

# Graduation '90



Courtesy Photo

Most of the University's earliest graduating classes worked hard to appear stoic and formal in their photographs.

## Ceremony has long, rich history

On Sunday, June 10, the University will recognize its 1990 graduating class in a commencement ceremony. It's been 112 years since the first class graduated, and a few things have changed since then.

Back in the summer of 1878, a grand total of five students took their place in local history in becoming the first class to graduate from the University. The class was made up of four men and one woman and each of them spoke at the ceremony. They had taken a vote to determine who would give the valedictory speech. Ellen Condon, the woman, was chosen.

The ceremony was held in an opera house in downtown Eugene City, as it was then known, because the entire University consisted of one building that could not hold

all wanting to attend. According to Keith Richard, University archivist, there really was no campus back then. It was an orchard with a building in the middle. The only trees in the area were the two just north of that building. They are still standing to this day.

The following year, graduation was held in a newly constructed auditorium on the third floor of that one building on campus. The building was later named Deady Hall in honor of Judge Matthew Deady, a benefactor of the University and the first president of the board of regents. He gave the commencement address that year.

In the early years of the University, each graduating class donated a gift. The first few classes planted trees. The one planted by the class of

1879 is the oldest one on campus.

The class of 1891 didn't have much luck with their effort. The first tree they planted died quickly, as did a second one. Because of this, the class of 1893 decided to give a gift with a much more certain future. They took a piece of basalt from what is now known as Skinner's Butte and placed it just north of the new building on campus, Villard Hall. They carved "Class of 1893" in the three-foot-high cylindrical stone, and it can still be seen on the lawn.

In the years since then, classes have donated money to help build the EMU and the Knight Library. Originally, the gifts were paid for with the money students were charged in class fees. Because the

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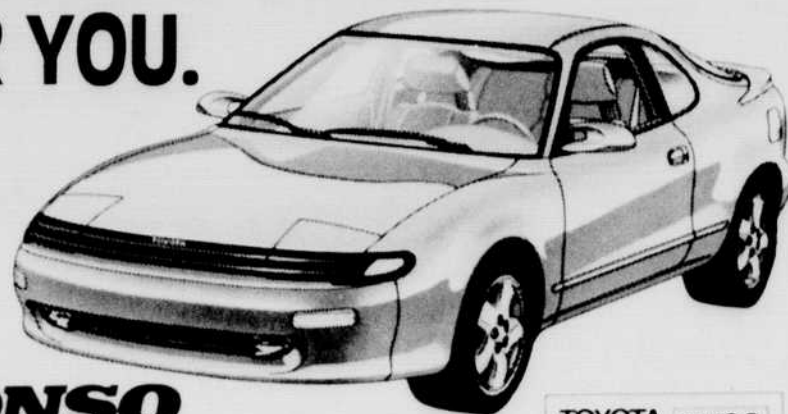
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