



**J**ohn Arch Morrison was born one of ten children on February 6<sup>th</sup>, 1893 in St. James, Missouri. His parents were Thomas L. Morrison and Mary Beezley Morrison. Though as an adult he would go on to become Anderson University's first president and a fierce supporter of education, John Morrison the student attended a one-room schoolhouse in his home state of Missouri, finishing at the eighth grade. Like many of his peers, farm work took precedent over formal education.

In 1910, he and his stepbrother Earl Martin – future dean of Anderson University's School of Theology – earned their teaching certificates. John Morrison began his first teaching position at Wesco School in Missouri at age seventeen. He taught in public schools for seven years, six of which were in

Missouri, and one in West Virginia.

During Morrison's first year at Wesco, he met Eunice May Drennen, a fellow schoolteacher. They were married in 1912. The couple had four children: Earl Drennen Morrison, Mona Hoffman, Dorothy Blevins-Dicus, and Vivian Caudill. All four attended Anderson College.

In 1917, the Morrises were invited to become pastors in Delta, Colorado, where they lived for a year and a half. Then, in 1919, John Morrison was invited to Anderson, Indiana to become the assistant principal at the recently founded Anderson Bible Training School. Though he was not sure he was qualified for the position, Morrison accepted, and the family moved to Anderson, Indiana that year. They moved into the house known as Morrison House in 1921; the building now houses the Anderson University counseling center.

Morrison taught homiletics in addition to his duties as assistant principal. He assumed full responsibility as principal in 1923. When the school's name was changed in 1925, John A. Morrison was elected president of Anderson College.

During his term as president, he advocated for full accreditation by the North Central Association of College and Secondary Schools, even offering to resign if his lack of formal education would negatively impact the Association's decision. He continued to support liberal arts education and formal training for ministers after Anderson College received full accreditation in 1946.

When he retired in 1958 after thirty-nine years as an administrator, Anderson College had grown from 50 students to 1251. The faculty had grown from 5 to 50. Over fifty percent of the faculty held doctorate degrees, compared to the nation's average of under thirty percent as noted by Morrison.

In 1930, Morrison was awarded an honorary degree from Anderson College, as well as several awards and recognitions upon his retirement. He received the Outstanding Alumni Award and the Anderson Exchange Club's Golden Deeds Award for Outstanding Community Service in 1958. In honor of his retirement from Anderson College, President Eisenhower wrote to Dr. Morrison and congratulated him on his exceptionally long service in education.

In addition to his work at Anderson College, Dr. Morrison was involved with a wide variety of educational and service organizations in Anderson throughout his life. He served as Chairman of the World Service Commission of the Church of God and on the Board of Trustees of the Anderson Public Library, each for twenty-five years. He was also president of the Anderson Kiwanis Club and the Indiana Association of Church Related and Independent Colleges of Indiana, and was a member of the Madison County unit of the American Cancer Society, the Board of Directors of Associated Colleges of Indiana, the American Council on Education, and the Indiana Conference on Higher Education. Henry Schricker, former Governor of Indiana, appointed him to the Indiana Personnel Board, a position he held for two years.

John Morrison was a prolific writer, authoring numerous books and writing columns for Alumni News and Vital Christianity. In addition, he went on nationwide speaking tours and advocated for Christian and liberal arts education until his death on December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1965.

**Anderson University and Church of God Archives**  
**John Arch Morrison Papers**

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