

Celebrating Tom Jackson and Dennis O'Brien

By Joel Seligman

IN MAY, WE WILL CELEBRATE THE NAMING of our new residence hall on Wilson Boulevard as O'Brien Hall, after our eighth president, Dennis O'Brien, and Jackson Court, including O'Brien Hall, Anderson and Wilder residence halls, and the Sage Art Center, after our ninth president, Tom Jackson.

This is a particularly fitting tribute to two pivotal presidents in the history of our University.

O'Brien Hall appropriately faces the Genesee River toward the greater Rochester community.

Dennis O'Brien was a leader in reaching out to our community. The construction of the pedestrian bridge across the Genesee is a physical embodiment of his determination to break down the belief that a great university in the 20th century could be wholly separate and apart from its surrounding community.

Dennis stressed the challenge of undergraduate education, urging: "Let our signature be liberal education in a professional world," and added the Take Five Scholars Program, among his many accomplishments.

Tom Jackson played a decisive role in further reenergizing undergraduate education at Rochester.

Under his leadership, Arts, Sciences & Engineering designed and implemented first the Renaissance Plan and later the Rochester Curriculum, with its nationally recognized cluster system. Tom was a University leader, and during his tenure the Medical Center developed and implemented its highly effective 1996 strategic plan.

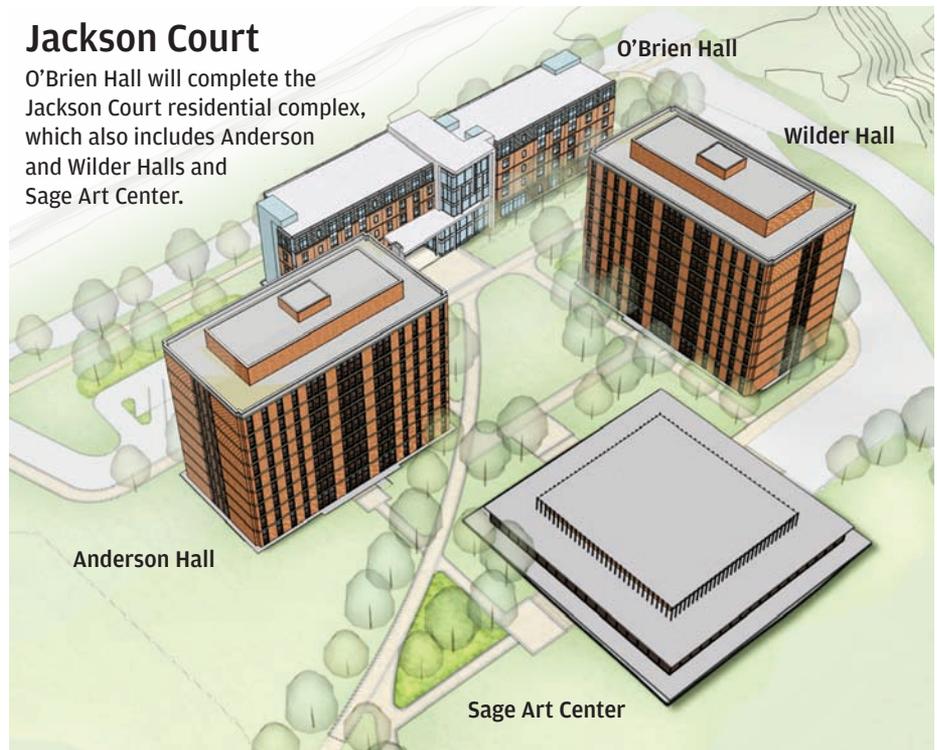
Great institutions build on their pasts. Both Dennis and Tom led our University during a time of economic challenge. Both were pivotal, as Tom put it, in "reasserting the greatness of the University of Rochester."

After his service as University president, Tom Jackson has remained on our faculty and I have frequently met with him.

He is the wisest of counselors, with a splendid memory, an experienced-based

Jackson Court

O'Brien Hall will complete the Jackson Court residential complex, which also includes Anderson and Wilder Halls and Sage Art Center.



understanding of the realities of my work, and an absolute commitment to helping our University achieve the ideal of Meliora.

I am especially grateful for his determination to make the transition between our two periods of service as seamless as possible, his support of different approaches that I have sometimes pursued, and his friendship.

Over 75 years ago, Rush Rhees stepped down as the third president of our University. Our central library was named in his honor. Since then, the University's history has followed a complex and nonlinear path, one today in which libraries are facing a profound transition as part of a digital revolution.

The reputation of Rush Rhees lives on.

We are always mindful of the transformational role that he and George Eastman played in building the modern University of Rochester.

I hope that many years from now Dennis and Tom similarly will be remembered.

Their leadership also was pivotal in helping fashion our University into one that is now a national leader in undergraduate education, among the nation's leaders in sponsored research, home to a health care system that leads our region, and a place in our community as the leading employer and a good neighbor.

To reverse the Shakespearian adage, "may the good that men [and women] do, live after them . . ."

Thank you, Dennis. Thank you, Tom. 🍷

Both Dennis O'Brien and Tom Jackson led our University during a time of economic challenge. Both were pivotal, as Tom put it, in "reasserting the greatness of the University of Rochester."