

'Right To Try' Guiding Philosophy At Northern During Harden's Tenure

The guiding philosophy at Northern Michigan University during Dr. Edgar L. Harden's 11 years as president has been "the right to try."

As more students in the Upper Peninsula looked to Northern for educational opportunities, and as more students in other areas of Michigan became aware of the breadth and depth of Northern's academic program, greater attention was focused on who should be educated beyond high school and who should be admitted to Northern.

Broke Traditions

In response to the question of who should go to college, Harden said, "It is my deep conviction that in the United States the decision will be made for the many rather than the few, and we must accept the responsibility to develop ways and means of maintaining both quality and quantity in our educational programs."

"The youth who is denied access to our growing reservoir of knowledge will be ill-prepared for the future. Lacking knowledge, he will fear change and challenge. Handicapped by fear and uncertainty, he will make little progress. The results are predictable: a society which denies its youth the right to try, will, in the course of time, become a society whose adults are afraid to try."

The "right to try" has led Northern into innovation and tradition breaking.

Promise And Challenge

It has meant an admission program which takes students in the upper two-thirds of their high school graduating class without entrance examinations. It has meant a philosophy which contains a promise and a challenge to students.

The promise has been a pledge of equality of educational opportunity. The challenge has been to make the most of the mind-stretching, life-enriching advantages of higher education.



NMU's President Resigns

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409 among its 1,000 employees, 27 buildings and a campus of 207 acres plus 120 acres in the Longyear Forest.

Harden established at Northern a three-dimensional program of instruction, research and service.

Some of the benchmarks during the 11 years of Harden's administration are:

- Establishment in 1956 of a public services division in which programs have ranged from operating the only Women's Job Corps Center on an American campus to preparing volunteers for the VISTA program.
- Inauguration of a graduate program in 1960. Northern now offers the master's degree in education, biology, English and history.
- Establishment in 1962 of

"The right to try," Harden has said, "is the fight of young men and women to test themselves against the realities of college or university life."

"Neither does one believe that arbitrary and inflexible admission policies should turn the key that locks the classroom door to the student who wants to make the effort."

"Neither does Northern believe that admission should be contingent upon the size of dad's pocketbook or mother's position in the social register."

Harden has believed that it is advisable to take into consideration a student's home background, previous educational opportunities and his motivation before making a final judgment."

Definition Of Excellence

The right to try at Northern hasn't meant dilution of quality or acceptance of mediocrity in higher education, Harden said. It has a great deal to do with excellence, particularly with excellence as defined by John W. Gardner, secretary of Health, Education and Welfare. "Excellence," says Gardner, "is a product of ability, motivation and character. And the more one observes high performance in the heat and dust of daily life, the more one is likely to be impressed with the contribution made by the latter two ingredients."

Perhaps "the right to try" was best explained by Harden when he stated, "Northern. If it is to merit the trust and confidence of the public it serves, must be not only strong but also flexible; not only broad in purpose but also effective in action; not only responsive to the needs of the people but also creative in the programs which people need."

"The American promise of individual dignity and freedom cannot be extended to all unless opportunity for education beyond high school is made available to all."

an Area Training Center — the first of its kind in Michigan — to help workers develop new skills.

- Activation of educational FM radio and closed-circuit television systems in 1963.
- Creation in 1963 of Operation Action-U.P. under the leadership of Harden and Walker L. Clesler, chairman of the board of the Detroit Edison Co., to utilize the ideas and know-how of outstanding leaders of business and industry to foster economic gains in the area.
- Achievement of university status in 1963.
- Recognition of Northern as a constitutional entity with its own board of control under the Michigan Constitution of 1963. The first eight-member board was appointed by Gov. George Romney in 1964.
- Development of the arts

and the Arts Recognition Year of 1963-64, which brought an unprecedented flow of artists, lecturers and outstanding educators to the campus for the benefit of people throughout the Upper Peninsula.

Activation in 1964 of an Upper Peninsula television network to extend the educational and cultural resources of the university to schools and homes across the Upper Peninsula. The radio-visual system was the first of its kind in the nation.

While the preparation of teachers remained central to Northern's purpose, other fields of study were strengthened, new fields of study were added and the university moved ahead on all fronts, developing an excellent reputation in music, drama, debate and other activities.

Prominence In Athletics

Under Harden's administration, Northern gained national prominence in athletics. Basketball and football schedules were greatly strengthened to include opponent teams from Michigan State University, Ohio State University, Wheaton College, Bradley University, University of Oklahoma, University of Wyoming and others.

The undergraduate program has been revised to give it more breadth and depth, a campus development program has been inaugurated and groundwork laid to establish a school of nursing, a graduate school of library science, advanced study leading to a doctor's degree and a unique school of business management.

Native Of Iowa

Harden is a native of Montezuma, Iowa, and has a distinguished background in the field of education as a former teacher, high school principal and university dean.

A graduate of the State College of Iowa, he received his master's degree from the State University of Iowa and his doctor's degree from Wayne State University.

Nine Years At MSU

Harden began his teaching career in Iowa, served as principal of high schools in Iowa and Illinois and came to Michigan in 1945 as principal of the Battle Creek High School.

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In 1946 he joined Michigan State University as an associate professor in the Institute of Counseling, Training and Guidance. During his nine years at Michigan State he was appointed director of continuing education and then dean of continuing education. He served as chairman of the Armed Forces Committee on Education and as faculty representative to the Big Ten Athletic Conference.

Michigan Week Chairman

Harden recently was appointed to membership on the Upper Midwest Research and Development Council and to the Michigan-Ohio Regional Educational Laboratory Committee. As a representative of the Association of State Colleges and Universities, he is presently serving as a member of the Board of Commissioners of the National Commission on Accrediting. He is also a member of the International Relations Committee of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

Active in civic and business affairs, Harden served as the 1967 general chairman for Michigan Week. He is co-chairman of Operation Action-U.P. and is the president and a director of Great Lakes Toys, Inc., of Iron River. He is chairman of the board of directors of the Lake Superior and Ishpeming

Railroad and a member of the board of directors of the Union National Bank and Trust Co. of Marquette. He also serves as a director of Panax Corp. and of Win Schuler's Restaurants, Inc. He is a member-at-large of the National Council of Boy Scouts of America, a member of the board of the Michigan Medical Service and a member of the board of the Michigan Welfare League.

Recipient Of Many Honors

Harden holds the honorary Doctor of Laws degree from both Northwood Institute and Alma College. Distinguished Alumni Awards have been conferred upon him by Wayne State University, Michigan State University and the State College of Iowa. He holds the Legion of Honor Award from the Order of DeMolay for contributions to youth through education.

He received the Exceptional Service Award from the United States Air Force in recognition of distinguished patriotic service during the period 1953 to 1962 as chairman of the Armed Forces Education Program Committee, as president of Northern Michigan University which established an outstanding education program for Air Force personnel at K. I. Sawyer Air Force Base and as a civic leader who has made outstanding contributions to the military-civilian re-

lationship in the Upper Peninsula. Harden is co-author of "A Basic Text for Guidance Workers" and author of "How To Organize Your Guidance Program." His writings include "Design and Program of Kellogg Center, Michigan State University," "American Schools and Universities," "Implications of USAFI Study of Non-Completions for High School Counselors," "Personnel and Guidance Faculty Salaries, National Conference on Higher Education," "Current Issues in Higher Education," "Adult Education's Untended Garden," "Adult Education," "Time Out for Responsibility," "Vital Speeches," "What College Presidents Say about Athletics," "Journal of Health, Physical Education and Recreation," and "It's Time . . . Vital Speeches."

Dr. and Mrs. Harden have two children — a son, Donald F. of East Lansing, and a daughter, Mrs. Terry (Pamela) Nyquist of Marquette.

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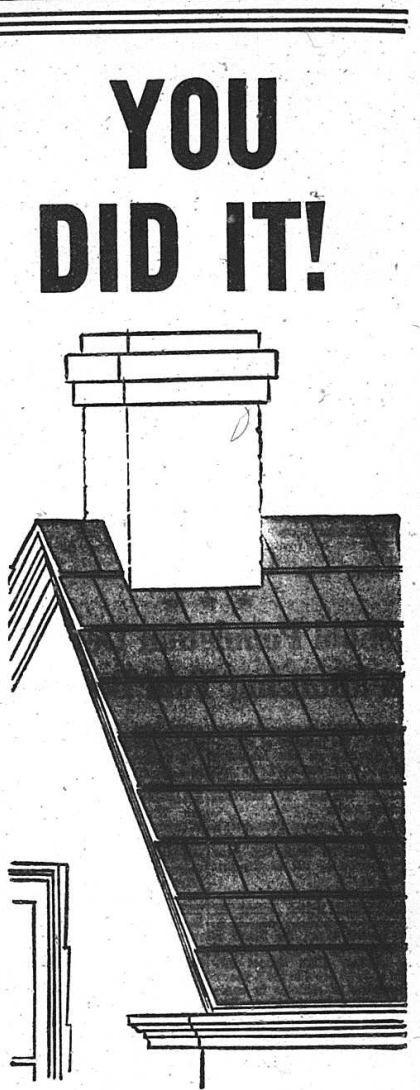
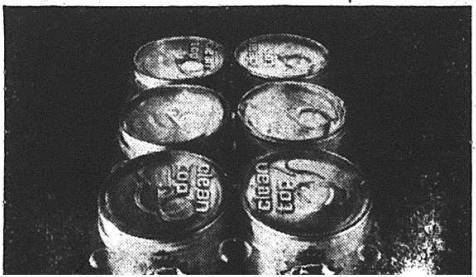
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