



Transcript of Kerby Plaque at Kerby Centre.

George and Emily Kerby

Rev. Dr. George Kerby

The Rev. Dr. George and Emily Kerby were early builders of Calgary and their achievements continue to improve life for Calgarians today.

Born in Ontario in 1860, George Kerby graduated from Victoria University in the University of Toronto and was ordained as a minister of the Methodist Church. In 1888 he married Emily Spencer, a teacher and the principal of a girls' high school.

George Kerby was charismatic, determined and dynamic, a born promoter and an inspirational leader. Emily was a talented social activist, writer and educator. A progressive thinker, she was the importance of education for women.

Over the next 15 years, George became a respected church leader and a powerful speaker. Emily joined local organizations such as the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA).

In 1903 George and Emily Kerby moved to Calgary, where he became minister of the Central Methodist Church (today's Central United Church at 131 – 7 Ave. SW). Emily put her organizational skills toward raising funds to create a Calgary YWCA.

1910 was a pivotal year for the Kerbys. The YWCA was founded in December and George became the founding principal of the city's new Methodist College, called Mount Royal College.

Mount Royal opened its doors at the corner of 7th Avenue and 11th Street SW (across 7th Ave. from this plaque) in 1911. During the first academic year, it welcomed 179 students.

George Kerby described the new college as “a character factory, a place for the making of men and women”. Classes included “general arts courses - in English, commercial and stenographic work, music, elocution, physical culture, household and domestic science” Emily was one of the College's first teachers.

For more than 31 years, George Kerby served as Principal of Mount Royal and was active with many community organizations. Emily was a charter member of the Calgary Local Council of Women and campaigned with Nellie McClung to win the vote for women in Alberta in 1916 and across Canada in 1918.

Emily died in 1938, only nine days before the Kerby's 50th wedding anniversary George retired from the College in 1942 and died in 1944.

When the College needed to expand, the Kerby Memorial Building was opened (1948) but student enrolment continued to grow and in 1972 Mount Royal College moved to its present Lincoln Park campus.

Since 1973, the Kerby Centre has been providing outstanding programs for seniors from its home in the Kerby Memorial Building.

Mount Royal College became Mount Royal University in 2009 and it has never lost its dedication to student success – a legacy of the Rev. Dr. George Kerby and his wife Emily.