Brewer, Gates, and Goldman, 66.

Organizational Theoretical Framework Sources

Laney's transition from dean of the Candler School of Theology to the early years of his presidency suggests the validity of insights such as those found in Clark Kerr's essay, "The Idea of a Multiversity," which asserted that leading research institutions are not accurately viewed as an organic whole but instead "a series of processes producing a series of results—a mechanism held together by administrative rules and powered by money."[26] Ironically, while demonstrating these characteristics in deed, Laney will later deny them in words. While requiring the approval of the president and board to make his broad moves, Laney pioneered for Emory the autonomy of various schools within the university and the subsequent expectation that their funding should—with the clear exceptions of the core undergraduate college and graduate school—be self-sustaining, even advocating the hoary Harvard mantra, "Every tub on its own bottom." This embryonic policy at Emory reached its full development with the expansion of revenue generating schools and the closing of non-self-sustaining programs at Emory during the 1980s: concepts meeting Kerr's definition of a "multiversity" in total.

I plan on applying "garbage can" analysis to the decision-making process used at Emory relating to the spending of funds generated by the Woodruff gift. After I construct a narrative of Emory's decision making under Laney, I will use the theory to evaluate the processes that took place. The genesis of "garbage can" analysis began with Cohen, March and Olsen's "A Garbage Can Model of Organizational Choice," from *Administrative Science Quarterly* (1972) and has been refined in Robert Birnbaum's *How Colleges Work: The Cybernetics of Academic*

26. Clark Kerr, "The Idea of a Multiversity," in *The Uses of the University, Fourth Edition, with 1994 Commentaries on Past Development and Future Prospects* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994), 33.

Organization and Leadership (1988).[27] Subsequent treatments of garbage can analysis that tend to widen the focus beyond university settings are hence not germane to this research. I selected this process primarily because it seems to explain Laney's appointment of internal and external committees to decide how the myriad of issues and suggestions offered in the wake of the Woodruff gift go through a strategic planning process. Birnbaum, building on the work of predecessors, describes the functioning of the garbage can model: "specific problems, participants, and solutions coalesce with a particular choice point and they become attached (that is, more tightly coupled) to each other."[28] The problems of Emory University at the advent of Laney's administration—its uncertain priorities, cultural conflicts, and inchoate ambitions—mix with participants including faculty members, trustees, and administrators in addition to outside evaluators and journalists. Birnbaum endorses the notion that these processes appear as the apotheosis of the garbage can model: "Ad hoc long-range institutional planning committees may be the quintessential garbage cans, temporarily providing 'homes' for any conceivable institutional problem, solution, or participant."[29] Thus the largest gift to a private institution gives rise to garbage can processes when the institutional leader employs such committees to determine institutional priorities.

Birnbaum serves as a further key text for my rhetorical analysis. His *How College's Work* presents various models offering conceptual frameworks for understanding academic organizational behavior. In Emory's case, the more hierarchically-oriented board presumes a bureaucratic model, with clear lines of authority. In such a case, "Individuals know what their

27. Michael D. Cohen, James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, "A Garbage Can Model of Organizational Choice," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 17, no. 1 (March 1972) and Robert Birnbaum, *How Colleges Work: The Cybernetics of Academic Organization and Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1988).

28. Birnbaum, 164.

29. Ibid, 165.

jobs are, and they understand the limits of their own responsibilities and those of others."[30] Thus, the faculty's request to help select the president appears as an inversion of the perceived hierarchy and a transgression of limits to their authority. Henry L. Bowden, a successful Atlanta lawyer, wrote of "delegation of authority" and how, since the board would be "responsible" for the president's actions, such delegation would be impossible. The request met with rejection since faculty, in a traditional bureaucratic model, do not reach even the initial supervisory level of department heads, serving essentially as expert employees, not managers.

In contrast, Birnbaum's discussion of a collegial model familiar to small, traditional liberal arts colleges, seems to be the operating expectation of the Emory faculty. Characterized by flattened status hierarchies and consensus-oriented decision making, this model evokes an idealized form that undergirds a close-knit academic community based on personal relationships, accessible power centers and shared governance. Birnbaum's constructed collegial example, featuring a fictional President Henderson at Heritage College, describes this ideal: "The faculty tends to think of President Henderson as having been elected, since he was recommended to the Heritage trustees by a unanimous faculty search committee. Although his faculty colleagues expect that the president will make decisions about ordinary problems as they come along, they see him as their agent rather than as an independent actor."[31] This model could have applied to Emory at an early period although there does not appear to be a tradition of strong faculty governance at the institution; rather, a tightly-managed board with central oversight aligned Atlanta's corporate interests with the Methodist church organization. However, as Birnbaum points out, "an important condition for the maintenance of a true collegial form is that it be

30. Ibid, 162.

31. Ibid, 89.

comparatively small."[32] Emory's status as a university with an enrollment around 6,000 students in the mid-1970s, while certainly undersized for a research institution, appears prohibitively large for such a faculty-centered ideal. Yet shared governance and the centrality of the faculty perspective did and do exist at similar-sized institutions, making Emory's exclusion of anyone but trustees from the presidential search process fraught with potential discord. While, eventually, the trustees allowed faculty members to review the candidate files and meet candidates, the committee remained entirely trustee populated. This kind of discourse analysis suggested by Birnbaum reveals the competing models existing at the same institution and championed by various power centers: recounting Laney's ability to reconcile them as a masterstroke of academic coalition building will serve as the heart of my analysis in this area.

Taking issue with some of Birnbaum's notions of the near "anarchical" decision making coming out of a "garbage can," Thomas Hammond's "Herding Cats in University Hierarchies: Formal Structure and Policy Choice in American Research Universities" provides a useful albeit complex theory for evaluating Laney's situation.[33] Arguing that the reporting structure of a university channels the flow of information for decisions made by senior administrators, Hammond's thesis suggests avenues of analysis that frame the decisions Emory makes. The reporting lines on various information-filtering or decision-making bodies such as the Lamar Committee or dean-provost relationships constrain the possible choices available. Specifically, Hammond states ". . . I have suggested that organizational design necessarily involves trade-offs between strategic goal setting and involvement in the details of how any one strategic goal is

32. Ibid, 91.

33. Thomas H. Hammond, "Herding Cats in University Hierarchies: Formal Structure and Policy Choice in American Research Universities," *Governing Academia*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2004): 91-138.

pursued: no formal structure will easily allow the top-level administrator to do both herself."[34] I will consider this and related assertions to Laney's decision-making, particularly examining the instances—primarily at the inception of the Woodruff financial influx—when he appears to predetermine outcomes to questions posed to the community of how resources will be structured and contrasting those examples when he empowers elements of the community (primarily faculty) to make specific recommendations of university actions. The tension between strategic goal setting and the details of goal pursuit appear when Emory finds itself enmeshed in disputes such as the Carter Center's neighborhood impact and the closing of the dental school; Hammond's theories will undergird those discussions.

A final organizational theory relevant to Emory's bid for prestige speaks to the isomorphic tendencies rife in higher education. Paul J. DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell's "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields" serves as a critical amplification of Max Weber's observations regarding the tendency of institutions to become alike over time. They argue that "bureaucratization and other forms of organizational change occur as the result of processes that make organizations more similar without necessarily making them more efficient," a phenomenon that applies directly to higher education structures.[35] Institutions seeking to advance in status adopt the characteristics of those higher up, even if those traits are not particularly productive. Emory will embrace this process through expanding it graduate arts and sciences programs and through its lavish enhancements to its museum collection since these are drivers associated with prestige enhancement. Additionally, the attraction of star faculty and administrators disperses practices common to elite

34. Ibid, 137.

35. Paul J. DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell, "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields," *American Sociological Review* 48, no. 2. (April 1983): 148

institutions to striving organizations like Emory. Emory seeks exactly these high-status individuals as a rapid path to improved status. Elements such as research interests, laboratory practices and priority establishment flow from this sort of normative isomorphism.

Interpreting Emory's Cultural Changes

Marvin W. Peterson and Melinda G. Spencer's article, "Understanding Academic Culture and Climate," adds an understanding of Emory's transformation as a deep reorienting of its internal culture in contrast to Kerr's mechanistic notion. Their defining concept describes Laney's ultimate objective succinctly:

> The concept of culture represents a paradigm for providing a holistic perspective on organizational functioning. In an era of growing institutional competition for students and funding an institutional image reflecting a positive culture and climate on a few key dimensions is often sought.[36]

Laney's triumph is the forging of a "positive culture" from the contentious and complex university he led, sacrificing any aspects that risked the rise of a new perception of Emory by draining resources.

Seen through this lens, Laney forges a new myth that wipes away the previous prevailing institutional self-image, finding itself a home on the Emory website as the story the university tells itself and the world. This allows the fashioning of a new set of framing touchstones consistent with Peterson and Spencer's thesis:

> . . . the heroes and villains of the institution, the major sagas of the institution's successes or failures, and the language and jargon used to describe them are all forms of institutional culture that can provide great insight into the past and current ideologies and assumptions that members hold important and that guide their actions.[37]

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36. Marvin W. Peterson and Melinda G. Spencer, "Understanding Academic Culture and Climate," *Assessing Academic Climates and Cultures*, 68 (1990): 10.

37. Ibid, 11.

Laney cast the pursuit of prestige as a worthy goal justified by faculty achievement and regional pride; Emory returns the favor by mythologizing him as it shapes a narrative around his leadership as seen in the previously quoted excerpt from the university website. This argument has shaped my understanding when evaluating the level of success Laney and his team has reshaping the internal self-image at Emory and will be central to my understanding of these internal relationships.

Rhetorical Analysis Theory

Finally, I intend to apply some communications theory analysis to the rhetoric surrounding Laney. Specifically, Kenneth Burke considers language use in terms of a rhetoric of motives. He studies these as communally shared as opposed to individualist motives of inner drive. He rejects behavioristic, individual-psychological models of motivation in favor of motives as socially constructed involving others in language even if the rhetoric comes out of the mouths of individual leaders. Laney exhibits multiple social-communal rhetoric, as seen in his various rhetorical strategies found in speeches to faculty and trustees. Specifically, Burke's Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose, (third edition 1984, originally published 1935 and revised in 1965) will serve as a starting point for the evaluation of the different forms used to address particular audiences.[38] I will investigate through his theories in this text and additional works the possibility that the sub-communities of faculty and trustee members' participation as audiences shape Laney's rhetoric into distinct discourses which, while aiming at similar ends, take divergent forms and arguments grounded in the audience-speaker relationship.

38. Kenneth Burke, *Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose* (Berkeley: University of California Press, originally published in 1935, revised 1965, forward added 1984).

For example, When Laney addressed the faculty at the conclusion of a capital campaign planning process, in February 1978, he called for a determination of Emory's future. He characterized a university in direct contrast to Kerr's notion of a mechanism "powered by money," maintaining that "an educational institution is like a living organism, where concern for the health and well-being of all must be practiced . . ." and that Emory "must practice collegial delegation."[39] The irony that Laney would embrace an avowedly "collegial" and "organic" conception of governance after the trustees dismissed such notions two years previously, when selecting him, appears obvious. Clearly he sought a rapprochement with the faculty who opposed his appointment, drawing upon his Yale pedigree and connections to liberal education to gain credibility, much as Burke would predict the audience necessitates changes in the rhetorical choices.

In a more frank and challenging mode, Laney addressed the Emory Board of Trustees in a speech preserved in the archives a year later in May 1979, marking the end of his second year as president and his tenth year at Emory. His perception of the institution's image was remarkably blunt and essentially negative, particularly compared to his collegial remarks to faculty: describing Emory as lacking

> . . . definition . . . not only in the public image of the University . . . but in the image we hold of ourselves as an academic community. We do not have a convenient objective index to help us see ourselves in perspective—neither the strong intercollegiate athletic program that brings attention to other major universities, nor yet a commanding national academic reputation.[40]

Emory was a collection of disparate schools and programs according to Laney, with neither a shared internal vision nor a pervasive external reputation. His rhetoric is remarkably different

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39. James T. Laney, "Address to Faculty Meeting," 1977-8 Faculty Meeting Minutes, "February 1978" Folder, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta.

40. James T. Laney, "Trustee Minutes," Board of Trustees Meeting, May 1979, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta.

when addressing the trustees compared to his faculty musings calling for "collegiality." To the trustees he offers two divergent paths to great public and self-awareness: a "strong intercollegiate athletic program" or a "commanding national academic reputation." The trustees—overwhelmingly corporate leaders—hear a message calibrated to their perceptions and interests, perhaps evoking images of the University of Georgia and Yale respectively that would have been commonplace in the late 1970s. In light of this characterization of Emory, the trustees supported the launching of a $160 million campaign focused on financial aid endowment and student facility improvements, although they do not seem to solve Emory's lack of a clear image both internally and externally as outlined by Laney. This divergent rhetoric and changes in tone with the same goal of building Emory's facilities seems ripe for an evaluation along the lines Burke advocates.

Closing Remarks

Clearly the literature for this topic is rich, with a mix of artifacts (both physical archives and electronic self-promotion), academic articles, journalistic coverage, trade press and higher education theorists. I intend to connect the crosscurrents suggested in this chapter between these different, and at times competing, understandings of a university's transition to elite status. A complex institution deserves a full treatment of the available evidence, which is the goal of this study.

Table 1: Selected *U.S. News & World Report* College Rankings 1983-1994.[41]

University	1983	1985	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Emory	NR	NR	25	22	NR	NR	NR	21	25	16
Vanderbilt	NR	NR	NR	NR	24	NR	19	25	20	18
Duke	NR	6	7	12	5	7	7	7	7	6
Virginia	NR	NR	15	20	21	18	21	22	21	17
UNC Chapel Hill	NR	9	11	23	18	20	25	NR	NR	NR
Rice	NR	NR	NR	NR	24	NR	19	25	20	18

41. "U.S. News Rankings Through the Years," *The Chronicle of Higher Education: Facts & Figures*, http://web.archive.org/web/20070908142457/http://chronicle.com/stats/usnews/ (accessed November 4, 2011). The above table excerpts the annual *U.S. News & World Report* rankings for national universities. The methodology used by the newsweekly has changed with every publication, sometimes slightly and at other times fundamentally. "NR" represents "no ranking" in the top twenty-five. The article states that "some values are blank because in those years the magazine did not give individual rankings to every institution, instead listing them in large groups described as 'quartiles' or 'tiers,'" while at others the institution may not have been ranked at all. The 1983 and 1985 listings were published in its magazine in those respective years. The rankings come from U.S. News's separate annual publication *US News Ultimate College Guide* from 1988 onwards, which are announced in 1987 but printed for the following year's guidebook.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Designing a study of Emory University's rise in prestige as reflected in criteria ranging from membership in the American Association of Universities to its placement as number twenty-five in the 1987 *U.S. News & World Report Guide to Colleges and Universities* requires a variety of qualitative measures. While this rise from second-tier status to the elite ranks represents the single largest gain in rankings among any American college or university, heretofore, no compelling study of its rise has occurred, particularly one which focuses on the leadership strategies and choices employed toward this goal. A qualitative analysis of Emory's emergence as a leading private research university during the 1980s and 1990s would explain the confluence of events that allowed this ambition to succeed and would suggest avenues and potential pitfalls for the many (if not most) institutions that wish to raise their level of prestige.

Making the Case for a Case Study

The research design for such a project which centers on a single case rooted in a defined timespan and a cast of individuals within a community clearly calls for a fundamentally qualitative approach. I have relied primarily on Robert K. Yin's Case Study Research: Design and Methods for structure, scope and boundaries.[42] Since the topic focuses on processes, individuals and shifting cultures, a purely or even significantly quantitative approach would be inappropriate. A compelling research design calls for a canonical series of topics that

42. Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods, Fourth Edition* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage, Inc., 2009).

comprehensively address the scope and depth of the project while indicating the sources and replicability of the evidence. The utility of the qualitative approach, as seen in this proposed research design, flows from the subject matter. As a singular set of circumstances that cannot be replicated, the sequence of Emory's past leadership's choices are at best suggestive to other ambitious institutions but they cannot be strictly determinative. Qualitative case studies such as these are meant to expand the possible choices other practitioners have, serving as indicators—for good or for ill—of other instances that may be analogous given a set of relevant circumstances. Thus, a primarily quantitative approach would be completely unsuitable for such a study: while more than describing the zeitgeist of Emory and its advancement in the heady days of 1980s Atlanta, capturing the cultural elements of institutional transformation is clearly best suited for qualitative measures.

Setting and Historical Context

The setting of the case study is key for this topic: the city of Atlanta in the late 1970s contained a powerful nexus of the city's white business elite and the newly-empowered black political elite, both of which interacted closely with the state of Georgia's respective business and political leadership located in the same city. As a booming Sunbelt metropolis lacking a high-status comprehensive research university but rich in boosterism, Atlanta hungered for signifiers of its emergence as the unofficial "capital of the Southeast" beyond the primacy of its airport. The case of Emory, whose rise outpaced the significant advances of other Atlanta area institutions (Georgia Institute of Technology, Georgia State University and the University of Georgia) during this time period, is inseparable from that of the city. Its rise to national and international stature is singular yet contains elements that other ambitious and resourced

institutions may find relevant to their own ambitions. Thus, the study should begin with a brief review of contemporary accounts of Atlanta's rise, beginning in the post-Reconstruction era marked by Henry Grady's speech identifying "The New South" at the 1895 Cotton States Exposition delivered in Atlanta's Piedmont Park, and following through landmarks such as the phenomenon of a relatively peaceful experience of integration and the startling success of Atlanta's 1990 bid to host the Centennial Olympic Games. This will contextualize the wider civic culture and establish the Woodruff donors' environments and that of Laney's processes.

Archival Analysis: Overview

Other than the brief historical survey, the subsequent methodology required of the study is primarily archival. I have surveyed the materials accessible to a scholar, determining that a large but manageable collection exists. Almost exclusively housed in The Robert W. Woodruff Library's special collections department at Emory University, the documents are a rich source with, however, a few potential problems. The official "Office of the President" documents for this time period are individually catalogued with box and folder numbers, making the retrieval of specific items relatively simple. However, Emory's personal paper collections of its own administrators—including those of James T. Laney—and former trustee chairman, Henry Bowden, are not catalogued. Rather, they are merely boxed in approximately chronological order as they appear to have been kept in his office and will subsequently require a structured investigation for specific known documents and surveys for other potentially useful materials. Existing texts on distinct but related subjects including in-house institutional histories will help refine this process but significant archival investigations will need to occur. Voluminous records of board of trustee, faculty senate and university senate minutes exist in detail and are routinely

extracted by the special collections staff. They also have custody of special reports such as the final one of the Lamar Committee, the creation of the Carter Center of Emory University and records pertaining to the closing of dental school and the library science program. I have established a relationship with the staff of Emory's special collections department and have general approval for any requested documents. Further, I have determined that any specific document may be requested in electronic form, making retrieval from my base in Iraq within a few days, more likely.

Office of the President's Papers

Only a limited amount of this material pertains both to James T. Laney, the president during the time under consideration, and Emory's prestige advancement, but the relevant materials are crucial. Numerous speeches, notes, memoranda and publications emanating from the President's Office comprise key documents for the project. For example, "James T. Laney Memorandum to the Faculty of the University," dated October 26, 1987, serves as the initial report of Emory's advancement to number twenty-five on the *U.S. News & World Report* list of "best" universities within the context of the stock market correction taking place the previous week.[43] The sheer novelty of the guide's publication—it was only the third version the survey published since it began in 1983—helped draw attention to Emory's rise from the middle ranks in the earlier 1980s. Laney made clever use of the press announcement, including copies of it with a written memorandum to university faculty addressing Emory's response to the "stock market correction" that occurred that month in which he asked "to recapture some 2-3 percent of

43. James T. Laney, "Memorandum to the Faculty of the University," October 26, 1987, President's Office (Laney), "Articles, Miscellaneous" folder, box 1, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta.

the University's annual budget."[44] This budget was still a six percent increase over the previous year's allocation even with the reductions. Thus, while many other institutions were retrenching, Emory was expanding, able to allocate new resources and redirect existing ones in a manner aimed at improving prestige. The final paragraph of his letter outlining the reductions spoke to the top twenty-five listing as one that surpassed many of the Association of American Universities' members, documenting the rise in the perception of Emory's quality around the nation. Laney remained tightly focused on his goal of promoting Emory's rise and bound the faculty to his aim by portraying their contribution as pivotal to the endeavor.

James T. Laney Papers

I have discovered other crucial memoranda relevant to this study and completed the survey of the materials in the "President's Office" collection that appear relevant. However, all documents related to official presidential communications do not rest in this collection; rather, it appears that staff inserted specific pieces to be preserved for posterity in the collection. While the Office of the President's papers consisted of the working files kept in the president's suite, the holdings include speeches, personal notes, and schedules along with scattered seemingly extraneous documents. More complex are the personal papers of James. T. Laney. Known as "The Laney Papers," these span his life at Emory from his arrival in 1969 as dean of the Candler School of Theology to his departure from Emory in 1993 to serve as the American Ambassador to South Korea. Thirty boxes stored in a warehouse off-campus constitute the collection. Unlike the official President's Office collection, these boxes were neither categorized nor inventoried and needed to be sorted by hand. An initial scan of the collection indicated that the material was

44. Ibid.

generally clumped by alphabetical order but not strictly so: beyond the first fifteen boxes, the alphabetization ceases. These included items that might be expected to be in the official President's Office files, but there does not seem to be a clear principle for inclusion in one or the other beyond the initial fifteen in alphabetical order. The special collections staff is unaware who made the selections for each category or if the files had been purged; both the President's Office and James T. Laney collections are unprocessed and hence the lack inventory records.

The Papers of Henry Bowden and Various Administrators' Files

Similarly, professional papers related to other individuals, primarily Billy E. Frye, Emory's former provost and the acting president subsequent to Laney, are held by Emory's special collections department and required surveying through various categories. Significantly smaller than Laney's, these required an additional day or two to comb through, primarily to cross-reference correspondence between Laney and members of his leadership team. Other individuals' records relevant to this topic exist in Emory's Special Collections archives. Documents related to the early part of this project abound in the "Papers of Henry Bowden." As chairman of the Emory Board of Trustees for 22 years, Bowden received key documents as personal correspondence. Records resting there indicate the scope of Atlanta's philanthropy and Emory's proximity to its leadership. Dominated by Atlanta's corporate elites with a sprinkling of Methodist clergy, the board's center of power lay with the Coca-Cola executive George Woodruff and his supporters—his brother Robert had declined to return to the board several years previously but played an active role behind the scenes as perhaps Atlanta's most influential businessman. The Woodruffs were supporters of Laney, with Robert himself treating Laney much as a personal religious counselor. Upon then-President Atwood's statement of impending

retirement, Woodruff nominated Laney in a personal note to Chairman Bowden.[45] Bowden subsequently named himself chair of the presidential search committee with all other search committee members being fellow trustees. Trustee D. W. Brooks endorsed Laney to the search committee in writing, with the comments surviving.[46] Laney was clearly a serious candidate from the board's perspective, and all these otherwise ephemeral notes survive as part of the record. Yet Bowden's records are invaluable for gleaning the opposite view of Laney's candidacy. Included in the collection are tantalizing pieces of faculty correspondence to the chairman, the most incendiary of which chronicles the faculty's expected participation in the search process.

Tracing Emory's Self-Reported Image

Significant material released by Emory University presents an institutional narrative constructed for external consumption. Emory's website, viewbooks, admission publications and other self-generated materials advance an official interpretation of events and causation leading to Emory's success. Drawn almost exclusively from the work of Emory University Secretary Gary Hauk, the text found on the "emory.edu" website represents the official history of the university, sanctioned institutionally. Portraits of the leaders are characterized as the "Guiding Lights" of the institution, useful when evaluating the rhetoric associated with Emory's advancement. I am mindful of O'Meara's comments endorsing the examination of this category of material:

45. Robert W. Woodruff to Henry L. Bowden, October 5, 1976, Henry L. Bowden Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta.

46. D. W. Brooks to Henry L. Bowden, October 22, 1976, Henry L Bowden Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta.

> One area that might be isolated and explored in greater detail is internal and external communications regarding external image and internal management of institutional identity. Discourse analysis and document analysis could be conducted of both formal and informal documents that in some way represent the institution during a period of striving.[47]

I have begun by scanning the entire website narrative and will examine publications, focusing on those specific to the time period under consideration and more contemporary ones that address the Laney era. I understand the tension inherent in any self-published "official" material and see it both as artifactual evidence as well as a suggested narrative, thus not a necessarily reliable or comprehensive treatment of their own institution. However, it represents the story the institution tells itself and its external audience. For example, its website tells its story of the end of the Laney era thusly:

> In fiscal year 1993, the University surpassed the $100 million mark in federal research funding. By the end of the 1990-95 capital campaign—the second campaign of Laney's administration—annual gift support had reached $72 million. Academically, the gains were equally impressive . . . Emory achieved the goal of graduating a hundred new doctors of philosophy annually. By the mid-nineties, one Ph.D. program (religion) was ranked among the top five nationally, and the schools of medicine, law, and business were knocking on the door of the top twenty.[48]

While each itemized goal reinforces greater prestige, they collectively suggest a university that has fundamentally altered its self-perception. Testing how these achievements meet or exceed internal priorities or predictions will demonstrate the efficacy of the strategies adopted by Laney's administration.

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47. O'Meara, 173.

48. Emory History, "The Impact of 'The Gift,'" Emory University, http://emoryhistory.emory.edu/people/guidinglights/WoodruffGift.html (accessed January 3, 2011).

Personal Connections, Potential Biases, and Confidentiality

Emory has accorded me access to the special collections archives already, and my status as a quasi-insider[49] allows me to renew personal access. While I surveyed the collection, Emory revised its policy on accessing presidential-level documents, placing a twenty-year hold on these records without special permission. I sought and received in writing from the director of the special collections library and the university secretary a special exemption from this new policy for all records, including the personal papers of president Laney and the trustee meetings records related to decisions made during his era. Otherwise, his records would not be available prior to July of 2013. I am aware that this all potentially biases my objectivity—as the holder of an Emory degree, I have a slight vested interest in it maintaining or even increasing its value—but the acknowledgement of its potential and steps to remediate it (such as tracking dissenting opinions and investigating unsuccessful or unpopular initiatives) should mitigate this concern. I have allocated time in Atlanta to access the documents and see few potential problems in executing the process. I anticipate a round of visits to the archives with follow-up research dovetailing with trips to Atlanta.

I will identify, through existing records and newspaper reports, the most publicly controversial decisions such as the closure of the dental school (for a long time the only one in Georgia) and the masters in library science program (one of two and the more highly-regarded one at the time in the state of Georgia) and seek to include all sides regarding the controversies. I have been advised that since this topic requires no human subjects or interviews, it will not require an Institutional Review Board approval, but the board will be notified of my status as falling outside its purview.

49. I obtained my master's degree in history from Emory during this time period, served as a staff member for several years, was elected president of the student government association and met on occasion with President Laney and other cabinet-level officers.

Coding and Triangulation

Data analysis will require extensive coding of archival materials in addition to triangulation with media reports and additional secondary sources. Memoranda, reports, speeches and correspondence will be coded into topics which seek to tease out common themes and ideas that will be compared once completed. These comparisons will coalesce into concepts that will be tested against all evidence and result in the formulation of multiple—at times perhaps competing—interpretations. This "constant comparative approach" allows for the formation and winnowing of a multiplicity of approaches with the most intuitive and recurring ones gaining primacy. Surviving concepts should merge into several propositions that suggest generalizable insights into prestige-enhancement and efficacious decision-making as practiced by Emory during the time under consideration.

When possible, documents covering similar time frames but addressed to different audiences (the annual President's reports to the faculty and trustees, for example) will be reviewed both for similarities and differences in content and tone in addition to more critical rhetorical analysis methodology.

Additional triangulation of archival material will occur through the evaluation of extensive newspaper accounts. Each of the principal turning points in the study are covered in the *Atlanta Journal* and the *Atlanta Constitution* and will be researched to check external characterizations with internal documents and memories: Laney's rise to the presidency; the Woodruff gift and the subsequent announcement of the spending processes; the Lamar Report; the opening of the School of Allied Health and the Carter Center; the closings of the dental school, library science department and the geology department; and Laney's departure for the ambassadorship of South Korea, which brought about an assessment of his legacy in the

newspapers. Editions from 1985 to the present are available online through the ajc.com website's archives; earlier ones are searchable and available through third-party clippings service and university library holdings such as those at Emory and the University of Texas at Austin. I will match the journalist pieces with the contemporary events at Emory to establish the local coverage and perception of Emory, and I will examine any relevant *New York Times*' records as they occur and use them to establish national perceptions of the university.

A distinct advantage of a historical approach for evidence gathering is the existence of books and articles related to the subject matter. Combing published works for their perceptions of key figures and institutions—ranging from Laney and Emory to the Woodruff Foundation and the city of Atlanta itself—connects with the other sources in a crucial manner. Balancing immediate accounts available in press stories with more comprehensive research and the ability to look over years of details, these accounts will ground the archival searches in aggregated information.

Concluding Expectations

This "post-positivist" qualitative research approach ultimately is the most appropriate choice, with the above exception notwithstanding, when studying an institution's strategy for transforming its internal culture and external perception. While memories fade and documents conceal, these sources are the best tools to describe the actions of a community undergoing dramatic change. The conjectural nature of human institutions such as universities makes reliance on tools that did not engage this human reality as incomplete at best and even potentially irrelevant.

CHAPTER 4

THE GENESIS OF A CITY, A UNIVERSITY, AND A GIFT

Atlanta's Origins and Foundation Myths

Emory University's emergence as an elite institution depended upon its connection to the city of Atlanta's relentless ambitions. The university reflects the intersection of Atlanta's dreamy aspirations with corporate power, in many ways appearing as the apotheosis of the city's hopes of true "international" recognition. This combination of pervasive commercial hegemony fused to a longing for metropolitan respectability typifies much of Atlanta's history and finds reflection in the choices made by Emory's leadership. While a full account of the city's development lies outside the bounds of this dissertation, a brief overview and characterization of Atlanta's origins, leaders and imaging (both self and external) contextualizes Emory and suggests key factors shaping both its growth and its limitations.

The foundation of what becomes Atlanta began with the placement of a railroad marker at a site dubbed "Terminus" in 1837. Marking where the east-west Western and Atlantic Railroad moving from the port of Charleston toward Alabama would intersect another rail line heading southeast from Chattanooga, this junction would connect the Atlantic seaboard with the interior Tennessee highlands and Ohio valley along with the cotton fields of central Alabama and Mississippi. The chief engineer of the project, Colonel Stephen Long, characterized the location as likely to result in "a tavern, a blacksmith's shop, a general store, and nothing else."[50] Lacking

50. Rutheiser, 17.

a navigable river, fertile soil and mineral wealth and with Creek and Cherokee natives only recently pushed northwards, the site was overshadowed initially by other white settlements such as Decatur to the east and Marietta to the northwest. After a brief period as "Marthasville," (named for Georgia Governor Wilson Lumpkin's daughter) the junction was rechristened in 1847 as "Atlanta," a feminized evocation of "Atlantic," suggesting the city's access to the transoceanic trade the railroad provided. Thus, the city's very name was itself a marketing opportunity available for retooling to better fulfill the ambitions of its emerging elite.[51]

The next fourteen years saw the rapid expansion of the city along the strategic intersection, outpacing the older capital city of Milledgeville, which—while geographically central in the state of Georgia—was irrelevant to the emerging rail network. As Atlanta moved from a gritty frontier post to a commercial nexus, it demonstrated a drive for respectability. Electing a mayor who overturned the liquor-lubricated and brothel-patronizing founding cohort, Atlanta arrived at the eve of the Civil War as a raw transportation hub within a Baptist and Methodist-dominated white population and a black underclass of freedmen and slaves.[52] The first three years of the war (1861-64) actually saw the city boom as a center for the South's armament industry as well as the central transshipment point for supplies supporting the war effort, making it the decisive objective for the Union's new strategy of total war. Infamously led by General William T. Sherman, the "Atlanta Campaign" followed the rail line from Chattanooga to Atlanta, ending with the controversial burning of the city that became the central crisis of the city's mythic history.

Atlanta's rebuilding following the Confederacy's defeat brought a new industry to Atlanta in addition to its status as the state capital: higher education. However, the first

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid, 18-19.

institutions in this field received little recognition from Atlanta's political structure since they were dedicated to educating the "Negro" population that poured into Atlanta with the ending of the war and the institution of slavery. Atlanta University, founded in 1865 by the American Missionary Association (with subsequent support from the Freedman's Bureau during Reconstruction) was the first of the modern institutions in the immediate Atlanta area.[53] Other educational institutions serving black Atlantans were founded, such as Clark College (1869), Morehouse College (founded 1867 as Augusta Institute, moved from Augusta to Atlanta in 1879 as Atlanta Baptist Seminary, becoming Atlanta Baptist College in 1897 then Morehouse College in 1913);[54] Spelman College (1881),[55] and Morris Brown College (1881).[56] This phenomenon "made Atlanta an unparalleled center of African-American higher education and helped to forge its later reputation as a 'Black Mecca,'" fostering the development of a black bourgeoisie and intelligentsia.[57] Sponsored and staffed by Northern religious activists, these institutions promoted traditional liberal arts and business education well before any institution in Atlanta designed for whites.

Although lagging in higher education, white Atlanta quickly found leaders willing to hustle for commercial rebuilding. Soliciting investments from the very Northern industrialists whose factories helped crush the attempted secessionists under superior materiel, Atlanta representatives emerged at the forefront of the "New South" movement, foremost among them, Henry W. Grady (1850-89). Co-owner and managing editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*

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53. Clark Atlanta University, "Clark Atlanta University History," www.cau.edu/About_CAU_History.aspx (accessed August 27, 2011).

54. Morehouse College, "About Morehouse," "Morehouse Legacy," www.morehouse.edu/about/legacy.html (accessed August 27, 2011).

55. Spelman College, "About Us," "History in Brief," www.spelman.edu/about_us/facts/ (accessed August 27, 2011).

56. Morris Brown College, "College Overview," http://hbcuconnect.com/colleges/63/morris-brown-college (accessed November 19, 2011).

57. Rutheiser, 21.

newspaper, Grady would become linked with the concept of a Southern economy diversified enough to include manufacturing alongside agriculture, with a subordinated black community providing its labor with the whites in political and economic control.[58] Grady's celebrated and oft-quoted 1886 speech in New York City to a group of capitalists—including General Sherman—reads as pure Atlanta boosterism: "We have raised a brave and beautiful city; that somehow or other we have caught the sunshine in the bricks and mortar of our homes and have builded therein not one ignoble prejudice or memory."[59] A modern reader may mistake the reference to "ignoble prejudice or memory" as racial: rather, Grady was referring to lingering antipathy over the war between Northerners and Southerners, which he rather hopefully elides. The sunny description of an attractive Atlanta built from the ashes is puffery, since much of the rebuilding was dirty manufacturing fired by coal, but that would cloud his point. Grady continued his speech, rhetorically asking and answering the following:

> But in all this what have we accomplished? What is the sum of our work? We have found out that in the general summary the free Negro counts more than he did as a slave. We have planted the schoolhouse on the hilltop and made it free to white and black. We have sowed towns and cities in the place of theories and put business above politics.[60]

Wrapping together race, education, urbanization and the subordination of politics to commerce, Grady foretells the interlocking elites of Atlanta during the coming century, although he omits the looming legacy of Jim Crow that will keep Atlanta divided by parallel structures through the 1960s.

On balance, Atlanta prospered through the early 1900s, emerging as one of the leading cities of the "New South" as Grady envisioned. Its business class continued its essential

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58. Ibid, 23.

59. Henry Grady, 'The New South' Speech (December 22, 1886)," St. Anselm College, www.anselm.edu/academic/history/hdubrulle/CivWar/text/documents/doc54.htm (accessed September 3, 2011). Originally quoted in Rutheiser, 22.

60. Ibid.

Babbittry, relying upon the dynamism of specific individuals to secure Atlanta's status in comparison to regional rivals such as Birmingham, Alabama and Nashville, Tennessee. The deciding factor that locked in Atlanta's supremacy over competing cities again related to transportation. Rather than further exploiting the intersection of rails however, a few audacious Atlanta leaders schemed to host the regional depot for the federal air mail route proposed to link New York to Miami in the early 1920s.

The Atlantan who led this effort was at the time a first-term city alderman from a modest background. He would become the most celebrated mayor of the city pre-World War II, with a surname familiar to millions of air travelers annually: William B. Hartsfield. Born in 1890 as the son of a local tinsmith, Hartsfield had read the law and had a struggling legal practice in the city. Imagining the possibilities of airborne travel and commerce, in 1924 he asserted presciently that "the city that makes its port on this new ocean [will] be the city of the future."[61] Hartsfield led a committee that leased and eventually purchased Candler Field from Asa Candler Jr., the son of Coca-Cola Company founder Asa Candler. This connection between the growing beverage corporation and the airport demonstrates the tightly-held nature of Atlanta's assets at this early stage and the intertwined nature of two hallmarks of the city's business class. Atlanta's 1926 coup—beating out Birmingham's aggressive campaign for the air route by feting the visiting assistant postmaster general—quickly resulted in expansion. By 1930, Atlanta Municipal Airport boasted 16 flights a day, the third busiest in the United States behind Chicago and New York.[62] The centrality of the airport as Atlanta's engine of economic growth was difficult to overstate, with Emory University's President Laney later invoking it in a range of speeches throughout his tenure.

61. Allen, 24.

62. Ibid, 25.

The Primacy of Coca-Cola and Robert Woodruff

The airport episode and its connection with the Candler heir evoked the aspect of Atlanta's business elite that defined the power structure's summit: the Coca-Cola Corporation. The subject of numerous works both scholarly and popular, the soft drink company and its centrality to the operation of Atlanta serves as a topic worthy of a doctoral dissertation alone and hence cannot be considered in its full scope within this work. However, the prominence of the Candler and Woodruff families and the fortunes that flow from Coca-Cola's phenomenal rise shaped the fate of Emory University throughout the twentieth century.

By 1919, the Coca-Cola Company's ubiquity—its drink was available for purchase in all fifty states—caught the notice of Trust Company of Georgia banker Ernest Woodruff. A Connecticut transplant to Atlanta, Woodruff led an investment group in purchasing the company from Asa Candler and his family for $25 million. Ernest Woodruff had laid the basis for the family fortune not in personal banking but by organizing buyouts of promising businesses: Coca-Cola was to be his most wildly successful venture. His personal achievements, however, were surpassed by his son, Robert W. Woodruff. Robert Woodruff made an unimpressive academic beginning, first at the Georgia Institute of Technology and then Emory College where he lasted a single term, fall 1908. President Dickey of Emory College wrote to Ernest Woodruff regarding his son: "I do not think it advisable for him to return to college this term as he has not done satisfactory work. He has never learned to apply himself which, together with very frequent absences, makes it impossible for him to succeed as a student."[63] Robert Woodruff instead entered the world of work at the age of 19.

63. Gulley, 75.

Starting as a common laborer in several Atlanta companies and quitting a firm of his father's along the way, he eventually worked for his father's Atlantic Ice and Coal Company, a home delivery consortium created from the merger of many small firms bought out by Ernest Woodruff's investment group. From there he jumped to Cleveland, Ohio's White Motor Company as a truck salesman, distinguishing himself in sales acumen and manipulating his U.S. Army officer commission during World War I to get White Motor trucks purchased in large quantities by the Army. Promoted to the vice presidency in 1921 and to the White Motor Company's board in 1922, Robert Woodruff was convinced by his father of the potential of the emerging soft drink vendor, Coca-Cola. In 1923, Robert Woodruff became president of the now publicly-traded company at a salary $50,000 less than the $86,000 he was making at White Motor Company.[64]

Robert Woodruff applied his life experiences to shaping the ascendency of Coca-Cola to the status of an American icon. At the time he joined the company, it was struggling with over-extended finances and swings in the price of commodities on the international market. Cleverly marketing the sugary beverage as an alternative to alcohol during the Prohibition years, he guided Coke's transition from a drugstore refreshment to a household product with supporting innovations such as the "six-pack," making transportation from the emerging grocery stores convenient for shoppers.[65] On a macro scale, Woodruff oversaw the internationalization of Coca-Cola, spreading the sale of syrup to independent bottlers in 44 countries by the end of the 1930s. Capitalizing on personal relationships fostered at his South Georgia plantation with government

64. Frederick Allen, *Secret Formula: How Brilliant Marketing and Relentless Salesmanship Made Coca-Cola the Best-Known Product in the World*, (New York: HarperBusiness, 1994), 18.

65. Mark Pendergrast, *For God, Country, and Coca-Cola: The Definitive History of the Great American Soft Drink and the Company That Makes It*, 2d ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 34. The subsequent account is based primarily on the text of Pendergrast and Allen's *Secret Formula*.

and corporate elites, Woodruff secured Coca-Cola's status as "an essential war good" with his promise to keep a cold Coke available to American soldiers around the world at the cost of a nickel. This allowed the company to circumvent sugar rationing and mandated—at General Eisenhower's assent—the rapid establishment of production factories wherever American troops were concentrated. Coke's global presence was assured, eventually emerging as one of the world's most recognized brands and bringing a truly international business to Atlanta.

While Woodruff, following Coca-Cola's policy, retired as president in 1955 at the age of 65, he retained his office at headquarters (even having it moved to the new tower Coke built in the 1970s), retaining both his seat on the board and chairmanship of the finance committee. He maintained unofficial control of the company well into his 80s and served as the pinnacle of Atlanta's business elite. Sitting on boards for major Atlanta retailers such as Rich's department store chain and national firms such as American Express, Woodruff's role as doyen of Atlanta business was unchallenged and shaded into the political sphere. Numerous instances of Woodruff confidentially advising all mayors of the city from Hartsfield in the 1920s through the emergence of black Atlanta's mayors such as Maynard Jackson and Andrew Young in the 1970s and early 1980s abounded, yet very little appeared in public or in print until after his death in 1985.

Philanthropically, Woodruff and his family were the leading local benefactors, favoring Atlanta institutions with their largesse. Establishing the Tebor Foundation in 1937 (renamed the Robert W. Woodruff Foundation after his death), he donated money to hospitals, schools and higher education institutions in the city and state of Georgia, stipulating that he be known as "anonymous donor" rather than taking credit for his endowments. One of his anonymous gifts helped create the Memorial Arts Center (later Woodruff Arts Center), commemorating the 1962

Orly air crash, which killed 106 Atlantans, many associated with the arts and other aspects of the non-profit sector. He and his brother George gave more than twenty million dollars to Emory University Hospital and Medical School through the 1950s and 1960s, building up the corpus of the university's endowment prior to the later transformational gift, although almost all of it was restricted to the health sciences institutions of the medical school and hospital complexes.[66]

Emory's Beginnings: from Manual Labor College to a University

Emory's origins, while more high-minded than Atlanta's overtly commercial roots, are similarly modest. Founded in 1836 by a community of Methodists migrating from the Augusta area, they founded a town to host a college, naming the settlement "Oxford" as an evocation of the prestigious British university town. Yet the initial structure of the institution was unlike the Northern collegiate models common to earlier forms of higher education. Founded simply as "Manual Labor School," students were to work in the fields and workshops in the mornings while attending class later in the day. Rooming with faculty members, students pledged themselves to strict codes of personal conduct. This experiment occurred in institutions scattered thinly throughout the Southeast in the mid-nineteenth century.[67] As in most of these attempts, the financial realities quickly doomed this attempt at self-sustenance, and the institution re-calibrated itself as Emory College, a Methodist liberal arts institution named after an obscure bishop who died while attending a planning conference for the southeastern assembly of Methodist bishops in 1838. One of many small institutions springing up in the first half of the nineteenth century,

66. Gulley, 77.

67. See Ralph Reed, "Fortresses of Faith: Design and Experience at Southern Evangelical Colleges, 1830-1900," PhD diss., Emory University, 1991, for an exhaustive discussion of the variety of religious colleges founded in the southeastern United States.

Emory College closed, like many sister institutions, with the onset of the Civil War when the entire student body enlisted in the Confederacy.

Restarting after the war, Emory's survival was precarious, leading its advocates—much like Grady—to look northward to their erstwhile enemies for support. Emory College President Atticus Haygood preached a Thanksgiving Day sermon in 1880 that reached George Seney of Brooklyn, a Methodist banker planning to invest in rebuilding Georgia railroads.[68] Seney donated more than $250,000 overall, a large sum in the nineteenth century, allowing the college to erect a Victorian Gothic administration building that bears his name today as "Seney Hall." His timely gift guaranteed Emory's survival into the twentieth century when other, older and more renowned Georgia institutions such as the Presbyterian foundation, Oglethorpe University, failed to sustain a reopening and either closed or merged.

By simply being a surviving Methodist institution, Emory received a stroke of good fortune. Protracted struggles over governance at Vanderbilt University gave Emory College a chance to emerge from obscurity. Vanderbilt had been a Methodist institution leavened in its foundation years (1873-6) with a million dollars in railroad bonds from the eponymous plutocrat, Cornelius Vanderbilt. Initially closely affiliated with the church, upon its foundation Vanderbilt University appeared to a secular onlooker from the University of Nashville as limited in scope:

> Vanderbilt University can never fill the place of the University of Nashville. It is intended to be a denominational institution. It is established for the benefit of the Methodist Church. It will be built up in the interest of the Methodist Church. And although . . . it will be conducted on the most general and liberal terms, still it will ever be, as it was intended, a Methodist University.[69]

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68. A Brief History, "*Cor Prudentis Possidebit Scientiam*: The wise heart seeks knowledge," www.emoryhistory.emory.edu/history/index.html, Emory University (accessed January 12, 2011).

69. Bill Carey, *Chancellors, Commodores, & Coeds*, 119. The evolution of the University of Nashville is a colorful story in its own right. Two pieces of it that survived the Civil War, its medical school and the Peabody Teachers College, eventually became absorbed into Vanderbilt, while its third component ultimately emerged as "University School of Nashville," a K-12 non-sectarian private day school.

By the mid-1890s, the Methodist Church's endorsement of the university deepened to the point where it designated Vanderbilt a "central institution" at Chancellor James Kirkland's behest, ranking it above other Methodist foundations such as Emory College and Birmingham's Southern University.

However, funding the university's rapid growth as well as the financial panic of 1893 strained the resources of the initial gift, and the declining value of railroad bonds by the early twentieth century encouraged Kirkland to modernize both the finances and governing structure. Moving against the Methodist bishops' numerical domination of the board, Kirkland touched off protracted disputes that that ultimately resulted in a trial. A key piece of evidence submitted by the university was a letter from Cornelius Vanderbilt penned at the time of the institution's foundation:

> I wish the university to be conducted with the best talent on non-denominational lines. I believe the education of the youth of the South on these lines will do much to harmonize the former strained relations. I put Bishop McTyeire at the head of Trust on a fixed salary for life not because he was a Methodist, but a man of talent and of fine executive ability, and because his wife and mine were cousins.[70]

The court found in favor of the administration's claim that the university was founded by Cornelius Vanderbilt rather than the church and the resulting Trust was essentially self-perpetuating under the chancellor's leadership. Vanderbilt University emerged as a secular institution and as such developed with a markedly different character. Old affiliations with the locally powerful Christian publishing industry were severed in the wake of this breach, weakening the ties with traditional avenues of local community support. The evaporation of Methodist social constraints through the 1920s appeared in Vanderbilt's growing participation in intercollegiate athletics and social events for students, fostering an institutional culture that appealed to regional gentry devoid of religious limitations and enhanced national name

[70].Ibid, 124.

recognition. This development suggests an avenue quite different from Emory's tendency to stick closely within both the traditional Atlanta business elites as well as the influence of the Methodist bishops.

Shorn of one of the principal bastions of Methodist strength, the Southern Methodist church leadership sought a pair of regional universities to serve the needs of the faithful and promote Methodist religious and secular scholarship. After quickly selecting what became Southern Methodist University in Texas, an opportunity existed for another institution to emerge east of the Mississippi River as an officially "Methodist" regional institution. In this case, one of Atlanta's religious elite who was now a former trustee of Vanderbilt University—and scion of the first Coca-Cola millionaires—saw an opportunity to enhance his and Atlanta's standing in the Church. The Methodist bishop of northern Georgia was none other than Warren Candler, younger brother of Asa Candler Sr., the founder of the Coca-Cola Company. Asa intervened at his brother's behest, issuing what became known in Emory lore as the "Million Dollar Letter." As reported on Emory's website categorized as "Guiding Lights," the scenario unfolded thusly, with Asa Candler writing to the Church's Educational Commission on June 17, 1914, offering:

> his 'impression that what our country needs is not secularized education, but more of the education that is fundamentally and intentionally religious.' He voiced his 'wish that the characteristic excellences of our people may be made better and that the things which blemish our lives may be speedily obliterated.' And to that end he offered 'the sum of one million dollars' to establish a university 'east of the Mississippi River.' Asa went on to say, 'I fully appreciate that . . . no amount of money alone is adequate for such a purpose. The faith, the love, the zeal and the prayers of good people must supply the force to do that which money without these cannot accomplish. But I trust all these precious things will be given, together with many other gifts, great and small.' Although his letter did not stipulate Atlanta as the location of the new school, the Educational Commission quickly decided the matter, and Asa's further gift of seventy-two acres of land ratified the decision.[71]

71. Guiding Lights, "The Million Dollar Letter," www.emoryhistory.emory.edu/people/guidinglights/AsaGriggsCandler.html, Emory University (accessed January 12, 2011).

Trumping Birmingham's bid to upgrade what eventually became Birmingham-Southern College, the designation of Atlanta as the future host of a regional Methodist university allowed Bishop Candler to align the property of his brother with the fate of Emory College. Warren Candler had previously led the school as president from 1888-98 prior to becoming bishop, and he had kept interest in his previous employer, with his entrepreneurial brother joining the college's Board of Trustees in 1889. The Candlers arranged that rather than creating a wholly new university, they would transfer the charter and central operations of Emory College to the suburban property donated by the soft drink magnate, with the institution recast as "Emory University" in 1915.

Enclosed within the Frederick Olmstead planned community of Druid Hills, the campus was designed with buildings clad in North Georgia marble along a distinctive Italianate style, with construction beginning within the year. The site rapidly became the central focus of the emerging university, relocating medical services from downtown Atlanta. By September 1919, Emory College had joined the schools of theology, law, medicine, and business at the University's new campus and the Oxford site became a hybrid high school and junior college for boys until the Second World War. The 1920s saw Emory add a campus in South Georgia, with the building of a junior college in the small city of Valdosta. Three campuses—Atlanta, Oxford and Valdosta—would funnel students taking two years of general education classes to the Atlanta university academic departments, a unique structure among private universities. After struggling to curb debt from the transition to the Druid Hills campus, Emory seemed poised for growth in the late 1920s. Showered with Candler money, a hospital complex emerged on the adjacent Clifton Road, anchoring the medical complex and serving as a teaching facility for the newly-formed nursing school.

The onset of the Great Depression, however, found Emory extended and vulnerable. The weakening of its endowment, enrollment erosion and donor cutbacks forced salary cuts and reduced program offerings as the university tried to consolidate after the fifteen-year growth spurt. Operating losses drained endowment revenues and the university struggled, with enrollment threatening to collapse as America entered World War II. Securing the enrollment of medical corpsmen for accelerated science and health training kept the institution functioning while a flood of students arrived post-war, funded by the G.I. Bill. A similar bust/boom cycle occurred in the early 1950s around the Korean War: when these swings were over, Emory's overall enrollment—less the closure of the Valdosta campus in 1953—had stabilized around 6,000. Emory retained this regional, small university stature (with the addition of PhD programs in the late 1950s) for the next two decades.

Major events such as Emory's leading the state of Georgia's private schools in desegregation in 1962 essentially mirrored the wider political issues sweeping the United States through the 1960s. The most particular to Emory was the controversy stirred up in 1965 when Time magazine plucked an otherwise obscure Emory Associate Professor of Religion, Thomas J. J. Altizer, from the academic world in a stark cover story entitled "The God is Dead Movement."[72] With complex theological and philosophical arguments simplified for shock effect, this case drew letters to Emory at the same time that the university launched a $25 million capital campaign.

To its credit, the university leadership, particularly President Sanford Atwood and longtime Woodruff ally and Board of Trustees chairman, Henry L. Bowden, ensured that Altizer's classroom freedom was protected. The Office of the President received numerous

72. "The God is Dead Movement," www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,941410-1,00.html, *Time*, October 22, 1965 (accessed August 25, 2011).

complaints that a Methodist University should not tolerate such as member of the faculty, even though Altizer was a member of the Religion Department in the Graduate School and not in the Candler School of Theology's academic ranks and was a practicing Episcopalian, rather than a Methodist.[73] Altizer endured an Easter-timed follow-up article, remaining at Emory for two more years until departing, and ultimately retiring as Professor Emeritus of Religious Studies at the State University of New York, Stony Brook. Thus as the 1960s came to an end, Emory's religious structure had withstood a crisis with the leadership standing firm behind academic principles yet sensitized to the need to keep the Methodist orientation of Emory central to its institutional identity.

James T. Laney: Background, Education, and Ambition

The year following Altizer's departure, 1969, saw the arrival of James T. Laney as the dean of the Candler School of Theology. Laney represented all that the senior administrators of Emory University would want: a former Methodist pastor with an Ivy League education, teaching and administrative credentials from Vanderbilt—then an aspirational institution for Emory in terms of prestige—and even years of service in South Korea as a missionary. Laney appeared on paper as a solid choice who would advance the perception of Emory without straying far from its established mission and traditions. He would fulfill far more than these ambitions to a degree members of his selection committee could not foresee.

Born in 1927 in Arkansas, Laney was the only son of a car salesman and his wife. Conventionally observant Methodists, the family worshipped together locally. Although Laney

73. Several examples are preserved in the Laney Papers. See Mrs. Janet Ellis, "To President Laney re Dr. Altizer," Papers of James T. Laney, box 7, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta, for a practicing Methodist's request for the dismissal of Altizer.

characterized his relationship with his mother as close, he reported that he experienced a more distant one his with father, leading the author of James T. Laney: The Academic President as Moral Leader, F. Stuart Gulley, to assert: "In many respects, Laney's childhood church and work-related experiences, including his work at Emory, were attempts to gain the fatherly approval and affirmation he missed as a child."[74] While this Freudian interpretation seems reductive, the influence of Methodism on the life and career of Laney was inarguable. This impulse to religiosity was supported through his relationship with his mother's parents: his grandfather was an ordained Methodist minister who demonstrated for his grandson the ability to read the Greek New Testament during daily devotional study. A hard-working high school student, Laney graduated as a co-valedictorian from Memphis' Central High School and received a scholarship to Yale University as a Southern Regional Scholar, an award designed to recruit strong students with potential from the area.[75]

Majoring in economics, Laney suspended his studies when drafted into the U.S. Army's Counter Intelligence Unit, serving in Korea in the late 1940s. Although he had no previous contact with that country's history or culture, Korea was the single Asian country with a significant Methodist presence, owing to a nineteenth-century missionary legacy. Laney developed an ongoing appreciation of Korean culture and its people, an influence that would shape Laney throughout his post-Emory career. He returned to Yale, completing his economics degree in 1950. His wife, Berta, encouraged him to follow a vocational urge: he reentered Yale University that same fall, but this time as a student in the Divinity School. Studying under renowned scholars such as H. Richard Niebuhr, Laney spent four years immersed in the work associated with his Masters of Divinity degree, maintaining several part-time religious positions

74. Gulley, 18.

75. The general biographical information about Laney's pre-Emory background is drawn from Gulley, 19-22.

in the immediate area near Yale, including the prestigious Choate School (now Choate Rosemary Hall). Laney declined to pursue his PhD under Niebuhr, instead becoming pastor of a small church. After three years in this role, he returned to South Korea as a Methodist missionary, serving there for five years among Methodist-friendly higher education institutions.

In 1964 Laney returned to Yale in pursuit of a PhD focusing on Christian ethics and graduated two years later. Taking a teaching post that fall at Vanderbilt, teaching Christian ethics in the religion department, Laney began his return to the American South as an assistant professor and director of Methodist Studies and co-pastor of a local church.[76] The following three years informed Laney's subsequent complex views of his first post-doctoral employer, he saw Vanderbilt as an institution of great privilege but little community involvement. In his third year as an assistant professor there, he was recruited by Emory's Candler School of Theology to serve as dean. His predecessor, William R. Cannon, was named to the rank of bishop after serving Emory since 1953 as the senior administrator of what was the world's largest Methodist seminary. Emory sought "a youthful academic with administrative and pastoral experience," and Laney's background as an Ivy League-educated missionary was considered a beneficial bonus.[77]

Laney's recruitment served as a watershed transformation for Emory's theology school and indicated strongly how he would later serve as president. He sought and received from President Atwood the responsibility and freedom for Candler to fund itself independent of the central university administration.[78] Known since the nineteenth century at Harvard by the unpronounceable acronym "ETOB" for "Every Tub on its Own Bottom," this concept was a harbinger of later management principles such as "Responsibility Centered Management." This

76. Gulley, 23.

77. "Dean Search Committee," Henry L. Bowden Papers, box 1, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta.

78. Gulley, 23.

policy promoted the successful unit to be self-sustaining. Laney even generated a surplus when previously The Candler School of Theology—as had all the other graduate units at Emory—relied on support from institutional development funds and subsidies from the undergraduate program. Under his presidency, this policy would later spread throughout the university as an expectation and result in the realignment of the university's organization and funding, with clear winners and losers.

Invited in the fall of 1974 for a sabbatical semester as a visiting professor at Harvard's Divinity School, Laney was apparently the object of interest for Harvard's own theology school deanship. Sharing this information with Henry L. Bowden, the long-serving chairman of Emory's Board of Trustees, Laney was counseled by Bowden not to consider the Harvard position, since Emory's leadership was interested in him succeeding President Atwood when he chose to step down, which Atwood duly announced he would be doing two years later, in August 1977. By then Laney would have served for eight years as dean of the Candler School of Theology. He could point to several outstanding accomplishments, chief among them was Candler's library expansion.

In 1972, Hartford Seminary in Connecticut changed its focus from a degree-granting institution to one offering continuing education for working clergy, and decided to sell off its library of nearly a quarter of a million volumes, most of which dated from before 1920.[79] Since Candler was founded in 1914, there was little overlap in the collection, which was significantly larger than Emory's existing holdings, including rare works dating from earlier centuries. Hartford's asking price was $1.25 million. While proud of his "every tub on its own bottom" policy, the price tag for the library far exceeded the operating surplus he had generated. Atwood

79. Gulley, 26.

required that Laney obtain board approval, which its executive committee granted on the understanding Laney would have to raise the funds independent of the general university's efforts. Launching a campaign to raise the money, Laney found himself competing with popular religious figure Billy Graham, who sought to acquire the pieces representing evangelical Protestant milestones with the plan to sell the remainder of the collection. Graham raised the bidding to $2 million, compelling Laney to renegotiate with the seminary. Hartford's stated preference to keep the collection together allowed Laney to reach a compromise at $1.75 million. This necessitated a return to the board for approval, creating a bit of skepticism among several board members regarding Laney's business sense and sophistication. The collection came to Emory, with the *New York Times* exclaiming that Emory's seminary enjoyed "an immediate increase in prestige and affords the South its first major center for historical theological research."[80] Notwithstanding the implicit Southern slight, the double plaudits of heightened prestige and regional leadership supplied the validation Atlanta's and Emory's booster leaders craved, setting Laney up as a strong presidential candidate.

Flowing from the process of acquiring the collection and Laney's growing personal reputation in the theological world, *Change* magazine published an article, "The Reputation of American Professional Schools," in 1975. This index placed Candler as the "sixth best" theology school in the country, behind Harvard, Yale, Chicago, Princeton Theological Seminary and Union Theological Seminary.[81] Although the culture of rankings was not nearly as pervasive in the 1970s as it would become a decade later and *Change* magazine was not a particularly influential publication, it was embraced as a triumph for Emory: it marks the first time Emory

80. "Theology collection heads south," *New York Times*, August 23, 1976, A/23.

81. "The Reputation of American Professional Schools," *Change*, October 20, 1975, 17.

was ever ranked within the top twenty-five in any field on the national level.[82] While the esoteric shades of meaning raised by issues such as the earlier "God is Dead" controversy in the religion department might leave citizens bemused, placing solidly in the "top ten" was something the average Atlanta businessman could understand and celebrate.

Laney Advances to the Presidency and as a Confidante of Woodruff

However the shrewdest accomplishment Laney made as the dean of the Candler School of Theology was far less public: he made a positive impression on Robert Woodruff. In 1975, they were introduced through Garland Herndon, Woodruff's personal physician, who was also Emory's Vice President for Health Affairs and Laney's neighbor. Impressed by Laney, Woodruff issued occasional social invitations to Laney that were ongoing as the presidential search for Atwood's replacement got underway. Since Bowden had made himself head of the search committee, Woodruff authored the following nomination:

> Dear Henry:
>
> Having in mind the effort now underway to select a successor to Dr. Atwood, I would like to express for the consideration of your Search Committee the thought that it may be timely to recommend a successor from the current leadership of the University. It is the general practice of business corporations, of course, to promote from within their own organizations when a qualified candidate for a higher position is identifiable. The advantages of this procedure are obvious.
>
> Accordingly, I suggest the appointment of Dr. James T. Laney as Dr. Atwood's successor . . . His attainments both before and since coming to Emory are impressive and I hope you will acquaint yourself with his truly outstanding record.
>
> Because your personal relationship with Dr. Laney is closer than mine, and if you agree that this thought is opportune, I hope it may also have your endorsement as you continue the process of choosing a president.[83]

This text reveals significant insight into the assumptions and relationships that existed between and among the power elites in Atlanta, particularly regarding Emory. Woodruff treats as

82. Gulley, 26.

83. Gulley, 25.

commonplace the comparison of university operations with the business world concerning leadership, characterizing internal promotion as a "general practice of business corporations." This was certainly true for Coca-Cola during the Woodruff era: it sought long-term stability through the fostering of a disciplined internal culture that inculcated the advancement of "company men" over time.[84] While phrased as an aspiration, the statement "I hope you will acquaint yourself with [Laney's] truly outstanding record," seems like a polite directive. Bowden, of course, would have been more than familiar with Laney's achievements, having shepherded the Hartford Seminary library's purchase through the board's executive committee. Woodruff seemed to be underlining his personal awareness of Laney's tenure, particularly the recognition that the Candler School of Theology had, singular among Emory's departments or divisions, ascended to national prominence. This was something the great marketer of Coca-Cola could endorse.

Laney garnered further support among the board, with trustee D. W. Brooks—who knew Laney perhaps best among the board members as the chairman of the theology school's fund raising group—offering the following note supporting Laney's candidacy:

> When you look at Dean Laney's training, it is about as perfect as you could possibly have. The fact that he was a brilliant student first in economics graduating cum laude and then going back later into the ministry, I don't think you could have a person with a better background. Business people on the Committee, of course, should recognize this training, which is excellent for a person who is going to have the responsibility for a university.[85]

Brooks characterized the twinned appeal of economics and ministry among the committee's "business people," as apparent benefits for university management. Interestingly, he omitted Laney's significant stints as a faculty member at such respected places as Vanderbilt and

84. Pendergrast, 77.

85. Gulley, 29.

Harvard as having any obvious bearing on a university president's ability to succeed. Yet with Woodruff and Brooks, the leading candidate for the open position seemed clear.

However, the academic community at Emory was certainly not unanimous or even particularly in favor of Laney's appointment. As the possibility of Laney's selection grew clearer, faculty reservations and outright opposition surfaced. However, as initially conceived by Bowden, the faculty had no avenue either formally or informally to participate in the selection process. Yet their desire to do so was clearly articulated to Bowden. Faculty operating along American Association of University Professors (AAUP) guidelines requested representation on the search committee in writing, submitting with their letter copies of the AAUP's "Statement on the Governance of Colleges and Universities" and "Faculty Participation in the Recruitment and Retention of Administrators," both of which called for faculty representation in the hiring of higher education presidents and survive in the files.[86]

While not unprecedented since outgoing President Atwood's hiring occurred with two faculty members on the interviewing committee, these members had been selected by the trustees themselves, with their primary trait assessed by other faculty being their malleability.[87] Bowden rejected this request categorically responding: ". . . in regard the selection of the President . . . the duty devolves upon the Trustees and the responsibility for failure must be theirs also. Under such circumstances, there can be no delegation of such authority."[88] This situation indicates that, at the time, a significant rift existed between institutional cultures within the trustees and faculty. Structural expectations and governance were diametrically opposed: the faculty advocated for an

86. Gene Tucker and Albert Stone to Henry Bowden, Henry L. Bowden Papers, "1975" folder, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta.

87. Gulley, 28.

88. Henry Bowden to Gene Tucker and Albert Stone, Henry L. Bowden Papers, "1975" folder, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta.

open and collegial model, with all major constituencies represented in the decision-making process; the trustees operated under an assumed corporate and bureaucratic model, with authority concentrated at the top and flowing down tiers of power.[89]

The faculty members did not meekly accept Bowden's rejection: rather, they upped the ante. According to Gulley, the chairman of the Faculty Advisory Committee (and ironically member of the Theology faculty), Theodore Weber wrote that the committee was "worried that the search would be seen as a sham if external candidates were not courted and brought to campus."[90] In an October 1976 meeting between Bowden and Weber, the board and search chairman indicated "that it was the desire of the search committee to name Laney then as president so that he could begin to help set budget and make a smooth transition with Atwood."[91] The explanation for haste—setting budget for the next year—indicates most clearly the bureaucratic emphasis and little patience for niceties such as "inclusiveness," a hallmark of faculty governance expectations. Various faculty activists rallied around one of five other candidates interviewed: Frank Rhodes from the University of Michigan.

The top choice of the Faculty Advisory Committee and impressive even to the trustees who met him, he emerged as the favorite, temporarily eclipsing Laney's candidacy. To the dismay of Rhodes' faculty advocates however, they were blindsided by a *New York Times* article in the February 17, 1977 edition reporting that he had accepted an offer for Cornell University's presidency. A week later Weber wrote Bowden urging a reopening of the search or at least investigating additional candidates, but Bowden chose not to respond. Thus, with no viable alternatives and a selection committee comprised entirely of trustees, the way was clear for

89. Birnbaum's work suggests this point of view throughout.

90. Gulley, 31.

91. Ibid.

Laney. Laney was unanimously approved by the trustees on March 17, 1977 and accepted the position. Emory had returned to having an ordained minister as leader, a status that had been discarded since the early 1920s. While somewhat mollified by his impeccable credentials, academic faculty were skeptical of religious leadership for a major research university and resented the intrusion of businessmen and their subsequent exclusion from the selection process. Thus Laney was arriving at a critical juncture with a fractured constituency and mixed expectations.

Upon assuming the presidency, Laney had several major tasks before him. Paramount would be winning over the faculty who had expressed such doubt in his leadership while simultaneously cultivating Atlanta's power brokers who maneuvered him into position. This balancing act coincided with the protracted undertakings that are the hallmark of capital campaign planning, a task guaranteed to manifest distinct and competing potential priorities for the university. Laney worked deliberately to develop the relationship with Woodruff, knowing that Woodruff both stood at the pinnacle of Atlanta's general philanthropy and directly controlled the Woodruff funds. The retired Coca-Cola leader held court routinely at his home weekdays between 5:00 and 7:00 p.m.: Laney made sure to arrive though at the Woodruff home between 4:00 and 4:30 p.m., allowing him private time with the host.[92] Famously, for all their long-term familiarity and mutual admiration, Laney and Woodruff always spoke and referred to one another as "Mr. Woodruff" and "Dr. Laney" respectively. While Woodruff apparently invited Laney to refer to him as "Robert," since he could never bring himself to refer to the Emory president as simply "Jim," Laney returned the exaggerated formality. At intimate dinners at Woodruff's South Georgia plantation or holiday occasions in Atlanta, Laney was regularly

92. Gulley, 79.

seated to Woodruff's immediate right, the position of highest honor in the Atlanta business universe. Laney delicately and resolutely returned the admiration through these visits as well as by telephone conversations and notes. For Christmas Eve 1977, Laney composed the following note to Woodruff:

> Dear Mr. Woodruff:
>
> At Christmas one's thoughts turn naturally to gifts and gratitude.
>
> Since assuming the presidency I have been privileged to learn even more about the extraordinary magnitude of your generosity to Emory. I am awed and amazed. Surely there is no parallel in all higher education, either in this country or abroad.
>
> The only appropriate response in appreciation is to pledge to you that Emory will continue to grow in stature, and that your investments here will appreciate in every conceivable way.
>
> I can imagine how proud you must be of what you have accomplished here. I am proud to be associated with you in carrying on this remarkable legacy.
>
> Merry Christmas![93]

The craft of such a seemingly casual note is impressive. Framed as a holiday musing, it allowed Laney to describe himself as "awed and amazed" at Woodruff's previously anonymous "generosity," which Laney hyperbolizes (at this point at least) as having "no parallel," disregarding the long list of wealthy and generous patrons to elite universities other than Emory. Laney then skillfully transitions into prose appealing to competitive corporate leadership, promising that the university will "continue to grow in stature" as a successful business. He then frames the rest of the sentence in the manner of an earnest salesmen, speaking of the "appreciation" of "investments" and attests to his pride in Laney's own association. Of course, the Emory president sat as a distinguished symbol of association for Woodruff: having been dismissed from tiny Emory College almost seventy years ago by another president, he now was the intimate of his successor. Thus a circle of mutually reinforcing admiration emerged, controlled essentially by Laney's role as a supplicant with a distinguished educational pedigree,

93. Gulley, 80.

with Laney moving Emory firmly into Atlanta's most favorite philanthropic seat, while reflecting elite educational association on a man who had not been able to endure more than a few months as a student in higher education.

At Laney's formal inauguration in April 1978, a seemingly impromptu gesture garnered applause from the crowd. Usually remote and anonymous, Robert Woodruff chose to attend the event, seated in the front row: a visible sign of his and Atlanta's civic establishment's endorsement of Laney. During his remarks, Laney mentioned "Mr. Woodruff" and stepped down off the platform and approached him, shaking his hand as Woodruff stood. A memo from Boisfeuillet Jones, the chief administrator of the Woodruff Fund, circulated between Laney's office and Woodruff's, indicating that precisely this would occur: "Dr. Laney will make some appropriate reference to you, acknowledge your presence, and come from the platform to where you are sitting to identify you in the audience," continuing in that vein.[94] Clearly this and subsequent events were carefully choreographed between Laney and Woodruff's staff to promote both to the immediate Emory community and the wider Atlanta audience a message of mutual respect.

Laney characterized Emory's relationship with Georgia and the city of Atlanta in his first board meeting as president in the autumn of 1977. Although he himself had left the South for Yale in the 1940s, he offered this piquant observation: "The only reason bright Georgia students came to Atlanta was to change airplanes at the Atlanta airport on their way to distinguished schools in the Northeast . . . [I intend] that Atlanta had a university worthy of the city."[95] The board launched a study suggesting that Emory should undertake a comprehensive capital

94. Gulley, 82.

95. James T. Laney, "Trustee Minutes," Emory University Board of Trustees, "November 1977" folder, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta.

campaign, initially aiming at $100 million. The largest goal in the university's history, this initiative would rely on a few major individuals and foundation for critical momentum and large gifts, chief among them Woodruff and his network of foundations and peers. Laney subsequently named an internal committee of administrative leaders to create a list of upgraded facilities and endowments, settling on student life improvements such as athletic facilities, residence halls and a student center alongside endowments for financial aid and high status faculty.[96] While ambitious, these improvements were unremarkable, particularly given that Emory's student life buildings all dated back to the 1950s and were inferior to those at the leading schools.

To bolster his position with the fractured community and move Emory forward, Laney initiated the development of strategic improvements through a traditional planning process known as the "Priorities Review Committee."[97] What emerged was a reasonable series of initiatives meant to address existing shortcomings such as the aforementioned poor housing, decrepit athletic facilities and an unsuitable student center. Emory was concerned about its funding stream, relying on an intricate structure that included a health complex comprising several hospitals and clinics as well as medical, dental and undergraduate and graduate nursing schools. Over half of the endowment of Emory—much of it gifts over the past five decades from the Woodruff family—was restricted to supporting the medical-related programs: primarily the hospital and medical school. This limited the flexibility of the university's spending strategy and overstated in some sense Emory's resources when measured against its peer institutions. Emory was actually competing with other regional institutions such as Tulane and Mercer for students while drawing a substantial segment of its undergraduate population from second-tier Northern students interested in relocating to the Sunbelt and seeking a pre-professional education.

96. Ibid, "May 1978" folder.

97. Gulley, 88.

Institutions such as Vanderbilt and Duke were aspirational institutions rather than true competitors: they were in a different class. Emory's students were affluent and intent on moving on rather than rooted in the community and region. The relatively high cost of tuition, by Southern standards, and Emory's inability to fund need or merit-based aid generously, precluded many needy students, as well as bright ones with the option to head north.

When Laney addressed the faculty at the conclusion of this process in February 1978, he called for a determination of Emory's future. He characterized a university in direct contrast to Kerr's notion of a mechanism "powered by money" favored by trustees, maintaining that "an educational institution is like a living organism, where concern for the health and well-being of all must be practiced . . ." and that Emory "must practice collegial delegation."[98] The irony that Laney would embrace an avowedly "collegial" and "organic" conception of governance after the trustees dismissed such notions two years previously when selecting him appears obvious. Clearly he sought a rapprochement with the faculty who opposed his appointment previously, drawing upon his Yale pedigree and connections to liberal education to gain credibility. He was convinced that faculty would support upgraded student facilities in order to attract better students, improving their classroom experiences as teachers. He just needed to raise the money from those who had it.

An Opportunity for Transformation: The Woodruff Gift

At this early, "quiet" phase of the capital campaign in spring 1979, Laney courted Woodruff assiduously. Reducing the comprehensive plan to a single-page document listing capital projects and endowment support in parallel columns, the president pitched the campaign

98. James T. Laney, "Remarks to the Faculty," March 1978, 1977-8 Faculty Meeting Minutes, "March 1978" folder, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta.

to the benefactor. According to Laney as told by Gulley, Woodruff considered the building projects reasonable but described the concept of endowed funds as "idle capital" unworthy of his support. Initially dejected, Laney recast the term "endowment" as "working capital," which Woodruff acknowledged was necessary for every company.[99] He agreed to serve as the honorary chairman for the capital campaign and had an unspecified but favorable contribution to the campaign. Although positive, he did not specify an amount at this early phase of the process. That same season saw Woodruff accept, after decades of demurring, the offer of an honorary doctorate from Emory, bestowed by the hands of Laney.

With the goodwill of Woodruff assured, Laney was able to address the trustees more vigorously. In a more frank and challenging mode than he used with the faculty and with a large gift from Woodruff likely, Laney addressed the Emory Board of Trustees in May 1979, marking the end of his second year as president and his tenth year at Emory. His characterization of the institution's image was remarkably blunt and essentially negative, particularly compared to his collegial remarks to faculty: describing Emory as lacking

> definition . . . not only in the public image of the University . . . but in the image we hold of ourselves as an academic community. We do not have a convenient objective index to help us see ourselves in perspective—neither the strong intercollegiate athletic program that brings attention to other major universities, nor yet a commanding national academic reputation.[100]

Emory was a collection of disparate schools and programs according to Laney, with neither a shared internal vision nor a pervasive external reputation. His rhetoric is remarkably different when addressing the trustees compared to his faculty musings calling for "collegiality." To the trustees he offers two divergent paths to great public and self-awareness: a "strong intercollegiate athletic program" or a "commanding national academic reputation." The trustees—

99. Gulley, 84.

100. Gulley, 90.

overwhelmingly corporate leaders—heard a message calibrated to their perceptions and interests, perhaps evoking images of the University of Georgia and Yale respectively that would have been commonplace in the late 1970s. In light of this characterization of Emory, the trustees supported the launching of an enhanced $160 million campaign focused on the previously approved financial aid endowment and student facility improvements, although they do not seem to solve Emory's lack of a clear image both internally and externally as outlined by Laney.

Up to this point, the likely reason Woodruff initially declined to offer a specific contribution to this campaign is that he and his brother George were considering the unprecedented gift that would catalyze Emory's transformation. Both men were in their eighties and were concerned about their legacies—Robert himself had no children while George had three daughters—and having seen the drift of some foundations such as the Ford and Mellon funds into areas their eponymous donors may not have supported, the Woodruffs sought a safe harbor for their wealth that they believed would reflect their world view. Since the operation of the Emily and Ernest Woodruff fund had traditionally been split forty percent to Emory (chiefly medical) and sixty percent to twenty-seven others, chiefly Atlanta-area beneficiaries, moving the corpus of the endowment to the university was a natural option. While trustees close to the Woodruffs advocated switching the percentages, George Woodruff—a longtime board member and in some ways Robert's proxy—stated: "My brother and I talked about giving the assets of the foundation to Emory. His idea was to give part of it to Emory, and my idea was to give it all to Emory. And he finally agreed to that. I figured the money would do more good."[101] George Woodruff's trust in Emory's stewardship and potential for doing "more good" with the money instead of the other colleges, charities and private high schools who had benefited from the

101. Gulley, 84.

foundation cannot have been meant in a moral sense, but rather in a sense of renown and momentum-building. With over forty years on the Coca-Cola board of directors, George Woodruff had seen the benefits of the company's meteoric expansion under his brother Robert and understood Emory to be the most likely institution in Atlanta to reflect that philanthropically.[102] Laney had put Atlanta's university life in the national rankings for the first time, and the brothers understood that in business terms. While the younger Woodruff was less under Laney's influence, the older brother was the decision-maker whose approval marked the beginning of the process to refashion Emory's trajectory.

With this decision made in the spring of 1979, Laney was informed privately that the foundation would be turned over to Emory in early 1980. Working backward from that date, the Woodruffs and Laney agreed that the gift would be announced at the November 1979 Board of Trustees' meeting, giving Emory a couple of months to prepare the fiscal infrastructure following the publicity to process the gift. Even more important, Laney had almost six months to lay the groundwork for the gift's terms. Showing remarkable restraint, Laney dissuaded the benefactors from turning over the funds with virtually no restrictions as they seem to have initially intended. Rather, Laney requested that the Woodruffs specify significant conditions on the use of the money—most notably that none of the fund's principal could be spent unless two-thirds of the board voted that an "financial exigency" required it—and restricting the income of the endowment from going toward subsidizing existing operations. Proceeds of a portion of the revenue generated by the "internal Woodruff foundation" as it became known were destined for multiple purposes after approval by the board and a complex process that would unfold.

102. For a discussion of Woodruff's relationship with his brother, Coca-Cola, and view on higher education, see Della Wager Wells, *George Waldo Woodruff: A Life of Quiet Achievement* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1987).

Unsurprisingly, the announcement of this gift was carefully orchestrated. On November 8, 1979, the day of the announcement, Henry Bowden's retirement from the Emory board after twenty-two consecutive years as the chairman was thought to be the biggest announcement of the meeting, receiving front page coverage, with no hint of the Woodruff gift discernible in the dignified and detailed profile of Bowden published by the *Atlanta Constitution*. Known in advance only by the Executive Committee of the board, the official announcement was made by trustee George Woodruff through the reading of a letter penned by his brother Robert:

> Gratified by Emory's progress, its demonstrated capacity to manage its affairs, and its continued commitment to educational excellence in the service of society, trustees of the Emily and Ernest Woodruff Fund have determined that resources committed to their care for public benefit can be of greatest potential for service in the South, their area of special interest, is concentrated now in Emory University.
> After fulfilling all commitments through 1979 and subject to appropriate governmental approval, the Emily and Ernest Woodruff Fund, Inc., will transfer to Emory University early in 1980 all of its net assets, valued in excess of $100,000,000, to be retained as a seperate [sic] endowment with income to be used for purposes of the university as determined by its board of trustees.[103]

Once again, an endorsement of sound business practices, "excellence," and responsible management was at the heart of the gift. Atlanta, while unmentioned specifically in these remarks, stood as the capital of "their area of special interest," the South, and would enjoy the largesse generated by well-marketed soft drinks. Winding up generosity to other institutions in 1979, the Foundation—administered wholly by Emory in accordance with the agreement—dissolved in early 1980, serving as the largest private gift to a higher education institution at that time.

The immediate impact was heavy coverage in the national press and laudatory excitement in Atlanta media. The next day, the *New York Times* made it a page one headline,

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103. George Woodruff, "Trustee Minutes," Emory University Board of Trustees, 1979-80, "November 1979" folder, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta. Also quoted in Gulley, 85, and the *Atlanta Constitution*, November 9, 1979.

while the *Atlanta Constitution* ran a banner headline "Woodruff Gives Emory $100 Million" with the sidebar article (also on the front page above the fold) extolling that "For Emory, Past and Present, Things Go Better with Coke." Laney was quoted in the Atlanta sidebar article as predicting "changes in direction but not changes in quality" at Emory, as three articles published together the day after the announcement took on a frankly celebratory tone, extolling Woodruff's generosity beside Emory's ambition. While the New York coverage was more restrained, it spoke of Emory as "emerging" and as a "regional university," two qualifiers the institution seemed eager to shed. More thoughtful articles followed in both newspapers, with profiles of Robert Woodruff appearing alongside speculation of how Emory would allocate the money while setting priorities.[104]

Immediately, the campus community was electrified. While scattered calls for improving salaries or covering existing shortfalls and projects occurred, the stipulations limiting the funds to new initiatives that Laney had persuaded the Woodruffs to include easily turned aside these attempts. Laney pointed out that the basic assumptions for the 1980-81 academic year budget were already underway and did not rely on any funding from the gift, so the university would "enjoy a respite" to "catch its breath" as it decided what to do. Members of the faculty, departments and divisions were invited to submit proposals for short-term and relatively low-cost initiatives such as research funding, junior faculty development, visiting professors. However, faculty were warned that revenue was not going to be dispensed heedlessly: rather, the administration advised applicants that requests would be "as carefully screened as proposals

104. "$100 Million to Atlanta's Emory University," *New York Times*, November 9, 1979; "Woodruff Gives Emory $100 Million" and "For Emory, Past and Present, Things Go Better with Coke," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 9, 1979.

received by any major foundation in America," which with $100 million, the foundation essentially was.[105]

With the initial euphoria settling, Laney announced his plan for co-opting internal support for re-imagining the university. In January 1980 he:

> directed every division and unit of the university to undertake an internal review over the next nine months. The review was to include those particular needs of the department/division, but 'should examine as well its relation to the University as a whole.'[106]

The masterstroke of this plan's announcement was the clear dictum that each committee, regardless of its function or location, would be chaired by a member of the faculty. Thus, departments ranging from athletics to the physical plant, the dental school to political science, were overseen by professors. Any significant rancor remaining from the now-distant search squabbles dissolved in raised hopes and a scramble for influence among the various divisions and departments. Turning in voluminous reports by September 1980, each committee's work was to be scrutinized by outsiders.

The Lamar Committee

The results of the self-study became the basic materials for what became the defining tool for Emory's transformation: the "Lamar Committee." Laney appointed the Dean of Yale College, Howard R. Lamar, to head a committee including five nationally-respected academic leaders that would review the findings of the self-study pertaining to the liberal arts and sciences and follow up with campus visits to inspect facilities and interview staff and faculty. Known formally as the "Emory University Visiting Committee for the Arts and Sciences," it soon

105. Gulley, 86.

106. James T. Laney, "Memorandum to the University Community," January 23, 1980, Laney Papers, box 6, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta.

acquired the name of its chairman, even appearing as such on working documents from the President's Office. Lamar was an alumnus of Emory College (class of 1945), where he received his undergraduate degree while earning his master and doctoral degrees at Yale. Well-known to Laney through his Yale connections, Lamar was a fellow Southern-born academic with impeccable credentials. Lamar was at the time one of the most influential historians of the American West, with a theory of the frontier that reformulated the venerable "Turner Thesis" as a more individualized and political phenomenon.[107] His education, scholarship and administrative background sent a clear signal of the ambition Laney held for Emory.

Laney and Lamar handpicked the balance of the committee, casting a wide net of academic specialties but all representative of the top echelon of liberal arts and science scholarship. Robert N. Bellah was the Elliott Professor of Sociology at the University of California at Berkeley. A 1950 Harvard College summa cum laude graduate in social anthropology, Bellah had risen quickly: his undergraduate honors thesis on Apache Native Americans won Harvard's Phi Beta Kappa Prize and the university's press published it. Remaining at Harvard, he completed his PhD in 1955, and returned there to teach two years later. He published widely on Asian religion, morality and civic religion while rising through the academic ranks. He left Harvard in 1967 for Berkeley, where he was teaching when contacted to serve as an evaluator for Emory. While serving on the Lamar Committee, Bellah found time to coauthor *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*, published by the University of California Press in 1985: this became a required text for freshmen at Emory in the late 1980s.

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107. See Howard R. Lamar, *The Far Southwest, 1846-1912: A Territorial History* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1966, reprinted 2000).

Another member of the Lamar Committee with an extensive Harvard pedigree was Stanley L. Cavell, who was then serving at Harvard as the Walter M. Cabot Professor of Aesthetics and the General Theory of Value. He had earned his undergraduate degree in music at Berkeley in 1947, then switched to philosophy, completing his PhD at Harvard in 1952. After teaching at his alma mater, he returned to Harvard in 1967, remaining until attaining emeritus status in 1997. Interestingly, he had spent much of his childhood in Atlanta as part of the city's Jewish community; his father moved the family back and forth between their roots there and California for business opportunities. His mother was a professional pianist, instilling in him a love of music and the related skill of logical progression.[108] Cavell would, like Bellah, publish widely on subjects as diffused as American film theory, logic, and an understanding of his evolving views of philosophy as viewed through his autobiography.

The only woman to serve on the Lamar Committee, Kathryn Sklar, was yet another Harvard graduate. An alumna of Harvard's Radcliffe College with a bachelor's in literature from 1963, she took her PhD in history from the University of Michigan in 1969. Specializing in nineteenth-century women's history, her publishing vita was impressive, with diverse works on women, domesticity and slavery among her accomplishments prior to her work at Emory. Her years on the Lamar Committee overlapped with her role as one of the founding professors associated with the University of California at Los Angeles' Center for the Study of Women, the first unit in the California system charged with interdisciplinary research. This project was described by a co-founder and first director, Dr. Karen Rowe, "as a collectivity of bodies, minds, and spirits, sharing a commitment to the centrality of studies of women as an integral part of the

108. Biographical information on Cavell is taken from Thomas S. Hibbs, "Stanley Cavell's Philosophical Improvisations," *The Chronicle of Higher Education Online*, October 10, 2010, http://chronicle.com/article/Stanley-Cavells-Philosophical/124830 (accessed September 12, 2011).

academic goals of a great university and human society."[109] The creation of a women's center at Emory and a dramatically expanded women's studies program through the Institute for Liberal Arts in the later 1980s, subsequent to her consulting, are legacies of her interests and reveal Laney's recognition and support of the study of women's experiences.

Eliot Stellar represented life sciences on the committee, serving as one of the creators of the emerging field now known as neuroscience. A native Bostonian and yet another Harvard College alumnus from 1941, he completed his PhD at Brown University in 1947. After teaching and researching at Johns Hopkins—including authorship of one of the most cited papers in Psychology, 1954's "The Physiology of Motivation"—he moved to the University of Pennsylvania in 1954, setting up experiments to understand the intersection of physiology, behavior, and psychology.[110] By the inception of the Lamar Committee in 1981, Stellar had served as the University of Pennsylvania's provost from 1973-78. Previously, his experience as co-chairman of the university's Development Commission, which has been engaged in a university-wide analysis of future needs and the promotion of a "one university" curricular vision, recommended him to the president for the provost's position. He stepped down as provost after implementing as much of the plan as he felt he could, returning to faculty status and a variety of consulting assignments such as Emory's.

Maurice Glicksman, the only non-Ivy League alumnus on the committee, received his BS in 1952 and PhD in 1957 from the University of Chicago in physics. Interested in the relevance of physics theory to applied solutions, he taught in the engineering division before becoming the provost and dean of the faculty of Brown University. He published extensively on technology

109. Center for the Study of Women, "History of the Center," www.csw.ucla.edu/about/accomplishments, UCLA Women's Center (accessed September 12, 2011).

110. Eliot Stellar, "The Physiology of Motivation," *Physiology Review* 101, no. 2, (1954): 301-11.

and its applications, becoming a leader in the 1980s on the spread of information technology to academic libraries and the needs of library science curricula. In an article regarding balancing resources at Brown published in January 2011, the provost emeritus recalled his service on the Lamar Committee:

> I was once an advisor to a University with credible professional schools but an arts and sciences faculty less distinguished. Its governing Board and president wished to build up the University and sought advice on how to do it. The undergraduate student body needed to be increased in quality and quantity. To do so, that University had to slow down its build-up of the professional schools and build up its arts and sciences faculty. Without the strength in its core arts and sciences, it could not hope to attract the students of the quality desired.[111]

Glicksman cautioned that the balance must be struck, also warning Brown not to tip too far toward favoring the professional schools and sciences or else it would need a recalibration as Emory did.

The selection of this committee and the diverse interests and expertise served as a watershed moment for the university probably best appreciated in hindsight. All embodied high achievement in the arts or sciences, with Glickman's tangential connection to engineering the only "professional" academic work done by the group. Each one of them had extensive scholarly or professional interests in interdisciplinary work, either teaching in cross-disciplinary fields such as Glicksman's application of physics to engineering and Bella's sociological approach to religion or helping create new disciplines such as Sklar with women's studies or Stellar with neuroscience. They represented a range of accomplished administrative experiences too, with a former and a sitting provost, a women's center founder and department chairs and committee heads too numerous to list. Also remarkable is the tight interconnectedness of the committee. Four Harvard alumni, a Brown PhD and provost, a Berkeley alumnus and faculty member

111. Maurice Glicksman, "Whither Brown?" *Brown University Faculty Bulletin* 11, no. 1, January 2011, at http://facgov.brown.edu/bulletins/FacBull%20Winter%20Jan.2011%20Final%20with%20cvr.pdf (accessed September 13, 2011).

indicate that Laney and Lamar drew on narrowly perceived elites for their consultants, all of whom were white and traditionally degreed. Lamar as an Emory alumnus and Cavell's Atlanta childhood are the only clear connections among the six to the location, with none of the members beyond Lamar's Emory bachelor's degree having any academic qualification or experience from a Southern university. This suggests that Laney himself may have shared the bias he recognized as that held by the brightest Georgia high school students who chose only to change planes in Atlanta on their way to the Northeast: Laney wanted Emory to look past the other universities of the region and consider its role on the national stage.

This point is most clearly rendered by Laney himself in his charge to the committee. Setting the public direction on their mission, he instructed them (and all those closely listening) that one question must always be applied when the committee reviews the copious reports and begins the on-site investigations, asking in all cases: "What will it take to move this department, this school—this university—to preeminence?"[112] The definition that Laney intended for "preeminence" is not spelled out specifically, but the implicit sense of national and international renown appeared to be what was sought. Those departments or divisions thought to have a good chance to succeed would receive support; others that would require resources too significant to build prestige faced cuts or even closure. Thus, six liberal arts academics set out over four years to determine the likeliest path to prestige for an aspiring institution.

The commitment members of the Lamar Committee made to Emory were fairly rigorous: they agreed to divide the reports along expertise lines and offer academic advice on program support levels. They accepted a schedule that would bring representatives to Emory five times in 1981, four times in 1982, three times in 1983, twice in 1984 and once to conclude in 1985,

112. Emory History, "The Impact of 'The Gift,'" http://emoryhistory.emory.edu/people/guidinglights/WoodruffGift.html, Emory University (accessed August 24, 2011).

issuing a report in spring 1982 with subsequent sessions designed to follow up on their observations and recommendations. Each visit split the committee among their areas of expertise, although they gathered together for some plenary sessions occasionally. Projects approved by the board of trustees previous to the committee formation—specifically the new athletic center, university center and residence halls—would proceed outside the Lamar process along with the assessments of professional programs and outside projects.

After six visits, the committee issued its initial findings on April 2, 1982. Simply entitled "Report of the Emory University Visiting Committee for the Arts and Sciences to President James T. Laney," the report charted the committee's follow-up work for the next three years, as well as Emory's Graduate School's general strategy for the next thirty.[113] Running a slim 29 pages, the report was organized into three specific areas: the social sciences, the natural sciences, and the humanities. After a page or two of general observations, a brief and frank summary of the perceived quality of each department or program followed—with none longer than a page—conjecturing how long, with the appropriate allocation of resources, it would take for the department or program to reach national rankings in the top 10 or 20, if possible. Each section concluded with specific recommendations regarding priorities and which program should enjoy such privileges and which, if any, should be scaled back, merged or closed.

The schedule undertaken during the visits were uniformly demanding and complex. With members flying in from all over the country on Thursday evenings, they would visit all day Friday with a shifting array of people collected in different cross-sections, such as department chairs or special committees. While recounting the entire sequence of assessments would be

113. "Report of the Emory University Visiting Committee for the Arts and Sciences to President James T. Laney," President's Office Collection (Laney), "Lamar Committee" folder, box 7, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta.

tedious, a representative sample of the project is the agenda for the final January 24-26, 1985 round. Divided into subject areas and well past reviewing the internal reports and fact-finding of earlier rounds, the Lamar Committee members focused on emerging initiatives. On the 25th, Cavell and Sklar were to meet privately with the Graduate School dean, Dr. Ellen Mickiewicz, followed by a group meeting with the department chairs from art history, anthropology, modern languages and classics, history, the Institute of Liberal Arts (ILA), English, and philosophy. Bringing this collection of humanities faculty leaders was intended to forge cross and interdisciplinary programs and became an informal, "loosely coupled" cohort. Following that meeting, the distinguished philosopher and historian endured three pitches. The first—over lunch—vetted a proposal for a comparative literature department. To be spun out of the ILA when it grew large enough, this department would serve the fashionable boom in postmodern and cross-cultural literary analysis that had essentially bypassed Emory's traditionalist and Southern and British-oriented English department. Pitched primarily by the classicist, translator and critic of humanities research William Arrowsmith and literary theorist Timothy Reiss, the goal was to recruit additional distinguished faculty and foster a critical mass of scholarship that would attract graduate students and an aura of prestige. Several well-known faculty were to cycle through Emory's department when it was created, with Arrowsmith and Reiss themselves eventually leaving for high-status postings.[114]

Following the literary pitch, Michael Giles from the political science department and Kenneth Stein from the Carter Center suggested ways the emerging presidential legacy of service might combine with Emory's courses in politics and leadership. Joined by Dean Mickiewicz—a

114. The information in the following paragraphs regarding the committee's work over the January 24-26 period can be found at "Lamar Committee Schedule," President's Office Collection (Laney), "Lamar Committee" folder, box 7, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta.

Soviet media research specialist—this group was considering initiatives that resulted in President Carter serving as a distinguished lecturer-in-residence and Emory coordinating closely on research projects, internships and other high-profile opportunities. The third and final hour-long proposal was for the creation of an interdisciplinary "Feminist Studies" program. Later to manifest as a "Women's Studies" department, it grew from a concentration within the ILA. Professors Peggy Bartlett in anthropology, Carole Hahn in educational studies, Patricia Hilden from the ILA, and Gayatri Spivak in the English department advocated for the creation of a department apart from the ILA that would be a mix of full-time assigned faculty along with additional cross-listed members based in other departments. With Sklar's example at UCLA in mind and Woodruff money available, the renamed department became a reality two years later, under its first chair, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese. It evolved in the twenty-first century into the "Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies" department, currently offering the only private-institution PhD in the field.[115]

Lamar's own 1985 visit was far less concerned with emerging programs yet was similarly interdisciplinary in spirit. His first session was a discussion with representatives from the law, theology, and medical schools interacting with faculty from political science and anthropology along with two students on the subject "Preprofessional Education and 'Moralizing the Professions.'" He then moved onto the general topic of "General Education and the Undergraduate Experience" with two more students and faculty from English, philosophy, biology, and anthropology. He then spent the remainder of the day in the company of William Fox, the vice president of campus life, attending lunch; a presentation entitled "Overview of Campus Life and Undergraduate Experience;" and a discussion, "'Forging a Community of

115. Department of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies, "Welcome," http://wgss.emory.edu/home/index.html (accessed September 12, 2011)

Interest': The Role of Athletics;" with coaches, students, and a faculty member from the psychology and English departments. While certainly less concrete in proposals, results would include Emory's expansion and renovation of all it dormitories (including retrofitting all its freshmen housing with air conditioning in the summer of 1988); a common text for freshman seminars from 1987-89, (Bellah's *Habits of the Heart*); and the addition of intercollegiate basketball at Emory in 1986 through its Division III University Athletic Association, including schools as wide ranging as The University of Chicago, Case-Western Reserve and New York University.[116]

Unsurprisingly, Stellar's schedule was focused completely on the biosciences. From 9:00 a.m. through 5:30 p.m., he met with a range of faculty and relevant high-level administrators too numerous to name beyond the various topic areas and departments covered. Beginning with an overview of Emory's biological sciences, the agenda moved quickly to institutional strong points: Molecular Biology and Genetics; the new "Neurobiology and Behavior" program; Special Problems in Neurosciences and Behavioral Sciences; the Biosciences Program Working Group; and concluding with a Summation and Final Discussion led by the deans of the Medical and Graduate Schools. The departments represented a mix of medical and graduate school researchers representing genetics, biology, biochemistry, psychology, anatomy, psychology, neurology, physiology, biometry, chemistry, pharmacology, microbiology, and mathematics as well as a delegate from the Yerkes Primate Research Center, which had been a target of animal rights protesters and a topic in the "Special Problems" discussion. These discussions resulted in a complex and comprehensive realignment of Emory's bioscience structure, making possible the

116. "Lamar Committee Schedule," President's Office Collection (Laney), "Lamar Committee" folder, box 7, 3, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta.

creation of a school of allied health along with numerous joint programs between the medical and graduate faculties.[117]

The final schedule of the visit focused on Glicksman's specialty of academic applications for technology. Rounds of meetings included the sequence "Arts and Sciences Computer Advisory Committee," "University Computer Advisory Committee," "Library Automation Committee," and "Medical School Computer Advisory Committee." Certainly an artifact of the time when mainframe computers were being swept away by personal computers, these discussions allowed Glicksman to explain how Emory could benefit from his experiences at Brown and needed to ensure that the programs desired by individual schools would be able to interact with colleagues across campus, although the decision-making bodies tended to be divided by school. Emory closely studied the rapidly-evolving research needs for libraries, which had the divergent results of Emory pouring money into getting its collections and search abilities digitized by the early 1990s while deciding to close its master's program in library science because the investment required to upgrade it was not considered an effective use of university funds.[118]

The schedules reviewed above represent only one day in fifteen spread over the five-year lifespan of the Lamar Committee. Clearly, these leading national academicians probed Emory's resources in faculty, facilities, and funding, seeking to determine the right combination of emphases to meet Laney's charge of advancing the institution. Unsurprisingly, each of these scholars found areas related to his or her specialty to advocate for improvements: this likelihood cannot have escaped Laney's notice and may perhaps even been anticipated by him when he selected the participants. As the above quotation of Glicksman regarding Emory's need to

117. Ibid, 5.

118. Ibid, 7.

rebalance the relationship between its strong professional schools with its relatively weaker arts and sciences program at both the graduate and undergraduate levels made apparent, Emory's pressing need was to improve its core liberal arts departments. The emphasis on improving the liberal arts college and graduate school, with appropriate professional and special institute tie-ins, became the lasting overarching recommendation of the Lamar Committee.

CHAPTER 5

PLANNING BECOMES REALITY: LAMAR WINNERS AND LOSERS

The programs endorsed by the committee would receive major support in an attempt to move them into the first rank of institutions in their field. While not all were successful, some were chosen because they were already somewhat prestigious while others seemed like natural fits for existing strengths, particularly in the professional schools, that could catalyze reputation enhancement in the academic discipline. While a full study of Emory's liberal arts and sciences curricula evolution and its implications in the 1980s exceeds the scope of this dissertation, illustrative examples and the wider points are certainly relevant. The general remarks of the report hewed closely to its overarching theme: if Emory intends on achieving institutional "preeminence," it will need to enhance its prestige among the opinion-shapers such as academic presidents, provosts, and deans. They proposed to associate Emory with leading professors who were still productive in their fields and use them to enhance the perception of Emory at the national level through their scholarship while also using them to attract the most talented graduate students. The focus on graduate students would create generations of new faculty radiating out of the university bearing the university's name, with the intention that they would become influential professors in their own right and burnish their graduate school further on their campus of employment.

Two examples of "Lamar winners" were the chemistry and religion departments, but for very different reasons and with divergent assessments of their existing status. Glicksman and Stellar entered the general discussion of the "Natural Sciences" by endorsing the internal study's

central and audacious recommendation to divide the division into two: a "Division of Physical Sciences and Mathematics" and a "Biological Science Division." For the former, the chemistry department was perceived as the strongest, being characterized thusly: "the Chemistry Department is the most likely to be able to reach national prominence with the least additional resources. Because of the success in program development and faculty recruitment which has occurred in that department, this should be encouraged further, with a Woodruff Chair and a five-year development award as recommended in the natural science division report."[119] Thus, success bred success: the ability of the chemistry department leadership at that time to attract productive researchers and expand their offerings was to be rewarded with an endowed chair and the bestowing of a "five-year development award," a program allowing the seeding of money that would expire as a university outlay after the designated period. The endowed chair would allow the department to lure a nationally-known researcher to the campus, while the development award would fund supplies and graduate students who would—if the initiative worked—be paid for in the future by grants. The recommendation was accepted, and Emory searched for a Woodruff faculty member and deepened its chemistry capabilities.

The impetus for supporting the religion department however, came from a different line of reasoning. Characterizing the department as underperforming, members of the committee thought the academic disciplinary work fell under the shadow of the burgeoning reputation of the theology school. They maintained though that "Emory was a natural place for an expansion of a Religion program" since it could draw on the Pitts Theology Library collection built up by Laney as well as multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary specialists in the ILA. The committee called for "dynamic leadership" and the "assignment of a Woodruff Chair to the Department" to find

119. Ibid, 14-5.

someone of national caliber suitable to link the department with the theology school, and the ILA and other programs. They understood its past reputation with the controversial "God is Dead" flap of the mid-1960s, but new leadership was in order.

Laney himself endorsed this idea in a memorandum five years later to the dean of the college, Dr. David Minter. Approaching the transformation of Emory as an ongoing project that required striving leadership in selected programs, Laney expressed a desire for a multi-dimensional religion chair:

> I would like sometime in the next month or so to discuss several matters with you that bear upon the long-term ethos of the College and the University. One of them has to with the possibility of getting a first-class Chair in the department of Religion, someone who has some sense of what we are trying to do here and has an eye for outstanding teachers and scholars as well. I feel the department, while being staffed adequately and serving a certain function, is a long way from being what I would call distinguished. That's really not acceptable in a University with the traditions and connections and aspirations of Emory. I know you share these concerns and I know what the bottom line problem is![120]

While expressing a bit more cheeriness than the Committee report, Laney directs his arts and sciences dean to find someone who will fulfill the position, which he believes would "bear upon the long-term ethos" of the place. A scholar who also serves as a grounding member of the community, eager to recruit and mentor junior faculty, would be a rare find indeed. Additionally, Laney adhered to the instructions given six years earlier seeking advancement, reminding Dean Minter of the "traditions and connections and aspirations of Emory," so rooted in its links to Atlanta's past and the shared vision held by both the city and university. By the end of the 1980s, Emory would cycle through three chairs before achieving the stability it sought, ranking consistently in the top ten American programs in religion from the 1990s onward.

120. James T. Laney, "Memorandum to Dr. David Minter," President's Office (Laney), "Emory College" folder, box 3, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta.

Other programs did not fare as well in the Lamar process, touching off protracted discussions that in several cases escalated into disputes followed by some recriminations. The fates of two programs, Emory's geology department and its division of library and information management, were threatened by negative assessments of their ability to contribute to Emory's advancement, and both suffered the consequences to various degrees. The geology department had been one of the four original departments of the Manual Labor School that served as the initial phase of what became Emory University. Yet by time of the Lamar Committee's investigation, it was in real trouble. Led by Glicksman and Stellar, the assessment was uniformly negative, expressing only the faintest of hopes at the end:

> The Geology Department is a real problem. This is an area less vital than are the other disciplines to a first-rank institution, yet such an institution should have a competent program in this area. Priority for funds in this area should fall into line after Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics; the only way to remedy the current situation would be to recruit an aggressive chairman and provide him/her with a commitment to build up the department, in appointments and in space/equipment. The commitment should be made concurrently with the top-level appointment, and should be contingent upon it.
>
> Members of the Visiting Committee suggested that in addition to providing good undergraduate instruction, the Geology Department go into relatively unconventional but inexpensive areas of graduate research with the hope of becoming a first-rate department in fifteen years.[121]

Lacking effective leadership, funding, priority, and a commitment, the Geology Department was doomed as a distinct entity. Placing last in the Lamar Committee's list of departmental priorities in the new division of physical sciences and mathematics, geology was relegated to "relatively unconventional but inexpensive areas of graduate research," perhaps to keep the cost structure down as low as possible. The evaluation found nothing to recommend the department, serving as an excuse for the university to end its programs.

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121. "Report of the Emory University Visiting Committee for the Arts and Sciences to President James T. Laney," President's Office Collection (Laney), "Lamar Committee" folder, box 7, 15, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta.

The actual process to close the department, however, took over four years. The recommendations made by Stellar and Glicksman were joined by an assessment of the program by Dr. Frank Press of the National Academy of Sciences. At the December 11, 1986 meeting of the Academic Affairs Committee of the Emory Board of Trustees, Associate Professor and chair of the geology department William Size was invited in to make a case for preserving the program. He

> admitted that his department had not done well in keeping up on the forward edge of his discipline, but indicated that the problems had been identified and a new course set. The department's new development plan would entail a major commitment from the university administration, he explained.[122]

Although Size tried to justify the program as demonstrating the "interdisciplinary emphasis urged by President Laney," he was unable to persuade the board to preserve the program. Unwilling to commit funds to such an minor field lacking in prestige, the trustees voted on February 12, 1987 to phase out the geology department over two years.

At the same meeting, the trustees voted within a few minutes of geology's demise to "phase out the Division of Library and Information Management" over the following year. The dissolution of this program was unlike the end of the geology department; far from being seen as a backwater, Emory's library programs were well regarded throughout the Southeast and had a respected history. The Lamar Committee, however, cautioned in its 1982 report that "the Library program will require major infusions of support as the technological basis for librarianship continues to evolve," and that the "future is uncertain" for the programs in existence at the time. Emory undertook several subsequent studies, with marked disconnection between the external perception of an antiquated curriculum exacerbated by the under-preparedness of the faculty and

122. "Minutes, Meeting of Committee on Academic Affairs, December 11, 1986," Executive Committee 1/8/87, box 2 of 2, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta.

the relatively positive self-assessment the program faculty gave themselves. Glicksman's expertise in library management and his foreboding assessment of the industry shedding jobs, eroding salaries and reliance on expensive technology helped seal the end of the program.

Structurally embedded in the Graduate School but in many ways the smallest professional school at Emory, the library program did not have the status of a separate school as the other professions did. It was not a natural fit where it was since libraries hold a service function in an arts and sciences environment, leaving the Graduate School dean unenthusiastic regarding protecting the school. The then provost, Billy Frye, maintained that it would cost upwards of a million dollars to upgrade the program, with no assurance that it could attract full cohorts to a curriculum that would reflect the demanding nature of managing information in an increasingly digital world. With Emory's closure of its library program, the state was reduced to a weak one at Clark Atlanta University, which would have its accreditation revoked early in the twenty-first century.

The Michael C. Carlos Museum of Art and Archeology Emerges

A minor point in the Lamar Committee's report called for the physical separation of three programs intermixed in one of the original buildings on Emory's quadrangle. The departments of anthropology and art history shared the handsome but dated original law school building with the Emory Museum in a jumble of offices and cramped space that had been hastily repurposed and renamed "Carlos Hall" to recognize the major donor who partially funded the renovation. With the Committee's focus on improving the arts and sciences at Emory, the museum was mentioned as a potential prestige enhancement in passing, possibly since none of the members had any significant curatorship in their backgrounds. The Emory Museum at that time was an assortment

of artifacts accumulated since 1876 that were antiquarian pieces without a coherent vision guiding the collection. The most valuable and academically promising holdings resulted from visits by eccentric Emory theology professor William A. Shelton to Egypt and Palestine in 1920.[123] Bringing back a jumble of mummies, ceramic jars and oil lamps, the items were not integrated well into the late 1970s curriculum nor served a significant research base: rather, they appeared to be curiosities associated with biblical storytelling mildly interesting to earlier generations.

The other noteworthy items were nineteenth-century souvenirs from east Asia, primarily Korea. Donated by repatriated missionaries, these items reveal more about the period's export market than a curated investigation considering the intrinsic value of Korean art.[124] The disentangling of the two academic disciplines and the little museum seems to have been the main point in the Committee's endorsement in renovating the building and clarifying its purpose. While both academic departments gained significantly from the subsequent renovations in the 1980s, the transformation of the museum yielded outsized benefits for Emory's profile among the Atlanta arts cognoscenti while anchoring the original Atlanta campus' public appeal.

Archived documents reveal clearly that the university remodeled then expanded the museum with a careful eye on public function, donor appeal, and academic value. Tensions regarding space allocation and square footage occurred, but the overarching sense of progress and ambition appeared throughout the records. An October 29, 1982 letter to Laney from then-Museum Director and Associate Art History Professor Clark V. Poling states:

123. Michael C. Carlos Museum, "Egyptian, Nubian and Near Eastern Art," http://carlos.emory.edu/egyptian-nubian, Emory University (accessed September 12, 2011).

124. Michael C. Carlos Museum, "History & Mission," http://carlos.emory.edu/history-mission, Emory University (accessed September 12, 2011).

> Given the desire to place three program in the building and the pressures that that has caused, the accomodation [sic] shows particularly the Administration's committment [sic] and faith in this new or re-newed [sic] entity within the University, and this of course pleases me very much. The Museum will be able to function effectively at a professional level in the new facility . . . Nevertheless, there are problems concerning the space for exhibitions that seriously affect the possibilities for the display of the collections and the growth of the collections and programs in the immediate future.[125]

Poling, while he continued to wheedle Laney for additional space after paying lip service to the need for the three programs to coexist, understood that the "commitment" to a museum was genuine. He did not shy away from citing potential donors, presciently citing the Carlos family as having "expressed interest in helping us with regard to ancient Greek art, an area in which we are quite weak . . ." Implying as the letter continued that, if the academics must be included in the building, perhaps more space could be created through an addition to expand exhibit space.

As a member of the arts and sciences faculty and teaching in the master's program in art history, Poling must have felt the pressure to consider the needs of the academic departments, mentioning in the text that the college dean explained to the two departments' faculties the space allocation problems. However, his last paragraph in his two-page letter attempted to reach past the needs of the graduate programs:

> Ultimately, the nature and function of the Museum goes beyond Arts and Sciences, not only serving the whole University but addressing and winning prestige for the University with a broader public. I do feel that we will have a distinguished small museum in the facility. However I fear that the potential for the display of the permanent collection and for the growth in excellence in the collections and programs, witnessed by donations and grants, cannot be fully realized in the present plans."[126]

Poling had heard Laney and his supporters clearly regarding the central point of the entire Woodruff uplift enterprise: achieve as much "prestige" as possible among as wide an audience as

125. Clark V. Poling, "Letter to Dr. James T. Laney," President's Office (Laney), folder "Museum," box 8, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta.

126. Ibid, 2, emphasis added.

possible, in this case aiming at "a broader public." His appeal to growing collections and programs in the future fit the reward structure of Laney and Atlanta business as a whole, hoping that looking forward and planning for ever-increasing capacity would be rewarded.

Laney's rapid response to the letter, dated November 4, 1982, assured Poling that he reviewed the points with Minter and the architect (no less than Michael Graves himself!). He states in the first paragraph: "I am persuaded now that there are no impediments to an optimal utilization of the building as it presently stands, and we discussed a number of possible improvements with Michael this past Monday."[127] He proceeded to deny the possibility of allocating funds to include a wing on the building, although he reported that Graves "assured me that a wing could be added without any problem . . ." Laney then laid out the central fiscal response to Poling's argument regarding the prestige of the Museum and its public function:

> The budget was set with a considerable interjection of Woodruff funds plus the Carlos gift, and this has, as you know, catapulted Carlos Hall well ahead of other priorities that had been established originally by the [Lamar] Committee. Since it was my suggestion, you know that I fully concurred in this and want it to be as inviting and usable as possible.[128]

Laney's point remains clear three decades later: the museum received what it did when it did because it was able to obtain gift income from both Woodruff and the Carlos family: the latter was rewarded initially with their name on the building for the initial gift and with Michael Carlos' name on the museum itself when he funded the expansion in the later 1980s as Laney and Poling had hoped. The Lamar Committee's priorities were subject to advancement or delay depending on funding, making the emergence of the Carlos Museum one of the less anticipated yet fully successful legacies of their process. Poling had tried initially but failed to trump the

127. James T. Laney, "Letter to Dr. Clark V. Poling," President's Office (Laney), folder "Museum," box 8, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta.

128. Ibid.

needs of the academic programs through appealing to public prestige without money in hand; the Michael C. Carlos Museum of Art and Archeology would receive a new wing in the late 1980s, but under different leadership by then with resources committed by the Carlos family. Weekly listings for museum hours and events were to represent one of the largest unpaid media placements for Emory in local journalism and regularly scheduled special exhibits receive free regional coverage routinely.

The Carter Center of Emory University: A Coup Bears Fruit

A truly national and international program generating prestige for Emory though was an intentional priority for the Laney Administration. The linking of the university to the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library became a cornerstone of Emory's image, but it was not without controversy and difficult negotiations, at times embroiling Emory in wider controversies. From the jockeying for hosting the institution to the prosaic concerns of neighborhood disruptions, Emory will pay a price for its enhanced profile in the Atlanta community. The maneuvering for the future presidential library began at the inception of the Carter administration in 1977, when historian and Georgia Tech faculty member Melvin Kranzberg called a meeting of Atlanta area colleges and universities together, with the hope that a "consortium" of them would bring the facility to Atlanta. Perhaps hoping that Tech would be the actual physical location—Carter attended the university from 1943-4 before transferring to the Naval Academy—a shared facility was his stated aim. His reasoning, published in the *Atlanta Constitution* after Carter's White House departure in late January of 1981, was a telling assessment of Atlanta's higher education self-image as of 1977:

> 'We thought it should be in Atlanta, but we don't have a multi-university here. There is no place like the University of Michigan or the University of Texas where other

> presidential libraries are located, tremendous universities with major graduate programs in every field. But among us we possess all the qualities. We have good scholars in all fields. So we decided we weren't going to push for any particular site. First, we'd push for the decision that it be in Atlanta, and then we would present our individual cases to those making the decision.'[129]

This assessment of Atlanta as lacking a "tremendous" university when compared to the large state ones in Michigan and Texas, holding the Gerald Ford and Lyndon Johnson libraries respectively, served as a telling assessment of Atlanta's undistinguished position in the higher education marketplace in the 1970s. One unnamed university administrator quoted in the Atlanta newspaper article characterized this proposal for a consortium as "a gentlemen's agreement when almost no one involved was a gentleman,"[130] with various institutions hoping to host the facility. Competition would be delayed until Carter's presidency ended.

Public posturing papered over by this agreement reemerged following Carter's November 1980 re-election defeat. In early January 1981, the Georgia Board of Regents requested that the Carter Foundation trustees "choose one of the state's public colleges and universities as a site for the Carter presidential library," a request that became public quickly. Although the Board of Regents justified its actions vigorously, arguing that "the request is not a violation of the 1977 Atlanta agreement, because most of those institutions are outside of Atlanta," it angered the private Atlanta institutions and broke apart the consortium idea. Emory benefited from the regents' maladroit action, initiating contact with the Carter Foundation through private channels in a manner difficult for the public institutions to follow and match. Later that same spring, the Carter Foundation trustees entered serious private talks with Emory's leadership, outlining a complex deal that evolved through the 1980s. Emory quietly negotiated to subsidize the

129. Brenda Mooney, "Colleges Jockey for Carter Library," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 28, 1981.

130. Ibid.

construction of the facility, underwriting the costs for up to two million dollars for organizational oversight consideration.[131]

At a staff reunion in Washington D.C. in the spring of 1982, Carter announced that he would "devote 'the rest of my life' to building his new institute at Emory University in Atlanta."[132] This announcement began Carter's public association with the university, bringing national attention. Carter elaborated on his plan, anticipating that he would begin service as a "distinguished professor" September 1, 1982, fulfilling what he described as a "lifelong dream." His office would be located on the main campus temporarily, teaching classes twice a month while the library and research institute were being built over the next three years. Carter, then 58 years old, anticipated spending "the next 10 to 15 years to making the institute a center for studies in nuclear disarmament, human rights, civil rights, and the environment."[133] The vitality and success of the evolving Carter Center—and Jimmy and Rosalyn Carter's continued good health—belied his expectation by nearly 30 years: they remain in control of the Carter Foundation and through that the leadership of the Carter Center through 2011 and the completion of this dissertation.

The center's work was inaugurated on the Emory campus itself in November 1983, when the Carter Center hosted groups of middle-eastern scholars and government representatives along with American diplomats, academics, and think tank members. Although the Israeli government did not send representatives, Israeli scholars did attend, and the press coverage—both local and national—was generally very positive.[134] A columnist writing at the close of the conference,

131. The story of the Georgia Board of Regents and the awarding of the Carter Center partnership to Emory University appears in Joseph Albright, "Carter to Devote 'My Life' to Center," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 3, 1982.

132. Ibid.

133. Ibid.

134. Ron Taylor, "Emory Gets $150,000 for Summit on Mideast," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 3, 1983.

when reflecting on the initial event, considered the tension between the conference's success with the local pressures the building project created: "the conference at Emory this week demonstrated the salutary possibilities for a permanent Carter policy center."[135] The local columnist asked and answered,

> What's in this for Atlanta? Plenty. The issue goes far beyond a highway or a park. We like to think of ourselves as -- yes --an 'international city.' We are struggling to attract more foreign banks, airline flights, consulates and business people. We are struggling to create something fancy we can show off to visitors -- something that will solidify our image and enhance our community. And here comes Carter with his library proposal. It is a natural for the task.[136]

The desire in Atlanta for a world-class attraction saw a local writer embrace an esoteric think tank and high-minded diplomatic venue as a solution to Atlanta's striving ambition and regional anxiety, while the early twenty-first century saw it embrace an aquarium to play this role. The quotation encapsulated both Atlanta's hunger for "solidifying" its malleable image on the national stage and its thirst for prestige.

The tension regarding the location and supporting infrastructure alluded to by columnist Dolan had surfaced in 1982 however, with the announcement that Emory would associate with the Carter Presidential Library. A mind bogglingly complex issue conflating Emory, the Carter Presidential Library, the Georgia Department of Transportation, the state legislature and Atlanta neighborhood activists crystalized around the planning of a four-lane divided highway designed to link Atlanta's Downtown Connector (I-75 and I-85) with I-285 and the Stone Mountain Freeway (U.S. Highway 78) with the Carter facility in the center. Dubbed the "Presidential Parkway" and surrounded by a large proposed park, the project would have required the

135. Joe Dolan, "Protests Wrongly Target Carter," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 10, 1983.

136. Ibid.

demolition of swathes of urban middle-class neighborhoods established in the 1920s.[137] Following years of litigation, demonstrations, and various starts and stops, the "Presidential Parkway" was scaled back to a surface road with traffic lights built on only a relatively small portion of land cleared of homes from the originally proposed 219-acre "Great Park." Previously boxed in by Carter's public embracing of the Department of Transportation's original vision and the virulent neighborhood protests, Laney risked alienating either side until the brokering of the compromise deal. Emory and the Carter Center could move forward with the project, with the goodwill of a national-profile center but without the controversial full-scale roadway. Atlanta newspapers printed numerous letters of complaint aimed at Carter, Emory and the Department of Transportation, with them falling away only when the final project was scaled down and completed. Emory had weathered its initial brush with negative publicity from its Carter association, paying an unanticipated price in local goodwill when it unreservedly embraced Carter's agenda.

By October 1, 1986, the Carter Center of Emory University was operational on the site previously shrouded in controversy. At the dedication ceremony for the complex known officially as the "Carter Presidential Center," President Laney made the following remarks predicating a profile of Warren Christopher, the actual dedicatory speaker:

> This is a great day for higher education in this area. It is my privilege, in behalf of the college and university presidents here, as well as the faculty of Emory University and the Fellows of the Carter Center of Emory, to express our deep pride and pleasure in having the Carter Presidential Library and Center located here in Atlanta.
>
> This handsome complex becomes its lovely setting nestled as it is so gracefully among these hills yet commanding an impressive view of the city. It is appropriate that this spot, made famous by General Sherman's having watched the burning of Atlanta from here, should now be the place that scholars and statesmen in reflection and consultation seeks those things that make for peace. That surely is what the ultimate aim

137. A useful summary of the Presidential Parkway controversy can be found in Ester M. Bauer, "Presidential Flag Will Wave When Carter at Library," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 23, 1983.

> of all of our study and research should be, the well-being of people everywhere. That's why were [sic] are so proud at Emory to be an integral part of this place, and to have President Carter as a distinguished member of our faculty. For the Carter Center is dedicated to seek to influence the standards of mankind over succeeding generations. With President Carter, in our work and in our programs we share that vision and that hope.[138]

The invocation of perhaps the Southerner's greatest villain, Sherman, in juxtaposition to peacemakers resonated in a way only possible for Atlanta. Laney's linkage of Carter and the location to the Emory faculty seemed designed both to elevate the university and underline the academic aspect of the site. The curious assertion that "the Carter Center is dedicated to seek to influence the standards of mankind over succeeding generations" is ambitious yet pointed to the congruence of Carter's advocacy of a moral dimension in the exercising of American strength with Atlanta's supporting Emory's bid for prestige. Both are grounded in a certainty of "rightness" as well as a conflation of power and ethics. The expansive intentions invoked by influencing "the standards of mankind," points to the confluence of Atlanta's, Emory's and Jimmy Carter's ambition. The Center and Emory hoped for a strong impact in the city and world.

Within two weeks following the gala opening, Laney and Carter reached an agreement detailing relationships and the remaining issues within a four-page memorandum. Documenting the interaction between the three parties involved with the Center—the Carter Presidential Center, Inc., the National Archives, and Emory University—the university and former national presidents sketched out ambitious aspirations and practical goals for global reach and efficient operations. "The Carter Center of Emory University" would operate in a space through a ninety-nine-year lease held by the Carter Presidential Center, Inc. The text affirmed that "Emory's primary interest lies in ensuring the academic integrity of programs mounted by its Center, so

138. James T. Laney, "Remarks at Carter Center Dedication," President's Office (Laney), folder "Carter Center," box 3, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta.

that the Center may develop into a truly distinguished and internationally-respected nonpartisan policy study center."[139] This functional mission statement was classic Laney jargon: it envisioned high scholarly repute to promote prestige through "a truly distinguished and internationally respected" program. Laney positioned Emory to use its unique asset to support its striving for elite status. The penultimate chapter, following ones detailing the National Archives and Carter Presidential Center contributions to the entire institution, addressed the contributions Emory brought to the relationship. Authored by Emory University Secretary Tom Bertrand, the text asserted a level that the university pursued but rarely claimed. "As a major research university which over many years has forged a widely recognized commitment to many of the same concerns held dear by President and Mrs. Carter, Emory maintains its own network throughout the world's intellectual community."[140] At this moment of institutional triumph, Emory's leadership claimed "major research university" status that had been dismissed less than ten years previously in the aborted agreement for an Atlanta "consortium" while also equating its global reach and connection to the "world's intellectual community." Interestingly, their agreement does not mention any role or context regarding Atlanta throughout its four pages, leaving the center and the university vulnerable to criticism from the city's perspective.

Less than a year after this energizing opening, the entire project suffered adjustment problems that played out publicly via negative media. By July 1987, the Carter Center of Emory University had been operating in its facility for six months; local press coverage shifted dramatically. A front-page story dated July 20 by staff writer Mark Silk characterized the center thusly:

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139. Tom Bertrand, "Agreement between Emory University and the Carter Presidential Center, Inc.," President's Office (Laney), folder "Carter Center," box 3, 2, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta.

140. Ibid, 4.

> The center, which has experienced management and financial problems, still suffers from an inability to communicate a clear sense of mission, in the opinion of staff members and others closely associated with the fledgling institution. Three and a half years after its first public event, and nine months after its grand opening, the Carter Presidential Center is an institution still in search of itself.[141]

He saw the various initiatives as lacking coherence, with the hopes for the institution mired in mundane issues of understaffing, budget cuts, and funding shortfalls. What followed was a lengthy listing of staff hirings and departures over the three years of operations, interspersed with interview remarks attributed to current and former staffers which, when threaded together, fashioned an overall negative tone to the ambitions of the Center and Emory. The central problem Silk traced, in his analysis, rested in the following statement:

> Some of the difficulties are part of the normal shakedown that any new institution must go through. But the Carter Center is a uniquely complicated entity—part university think tank, part public health agency, part conference center and part goodwill mission. Above all, it's the home base for a former president intent on pursuing the vast aims that the American electorate did not permit him to pursue into a second term in office. It is a place without precedent.[142]

Silk punctured the noble self-image Atlanta and the Carter Center leadership that Laney characterized at the dedication six months earlier when he portrayed it as over-reaching and under-funded. The inference that the Center—and by extension Emory—overreached its ambition and represented the dreams of a defeated and delegitimized ex-president permeated the article.

Perhaps the most damaging aspect of the piece for internal Emory-Carter Center operations was the criticism of the Center's operations attributed to Laney himself. He did not endorse the vision of original administrators in the interview nor the complex organization, describing it according to Silk as "a hydra-headed monster." However Laney took significant

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141. Mark Silk, "Carter Center Plagued by Staff Cuts, Confusion Over Its Mission," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 20, 1987.

142. Ibid.

responsibility onto himself for not marshaling the scholastic aspects of the center in the article: "I haven't been able to come up with a grand design for the Carter Center . . . I say that ruefully, because it's eluded me. It still needs that energizing intelligence to give it focus on the academic side."[143] This honest assessment intended by Laney may have been framed by Silk to seem to criticize the entire project beyond his self-criticism, prompting Laney to do something rare for his presidency: he responded to the article with an extensive two-page note addressed simply to his files. He outlined a sequence of events leading to the interview he had with Silk and disputed the overall tone and facts contained in the article, even going so far as to claim: "I have no recollection ever of using the term 'hydra-headed monster'—in fact I don't ever recall using that term ever in any conversation or context."[144] Laney most likely feared potential fallout from the article he characterized as "almost entirely negative in tone." Laney and Emory experienced its first significant negative press, and he would have to respond to the negative spin and implied criticism of the center's leadership, presumably including President Carter. Yet by late 1987, Laney and the Carter Center were fully operational and had weathered their first major criticism from the Atlanta media, but the success lead to a diminution of the traditional civic boosterism.

The Division that Died: the Emory School of Dentistry

The protracted issue that actually may have tested Laney's administrative abilities and institutional relationships most severely was the fate of the Emory School of Dentistry. Founded in 1887 as The Atlanta-Southern Dental College affiliated with the Southern Medical College, it fully merged with Emory University in 1944 and relocated to the edge of the campus adjacent to

143. Ibid.

144. James T. Laney, "Memorandum to File, July 20, 1987," President's Office (Laney), "Carter Center" folder, box 1, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta.

the Centers for Disease Control Atlanta facility in 1969, the same year Laney joined the university.[145] For decades into the twentieth century, this school had been the only dental school in the southeastern United States, benefiting from state and southeastern subsidies bestowed by the Southern Regional Education Board. Yet by the 1970s, the surrounding states had established their own dental schools and regional funding diminished, finally ending from the state of Georgia completely in 1982. Other schools, ranging from the University of Oklahoma to Northwestern University, underwent their own protracted struggles ending in either the complete closing or radical shrinking of their dental programs in the 1980s.

Emory seriously considered its options beginning as early at 1981 with the creation of a task force to consider the future of the dental school. A committee of ten internal dental faculty members plus an external consultant and internal senior administrator composed "A Proposal for the Reorganization and Redirection of the Emory University School of Dentistry: an In-house Committee Report" and issued it November 2, 1981.[146] The report made grand claims for the dental school, asserting that that it was "the most cost efficient school of dentistry in the country, and as cited by the 1980 Gourman Report, the school ranks 14th nationally . . . According to this report, relative to its peer institutions, the School of Dentistry ranks as the outstanding 'graduate school' on the campus."[147] This bold claim identifying the dental school as the most highly-ranked division of Emory and its efficiency were all made in the first two sentences of the report. It proceeded though to detail the problems facing the wider dental industry: the "perceived

145. An overview of the situation from the perspectives of the Laney administration's leadership was provided to members of the Emory Trustees' Executive Committee prior to the votes to close the dental school: "Confidential Information to Trustees: Recommendation to Close Professional (DDS) Program in School of Dentistry," President's Office (Laney) files, "Dental School 1985" folder, box 4, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta.

146. "A Proposal for the Reorganization and Redirection of the Emory University School of Dentistry: an In-house Committee Report," President's Office (Laney), "Dental School" folder, box 4, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta.

147. Ibid, 1.

surplus of dental manpower," a dwindling pool of qualified applicants and fiscal restraints. Together they called for a redefinition of the school's purpose: "the mission of the school must change from being a primary provider of competent general practitioners to something more—something which is so unique as to attract and educate the leaders of the future."[148] Interestingly, the report invoked the points advanced by Laney and his supporters: it embraced forward looking, prestige-oriented, and striving strategies consistent with his rhetoric. However, the scale of the changes necessary violated Laney's earlier commitment to "every tub on its own bottom," with the dental school swallowing hundreds of thousands of dollars in subsidies in its last years producing the DDS degree.[149]

The mission change advocated was for Emory to transition to producing "dental scholars," researchers and future faculty members rather than clinical practitioners. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the report acknowledged that "this idea emanates from the Harvard School of Dental Medicine, whose primary mission has been to produce the leaders of the dental profession."[150] As the simultaneous launching of the Lamar Committee advocated a transformative agenda for Emory's graduate school of arts and sciences, the committee members for the dental program sought a similar uplift also inspired by America's oldest university. Flush with the Woodruff resources and mindful of the dental school's long history of service, improvements amounting to $1.5 million in equipment and upgrades flowed beginning in 1982. Supporting the creation of a faculty clinic modeled on the financially successful Emory Clinic

148. Ibid.

149. "Confidential Information to Trustees: Recommendation to Close Professional (DDS) Program in School of Dentistry," President's Office (Laney) files, "Dental School 1985" folder, box 4, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta.

150. "A Proposal for the Reorganization and Redirection of the Emory University School of Dentistry: an In-house Committee Report," President's Office (Laney), "Dental School" folder, box 4, 2, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta.

associated with the medical school, this medical outpatient facility was a longstanding surplus-generating center for the university that Laney realigned in the late 1970s, fashioning a deal with the member physicians beneficial to the university's bottom line.

However successful these changes were in preserving and promoting Emory's reputation in dentistry, significant costs remained which risked increasing over time. According to the case assembled by the senior administration supporting the school's closure, the 1983-84 budget cycle contained a $400,000 direct subsidy from the university endowment income yet still managed to overrun its allocation by $650,000, for an operational shortfall of over a million dollars. Covering such a loss annually would require a five percent draw after raising or designating at least twenty-million dollars in endowment income. This money could be used elsewhere for projects linked to prestige enhancement like the biological sciences program endorsed by the Lamar Committee while the dental school's fate was under consideration. Dental research, while widely undertaken, was neither of significant enough stature nor amount to benefit rankings significantly. External research money brought in by the Emory School of Dentistry did grow from $85,000 in 1981 to almost a million dollars in 1984, but these funds grew at a time when the operational shortfalls also expanded.[151]

The senior administration advanced a complex set of assertions couched as "facts" to the trustees. Invoking declining applicant quality, the overabundance of spaces nationally, weak deposit numbers and support from Atlanta-area dentists (including past and present heads of Emory's dental alumni), the administration advocated terminating the "undergraduate" DDS degree. This initiative led to a compressed series of February 1985 meetings convened by Laney involving the Woodruff Health Sciences Center Board, dental faculty and the Board of Trustees

151. "Confidential Information to Trustees: Recommendation to Close Professional (DDS) Program in School of Dentistry," President's Office (Laney) files, "Dental School 1985" folder, box 4, 3.

Executive Committee, the latter both by phone early in the month and in person near its end. The immediate issue driving the decision-making that month was the impending March deadline for students depositing on their offers of admission for the next incoming class circulated to admitted students the previous month. The key meeting occurred February 5, when the Woodruff Health Sciences Center Board—after considering whether to enroll another cohort even though it might be of lower quality—voted "unanimously and regretfully to recommend that the undergraduate program in dentistry to be phased out with all due speed."[152] Deciding it could perhaps preserve the research functions advocated in 1981 in a "post-graduate" dental program without the high costs associated with a public clinic and a DDS program, the trustees' executive committee voted by telephone early the following afternoon to rescind admission offers and help place the twenty-five students who had already deposited at Emory while preserving the accreditation of the school as remaining cohorts completed their degrees.

Announced at a faculty meeting late in the afternoon of February 6, this decision caused an uproar among the faculty and students, setting off a community and media firestorm. Dean Michael E. Fritz, the proponent of the 1981 "Harvard strategy," resigned to return to the research faculty at the end of the fiscal year (August 31), a resignation Laney accepted "in great appreciation for Fritz's leadership under difficult circumstances."[153] This would be perhaps Laney's easiest transition in the controversy. The entire back-and-forth as covered in the *Atlanta Journal* and *Atlanta Constitution* played out Emory's messy internal battles. A document entitled "A Statement by the Faculty of Emory University School of Dentistry" was released to the press on February 9, 1981, with excerpts printed in local newspapers the following day. Responding directly to Emory officials quoted in the February 7 *Atlanta Constitution* coverage claiming that

152. Ibid, 2.

153. Ibid, 5.

faculty supported the closing of the program, the first sentence of the faculty's release attacked this assertion directly:

> The statement that the faculty supported the decision to close the dental program . . . is contrary to the facts. The faculty was not consulted in any way prior to the precipitous decision and, in fact, the faculty is overwhelmingly opposed not only to the decision but the manner in which it was made."[154]

The goodwill carefully crafted by Laney with the arts and sciences faculty was now completely absent in his relationship with the dental school professors. Accusations of personal duplicity and administrative misstatements follow throughout the four-page missive, attempting to refute the administrative assertions point by point.

After countering claims about declining student quality, the faculty extolled the very curricular innovations funded and implemented in the three years since the 1981 report called for them. Portraying these reforms as cutting-edge (such as having first-years experiencing clinical environments and developing publishable research), the faculty claimed that "such direction is filling a need that is not being met by the majority of dental schools in the country to train the future leaders of the oral health care community."[155] Maintaining that the changes brought about earlier in the decade just needed a few more years to transform inarguably the perception of Emory dentistry, the faculty warned that the institutional credibility was now at risk in case the impending closure led to the national accrediting body's pulling of Emory's recognition while students remained. Yet rather than closing with an argument supporting the students as victims, the faculty curiously asserted a possible conspiracy in its last paragraph:

> Despite the University Administration's denial, the faculty feels that the overriding reason for the closure of the dental school was utilization of the dental school building for additional space, and not because of current and planned program quality. The need for

154. "Press Release: A Statement by the Faculty of Emory University School of Dentistry," President's Office (Laney), "Dental School 1985" folder, box 4, 1, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta.

155. Ibid, 2.

> this space apparently became acute when the cost estimates for a new medical research facility greatly exceeded the amounts needed to convert the current dental building to a medical research facility.[156]

Threatened with impending closure and aware that its space will be the site of a combined allied health library, the dental school's employees suspected that they were being displaced in favor of a low-priced conversion of dental space to medical space and pressure from the Lamar recommenders to support the biological sciences. However, the accusation remained speculative, with no concrete evidence presented.

Similar themes to the faculty press release appeared in the October 11 statement authored by Emory dental students. Questions of motive, timing and process filled the text, with portentous assertions such as this one:

> It has become clear in the past few days that the university administration may have reasons other than those stated publicly for closing the dental school. It is our concern that this decision was made by the Rev. Dr. Laney and the Executive Committee of the Board with the underlying motives which they have not brought forth. Thus, we would request a scrupulous review, by the entire board of trustees, of the decision. Its reasons and ramifications within and without the Emory community, and consideration of future plans for the Dental School building.[157]

Clearly their statement was influenced by the faculty's. Thus, the students echoed their instructors when they suggested that their program's demise may be attributed to the designs upon their facility by the biosciences alliance forged between the graduate and medical schools, catalyzed by the Lamar Committee. Suggestive of a conspiracy through questioning "underlying motives," these students' statement did not engage any points of university subsidy or divisional shortfall. Rather, they maintained that, similar to the faculty's press release, dentistry was being

156. Ibid, 4.

157. "February 11 Announcement from Dental Students," President's Office (Laney), "Dental School 1985" folder, box 4, 3, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta.

shrunken to a post-DDS program, allowing the renovated laboratories and clinical spaces to be yielded to the biomedical departments and divisions.

Even the students' statements contained the institution-wide desire and pursuit of prestige. Apparently one of the reasons some of the students selected Emory was its innovative curriculum and new spaces:

> We were assured in 1982 that the university would make a five year commitment to the dental school, both financially and philosophically, to redirect the curriculum and reestablish Emory as a national leader in dental education. The university has chosen not to live up to that assurance.[158]

This appeal to "national leadership" and Emory (specifically Laney) not living up to a promise stung since the internal record clearly supported that Emory's leadership shared this ambition for national prominence and had indeed pumped money into the program to achieve precisely that. From joining a school that positioned itself as in the vanguard of dentistry to graduating from a school worried about maintaining accreditation through 1988 was a bitter blow to the students, and they were willing to share their frustration and anger with the newspapers. The targets beyond conspiracy are that the decision-making process was concealed, and the students indicated their concern that the appropriate channels had not been followed. The vice president of the dental student government, Chris Favello, complained about this closed process, pointing out that it indicated a lack of familiarity with the dental professional organizations when pursuing the maintenance of accreditation during the phase out of the DDS degree. When referring to Laney and Vice President for Health Affairs, Charles Hatcher, he asserted that "they didn't even know who to contact at the ADA. They are not doing anything themselves to get this thing rolling."[159] Unlike the lengthy and community-wide discussions stemming from the

158. Ibid, 1.

159. David K. Secrest, "Dental School Students, Staff Fight Phase-Out," *Atlanta Constitution*, February 9, 1985.

Woodruff gift, the faculty was not leaders in determining the medical school's fate. Laney's credibility was weak with the students, and it diminished further when, in comments following a 300-student protest march in driving rain on February 11 that he did not attend, he informed the leaders that the closure "is a final, irrevocable decision."[160] Furthermore, while maintaining that the administration had no plans for the dental building being transformed into medical space, Laney said "the school had a greater deficit—$600,000 this year—than all the other schools in the university combined."[161] Since, in the end preserving the dental school would have required violating the "every tub on its own bottom" principle Laney had long adhered to, the ending of the DDS program was assured.

Protracted negotiations with faculty necessary for the remaining three years and a lawsuit from students in a hybrid DDS./PhD program notwithstanding, Laney's 1985 remark ending discussion of the DDS.' program's ultimate demise in 1988 was prescient: the dental school faded with its dwindling student population, and the dental school building was indeed partially repurposed to become an interdivisional health sciences library, eventually named the "Woodruff Health Sciences Center Library," commemorating Robert W. Woodruff's largess. The closing, while painful and not keeping with the stated values of community involvement, kept Emory focused on its strategy aiming at prestige, regardless of traditions, history and public service if their price was too high.

From 1987's "Emory 2000" and Beyond

By 1987, the achievements of Laney following the Woodruff gift were taking root. The Lamar Committee had disbanded, with its final visits completed and recommendations filed two

160. David K. Secrest, "300 Protest Plan to Close Dental School," *Atlanta Constitution*, February 12, 1985.

161. David K. Secrest, "Emory Firm on Dental Decision," *Atlanta Journal*, February 12, 1985.

years before. Many of the structural changes it called for were underway, such as the expansion of the Carlos Museum and the establishment of the Biosciences Division, along with recruitment of high-profile faculty such as Jimmy Carter. The pruning of the geology and library science programs took place then, and the end of undergraduate dentistry at Emory was an accepted reality when the last class would graduate the following year. Yet, rather than rest on its achievements or seek to consolidate, the Laney administration was busily preparing for the second wave of post-Woodruff gift advancement. Two years earlier in January 1985, Emory officially closed out the "Campaign for Emory," having raised $220 million with the (twice upwardly adjusted) target of $160 million strongly surpassed in total, anchored by the $105 million Woodruff money. However, John W. Stephenson, Emory's vice president for development, commented on the final totals, placing Emory in elite company: "Ours was like other recent fund-raising efforts at places like Harvard and Yale, Our funding for bricks and mortar fell short of the goal. Our fund raising for endowment far exceeded the goal," outlining that while the endowment contributions totaled $200.5 million—clearly surpassing the $162 million goal—the construction and renovation fund raising had reached $16.2 million, short of the $23 million target.[162] This linkage to Ivy League endowment elites, finding commonalities with their successes and shortfalls, was clearly intentional. Additionally, the successful endowment drive had been jumpstarted by the $105 million gift, a deep irony since Robert Woodruff had initially dismissed endowment as "idle capital" and resisted it until Laney reframed in a more business-friendly sense. It served as a powerful legacy.

In anticipation of the next phase and with the working title "Emory 2000" so evocative of the pre-millennium time frame, Emory began planning for the future. This process allowed

162. David K. Secrest, "Campaign for Emory Nets $220 Million," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 6, 1985.

Laney to claim successes and indicated the dramatic contrast with his remarks to trustees and faculty in the late 1970s. At a planning retreat with trustees during the spring semester of 1987, he presented a challenge to the board:

> We are now positioned . . . to aspire to be in a select group of leading private institutions in this nation . . . Today south of the line that stretches from Baltimore to Los Angeles there is no University in that category . . . It is intolerable that there is no educational institution in the southern tier of the United States that stands absolutely and unquestionably in that top tier of the twelve outstanding institutions.[163]

The appeal by a Southern academic leader in the process of transforming his institution laying down a challenge to Atlanta's corporate elites remained a staple of his tactics, invoking regional pride.

This pitch to the trustees linked Emory's ascendance with Atlanta's claim for regional leadership, leading Laney to amplify his remarks later at the retreat, taking on Vanderbilt and Duke:

> I would say that Emory's distinction from Vanderbilt and Duke lies in this. Vanderbilt has largely left behind its concern for values, as it has become gentrified. Its cultural cachet is that it is the place for southern gentry and that's a very attractive thing . . . I think that puts a ceiling that is unfortunate upon the aspirations of the university. I think that Duke is unashamedly and unabashedly seeking to be like the Ivy League.[164]

He saw space between the "southern gentry" of Vanderbilt and the "Northeastern imitator" of Duke for an authentically Southern yet international institution, playing to the city and world through venues such as the Carter Center. Emory's emerging self-confidence, as encapsulated by Laney, was transformed from the school he described in 1979 as "lacking definition" to one on the threshold of being an "outstanding institution."

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163. James T. Laney," Minutes of the 1987 Trustee Retreat," Series 040, 1986-7 Board of Trustee Minutes, box 2, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta.

164. Ibid.

The product of this process was a twelve-point set of goals, broken down into resources, academic programs and campus life. The first category specifics called for major improvements in annual gift giving and federal research grants (tripling and doubling respectively) and research collaboration with Georgia Tech and the University of Georgia to advance the Georgia Research Consortium. Taken altogether, these represented necessary steps for Emory to advance further within the top ranks as measured by alumni and grant-giving support rather than merely gaining entry to the elites as envisioned in 1980. The academic initiatives were prestige-based, growing out of the Lamar Committee's work. The emergence of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences in PhD production and departmental recognition topped the list, while advancing a tier for the professional schools was also significant. Individual faculty promotion and globalized and undergraduate education were elements that appeared as additional priorities to reach the truly elite status. Campus life goals sought to uplift the performing arts—the absence of which was a criticism of the earlier Woodruff-inspired process—as well as developing strong traditions in peer education and traditions that would advance "the education of the heart in all fields," something dear to Laney personally as well as Lamar Committee humanist Robert N. Bellah. The selection of his text *Habits of the Heart* would be required reading for freshmen seminars in 1987 and 1988 and meant to address this goal. The notion of a summer reading was quietly dropped after the two years.

Taken together, these priorities called for a confident, aggressive university focused both on depth and advancement while respecting its Methodist roots. The pursuit of an encompassing image called to Laney, and he sought to make Emory a globally recognized but distinctively Southern university, true to its Methodist heritage but fiercely competitive in the academic marketplace. The resulting vision statement for Emory 2000 read:

> By the year 2000, Emory should be recognized as one of the nation's strongest and most distinctive universities, sustained by a solid core of resources, including powerful support from its alumni and region as well as a nationally competitive level of research funding. At its heart will be the faculty of arts and sciences, and radiating out from that the several faculties of the professional schools, whose quality, vision and originality will lead them to play an increasingly important role in the dialogue that constitutes our national culture.[165]

Emory's ambitions had focused from the 1970s, and it stood on the threshold of true elite status while seeking every possible way to achieve it. Having worked its way into consideration as elite, Emory desired to ascend into "preeminence" by essentially recreating other elite school's support for the primacy of the Arts and Sciences.

One target that represented Emory's quest for prestige was membership in the Association of American Universities. Its enduring mark of status was one of the first objectives sought by Laney after the promulgation of Emory 2000. His letter to Dr. Robert Rosenzweig, the AAU President, in May of 1987 emphasized Emory's rise in less than a decade and its aim at top twenty to twenty-five status "within the next decade." After asking to be considered for membership, he explained that:

> it would be an advantage for us to pool our strengths with those of the members of American's preeminent organization of research universities. I believe Emory's distinctive quality, its importance to this city and region, and its extraordinary dynamism warrant consideration of its admission to this select group.[166]

His appeal to Emory's status in Atlanta and the Southeast is yet another instance of the linkages forged by him to link Emory to the city, and the pair of them together with the wider national and international stages. The undeniable strength of Emory's finances, and its ability to choose its

165. "Emory 2000," Minutes of the Board of Trustee Meetings 1986-7, Series 040, , "Minutes, 9 April 1987" folder, box 1, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta.

166. "James T. Laney to Dr. Robert Rosenzweig, President's Office (Laney), "Graduate School" folder, box 5, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta.

emphases made it a dynamic candidate, but membership eluded Laney: Emory was invited to join the AAU the year after he departed to serve as U.S. Ambassador to South Korea in 1993.

Laney did preside over a less-vaunted but more popular achievement that would become a hallmark of his time at Emory: the university broke into the *U.S. News & World Report Guide to Colleges and Universities* rankings. Tying for twenty-fifth on the list with the University of Texas at Austin with only 25 spaces for "top research universities," Emory had finally broken through into the popular culture's notion of prestige. The sheer novelty at the time of the publication—it was only the third version the survey published since it had begun in 1983—helped draw attention to Emory's rise from the middle ranks in the earlier 1980s. Laney made clever use of the press announcement, including copies of it with a written memorandum to university faculty addressing Emory's response to the "stock market correction" that occurred earlier that October in which he asked "to recapture some 2-3 percent of the university's annual budget."[167] However, this budget still was a six percent increase from the previous year's allocation even with the reductions. Thus, while many other institutions were retrenching, Emory was expanding, able to allocate new resources and redirect existing ones in a manner aimed at improving prestige. The final paragraph of his letter outlining the reductions spoke to the top twenty-five listing as:

> . . . a ranking that omits may superb institutions, including 31 of the 56 members of the Association of American Universities. It reflects a remarkable rise in the perception of Emory's quality on the part of educators around the nation. I am extraordinarily proud of the work done by Emory faculty over recent years to bring this about . . . [168]

167. James T. Laney, "Memorandum to Faculty of the University," dated October 26, 1987," President's Office (Laney), "Articles, Miscellaneous" folder, 1, box 1, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta.

168. Ibid, 2.

While clearly mindful of Emory's then-frustrated aspirations for AAU membership, Laney remained tightly focused on his goal of promoting Emory's rise and bound the arts and sciences faculty in particular to his aim by portraying their contribution as pivotal to the endeavor.

Emory's experience with *U.S. News/America's Best Colleges* rankings through 1994 was mixed. After the triumph of 1987, the university climbed to twenty-two the following year. However, methodological changes at the publication coupled with other universities' tactical adjustments to boost rank saw Emory drop off the list for the next three years. In comparison, Vanderbilt popped onto the list at number twenty-four in 1990 before disappearing for another year, returning at number nineteen. From 1993-95, Emory ranks 21, 25, and 16 while rival Vanderbilt scores 25, 20, and 18.[169] As Clarke indicates, these ordinal placements represent tiny differences reflecting tweaked emphases and slight differences year-to-year that can show movement that is essentially meaningless within broad bands.[170] Thus these two schools, with overlapping histories and different strategies, end up clustered together at the bottom of the elite category research universities without a statistically meaningful distinction in quality. They floated in the tier below Duke, which apart from 1989 when it dropped to twelfth, remained firmly in the top ten. Laney's ambition to climb into the top twelve by 2000 and fulfill his stated desire to be the preeminent American university in the South, will elude Emory.

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169 "U.S. News Rankings Through the Years," *The Chronicle of Higher Education: Facts & Figures,* http://web.archive.org/web/20070908142457/http://chronicle.com/stats/usnews/ (accessed November 4, 2011).

170 Clarke, "News or Noise? An Analysis of U.S. News and World Report's Ranking Scores," 46.

CHAPTER 6

ANALYTICAL LENSES APPLIED TO EMORY 1979-87

The charge to the post-Woodruff gift planning committees set the groundwork for an evaluation of units in terms of cost/benefit to the institution as a whole: a process Laney himself had pioneered during his time as dean of the theology school. While many were slow to see this, various offices and even entire schools were at risk through a process ostensibly undertaken to promote growth. It is helpful to recall that this committee was "charged with integrating the reports, assessing the long-term goals of the divisions, consulting with academic officers and making recommendations to the administration."[171] The previously profiled academics, while elite, were completely devoid of representation from any of the professions enrolling half of the Emory student population and employing a majority of the university's faculty. With the overall goal of achieving "preeminence," the main thrust of the process emerges as status-seeking as an end unto itself, rather than having an underlying ideology that would benefit from such an elevated position.

The Garbage Can and Emory's Rise

After a protracted period of tension stemming from scant resources and a sense of drift, the search resulting in Laney's promotion to the presidency could have undermined his effectiveness. Either by cleaving too close to the trustees and adopting their bureaucratic model

171. "Report of the Emory University Visiting Committee for the Arts and Sciences to President James T. Laney," President's Office Collection (Laney), "Lamar Committee" folder, box 7, 1, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta.

or conceding too much to faculty fantasies of collegial rhetoric, Laney could have failed in harmonizing the institution's units. While he could speak to them in their contexts, his most adroit tactic seems to have been his adoption of the "'garbage can' model" of decision making at critical junctures. Specifically, at his assumption of the presidency, after the announcement of the gift, when commissioning the 1981 dental school study, and following Emory's arrival on the *U.S. News & World Report* top twenty-five list, Laney resorted to "garbage can" management tactics.

Birnbaum, building on the work of predecessors, describes the functioning of the garbage can model: "specific problems, participants, and solutions coalesce with a particular choice point and they become attached (that is, more tightly coupled) to each other."[172] The problems of Emory University at the advent of Laney's administration—its uncertain priorities, cultural conflicts and inchoate ambitions—mix with participants including faculty members, trustees and administrators in addition to outside evaluators and journalists. The "solutions" metaphorically floating about included an array of options ranging from enhancing existing faculty salaries to aligning the institution more closely with Atlanta's elite. In less capable hands, these competing and at times conflicting ends could have degenerated into the worst aspects of a "political" model characterized by rapidly shifting coalitions destabilizing the university with zero-sum resolutions. An example of this was the tension over faculty participation in the presidential selection process that resulted in Laney's hiring: a disgruntled faculty delegation petitioned the trustee board and search chair who summarily rejected the request. This response inflamed faculty alienation, ultimately resulting in a grudging compromise with token faculty representation outside the formal decision-making process guarded by the trustee leadership.

172. Birnbaum, 164.

Laney must have realized the cost of such struggles in a university environment, particularly in one that he believed, as he said to trustees in 1979 that Emory "lacked definition." Thus, he appealed to "collegiality" with faculty while calling for "a convenient objective index to help us see ourselves in perspective" when addressing the trustees. Yet he resorts to garbage can methodology multiple times, both before and after the Woodruff gift. First, he uses it to assuage the conflicts resulting from his appointment when he calls for a comprehensive strategic plan, with results yielding community support. He does not seem to steer the participants toward any particular outcome in the first case; the process itself serves as the goal of bridging differences and appearing open and inclusive.

The employment of an overt garbage can model appears to be even more significant as a response in the post-Woodruff gift environment. With so much ambition depending on it catalyzing the Emory community and redefining the image of the university, Laney takes great pains to channel the final result by pre-determining the parameters of the metaphoric "dumpster" containing the garbage: he negotiates before the gift's announcement soliciting more restrictions from the Woodruffs; he appoints faculty to head all the internal reviews instead of relevant staff or administrators; and he selects all high-profile arts and science "experts" to serve on the Lamar Committee. Taken together, it is unsurprising that the greatest single recommendation the committee calls for is a substantial investment in the Graduate School of Arts And Sciences above all else and shows little sympathy for the legacy of professional programs such as dentistry that would require seemingly endless subsidies with little benefit to overall reputation enhancement. It seems particularly fitting that the graduate school now bears Laney's name: he shaped the process that allowed it to climb to national prominence.

Birnbaum endorses the notion that these processes appear as the apotheosis of the garbage can model: "Ad hoc long-range institutional planning committees may be the quintessential garbage cans, temporarily providing 'homes' for any conceivable institutional problem, solution, or participant."[173] Emory committed its future to these processes that Laney influenced but studiously avoided appearing to do so. Searching his background for a hint of bias indicates that his wide ranging Yale choices—economics, nineteenth-century British literature, and twentieth-century ethics—suggest an individual imbued with a liberal education rather than an applied "training" ethos. His Niebuhr-based ethical education armed him with collegial rhetoric and predisposed him to favor an open planning process before the gift, but the possibility of a true institutional transformation following the Woodruff gift compelled him to construct a "garbage can" most likely to generate academic status at the price of traditional programs ill-suited to support such a goal. While going into the process he may not have had specific plans on the fate of the dental school or the ultimate fate of the geology department, the charge given to the Lamar Committee and its subsequent recommendations tossed out these specific solutions as results consistent with their design. It worked spectacularly, with Emory ascendant in the ratings while programs that did not contribute to this outcome became vulnerable to termination.

Striving towards Isomorphism?

Laney's adoption of the garbage can model indicated that he was not wedded to specific tactics, but rather the broad strategy of elevating the liberal arts. This principle demonstrates why Emory's experience 1979-87 perhaps best illustrates O'Meara's notion of "striving for prestige" and how Laney guides perhaps the most elite example of this tendency. Her list of possible

173. Ibid, 165.

tactics including amending admissions processes, reward structures, and resource allocation decisions are each embraced by Laney's administration. "Woodruff Scholars" among high-promise student prospects and productive faculty received generous stipends or salaries to attract them, addressing Laney's lament that Southern students were fleeing northwards for a quality education. Most tellingly, the resource allocation culture at Emory was so pervasive and obvious—winners like the bioscience initiative moving to a forty million dollar O. Wayne Rollins Research Center, while the geology building lost its name and was shared with fellow "earth science" colleagues—that the factions even picked up on it. Recall the dark conspiracy suggested by the dental school faculty and students, aware that resources were flowing to the biologists and physicians, believing their school was closed so the building could be repurposed.

In a sense, they were actually correct but perhaps not as literally as they argued. Laney's administration measured the "return on investment" yielded by the dental program, for example, and realized it was unlikely to raise prestige. With an annual cost of at least a million dollars and growing, the dental school would be a drain, and its research revenue peaked in 1984 at about the same amount, a mere one percent of the total figure for 1993 alone, when Emory first broke $100 million.[174] Thus "investing" the subsidy in a school that produced such a small stream of research revenue was not the best use of revenue if the goal was "striving" for better rankings. Concretely, the evidence O'Meara seeks for an institution engaging in striving behavior takes the form of these rankings, with *U.S. News & World Report*'s publication the most well-known.[175] Emory throughout the 1980s and early 1990s unblushingly embraced this measurement, with internal and external citations outlining the goal to advance or announcing improvements

174. Emory History, "The Impact of 'The Gift,'" emoryhistory.emory.edu/people/guidinglights/WoodruffGifts.html, Emory University (accessed October 3, 2011).

175. O'Meara, 125.

common in Laney's papers. Emory, as a more settled and less obviously striving institution today, no longer makes as much a fuss about its rank; perhaps that in itself is a striving behavior, since its higher-ranked fellows themselves feign disinterest in the rankings too.

DiMaggio and Powell's understanding of "normative isomorphism" appears relevant in retrospect of Emory's decision-making and striving behavior. Laney's reliance on Harvard educated and employed "experts" on the Lamar Committee laid the groundwork for programs that, while expensive, would enhance Emory's stature compared to other institutions. They assert:

> We argue that a theory of institutional isomorphism may help explain the observations that organizations are becoming more homogeneous, and that elites often get their way, while at the same time enabling us to understand the irrationality, the frustration of power, and the lack of innovation that are so commonplace in organizational life.[176]

The bitter arguments at Emory regarding the closing of programs such as the geology department and the maneuvering for space in the Carlos museum renovations eclipse the important point cited above: "elites often get their way" even though human behavior remains erratic, undermining the rational actors. The cost to a community through stresses such as the closing of the dental school prohibits cold cost accounting in all cases; after all, Laney was relieved when the Carter Center access highway issue passed without the desired multi-lane highway.

Perhaps the most innovative aspect of O'Meara's argument is her assertion of "retrenchment" as part of the striving ethos. Emory, in this time period, demonstrated that fully. The closings and cutting back of numerous departments and programs throughout the university during a virtually unprecedented infusion of revenue elsewhere speaks to the high degree of discipline a successful "striver" must have. It would certainly have been easier if Emory's

176. DiMaggio and Powell, 157.

leadership had strung along the vulnerable departments for a longer time, perhaps eroding them more slowly. Rather, the closings seemed to come in flurries, with the library science and geology programs terminated by the Board of Trustees at the very same meeting. It must have rankled some of the employees, alumni and advocates for doomed programs to witness emphasis shifted to others, particularly to those such as the religion department that in itself produced virtually no revenue. With relatively few undergraduate majors and almost all its graduate students internally funded by Emory, this program was and always will be a financial loss, in a percentage sense, greater than the dental school. However, the striving ethos endorsed by the Lamar "garbage can" awarded religion as a potential prestige-generator among the humanities, several of which appear necessary to gain rank. O'Meara argues that luring productive young faculty as Laney hoped for in his search for a religion chairperson would attract more and better graduate students who would boost the average GRE scores and likelihood of completing their PhDs—concrete measures factored by the ranking industry. The programs recommended against receiving resources by the Lamar Committee were not, in the end, good "investments."

The twinned central questions this notion of "striving" raises in all cases yet particularly significant for Emory are, "Does prestige matter?" and "What is the purpose of 'prestige' once attained?" O'Meara suggests that the equation of prestige with quality exists independently in the popular sphere, and Emory certainly experiences that. While a complex study of its selectivity is outside this study, Emory does experience growth in test scores, numbers of applications and selectivity during its ascension to elite status, particularly when it moves up numerically in the rankings. Prestige feeds on itself: enhanced prestige helps lure more students, productive faculty and general profile, driving increases in the rankings. So certainly it matters, particularly if an institution seeks "preeminence" as Laney called for back in his 1981 charge to the Lamar

Committee. Emory must surpass universities that seek to protect and enhance their own rank, many of them considering the same choices regarding which programs to enhance and which to diminish.

Yet the second question remains regarding prestige's purpose. Perhaps for Emory's case, its symbiotic relationship to Atlanta serves as the answer: the city itself strives, seeking "rank," pursuing "international city" symbols such as conventions and sporting events designed to draw attention to the city and region. National events such as basketball's Final Four and football's Superbowl are aggressively sought by the city, with the dream and subsequent mixed reality of the Centennial Olympic Games as the ultimate symbol of Atlanta's national ambitions. The city's striving has a different flavor than Emory's, which spurns Division I athletics, but Laney himself saw the linkage. Recall his speech to trustees decrying Emory's lack of distinction, pointing out that it had "neither the strong intercollegiate athletic program that brings attention to other major universities, nor yet a commanding national academic reputation."[177] He had presented them a choice in 1979, knowing they would not turn toward football—UGA and Georgia Tech had that market locked in the region—but rather toward academic repute. The key element though of this quotation is the small modifying "not yet," indicating that this aspiration is possible. Laney said this, of course, knowing that the Woodruff gift was a distinct possibility, so he was priming the trustees to follow him as he "strove" for elite status.

A central and unresolved problem of this "striving" behavior is the difficulty and perhaps impossibility of knowing when one has "arrived." Emory, much like Atlanta, has ambitions aiming for the very highest classification. Laney's dismissive statements regarding regional peers like Vanderbilt and Duke allow him to offer a fantasy of Emory ascending to top-twelve status, a

177. Gulley, 90.

goal unachieved except for a single ranking of "nine" in the 1996 *U.S. News & World Report* index.[178] Similarly, Atlanta managed to convince representatives of the Olympics that it could hold the event as the "next great international city," but the effort met disappointing reviews although leaving a legacy of improved facilities in the city's downtown. This striving, for both the city as well as the university, undercuts the reality of what their identities actually are: by focusing so much efforts at "becoming," they suffer from an inability to communicate "being." As Emory and Atlanta looked toward whatever was coming next, they were not consolidating their existing constituencies.

Rhetorical Frameworks and a Cultural Shift

What he hoped to do upon succeeding appears a bit more elusive, but his evocations at the dedication of the Carter Center and his championing of Bellah's *Habits of the Heart* indicate his intention to supply a moral dimension to the university's transformation. His success in this realm is less easily measured than the standings in various indices. The rhetorical analyses woven throughout the preceding narrative show how Laney interacted with his interlocutors. In most cases he was a masterful persuader, winning over benefactors, faculty, and evaluators. However, in cases where he could or would not supply audience members with the responses they sought, his discourse shifted. Adopting the rhetorical and sociological lens developed by Kenneth Burke suggests that the human capacity to see "signs" as symbols rather than mere gestures. As symbols, they are open to interpretation based on relationship to the idea. For example, Burke suggests:

178 "U.S. News Rankings Through the Years," *The Chronicle of Higher Education: Facts & Figures*, http://web.archive.org/web/20070908142457/http://chronicle.com/stats/usnews/, accessed November 4, 2011.

Even a set of signs indicating the likelihood of death by torture has another meaning in the orientation of a comfort-loving skeptic than it would for the ascetic whose world-view promised eternal reward for martyrdom. Any given situation derives its character from the entire framework by which we judge it.[179]

Thus, Laney's careful measuring of the DDS program's net cost versus contribution, which resulted in its closing, appeared to the factions hurt by it as a conspiracy yet good governance by the Board of Trustees. When, in 1979, Laney was leading faculty to a discussion of the institution, he advocated a framework of collegiality; when dental faculty and students were protesting the closure of their school, he characterized the decision as "a final, irrevocable decision." He appeared to the trustees and his supporters as a decisive leader—to the faculty and students who lost their school as a heartless and deceptive conspirator. A conversation becomes, according to Burke, not merely the expression of individual psychological states interacting among the discussants, but rather complex interactions of shared and often conflicting meanings: "Other groups may select other relationships as meaningful. These relationships are not realities, they are interpretations of reality—hence different frameworks of interpretation will lead to different conclusion as to what reality is."[180] Thus the significance of Robert Woodruff's attendance at Laney's inauguration after many years as a remote figure may be read as an endorsement of Laney's talents or the now-visible hand of a puppeteer. These conflicting meanings can coexist and even interact. When things functioned smoothly, Laney was a master; in times of conflict, he managed to achieve his aims regardless of opposition.

Laney's interactions with various groups including corporate-minded trustees, status-oriented faculty and grade-obsessed students demand a rhetorical adaptability of exquisite

179. Burke, 35.

180. Ibid.

measure. This need was particularly acute when one considers that Emory's advance created a bifurcated structure, dividing longtime faculty and staff who joined a regional Methodist institution of some ambition but modest resources who found themselves in the presence, at times, of a former U.S. president, the Dali Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu within the span of a decade. Thus, perhaps the most noteworthy result of Laney's mastery of the garbage can process, striving strategies, and rhetorical approaches is the transformation of Emory's culture. Recall that early in his presidency Laney characterized Emory as ill-defined both internally and externally: a blunt and painful assessment from someone who had served as a dean for seven years and as president for two. The regional teaching institution with a well-regarded hospital and theology library becomes a smoothly running research university with numerous markers of its success by 1994, with a few scars such as disaffected dentists and librarians among the alumni showing. Its website tells its story of the end of the Laney era thusly:

> In fiscal year 1993, the University surpassed the $100 million mark in federal research funding. By the end of the 1990-95 capital campaign—the second campaign of Laney's administration—annual gift support had reached $72 million. Academically, the gains were equally impressive . . . Emory achieved the goal of graduating a hundred new doctors of philosophy annually. By the mid-nineties, one Ph.D. program (religion) was ranked among the top five nationally, and the schools of medicine, law, and business were knocking on the door of the top twenty.[181]

While each itemized goal reinforces greater prestige, they collectively suggested a university that has fundamentally altered its self-perception from 1979, with virtually all the crucial decisions made through 1987. Yet the higher goals in Emory 2000—two departments in the top ten and the professional schools within the top twenty—were unmet and remain so as a whole today.

181. Emory History, "The Impact of 'The Gift,'" emoryhistory.emory.edu/people/guidinglights/WoodruffGifts.html, Emory University (accessed October 3, 2011).

This circumstance raises the often overused but perhaps justified notion of a true "paradigm shift" in Emory's internal culture. Marvin W. Peterson's and Melinda G. Spencer's article "Understanding Academic Culture and Climate" describes Laney's ultimate objective succinctly: "The concept of culture represents a paradigm for providing a holistic perspective on organizational functioning. In an era of growing institutional competition for students and funding an institutional image reflecting a positive culture and climate on a few key dimensions is often sought."[182] Laney's triumph is the forging of a "positive culture" from the contentious and complex university he led, sacrificing any aspects that risked the rise of a new perception of Emory by draining resources. The success of the "garbage can" process for Laney forges a new myth that wipes away the previous prevailing institutional self-image, finding itself a home on the Emory website as the story the university tells itself and the world. This allows the fashioning of a new set of framing touchstones consistent with Peterson and Spencer's thesis: ". . . the heroes and villains of the institution, the major sagas of the institution's successes or failures, and the language and jargon used to describe them are all forms of institutional culture that can provide great insight into the past and current ideologies and assumptions that members hold important and that guide their actions."[183] Laney cast the pursuit of prestige as a worthy goal justified by faculty achievement and regional pride; Emory returns the favor by mythologizing him as it shapes a narrative around his leadership.

182. Peterson and Spencer, 10.

183. Ibid, 11.

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