As a young man, Joseph Baldwin realized the importance of teacher education and dedicated his life to furthering this idea.

"Pure in word and thought, spotless in character Dedicated to the service of God and the uplifting of man."

This quote from Joseph Baldwin: A Dedicated Teacher Educator, exemplifies the spirit of an extraordinary man, a man with a true pioneering spirit who founded a great teaching institution, a man who brought higher education to Northeast Missouri. . . Joseph Baldwin.

Great men do not always come from significant beginnings. Such was the case for Joseph Baldwin. He was born October 31, 1827, on a small farm in New Castle, Pennsylvania, as one of seven children. His childhood was rather uneventful for he worked long, hard hours on his father’s farm. He could not even attend the district school regularly because of all the work the family farm required. But Joseph was a happy boy. His home was filled with love and he always found time for his favorite pastime—reading. He would often take a book to the field with him to enjoy. Fortunately, his father, whose name was also Joseph, was a school teacher and an avid reader, too. Young Joseph’s love for books and his ability to make the most of his opportunities enabled him to learn more than most children his age.

Joseph Baldwin was raised in a devout religious background. During the thirties and forties there was religious unrest. Joseph’s parents were a part of this religious movement and converted to the Church of Christ. In fact, Joseph’s mother, Isabelle, was one of the first women in the area to join this church. Later, as a young man, Joseph also joined the Church of Christ. He always had a deep interest in the Christian faith and would later have to choose between the ministry and teaching.

In 1846 he entered Bartlett Academy in Pennsylvania. He lived with his grandfather, William Cairns. Cairns was a strict man of sound character and had a definite Christian influence on his grandson. His grandson graduated from the Bartlett Academy in 1847.

The following year Joseph Baldwin entered Bethany College in Virginia and his father persuaded him to prepare for the ministry. The first problem he encountered was a lack of funds. His sister, Mrs. Isabelle Grigsby, loaned him the money which he paid back the first year after graduating in 1852.

At Bethany, he was soon influenced by its vibrant president, Alexander Campbell. He lived with Reverend Campbell as one of the family. Leading churchmen and educators visited the Campbell household and Joseph learned much from their many debates.

According to John R. Kirk, former president of NMSU, by living in Alexander Campbell’s home, Joseph Baldwin received double the equivalent of a college education in a four-year period. Mr. Baldwin graduated from Bethany College on July 4, 1852.

Fifty-two days after graduating, he married Miss Ellen Fluhart from Wausion, Ohio. She became Baldwin’s strongest ally during the years of their marriage.

Joseph Baldwin, undecided on whether to teach or go into the ministry, listened to his wife’s suggestions and decided to teach. One reason for teaching was the fact that he needed money to repay his loan to his sister. Also, at this time he was not confident with his public-speaking abilities.

In the fall of 1852, Joseph Baldwin came to Missouri where he taught at the Platt City Academy. He then moved to Sava-

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could not stay away. In the fall of 1864, he was president of a teacher education institution in Logansport, Indiana.

By 1866 President Baldwin had become dissatisfied with the situation at Logansport and seriously considered returning to Missouri. He met with Major John B. Merwin of St. Louis who encouraged him to come to Missouri and establish a normal school.

Originally, Mr. Baldwin had planned to go to St. Joseph since he knew that part of Missouri best. Incidentally, Baldwin’s nephew, J.J. Grisby, now lived in Kirksville and would greatly influence his uncle.

On February 13, 1867, Joseph Baldwin reached Macon by the North Missouri Railroad and traveled the rest of the way to Kirksville by horse and buggy. That evening he met with a group of citizens, some of whom were stockholders in the Cumberland Academy. He told these people his dreams and received a positive response. These talks ended in the negotiation of a contract for a ten-year lease of the Cumberland Academy at a rate of $100 a year. Mr. Baldwin remodeled the building and on September 2, 1867, the North Missouri Normal School was opened.

It must be emphasized that Northeast Missouri in 1867 was much different than it is today. Professor of Missouri History Walter H. Ryle, Jr., said, “When Joseph Baldwin arrived in Kirksville, very few roads were paved and the one or two rooms

The statue of Joseph Baldwin was erected on the Northeast Missouri State University campus in 1927 in commemoration of his birthday and the 60th anniversary of the founding of the school.

na in 1853. Here he started his work in the field of teacher education at the Savanna Collegiate Institution.

As a young man, he helped organize the Missouri State Teachers Association in St. Louis. After being chosen as a vice-president, he made decisions concerning the establishment of a State Normal School in Missouri. For the first time, President Baldwin would realize the great significance that a normal school would have on the state of Missouri.

Mrs. Baldwin disliked Savanna. So, during the spring of 1856, at the age of 29, Baldwin and his wife left Missouri and returned to his hometown of New Castle, Pennsylvania. He then began studying under Dr. Wickesham at the Millersville Normal School. He studied the field of professional education for teachers and was greatly influenced by this program.

Baldwin’s nephew, J.J. Grisby, invited him to come to Burnettsville, Indiana, where Baldwin opened the Indiana Normal School in 1859. While Joseph Baldwin was in Indiana, the Normal School prospered and at last he had discovered his life’s ambition. The school was open for only five years because Joseph Baldwin closed its doors in June 1863 and joined the Union Army. He was discharged from the Army due to a bout with pneumonia that damaged his lungs. Doctors advised him to wait a few years before going back to the classroom, but he

The North Missouri Normal School was located in the Cumberland Academy on the corner of Mulanix and Hickory Streets from 1867-1871.
rural schools of the day were poorly staffed. Some teachers did not even have a college education. This area was truly a frontier.

The new North Missouri Normal School did not have a reputation to draw students. To recruit students, Baldwin traveled in a horse and buggy spreading his message. He was tireless in his travels, and with his persuasive personality he was able to sell his school. Mrs. Pauline Knobbs, a former NMSTC instructor, said, “Baldwin even sent out his faculty to make speeches, trying to encourage student attendance.”

The opening of the North Missouri Normal School was the first major step of the cause to which Joseph Baldwin dedicated his life: the professional training of teachers. It was a private teachers college granting a bachelor of arts degree in education. The first year, 140 men and women enrolled in the normal department and 144 in the model school department. President Baldwin was more than satisfied with the enrollment, considering the Civil Was was going on. His optimism proved to be right on track. The second year 203 enrolled, and by only the fourth year the normal department had more than doubled its enrollment.

One of the first matters to be dealt with was the selection of a faculty. Mr. Baldwin felt teachers should be good role models with strong character. After careful consideration, he chose a fairly young faculty of five members. They were William P. Nason, Mr. and Mrs. F.L. Ferris, and Mr. and Mrs. J.M. Greenwood. The future accomplishments of these individuals show again that Joseph Baldwin was wise and insightful. Clearly, his ability to position people according to their talents had a definite impact on the future of the school. In fact, when asked what he considered his greatest accomplishment, Joseph Baldwin replied, “I discovered J.M. Greenwood.” According to Mrs. Knobbs, “The teachers made the difference.”

Another responsibility of the president was organizing the curriculum. President Baldwin felt students must have the best possible elementary and secondary education with a knowledge of many subjects. He particularly stressed science, though courses from agriculture to debating were offered. Mrs. Knobbs said, “The commercial subjects that were taught included bookkeeping, typewriting, shorthand, and penmanship.”

Most people of the day were advocates of one of three ideas concerning the distinctive work of a normal school. One idea was that the normal’s basic concern should be that of academics. They believed through scholarship a person would learn all that was needed to know to be able to teach. Other people thought professionalism should be stressed because to them, the art of teaching was most important.

Finally, there was the view that a normal school should have two different parts. These people felt academic and professional programs should be separated to exist on an equal level. Needless to say, these viewpoints created friction and rivalry between the two departments. Mr. Baldwin, however, stood
firmly by his conviction that scholarship and professionalism were equally important and should be combined and implemented into one program. In other words, a broad knowledge of subject matter is important, but so is thorough training in how to teach. Joseph Baldwin believed the two ideas should be interwoven. This controversial idea was the foundation of his normal school and is one of Joseph Baldwin’s major contributions to education in Missouri and in the nation.

Another aspect in Joseph Baldwin’s theory on complete teacher preparation was the need for a period of internship, which led to the establishment of the Model School right along with the Normal School. Its purpose was to allow students to participate in the teaching process while observing professional teachers, a distinctive feature of the Normal School.

The educational system in Missouri during the mid-1800s was dominated by universities and private liberal arts schools. In spite of terrific opposition, President Baldwin’s Normal School became the North Missouri State Normal School of the First District on December 29, 1870. This was the first state-supported institution in Missouri for educating teachers and the mother of future teacher’s colleges.

Everyone has trials and tribulations and Joseph Baldwin was no exception. He was always fighting for the recognition and respect he deserved. Problems also arose between him and the Board of Regents at the Normal School. He never had their full support and did not have the patience to play political games that would win the Board’s respect.

The matter of funds always seemed to appear. There was never enough money to keep the Normal School progressing as Joseph Baldwin thought it should. From the very first, he saw the need for a library and tried to get more funds to furnish it. During his 14 years as president, his salary was never more than $2,000.

When offered the position of president at the Sam Houston University in Huntsville, Texas, Mr. Baldwin resigned his position at the Normal School in Kirksville in 1891. The salary was greater and so was the challenge. And for Joseph Baldwin to thrive, he had to follow his pioneering spirit.

Mr. Baldwin still had many of the same ideas; he was still opposed to drinking, dancing, and playing cards. Courses were much the same as those in Kirksville and the school year was divided into four terms. Also, he was still committed to increasing the library. The chief difference between the school in Kirksville and the one in Huntsville was that Kirksville had four-year courses that emphasized academics. In Huntsville, President Baldwin added a third year post-graduate course that emphasized professional training.

The Sam Houston University saw much growth under its new president. From 1890-1891 there were, for the first time, more paying students than scholarship students. The students came from many different areas and grew in number along with the faculty and graduates. One hundred and ten students were enrolled. The increasing power and influence of the University was largely due to Joseph Baldwin.

Public-speaking was now a love of this multi-talented man. Wherever he went, Baldwin promoted education. In Texas he concentrated on his plan for six normal schools in the state. He also thought summer normal institutes that lasted four to six weeks were vital. From 1880-1897 he was involved with the training of conductors for the normal institutes through his affiliation with the summer school.

In 1891, Joseph Baldwin resigned from Sam Houston University and accepted the position of Professor of Pedagogy at the University of Texas in Austin. He stayed there until 1897.

After leaving Austin at the age of 70, Mr. Baldwin attended the University of Chicago and wrote a series of articles for Texas School Magazine. He continued to lecture until he fell ill with pneumonia. Joseph Baldwin died on the 13th of January, 1899.

Joseph Baldwin also wrote and published four books: The Art of School Management (1880), Elementary Psychology and Education (1887), Psychology Applied to the Art of Teaching, and School Management and School Methods (1897). These books were mainly used as textbooks for elementary and secondary education.

To list all the honors of this great man would be impossible. Some, naturally, stand out more than others. A window in the Memorial Chapter at Sam Houston University is dedicated to him. The Northeast Missouri State University has shown their high regard of its founder by erecting a statue of him on their campus. Baldwin Day was held June 13, 1893, in Kirksville to recognize the achievements of Joseph Baldwin. In 1901 the first building the State of Missouri erected for teacher education was named Baldwin Hall.

Whenever one thinks of education in Missouri, Joseph Baldwin must come to mind. He was a true crusader with an indestructible faith. His influence can be seen in the present-day university, its graduates, and the city of Kirksville itself.