

**1983 Unitarian Universalist Trust for Theological Education:
The Background, the Promises Made, the Grant Awarded
and its Early Implementation**

Arliss Ungar
Collegium, November, 2007

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In 1983, the North Shore Unitarian Universalist Society at Plandome, New York (now the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock) awarded the Unitarian Universalist Association a \$9 million “UU Trust for Theological Education.” This paper explains the background of the application for the endowment grant, the agreements made, the wording of the grant, and the controversy over its early administration by the UUA.

In the late 1970's there was little contact between Starr King School (SKSM) and Meadville Lombard (M/L). Rev. Leon Hopper, UUA Director for Ministerial Education at that time, and later chair of the board of Meadville Lombard, described it, “As for the relations between the schools: my sense is that it was distant at best bordering on suspicion. . . . I do not believe there was much communication between the two schools; however they both evidenced some level of suspicion toward the UUA.”

“The caricatures were rife,” says Rev. Mark Belletini, who graduated from Starr King in 1978. “Meadville was all people in suits and dark dresses, with Greek and Latin tomes under the arms. SKSM was all Zen Baseball and people speaking California Wows! for sermons, if they could be called that. . . . Wouldn't you know it . . . all of the caricatures were just that, caricatures. Mostly, people at both schools took worship seriously, liked each other, fought with each other family style, and took classes in a wide variety of academic and experiential subjects. There were not very many differences really, that were significant . . .” (Belletini e-mail to the author May 11, 2005)

This suspicion by the schools of the UUA was, in part, a reaction to the recommendations of the Scovel Commission, the 1972–1974 Ministerial Education Commission. Although the committee’s charge was “to solicit money from various sources to support education for professional religious leadership” and “to allocate money for that same purpose, following the criterion of improving the quality of education for our professional religious leadership,” the committee instead came up with practical recommendations for improving the education for seminary students and ministers. The original report did not allow for direct funding for institutional support for the theological schools.

In his book, *The Premise and the Promise*, Warren Ross says:

During the 1970's, the UUA board again felt the need to study what was happening at the two seminaries. The report it received from one of its members indicated that Meadville/Lombard was educating only a bare handful of students, while Starr King, with more students, was having trouble keeping its financial head above water.

What to do? Step one was once again to appoint a committee, which this time was headed by Carl Scovel, Minister of King's Chapel. [This was the sixth committee to consider theological education since the Unitarian and Universalist consolidation in 1961.] "There was a feeling that each school was running its own show and not preparing their students for the ministry," according to Scovel. "There was also a desire to articulate common standards for all students, including those not attending UU seminaries . . . that there should be some common expectation for all people coming before the Fellowship Committee." To meet these needs, the Scovel committee developed a grid as to what should be expected of all students, putting strong emphasis on clinical pastoral education and proposing that all ministerial candidates serve a well-structured internship. As might be expected, the committee's recommendations caused considerable controversy, the theological schools pointing out that the UUA was calling for additional expenditures without providing the funds. However, the Scovel report and the follow-up initiatives of [UUA presidents] West and Picket [*sic*] shaped the educational priorities and standards that are basic to our denomination today. (Ross, 125-126)

The November 1973 Starr King Board minutes state:

The UUA Board is giving [the original Report of the Ministerial Education Commission] serious consideration. Their vote was to accept the Report but to delay recommended actions in it to later dates, to allow for more extended consideration and feed-back from various segments of the denomination. . . . Meadville is negative on the Report. Dr. Kimball [Starr King President] told the UUMA [UU Ministers' Association] the Report assumes the Schools will continue, even though all denominational support is withdrawn and other denominational financial resources are closed to them except for so-called "program funding." [Program funding is financial support for specific programs, rather than a continuing amount for basic institutional support.] However, as many schools throughout the country have discovered, program funding is very unwise to regard as a means for maintaining support of an ongoing operational budgetThe Commission's Report . . . seems to repudiate the plurality factor in the denomination and the fact that no particular ministerial "model" can fit into all societies. . . . The Report ignores what other denominations are doing in support of their theological institutions. . . .The Commission is somewhat dated in the concepts it endorses.

The original draft of the Scovel Report stated that the UU Related theological schools "may receive funding, but only for specific programs for which proposals have been submitted to the Ministerial Education Council and approved by that same council." The final report was changed to add "but also for direct grants to them as institutions." Starr King president at that time, Bob Kimball, put it this way, "It took a couple of years, and untellable hours, to argue against that little offensive absurdity. The result of the efforts of the School and hundreds of supporters, including [UUA President] Bob West, was that the Association's Board did not accept the Commission's recommendations.

Starr King School was also concerned that the Commission was "recommending a trend of controlling and directing UUA religious leadership activities in a way that is reactionary and

unsuited to these present times.” (*Minutes of the SKSM Board* March 8-9, 1974) [These times were the ‘70s when it was especially common to “question authority”.]

Leon Hopper remembers, “The Scovel Commission . . . created quite a storm and serious criticisms from both SK and ML. I do believe that one of the outcomes of the Scovel Commission was the creation by the UUA Board of CEPRL [Council on Education for Professional Religious Leadership]. The Scovel Commission report did not, as I remember, enhance a creative or cooperative relationship between the UUA and the schools. (E-mail from Hopper to the author, Oct. 24, 2004)

The Council on Education for Professional Religious Leadership [CERPL] was established by the UUA in June 1974. The Council’s responsibilities included:

- a. securing monies from the UUA budget as well as special funds from sources such as foundations, districts and congregations for the several purposes of ministerial education.
- b. . . recommending to the Board of Trustees annually action on an itemized budget for Ministerial education . . . (*Minutes of the SKSM Board* March 8-9, 1974)

In its final report to the UUA Board of Trustees, the Council on Education for Professional Religious Leadership states: “Conceived in controversy with suspicions particularly acute at the two Unitarian Universalist theological schools, which seemed to feel under attack, the Council undertook a program of information-gathering and policy development that in turn led to several program initiatives and to increasingly close working relationships with the theological seminaries.” (CEPRL Report, October 9, 1979) In the 1982 *Starr King Self Study*, Bob Kimball states that “The more important accomplishment of the Council was the forcing of Starr King and Meadville/Lombard into conversation with each other and the marvelous creation of the Joint Schools Committee.” (SKSM Self Study 1982,108)

In a 1977 memo from John C. Godbey, Associate Dean and Associate Professor of Church History, Meadville/Lombard Theological School to Robert Kimball, President, Starr King, Godbey says: “It was mutually acknowledged that there are some merits in CEPRL’s Parish Internship Program, but the weaknesses of that program include the fact that outside persons were engaged by CEPRL without consulting the schools. The insights to be gained from the knowledge and experience of the professors in each school were not sufficiently taken into account in the planning of that program. It was agreed that the chief benefit of the program was the opportunity it would provide for faculty members to come into mutual contact and planning.” (October 18, 1977)

In 1979, CEPRL strongly urged the UUA board not to cut back on the money available for the theological schools, and to finance CEPRL. “We wish to express our deep concern that reductions of \$80,000, or 40%, in a \$200,000 cut-back are suggested in programs and mechanisms for the education of professional religious leadership. . . .” (Memo to UUA Board of Trustees from CEPRL, January 17, 1979) Funds to the schools were decreased, but not so much as originally suggested. CERPL was disbanded by the UUA in January 1979. Leon Hopper said

recently, "In the end I felt that CEPRL was a flawed design, though when I went to "25" to serve CEPRL I believed that it held great promise." (E-mail to the author, Oct. 15, 2007)

Leon Hopper explained:

Financial support from the denomination was a significant issue with the schools, particularly SK with a very limited endowment. CEPRL was created during the early portion of Bob West's presidency [1969-1977]. . . . Among other tasks CEPRL sought to understand the financial status of both schools. To that end it requested copies of each school's budget and financial statement. Both were received. CEPRL initiated a meeting in Berkeley to which representatives from M/L were invited along with SK folk. The schools were asked if they would agree to have their budget shared with the other school, and both agreed. (I seem to remember that Peter Fleck and John Godbey came from M/L and maybe John Wolf. Other than Bob Kimball I do not remember the SK persons.) Up to this time no one from M/L had ever visited SK. Neither had information or understanding of the other's finances. From this meeting the schools realized that however different their schools were they did have much in common, including, dare I put it this way?, a suspicion of the intentions of the UUA. Out of their meeting came the "Joint Schools Committee."

The Joint Schools Committee became a venue for discussion of common problems and shared concerns. I believe that it met once or twice a year. Sometimes the Joint Schools Committee met during the UUA GA, but more often at Peter Fleck's home on Cape Cod. At a later time UUA staff from the Dept of Ministry were invited to participate to address mutual concerns for ministerial education. . . . Those who attended would have been John Wolf from M/L and Bob Kimball from SK. I think that Gordon McKeeman also attended. (E-mail to the author, Oct. 22, 2005)

The Starr King 1988 self study for reaccreditation states:

The UUA Committee for Professional Religious Leaders "told folks at Starr King and Meadville/Lombard to talk together. This led to creation of what is known as the Joint Schools Committee. Initially, it consisted of the chief executive of the schools, chairperson of the boards, and a member at large of the board of each school. The Joint Committee has been meeting since 1978 at the house of Dr. Peter Fleck, former Chairman of the Meadville/Lombard Board of Trustees. Meeting at Peter and Ruth's home probably has been the key to the event of grace which got the Schools together. There had been close to three-quarters of a century of various levels of animosity. What we realized in our first gathering was that while any folks, i.e., graduates, might have some need of such animosity, the Schools no longer needed to service that need. So the Schools' representatives did some hard work relating and discovered an enormous amount about each other and themselves.

At a certain point when it became clear that the two schools had accomplished as much as they needed to institutionally, a suggestion was made to invite denominational representatives to gather regularly with the Committee. The denominational officers are the President, the Executive Vice President, and the persons responsible for working with seminary students. That consistency of the Joint Committee has now been meeting for two years. The consequence of

these conversations has been a level of peer respect and mutual enrichment for the first time in recent history.

At the Joint Committee's last meeting, [George Rupp,] Dean of Harvard Divinity School (which has a rich historical tie to the Unitarian Universalist denomination as well as a large contingent of Unitarian Universalist students) was added to the Committee. Thus the Committee has a rather powerful, coordinated conversational base for addressing matters of educational, institutional, and financial concerns.

The financial consequence of the Joint Committee is that the UUA Board of Trustees has submitted a request to the extremely wealthy North Shore Unitarian Universalist Society of Long Island, New York [then Plandome, now Shelter Rock] for a \$9 million capital gift to theological education. While this capital gift is being considered, there has been a major interim grant to the Schools, and hopefully, this interim grant will be continued annually until the capital gift has been allocated." (1982 SKSM Self Study , 7-9)

The author's book, *With Vision and Courage*, relates:

A January 12, 1981 memo to the UUA Board from its president, Eugene Pickett, states: In 1979–80, Meadville/Lombard and Starr King, working cooperatively through the Joint Schools Committee, submitted a proposal for funding to the North Shore Unitarian Veatch Program. This proposal was limited largely to funding for the institutional needs of those two schools. The proposal was subsequently rejected by the Veatch Board on a 5–4 vote. . . . After informal conversations between the UUA Administration and representatives of the North Shore Unitarian Society and the North Shore Unitarian Veatch Program, it became evident that, if the UUA were to offer its own assessment of theological education finances and present that assessment in broader terms than simply the funding of two specific institutions, North Shore Unitarian Society might be willing to look again at the matter of funding for theological education. . . . [There is a difference of opinion as to whether Starr King and Meadville submitted a joint proposal, or separate closely-coordinated proposals.]

After the joint proposal was rejected in 1981 by the Veatch Program, the UUA submitted a proposal to the North Shore Unitarian Society of Plandome "to provide an endowment of nine million dollars to the UUA to establish a Unitarian Universalist Theological Education Fund, income from the Fund to be restricted for Unitarian Universalist theological education. "While the Fund would be held in perpetuity by the UUA, at least 60% of the fund's expendable annual income would be available for support of the basic institutional programs of UU related theological schools. . . ." The proposal stated that ultimate fiscal control must rest with the UUA Board of Trustees, and proposed a Panel on Theological Education to advise the board. (*Proposal for Funding for Theological Education*, January 1981, 3, 19)

Rev. Pickett, President of the UUA from 1979–1985, remembers:

Both Starr King and Meadville/Lombard had submitted proposals to the Veatch Program for funding, and both had been rejected. It was agreed that the Association would take the matter up with the Veatch Program. I had had a number of conversations with David Osborn, the minister of the Plandome congregation. He assured me that the congregation itself, apart from the Veatch Program, was very much interested in funding theological education but that

they preferred to accomplish this through the UUA. They wanted the UU-related schools to have funding but they also were much concerned that some funds be available for the broader needs of theological education. And so the Association submitted a proposal directly to the Plandome Congregation. As a result, Plandome established, at the UUA, a Theological Endowment of \$9 million. It was agreed that 60 percent of the income would go to UU-related schools and that 40 percent would be allocated by a Theological Education Panel to be appointed by the UUA Board of Trustees. The 40 percent could be used for a variety of purposes as long as they supported theological education. . . . It's my understanding that the intention of the Plandome Congregation was always that the endowment would be used for broader purposes and not only for support of the schools, and this certainly was the desire of the UUA. It was also clear from the beginning that Plandome wanted the UUA to control and administer the endowment. Of course, the theological schools met with the Theological Education Panel and did help influence the Panel's decisions. There were still some disagreements and tensions between Starr King and the UUA, but I think the relationship became more productive and that the UUA was glad to be able to provide financial support for the theological schools at a much more significant level. (E-mail to the author, June 7, 2005)

Bill Schulz, president of the Unitarian Universalist Association from 1985–1993, remembers:

Gene Pickett, President of the UUA and David Osborne, Minister at the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock (previously North Shore Congregation at Plandome) were very, very close friends. They had been classmates at Meadville, and they and their wives visited socially. Plandome wanted the UUA to establish discretionary judgment and evaluation of the curriculum and education of candidates for the UU ministry through the UUA Panel on Theological Education. This was a sore point for Bob Kimball. Although there was no agreement in writing in the final grant, Kimball also felt that the bulk of the 40 percent not earmarked for basic institutional programs in theological education should go to the schools. The Plandome grant for Theological Education supported the UUA's Independent Study Program in Religious Education, which was eventually turned over to Meadville/Lombard. [Starr King President] Kimball felt that the UUA had betrayed previous agreements. This colored the relations between Starr King School and the UUA. There were often tensions over what it meant to educate. Starr King's more flexible, alternative approaches were sometimes in conflict with the more traditional expectations of the UUA. This was occasionally true of Meadville/Lombard's pedagogy as well.

The grant proposal to the North Shore UU Society at Plandome [now Shelter Rock], sent to the UUA Board for its approval, said that at least 60% of the fund's expendable annual income would be available for support of the basic institutional programs of UU related theological schools. . . ." Gene Pickett, then president of the UUA states, "It is my memory that how the theological trust funds were to be allocated was an agreement reached between the UUA administration and the Plandome Congregation. I assume that I presented the agreement to the UUA Board and that they approved. Whether there was a formal vote or just accepted as part of my President's report I do not remember. If the wording in the Trust document is different from that in the Proposal, this change would have been made by the Plandome Congregation. Of

course, the wording in the Trust document would be the controlling factor in the distribution of funds. (E-mail to the author, Oct. 10, 2007)

November 9, 1982 “Recommendations to the Board of Trustees of the North Shore UU Society from the [North Shore] Endowment Committee” state, "Among the needs which the Committee considered was a proposal from the UUA for a nine million dollar endowment for Theological Education. . . These funds would be managed by the Denomination which would establish a “Panel on Theological Education” to allocate the annual income. At least sixty per cent of this income would go to the Theological Schools, with the remainder directed to such areas as continuing education for ministers and other religious leaders.”

But the endowment grant given by the North Shore UU Society at Plandome states that the money is “to be used in the discretion of the Association exclusively for theological education. . . . The purposes for which the Association may expend the funds so distributed may include, but shall not be limited to, the making of grants or loans to educational institutions, in support of programs of religious education, or grants or loans to students, religious professionals or lay personnel in attendance at such institutions, or otherwise sponsoring religious educational operations, programs, publications or other theological activities of an educational nature either directly or by contributing financial support to other organizations or individuals to enable them to provide or to acquire such theological education such income to be used for such theological educational purposes of the Association as shall be determined from time to time by the Association.” (*Unitarian Universalist Trust for Theological Education*, June 7, 1983, p. 2.)

In January 1983, Gene Pickett wrote:

Dear Friends:

It is not often that a UUA President is privileged to convey the kind of news which this letter brings but I am most gratified to be able to do so. The congregation of the North Shore Unitarian Universalist Society of Plandome, New York, voted on January 16, 1983 to provide over a period of years \$11 million in endowment income restricted for theological education and \$2 million to aid and supplement the incomes of retired ministers and their spouses. . . .

The grant to the UUA restricted for theological education will allow the denomination to provide major on-going support to our theological schools, much more satisfactory scholarship aid to students, encouragement to our theological scholars, significant funds for continuing education, support for our ministerial education and religious education programs, and, in general, will go far toward insuring high quality, learned professional leadership for the decades to come. . . .

Sincerely, Gene Pickett

Former UUA President Bill Schulz felt that during the period from 1981 until 1986 the UUA was doing reasonably well financially. Pickett had instituted the Friends of the UUA Campaign, soliciting donations from individuals for the first time. The UUA had a major grant from the Plandome congregation. [In 1985, a \$20 million endowment was given to the UUA by the North Shore UU Society of Plandome to replace their annual contribution.] (Phone conversation with the author May 31, 2005)

Starr King President Gordon McKeeman reported to his Board in the Fall of 1983, “We have received \$750,000 as our “share” of the initial \$2 million given the UUA for theological education. We have put the entire \$750,000 in our endowment. . . . Major items of the Joint School Committee agenda include discussions on the projected distributions from the additional \$9 million to be accumulated by the Veach committee and given eventually to the UUA to administer (*President’s Report to the Board*, Fall 1983.)

In 1985, an attempt by new UUA President Bill Schulz to reach out to Starr King School did not, in his opinion, meet with success. He felt that he was not cordially received, especially by Bob Kimball. (Schulz phone conversation with the author May 31, 2005) Starr King President McKeeman remembers the meeting differently, “Bill was eager to try to address any problems of relationship between the UUA and the School. The conversation was candid and focused in particular on internship arrangements and on the Theological Education Endowment Trust. Bill was given the latest (the final?) Draft of the Statement of Concern. The conversations will continue. There was no rancor in the breakfast meeting, and no promises, either. I, being optimistic, thought it might have been a bit helpful. The food was excellent. (Letter from President Gordon McKeeman to the Starr King Board of Trustees, June 16, 1986)

In 1986, the Starr King President reported to the Board:

At the meeting of the Joint Schools Committee held October 8-9 [1986], the School representatives sought to gain the UUA administration’s support for a fixed percentage to be devoted to “basic institutional support” for the theological seminaries. The effort failed to get the support of the UUA President, who agreed that this was a major purpose for the Fund’s establishment but was unwilling to support a fixed percentage arrangement. The 15% fixed percentage “off-the-top” for the UUA administrative expense and the 5% “cap” on spendable income from the Fund’s total return remain firmly in place. . . . (*President’s Report to the Board* October 15, 1986).

By 1987, McKeeman could report:

“The Theological Education Endowment Trust has now begun its task of recommending distributions from the proceeds of the Fund, due to be accumulated in full (\$9 million) by July 1, 1987. . . . The original proposal that was submitted to the Plandome congregation requested that 60% of the proceeds be used to provide “basic institutional support” for the theological schools. . . . Using the guidelines then in use, Starr King should have received \$108,000. Using a 7% cap on withdrawals, 11% fund management fee (\$469,300 and expenses of \$20,000, leaving \$105,00 each for SKSM and M/L, \$56,700 for Harvard, \$160,000 for the UUA and \$114,000 for other projects, totaling \$540,700. The panel thought it had “come close” to meeting the original income expectations of the Schools and, in addition, had some monies to devote to proposals that would be submitted. In other words, the panel through its work deserved commendation from all quarters. (*President’s Report to the Board*, March 30, 1987, 1-2.)

The next year, he reported,

Our relationship with the Unitarian Universalist Association is multi-dimensional. So I take some umbrage when I hear it described in terms that suggest we are constantly at odds with each other. That simply is not the case. . . .

This is not to suggest or pretend that there is total harmony and agreement. We still feel that the decisions regarding the uses of the Theological Education Endowment Trust have not honored the intention of the Plandome congregation, whose gift established the Fund, nor recognized the massive financial needs of the Schools, who were to be the major recipients of income for “institutional maintenance” from the Fund. Steps have now been initiated to enlist the other Schools in a cooperative address to the UUA Board, which has the ultimate authority to distribute income from the Fund.

The UUA’s cash “flow” problem seems to have resulted in delays in transmission of grants from the Theological Education Endowment Trust income. In this fiscal year we have received \$40,000 so far, though we are well past the mid-point of a year in which the UUA has granted Starr King a total of \$105,000.00. We have remonstrated with them. Reminding them that we are not their banker. The \$40,000 arrived after our complaint, but they are still behind.

We have been in conversation with the Plandome Church’s Theological Faculty Needs Committee. Its recent half million dollar gift to support a UU Studies Professorship at Harvard has motivated there a desire to provide additional financial support for faculty needs at Meadville/Lombard and Starr King. It goes without saying that we shall do everything possible to support and encourage such a move on their part.

There have been disappointments, chief of which has been to not have the capital campaign further advanced than it is, for I think we must depend chiefly on our own efforts to maintain and uphold this school. The denomination has, time after time, disappointed our hopes that it might assume a more responsible stance toward what it regards as its own theological education institutions. Its unequivocal endorsement and support are not forthcoming, though it sometimes points to us with pride. But I do believe we are making progress, and with diligent effort will be able to transcend the erroneous and outdated tales that so misrepresent us, and more effectively enlist the generous support of an expanding constituency.

(President’s Report to the Board, March 1, 1988, 2–3)

The *Thomas Starr King School 1988 Self Study* talked about funding from the UU:

Our general endowment increased dramatically in 1983, with the receipt of a gift of \$750,000 from the North Shore Unitarian Universalist Society, Plandome, New York. The addition of this generous gift virtually doubled the size of our endowment. . . . The large addition to our endowment has helped to overcome the effect of the cessation of any direct funding from the Unitarian Universalist Association while a \$9,000,000 Theological Education Endowment Trust was in the process of creation and accumulation. This fund, also a gift of the aforementioned Plandome UUA Society, was a result of a lengthy process of planning and cooperation among the denomination, and the schools associated historically with the Unitarian Universalist Association (Harvard Divinity School, Meadville/Lombard Theological School and Starr King School for the Ministry). This fund has now been given to the denomination, and appropriations from the annual income are made by the denomination’s Board of Trustees on recommendation of a Theological Education panel,

appointed by the denominational Board of Trustees. Representatives of the schools serve in an advisory and non-voting capacity to the panel at its quarterly meetings. Thus, the matter of denominational funding is now centered in the activity of the Theological Educational Panel.

...

The School's differences with the panel on the interpretation of the trust's conditions and with the distributions adopted by the Board on the recommendation of the panel has been a source of some disagreement and unhappiness. Nonetheless, the School has been assured of annual funding by the denomination in the amount of \$105,000 annually for the next two years. The panel is currently seeking to devise a consultation/evaluation process to determine the School's eligibility for continuing funding from the Theological Education Endowment. We have pointed out to the panel that we, as an accredited institution of the ATS, are subject to expert evaluation periodically by the ATS. The relationship with the panel is an uneasy one, and the School's Board and administration continue to work actively to insure our receiving an equitable share of denominational support for institutional maintenance (SKSM Self Study 1988, 8).

The Self Study also explained:

Denominational support continues to be a source of considerable frustration. The North Shore Unitarian Universalist Society of Plandome, N.Y. gave the Unitarian Universalist Association a \$9,000,000 grant, the intention of which was to provide a substantial institutional maintenance resource for theological seminaries. Two interlocking desire/needs are interposing themselves between the schools and the support: the denomination's need and desire to fund programs which are related to its own activities in theological education (e.g. the Denominational Office of Ministerial Education and the Independent Study Program which seeks to prepare Ministers of Religious Education). None of the monies are devoted to M.Div. student aid, and less than half of total income is distributed to the three "denominational schools" (Harvard, Meadville/Lombard, Starr King) for basic institutional support. An additional issue is the desire of the denomination to control the educational programs of the schools, using money as leverage to do so. . . . It is an ongoing source of tension and stress. The stated unwillingness of the recommending panel to adjust appropriations to the schools even to offset the effects of inflation further erodes the denomination's support in terms of purchasing power. (*Thomas Starr King School, 1988 Self Study*, 13)

Relations between Starr King and the UUA improved. By October 1987, President McKeeman could say, "Useful conversations were held with the Rev. Judith Meyer, who is the new UUA Associate Director for Theological Education, and who is eager to serve both the Schools and the students effectively. I came away from the conversations feeling hopeful of a mutually respectful relationship." (President's Report to the Board, October 9, 1987)

John Buehrens, UUA President from 1993–2001 says,

Under the UUA Administration prior to my own, the UUA had drawn upon a portion of the earnings from the Endowment to establish and maintain the Office of Ministerial Education. I adopted the policy of reducing the UUA's utilization of funds from the Endowment in order

to make more funds available directly to the two schools. The funding of the Independent Study Program for religious educators, originally housed at UUA, continued when the program was transferred to Meadville/Lombard. After M/L transformed it into a Modified Residency Program for ministerial studies generally, however, the Panel began a process which led to the elimination of separate funding for that program.

In 1990, the Plandome congregation gave \$2,000,000 directly to Starr King for enhancing faculty salaries and \$1,500,000 to Meadville Lombard to establish the Angus MacLean Professorship in Religious Education. John Lees, who was at North Shore at the time, claims that the money was given by North Shore Congregation directly to the schools because of the congregation's dissatisfaction with how the endowment money was being administered by the UUA.

Starr King and Meadville Lombard have utilized money from the UU theological education endowment for institutional funding and for special projects for twenty years. But now, the question of funding for theological education institutional needs is once more before the UUA. On June 22, 2007, the *UU World* on line reported:

The UUA Board of Trustees approved \$25,000 cuts in funding for both of the Unitarian Universalist theological schools this week and set in motion an 18-month process to develop a long-term strategy to foster excellence in UU ministry.

The steps furthered an initiative by the board that, in the words of a motion it approved in April, seeks to give priority to “the funding of ministerial formation, development and excellence” rather than “the current singular focus on support for theological schools.” . . . The 18-month process is to include a survey to be conducted in the fall, a request to schools and other stakeholders for proposals for new approaches, and a goal-setting conference in October 2008 for representatives from “all relevant stakeholder groups.” The panel is to present a report on the conference’s vision to the board in January 2009 and, in April, present recommendations to the board.

Meadville Lombard and Starr King School for the Ministry are designing and beginning to implement bold new approaches to theological education for Unitarian Universalist ministry in the 21st century. May they gain the institutional funding necessary to carry out their visions for excellence in ministerial education to serve the denomination and the larger society in the years to come. And may all those who choose to study for the UU ministry find the resources they need to finance their theological education, and to learn UU history, polity and theology.

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This letter assures the North Shore Endowment Committee that grant money to Harvard Divinity School will be spent for UU activities at the Andover Harvard Library and/or for UU scholarships.

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