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Robert F. Rich and His Importance to the Development of Lycoming College in the Early Twentieth Century

Lycoming College is a four-year liberal arts and sciences higher education institution in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. It emerged from a series of changes in its structure from an academy in 1812, to a seminary in 1848, to a junior college in 1929, and finally to a four-year college in 1947.<sup>1</sup> Many institutions were going through a similar process or series of changes in the twentieth century due to certain political, social, and economic factors. The crucial period of the institution's history was the first half of the twentieth century. It was at this time that President John W. Long initiated the changes that would turn the school into a four-year college with the help and influence of Congressman Robert F. Rich. Robert F. Rich's contributions and influence were crucial to the development of Lycoming College from a seminary to a four-year accredited college in the early twentieth century, and without his support this transition would not have occurred.

Strong leaders have been central to the survival of colleges, especially small ones. Many schools recognize the president as the most influential power over the institution. John W. Long, former president of Williamsport Dickinson Seminary and Junior College was a typical strong leader of his institution. Research into the development and changes of Williamsport Dickinson Seminary has given the credit for these changes to President Long. However, he was not the only influential and powerful member of the Lycoming community that moved the college through this transition. The other key, influential member was Robert F. Rich, Congressman,

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Scott Williams, *History of Lycoming College and Its Predecessor Institutions* (Baltimore: King Brothers, 1959), 5-14. Williams records the founding of the Williamsport Academy in 1811. Lycoming College uses the date 1812.

head of Woolrich Woolen Mills, member of the board of trustees at Dickinson College, and president of the board of trustees for Williamsport Dickinson Seminary. Research on the changes of American higher education usually focuses on the influences of the president on these changes, but this paper measures the importance of Robert F. Rich and his impact on the development of this institution.

The most important recent student of the changes in American higher education is John Thelin, a professor at the University of Kansas. He has evaluated the factors that contributed to the development of American higher education, as well as the leaders who transitioned these institutions through these developments. Just before and then after the Civil War, many students wanted the opportunity to continue their education beyond a seminary or high school. During the nineteenth century, higher education institutions became increasingly “fashionable and prestigious.”<sup>2</sup> The Morrill Bills of 1862 and 1890 were one reason many students wanted a higher education. This federally funded program provided land grants to states to build research-based universities to solve the problems involved in agriculture, military training, fertilizers, mining, and home-economics.<sup>3</sup> These acts encouraged the development of public higher education institutions, which vastly increased the importance for higher education. The growth of small colleges matched this increase in large universities. Many institutions and states also established more small colleges to meet the increasing number of students applying to college. Unfortunately, many families did not have the money to go to these universities or private institutions.<sup>4</sup> The solution to this problem was the development of junior colleges which provided students with the first two years of a college-level work. For example, William Rainey Harper, the first president of the University of Chicago, in the late nineteenth century, was one of

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<sup>2</sup> John Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2004), 156.

<sup>3</sup> Thelin, 135-136.

<sup>4</sup> Thelin, 169.

the first presidents to add a two-year junior college to his university.<sup>5</sup> This addition to his college started the development of junior colleges around the country. The families who could not afford higher education for their children now were able to send their children off to these more-affordable junior colleges.

The next factor that affected the development of higher education was World War II and the passage of the GI Bill. After World War II, the GI Bill provided money to soldiers back from the war to attend federally approved universities, colleges, or junior colleges.<sup>6</sup> Between 1943 and 1946, university and college enrollments doubled.<sup>7</sup> To encourage enrollment, many junior colleges created programs that would appeal to the returning soldiers and advertised their institutions heavily overseas.<sup>8</sup> To accommodate increasing enrollment and competition, institutions had to expand to meet the needs of the returning soldiers, as well as other prospective students.

Thelin asserts that the leaders that helped transition institutions through these changes were college or university presidents. He believed that the presidents needed to be strong leaders and have strong character. They had to understand the legal issues and the problems that may arise from any new status or form for the institution.<sup>9</sup> They had to be “strong administrative” presidents, yet be able to cooperate with some sort of external board.<sup>10</sup> Describing the role of the president and the president’s importance, Thelin exclaims, the “American college president from the start had to be an entrepreneur in the broadest and best sense of the word.”<sup>11</sup> The presidents had to know how to keep their businesses—the colleges or seminaries—running. Thelin does

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<sup>5</sup> Thelin, 121.

<sup>6</sup> Thelin, 264.

<sup>7</sup> Thelin, 264.

<sup>8</sup> Thelin, 263.

<sup>9</sup> Thelin, 33.

<sup>10</sup> Thelin, 33.

<sup>11</sup> Thelin, 33-34.

not, however, mention any role of the president of the board of trustees or how influential his or her role would be in the development of these institutions.

Another important student of the changes in American higher education is Samuel Schuman, chancellor of the University of Minnesota. He also examines some of the same factors as Thelin does. However, he places emphasis on the effects of these factors on small colleges and the leadership of the presidents of these colleges. Schuman also places emphasis on World War II and the GI Bill as important factors in the development of American higher education. This bill encouraged the development of many new institutions, as well as the development of small colleges into universities.<sup>12</sup> However, this influx of soldiers created problems for many junior colleges. One of these problems was that many soldiers chose to attend more expensive universities and four-year colleges, which put many junior colleges in financial trouble. The junior colleges had lost many of their students to the war, and at the end of the war, they did not gain these students back. They did not have enough students applying to their institutions to support their institutions financially. Those soldiers receiving money from the government would not want to complete only two years of a college education when they could complete four years almost completely free. They applied to the more expensive institutions. Nevertheless, when the most desirable four-year institutions had filled, returning soldiers turned to junior colleges for their education. This created another problem for the junior colleges, because now they overflowed with students they could not accommodate.<sup>13</sup> The junior colleges could not guarantee that once these students completed their two years at the junior college, they would find a four-year institution to attend, since the four-year schools had no room for any more

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<sup>12</sup> Samuel Schuman, *Old Main: Small Colleges in Twenty-First Century America* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2005), 38.

<sup>13</sup> Williams, 103.

students.<sup>14</sup> These reasons prompted many junior colleges to seek to try the transition to a four-year accredited college so that they could survive and accommodate the growing number of students applying to the college.

Similar to Thelin, Schuman argues that usually, the presidents of the colleges played the most important role in guiding the institutions through this transition. He explains that “[i]t is hard to deny the incredible influence that some strong presidents have had on the evolution of the institutions they serve.”<sup>15</sup> For example, one president of Antioch College, Arthur Morgan, saved the college by creating a work program for the institution.<sup>16</sup> In addition, Arthur Kirk’s good management practices saved his college, Keuka College in New York, from deep financial troubles.<sup>17</sup> Presidents usually were considered the most important and influential members of the colleges, because they were the ones in the public eye. These recent scholars do not credit any other staff or faculty members for contributing as much to the colleges’ development as the presidents of the colleges did.

However, one historian, S. V. Martorana, does examine the roles and duties of board of trustees on a college campus. He also examines the role of the chairman or president of the board of trustees and the acts and duties expected of the person placed in this position. He exclaims that the head of the board “presides at meetings, signs legal and official documents recording actions of the board as a body corporate, and generally gives leadership to the board in carrying out its prescribed duties.”<sup>18</sup> Robert F. Rich’s support, influence, and help to the college seem to go beyond these prescribed duties. He negotiated purchases for the college and

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<sup>14</sup> Williams, 103.

<sup>15</sup> Schuman, 99.

<sup>16</sup> Schuman, 99.

<sup>17</sup> Schuman, 100.

<sup>18</sup> S.V. Martorana, *College Boards of Trustees* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Research in Education, 1963), 68.

purchased properties himself for the college. Martorana also states that the board of trustees in colleges is referred to as the “board of control” because it served as the “controlling agency of the institutions.”<sup>19</sup> In addition, these entities in the early twentieth century were supposed to act as one body with no member completing the obligations of the whole group.<sup>20</sup> Robert F. Rich’s service did not follow this profile. Dr. Long and the other members of the board were not willing to make decisions without Rich. If Rich was in Washington, D.C., they would send him a letter asking his opinion on important issues or decisions. All decisions were passed by Rich before arriving at a final conclusion. The board of trustees did work as a team, but Rich had the most influence and power. It was this influence and power that enabled him to move Williamsport Dickinson Seminary through the development process to its current status as the four-year institution, Lycoming College.

Charles Scott Williams, a judge from the Williamsport area who supported the institution which became Lycoming College, also addresses the issue of who were the most influential men on campus. He declares that the presidents were the most influential and powerful men on campus in his *History of Lycoming College and its Predecessor Institutions*. Williams argues that most of the credit for the success of the move from a seminary to a junior college, and then a junior college to a four-year institution, went to President Long.<sup>21</sup> Long served as president of the college for thirty-four years, longer than any other president before him.<sup>22</sup> Williams declares that Long tackled “one crisis after another, many times with the opposition of many church leaders, and at times his outlook was far ahead of many of his board of trustees.”<sup>23</sup> Although Williams gives him most of the credit for the transition, he does mention that Robert F. Rich

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<sup>19</sup> Martorana, 1.

<sup>20</sup> Martorana, 1.

<sup>21</sup> Williams, 3.

<sup>22</sup> Williams, 89.

<sup>23</sup> Williams, 89.

gave beneficial contributions and helped Dr. Long with a few important decisions and projects. Williams mentioned Robert F. Rich's part in meetings for the junior college accreditation and his part in purchasing the brewery company that was next door to the seminary.<sup>24</sup> Williams also highlights the large and numerous Rich family contributions to this institution. He states that "[n]o history of Williamsport Dickinson Seminary and Lycoming College can be written without special mention of the Rich family, of Woolrich, the chief benefactors of the college."<sup>25</sup>

Williams, unlike the other scholars, does mention others that may have had some impact or influence over the development of the institution, besides the president. Although Williams makes a good case for Long's importance, he downplays the role of Robert F. Rich in the development of Williamsport Dickinson Seminary into Lycoming College. Williams worked closely with Long throughout his years as president, which accounts for his bias toward Long's influence in the transition. In addition, he did not have access to sufficient information to properly assess Robert F. Rich's role in the transition of the college. New information has revealed Rich's role in this development. This information comes from his personal papers and letters from the time he was president of the board of trustees.

This new information demonstrates the importance of Rich in the development of the college. There is no doubt that President Long was important to the transition from Williamsport Dickinson Seminary to Lycoming College. However, Robert F. Rich's influence also played a crucial part in developing the institution to a four-year institution. Rich's contributions, support, and influence gave the college the necessary provisions needed to make it through this transition, and without these contributions the institution would not have developed into Lycoming College.

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<sup>24</sup> Williams, 97, 110.

<sup>25</sup> Williams, 116.

Robert F. Rich's support and help to the seminary was not a spur-of-the-moment decision. He followed a Rich family legacy of support and contributions to the institution. One reason for the Rich family's interest in the seminary and college was the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century trend among business philanthropists. From the 1890s to 1950s, industrial giants, as well as other wealthy business owners, contributed generously to the development of colleges.<sup>26</sup> At first these donations went to help colleges modernize their campuses to allow more students to attend, as well as to keep the campus safe. The donations went towards the construction of tall office buildings, lecture halls, administrative buildings, and gyms that connected the past with the present to form a modern campus.<sup>27</sup> Later these philanthropists also donated money to help the campus run smoothly.<sup>28</sup>

In addition, many of these important industrial leaders also became members of the institutions' board of trustees.<sup>29</sup> So not only were they contributing money to the expansion and running of the campus, but they were also politically involved in the running of the institution. Quite a few members of the Rich family were members of the seminary's board of trustees, and two of them acted as presidents of the board of trustees. These two members, starting in 1921, were Michael Bond Rich and his son, Robert F Rich, who continued the family's legacy when he assumed his father's duties in 1931. Together they led the board of trustees for 43 years.

The Rich family owned the Woolrich Woolen Mills and followed this trend of donating money for the modernizing or expanding of the school's campus. Members of the Rich family had been involved in the school as far back as the 1850s, not long after Benjamin Crever turned the Academy into the Seminary. In 1852, John Rich helped to pay off the seminary's \$9000 debt

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<sup>26</sup> Thelin, 112-113.

<sup>27</sup> Thelin, 115.

<sup>28</sup> Thelin, 135.

<sup>29</sup> Thelin, 112.

by purchasing bonds for a sum of \$500.<sup>30</sup> This loan helped to get the seminary on its feet. Later, in the 1910s, J. Woods Rich contributed \$5000 to the seminary.<sup>31</sup> Throughout the Great Depression and even after World War II, the Rich family continued to contribute to the institution. In 1940, Rich's uncle William Fleming contributed \$5000 to the renovation of what became the Fine Arts Building and the President's House.<sup>32</sup>

Another reason for the long interest in the college was that the Rich family felt a special bond to the seminary because, for many of the family members, it was their alma mater. From the beginning of the seminary to the late 1960s, nineteen members of the Rich family had attended or were attending this institution.<sup>33</sup> The college records a member of the Rich family attending the seminary in the early 1850s, not too long after the Williamsport Academy first became a seminary.<sup>34</sup> Michael Bond Rich attended the seminary in the 1870s during the Wilson L. Spottswood administration.<sup>35</sup> Two of M. B.'s brothers, John and William Fleming, also attended the Seminary, and so did his sister Lydia.<sup>36</sup> M. B. also sent two of his own sons (Robert F. and John B.) and four of his daughters (Catherine, Anna Bell, Grace Elizabeth, and Margaret) to the seminary.<sup>37</sup> Robert attended the seminary in 1898 and remained until 1902, before continuing his education later at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. According to newspaper articles, Robert was a "brilliant half back" while at the seminary.<sup>38</sup> These personal and family connections were a few of the reasons that Robert F. Rich was willing to put so much

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<sup>30</sup> Williams, 42.

<sup>31</sup> Williams, 87.

<sup>32</sup> Williams, 100.

<sup>33</sup> Williams, 116.

<sup>34</sup> Williams, 116.

<sup>35</sup> Williams, 70.

<sup>36</sup> Williams, 116.

<sup>37</sup> Williams, 117.

<sup>38</sup> Williams, 77.

effort into the development of the Williamsport Dickinson Seminary from a seminary to a junior college and then to the four-year institution known as Lycoming College.

First his father, M. B., became president of the board of trustees in 1921 and remained president until his death in 1930.<sup>39</sup> M.B. continued the legacy of his family by contributing money to the seminary's development and coordinating plans for the expansion of the campus. During the later years of his presidency on the board of trustees, M. B. contributed \$50,000 to the endowment of a chair of Religious Education.<sup>40</sup> The year before his death, M. B. and President Long coordinated plans to buy twenty-nine properties that would extend the campus to Washington Boulevard, to Elizabeth Street on the west side of campus, and to Henrietta Alley on the east side of campus.<sup>41</sup> Elizabeth Street is now College Place, and Henrietta Alley on the eastern side of campus was bought for the building of the new fraternity dorm.<sup>42</sup> With this purchase, the seminary expanded from College Place up to the location of the recreation center, and on the east side of campus up to East Hall and Asbury Hall. M.B. helped to finance this purchase, which totaled \$103,300.<sup>43</sup> He purchased nineteen of the properties in his own name.<sup>44</sup> However, before he could complete this purchase he died in a tragic car accident August 8, 1930.<sup>45</sup> The historical records state that Michael Bond Rich's term ended in 1931, although his death was in August of 1930. The records make this statement because no one filled his place until his son took over the position in 1931.

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<sup>39</sup> Williams, 90-91.

<sup>40</sup> Williams, 95.

<sup>41</sup> Williams, 96.

<sup>42</sup> Sam Reese, "John Long Administration Reviewed in Retrospect," *The Bell* 5, no. 16, (May 3, 1962): 2, <http://205.247.101.31:2005/cdm4/document.php?CISOROOT=/lycnews&CISOPTR=6300&CISOSHOW=6297&REC=1> (accessed November 6, 2008).

<sup>43</sup> Williams, 96.

<sup>44</sup> "The Fine Arts Building and the President's House," Rich Family Files, Lycoming College Archives, Williamsport, PA.

<sup>45</sup> Williams, 96.

Throughout his term, M. B. helped keep the seminary running and dealt with the leadership issues affecting the seminary. One of his first issues as president of the board of trustees was to pick the next president of the seminary after the death of Dr. Benjamin Conner in August of 1921.<sup>46</sup> His son Robert F. Rich, not yet involved on the board of trustees, contributed to this decision. He suggested that his father consider John W. Long, his roommate from his years at Dickinson College.<sup>47</sup> M. B. took his son's advice, and he and Robert traveled to State College to listen to Reverend Long, the pastor of the State College Methodist Church, preach.<sup>48</sup> M. B. was so impressed with the sermon that he asked the board to consider him for the position of president of the seminary.

President Long and M. B. made the decision to transform Williamsport Dickinson Seminary from a seminary to a junior college. Long began offering junior college classes in 1929, and M.B gave him his support for this project.<sup>49</sup> On one occasion, M.B. told a conference that the seminary wanted to provide students with a higher education after they completed high school.<sup>50</sup> Long knew that this transition was necessary for the seminary's survival because he predicted that preparatory schools were in decline; more students were applying to colleges in the 1920s than they were in the late nineteenth century.<sup>51</sup> So with the help of M. B. Rich, Long started this move to the junior college. Eventually, with the help of Robert F. Rich, Long's first vision for the college would become a reality.

Robert F. Rich played five major roles in the development of this institution. Firstly, he completed the projects his father started. Secondly, he helped to modernize the campus.

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<sup>46</sup> Williams, 86.

<sup>47</sup> Williams, 90.

<sup>48</sup> Williams, 90.

<sup>49</sup> Williams, 93.

<sup>50</sup> Williams, 93.

<sup>51</sup> Williams, 93.

Thirdly, he served as an important provider for the college's financial needs. Fourth, he acted as an advisor to President Long throughout this transition to a four-year college. Lastly, using his prestige as Congressman, he helped to obtain support and contributions for the transition to a four-year institution.

Through Robert F. Rich's efforts to continue what his father had started and to complete President Long's first vision, the seminary was able to complete the transition to a junior college in 1935. Not long after the death of Michael Bond Rich, Long and the other members of the board approached Rich and asked him to fill his father's place as president of the board of trustees.<sup>52</sup> Robert F. started his term as president of the board in 1931 by completing the project his father had started to extend the campus. He finished purchasing the remaining properties on behalf of the seminary and turned over the nineteen properties his father had purchased in his own name to the seminary.<sup>53</sup> The seminary had most of these buildings torn down except for two properties located at the corner of Washington Boulevard and College Place, which the seminary later turned into the Fine Arts Building and the President's House.<sup>54</sup> On Alumni Day in 1940, these properties were rededicated as the Fine Arts Center and the President's House, now the Admissions House.<sup>55</sup> This act started his numerous contributions to the development of the institution.

Robert F. Rich used his influence and connections with Dickinson College to assist the Williamsport Dickinson Seminary in the transition to a junior college. Both Long and Rich had attended Dickinson College; however, Rich's office as Congressman gave him considerable

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<sup>52</sup> Williams, 97.

<sup>53</sup> "The Fine Arts Building and the President's House."

<sup>54</sup> Williams, 96.

<sup>55</sup> "Aerial View of Campus with Three Proposed Buildings Sketched on the Photograph," 1949, Lycoming College Archives, *Access Pennsylvania Digital Repository*, [http://205.247.101.31:2005/cdm4/item\\_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/lyc-5&CISOPTR=624&CISOBOX=1&REC=1](http://205.247.101.31:2005/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/lyc-5&CISOPTR=624&CISOBOX=1&REC=1) (accessed November 8, 2008).

influence. Rich knew how important it was to meet the accreditation requirements set by the University Senate of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The University Senate was an organization established to bring order to any institutions associated with the Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>56</sup> The organization wanted to keep its institutions stable and up to excellent academic standards.<sup>57</sup> Long and Rich found this accreditation process to be harder than they expected. They had many factors playing against them. One factor was that the University Senate of the Methodist Episcopal Church seemed to discourage this transition.<sup>58</sup> In addition, Long and his administration had to make sure that other colleges and universities would accept the students completing the junior college curriculum.<sup>59</sup> Without University Senate approval, which was one form of accreditation, it would be hard for graduates to be accepted at other institutions. If other institutions would not accept the students leaving the Williamsport Dickinson Seminary and Junior College, then making this transition would not benefit the seminary. Students would refuse to enter the junior college if they knew they could not take their degree or education further. Lastly, the seminary faced opposition from four-year institutions, mainly Dickinson College, which believed that this transition would create unwelcome competition.<sup>60</sup>

Robert F. Rich helped to persuade the leader of Dickinson College to support this transition. He set up a meeting with President J. Henry Morgan of Dickinson College in order to convince him that this move to a junior college would not take away students from Dickinson College. Before approving Williamsport Dickinson Seminary's status as a junior college, the

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<sup>56</sup> Beth Adams Bowser, *Living the Vision: The University Senate of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Church, and the United Methodist Church 1892-1991* (Nashville, TN: Board of Higher Education and Ministry of the United Methodist Church, 1992), 1.

<sup>57</sup> Bowser, 1.

<sup>58</sup> Williams, 94.

<sup>59</sup> Williams, 94.

<sup>60</sup> Williams, 94.

University Senate had to determine whether the institution had the necessary resources, equipment, and foundations in order to keep a stable and orderly school.<sup>61</sup> In order to meet the requirements and standards for the University, the institution needed to have the necessary endowment funds, have an experienced and trained faculty, and meet the minimum required academic courses.<sup>62</sup> In addition, the college needed to have the required amount of days in a school year and to comply with the mandatory graduation and enrollment requirements.<sup>63</sup>

Rich's meeting with President Morgan turned out to be the meeting that "paved the way" for the seminary to develop into a junior college.<sup>64</sup> By the end of this meeting, Rich had convinced Dr. Morgan to assist the seminary in its efforts to develop into a junior college.<sup>65</sup> One point that changed Dr. Morgan's decision was Rich's promise that the seminary had no plans to move beyond the junior college status.<sup>66</sup> Rich's influence also helped sway President Morgan's decision. Dr. Morgan and Dr. O. B. McIntire, a member of his faculty, assisted the seminary's accreditation by heading a committee which reported to the University Senate that "Dickinson Seminary is doing everything in its power in these heart breaking times to meet the just requirements of the University Senate and appeals to said Senate for its generous consideration."<sup>67</sup> This institution, like so many other institutions during the Great Depression, was having trouble attracting students and paying for the improvements necessary to meet the accreditation requirements. Families were having enough trouble buying the necessities to keep their families going. They did not have the money to send their children to seminaries or other private, expensive schools.

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<sup>61</sup> Bowser, 8.

<sup>62</sup> Bowser, 12-16.

<sup>63</sup> Bowser, 12-16.

<sup>64</sup> Mark Levine, "The Rich Family...A History of Magnificence," *Lycoming Quarterly*, June 1987.

<sup>65</sup> Williams, 94.

<sup>66</sup> Williams, 94.

<sup>67</sup> Williams, 94.

Congressman Rich's influence also affected the next president of Dickinson College, Dr. Karl Waugh, who replaced Dr. Morgan in 1933. Rich also spent some time conferring with President Waugh about what the University Senate's requirements were and how the seminary could meet these requirements. Through this interaction, Rich obtained two pamphlets that described the accreditation process and the requirements.<sup>68</sup> These two pamphlets were "The Enactments of the University Senate" and "The Study by the Carnegie Foundation."<sup>69</sup> After reading these texts, President Long seemed concerned that they did not have enough books in the library to meet the accreditation requirements. He believed that they needed at least a thousand more books on the subjects taught at the institution; fortunately, they had enough endowment to be able to purchase the necessary books.<sup>70</sup> By obtaining this information, Rich placed the seminary and Long in a position where they could identify and meet the requirements. Through these acts and the assistance of Dickinson College, the seminary finally reached full accreditation status in 1935. The first brochure after its accreditation in 1935 described Williamsport Dickinson Junior College as "An Historic Institution with a Unique Educational Program" which offered the last two years of high school and first two years of college.<sup>71</sup> The Williamsport Dickinson Junior College was the "first fully accredited [private] Junior College in Pennsylvania."<sup>72</sup> Without Robert F. Rich's devotion to the seminary and his influence as a congressman, the seminary might not have reached this status.

Rich continued his interest in the seminary by contributing to its campus between the years of its accreditation and World War II. This expansion of the campus was an important part

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<sup>68</sup> Dr. John W. Long to Robert F. Rich, February 3, 1933, Robert F. Rich Papers, Lycoming College Snowden Library Archives, Williamsport, PA.

<sup>69</sup> Dr. John W. Long to Robert F. Rich, February 3, 1933.

<sup>70</sup> Dr. John W. Long to Robert F. Rich, February 3, 1933.

<sup>71</sup> "Williamsport Dickinson Junior College Brochure," 1934, Robert F. Rich Papers, Lycoming College Snowden Library Archives, Williamsport, PA.

<sup>72</sup> Williams, 94.

of the seminary's development because the seminary needed to have up-to-date facilities to accommodate the students looking for the first two years of college after high school. In addition, the seminary needed to have enough dorms, lounges, and day rooms for the comfort of both commuter and residential students attending the institution. The institution would not be able to move beyond its seminary status if it could not accommodate the educational needs of the students.

Rich expanded the campus by providing the seminary with financial contributions and by helping the junior college to obtain finances for the purchase of properties and for the building of facilities on campus. Not only did Rich feel that the college should have enough space for classes and residential students, but he also believed that it was important for the college to appear safe, clean, and beautiful so that the city of Williamsport would be proud of its junior college. Rich referred to the college "as the backyard of Williamsport" and believed it should be an "attractive inviting place" for the citizens of Williamsport to enjoy.<sup>73</sup> In a letter to his Uncle, William Fleming Rich, he asked his uncle to have Woolrich Woolen Mills contribute money to the improving and "beautifying of the campus."<sup>74</sup> Rich promised his uncle that he would take full responsibility for the contribution and would get permission from the other members of the company first.<sup>75</sup>

Rich understood how important it was for the community of Williamsport to support and enjoy the junior college. The residents of Williamsport would not give contributions to the college or send their children to attend the institution if they did not support the institution. It was for this reason that Rich wanted to make sure the college had enough finances to make the

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<sup>73</sup> Robert F. Rich to John E. Person, May 18, 1938, Robert F. Rich Papers, Lycoming College Snowden Library Archives, Williamsport, PA.

<sup>74</sup> Robert F. Rich to Uncle Flem, April 26, 1938, Robert F. Rich Paper, Lycoming College Snowden Library Archives, Williamsport, PA.

<sup>75</sup> Robert F. Rich to Uncle Flem, April 26, 1938.

college's appearance beautiful for the community. In order to complete this task, Rich agreed to select the members for a committee to raise \$125,000 toward the development of properties on Washington Boulevard.<sup>76</sup> Long knew that his college roommate had the right connections and knew the best people for the job. For this task, Rich chose John Person as Chairman of the committee, as well as A. Lawrence Miller and George Stearns, important members of the Williamsport community.<sup>77</sup> Rich's connections helped him to pick out the best people for the job. He knew who was out there and how hard they would work for the college.

In addition, Rich worked to keep the college campus a safe environment for its students. The fact that the railroad was so close to the college and there were no watchmen around worried both Long and Rich. No watchmen increased the risk of students getting hurt or killed by trains passing through the city. Day students and commuter students crossed these tracks in order to get to the college campus. Since there were no watchmen to coordinate the students' movement across these tracks, the students had to trust their own judgment. This put many students at risk. In addition, Long and Rich were concerned that enrollment would decrease if they did not take care of this danger. In 1945, Mr. Vanderling, one of the leaders of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, told Rich that it would cost \$10,000 to remove the railroad tracks near the college and that they probably would have to get rid of the Academy Street entrance in order for this to occur.<sup>78</sup> After two years, with no actions taken to make the railroad safer, Rich sent out a letter to P.W. Neff, a lawyer of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, who promised to take Rich and Long's concerns to Philadelphia.<sup>79</sup> Rich asked Neff to tell the Pennsylvania Railroad Company

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<sup>76</sup> Robert F. Rich to members of the committee, July 1, 1937, Robert F. Rich Papers, Lycoming College Snowden Library Archives, Williamsport, PA.

<sup>77</sup> Robert F. Rich to members of the committee, July 1, 1937.

<sup>78</sup> Robert F. Rich to Dr. John W. Long, November 26, 1945, Robert F. Rich Papers, Lycoming College Archives, Williamsport, PA. Mr. Vanderling's first name was not mentioned in the letter.

<sup>79</sup> Robert F. Rich to P.W. Neff, May 19, 1947, Robert F. Rich Papers, Lycoming College Archives, Williamsport, PA.

that it should close the railroad tracks near the school because there were no watchmen and the track was an eye sore to the college.<sup>80</sup> In order to maintain the social environment and donations to the college, the students needed to feel safe in their school environment.

Rich also helped to expand the campus with his role as an advisor to President Long. President Long tended to take charge himself and usually did not ask advice from other members of his faculty; he held no faculty meetings.<sup>81</sup> It was rare for him to seek advice from anyone, yet he put his trust in the advice and decision-making ability of Rich. Long asked for Rich's advice on what buildings or properties to buy before making a final decision. For example, in 1938 Long and John Person coordinated back and forth with Rich on the plans for a new dining room and kitchen. Before this point the dining room was located in the basement of Old Main with the classrooms and student rooms.<sup>82</sup> The architects suggested attaching a new building to the Hilltop Gymnasium.<sup>83</sup> This attachment would contain a kitchen, dining hall, and auditorium. The architects wanted to place the dining hall and the kitchen in the basement of this building, with the auditorium on the ground floor.<sup>84</sup> However, Rich had a problem with this suggestion. Although he would be in favor of combining the dining room with an auditorium, he advised the college to put the new building at least fifty feet away from the gym.<sup>85</sup> Person had told Rich that if they could only raise fifty to sixty thousand dollars, he believed they would have to put the two buildings together; however, if they could raise another twelve to eighteen thousand dollars, they

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<sup>80</sup> Robert F. Rich to P.W. Neff, May 19, 1947.

<sup>81</sup> John Graham, Interview by Alison S. Gregory, May 27, 1997, Lycoming College Snowden Library Archives, Williamsport, PA.

<sup>82</sup> Williams, 20.

<sup>83</sup> Robert F. Rich to John Person, March 2, 1938, Robert F. Rich Papers, Lycoming College Archives, Williamsport, PA.

<sup>84</sup> Robert F. Rich to John Person, March 2, 1938.

<sup>85</sup> Robert F. Rich to John Person, March 2, 1938.

would be able to separate the buildings.<sup>86</sup> Hearing this news, Rich promised to provide \$10,000 for this project if they kept the buildings separate because of his belief that the separate buildings were more reasonable.<sup>87</sup>

In this situation, both Dr. Long and John Person proved their trust in Rich. Person, not knowing yet whether they would be able to raise the extra money, responded to Rich's advice by stating that "[t]he Present splendid status of the seminary is due almost entirely to the loyalty and beneficence of the Rich Family, and nothing can be done at the institution—nothing will be done—without the complete, wholehearted and spontaneous approval of yourself."<sup>88</sup> Long decided that Rich was right and had the architectural plans drawn up with the buildings separate.<sup>89</sup>

Another example of this trust in Rich's decision-making ability occurred a few years earlier in 1935 when President Long asked Rich what he thought about buying a property from the Shadle heirs to add to the college campus.<sup>90</sup> Rich had already offered the Shadle heirs a price of \$1,800 for the property, but they did not want to take it for any less than \$2,650.<sup>91</sup> Long wanted to know whether Rich thought the property was worth that much and whether they should continue with the purchase. Long was not sure how beneficial this purchase would be to the junior college and wanted to hear Rich's opinion. If the properties were not going to benefit the college, then it would not be worth spending the extra money for the property. Rich

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<sup>86</sup> John Person to Robert F. Rich, March 5, 1938, Robert F. Rich Papers, Lycoming College Snowden Library Archives, Williamsport, PA.

<sup>87</sup> Robert F. Rich to Dr. John W. Long, March 8, 1938, Robert F. Rich Papers, Lycoming College Snowden Library Archives, Williamsport, PA.

<sup>88</sup> John Person to Robert F. Rich, March 5, 1938, Robert F. Rich Papers, Lycoming College Snowden Library Archives, Williamsport, PA.

<sup>89</sup> Dr. John W. Long to Robert F. Rich, March 22, 1938, Robert F. Rich Papers, Lycoming College Snowden Library Archives, Williamsport, PA.

<sup>90</sup> Dr. John W. Long to Robert F. Rich, March 16, 1935, Robert F. Rich Papers, Lycoming College Snowden Library Archives, Williamsport, PA.

<sup>91</sup> Dr. John W. Long to Robert F. Rich, March 16, 1935.

contributed greatly to the decision of what properties would be added to the campus and which ones would not.

Not only did Rich help Long decide which properties to add to the campus, Rich also acted as a coordinator between the junior college and many of the owners of properties near the college. Rich would make the initial offers for the property and bargain with owners which he did with the Shadle heirs after he convinced Long to go ahead with the purchase. A few months after this discussion about the Shadle heir properties, Robert F. Rich also coordinated and gave Long his opinion on two more properties, the Gray properties on Fourth Street and a property on Park Avenue.<sup>92</sup> Long believed that these properties might be beneficial to the college; however, the college would be spending around \$46,000 to purchase them.<sup>93</sup> If Rich believed these properties were worth the price, Long would allow him to continue with the negotiations for the properties. Rich spent the years before the onset of World War II helping to expand and improve the junior college by coordinating various purchases for the campus.

The Williamsport Seminary and Junior College was prospering before the beginning of World War II. After many of the students went off to war, the junior college lost enough of its revenue that in 1944 Robert F. Rich loaned \$9,800 to the college to help out with the finances. By 1948, the college had paid back \$8,600 of this loan.<sup>94</sup> Long had tried to help the college out by starting an Army education unit in 1942 and “one hundred and ten young men were enrolled in the Civil Pilot Training Cadet course.”<sup>95</sup> In 1943, the college had 349 officers at the college and the school had to ask some of the other students to evacuate their dormitory rooms.<sup>96</sup> The

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<sup>92</sup> Report from John Person to Robert F. Rich, May 10, 1935, Robert F. Rich Papers, Lycoming College Snowden Library Archives, Williamsport, PA.

<sup>93</sup> Report from John Person to Robert F. Rich, May 10, 1935.

<sup>94</sup> Dr. John W. Long to Robert F. Rich, January 11, 1949, Robert F. Rich, Lycoming College Snowden Library Archives, Williamsport, PA.

<sup>95</sup> Williams, 100.

<sup>96</sup> Williams, 100.

numbers of soldiers kept increasing and this helped the college out financially, but it was not enough to keep the junior college out of financial trouble. Rich's loan was therefore a blessing to the college.

At the end of World War II, the college was in financial trouble because many of the returning soldiers were using the money from the GI Bill to go to more expensive, federally approved institutions and universities.<sup>97</sup> As these institutions began to fill, however, Williamsport Dickinson Seminary and Junior College soon overflowed with applications and opened its doors to many of these returning soldiers.<sup>98</sup> The returning soldiers in the Williamsport area had nowhere else to go because many four-year institutions were all ready full and accepting no other students.<sup>99</sup> For the start of the 1946-1947 school year, the college had "939 registered students, 520 of these being G.I.'s."<sup>100</sup> Feeling that the school could better serve these students if it was a four-year institution, Dr. Long contacted the President of the University Senate of the Methodist Church, John L. Seaton.<sup>101</sup> At a meeting of the board and various Methodist ministers on October 17, 1946, Long stated some of the arguments supporting this move to a four-year institution:

The crowded conditions of all colleges at the present time indicate that beginning with our graduation class next June we shall not be able to gain admission for these students to other college.

There are 424 veterans and 175 non-veterans students living in and near Williamsport. Their parents are concerned.

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<sup>97</sup> Thelin, 264.

<sup>98</sup> Williams, 103.

<sup>99</sup> Williams, 103.

<sup>100</sup> Williams, 103

<sup>101</sup> Williams, 102.

This possible enlargement of our educational program will not interfere with Dickinson College. There are possibly 500,000 Methodists in the State of Pennsylvania with only two Methodist four year colleges.

The present interest in higher education will continue for at least five years. The present colleges will have to enlarge or new four year colleges will have to come into existence...

The public school system is beginning Junior College work which will be the end of Junior Colleges such as Williamsport Dickinson.<sup>102</sup>

These were only some of the arguments used at the meeting to argue for the junior college becoming a four-year accredited institution. Long knew the college needed to become a four-year college if it wanted to survive the changing times.

Robert F. Rich, however, wanted nothing to do with this move to a four-year institution, and he made this perfectly clear at the October 17, 1946 meeting. His reason for this opposition was that he had promised Dr. Morgan of Dickinson College that the college would not move beyond the junior college status. He told the board and Long that he would not support this accreditation unless Dickinson College released him from the promise he made to them in the early 1930s.<sup>103</sup> The administration of Williamsport Dickinson Seminary and Junior College knew how important Rich would be to the development, so they set up a meeting with Dickinson College. Dickinson College met with a committee headed by Judge Charles Williams, author of the only history of Lycoming College's development, on January 4, 1947 to discuss this promise.<sup>104</sup> At this meeting, the new president of Dickinson College told the committee that Williamsport Dickinson had no obligations to Dickinson College; however, he asked that the

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<sup>102</sup> Williams, 104.

<sup>103</sup> Williams, 102.

<sup>104</sup> Williams, 105.

new school not use Dickinson in its name.<sup>105</sup> With Rich no longer obligated to Dickinson College, he threw his support into the movement to a four-year school. Without this support, the college might not have raised enough money to finance this move and might not have met the accreditation requirements. Rich had so much to do with the accreditation of the college that it is hard to imagine if Long's second vision still would have come true if Dickinson College had not released Williamsport Dickinson from its promise. It would have been hard to continue the accreditation process without Rich.

The campaign for accreditation began in 1948. Rich's help and influence as Congressman was important to this campaign. Long expressed his concerns for the college in his letter to Rich in 1949, stating that the "college must be accredited in order to live."<sup>106</sup> Long knew Rich had the power to make this accreditation happen. In late 1946, the college had applied to the state to change the junior college to a four-year institution and to name the new institution Lycoming College.<sup>107</sup> Rich helped to make this possible in any way he could from giving speeches and radio addresses, to signing letters and subscription cards. The subscription cards and letters were an important part of the campaign. Who gave out the subscription cards and who signed the letters also influenced how much money a contributor might be willing to give to the campaign. For instance, after receiving a letter from Congressman Rich, the president of Williamsport Narrow Fabric Company, William R. Waldeisen, stated that he would now give a contribution to the campaign.<sup>108</sup> Earlier, the committee had sent a "colored woman around to him soliciting

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<sup>105</sup> Williams, 105.

<sup>106</sup> Dr. John W. Long to Robert F. Rich, August 20, 1949, Robert F. Rich Papers, Lycoming College Snowden Library Archives, Williamsport, PA.

<sup>107</sup> William Gray to Robert F. Rich, December 31, 1947, Robert F. Rich Papers, Lycoming College Snowden Library Archives, Williamsport, PA.

<sup>108</sup> Robert F. Rich to Dr. John W. Long, February 25, 1948, Robert F. Rich Papers, Lycoming College Snowden Library Archives, Williamsport, PA.

contributions,” and he made it clear to Rich that this action had offended him.<sup>109</sup> Even though the college had offended him, he still donated money to the campaign after receiving the letter and apology from the congressman. Another example, Ralph Minker, a member of the campaign committee, contacted Robert F. Rich and asked for his permission to send him 400 to 500 letters and invitations for the campaign so that he could sign them before they were put in the mail.<sup>110</sup> The college wanted to use any method it could and take any precautions necessary to obtain as many donations as it could. It could not meet the accreditation requirements without the funds necessary to do it.

Not only did Rich’s title help the campaign, but he also helped the college meet the accreditation requirements by contributing to the campaign and keeping in close contact with the reports from the Middle States Association of College and Secondary Schools. The college had started giving third-year class work in September of 1947 and planned to give fourth-year class work in September of 1948.<sup>111</sup> However, the college needed to receive accreditation from the University Senate of the Methodist Church and Secondary Schools, as well as the Middle States Association of College and Secondary Schools, in order for other institutions to accept the graduates of the college.<sup>112</sup> The college had received a good report from the University Senate in 1947 and began to execute the plans necessary for the four-year school’s accreditation; however, in order for the University Senate to accredit the school, it would need to meet the Middle States Association requirements, which included more classroom space, more professional faculty

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<sup>109</sup> Robert F. Rich to Dr. John W. Long, February 25, 1948.

<sup>110</sup> Ralph Minker to Robert F. Rich, November 25, 1947, Robert F. Rich Papers, Lycoming College Snowden Library Archives, Williamsport, PA.

<sup>111</sup> “Four-Year College Program Definitely Authorized for DJC,” *Bulletin Williamsport Dickinson Seminary and Junior College*, May 1947, Robert F. Rich Papers, Lycoming College Snowden Library Archives, Williamsport, PA.

<sup>112</sup> Williams, 109.

members, and an endowment of \$1,000,000.<sup>113</sup> Committees from both associations visited the campus twice before approving the college for accreditation.<sup>114</sup>

The first visit to the college was by a committee of five educators from the Middle States Association in March of 1948.<sup>115</sup> This committee decided that the junior college needed to make quite a few changes and revisions in order to meet the accreditation requirements.<sup>116</sup> For example, the committee suggested that “the dean and heads of the education divisions all have doctor’s degrees and experience in four year college work.”<sup>117</sup> The college took these suggestions into consideration, as well as the suggestions from the University Senate. Chancellor E. V. Trolley from Syracuse University visited the college in January of 1950 with a committee from the University Senate.<sup>118</sup> This committee would not approve the college unless the college also built a new library and science building.<sup>119</sup> In addition, most of the faculty at the college needed to have doctorate degrees, and the college needed to reorganize the faculty departments to de-centralize authority.<sup>120</sup> From the report, the college also still needed to raise \$320,000 to meet the endowment requirement, as well as \$180,000 to expand certain facilities such as labs for the science courses and \$55,000 to remodel the dorm section of Old Main, which needed better fire protection.<sup>121</sup> The college followed these recommendations so that the committees would approve the college for accreditation in their second visit to campus.

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<sup>113</sup> “Four-Year College Program Definitely Authorized for DJC,” *Bulletin Williamsport Dickinson Seminary and Junior College*, May 1947.

<sup>114</sup> Williams, 109.

<sup>115</sup> Williams, 109.

<sup>116</sup> Williams, 109.

<sup>117</sup> Williams, 109.

<sup>118</sup> Williams, 109.

<sup>119</sup> Williams, 109.

<sup>120</sup> Williams, 109.

<sup>121</sup> Frank H. Bowles to Dr. Long, May 2, 1950, Robert F. Rich Papers, Lycoming College Snowden Library Archives, Williamsport, PA.

Rich knew how important it was for the college to have sufficient funds to meet the accreditation requirements. He knew that the college needed to raise enough money so that it could meet the endowment requirements and improve the campus facilities. As soon as he agreed to support the transition to a four-year school, he began contributing money to the college and the campaign. One contribution he made was in the form of a contract between Woolrich Woolen Mills and the Williamsport Dickinson Seminary and Junior College in 1947. The contract stated that for every nineteen dollars that citizens of the Williamsport community gave to the college, the company would give the college one dollar.<sup>122</sup> Therefore, if the citizens gave \$380,000, the company would give the college \$20,000, and if the citizens raised \$475,000, then the company would give the college \$25,000.<sup>123</sup> The company agreed to continue this contract up until September 1, 1947.<sup>124</sup> In January of 1948, Rich donated a joint gift with his Woolrich Woolen Mills Company to the college campaign fund.<sup>125</sup> The company gave \$20,000 to the college, and Robert F. Rich added another \$5,000 from himself.<sup>126</sup>

Contributing to the campaign funds was not the only way in which Rich contributed money to meet the accreditation requirements. Since he knew that the college needed to build a new library on campus in order to meet the accreditation requirements, he contributed \$15,000 to the funds for the library.<sup>127</sup> Before this point, the college had a contract with the public James V. Brown library so that the students had access to books needed for their college courses.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Woolrich Woolen Mills to Dr. Long, June 24, 1947, Robert F. Rich Papers, Lycoming College Snowden Library Archives, Williamsport, PA.

<sup>123</sup> Woolrich Woolen Mills to Dr. Long, June 24, 1947.

<sup>124</sup> Woolrich Woolen Mills to Dr. Long, June 24, 1947.

<sup>125</sup> Robert F. Rich to Ralph Minker, January 5, 1948, Robert F. Rich Papers, Lycoming College Snowden Library Archives, Williamsport, PA.

<sup>126</sup> Robert F. Rich to Ralph Minker, January 5, 1948.

<sup>127</sup> Williams, 110.

<sup>128</sup> Williams, 109.

The second committees for both the University Senate and the Middle States Association visited again in April and June of 1950.<sup>129</sup> During these visits both associations gave the college their approval for accreditation. However, the Middle States Association still had a few suggestions for improvement for the college. For example, the college had not yet completed the construction of the new library but had promised it would be completed by 1952.<sup>130</sup> The Middle States Association suggested that the college organize the materials by academic department and make sure that the library had a large enough collection of books and materials.<sup>131</sup> In addition, they suggested that the college use more standardized testing for class evaluations and establish senior and honors programs for independent study.<sup>132</sup> Finally in May, Long received a letter from Frank H. Bowles, the chairman of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, stating that Lycoming College had been placed on the accredited list on April 28, 1950.<sup>133</sup>

Another important contribution Rich made for the benefit of the college was his negotiations and bargaining with the Flock Brewing Company. In 1854, not too long after Benjamin Crever established the seminary in Williamsport, Henry Jacob Flock and his partners built the City Brewery, and in 1865 Flock “purchased the entire business...and named it the Flock Brewing Company.”<sup>134</sup> President Long and Rich worried about the brewery being so close to the school campus in case it might encourage inappropriate behavior from the students. As

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<sup>129</sup> Williams, 109.

<sup>130</sup> Williams, 110.

<sup>131</sup> “Report of the Inspection of Lycoming College for the Middle States Association,” February 26-28, Robert F. Rich Papers, Lycoming College Snowden Library Archives, Williamsport, PA.

<sup>132</sup> “Report of the Inspection of Lycoming College for the Middle States Association,” February 26-28.

<sup>133</sup> Frank H. Bowles to Dr. Long, May 2, 1950, Robert F. Rich Papers, Lycoming College Snowden Library Archives, Williamsport, PA.

<sup>134</sup> Williams, 110.

Long told his friend in 1933, he was worried that the students would want to try the beer.<sup>135</sup> In addition, the faculty joked that the students would make a “pipe line from the vats to Bradley Hall, a few feet away.”<sup>136</sup> The board of trustees led by Rich believed it beneficial to the college to buy out the Flock Brewery, so they began negotiations for the brewery in 1948 with an offer of \$50,000.<sup>137</sup> In 1949, Rich was still not willing to raise the offer above \$50,000 for the property. The property included the boiler house, a recreation center built for the employees of the company, and any nearby houses owned by the company; however, the college did not want any of the machinery in the brewery.<sup>138</sup> Nathan F. Cooper, the president of the Flock Brewing Company, believed that the college’s offer was too low and wanted \$85,000 for these properties.<sup>139</sup> These negotiations continued until 1951 because neither Rich nor Cooper was willing to significantly increase or decrease his offer. In September of 1949, Rich adjusted his price slightly to \$70,000 even though he believed that the property was not worth that much.<sup>140</sup> Finally, in November of 1951, the college increased its offer to \$83,000 and Cooper accepted.<sup>141</sup> In 1955, Rich then headed a committee for the raising of funds to take down the all but the brewery’s heating system.<sup>142</sup>

President Long, however, did not approve of this purchase the first couple years that Rich suggested it. Although Long believed that the brewery was an eye sore and wanted to close it down, he also believed that the money required for this purchase would be better used for the

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<sup>135</sup> Dr. John W. Long to Robert F. Rich, March 23, 1933, Robert F. Rich Papers, Lycoming College Snowden Library Archives, Williamsport, PA.

<sup>136</sup> Williams, 111.

<sup>137</sup> Williams, 111.

<sup>138</sup> Robert F. Rich to Durant L. Furey, February 28, 1949, Robert F. Rich Papers, Lycoming College Snowden Library Archives, Williamsport, PA.

<sup>139</sup> Daniel F. Swartz to Robert F. Rich, October 20, 1949, Robert F. Rich Papers, Lycoming College Snowden Library Archives, Williamsport, PA.

<sup>140</sup> Robert F. Rich to Judge Charles S. Williams, September 29, 1949, Robert F. Rich Papers, Lycoming College Snowden Library Archives, Williamsport, PA.

<sup>141</sup> Williams, 111.

<sup>142</sup> Williams, 112.

new library, a science building, or the purchase of properties on Franklin Avenue and Washington Boulevard.<sup>143</sup> He did not think this purchase would benefit the college. He declared that only the heating system and bottling plant (for storage) could benefit the college; the rest of the building would be torn down and could only be used for a parking lot.<sup>144</sup> Even though Long had these objections to this purchase, he trusted and respected Rich's decisions and his advice. After stating his objections, Long declared, "You are the President and naturally any action which the Board takes under your leadership will be respected by me and I will do all I can to carry out your wishes and those of the Board whatever that may mean as to the purchase and use of the brewery buildings."<sup>145</sup> Rich had given President Long good advice since he first became president of the board of trustees. In the end, the college tore down most of the brewery and put a parking lot in its place, and the college turned the bottling plant into a science hall.<sup>146</sup>

Besides the major roles already discussed, Rich also played a role in electing the successor to President Long. Robert F. Rich wanted to make sure that the college would succeed after Long's retirement and after he retired as well. So, in 1954, Rich headed the committee to select the next president.<sup>147</sup> Rich wanted a president who was just as dedicated and enthusiastic as Long was, so he helped to select Reverend D. Frederick Wertz.<sup>148</sup>

Robert F. Rich did everything he could to make sure President Long's visions for the college came true. By the time he joined the board of trustees as its president in 1931, the seminary had already started its transition into the junior college. It was Rich's efforts and his contributions to the campus that helped the seminary succeed in accomplishing the accreditation

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<sup>143</sup> Dr. John W. Long to Robert F. Rich, August 20, 1949, Robert F. Rich Papers, Lycoming College Snowden Library Archives, Williamsport, PA.

<sup>144</sup> Dr. John W. Long to Robert F. Rich, August 20, 1949.

<sup>145</sup> Dr. John W. Long to Robert F. Rich, August 20, 1949.

<sup>146</sup> Williams, 112.

<sup>147</sup> Williams, 118.

<sup>148</sup> Williams, 120.

requirements for the junior college status. His meeting with Dr. Henry Morgan of Dickinson College contributed greatly to the junior college accreditation process. Without this meeting, the seminary would have had a hard time meeting the approved requirements for junior college status. After the seminary became accredited in 1935 and became the Williamsport Dickinson Seminary and Junior College, Robert F. Rich contributed money to the development of the campus and its expansion. These contributions were crucial because the new junior college needed to expand its facilities and departments in order to accommodate the new flow of students applying and attending this institution.

During World War II, the college found a way to keep itself from going bankrupt. However, with the return of soldiers to the area after the end of the war, the college needed to find ways to accommodate the soldiers now looking for higher education. With most institutions in the country already overflowing with students, President Long believed it would be in the best interest of the college to transition into a four-year institution. After resolving his obligation to Dickinson College, Rich agreed with Long that the college needed to become a four-year institution in order to survive. Through his own efforts and influence, Rich helped to raise money for the campaign to meet the accreditation requirements by the University Senate and the Middle States Association. He used his influence to solicit contributions for the campaign, negotiated the purchase of properties for the college, donated money himself to the campaign, and advised Long on what steps needed to be taken to meet the requirements. Long had complete faith in Rich and, although he would rather take control of all the decision-making himself, Long was not willing to make a full decision without seeking the advice of his old friend and roommate. In order to be as effective as he was, Rich needed to have the respect and trust of

the administration, other members of the board, and the faculty members; he also needed a considerable amount of power.

No one is downplaying the role of President Long in the development of Williamsport Dickinson Seminary into the four-year institution of Lycoming College. It was his vision, after all, for the institution to move from a seminary to a junior college and then to a four-year institution. However, he did not complete this task himself, and he would not have been able to complete the task without the help of his partner and roommate, Robert F. Rich. The efforts and influence of Robert F. Rich in the early twentieth century made it possible for the seminary to make this development and to survive the transitions.

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