

## “Our People Excel in the Love of Education”: Northwestern Classical Academy, Iowa, 1882- 1928

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### Document Type

Article

### Abstract

This article examines the organization and growth of Northwestern Classical Academy as a stand-alone Christian school in Orange City, Iowa. Founded in 1882, it was an institution that helped fulfill the northwest Iowa Dutch-American colonists' aspirations for a community where, in words of Henry Hospers, "they might live under the shadow of the Church and School [*kerk en school*]." The Academy, a private preparatory school at the secondary level, was intended to be "an Institution of learning for the promotion of Science and Literature in harmony with, and Religion as expressed in, the Doctrinal Standards of the Reformed Church in America." By 1894, its first permanent building was opened (originally Academy Hall, now Zwemer Hall). The founding and growth of the Academy is illustrated in this article not only by archival photographs but also by attention to leaders such as founder Henry Hospers and Principals James F. Zwemer and Thomas Welmers. Furthermore, analysis of graduates such as B.D. Dykstra, Hendrina Hospers, Jeane Noordhoff, James Muilenburg, and Jacob Heemstra help unpack some of the life and legacy of early Northwestern. After World War I, Northwestern was stable enough to expand. In 1924, a second permanent building joined Academy Hall on campus, and in 1928 the Academy became, in effect, a feeder school to a new Northwestern Junior College. (In 1960-1961, the Academy ended and Northwestern became a full four-year college, still self-identifying as a Christian institution affiliated with the Reformed Church in America.)

### About the Author

Dr. Doug Anderson specializes in the history of the American West and American religious history. He earned a doctorate in the latter subject and spent a year studying at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody, Wyoming.

He is co-author of *Pilgrim Progression: The Protestant Experience in California*, and his articles and book reviews have been published in *Western Historical Quarterly*, *Religion and American Culture*, and *Fides et Historia*, as well as in encyclopedias of the Great Plains and American West.

He has also teamed with other religion scholars on a comprehensive and comparative study of the impact regions have on religion's role in American public life, which resulted in eight geographically based books.

In 2014, Dr. Anderson co-authored a history of Orange City, Iowa, the town where Northwestern College is located. Part of the "Images of America" series by Arcadia Publishing, *Orange City* traces the development of the town from its founding in 1869 through the present. The 2017 publication *California Dreaming: Society and Culture in the Golden State* included a chapter on Bay Area Protestants in the Progressive Era by Dr. Anderson.

Currently, Dr. Anderson is working on an institutional history of Northwestern College.

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Monday Oct. 26: Superheroes (Dress as your Favorite Superhero). Since 1882, Northwestern has been delivering an excellent education within the context of community and a Christian worldview. About NWC. Learn about NWC. In 1928 the academy added a junior college. The Great Depression hit Northwestern hard, resulting in salary cuts for faculty.

Despite the suggestion from the Reformed Church's Board of Education in 1932 that the junior college close temporarily, President Jacob Heemstra kept Northwestern afloat. After World War II enrollment increased steadily. With that growth came the construction of a number of buildings in the 1950s. Northwestern College in the 21st century is a standard-setting

higher education institution, earning awards for academic excellence, spiritual fervor, co-curricular opportunity and vibrant campus life. "Our People Excel in the Love of Education":

Northwestern Classical Academy, Iowa, 1882-1928. This article examines the organization and growth of Northwestern Classical Academy as a stand-alone Christian school in Orange City, Iowa. Founded in 1882, it was an institution that helped fulfill the northwest Iowa Dutch-American more. This article examines the organization and growth of Northwestern Classical

Academy as a stand-alone Christian school in Orange City, Iowa. Founded in 1882, it was an institution that helped fulfill the northwest Iowa Dutch-American colonists' aspirations for a co Educational Implications. Using behaviorist theory in the classroom can be rewarding for both students and teachers. Behavioral change occurs for a reason; students work for things

that bring them positive feelings, and for approval from people they admire. They change behaviors to satisfy the desires they have learned to value. They generally avoid behaviors they associate with unpleasantness and develop habitual behaviors from those that are repeated often (Parkay & Hass, 2000).