

**History**

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## Jorgensen credited with UConn's growth



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The University of Connecticut entered a new era after World War II, thanks to the GI Bill, and to some pre-war investment made at the campus in the New Deal years. The growing college was featured in an article written by Frank Atwood, in the December 1945 issue of Connecticut Circle. It outlined the growing college's current programs, and presented a brief history of the school.

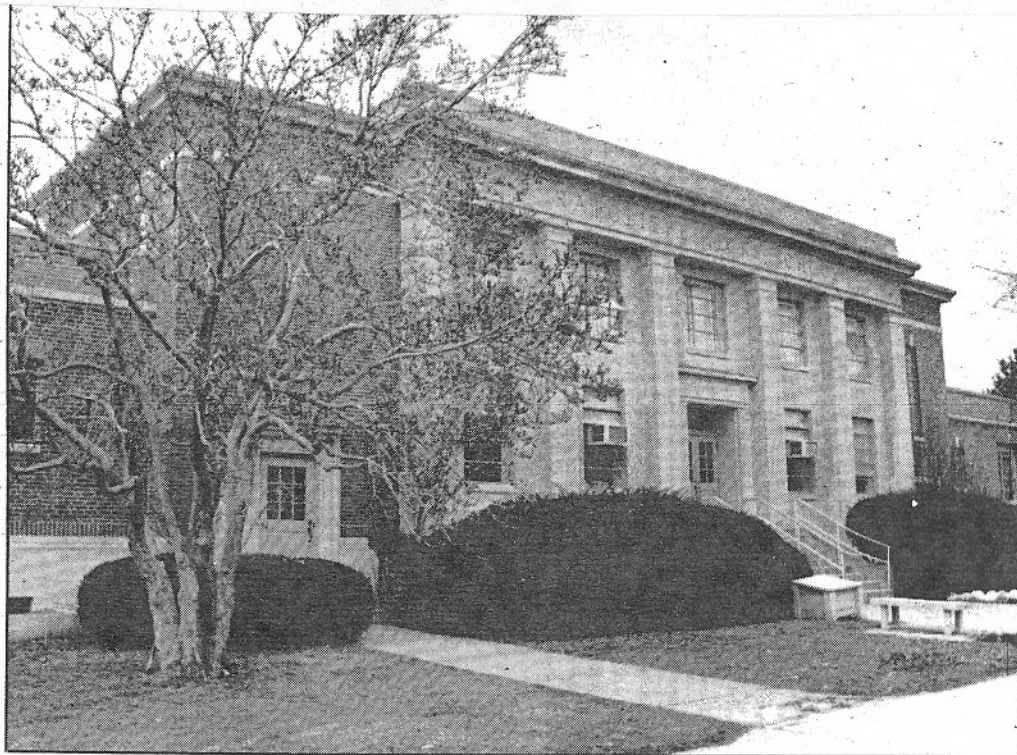
Frank Atwood gave a great deal of credit to the growth of UConn to president Albert Jorgensen. The campus had 500 enrolled students in 1930, 800 by 1935 and during the fall 1941 semester, the last full term before Pearl Harbor, the enrollment was more than 2,000. During World War II, the college's students were mainly women, plus a few male Army officers studying engineering.

Jorgensen expected that he would have to find room for more than 3,000 former students wanting to return to

complete their college work. During the War, the Connecticut General Assembly had voted for a \$5 million building program at Storrs, for new dorms, classrooms, labs, barns, an auditorium, an Alumni building, athletic buildings, family dwellings and apartment houses.

The college had started life in 1881 as the Storrs School of Agriculture. There were three faculty members and 13 students in a frame building that had been an orphan's home. It was a manual training school in agriculture for farm boys. The first president of the new Storrs Agricultural College in 1893, was B.F. Koons, a Civil War veteran. Atwood explained that "Federal Acts had established the Land Grant Colleges, and the Storrs Experimental Station and Extension Service stimulated and underwrote the growth from a farm school to a state agricultural college."

The college's modern period had begun under president Charles Lewis Beech, who held the post from 1908 until 1928. He was responsible for an extensive building program and an increase in enrollments. The college's seventh president, Albert Jorgensen, had arrived from the University of Buffalo in 1935. In 1937, the



Charles Hisey

*The Ratcliffe Hicks building at the University of Connecticut was built after World War II, when college enrollment increased rapidly.*

General Assembly voted for a large building program, and in 1939 the college became the University of Connecticut.

Agricultural arts, sciences, engineering, and home economics' became a central core of the UConn program. Business administration schools had begun as recently as 1940, and in 1945 it ranked second in enrollment. The College of Pharmacy in New Haven became a part of UConn in 1941,

followed by the Hartford College of Law and the Hartford College of Insurance in 1943. There was also a new school of nursing and candidates would graduate in 1946. The nursing course included internships at the Backus Hospital in Norwich, the Yale School of Nursing, and three months of psychiatric nursing at the Norwich State hospital. Prospective nurses also had to work for four months with Hartford's Visiting Nurses Association.

UConn's Ratcliffe Hicks School of Agriculture was established through private endowments, and a new school of social work had just been opened in time for the Fall, 1945 semester. The College also had a summer school, and a number of extension teaching locations across the state. The total enrollment for all UConn schools in 1945 was 2,731 students. President Jorgensen expected that figure would grow rapidly.