Semiotic Analysis of Andrews University's Official Seal

Debbie-Ann Francis
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Honors Thesis

Semiotic Analysis of Andrews University’s Official Seal

Debbie-Ann Francis

April 2, 2012

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Abstract

This essay focuses on the significance of the symbols used within the official seal of Andrews University. The official seal of an institution describes the origins, foundations, and the authority that the institution carries. The analysis focused on these particular sections: “Andrews University,” “1874,” and the pyramid. A concise analysis was made on the other elements of the seal: the colors blue and gold, Corpus, Mens, Spiritus; and the cross-like structure within the middle of the seal. Past and current university personnel were consulted for interviews and for clarification of material. The results revealed that the official seal of Andrews University carries an arbitrary and mythic significance to the institution.
# SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF AU OFFICIAL SEAL

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The history of Andrews University begins in 1874 under the name of Battle Creek College. In 1868, within the city of Battle Creek, Michigan, a patient-turned-teacher Goodloe Harper Bell began holding grammar classes at the Battle Creek Sanitarium for adults. Bell taught so well that in 1869 a key church member by the name of James White suggested plans to create a school; Battle Creek College finally opened on January 4, 1874 (Vande Vere, 1972). However, this did not come without difficulties. The school had difficulties with its finances and the method of educating the students. The lack of sufficient funding, the environment of the urban setting, and the struggle to use strictly religious or a blend of secular and religious education material placed the college in turmoil (Vande Vere, 1972). Issues with leadership were a critical factor as well. The college suspended operations on September 12, 1882. In 1883, the school reopened (Vande Vere, 1972). In 1901, the decision was made to move the college from the city of Battle Creek to a plot of land located in the small village of Berrien Springs, in southwest Michigan. The school was renamed as Emmanuel Missionary College (EMC), Emmanuel meaning “God with us” and Missionary to stand for the spirit of missions. The school’s vision was to gain academic growth, physical strength, and to uphold the ideal of the Bible and the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church. From there, the college took permanent roots and expanded (Jones Gray, 2002; Vande Vere, 1972).

In 1928, Floyd Oliver Rittenhouse entered the small college as a student (Jones Gray, 2002). Upon graduation, he was employed by the SDA Church as an educator within several academies and as a denominational employee. In 1952 Rittenhouse returned to EMC as Dean of Academic Affairs (Vande Vere, 1972). In 1955, Floyd O. Rittenhouse was elected to be the president of the college (Jones Gray, 2002; Vande Vere, 1972). During his tenure at EMC, Rittenhouse implemented many changes to the institution’s campus. Rittenhouse was asked to be...
president of a tentative SDA university, which would be created as a result of a merger between a sister school by the name of Washington Missionary College and Potomac University, the latter being the postgraduate SDA School and the Adventist Theological Seminary (Jones Gray, 2002). In 1958 talks began between Rittenhouse and the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, the governing body of the SDA Church, to create this new institution (Jones Gray, 2002). That plan did not materialize. Later on, Rittenhouse suggested moving Potomac University to Michigan, join it to EMC, and create a SDA university out of a merger of the two institutions (Jones Gray, 2002). The merger was eventually agreed upon. In 1960, Emmanuel Missionary College and Potomac University merged to form a new institution, the first comprehensive Seventh-day Adventist University. A new name was assigned to the newly-made university: Andrews University (AU). EMC was considered to be the undergraduate division of the university while Andrews University was the graduate division. After 1961-1962, the whole entity carried the name Andrews University.

Before the merger, EMC had an official seal. Since the institution was now known as Andrews University, Rittenhouse created a design for a new official seal. General ideas were first drawn by Rittenhouse and then sent to Irvin Althage, then Chair of the Art Department. Althage was asked to look at the design and add artistic interpretation (Althage, personal communication, Oct. 6, 1994; Rittenhouse, personal communication, May 22, 1983). Althage’s changes were minor, and the seal was adopted for use in 1961.

The statement of problem for this thesis is the significance of the AU official seal. The form of research method selected for this thesis is called semiotic analysis. This research method has been academically used to analyze a range of mass communication such as marketing, politics, social issues and the arts (McIlWain, 2007; Sutherland-Smith, 2011; Xin and Wang,
Past studies on semiotic analysis of flags of countries and of coat-of-arms have been made for the reason that they fall under the category of a code (Nöth, 1990). No study was identified in my review of literature, in which a semiotic analysis has been applied to official seals. This thesis is therefore significant as an explorative form of research. What has been found is the historical context of the seal from Andrews University. The latter part of this thesis will look for other significant meanings to the official seal.
Methodology

Semiotics is the study of signs, symbols, and the messages that they carry. This theory deals with the idea that anything can stand for something else; any visual has the ability to carry meaning at any time. This theory was created by Ferdinand de Saussure, a Swiss linguist, and Charles Sanders Peirce, an American philosopher. Saussure identified this concept as a science to interpret and analyze the meaning of language; the term that he used was called semiology. Pierce used the theory to analyze logic and renamed it semiotics. Saussure focused on behavior while Pierce focused on logic; the result of this is the theory of semiotics (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1993).

The concept of sign within semiotics is defined as a combination of two elements: the signifier and the signified (Barthes, 1989). The signifier is the word, symbol, image, expression, or any sort of visual object that is seen by the viewer. The signified is the concept or idea that the signifier carries. The bringing of the two together creates the sign, which is now considered to be a concrete entity (Barthes, 1989; Griffin, 2012; Leeds-Hurwitz, 1993). This can be represented by the equation \( \text{sign} = \text{signifier} + \text{signified} \). A brief example of this would be the traffic sign STOP. The red color and the word “STOP” are the visuals, this would be the signifier(s). The signified is the message to come to a full halt as the driver approaches the sign.

Signs are always a part of a system; they can never stand alone. Within the sign, there are two systems that determine how a sign is interpreted. The denotative system is the system that contains the original description of a sign, that is, the signified carries its original meaning (Griffin, 2012; Leeds-Hurwitz, 1993). The connotative system strips the sign of its history and assigns a new signified concept to the sign (Griffin, 2012; Leeds-Hurwitz, 1993). Within this
particular system, the sign carries an arbitrary significance that makes what is cultural seem to be
natural, which is called *myth* (Griffin, 2012; Leeds-Hurwitz, 1993).

The interpretation of the sign’s meaning is determined by the code that it uses to identify itself. Signs appear in groups; these groups of signs come with a set of rules for interpretation; this is called a *code* (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1993). Normally what would determine the form of analysis is the system with which the sign is identified. Codes can be encoded, where formation is conveyed, or it can be decoded, where meaning can be interpreted (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1993). Codes can be subject to constant change or equilibrium (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1993).

Context is important to look at when interpreting signs. *Intertextuality* is a concept where signs carry borrowed meaning (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1993). The original sign is repeated, and the interpretation carries original and new meaning. *Polysemy* is the ability for signs to carry more than one interpretation (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1993). Depending on the context, the signified may take different meanings. In order to determine what interpretation is used, both the sign and the context must be used in interpretation.

Semiotic analysis is the research method which utilizes the theory of semiotics. Here, the concepts of semiotics are applied, such as the sign, signifier, signified, and the other aforementioned concepts. Semiotic analysis uncovers and decodes different layers of meaning within signs and determines whether the meaning may be denotative or connotative. It is “a mode of problem identification” that follows analytical technique, for that reason, surface meanings must be uncovered in order to uncover underlying forms of understanding (Manning, 1987).
Semiotic analysis was selected as the main method of analysis, since the seal consists of a compilation of different symbolic elements. The theory directed the form of research method to follow. Elements of the seal were isolated then analyzed for historical background and other possible codes. The elements were then examined for either denotative concepts or connotative concepts. Places consulted for primary sources were the Andrews University Department of Integrated Marketing and Communication and the University Archives located in James White Library on the campus of Andrews University. Letters, minutes, books, magazine articles, academic journals, and other forms of primary history were collected and studied. The institution’s website was also consulted.

Interviews were a supplementary research method. A schedule of interview questions were created consisting of general questions on the interviewee’s affiliation with the university, their experience or familiarity with the official seal, their views on the official seal, and questions regarding whether they were familiar with Rittenhouse or Althage. Three members of the university personnel were interviewed: President Niels-Erik Andreasen of Andrews University; Dr. Meredith Jones Gray, Professor of English and campus historian; and Dr. Paul E. Hamel, Professor of Music, Emeritus. Interview transcripts are available in Appendix B.
Findings

Seal Description

A seal is a distinct identifying mark. Symbols that portray the historical background of an organization’s or person’s territory can be found within a seal. The first appearance of a seal began in Mesopotamia in the late 4th millennium BC (Britannica, 2012). A seal was used to authenticate documents in order to prevent forgery (Britannica, 2012). An official seal therefore carries the institution’s power of authority.

The EMC official seal was normally seen on letterheads. This seal was circular and consisted of three main parts: the border, an outermost circle, and an innermost circle. The border is made up of a spiked design. The outermost circle carries two phrases separated by two perpendicular objects. The words “Emmanuel Missionary College” are found on the top of that particular circle. The base contains the phrase, “Founded 1874”. Within the innermost circle, the words Corpus, Mens, Spiritus are arranged in a triangular fashion around a candelabrum. This candelabrum of seven sticks is supported by two books, which are supported by two hands. All these elements combined make up the EMC seal.
The AU official seal is made in a circular fashion like its original counterpart; however, there are differences between this seal and the previous one. To begin, the background consists of blue and the seal’s elements are colored in gold. The ribbon-like/crown-like border frames the seal in gold (Althage, personal communication, Oct. 6, 1994; Rittenhouse, personal communication, May 22, 1983). Primary and secondary circles are not present within this seal.

What is found is the title of “Andrews University” emblazoned on the top. The number “1874” is found on the base. Next, the three words of *Corpus, Mens, Spiritus* are embedded within the seal. These words surround a structure of two asymmetrical and perpendicular lines. On the horizontal lines rest a lamp and a pyramid. To the right of the pyramid lies the lamp with a flame in the form of a circular glow that emits from the center of the pyramid. Two sides divide the pyramid in half: one side with light and the other side darkened with horizontal lines that ascend to the top.
Analysis of Andrews University’s Official Seal

Andrews University

The seal’s title of “Andrews University” was selected as the new name of the institution after John Nevins Andrews, a prominent member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church; he was the church’s first missionary (Althage, personal communication, Oct. 6, 1994; Andrews University Website). Althage states that:

. . . the name Andrew [sic] University was chosen because John Nevins Andrews was our first missionary sent out to the mission field. Both he and his name symbolize the character that we trust our graduates will have in their life work to spread the gospel and carry out the great commission of Jesus Christ to His disciples [sic]” (Althage, personal communication, Oct. 6, 1994).

Andrews University adds:

We are named after John Nevins Andrews (1829-1883), the biggest thinker in the 19th century Seventh-day Adventist Church. He was also the first sponsored missionary that the Church sent overseas. J.N. Andrews’ example of careful thought and compassionate action in Christian life is something that we have taken to heart. Our motto is "Seek Knowledge. Affirm Faith. Change the World.” (Andrews University Website)

1874

The numbers “1874” reflect the year when the institution was founded. Andrews University was first known as Battle Creek College, which began in the year of 1874: “The roots of Andrews University date back to a little 19th century school. . . Through the leadership of a
teacher, Goodloe Harper Bell, the Battle Creek Michigan-based school expanded . . . in 1874, [it] took the name [of] Battle Creek College” (Andrews University Website).

Corpus, Mens, Spiritus

The words Corpus, Mens, Spiritus in respective order represent “Body, Mind, Spirit” in Latin. President Niels-Erik Andreasen of Andrews University states: “It is presumed that Latin is used in . . . university mottos because at one time, in Europe at least, Latin was the language of instruction at universities” (Andreasen, 2011). According to Rittenhouse, these words were the “triune aims of the institution” (Rittenhouse, personal communication, May 22, 1983). The origins of the words came from “later occidental Socratic, Platonic, and Cartesian philosophical systems [which] took a reductionistic approach to the self. They divided the self into the physical (L. corpus, “body”), mental (L. mens, “mind”), and spiritual (L. animus, “spirit”) components” (Rodning & Aunay, 1998).

These words were to be defined as the holistic focus of Christian education. Within the AU context, the words in the seal come from a book authored by Ellen Gould White, a prolific writer within the SDA church. In her book Education, she states that “[true education] is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers” (White, 1952). What Andrews University focuses on is the development of the person in a holistic manner.

Perpendicular Lines

The crossing of the two perpendicular lines is represented to be a cross in the AU seal; Althage calls this structure as representation of “the cross of our Redeemer and our salvation in Christ” (Althage, personal communication, Oct. 6, 1994). The horizontal line of the cross is arranged in a lower position, closer towards the lower end of the vertical line. Johannes Troyer
reported that “The cross appeared as a mystic or religious symbol as early as primeval times” (Troyer, 1961). This cross appears as a solar wheel within cult stones during the Stone Age, then spread worldwide (Troyer, 1961). Within other codes of meaning, the cross had representations of north, south, east, and west; the earth’s four directions (Ramshaw, 2009). Within other cultures, it would be displayed on a shaman’s robe to demonstrate the “far-reaching sign of the flying eagle” (Ramshaw, 2009).

Gail Ramshaw outlines how the cross became adopted into the Church as usage for Christianity:

In the first centuries of the Christian church, the cross was never depicted, since it was the cultural symbol of the power of the Roman Empire to execute criminals in a particularly cruel way. After all, in our time, probably only seriously disturbed people would wear a pendant of a tiny replica of an electric chair. In the fourth century C.E, however, the Roman emperor came to favor the Christian religion, and as a result, he outlawed crucifixion as a method of execution. Only then did Christians begin to use the cross as a symbol. (Ramshaw, 2009)

At this point in time, the cross stands for a symbol of Christ or Christianity. According to some churches, the cross is symbolic for the resurrection instead of the death of Christ (Ramshaw, 2009). Usually, that particular cross has a horizontal line that is closer towards the top of the vertical line. When the cross is positioned upside-down, a different message is created; Thomas Albert Stafford, the author of *Christian Symbolism in the Evangelical Churches: With definitions of church terms and usage*, defined this symbol as a representation of Saint Peter. This symbol was selected for the reason that it was said that Peter requested to be crucified in
such a manner because he was unworthy to die the way that Jesus died (Stafford, 1942; Troyer, 1961).

**Lamp**

To the right of the cross, a lamp stands within the AU seal. It is one of the most prominent symbols located within the seal. Althage describes this part as “light”, whereas Rittenhouse describes this symbol to be “illumination from above” (Althage, personal communication, Oct. 6, 1994; Rittenhouse, May 22, 1983). Althage quotes from Psalm 119:105 where it says, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet” (Psalm 119:105, King James Version). The lamp was “a device for producing illumination, consisting originally of a vessel containing a wick soaked in combustible material, and subsequently such other light-producing instruments as gas and electric lamps. The lamp was invented at least as early as 70,000 [BC]” (Britannica, 2012). The lamp carried a figurative and literal interpretation in terms of knowledge, enlightenment, and visibility. F.R. Webber, from his compilation *Church symbolism: An explanation of the more important symbols of the Old and New Testament, the primitive, the mediaeval, and the modern church*, represents the lamp as Christian knowledge under the form of abstract truths (Webber, 1938).

**Pyramid and Glow**

Encircled and centered within the AU seal is a pyramid. This symbol is partially lit by the lamp on the left side, while on the right side there is no light; instead, there are horizontal lines. Althage identified this symbol as the Trinity (Althage, personal communication, Oct. 6, 1994). In history, the concept of the Trinity was represented in many symbols. The triangle is a common representation.
Within the AU seal, the lamp’s glow is within the middle of the triangle, described as the “Eye of the Trinity” by Althage (Althage, personal communication, Oct. 6, 1994). Within historical terms of the ancient Church, this eye represented itself as a stern version of God the Father; this was called the all-seeing eye. This symbol appeared within churches during the sixteenth century, most commonly found in Great Britain (Stafford, 1942). It was made to present the power, majesty, omniscience, and omnipresence of God (Stafford, 1942; Webber, 1938).

The symbol’s origin comes from sun-worship (Stafford, 1942). Egyptian mythology represented the eye in different ways, either as the sun or as the Eye of Horus. This figure in Egyptian mythology was one of the most worshipped figures in Egypt; “his eyes were the sun and moon, and in art he is sometimes Wedjat, the Eye itself” (Leeming, 2005). That eye symbolized protection and healing within Egyptian society (Shepherd & Shepherd, 2002). Amulets of this symbol would be made of this symbol and used for protection; it was also considered to be the best type of gift to be both shared and received (Redford, 2002). Presently, the eye would be found as an identifying symbol within certain organizations such as Freemasonry to demonstrate “the watchfulness of God, and his eternal justice” (Shepherd & Shepherd, 2002).
Discussion

Based on the method of semiotics, the signs “Andrews University” and “1874” carry denotative meaning within the seal. The signifieds of these signs directly correlate to their history within the school. This has not changed over time. The words Corpus, Mens, Spiritus reflect a blend of denotative and connotative application.

Based on a structural comparison between the EMC seal and the AU seal, there is evidence of intertextuality between both seals. The AU seal borrows the words Corpus, Mens, Spiritus and the number “1874” from the EMC seal. The pyramid is a different intertextual sign, which has been borrowed from historical and other church settings. This sign also presents a blend of denotative and connotative application.

Within the AU seal, the cross is a connotative sign, for it is expressed differently within the cultural code of Andrews University. Andrews University considers that particular sign to be a sign of salvation while other social contexts consider it to represent Peter’s death on the cross. Another connotative sign are the colors used by the AU seal. Based on social codes, the colors blue and gold carry a plethora of meanings. At this point, the colors are represented on the seal for the fact that they are considered to be the university colors (Committee Minutes, Administrative Council, June 5, 1963). The center of the pyramid, which contains the flame of the lamp, is a connotative sign based on the history that it carries. The lamp is a polysemic sign within the seal; the analysis has shown that has stood for illumination, knowledge, particularly Christian knowledge, and the Word of God (Whittemore, 1957).

All interviewees generally expressed that the seal represented Andrews University and its values. The interviews that were conducted gave knowledge towards the significance of the
words Corpus, Mens, Spiritus. All three interviewees expressed similar ideas in terms of questions directed towards the official seal. On the question, “What do you know about the creation and/or meaning of the AU seal?,” all interviewees independently expressed similar views that Corpus, Mens, Spiritus represented the values of Adventist Education or the values of Andrews University (Andreasen, personal communication, Feb. 28, 2012; Hamel, personal communication, Feb. 19, 2012).

In terms of interpretation, the main sign that was mentioned consistently was Corpus, Mens, Spiritus; however, there was a certain focus on the Corpus section. The follow-up question to the previously stated question was, “Do you think these values have changed since its inception?” Dr. Meredith Jones Gray stated that, “We are still striving” (Jones Gray, personal communication, Oct. 17, 2011). Jones Gray shared disappointment that Corpus is neglected since the loss of the Physical Department and the Physical Education major; “We lost sign of the balance represented by [the] seal” (Jones Gray, personal communication, Oct. 17, 2011). President Andreasen shared similar opinions: “More expression of Corpus is needed” (Andreasen, personal communication, Feb. 28, 2012).
Conclusion

The gathering of primary sources, inquiring of possible interviewees, actual interviews, gathering of secondary sources, and completing the analysis within a satisfactory time frame proved to be a limiting factor within this thesis. The amount of time that it took to gather, analyze, and compile the information was longer than anticipated.

Availability of primary resources was another factor that was a limitation. The amount of information that was readily available directly from Andrews University on the seal was of small quantity. There were not a large number of sources to use, which restricted analysis on certain parts of the seal. It was very difficult to find substantive primary sources: “I was surprised to be unable to find a record, in committee or Board of Trustees minutes, of the adoption of the Andrews University seal (Williams, personal communication, Mar. 30, 2012).”

The implication of these limiting factors was the lack of a clear angle to choose for analysis. The best example for that would be the primary sources that directly addressed the seal; one source identified the border as ribbons while another source labeled the border as crowns. There were no other available sources from Andrews University that were able to validate or distinguish the intended form of interpretation. For that reason, it is recommended that official documentation from Andrews University is made concerning the official seal and its interpretation.

In summary, the official seal of Andrews University reflects a blend of denotative and connotative expressions. The seal carries polysemic signs as well as evidence of intertextuality. Generally, the seal carries the embodiment of Andrews University values yet reflects mythic concepts. In synopsis, the seal of Andrews University conveys arbitrary meaning.
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Appendices

Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

**Code:** the context in which a sign is interpreted

**Connotative:** the reassigned message within the sign

**Denotative:** the original message associated with the sign

**Intertextuality:** the borrowing of symbols from one code to another

**Myth:** makes what is cultural seem natural and eternal, does not affect the status quo

**Polysemy:** multiple meanings within the same sign

**Semiotics/Semiology:** the study of signs, symbols, and their associated messages

**Sign:** the inseparable combination of a signifier and its signified

**Signified:** the message associated with the sign

**Signifier:** the visual seen, e.g. an image or an expression
1. At what time did you come to Andrews University, and what capacity (as a student/ parent/ faculty/staff member, etc.)?

Jones Gray: I grew up in Berrien Springs. My father was a teacher here for 40 years. I did most of my schooling here. At age 11, I lived in Paris. I eventually went to Collonges to study French. I graduated from Andrews Academy, then from Andrews University with a BA in French, and then completed a MA in English. I came back here to teach in 1982.

2. What do you know about the formation and/or significance of the AU official seal?

Jones Gray: Emmanuel Missionary College became Andrews University in 1960 when Potomac University moved to Michigan. President Floyd Rittenhouse asked for the new seal.

3. Do you think that these values within the seal have changed since its origin?

Jones Gray: We are still striving. I’m disappointed that the Corpus part is neglected, when the Physical Department was removed. The Physical Education major is no longer here. We lost sight of the balance represented by the seal.

4. Did you have the opportunity to meet Irvin Althage, the creator of the seal? Or President Rittenhouse, the one who requested the seal to be made? If you have, how would you describe their values and influence on Andrews University?

Jones Gray: Rittenhouse was very important to AU’s history. He was full of personality, an interesting character. He was well-liked by students, he liked a good joke. He created lots of enemies when AU moved. It was traumatic when he was kicked out of AU. It was a political
decision, AU recovered; but students were very upset. There is some oral history that some students hung a dummy of Jerry D. Smith, then president of Lake Union Conference, in effigy in retaliation of what had happened. Althage was an eccentric person. He built the Art Department into a serious academic department, he was a serious artist. He was not an easy person; he was a prickly sort of person.
Interview with Dr. Paul Hamel, Professor of Music, Emeritus, February 19, 2012

1. At what time did you come to Andrews University, and what capacity (as a student/parent/faculty/staff member, etc.)?

Hamel: I was the creator and director of the Honors Program. I helped to design the seal. I was a solider in WWII. Well, first I started my BA in 1937. I was a musician in the army as a clarinetist. After the war, I looked for work. I came to EMC in 1947. I taught music. I became the chairman of the Music Department; I was in that position for 25-30 years. I taught band and gave private lessons, and I was a band director for 10 years. I retired in 1982.

2. What do you know about the formation and/or significance of the AU official seal?

Hamel: I was a part of the committee to design the new seal. The outer design may have no significance.

3. Do you think that these values within the seal have changed since its origin?

Hamel: Well, the seal reflects dimensions of SDA education as Mind, Body, and Spirit.
Interview with President Andreasen of Andrews University, February 28, 2012

1. At what time did you come to Andrews University, and what capacity (as a student/parent/faculty/staff member, etc.)?

Andreasen: I first came here as a student.

2. What do you know about the formation and/or significance of the AU official seal?

Andreasen: The part *Spiritus, Mens, Corpus* comes from the book *Education*, which identifies what true education is about. It is about holistic education. It is in Latin, most possibly for the reason that Latin was the language of learning in the early history of universities. The seal is round, it could mean completion. The pyramid could be a reference to science or geometry, in an artistic design.

3. Do you think that these values within the seal have changed since its origin?

Andreasen: More expression of *Corpus* is needed. We are establishing a new health professions department for that.

4. Did you have the opportunity to meet Irvin Althage, the creator of the seal? Or President Rittenhouse, the one who requested the seal to be made? If you have, how would you describe their values and influence on Andrews University?

Andreasen: I knew of Althage, but I did not speak with him often. I knew Rittenhouse. He was very clever. When I went to Pacific Union College as a professor, Rittenhouse retired. I needed a desk, and I was given this large desk. Inside it were very interesting things. It turns out that it was Rittenhouse’s desk. He was very smart. His sister was Ruth Rittenhouse, better known as Ruth Murdoch, whom the elementary school was named after.