



**Frank L. McVey and the University of Kentucky:
A Progressive President and the Modernization of
a Southern University (Thomas D. Clark Studies in
Education, Public Policy, and Social Change)**

Eric A. Moyen

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In 1917, fifty-two years after its founding, the University of Kentucky faced stagnation, financial troubles, and disturbing reports of nepotism, resulting in a leadership crisis. A special committee investigated the institution and issued a report calling for a massive transformation of the university, including the hiring of a new president who could execute the report's suggested initiatives. The Board of Trustees hired Frank L. McVey.

McVey labored tirelessly for more than two decades to establish Kentucky as one of the nation's most respected institutions of higher learning, which brought him recognition as one of the leading progressive educators in the South. In *Frank L. McVey and the University of Kentucky*, Eric A. Moyen chronicles McVey's triumphs and challenges as the president sought to transform the university from a small state college into the state's flagship institution. McVey recruited an exceptional faculty, expanded graduate programs, promoted research, oversaw booming enrollments and campus construction, and defended academic freedom during the nation's first major antievolution controversy. Yet he faced challenges related to the development of modern collegiate athletics, a populace suspicious of his remarkable new conception of a state university, and the Great Depression. This authoritative biography not only details an important period in the history of the university and the commonwealth, but also tells the story of the advancement of education reform in early-twentieth-century America.

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