

Ezra Cornell

Founder of The University And President of The Board of Trustees From Its Founding in 1863 Until His Death

— *December 9, 1874*

On the occasion of the death of Ezra Cornell the Faculty wishes to place upon record this expression of its feelings with regard to the Founder of the University.

Under quiet, undemonstrative manners and entire freedom from obtrusiveness he possessed a will of unusual strength and a character of great earnestness, unselfishness and purity. With little education besides that which he derived from observation and intercourse with men, he accomplished with sagacity, breadth, and boldness a great amount of varied and useful work. Usefulness, indeed, and the power of doing good to society seemed to be the criterion by which he directed his efforts. In the improvement of the agriculture of the State through successful experiments in farming, and by the introduction of better breeds of cattle, and the manufacture of improved farming implements; in his development of telegraphic communication over the country; in his extensive railroad enterprises to build up the place of his residence; in the formation of the Cornell Library and the gift of ample resources for its support, and above all in the establishment of this University do we see him from his beginnings in poverty and hard work, through wealth and more difficult labors always identified with the progress of society.

This institution proves his deep interest especially in the working classes, and his conviction that their elevation and happiness as well as the prosperity of the community are based on intellectual improvement. His sympathies with the poor nerved his efforts to educate manual labor, and lie at the foundation of one of the greatest gifts for purposes of education ever made by any man in his life time. Under the severest trials of heart and brain and nerve, he was supported by the determination to help the world.

We know that he has succeeded, we recognize the nobility of his aspirations and the wisdom of his plans, and trust that his good influence may never cease. We cannot but believe that though his physical life has ended, and his form has departed from among us, his love of his kind, his unselfishness and devotion to the general good will long live in blessings through centuries to come.

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