

The Training Homes and Schools

It all began on the 1st of October 1897.

It will be noted with satisfaction that the Ewart Missionary Training Home, which, it is expected, will be formally opened on the 1st of October, will be under the charge of Mrs. Anna Ross, formerly of Brucefield, Ontario as lady superintendent. Mrs. Ross is well-known to our readers as a valued contributor to our columns, and in Western Ontario as the wife of the late highly revered Rev. John Ross, the 'Apostle of Bruce.' The institute has been fortunate in having secured her efficient services.

- The Presbyterian Review, Toronto, September 16, 1897

The Ewart Missionary Training Home, 540 Church Street, Toronto, will be open for work on the 1st of October. Although the Home is established primarily and chiefly for the training of Foreign mission Candidates, other Christian Workers desiring to avail themselves of its advantages will be received as boarders, subject to the approval of the Board of Management. W.F.M.S. applications may obtain all necessary information from Mrs. Shortreed, Foreign Secretary, W.F.M.S., 224 Jarvis Street, Toronto.

- The Presbyterian Record, October 1897

The Ewart Missionary Training Home received its name in memory of Mrs. Thomas Ewart who was president of the Women's Foreign Missionary Society. The first location was 540 Church Street, Toronto, which had been occupied by Mrs. Ewart for a short time prior to her death. In 1899 it was necessary to move to larger quarters, located at 74 Charles Street. From 1897 to June 1908 the institution was supported by the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society (W.F.M.S.) and was under the joint management of that Society and the Foreign Mission Committee.

The Ewart Home issued a small booklet with the following goal:

"The earnest wish of the friends of the Home is that the field of its operations may be widened for greater usefulness. It is now hoped that the Church, in the near future, will give its official sanction to the training of women workers as assistants in congregations, city missions, and other departments of Home Mission service with public recognition of their appointment, as is now done in the case of those for foreign work."

In June 1907, the Presbytery of Toronto presented to the General Assembly, meeting in Montreal, an overture asking Assembly "to express approval of the changing of the constitution of the (Ewart Training) Home with a view to the broadening of its scope and its support and to approve at the same time of some method by which graduates may be specially designated by the Church when entering their work." This overture, with that presented by the Presbytery of Winnipeg and the Synod Manitoba, was referred to a Committee which reported in 1908. The recommendations of the Committee were accepted and the Order of Deaconesses for the Presbyterian Church in Canada was instituted, and the scope of the Ewart Missionary Training Home was enlarged making it an institution for the training of women for the missionary and deaconess work of the Church.

With growing number coming to the Home, a move to another larger building was again necessary. The property at 60 Grosvenor Street, which was known as the Hammond residence, was purchased. A recommendation from the Ewart Missionary and Deaconess Training Home to the General Assembly in 1910 resulted in the name of the institution being changed to the Presbyterian Missionary and Deaconess Training Home.

In the allocation of property following the historic decision in June 1925, "60 Grosvenor" was given to The United Church of Canada. The Presbyterian Missionary and Deaconess Training Home was reborn out of the faith of such friends as Mrs. Daniel Strachan, Mrs. D.T.L. McKerroll, Miss Elizabeth Burns, and Mr. R.J. Lillico who was Chairman of the Deaconess Board. The first location was in a rented house on Huron Street, with Mrs. Lord in charge and Miss Irene Stringer enrolled as the first student. Another temporary move was made to a rented, furnished house at 104 Bedford Road. In September 1927, the general Assembly having been petitioned for permanent quarters for the training Home, approved the purchase of the property at 156 St. George Street. The following month, fourteen students were in residence with Miss Winnifred Ferguson as principal.

As time went on, the training involved certain forms, of social work and it was felt that the word "home" was not the best to use in thinking of the residence and the work connected with it. In 1941 the name was changed to The Presbyterian Missionary and Deaconess Training School, and in 1942 the residence was given the name of Westminster House. In 1952 a dream of long-standing became a reality. An assembly hall was built at the rear of the residence and provided an auditorium for social event and recreational activities. The growth of the School again was necessitated expansion and, in 1956, the property at 83 Prince Arthur Avenue was purchased as a second residence. The long range view of the Board of the School was towards a new building and, in 1958, the General Assembly gave permission to that Board to appeal to the Church for money to provide such a building. The new 156 St. George Street was dedicated on June 9, 1962 and the residence was officially opened on September 29, 1962.

In June 1961 the name of the School was changed by action of the General Assembly from the Presbyterian Missionary and Deaconess Training School to Ewart College, again in honour of Mrs. Thomas Ewart who was so largely responsible for its original founding.

1897-1908	Ewart Missionary Training Home
1908-1910	Ewart Missionary and Deaconess Training Home
1910-1941	Presbyterian Missionary and Deaconess Training Home
1941-1961	Presbyterian Missionary and Deaconess Training School
1961-1992	Ewart College

Locations of the school in Toronto

1897-1899	540 Church Street
1899-1909	74 Charles Street
1909-1925	60 Grosvenor Street
1925-1926	648 Huron Street
1926-1927	104 Bedford Road
1927-1992	156 St. George Street

Another significant change came about with the period 1965-1970 when the realization came that men as well as women should have an opportunity to study at Ewart. The period preceding 1966 was the period of decision for Presbyterians about the possibility of women becoming ordained ministers. In

that same period Ewart was considering the fact that although many men were teachers in the secular world, very few men had the opportunity to become involved in education in the Church.

In 1982, the Order of Deaconesses was changed to the order of Diaconal Ministries. This name change was made to be more inclusive – to include both male and female, and also the variety of ministries which are open to those trained at Ewart College. Then in September of 1991, Knox College and Ewart College were amalgamated and the Ewart College building was out of for sale and sold. In 1992, Diaconal Ministries gained access to the courts of the church.

This history was taken from:

A History of the Deaconess in the Presbyterian Church in Canada, prepared by a Committee of the Order of Deaconesses, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1975

To Keep the Memory Green - A History of Ewart College 1897-1987 by Irene Dickson and Margaret Webster, 1986