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Naming ceremony honors Imholte

Summary: UMM honored the John Q. Imholte legacy by renaming its Social Science building John Q. Imholte Hall in a ceremony held during Homecoming weekend.

(November 10, 2005)-When former University of Minnesota, Morris Chancellor John Q. Imholte began his UMM career as a professor in what was then the "department" of history, UMM was just beginning to write its own chapter in the annals of higher education excellence. A member of the 1960 founding faculty at UMM, Imholte retired in 1999.

UMM honored the John Q. Imholte legacy by renaming its Social Science building John Q. Imholte Hall in a ceremony held during Homecoming weekend.

"If Jack Imholte were not still very much with us and vigorous, it would be easy to call him 'mythic,'" said UMM Chancellor Sam Schuman in his remarks during the ceremony. "Since, however, Jack remains an active and engaged presence, we'll have to be content with a slightly more modest descriptor. I suggest 'legendary.'

"Jack Imholte -- founding faculty member, provost, chancellor -- is one of the giants of UMM's story," said Schuman. "His clear vision, steady leadership and penetrating intellect have, in more ways than anyone can count, shaped our college. Jack was one of the small band of visionaries who grasped that there actually could be created a national-class liberal arts college in a small rural town in the Upper Midwest. He was instrumental in making that astonishing dream a reality, then leading it through some of its most impressive years of accomplishment."

Imholte was working on his doctoral degree at the University of Minnesota's Twin Cities campus in 1960 when he read a newspaper ad about the start of a new University of Minnesota campus in Morris. He chose to come to UMM because it was new. He liked the liberal arts mission of the institution and the idea that he might have a role in shaping the young institution's future. That fall he was one of 13 faculty hired.

"I felt I was brass enough to think I could make some contribution to making UMM a strong liberal arts campus," said Imholte. By way of contribution, Imholte taught political science and economics in addition to history his first year. After that, he taught solely American history.

Imholte was named acting provost in 1969, and was formally installed as chancellor in 1970, a post he held for the next 20 years. In addition to serving as chancellor at UMM, he also served as interim vice president for student affairs on the Twin Cities campus in 1994-95.

During his tenure, the Morris campus became recognized as one of the premiere public liberal arts institutions in the country, and is still rated among the top public liberal arts colleges in the nation in annual college rankings by U.S. News & World Report, among others.

He received the 1998 President's Award for Outstanding Service, created in 1997 by University of Minnesota President

Nils Hasselmo to recognize faculty and staff members who have given exceptional service to the University and demonstrated extraordinary commitment to the University community.

"By far, my most important accomplishment has been to play some part in establishing a campus environment where each of you have had the opportunity to do what you do best," said Imholte when in 1989 he announced his decision to retire, "whether it is teaching, research, or any of the vital service activities required to mount a successful academic program."

"As a teacher of history, most of Professor Imholte's classes were held in the charming but increasingly shoddy social science building here behind us," concluded Schuman in his remarks. "It is, therefore, an appropriate recognition of Jack's career as founding chancellor and teacher that we re-dedicate this renovated home for social science classrooms as John Q. Imholte Hall."

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