

An Abridged Centennial Chronology (Evolving)

William Ezra Allen, Ph.D.

Professor of History and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Chair, Centennial Committee

- 1850 The Trustees of Donations for Education in Liberia is organized in the United States “by friends of the cause of Education in Africa, particularly in Liberia to take charge of any monies . . . for that purpose, to invest in this country”.¹ That same year TDEL communicated its plans to President Joseph J. Roberts. He replied: “I am truly delighted . . . This . . . subject has given me great concern . . . I consider a new era has dawned upon Liberia”.
- 1851 Liberia College is founded by an act of the Liberian Legislature.
- 1862 Buildings finalized and Liberia College is formally opened “with impressive ceremonies A procession . . . including the President of the Republic . . . moved to the College”.²
- 1863 Former President of Liberia, Joseph J. Roberts, is President of Liberia College, as classes begin; 10 students (likely all male) admitted after they were “examined in **Greek, Latin, and Mathematics**”; **three received scholarships** “the others were able to pay their own expenses **Others unable to pass the examinations were rejected**”.³
- 1866 First Commencement: James Henry Evans graduates with BA
- 1880 Edward Wilmot Blyden, one of Liberia’s foremost intellectual luminaries, was appointed President of Liberia College
- 1905 First graduating class with females
- 1950 Largest graduating class of Liberia College before becoming the University of Liberia: 27.⁴
- 1951 Liberia College becomes University of Liberia.

¹ Gardner W. Allen, *The Trustees of Donations for Education in Liberia: A Story of Philanthropic Endeavor, 1850-1923*, 8-10.

² *Ibid.*, 21

³ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁴ *University of Liberia Register of Graduates, 1866-1978* (University of Liberia, 1980), n.p.

- 1959 Dr. Rocheforte L. Weeks became the first Liberian President of the University of Liberia.
- 1978 Dr. Mary Antoinette Grimes Sherman assumed the presidency of the University of Liberia, and thus became the only female president dating back to the founding of the institution 116 years ago.
- 2017 Dr. Ophelia Inez Weeks, only the second female, is inaugurated President of the University of Liberia. The University of Liberia graduated its largest class of 3,448⁵
- 2019 THE CENTENARY**

⁵ This figure is available at several locations, e.g., the University of Liberia's Office of Enrollment Services at the Fendall campus.