

Brief Biography of Herman G. Baity

Herman G. Baity was a 1917 graduate of UNC, a renowned scholar and a former associate editor of The Daily Tar Heel. He was the recipient of the first Ph.D. in sanitary engineering in the United States. In 1928, while working on a doctorate at Harvard Engineering School, Baity won the Clemons Herschel Prize for the most outstanding work done in America in the field of sanitation. He was invited to join the Harvard faculty, but chose to return to Chapel Hill instead.

Dr. Baity became Dean of Engineering at UNC in 1932 and served in that capacity until the dissolution of the School of Engineering in 1936. The consolidation of state educational functions, a result of the depression years, would change the academic structure of UNC from that point forward. At a time when all other existing engineering programs moved to NC State, it was Dr. Baity's determination that firmly rooted Sanitary Engineering in the new Division of Public Health. The graduate programs expanded and in 1940 the Division of Public Health became the School of Public Health. Graduate degrees included the Master of Science in Sanitary Engineering (MSSE), the Master of Science in Public Health (MSPH), and the Master of Public Health (MPH).

“He was a man who loved the University,” said Daniel Okun, who replaced Baity as the head of UNC's Department of Sanitary Engineering. “He was a big power in the University for a long time.” Baity served on the faculty at UNC until 1955. He was later appointed chief engineer and director of sanitary engineering in the World Health Organization in Geneva, Switzerland.