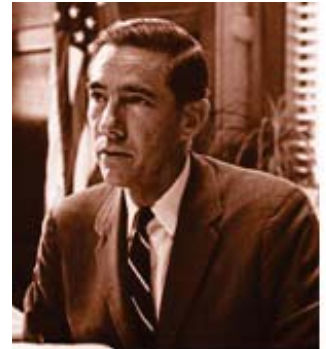


History of the Office

Chancellors 1875–2009

Alexander Heard 1963-1982

Before Alexander Heard was named chancellor in 1963, he was dean of the graduate school at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and had made a name for himself as a brilliant political scientist. Holding a B.A. from UNC and M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Columbia, he had written two books, “A Two Party South?” and “The Costs of Democracy,” the latter having led to his being named by President John Kennedy to serve on the Commission on Campaign Costs.



Heard guided the Vanderbilt ship through some very troubled waters. While he was at the helm, unrest engulfed many campuses across the country, at times leading to violence. Early on, Heard began holding quiet, regular meetings with student leaders, including some of the foremost campus radicals. Consequently, as far as activities on campus were concerned, Vanderbilt witnessed peaceful demonstrations, and Heard’s defense of the open forum survived challenges from both ends of the political spectrum.

Another segment of the Heard legacy was his successful effort to place the first woman, Mary Jane Werthan, B.A. ’29, M.A. ’35, on the board. He also convinced the board to create a new class of trustees— four recent graduates— to assure a youthful perspective would be heard by the board— one of the first universities in the nation to do so.

Beginning in 1974, Heard laid careful plans to undertake a historic campaign for the university to raise \$150 million. From 1977 through 1981, he stumped for contributions by traveling 117,537 miles, visiting 60 cities in 25 states. When it was over, the campaign had raised \$180 million, \$30 million above the goal.

Some of those funds were designated to build a home for the growing graduate school of management. The board had first discussed such a school during World War II, and the idea had grown slowly. With new funds available, Heard was able to announce that work had begun on a \$6.7 million building for the Owen Graduate School of Management, named for two local benefactors, Ralph and Lulu Owen.

Finally, in 1979, after a challenging and difficult set of negotiations involving Heard and others, Vanderbilt and Peabody College merged. Two years later the Blair School of Music merged with Vanderbilt. In 1983 the board recognized Heard’s work in building the university community by naming the Vanderbilt library system for Heard and his wife, Jean.

Heard had inherited a university with seven schools; by the end of his tenure as chancellor in 1982, Vanderbilt’s current complement of 10 schools was in place. When Alexander Heard retired in 1982, the board named Joe B. Wyatt to succeed him.