

# OHIO UNIVERSITY:

## A CAMPUS OF MEANINGFUL PLACES

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Scripps College of Communication

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface .....	5
Chapter 1: The Four Corners of Court and Union Streets: A Place of “Peaceful Chaos” Where Athens and Ohio University Intersect.....	7
Chapter 2: College Green: The Heart of Campus .....	15
Chapter 3: Templeton-Blackburn Alumni Memorial Auditorium’s West Portico: A Place of Meaningful Expression.....	21
Chapter 4: The Secret Garden: Wolfe Garden .....	29
Chapter 5: Peace, Tranquility, and Relaxation: Fond Memories and Experiences at Emeriti Park.....	37
Chapter 6: South Green: A Place to Begin Making Memories of Ohio University.....	49
Chapter 7: Peden Stadium: A Place of Camaraderie and Memories.....	55
Chapter 8: The Ridges: A Place of Multiple Meanings.....	65
References.....	73
Photo Credits .....	79

# PREFACE

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I have long been fascinated with places, an affliction that was undoubtedly handed down to me by my mother, who shared both her Viewmaster slides of national parks and puzzle map of the United States with me when I was a child. Today, I am fortunate to be able to make the study of places—specifically, the study of how places communicate meanings to the people who interact within them—a part of my job. I am also fortunate to work within a university that encourages faculty to both think creatively and engage undergraduate students in the practice of scholarship. As a result, I had the opportunity to teach 20 senior majors in the School of Communication Studies (COMS) about theories of communication and place, and then to mentor them as they put this knowledge into practice by working in teams to investigate eight meaningful places on the Ohio University campus. This book is the result of their work.

This project would not have been possible without the support of a number of people across campus. The Director of the School of Communication Studies, Dr. Claudia Hale, generously allowed me to develop and teach the class that produced this book. In addition, she provided her support as I applied for the university grant from the 1804 Endowment that funded the development and printing of this book. Dr. Greg Shepherd, Dean of the Scripps College of Communication, also provided support for the grant application as well as invaluable advice on how I should develop the budget within the grant application. Dr. David Descutner, Dean of University College and Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education, was especially supportive of the project and provided much encouragement along the way. Dr. Kathy Krendl, Executive Vice President and Provost, offered both her endorsement of the project and an invitation to include a web-version of it through a link on the “Of Place” page on her office’s website.

I also thank Dr. Michele Morrone, Director of the Environmental Studies program at Ohio University, for selecting my proposal for this class as part of the first installment of her university-wide Kanawha Project, which seeks to integrate teaching about environmental studies across the Ohio University curriculum. In addition, two of my colleagues in the Scripps College of Communication, Professor Ron Pittman of the E. W. Scripps School of Journalism and Professor Terry Eiler of the School of Visual Communication, recommended students in the college who could provide their expertise in developing the visual elements of this publication. Finally, University Archivist Bill Kimok provided invaluable assistance to those students seeking historical perspective on their meaningful places.

The words and images that appear on the following pages are primarily the work of students in the Scripps College of Communication. The words were written by the 20 senior COMS majors in the School of Communication Studies who were enrolled in my COMS 450 course during the Fall quarter of 2008. These students also captured some of the images contained in this publication. The majority of the images, however, were graciously provided by University Photographer Rick Fatica. The job of putting these words and images together was superbly handled by Kelly Picking, a junior major in the School of Visual Communication. I trust that you will both enjoy and appreciate their work while learning more about what makes Ohio University a meaningful place for those who work, study, and teach here.

*- Dr. Roger C. Aden*