

James Ward Preston
1908-1989
“*Mr. Community College*”

The J. Ward Preston Outstanding Faculty Award memorializes the teacher, counselor, administrator, colleague, and friend who, more than any other individual, deserved the admiration of all who knew him. His thirty-nine years of dedicated service at Jackson Junior College and Jackson Community College (1931-1970) earned him the title of “Mr. Community College.”

Ward Preston received the Bachelor of Science degree from Hillsdale College in 1931, and the Master of Science degree from the University of Michigan in 1934. Upon graduation from Hillsdale he came to Jackson to teach in the natural sciences, holding a joint appointment between Jackson High School and Jackson Junior College until 1938. From 1938 until his untimely resignation because of illness in 1970, Ward Preston taught botany, zoology, anatomy, and other natural science subjects; served as volunteer Director of Athletics and acted as Alumni Secretary; became Dean of Men, Dean of Students, Dean of Faculty, Vice-President for Academic Affairs, and finally, in 1968, Vice- President for Student Personnel Services.

In 1970 the Board of Trustees conferred upon Mr. Preston the title of Vice-President Emeritus. The following passage is from the Faculty Resolution to the Board of Trustees recommending this status.

No one in the history of the college has served it more wholeheartedly, and no one has endeared himself more to the entire staff as well as to the student body and the alumni. The faculty is privileged to have worked with him and [is] proud to recommend Ward Preston for appointment as Vice-President Emeritus.

In 1989 the Faculty recommended to the Board of Trustees that the annual Outstanding Faculty Award be renamed the “J. Ward Preston Outstanding Faculty Award,” a fitting tribute to one who will always be *primus inter pares*, the outstanding teacher against whom all the rest will be measured.