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Jongeward Hall

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What is in a Name? Jongeward Plant Services Building

Donald P. Jongeward saw a considerable change on the Central Washington University campus during his long career with the university. The campus grew from eight buildings with fewer than 600 students when he was hired, to 60 structures and more than 6,000 students by the time he retired.

Hired as head gardener for the school in 1937, Jongeward rose through the ranks—with a three-year break courtesy of the US Navy during World War II—to become the university's purchasing agent.

Jongeward was born in Yakima on February 7, 1914 and attended Yakima area schools. He married Lillian Gregory, who hailed from Goldendale, in 1945, and in 1952 they adopted two siblings (a four-year-old girl and one-and-a-half-year-old boy).

In 1942, after he had worked his way into being the superintendent of buildings at Central, Jongeward was called to serve in the military during World War II. From 1942-46, he served in the US Navy.

Upon his release from military service, Jongeward resumed his old position at the university. In an oral history recorded in the winter of 1992-93, Jongeward noted when he returned from the service he and his wife moved into a small, largely-unheated house on Walnut Street on the campus (no longer there). He had a monthly salary of \$165, of which \$35 was deducted for rent.

In 1949, Jongeward assumed responsibility for Central Stores, which included all shipping and receiving. He said that up until that time, all purchases on campus were made by the individual departments, so there was very little control or accountability.

As the campus expanded in the 1950s, Jongeward was shifted to a new position, Purchasing Agent, responsible for all university contracts and for setting policy on campus purchases. It was the job he would hold for the remainder of his university career.

In 1974, Jongeward and his wife, who was the librarian at Ellensburg's Lincoln School for many years, retired. He said it was only a few months after he retired that he got a call from someone identifying himself as the President of Central Washington University.

"He asked if there would be any objection on my part if one of the campus buildings would show my name on its identification sign," Jongeward said. "Great Scott! Those awards were usually given posthumously by the U. Did he know something about me that I didn't? I think that I was about as alive as usual and I must have sounded like a blatherskite when I had recovered sufficiently to indicate my surprise and pleasure."

In 1978, the university opened the Jongeward Plant Services Building on 11th Avenue in his honor. Today, it is the home of Department of Facilities Management, the agency in charge of the university's physical plant.

Donald Jongeward died on February 11, 2000, in Ellensburg. His wife, Lillian, died in Yakima on March 1, 2017, at the age of 100.