

Knox College: History of Honnold Lecture

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The Honnold Lectureship began in 1929 and was permanently endowed in 1936 by William Lincoln Honnold (1866-1950). Its purpose is to bring leaders in various fields to Knox College for residencies of varying lengths -- two to three days in recent years. During this residency the lecturers give public talks, hold small group discussions with students and faculty, and visit classes relating to their special fields of expertise.



William Lincoln Honnold was born in Adams County, Illinois. He attended Knox College's prep school, the Knox Academy, in 1886-87 and subsequently earned a degree in engineering from the Michigan College of Mines. He was a mining engineer in Michigan and prospected for gold in California. During his highly successful career as an engineer he worked for mining companies in Mexico, Canada, Alaska and Africa, and for a time was a partner in a firm with Herbert Hoover.

During World War I Mr. Honnold was awarded decorations from Belgium and France for his work with the Commission for Relief of Belgium. He received honorary degrees from Knox College, Claremont College, and the Michigan College of Mines.

Through an initial gift from Mr. Honnold, the lectureship was established in 1928. It was in 1936, at the urging of Knox College President Albert Britt, that Mr. Honnold permanently endowed the lecture series. Mr. Honnold's stated intent was that the lecturers be "chosen as [much] as possible from active professions of a non-academic character." The roster of Honnold Lecturers includes many distinguished intellectual figures of the twentieth century -- from muckraking journalist Ida Tarbell to theologian Paul Tillich and Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas; from author Archibald Macleish to anthropologist Richard Leakey.

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