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Pittsburg State University: A Photographic History of the First 100 Years

Randy Roberts, Shannon Phillips

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It began modestly, as a series of high school courses to train young men and women in industrial and domestic arts. Then in 1903 the Kansas legislature set in motion a chain of educational innovations by authorizing an auxiliary program of the normal college at Emporia. The State Manual Training Normal School opened its doors to 54 students, and ten years later it became independent. The ensuing century saw it evolve into Kansas State Teachers College in 1923, then Kansas State College of Pittsburg in 1959, and finally in 1977 the Pittsburg State University that 7,000 students now attend.

This book recounts how an institution of higher learning took root and grew from a vocational school to a multipurpose campus with over one hundred programs of study. Randy Roberts and Shannon Phillips chronicle the rich, colorful story of the emergence of this modern university from its chrysalis. Theirs is the first photographic history of Pittsburg State—and the only history of the school to cover the years from World War II to the present. In this single stunning volume, more than 300 photographs—many in color, and many never before published-track the institution's growth and convey its changing culture over the school's dynamic first century.

Distilling the essence of Pittsburg State—from the state's largest academic building housing the Kansas Technology Center, to Emporia-Pittsburg sports rivalries, to Apple Day celebrations-this book strikes a judicious balance between narrative and illustration to reflect ideals set down in 1903 that guide the university to this day. Whether paying tribute to esteemed faculty members or revisiting significant events such as the football stadium's construction (with faculty help), it faithfully captures the history of PSU and the vision of people like R. S. Russ, Odella Nation, and Harry Hartman who played pivotal roles in shaping the university.

In his foreword, PSU president Tom Bryant observes that if former president William Brandenburg were to walk across the Oval today, he would see a place that looked much different from the institution he helped build; but he would recognize a school where students are still valued and where education continues to open doors-and change lives. This photographic history will delight anyone associated with Pittsburg State University and provide inspiration for its next hundred years.

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