

Jonathan Edwards College



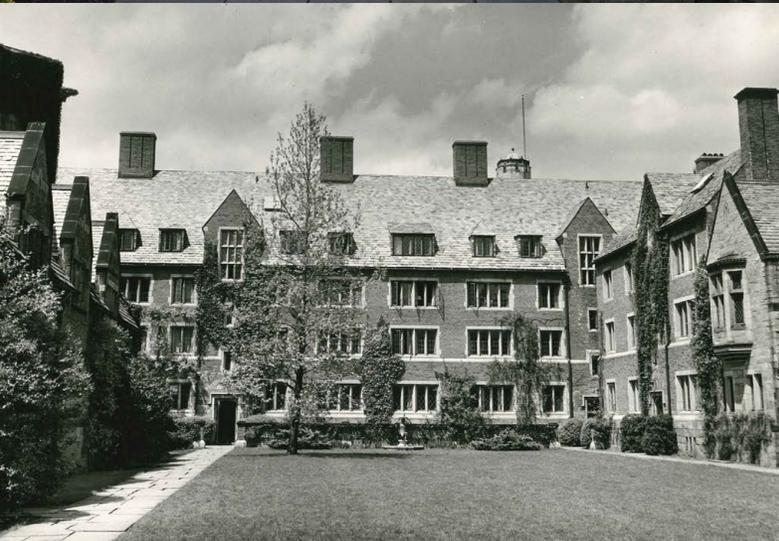
The Jonathan Edwards Trust at Fifty

The Jonathan Edwards Trust is an endowment that supports the unique cultural, social, and educational ambience of Yale's Jonathan Edwards College. It now celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of its founding by Joseph Toy Curtiss, one of the original fellows of the College.

Inspiring and beloved professor of English, an authority on medieval and seventeenth-century literature, founder and director of Yale's program in History, the Arts and Letters, Joe was later JE's first residential college dean. He was a close associate of founding Master Robert Dudley French, an architect of the residential college system. With attorney Morris Tyler and alumnus Sherwin Goldman, Joe established the Jonathan Edwards Trust in 1966. Its purpose was to carry out "so far as possible, the educational beliefs and aspirations of Robert Dudley French," by providing funds to support "educational programs to the advantage of [the College's] members, both undergraduate and fellows," programs that would not be funded by the University. Among the early trustees were younger faculty members David Calleo and Beekman Cannon.

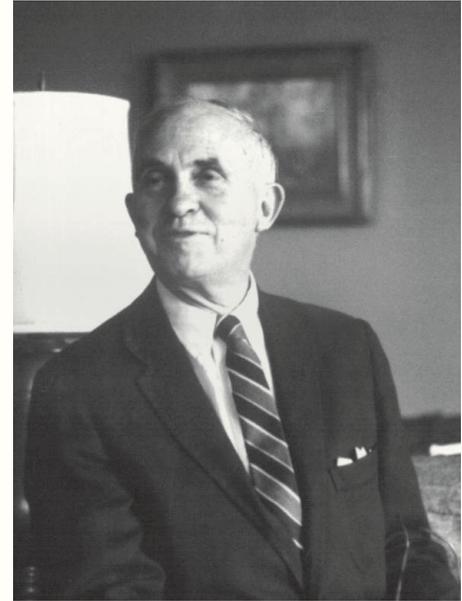
Later, with a bequest, Joe bestowed the bulk of the funds that have allowed the Trust to implement his vision. In its operations and procedures, the Trust was shaped largely by Professor Cannon, its long-term chair. Past Trustees have included such eminent figures as Mr. Goldman, producer of opera, theater and ballet; Walter Sullivan, science editor of the *New York Times*; Cyrus Hamlin, Professor of Comparative Literature; John Simon, Professor of Law; and Marvin Krislov, President of Oberlin College. Currently the Trust consists of eleven voting members, with the Head of College participating ex-officio. Projects are proposed by the Head of College and deliberated and approved by the Trustees at an annual meeting.

Over the years, those projects have included improvements to the facilities and furnishings that support educational programs, as well as direct support for cultural activities and other enhancements of the College's community life. Among other endeavors, the Trust has given towards the improvement of the College's seminar rooms, the Curtis & Curtiss Library, and a multi-purpose room in Weir Hall. It has provided signage for the College, added special enhancements to the College's renovation in 2008 and to the Master's much-used living room and the College guest suite, and has updated the epigraphy in the Senior Common Room. It has supported special residential college seminars and early concentration programs housed in the College, a visiting poets series, lectures, and an educational program related to the Dalai Lama's visit to JE in 1991.



The Trust has made possible the purchase of College pianos, lighting equipment for dramatic productions, computer equipment, and improvements to the JE Press and the Beekman and Margaret Cannon tulip garden. It has contributed towards the restoration of pianos; the cleaning, restoration, acquisition, and framing of College-owned art; and the copying of the Joseph Badger portraits of Jonathan and Sarah Pierpont Edwards. It has provided funds for concerts and many College-based opera, musical, and dramatic productions, training for students to operate the JE Press, and has mounted over twenty special, high-profile art exhibitions curated by former Master Gary Haller and photographer Richard Benson of the School of Art. It has aided in the publication of a college yearbook, as well as of Beekman Cannon's *Music and the Performing Arts in Jonathan Edwards College 1933–1983* and Mark Ryan's *A Collegiate Way of Living: Residential Colleges and a Yale Education*.

In recent years, funds have been used for the Culture Draw, enabling JE students, in the company of Fellows of the College, to attend opera, theater, and special cultural events in New York and New Haven, as well as for special “Fireside Chats” for Freshmen and Sophomores. The Culture Draw has played a powerful role in introducing JE students to the world of the arts, and deepening their experience of it, as the Chats have enhanced JE's intimate community life by helping students to get to know one another and College administrators in small group gatherings.



JOSEPH TOY CURTISS

At left: CURTISS & CURTISS LIBRARY

With these projects, the JE Trust has aimed, in the spirit of Joe Curtiss, to enhance and enliven the rich educational environment of the JE College community. We recall these words of long-term Trustee David Calleo, Joe's friend and colleague, spoken at his memorial service in 1992:

For Joe, as for Bob French, the colleges were Yale's great chance to realize its own best ideals. In the beautiful and intimate environment the colleges provided, undergraduates could grow up and learn how to live well in the best sense. Undergraduate life would be full of its usual exuberance and fun, but also guided and disciplined by the values, the example, and the companionship of its Fellows.

All his long life at Yale, Joe struggled to advance that ideal. He took part in numerous experiments to give the residential colleges a formal role in teaching. He gave generously to expand college facilities and to subsidize the theater, music, art, printing, the special seminars, and all the rest of JE's rich and intimate cultural life. Above all, Joe tried, himself, to embody the ideal of a College Fellow. No one ever succeeded more brilliantly.

On this occasion of its fiftieth anniversary, the JE Trust celebrates the spirit and vision of Joe Curtiss, and the special character of the College that he held so dear.

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