



*This Site
Only Open
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM*



Harm A. Weber Administration Building Judson University

1925 Georgian Revival

Dr. Gene C. Crume, Jr., President



Celebrating 50 years in Elgin, Judson University is pleased to have the Harm A. Weber Administration Building featured on the 2013 Historic Elgin House Tour.

The setting is as much of an attraction as the building. This white-pillared, red-brick Georgian mansion, now known as the Harm Weber Administration Building, is situated on a hill overlooking the Fox River. Approaching the house from State Street, one follows a narrow winding road that crosses a concrete bridge over Tyler Creek, which meanders through this riverside property. Behind the house is Volkman Pond, a pleasant little lake featuring a sparkling fountain. The landscape is rich with flora, and stately oaks surround the mansion. Several acres of the original property have been reserved as wildlife sanctuaries, and deer, chipmunks, mallard ducks, Canada geese and the occasional fox contribute to the pastoral setting.

The school was named for Adoniram Judson, the first American missionary abroad, who arrived in Burma in 1813 and eventually spent 37 years overseas, returning home just once during that time. Judson, who was married three times and widowed twice, died in 1850 at the age of 61. Though he was never a donor to the university named for him, his wish was to "...invest in the Kingdom of God through a small Christian college back in America, where in training young men and women, you are planting seed corn of the earth."

Judson's roots are now a century old—an outgrowth of Northern Theological Seminary, which was founded in 1913 and offered both graduate and undergraduate education to men and women training for the ministry. In the early 1960s, when the seminary moved from Chicago to Lombard, it was decided to make the college an independent entity. Under the guidance of

its president, Dr. Benjamin P. Browne, a "new" school was founded along the shore of the Fox River in 1963. Because Northern Theological Seminary began in 1913, and the Elgin site opened in 1963, the school is marking its "Golden Centennial" dual celebration this year.

The Harm Weber Administration Building was originally a residence built in 1925 by Daniel Todd, president of Elgin Sweeper Company, on a 20 acre portion of the 175 acres owned and farmed by his late father, Thomas Todd. The Todd family fondly referred to their home as the "Braeburn Estate," named for the Scottish word meaning "hills and vales." Daniel and his wife lived in the 13-room house until their deaths, leaving the estate and house to their three daughters, but it remained vacant until the spring of 1946 when it was purchased by Dr. and Mrs. Joel Deuterma.

Dr. Deuterma was a church and civic leader and renowned surgeon. He and his wife, Margaret, and three children lived on what many people considered the most beautiful setting in the Fox River Valley. Following her husband's death in 1955, Margaret Deuterma established Braeburn-on-the-Fox, a country gathering place for private parties and receptions on the property.

In 1963, Northern Theological Seminary purchased 19 acres of the Deuterma estate for \$100,000. The house immediately became the administrative offices, kitchen and dining hall for the new Judson College. The school opened in September of 1963, with 92 students and nine faculty members. Later, the building was remodeled to meet administrative needs and renamed for Harm A. Weber, Judson's third president. Thanks to the adaptive reuse of this former residence and a spacious addition in back, 11 people have permanent offices in the building.

Impressive interior features of the house include the Palladian windows, the sun porch, the spacious foyer with built-in bench seats, French doors, an elegant staircase, period tile and fixtures in the bathrooms, and the original fireplace in what is now the president's office.

Near the great house was once a somewhat weatherworn three-car garage, affectionately called

the "carriage house." Having initially functioned as a coach house with an apartment where the maintenance man lived, it was immediately renovated to serve as classrooms for music and art. The carriage house was removed when the stone structure of the Fine Arts Building was built in 1975.

Over the years the campus has enjoyed steady growth with 13 buildings being constructed to serve academic, residential, recreational, and support services. Herrick Chapel occupies a central place on the campus. A map with a brief description of Judson University facilities will be available for self-guided driving tours.

Originally Judson College, in 2007 it became Judson University. Students come from as far away as Kenya, India and Japan, and there are alumni in all 50 states. Today's 90-acre campus continues to provide an idyllic setting for nearly 1,200 students studying in more than 50 academic programs. This year the school welcomed its sixth president, Dr. Gene C. Crume, and offered its first doctoral program.

Visitors are invited to enjoy refreshments and view the 50th Anniversary Golden Centennial display in the nearby Thompson building.

This Historic Elgin House Tour site is only open on Saturday afternoon from 1 to 5 PM.



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