

Joseph Healy's recollections of the beginning of Old Dominion University

... In the winter of 1930, when I heard that the Norfolk city school board was to build a new elementary school in Larchmont, ... I realized that the old elementary school would be abandoned. So I went down to see Mr. Hughes. I said, "Mr. Hughes [Robert Morton Hughes], here is our opportunity to bring a college to Norfolk by using the old Larchmont Elementary School building when it's abandoned."

[As Mr. Healy, Mr. Hughes, Dr. J.A.C. Chandler, and Mr. A. H. Foreman looked over the school and land....] Dr. Chandler looked over the building. "Fine, fine," he said. There was some open land right near it, near the Larchmont School. "Foreman, see all that property out there? Get an option on that property."

It was understood among the four of us that he would start a college there. This was April, 1930, if I remember correctly. I didn't hear any more then until about the 15th of June and I got a call from Mr. Foreman's office. Dr. Chandler said, "Healy, come on down here as soon as you can get here." So I got in my car and drove down. Dr. Chandler was a very direct man; he wasted no words whatsoever. "Healy, go out to the Larchmont School Monday morning, have a telephone installed, employ a secretary, prepare a catalog, and start enrolling students. I will pay you \$500." And that's all he said -- just like that. Those were the words he used.

Full interview: <http://dc.lib.odu.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/oralhistory/id/155/rec/2>