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A Forward

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Foreword

Founded in 1885, the history of Rollins College is intertwined with the political, cultural, and economic history of Florida, and of our nation. Rollins has persisted through world wars, economic crises and periods of dramatic social change. All of this has shaped our character today.

Even before I arrived on campus, Professor Jack Lane was recommended to me as the person who would be the most knowledgeable and authoritative source on our history. This was good advice. I learned that Professor Lane had a draft manuscript of a history of Rollins College, and that it was available in digital form through our college library. I read it with great eagerness and found it difficult to put down, the history so rich, the chapters so filled with personalities, crises, bold and inspiring innovations, and a spirit that persisted through all of it. It is this manuscript that became, suitably revised, the book now published.

The story of Rollins told here is a tale woven of threads of fragility and durability. Through all manner of calamity and existential threat, Rollins has persisted, borne on the backs of many who believed - who still believe - deeply in the importance of our mission. One cannot read this and not feel humbled by the efforts of so many, inspired by their determination to realize the original and evolving vision for Rollins, and finally obliged to do all one can to move Rollins forward into its next century.

This is a pivotal moment to make public the first hundred years of Rollins's remarkable history. However far-reaching liberal education needs to change to meet global challenges in the 21st century, any new direction must be built upon continuity with the college's past. In this time of rapidly shifting changes that require (re)envisioning the role liberal education in a global context, it is critical that present and future Rollins generations embrace the distinctive character of the college they are inheriting and appreciate how previous generations strove to build, to strengthen and to pass on a college whose identity has become solidly grounded in the praxis of progressive liberal education. In this sense, the publication of Rollins's centennial history is probably more critical now than it was thirty years ago. From another perspective moreover, the college's centennial story is in need of publication because thousands of students who have graduated from Rollins and thousands of future graduates should be given the opportunity to know and appreciate the fascinating history of the college from which they earned their degrees.

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