서울대학교 개교 80주년
SNU 80 Years
1946–2026

서울대학교역사기록관
SEOUL NATIONAL UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

무한한 상상
담대한 도전
새로운 미래

서울대학교 기록관

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Foreword

Seoul National University (SNU) stands as one of the most significant achievements following Korea's liberation. Although the country was placed under U.S. military administration after liberation from Japanese colonial rule, the establishment of SNU marked the first time Koreans gained an independent national institution of higher education created for Koreans themselves.

Founded as Korea's first national university at a time when the country was among the poorest in the world, SNU was pushed to the brink of collapse by the devastation of the Korean War. Yet, guided by the aspiration to build a "University of the People," the SNU community overcame countless challenges. By the twenty-first century, the University had emerged as one of the world's leading institutions of higher learning.

Part 1

Seoul National University was founded in the immediate aftermath of Korea's liberation amid national discussions on establishing a public university. It went on to overcome the devastation of the Korean War and pursue reconstruction and growth. Following postwar recovery and campus integration, the University established its identity as a large comprehensive institution in 1975 with the development of the Gwanak Campus. After transitioning into a National University Corporation in 2012, Seoul National University continues its global advancement, grounded in autonomy and responsibility.



Letter from the president of University of Minnesota related to postwar reconstruction projects _1954



Student ID cards, _1950s–1980s



A bronze plaque that was mounted on the main gate of the Dongsung-dong College of Liberal Arts and Sciences campus until 1974



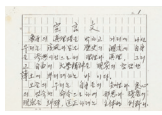
The first book published by the Press of Seoul National University, Korea's first university press established in 1947. 「Atomic Forces of the New Century」 _1948



School uniform worn by Kang Dae-gap, College of Engineering _1971



Student rally on Gwanak Campus, Seoul National University_1980.5.2.



April 19 declaration issued by students of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences_1960



Kim Min-gi's album_1972

Part 2

Seoul National University today stands upon a history shaped by efforts to preserve the Korean language and national identity during Japanese colonial rule, by wartime choices to set aside academic pursuits in service of the country, and by resistance that demanded democracy under military dictatorship. Across generations, students and faculty have responded to the call of their times, playing a central role in advancing Korean society.

Part 3

SNU is made up of many people. Beyond students and professors, there are administrative staff, campus security, cleaning personnel, and those who serve in cafeterias and campus stores. Together, these members of the community contribute to society through and beyond the University. SNU has produced leaders and innovators across academia, culture, science, the economy, and politics, all of whom have played vital roles in moving the world forward. Service and contribution define the University's past and remain its promise for the future.

Closing

"If one asks of the future of our nation, let them raise their heads towards Gwanak."

This well-known line by poet Jeong Hee-sung is familiar to every member of the SNU community. The phrase does not simply say "raise their heads towards Gwanak," but "let them raise their heads," a solemn call first voiced by the poet when he was a graduate student at the groundbreaking ceremony of the Gwanak Campus in 1971. SNU must be a light of truth and, beyond that, a light for the world.

Permanent Exihibitions

Visitor Information

Opening Hours
Weekdays 10:00–17:00

Days of Operation
See announcements on the SNU Archives website (archives.snu.ac.kr)

Admission
Free