



BROCK
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

Samford History

In 1841, a group of educational, economic and religious leaders established a new school in Marion, Alabama, and began a remarkable institutional odyssey. Named Howard College in honor of British prison reformer John Howard, the institution would survive fires, wars, relocations, financial and cultural upheaval, and renaming to become a nationally recognized university.

Facing financial difficulties in an area devastated by the Civil War, the college relocated to the East Lake community in Birmingham in 1887 only to find promises of support and visions of grand new facilities rapidly fading. In the decades after relocating, the college improved its facilities and financial situation, became coeducational and continued to grow along with the region to which it had relocated. But, the hard times of the 1930s and 1940s again threatened financial ruin.

During World War II, then-President Harwell Goodwin Davis actively lobbied for and won a contract with the federal government to host a branch of the U.S. Navy's V-12 training program, stationed at the nearby Birmingham airport. It was a visionary decision that dramatically changed the school. The college saved enough of the V-12 funds to buy property and relocate to the Birmingham suburb of Homewood in the 1950s.

Completion of the campus relocation fell to Davis' successor, Leslie S. Wright, who became president in 1958. Growth during the Wright years was not limited to bricks and mortar, however. In 1965, Howard College was elevated to university status, taking the name Samford University in part to avoid confusion with Howard University and in part to honor the family of longtime trustee Frank Park Samford. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, new programs, including the relocation of Cumberland School of Law to Samford, dramatically expanded the university's educational offerings.

Thomas E. Corts became president in 1983 and fueled a new era of remarkable growth. Samford earned a consistent place among the South's top universities in various national rankings, posted record enrollments, established a London Study Centre and expanded other international study opportunities, undertook major building projects, and nurtured an impressive endowment.

Samford's success in the 1980s and 1990s owed much to the generosity of the Beeson family. For more than three decades, the Beesons—Ralph and Orlean Bullard Beeson, and Dwight and Lucille Stewart Beeson—helped define both the physical and intellectual landscape of Samford. The Beesons were business contemporaries of Frank Park Samford, and their gifts provided funding for facilities, academic programs and scholarships.



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Today, Samford offers 23 graduate and undergraduate degree programs in more than 100 major fields of study through its eight academic units: School of the Arts, Howard College of Arts and Sciences, Brock School of Business, Beeson Divinity School, Orlean Bullard Beeson School of Education and Professional Studies, Cumberland School of Law, Ida V. Moffett School of Nursing and McWhorter School of Pharmacy.

Samford combines the advantages of a large, diverse institution with the atmosphere of a small, liberal arts college. More than 4,500 students are enrolled annually and represent a global community that includes all 50 states and about 30 other countries. The 400-plus member faculty holds degrees from more than 100 different higher education institutions.

The Leslie Stephen Wright Fine Arts Center, Jane Hollock Brock Hall, Bonnie Bolding Swearingen Hall, Ben F. Harrison Theatre, Bolding Studio and the Samford Art Gallery serve the university and the community through the burgeoning performing and fine arts programs at Samford and community-based organizations. The Wright Center Concert Hall is the home venue for the Alabama Ballet.

Andrew Westmoreland became Samford's 18th president in June 2006 at a time of unprecedented institutional strength, capability and optimism. Visionary leadership continues through strategic planning that will guide the university well into the 21st century as one of the outstanding doctoral and research universities in America.

