

University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well

University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well

Campus News Archive

Campus News, Newsletters, and Events

9-24-2010

University of Minnesota, Morris reflects on place and purpose in Promise of the Prairie: Education in Three Acts documentary

University Relations

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.morris.umn.edu/urel_news

Recommended Citation

University Relations, "University of Minnesota, Morris reflects on place and purpose in Promise of the Prairie: Education in Three Acts documentary" (2010). *Campus News Archive*. 1548.
https://digitalcommons.morris.umn.edu/urel_news/1548

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Campus News, Newsletters, and Events at University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well. It has been accepted for inclusion in Campus News Archive by an authorized administrator of University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well. For more information, please contact skulann@morris.umn.edu.

Contact

Melissa Weber, Director of Communications
Phone: 320-589-6414, weberm@morris.umn.edu

Jenna Ray, Editor/Writer
Phone: 320-589-6068, jrray@morris.umn.edu

University of Minnesota, Morris reflects on place and purpose in *Promise of the Prairie: Education in Three Acts* documentary

Summary: The new film created by Media Services, explores three different educational institutions that have made their home on the Morris campus.

(September 24, 2010)-*Promise of the Prairie: Education in Three Acts*, a new documentary created by University of Minnesota, Morris (UMM) Media Services, explores three very different educational institutions that have all made their home on the same plot of land—the Morris campus. The yearlong project culminates with its inaugural screening during Founders Weekend when the campus celebrates UMM's 50th birthday and the West Central School of Agriculture's 100th anniversary of its founding. The campus and community will have several opportunities to view the high definition, 70-minute documentary: at a Founders Weekend screening on Saturday, September 25 in the Student Center's Edson Auditorium, aired on Pioneer Public Television on January 23, 2011, and at home with a personal copy.

In images and voices, the documentary first tells the story of Mother Mary Joseph of the Sisters of Mercy who first broke the prairie ground on the Morris campus, establishing an American Indian boarding school in 1887. In 1910, the University of Minnesota opened an agriculture high school on the campus, erecting simple, sturdy Prairie School buildings for teenagers learning modern farming practices. Fifty years later, in 1960, the University's unique, new public liberal arts college brought young adults to the rural campus.

Michael Cihak, director and editor, states that the film is a historical document that should have broad public appeal. While *Promise of the Prairie* tells the stories of three educational entities, it also is a narrative of American culture. "These institutions absorbed 100 years of change," he reflects, "They are a mirror of society."

Chris Butler, researcher and writer, began the process of creating the documentary by performing a task that he enjoys—talking with people. "I listened for recurring themes and kept track of what was important to others. Historical social forces began and ended here at Morris with the American Indian boarding school and West Central School of Agriculture, and the University of Minnesota, Morris continues to keep pace with change. I like working with these stories and learning about the risks people took. I've felt a constant mix of awe and honor—awed by the amount of work and sacrifice and ambition, and honored by the opportunity to speak with and write about so many of the people who contributed to WCSA and UMM."

Roger Boleman, Media Services director and *Promise of the Prairie* producer, states that the documentary is a "true UMM production." From the research to the writing, from the filming to the editing, from the narration to the imagery, from the voice-overs to the original music composed by Joe Carucci, assistant professor of music, nearly 100 percent of the talent has a direct connection to either UMM or WCSA. The project encompassed collecting more than 1,300 images, interviewing more than 45 people, and more than 300 hours of editing. All of the research for *Promise of the Prairie* and the image library will be placed in the University of Minnesota, Morris Archives.

Media Services staff praise two student assistants who significantly contributed to the project. Jennifer Riestenberg '13,

Perham, served as research assistant, and Samuel Krump-Johnson '11, Maple Grove, served as production assistant.

Promise of the Prairie, a documentary of campus yesterdays, will also impact future Morris students. Gifts of \$30 or more qualify donors for a DVD copy of the documentary. These funds will help to create a new, endowed University of Minnesota, Morris scholarship fund that will assist future students in achieving their educational goals. For more information about making a gift, please call 320-589-6386 or [e-mail](#).

For more Founders Weekend details, view the [Web site](#) or call 320-589-6414.

Photo below: Chris Butler interviews Dennis Johnson, a West Central School of Agriculture alumnus, for the documentary.

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at morris.umn.edu or call 888-866-3382.