

The Endacott Society on its 21st Birthday

My task here today is to offer a brief look at the history of the Endacott Society, now 21 years old and most clearly an adult. To do that I will use Endacott's first name of Paul in an acrostic to represent the key stages in the story. The letters **P**, **A**, **U**, and **L** each start a word marking a stage. **P** is for the **Plan** that Endacott developed for KU retirees. **A** stands for the **Action** that he took to implement his ideas. That is what Paul Endacott did. Other persons enter with **U** which is the **Undertaking** which our pioneers did in specifically starting the KU Retirees' Club. There is also the **L** which involves everyone since then; **L** represents the **Lasting** of the organization, one score and one year. Let me now look at **PAUL**: **P** - Plan, **A** - Action, **U** - Undertaking, and **L** - Lasting.

Paul Endacott graduated from KU in 1923; and then sixty years later the KU Retirees' Club came into existence. How did that happen? Endacott desired to show appreciation for faculty members and staff who had been so important to him. And he was intrigued by both how to get alumni to contribute money and to provide something above the regular KU budget. By the mid-1950s his focus was on retirees and in another decade he proposed a Retirees Center. Ten years later in 1977 he submitted a detailed **Plan**. That plan was, of course, **Action** and there was earlier and later action as well. He importantly started a fund as an expression of his appreciation. When his plan was combined with the emerging idea of a KU Alumni Center further action could occur. Obviously with **PA** he was the father of our organization.

Paul Endacott to this point had pushed things along with help from KU and the Alumni Association. Next in 1981 it was time for our retiree pioneers to enter the story. Their **Undertaking** with the leadership of Ray Nichols was the starting of the Retirees Club. The Nichols committee came up with a name, a constitution plus by-laws, and ideas about activities. Though Paul Endacott had serious concerns about the discrepancy between his plan and what was being created in the Alumni Center under construction it is clear that something unique was appearing for retirees. In early 1983 the Nichols

committee was able to get KU retirees to approve the KU Retirees' Club and it began its activities in September when the Adams Alumni Center opened. Baley Price reports that about a dozen came for that first cup of coffee. One could not count the number of cups that have followed.

Nichols logically became the first president. And it was during his two years and the next two years under Joe Marzluff that a basic pattern for the KU Retirees' Club was set. That was another major part of the **Undertaking** by the pioneers. All cannot be listed but key persons beyond Nichols and Joe Marzluff include Betty Marzluff, Shirley Griffith, and Baley Price. Looking back we can see much of what we still do though we may have new IRS nomenclature for them: Wednesday morning coffees, monthly birthday parties, potluck dinners, pre-concert dinners, oral history, group travel, bridge, and the discussion of national issues. A potluck by any other name is as good to eat.

Starting the club was not enough though that was an essential **Undertaking**. More was needed to give these early efforts a **Lasting** effect. And that **Lasting** has occurred. Other early effective presidencies followed, including Arno Knapper's for two years, along with able leadership at the activity level. There were more and more cups of coffee. Much later came a name change and the group became the Endacott Society. Many of you know that Paul would not allow the use of his name at the beginning and it is worth noting that he did not really like the word "club" with the connotation of frivolity or exclusiveness. Though the name change occurred to deal with IRS criticism it is clear that there could be no more appropriate name than Endacott. Surely he would think that "Society" is more appropriate than "Club." Should the IRS even get a small "thank you" here? Today the organization, bigger with more activities, thrives on its 21st birthday. Thus Paul had done it: with a **Plan** and then with **Action** including funds. After those came the **Undertaking**: the pioneers had done it. And we have all done it in helping this organization to **Last**. Altogether **PAUL** or **P, A, U, and L** have done it. We celebrate that today. It is our expression of appreciation for Paul Endacott and the others. Fire regulations I believe forbid a twenty-one gun salute but that would certainly fit this happy birthday.

Albert R. Sellen, September 9, 2004