



CHAPEL'S PLACE IN THE LIFE OF WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY

Since its opening in 1956, Wait Chapel has served Wake Forest University in many capacities, including auditorium, concert hall, sanctuary—and debate hall. Distinguished speakers have ranged from United States presidents to Nobel laureates to world-famous authors. Concerts and performances by renowned orchestras and artists from around the world are presented in the Chapel under the auspices of the University's Secrest Artists Series.

The first U.S. president to visit the campus was Harry S Truman in October 1951. He participated in a groundbreaking ceremony for the campus, which was built in the 1950s as a new home for Wake Forest. The University was founded in 1834 in the town of Wake Forest, N.C. Presidents who followed Truman to campus have included Jimmy Carter, Gerald Ford and George Bush.

CHAPEL'S DEBATE HISTORY

Wait Chapel was the site of a 1988 Presidential Debate between George Bush and Michael Dukakis. Initially proposed by three Wake Forest students—Michael Smith, Beth Dawson McAlhany and Scott Dubois—the debate was held on Sept. 25, 1988. Twelve years later, it is host to a debate between presidential candidates George W. Bush and Al Gore.

CONSTRUCTION

Wake Forest's most identifiable building, Wait Chapel was the first building constructed on the University's 340-acre Reynolda Campus. Named in honor of the University's first president—Samuel Wait—it was dedicated in October 1956. (The fall of 1956 marked the first fall semester of classes on the Reynolda Campus, following the University's move from the town of

Wake Forest, N.C.) Like most of the campus' buildings, Wait Chapel is distinguished by its modified Georgian architecture. Its exterior is Old Virginia brick; interior walls are limestone. With its massive spire towering over the University's Plaza (Quad), Wait Chapel faces south toward Reynolda Hall, the University's administrative center.

RECENT RENOVATIONS

Wait Chapel has undergone significant renovation since hosting the 1988 Presidential Debate. Renovations in the late 1990s included the installation of a new ceiling custom-designed to improve the Chapel's acoustics, new flooring, a new sound system, heating and air conditioning improvements, lighting system enhancements, and seating refinishing.

SEATING

Originally designed to seat nearly 2,400 people, Wait Chapel's seating has been reduced during the years—through renovation—to seat approximately 2,250 people. The main level seats 1,588, while the balcony seats 662. Seating will be sharply reduced for the 2000 Presidential Debate, with all balcony seats removed, as well as some main level seats. Similar arrangements were made for the 1988 Presidential Debate in the Chapel.

SIZE

Wait Chapel extends nearly 152 feet from the interior foyer entrance doors to the back of the stage area. The Chapel measures 137 feet at its widest point. Including the balcony, its floor space covers more than 17,000 square feet. Including its steeple, the Chapel is 213 feet tall.