

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

April 3, 2013

MEMORANDUM

To: Trustee Policy Committee

From: June Pierce Youatt, Acting Provost

Subject: Naming Proposal: Justin S. Morrill Hall of Agriculture

Recommendation

BE IT RESOLVED that Agriculture Hall be renamed Justin S. Morrill Hall of Agriculture.

Background

Last year, 2012, marked the sesquicentennial of the Morrill Land Grant Act, which established the nation's land-grant universities. Michigan State University was first among them, and like many of its land-grant peers, MSU long ago commemorated the passage of this legislation by naming one of our campus buildings in honor of its author, Vermont Senator Justin S. Morrill.

Morrill Hall was constructed in 1900 as the Women's Building. It housed 120 female students and provided facilities for the study of what was then called domestic science. With the departure of the student residents in 1937, the building was remodeled for classroom and office space. It was at about this time that the building became known as Morrill Hall. Until recently, it housed classrooms and faculty offices in the College of Arts and Letters.

With the completion of the Wells Hall addition, Morrill Hall has been vacated. The building is slated to stand empty for a few months, with demolition scheduled for summer 2013. The pending demolition of Morrill Hall coincides almost exactly with the 150th anniversary of the Morrill Act.

The original Morrill Act was intended to promote a liberal and practical education in areas including agriculture and the mechanical arts. Subsequently, the Morrill Act spurred Congressional action in funding agricultural experiment stations and cooperative extension services. These pillars of the Morrill Act were at the time, and continue to be, central to MSU's identity and mission. Thus, it is fitting that the name Morrill Hall be attached to MSU's Agriculture Building.

There is precedent for preserving the names of demolished buildings on MSU's campus, particularly when they commemorate the contributions of influential leaders. The recently



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renovated Wells Hall (named for Hezekiah Wells, who was instrumental in the establishment of MSU) bears the name of two previous buildings, one that burned in 1905 and another that was razed in 1966. There is also precedent for renaming existing buildings, sometimes long after construction. This was true of the current Morrill Hall and also Eustace-Cole Hall (constructed in 1888 as the Horticultural Laboratory, named Eustace Hall 73 years later, and renamed Eustace-Cole Hall in 1998).

This proposal has been endorsed by the University Naming Committee and the Dean and College Advisory Council of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

c: President Simon
 Executive Vice President Udpa
 Vice President and Secretary Beekman
 Vice President Noto
 Dean Poston