Baker designed to honor former dean

By Thomas Huang
Editor's note: This article is the third in a series on the history of MIT.

"We need to add considerable extra-curricular influences to allow the dormitory to secure a larger portion of the enriching experiences more readily available in a liberal arts college."
--- Everett Moore Baker

Everett Moore Baker, former dean of students, died in a plane crash in August 1950, only a year after MIT students occupied a new dormitory on Memorial Drive. The building, then called the New Senior House, is now known as Baker House.

Baker was born in 1901 in Newtonville, Mass. He graduated from Dartmouth College 23 years later. Baker had been pastor of the First Unitarian Church in Cleveland for four years when MIT appointed him dean of students in 1947.

Baker encouraged extra-curricular activities and student counseling to develop citizenship and widen students' perspectives.

"The current emphasis on highly specialized vocational and professional education must make room for a greater concern...for the general responsibilities of living in a cosmopolitan democratic society in order that the present divisive factors of prejudice, greed, and ignorance shall be purged," Baker wrote in March, 1948.

Baker understood the importance of good student morale in an improved living environment. He told the 1948 Committee on Financial Development that MIT should strive for better student housing.

MIT lacked sufficient housing for the hundreds of married veterans who returned from World War II in 1945. The Institute built barracks on the west end of Briggs Field to accommodate the veterans. 100 cottages, each housing one or two families, covered 10 acres of land on Memorial Drive, west of Massachusetts Avenue.

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