The namesake of Machray Hall is Reverend Robert Machray, the first Chancellor of the University of Manitoba, who fought to make the university a degree-granting institution, rather than maintaining its status as a theological training center. He believed religion and education went hand-in-hand but did not believe that universities should be denominational. Machray pressured the provincial government to extend the university’s instructional program to include natural sciences. Machray passed away just prior to the realization of his efforts and the hiring of the first six science professors on campus.