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Marc Linder

University of Iowa College of Law

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When they ran out of dead white men to name buildings after, they began naming new ones for guys who were still alive. Is a single UI building named for a woman? Sooner or later one will be, because every president — no matter how good, bad or mediocre — eventually is so honored.

But none has been yet. At least one building, however, commemorates a caricature of a male chauvinist pig, who left behind a trail of misogynist writings.

Seashore, a psychology professor, was no closet woman-despiser. He promoted his views unabashedly in official university materials, academic journals and advice offered over decades from his dean's seat.

The university's Operations Manual lays down the law on "The Naming of Buildings" right next to the vital provision on "Vending Machines." Section 60.100 ordains: "Because of the relative permanence of decisions to name buildings ... it is prudent to allow reasonable time for consideration at each stage of the process."

How prudent was the UI when it bestowed the name Seashore on a

building in 1981? No, this building is not a reminder of an earlier geological period in Iowa, but a throwback to an earlier ideological era in the history of gender relations. Carl Seashore, for years the influential dean of the UI Graduate College, died in 1949. During the ensuing three decades, how prudently did the UI consider his denigrating attitudes and policies toward female students and professors before deciding to saddle us with him "relatively permanently"?

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promoted his views unabashedly in official university materials, academic journals and advice offered over decades from his dean's seat.

During his deanship, which lasted from 1908-33, Seashore identified the "career-minded woman" as his "greatest problem." "Something of biological nature in sex" was his explanation as to why vastly more male than female graduates had "achieved distinction." While will-

ing to admit women to the hallowed halls, he held that the foremost purpose of a woman's graduate education was preparation for "her social position" as wife. He declared as a "fundamental fact ... that marriage is a career in itself, the most universal, the most laudable and the most desirable career for a normal woman."

Some might call these revelations cheap shots. Life moves on, and not even a genius can anticipate the enlightenment that hindsight bestows.

But Seashore's writings show he was consciously engaged in a struggle against the women's liberationists of his day — and the week of International Women's Day seems an appropriate occasion to proceed with the exposé.

In one article, he observed: "Girls at the graduate-school level are often on a suffrage campaign, fighting for their sex, declaiming against violation of women's rights and prejudice against larger opportunities for women." He went on to recall an exchange with one of these "bitter-ender" women who aspired to a career, rejecting his suggestion that "a state of happy married life" was her preferred destiny. "The bitter-ender had

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declared vigorously that she was not going to be married. I then asked, "Do you really want to be an old maid?" That question stirred up trouble. She had been working against her deeper convictions and urges and set up an artificial goal."

During World War II, as women did men's work while men went to war,

Seashore trumpeted his philosophy nationally through the *Journal of Higher Education*, proclaiming: "The real and wise intention of most normal women undertaking graduate work is to prepare for being happily married to a scholarly and cultured man."

What conclusions can we draw from this Neanderthal claptrap? Perhaps not every president or other high-ranking university official is automatically worthy of joining the edifice-immortals. President Virgil Hancher, for example, by narrow-mindedly rejecting federal funds, was responsible for the fact that the UI had fewer resources than kindred institutions in the early post-World War II period — being the only major university without a library building until the early 1950s.

The point of this critique is not to plead for an extension to prominent women of the self-perpetuating system of defying local dignitaries on building plaques. Indeed, if 50 years after his death scarcely anyone can identify a one-time campus titan like Seashore, such obscurity suggests we might name buildings for meritorious non-lumi-

naries such as librarians, secretaries and janitors.

But why name buildings for anyone? An obvious reason is to avoid the prosaic use of numbers or boring functional labels. However, if our goals are variety and a local touch, we could adopt aesthetically pleasing fantasy names or those of regional flora and fauna. Alternatively, we could draw on collectively held values — say, "Justice and Equality" for the College of Law, or "Truth and Accuracy" for the School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

Ultimately, the UI's drive to sell itself to the highest bidder may spare us these hard but fun decisions altogether.

With buildings increasingly self-named by capitalists deigning to return some of their wealth to the commons, the rest of us will have even less say in what our public buildings are called.

Marc Linder is a professor in the UI College of Law and a local undignitary. UI associate professor of journalism Judy Polumbaum contributed the phrase "Neanderthal claptrap."