



Drexel University
Legends and Traditions



Drexel Dragon

The Dragon has been the school's mascot for nearly 80 years; there seems to be no special reason for its selection other than its obvious alliterative appeal. The Dragon represents ferocity and combativeness, desirable qualities in a mascot. Before they became Dragons, the school's sports teams had been known by a variety of names, including the Blue & Gold, the Engineers and the Drexelites. The first published reference to the Drexel Dragons appears in a 1928 edition of *The Triangle*, in an article on the football team; a dragon logo appears on the jerseys of the men's basketball team in a photo in the 1929 *Lexerd*.



New Classes Make Their Mark

In 2001, the Division for Student Life began honoring incoming classes with dragon claw plaques on Lancaster Walk. The bronze plaques are presented at the end of New Student Week to encourage students to "Make Your Mark" at Drexel.



Drexel Colors

H. D. Cady, class of 1896, wrote that his school pin was "the regular design used when the Institute opened its doors fifty years ago. The colors, orange and silver, were the colors in those days." In the early 1920s, the Athletic Association adopted blue and gold for Drexel teams. Later, the University's Board of Trustees approved the colors "gold with blue."

Blue & Gold Days

Alumni and special friends gather during Blue & Gold Days each spring, celebrating reunions, sharing memories, seeing campus improvements and expansion and engaging in social and sports events.

The Drexel 100

Created in 1991, this group consists of the University's most successful living alumni, recognized for their professional accomplishments. New inductions are made every two years.

Water Boy Statue

"The Water Boy," one of The Drexel Collection's proudest treasures, is by Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi (1834-1904), the French sculptor of the Statue of Liberty. Originally called "The Alsatian Vintner," the statue was designed as a fountain with a stream of water pouring from the cask into the boy's mouth. While an aged patina covers the statue, the right toe remains a shining bronze—generations of Drexel students passing through the Main Building's Great Court have rubbed the toe for good luck in exams.



Curtis Organ

Cyrus H.K. Curtis, the publisher of *The Saturday Evening Post*, purchased the large pipe organ built for Philadelphia's Sesquicentennial Exposition of 1926, and presented it to the University of Pennsylvania. William Sylvane Thunder, the organist at Drexel and at Curtis's suburban residence, suggested that Curtis might present a similar organ to Drexel. When Curtis asked how much it would cost, Thunder, having never considered the matter, blurted out, "\$40,000." Mr. Curtis promptly replied, "Have it installed." In 1928, the Austin Organ Company of Hartford, Conn. installed in the Drexel Main Building Auditorium a 70-rank, four-manual instrument, according to Thunder's specifications. The organ is maintained by an annual gift of Mary Louise (Mrs. Efre) Zimbalist, daughter of Mr. Curtis.



Founders



Left to right: Anthony J. Drexel, founder of the Drexel Institute of Art, Science and Industry; Constantine Hering, Jacob Jeanes, Walter Williamson, founders of Homeopathic College of Pennsylvania (later Hahnemann Medical College); William J. Mullen, founder of Female Medical College (later Woman's Medical College and Medical College of Pennsylvania).

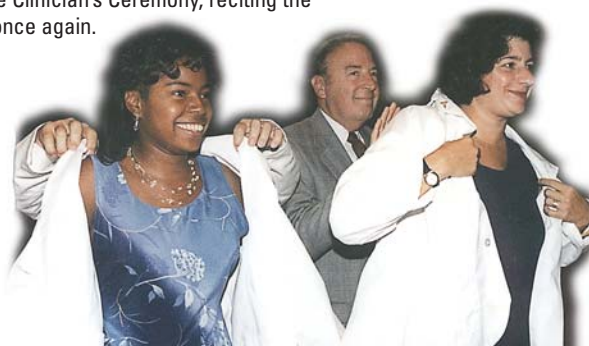
Convocation and Founders Day

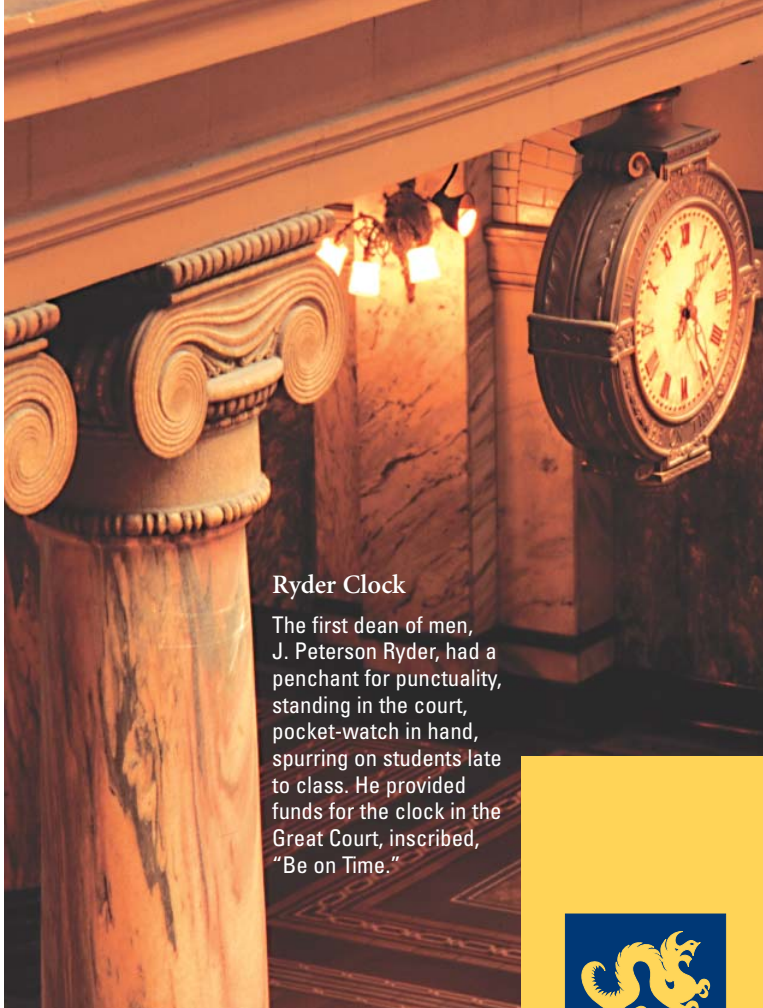
Convocation and Founders Day honors the legacy of Anthony J. Drexel as well as the founders of Medical College of Pennsylvania and Hahnemann University, the predecessors of the Drexel University College of Medicine. As part of the same ceremony, Convocation welcomes new faculty to the University, and the Provost's Medal for Excellence is awarded to a student.



White Coat Ceremony

At this ritual during the first week of school at the Drexel University College of Medicine, alumni present new medical students with their first white coat. The theme is professionalism, and the students recite the Hippocratic Oath for the first time. In their third year, they go through a similar rite, the Clinician's Ceremony, reciting the ancient oath once again.





Ryder Clock

The first dean of men, J. Peterson Ryder, had a penchant for punctuality, standing in the court, pocket-watch in hand, spurring on students late to class. He provided funds for the clock in the Great Court, inscribed, "Be on Time."



Drexel Ode

The music to the University's school song was written by organist James M. Dickinson, with lyrics by a young Library School student, Virginia Carter Castleman, Class of 1899:

*Hail, Drexel, hail to thee,
accept our praise.*

To you this joyful song thy children raise.

Drexel is in our eyes like a guiding star;

Bright with illuming rays, shining afar.

*Splendid in beauty sure, wave our
banners bold.*

*Proclaiming truth with blue;
great worth with gold.*

*Now, as our music swells, rings this
ancient song:*

*Hail, Drexel, hail to thee!
Our star shines strong.*



Meet Me at the Dragon Statue

"Mario the Magnificent," the bronze statue of the school mascot, the Drexel dragon, is the work of renowned Philadelphia sculptor Eric Berg. The statue and the Drexel Dragon Park at 33rd and Market Streets were dedicated on December 4, 2002; donations funded the artwork. Mario is 14 feet long, 10 feet high and weighs 4,100 pounds, on a 17-ton granite base. He is an easily visible landmark at which people can meet, especially when they are unfamiliar with the campus.



Peter Thompson Sailor Suit

"A Parisian Wedding" (1880), a painting by Julius L. Stewart (1855-1919) in the Paul Peck Alumni Center, purportedly depicts the marriage of a Drexel family member. The boy at the base of the steps is wearing a Peter Thompson Sailor Suit, very popular with young girls and boys at the time, and supposedly designed by an English tailor in America for Anthony J. Drexel's son George.



Statue of Anthony J. Drexel

Moses Ezekiel (1844-1917) crafted the bronze statue of Anthony J. Drexel in 1904. On the University's 75th anniversary, it was moved from Fairmount Park to 33rd and Market Streets, and it was moved in 2003 to its present site overlooking the pedestrian plaza at 32nd and Market. Kenneth Matheson, Drexel's president from 1922 through 1931, was reported by his son (later a Drexel dean himself) to have snapped to attention before the statue when passing through Fairmount Park, saluting it as he had seen Alexander Van Rensselaer (Anthony J. Drexel's son-in-law) do before. Ever after, the Matheson offspring waved to the statue when they passed by.

Lankenau Collection

When John D. Lankenau needed money to finish his hospital, he went to his brother-in-law, Anthony J. Drexel. Drexel said he would give Lankenau the needed money if, in turn, Lankenau would will his painting collection to Drexel Institute. Many Lankenau paintings hang in the Antoinette and Ray Westphal Picture Gallery along with paintings from Drexel family homes.



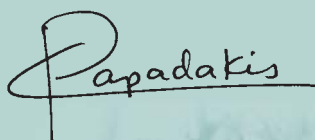
Chippendale Tall-Case Astronomical Clock

Philadelphia's most noted astronomer and mathematician during the 18th century, David Rittenhouse (1732-1796), built this clock in 1773. With 16 sets of chimes that play 10 tunes, it is regarded as the most important clock in America. The widow of George W. Childs, publisher of *The Public Ledger*, donated the clock to Drexel Institute of Art, Science and Industry in 1894; it is exhibited in the Antoinette and Ray Westphal Picture Gallery in the Main Building.





Technological and curricular innovations at Drexel are built on a solid foundation of tradition. Our mission of preparing students for success in modern society has been continuous since Anthony J. Drexel founded the University in 1891. In that spirit, we offer this overview of the legends and rituals that make Drexel special. When new students carry on these traditions and create new ones of their own, they become a permanent part of the fabric of our great University.



Constantine Papadakis
President



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