

Dr. G. T. "Buck" Smith  
President  
Davis & Elkins College  
100 Campus Drive  
Elkins, WV 26241

Dear Dr. Smith:

I am writing to recommend Robert Bricker as a first-class sculptor.

For 28 years – from 1939 to 1967, Dr. J. Earl Moreland was President of Randolph-Macon College, a Methodist school for men in Ashland, VA. Two years after he arrived there, the United States entered WW II; and most of the students left for military service. Dr. Moreland saved the college during the war, and particularly the faculty, by enticing the Federal Government to open military training facilities there. After the war, he faced another challenge. All the men returning and taking advantage of the GI Bill were looking for places of higher education to attend. Somehow, Dr. Moreland raised enough money to build inexpensive dorms to house these new students. Over the years of his presidency, Dr. Moreland "saved" the college on numerous occasions.

When I retired, I decided to spend my time and energy "honoring my heroes." In 2001, with the approval of the college administration, I wanted to honor Dr. Moreland by erecting a life-sized bronze statue of him on campus. Letters went out to the alumni of the "Moreland years," and we quickly raised the funds necessary.

We engaged Robert Bricker, highly recommended to us by retired Virginia sculptor, Jack Witt, to create the life-sized statue of Dr. Moreland. Over the next year, working entirely from photographs, Robert designed, cast, and constructed the image of Dr. Moreland. At Homecoming in 2002, the Dr. J. Earl Moreland Monument on its marble base was unveiled by his four daughters.

One of Dr. Moreland's daughters came to me prior to the presentation ceremony and warned that she might not seem excited when they unveiled the statue because she did not think that anyone who had never met her father could successfully capture his likeness. Afterward, she came to me and said, "I'm sorry that I was worried about how Daddy would look. When we pulled off the drapery, I almost spoke to him!" Robert Bricker's work on your behalf will "speak" for itself.

Sincerely yours,

**Bill Gray**

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