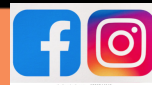


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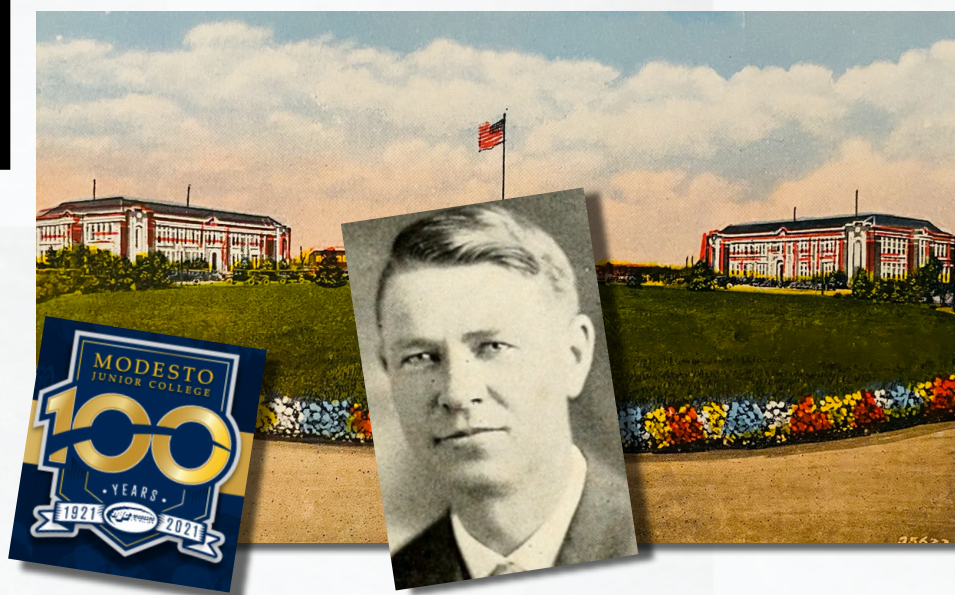
# Newsletter

October 2021

## History Lesson

Last month, Modesto Junior College celebrated its 100th anniversary. The school started humbly operating in a barn house and later at Modesto High School before it opened its first main campus. The school grew over the past century serving some 750,000 students. For this newsletter we would like to revisit the history of the school's first President Charles Shoemaker "Jum" Morris (1887-1952). For the Summer 1992 edition of the MM&HS *Stanislaus Stepping Stones* Morris' daughter Elizabeth "Betty" Morris Roehr (1912-2002) wrote a wonderful history on the life of her father, here are some of the highlights of her story:

Charles Shoemaker Morris was born in San Gabriel California on April 9, 1887, his mother was 38 years old at the time. His father, nine years junior to his wife, worked as an enterprising realtor. His family began as a devoted Quaker family, and later became equally devout Episcopalians. Charles was followed by a brother Benjamin in 1889, and Samuel in 1890. Charles grew to the height of six feet four inches and tipped the scales at 200 pounds, he was given the nickname "Jumbo" which was later shortened to "Jum."



### Charles "Jum" Morris

**He attended Stanford University** and chose botany as his major. He graduated in 1908 and remained at the school to procure his masters' degree. It was during this time at a Sunday school where he met the beautiful Carlena Cushing (1888-1987). The two fell instantly in love, and though Carlena had another very prestigious suitor, Jum won her over and the pair secretly eloped. The couple welcomed two children, Charles (1910-1984) and Elizabeth in 1912. Jum continued his education and competed in competitive sports winning many gold medals in the hurdles and high jumps.

Jum worked under Mr. J.C. Templeton, the principal of Palo Alto High School. Templeton was offered the position of Principal of Modesto High School in 1915 and selected Jum as his vice-principal. That year the Morris Family moved to Modesto into a house at 200 Poplar Avenue on the corner of Alice Street, which still stands today. While at Modesto High, Jum served as commandant of the R.O.T.C. When World War I broke out, Carlena worked hard volunteering for the American Red Cross. The couple was extremely devoted to each other and became especially close after Carlena suffered a near-fatal heart condition.

Modesto was a farming community, Jum became concerned that many of the local bright youth would never have the opportunity to procure a college education. He was instrumental in establishing a junior college so students could live at home and at the very least attend two years of college. In 1921 the first junior college in California was established and Jum was its first president, then called dean.

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**Modesto Junior College** earned an excellent reputation among educators across the country. Jum helped in the development of a permanent campus and spent many hours in Sacramento lobbying the cause of higher education in Modesto. Jum remained at MJC for ten years before he was offered a job as President of San Mateo Junior College. Modesto was home to the Morris family, but the heat before homes had air conditioning was debilitating to Carlena. MJC had also been placed under the jurisdiction of the superintendent of schools, and Jum could be his own boss in San Mateo. The family left Modesto for good. Jum remained there for the rest of his life. He was elected vice president of the American Association of Junior College Presidents in 1951 and was scheduled to be installed as President in May of 1952. However, on February 24, 1952 Jum suffered a fatal heart attack. Carlena spent the rest of her life dedicated to San Mateo Community College where she was known as “Ma” Morris. Carlena passed away in 1987 at the age of 99. Modesto Junior College may not have ever been to celebrate this centennial anniversary if not for the hard work and dedication of Charles “Jum” Morris.

\*For information on MJC Centennial events visit [www.mjc.edu/100/](http://www.mjc.edu/100/).



Jum and Carlena Morris and their Poplar Avenue Home.

## Updates



- The McHenry Museum is now open Friday-Sunday Noon- 4pm.
- The Museum Store hours are varied depending on volunteer availability.
- The Wood Workers are currently holding their yearly exhibition. October 1-3 is their final weekend in the basement of the museum.
- We are currently recruiting volunteers to docent for the Museum and to work the store. A training will be held this month. Please send a message to our website [www.mchenrymuseum.org](http://www.mchenrymuseum.org) if you are interested.
- The next board meeting of the MM&HS will be taking place October 19, 2021.

\*Membership renewals to the MM&HS have been mailed and returned invoices are being processed. To become a member please visit our website at

[www.mchenrymuseum.org](http://www.mchenrymuseum.org)