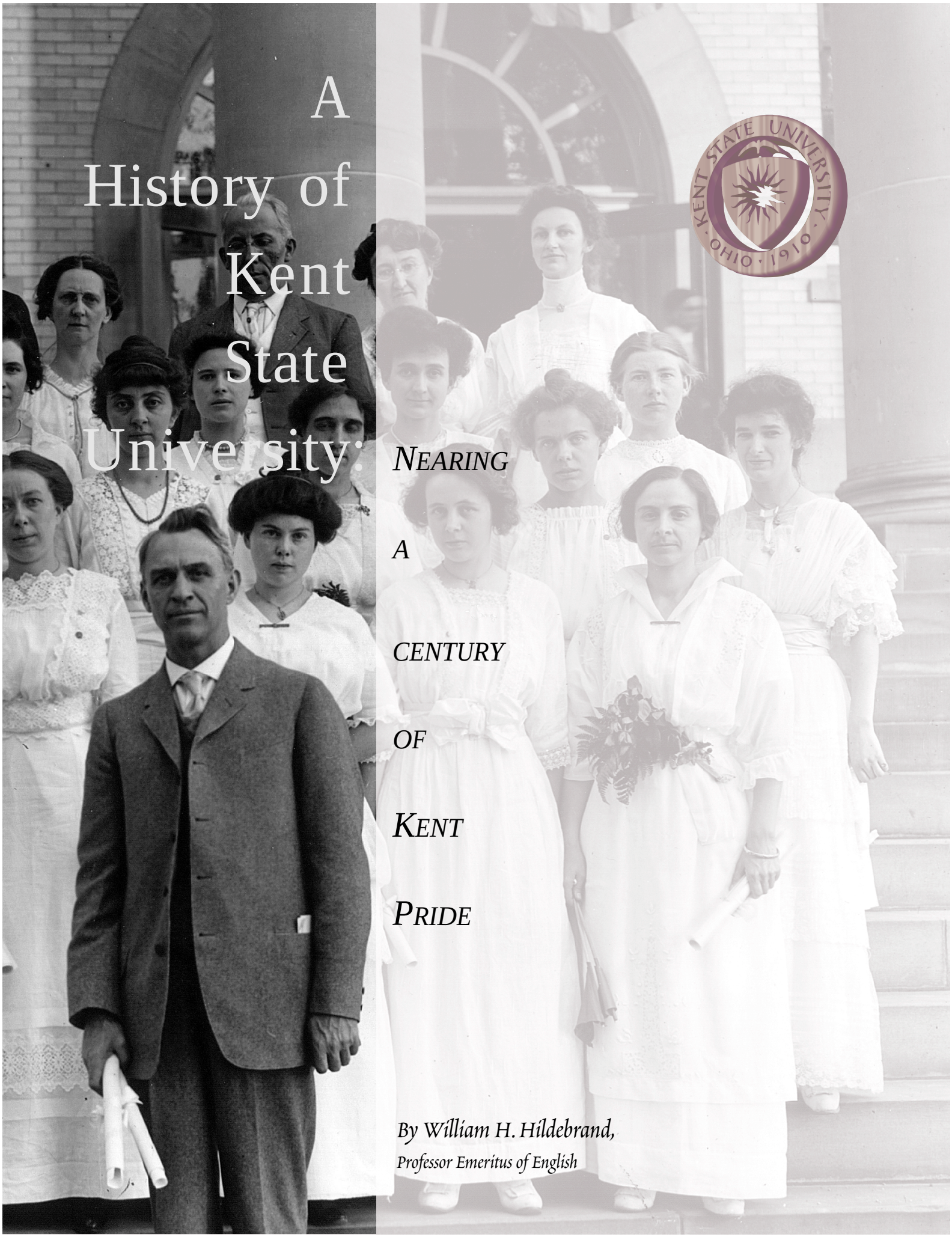

A History of Kent State University:

Nearing a Century of Kent Pride

By William H. Hildebrand,
Professor Emeritus of English

Foreword

The adage, "You don't know where you're going unless you know where you've been," is a fitting framework for this foreword. It is also a sentiment that moved the Kent State University Faculty and Staff Orientation Committee to recommend that a pamphlet be produced to provide newly hired faculty and staff with a historical perspective of the University. By understanding the institution's unique history, those new to the University community can better understand Kent's unique strengths—strengths such as a commitment to teaching excellence and a willingness to lead change.

Dean Keller, a member of the Orientation Committee and Emeritus Professor of Libraries and Media Services, knew there was only one person who could craft a historical overview that captured facts as well as the feelings behind the facts: his friend, Bill Hildebrand. Dr. Hildebrand, Emeritus Professor of English and respected scholar, embraced the task with the same selflessness and enthusiasm that imbues *A Book of Memories,* a major history of Kent State University that he edited with Keller and Dr. Anita Herington.

Not surprisingly, the result is much more than a history. One only has to read the Afterword in *A Book of Memories* to grasp the profound impact of the University on the author's life—beginning in 1948, when he first set foot on the Kent Campus, forced to wear a "dink" and scour the University seal with a toothbrush! To our great good fortune, Bill Hildebrand enjoyed that unforgettable freshman year and chose to remain in Kent. His tenure at the University, including 36 years as a faculty member, has allowed him to see Kent's remarkable history unfold firsthand—from the booming post-World War II era to the turbulence of the '60s and the aftermath of May 4, 1970, to a period of unparalleled growth and academic maturation that brought the University long-coveted Research University II status.

Thanks to Bill Hildebrand's commitment and creativity, each of us can better appreciate the many talented people—faculty, administrators, staff, students, alumni, trustees, and community members—who have helped Kent State University survive and thrive since 1910. In addition, the compelling story he tells adds rich meaning and subtle symbolism to familiar campus landmarks from McGilvrey, named after Kent's visionary first president, to Moulton, the stately site of formal dances and afternoon teas that today is the state-of-the-art Moulton Hall Learning Technologies Center.

In the context of the countless hours Bill put into this work and into the aforementioned labor of love, *A Book of Memories,* "thank you" hardly seems adequate. Nevertheless, on behalf of the Kent State University community, I extend deep, personal thanks to Bill Hildebrand, and my hope that he continues to add many chapters to the Kent State University story.

Carol Cartwright

Carol A. Cartwright
President