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## Eureka College named to National Register of Historic Places

EUREKA – Eureka College has been designated as a Campus Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places. The National Park Service made the announcement June 14.

The distinction recognizes the college’s record of achievement in education and its exceptional architecture, according to Jan Grimes, director of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, which administers the National Register program in Illinois.

“Eureka College’s ties to the history of education in Illinois and a number of historic buildings on campus were the main factors in its inclusion on this prestigious national list,” Grimes said.

Eureka College was founded as Walnut Grove Academy in 1848 by abolitionists who were members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). It was chartered as Eureka College by the Illinois Legislature in 1855. It exemplifies the development of private institutions of higher learning in Illinois in the 19th and 20th centuries, Grimes said.

In addition, the architecture spans a number of popular styles from the past 150 years, including Italianate, Romanesque Revival, Colonial Revival and Collegiate Gothic Revival. The oldest remaining building on campus, Burrus Dickinson Hall, was constructed in 1858.

The Eureka College story is tied to the story of the United States of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, said Eureka College history professor Junius Rodriguez.

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“Academic institutions are not born in a vacuum. They are the cultural products of the social and intellectual milieu of their times,” Rodriguez said. “In 1848, the convergence of several antebellum reforms—abolitionism, women’s rights, and a resurgence of evangelical Christianity—infused themselves into the nature of this school committed to social justice through the mutual development of intellect and character.”

Eureka College was the first college in Illinois and the third in the nation to admit men and women on an equal basis, Rodriguez said.

In addition, the distinction recognizes 156 years of graduating servant leaders who have had an impact on American education and history, most notably Ronald W. Reagan, the 40<sup>th</sup> president of the United States, who graduated in 1932, said Eureka College President J. David Arnold.

“While we have always known that our campus and our graduates made history, this formal recognition will bring more attention to distinctive features of Eureka College, including its founding, educational values, the faculty, the staff and the students who have studied here for more than 150 years,” Arnold said.