

Roberts, John Calvin ^[1]

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by Ralph Hardee Rives, 1994

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John Calvin Roberts, active Methodist Protestant layman and benefactor of [Kernersville](#) ^[2], was a member of the board of trustees of the Methodist Protestant Publishing House in [Greensboro](#) ^[3] and was almost singularly responsible for the impetus given to the efforts of the Reverend [J. F. McCulloch](#) ^[4] in the early twentieth century to establish a Methodist Protestant college in North Carolina. Roberts was a charter member of the Kernersville Methodist Protestant Church, organized in 1884, and took part in all its activities, serving for many years as Sunday school superintendent and class leader.

At the meeting of the North Carolina Annual Conference of the Methodist Protestant church in 1901, Roberts offered \$10,000 to be used for the establishment of a denominational college in the state and a special Ways and Means Committee of nine persons was appointed. Due to the economic conditions surrounding the panic of 1907, however, efforts to establish the school were postponed. When Roberts died two years later, he left the \$10,000 bequest in his will; the bequest stipulated that the funds be used by the Conference Board of Education in the building or support of a college provided that it was opened by 1920. If not, the money was to be used as a trust fund and the income applied towards educating young men for the ministry.

The cornerstone of the Administration Building at [High Point College](#) ^[5] was laid on 29 June 1922, and the building was named Roberts Hall in memory of the man whose generosity began the movement that culminated in the establishment of this college. The Reverend W. F. Kennett, in a tribute prepared shortly after Roberts's death, referred to him as the "bishop of Kernersville" because of the high esteem and respect in which he was held.

References:

J. Elwood Carroll, *History of the North Carolina Annual Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church* ^[6] (1939).

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