

# Profile

Earlham is a national liberal arts college with a reputation for excellent teaching and preparing students to make a profound positive difference in the world.

Earlham consistently ranks among U.S. News and World Report's top national liberal arts institutions, and we have one of the country's best classroom experiences, according to The Princeton Review. The quality of our academic experiences goes beyond rankings, however. Many prestigious organizations — including the Fulbright U.S. Student Program, the Watson Foundation, and the Lilly Foundation — invest in our students, our academic programs, and our facilities.

## A catalyst for good

Earlham's story begins in 1847, when a group of Quakers sought to foster education rooted in respect, integrity, peace, simplicity and community. Today, the college still embodies those qualities and has consistently ranked among the top national liberal arts institutions in the country. Earlham is a collaborative learning community that inspires and motivates students with transformative opportunities and experiences so they can become catalysts for good in a changing world.

## Our history

Earlham has its roots in the Great Migration of Quakers from the eastern United States, especially from North Carolina, in the first half of the nineteenth century. A peculiarly Quaker combination of idealism and practicality drew them to the Northwest Territory. As Friends, those who came out of the South had found themselves increasingly uneasy living in a slave society. As small farmers, the abundance of cheap, fertile land made Ohio and Indiana magnets of migration.

This migration created Indiana Yearly Meeting of Friends in 1821. By 1850, it was the largest in the world. Its center was Richmond, where the yearly meetinghouse for the Orthodox body was located. Thus when Indiana Friends decided in 1832 to open a boarding school "for the guarded religious education of the children of Friends," they placed it in Richmond. After fifteen years of laborious fund-raising, it opened on June 6, 1847. In 1859, a collegiate department was added and the school became Earlham College, in honor of the home of the eminent English Quaker minister Joseph John Gurney, who had been an early supporter. Earlham was the second Quaker college in the world, and the first coeducational one.

Most Quakers changed in the late nineteenth century, and Earlham changed with them. Originally a "select" school, open only to Friends, by 1865 the school accepted non-Quaker students, and hired its first non-Quaker professor in 1886. Gradually Quaker plain dress and the plain language disappeared from campus. By 1890, art and music, originally forbidden by Quaker beliefs, had become part of the curriculum. In the 1890s, intercollegiate athletics became part of Earlham life.

Change did not come without controversy. Between 1895 and 1915, Professor of Bible Elbert Russell was the target of numerous protests for introducing modernist methods of Bible study to the college. In 1920-1921, the college was actually the target of a heresy investigation aimed at liberalism and evolution. In the 1930s and 1941, many Quakers fiercely protested the relaxation of rules banning dancing and smoking. During World War II, the enrollment of Japanese-American students outraged some local residents.

Earlham transformed itself after World War II, with building and financial growth and the advent of a new generation of faculty, many of whom were veterans of Civilian Public Service. The student body became national and international. In 1960, to meet a growing demand for leadership in the Society of Friends, the Earlham School of Religion opened as the only accredited Quaker theological seminary in the world. A few years later Earlham created Conner Prairie, the living history museum near Indianapolis that became independent in 2006. In 2010, by mutual consent, the College and Indiana Yearly Meeting altered their legal relationship, ending the yearly meeting's appointment of trustees and replacing it with a covenant of mutual

expectations. Although Quakers are now a minority of students and faculty, the College maintains its Quaker identity through its Principles and Practices document, its governance by consensus-seeking, its curriculum and its affiliation with Western Yearly Meeting of Friends.