

*'Dreams and Visions,*  
*The History of Navarro College*

*By Dr. Tommy Stringer*

*Tommy Stringer*  
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## *Preface*

Dreams and Visions provides a brief account of the 50-year history of Navarro College. It is basically arranged chronologically by the administrations of the institution's four presidents. A wide variety of sources provided information and insight into the people and events that have contributed to the unique history of Navarro. Numerous interviews, both formal and informal, gave personal insights into the school's development and uncovered episodes that were not "written down" anywhere. Publications such as The Growl, El Navarro, and the Corsicana Daily Sun added more information. Numerous in-house publications, brochures, and photographs were also helpful in telling Navarro's story.

Of course, not every event in the College's fifty year history is included in this work. But a concerted effort has been made to include those episodes that have proven to be of special significance in shaping the institution. Navarro's story is a story of people, and many have been recognized by name on these pages. Others who gave of their time, talents, and resources were not named. The intention was not to slight anyone, but time and space limitations did come into play.

Dreams and Visions is intended to give the reader an understanding and appreciation of the experiences and people that made Navarro College a "first class junior college," as envisioned by its founders. It is impossible to count the number of lives that Navarro College has touched or to measure the influence it has exerted in its fifty year history, but this work is a feeble attempt to describe some of those accounts. The experience of researching and compiling this volume has given the writer a greater appreciation for Navarro College and the many people who have contributed to its success.

Dr. Tommy Stringer  
History Instructor  
Navarro College

## *Acknowledgments*

A project of this nature can be completed only with the assistance and cooperation of many people. It began when Dr. Kenneth Walker asked me to produce a history of Navarro College as the institution prepared to celebrate its 40th anniversary. The information that was gathered at that time publicized the beginnings of the College and the contributions of many people who were involved in its founding and development.

Over the next decade, suggestions were made to expand the previous effort into a full book-length history of Navarro as part of the 50th anniversary celebration. Many people have contributed significantly to this final product. Former students, faculty members, administrators, members of the Board of Trustees, and community leaders granted interviews, both formal and informal, to share their recollections of the College's development at its various stages. Many shared photographs, documents, and personal memorabilia that added human interest aspects of the life of the institution. The Registrar's Office and the Business Office made available statistical data related to the growth and development of the College. McAfee Daniel not only provided information based on his long association with the College but he also edited the manuscript. Linda Timmerman provided editorial comments, and, along with Lisa Washburn, was instrumental in the lay-out process involved in "putting the book together." Jeremy Pereira supplied photographs from his "collection," and Dr. Lary Reed and Dr. Gerald Burson provided much support for the project. Funding for publication and distribution of the book came from the Navarro College Foundation.

No doubt, there are others whom I am inadvertently omitting who made various contributions to this endeavor. Although you are unnamed, you are appreciated.

*Dreams and Visions*  
*The History of Navarro College*



*A.A. Allison, Corsicana's postmaster and chairman of the Educational Committee of the Corsicana Chamber of Commerce, was among the first in Navarro County to recognize the important role which the junior college could play in the educational process.*

## Chapter 1 The Dream

Navarro County, which is located fifty miles southeast of Dallas in north central Texas, has a colorful history, dating back to the beginnings of Texas statehood. Stories of cowboys and Indians, Texas Rangers, cotton, railroads, oil, and chili are all included in the rich heritage of the region.

The first Anglo residents, who came

determination would serve the settlers well as they carved out a new life for themselves: building homes, raising crops, starting businesses, erecting churches, and establishing schools as they brought civilization to the rugged Texas frontier.

The first Texas Legislature established Navarro County in July, 1846, and named it

for Texas patriot Jose Antonio Navarro. A five-member committee laid out a townsite to serve as the seat of government for the newly created county, and at Jose Navarro's request, called it Corsicana in honor of the island of Corsica, the birthplace of his father. The town grew consistently although not spectacularly during the next decade. Like

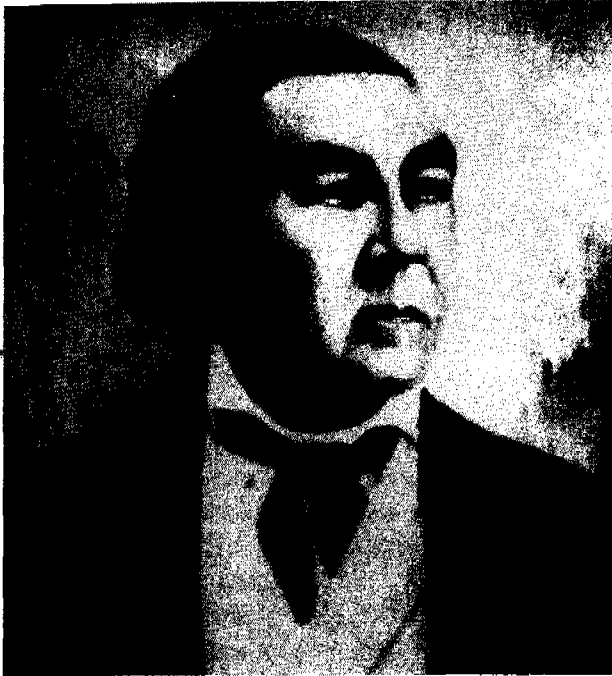


*Mule-drawn street car, Beaton Street - Corsicana.*

in the 1840s, were typical pioneers, having uprooted themselves to seek a better life and willing to take the risks that accompany such an endeavor. They were attracted to the area by the rich black soil, which was ideal for cotton production, and their spirit of

most communities in East and Central Texas, Corsicana enthusiastically supported secession and the Confederate cause during the Civil War, sending 450 of her sons to fight in General Lee's Rebel army. The arrival of the Houston and Texas Central

Railroad in 1871 brightened the community's future considerably by providing a dependable means of transporting people and goods into and out of the city.



*Jose Antonio Navarro*

The town's direction was altered dramatically when in 1894 workers drilling a water well only blocks from Corsicana's business district struck oil. By the end of the decade, there were 500 producing oil wells within the city limits of Corsicana, yielding more than 800,000 barrels of crude per year, making Corsicana the state's first commercial oil field. Corsicana became the vanguard for production technology, marketing strategies, and diversified uses for petroleum products. Some of the industry's most dynamic and innovative leaders got their first experience in the Corsicana field.

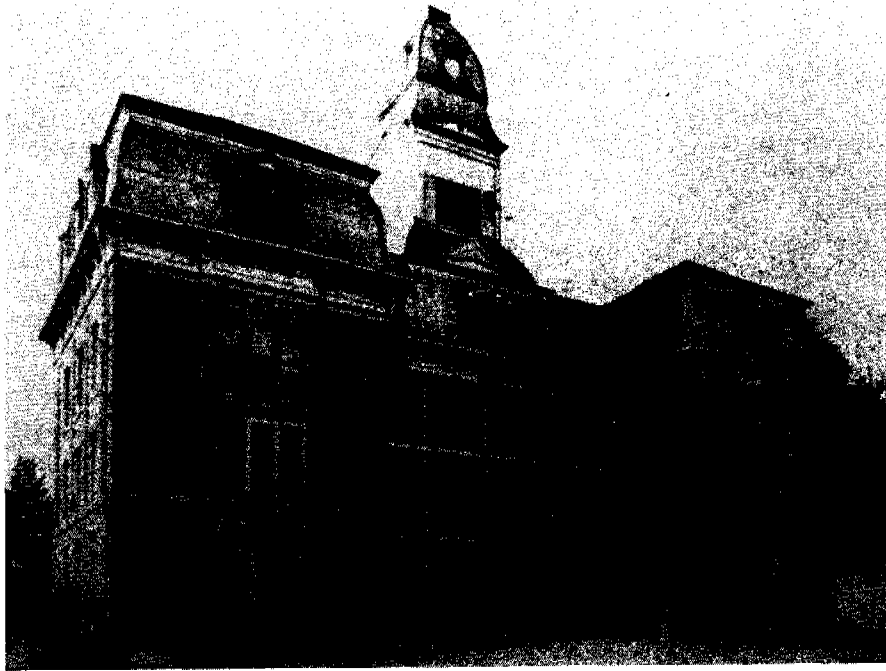
The development of the Spindletop Field in 1901 shifted oil interest from Corsicana to the Texas Gulf Coast, but a gusher drilled on a ranch near Powell 10 miles east of Corsicana in January, 1923,

launched a new boom for Navarro County. At its peak, the Powell Field was yielding 315,000 barrels of crude per day, bringing economic prosperity and a population explosion to Navarro County. The future looked extremely bright. It was under those dynamic conditions that the dream of a "first class junior college" for Navarro County was first discussed.

The County's residents had long demonstrated an interest in improving the quality of life through expanding educational opportunities. Dozens of one-room schools had flourished throughout the County, offering fundamental instruction in the "Three R's." As transportation improved, consolidation of many of those schools occurred. By 1860 there were five good boarding schools in Navarro County, including one at Dresden, one at Chatfield, and the remaining three at Corsicana. The Corsicana Female Institute provided instruction for young women in the social graces as well as in academic subjects. Major Henry Bishop established a military school in Corsicana about the time of the outbreak of the Civil War, while Mrs. J.W. Gillick operated a private academic institution. Professor R.S. Roberts operated a female academy in Corsicana which was noted for its outstanding programs in the fine arts, chemistry, physiology, and hygiene. The Catholic Church also operated a parochial school in Corsicana in the late 19th century. The Corsicana Public School system opened in 1880, providing local students with the opportunity to receive an education without tuition cost.

The residents of Navarro County also demonstrated a longstanding interest in higher education. The 1872 records of the Navarro County Court mention a "college of higher learning" at Dresden in the western part of the County. Dresden College occupied a large, two-story building in that community. In 1869, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church established Tehuacana University just across the Navarro County line in Limestone County to train young men for





*Trinity University - Tehuacana*

was founded in 1899 by the Corsicana Methodist Conference. The institution's name suggested its primary focus, namely to prepare students to transfer to Southwestern University at Georgetown, the leading Methodist college in the area at that time. By 1902 U.T.S. boasted a student body of 200, but enrollment was erratic over the next several years, and financial problems were a constant source of concern for administrators.

the Presbyterian ministry and to provide a wholesome Christian environment for young people to pursue their studies. The school struggled during its tenure at Tehuacana until it moved to Waxahachie in 1902, and the trustees changed its name to Trinity. In 1942 the school moved once again, this time to San Antonio, and today it enjoys an outstanding reputation for academic excellence. The Methodist Church acquired the original Tehuacana University property and established Westminster College, which operated at that site until the 1960s.

In 1910 trustees changed the school's name to Central Texas College. The following year, a bulletin from the State Board of Education classified Central Texas College in a group of institutions "doing work



*Central Texas College, - Blooming Grove*

Blooming Grove, located 15 miles west of Corsicana, also boasted an institution of higher learning. Known originally as the University Training School, it

above that of a secondary school, but giving no degrees." C.T.C. described itself as a junior college, although no academic or

accreditation agency ever classified it as such. Although Central Texas College had impressive facilities and offered a wide range of academic programs and extracurricular activities, the failure of the institution was almost inevitable. Because of its location in a rural, isolated area and its high tuition cost as a private institution, there was never an adequate number of potential students available from which to recruit, and financial problems were chronic. Consequently, the institution closed its doors in 1912.

Those individuals in the 1920s who began exploring the possibility of a college for Navarro County did have a foundation on which to build. They learned from the experiences of earlier endeavors. They realized that a private school located in a rural setting like Navarro County would have serious problems in attracting sufficient numbers of students and adequate financial resources needed to operate an institution of higher learning. Consequently, the organizers determined that a two-year college rather than a four-year institution would be more likely to succeed in Navarro County, and a public institution rather than a private one would be more affordable for perspective students. Thus a first class, tax-supported junior college was the dream of civic leaders and educators.

The junior college is a recent development in the American educational system. Initially, higher education in America was available only to wealthy aristocrats and emphasized studies of the classics. Such institutions prepared young men for life as a gentleman but little else. As democracy expanded, citizens' demands for rights and privileges increased, including the access to education. Among the first to propose a separate institution for the first two years of college was Henry Tappan, president of the University of Michigan. In 1852 Tappan maintained that in such an institution students could mature and develop better study habits before enrolling in a university. William Rainy Harper, founding president of the

University of Chicago, concurred. He proposed restructuring American universities after the German model, devoted to professional training and research. A separate division patterned after the German gymnasium would address the freshman and sophomore years of study. Harper established such an arrangement at the University of Chicago in the 1890s, calling it a junior college, while the upper division, or junior and senior level, was labelled the senior college.

Similar efforts were emerging in the Midwest as academies and seminaries expanded their curricula to include college courses, and they evolved into junior colleges. The first such institutions were privately funded, primarily church-affiliated. The first public junior college opened in Joliet, Illinois, in 1900. Over the next several decades the movement grew rapidly.

Texas was in the vanguard of the junior college movement. The Methodist Church began Lon Morris College in 1854 in Kilgore before moving the school to Jacksonville. Weatherford College established in 1869 and Blinn College founded in Brenham in 1883 were both Methodist colleges before they became public institutions. In the early Twentieth Century three Baptist four-year colleges became junior colleges with the understanding that their graduates would be admitted to Baylor University classified as juniors. Public junior colleges were established in Hillsboro, San Antonio, Paris, Amarillo, El Paso, Temple, and Tyler in the 1920s. The movement was obviously growing and meeting educational needs of local communities as they struggled to provide academic opportunities for their citizens.

A.A. Allison, Corsicana's postmaster and chairman of the Educational Committee of the Corsicana Chamber of Commerce, was among the first in Navarro County to recognize the important role which the junior college could play in the educational process. He published an article entitled "Junior

Colleges," in the June, 1928, issue of Texas Outlook. Citing the rapidly increasing high school population and the already overcrowded universities, Allison saw the two-year college as the most efficient and least expensive way to provide higher education opportunities for aspiring students. Naturally, Allison was promoting the establishment of such an institution in Corsicana. Because of the recent oil boom, the County's population had escalated to 50,000 people, and Allison pointed out that Navarro was the only county that size in the state without an institution of higher learning. By Allison's calculations, 200 to 300 young people from Navarro County were "away at college" in 1928. With a local "first class junior college," he believed that many of them would have stayed near home to study. In addition, Allison maintained that many young people who could not afford to go away to college perhaps could have raised sufficient funds to attend a local two-year institution.

Allison cited other advantages of the two-year college. At the junior college, students would get more personalized attention from instructors who were trained professionals. Their primary interest would be teaching rather than research. Enrolling at a junior college would enable those students starting their college careers to adjust to higher education without having to endure the intense pressure of a large university environment. At the smaller, more personalized school, there would be the opportunity to learn better study habits and to develop the discipline needed to succeed in college. Allison concluded that there was more than an adequate source of potential students from which to recruit. With an improving highway system crisscrossing the county, young people could live at home, thus avoiding the high cost of room and board, and travel a short distance for two years of college training at a campus right at their doorstep. Allison was convinced they would do exactly that.

Apparently Allison's arguments were

convincing to other community leaders. The Corsicana Chamber of Commerce announced that its major goal for 1929 would be the establishment of such an institution in Corsicana. In a published announcement, the Chamber expressed hope that the college would be organized "within the next few months." The seeds for Navarro College had been planted, and all indications were that those seeds would germinate rapidly. Navarro County was enjoying the prosperity of the oil boom, which had swelled the local population and poured substantial amounts of money into the local economy. Everything seemed to be ideal for achieving the Chamber's goal.

External circumstances, however, prevented the dream from becoming a reality at that time. In March, 1929, Herbert Hoover was inaugurated as the nation's new Chief Executive. The United States had been riding a wave of prosperity during the 1920s, but Hoover had campaigned on a promise that the economy would get even better--"a chicken in every pot and a car in every garage." In his inaugural address he announced that "we are just around the corner from the abolition of poverty in the United States."

Seven months later the economy collapsed, plunging the nation into the Great Depression and sending 25 percent of the American work force into the ranks of the unemployed. Millions of others were underemployed, working at jobs far below their capabilities, levels of training, and earning capacity. Navarro County struggled along with the rest of the country. Paul Moore, longtime employee of the Corsicana Daily Sun, related an episode that characterized the economic woes of the county as well as the entire nation. The owners of the Daily Sun called all the employees together to announce that the payroll would have to be reduced by ten percent. Workers were asked to decide if they would rather take a ten percent wage cut or reduce the staff by 10 percent. In a

unanimous vote, the employees opted for the resources simply were not available to pursue it seriously.



*Air Activities of Texas, Corsicana Facility*

pay cut rather than see some of their colleagues terminated.

Franklin D. Roosevelt initiated the New Deal in 1933 in an effort to pull the country out the economic disaster. Because so many Texans were in prominent power positions in Washington, the Lone Star State got a disproportionately high share of New Deal programs and funds. Corsicana's unemployed benefitted from FDR's programs. A Civilian Conservation Corps camp was located south of town near Lake Halbert, providing jobs for young men between the ages of 18 and 25. Others found work with the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Despite those job opportunities, many people in the county remained unemployed. The Collin Street Bakery provided bread to the needy, distributing it through schools. County officials opened the basement of the courthouse where transients slept on newspapers they spread on the floor. Although there was still interest in the proposed junior college, obviously financial

Priorities were being rearranged; survival was of more immediate concern to the local residents.

As the economy began to improve by the end of the 1930s, leaders thought they could revive interest in the college again. However, another external obstacle arose, namely the outbreak of World War II. Hitler's invasion of Poland in September, 1939, plunged

Europe into war, but America's initial response was to declare an official policy of neutrality. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, brought the United States into the conflict. The sons of Navarro County responded to the call to arms. More than 3,500 Navarro Countians served in the armed forces, fighting in every theater of the war. On the homefront, the American Well and Prospecting Company converted its operations from the manufacture of oil field equipment to the production of 240 millimeter shells and 1,000 pound semi-armor piercing bombs. The plant ran around-the-clock, employing as many as 1,000 people during its peak period of production. In addition, several local businesses sponsored war bond drives to raise funds to help finance the war effort. Rationing items such as gasoline, sugar,

meat, and tires required all Americans, including the people of Navarro County, to limit their use of such commodities. Many consumer goods were simply not available at all during the war. Once again, prevailing conditions interrupted any plans for the establishment of the college, at least for the time being. Other matters were more urgent, to say the least.

When the war ended in 1945, there were two distinct directions the American economy could have taken. With the cancellation of numerous military contracts and the closing of many war-related plants and factories, the nation might well have plunged into massive unemployment not unlike conditions during the Great Depression. Some economists were predicting that as many as 10 million Americans may lose their jobs in the transition from a war-time to peace-time economy. The other possibility was runaway inflation. Because of rationing and shortages, Americans had been forced to do without many consumer goods during the war years. Because of their pent-up demands for such items, they might be willing to pay exorbitant prices for those goods. President Harry Truman was confronted with the dilemma of trying to prepare for both massive unemployment and spiraling inflation.

Those conditions actually proved to be the catalyst that was needed to make Allison's dream of a college for Navarro County a reality. (Mr. Allison died in 1943). In an effort to prepare for the demobilization of the armed forces, Congress passed the Serviceman's Readjustment Act, commonly called the GI Bill. The returning veterans would find a job market already saturated with workers displaced by the cancellation of



*Cadets on Parade - Air Activities of Texas*

military contracts or closing of war-related plants. There simply would not be enough positions for such a large number of job seekers. The GI Bill hoped to alleviate some of the strain by providing \$13.5 billion in educational benefits for the returning servicemen. Many of those men had entered the military immediately upon graduating from high school, and consequently they had no opportunity to begin college. On the other hand, many had their college studies interrupted by the war. Still others would never have even considered going to college because they lacked the necessary funds to do so. The subsidies available under the GI Bill would provide both the incentive and the financial means for those men to begin or resume their college careers.

In addition, the federal government was abandoning various facilities that were no longer needed because of the conclusion of the war. The Air Activities of Texas was among the installations to be closed. Located six miles south of downtown Corsicana on US Highway 287, the Air Activities facility was established in 1941 as part of a government plan to train the thousands of pilots needed by the Army Air

Corps for World War II. Under a plan developed by General H.H. "Hap" Arnold, the Army contracted with private flight schools to conduct the training. The civilian-owned flight schools provided everything except the pilot trainees and the airplanes. A partnership composed of B.L. Woolley, B.W. Woolley, E.D. "Dick" Criddle, Edward "Doc" Booth, and J.O. Womack received a contract to operate such a facility in Navarro County. Under the terms of the contract, the Air Activities of Texas would provide food, housing, and civilian ground and flight instructors, and the Army Air Corps would provide planes, cadets, and appropriate military personnel as part of the training process. The Federal Government paid the school on a per hour basis. The school, which was designated as a primary flight school, was the second leg of a three level training procedure. Upon completion of their schooling at such facilities as the Air Activities, cadets were then sent to basic training where they learned to fly planes more sophisticated than the PT's they were operating at primary schools.

Air Activities was located on a 400-acre tract owned by Corsicana banker, J.N. Edens. A large part of the acreage had been an oil tank farm, which required the leveling and removal of those tanks before construction of the pilot training school campus could get underway. Construction included a parking strip 2,000 feet long and 225 feet wide, several hangars, barracks, office facilities, maintenance buildings, and a mess hall-kitchen. By March 18, 1941, six buildings were completed, and the first class of 51 cadets arrived the following day to begin their training.

The ten weeks of training involved 60 hours of flight instruction and 140 hours of ground school in the theory of flight, airplane engines, maps and navigation, meteorology, and mathematics. There was also a rigorous physical training program which included calisthenics performed to music, a forerunner of jazzercise. The civilian instructors who taught in the ground school usually had a

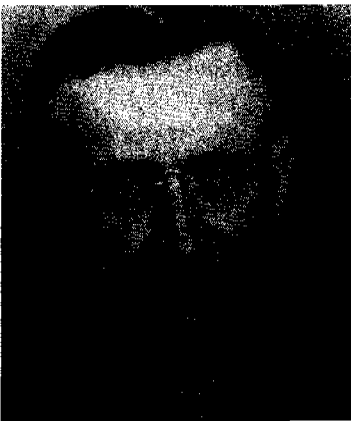
background in public education, including C.G. Strickland and Margaret Pannill, both of whom would later play prominent roles in the founding and early development of Navarro Junior College.

Miss Pannill recalled being approached by Air Activities officials with an offer to teach in the ground school. Naturally, she was somewhat surprised at the request. After all, her background was in music and literature. Her assignment at the air field would be to teach the cadets meteorology, airplane identification, and navigation, fields which she readily admitted she knew little about. When she raised questions about her qualifications to teach such subjects, she was told the main concern was her teaching ability. "They asked me if I thought I could teach. I told them I knew I could teach. They then told me they would provide the information and teach me what I needed to know." She accepted the challenge, but she admitted that she prepared diligently every night for the next day's lessons, just barely staying one step ahead of her students. She would demonstrate that same level of commitment and talent later as one of the original faculty members at Navarro Junior College.

During its three and a half years of operation, more than 8,000 cadets received primary flight training at the Corsicana field before they moved on to more advanced instruction. Pilots from the Corsicana field flew combat missions in every theater of the war. But as the Allies gained the upper hand in the long and bloody conflict, the need for such facilities declined. The Corsicana Field was ordered closed in October, 1944.

The facility made significant contributions to the Allied victory, and it had an enormous economic impact on the County by providing as many as 500 civilian jobs and the purchase of supplies and materials used to operate the Field. But the Air Activities of Texas had yet another important role to play in the community's history.

County educators and business leaders once again raised the issue of the creation of a junior college. At that time, the Navarro County School Administrators Association, comprised of superintendents and principals of all the county's schools, held monthly gatherings, rotating the meeting site among the respective campuses. The superintendent of the host school provided a meal, usually prepared by the high school home economics department. Normally there was some type of program following the dinner.



Mr. W.H. Norwood

rather than arranging a musical presentation or a dramatic production as was usually the case, he presented the program himself. Norwood declared to the assembled educators that now was the time to push for the long-talked-about junior college. The Air Activities facility would be suitable for a campus, and the returning servicemen, motivated by GI educational benefits, would provide the foundation for a student body.

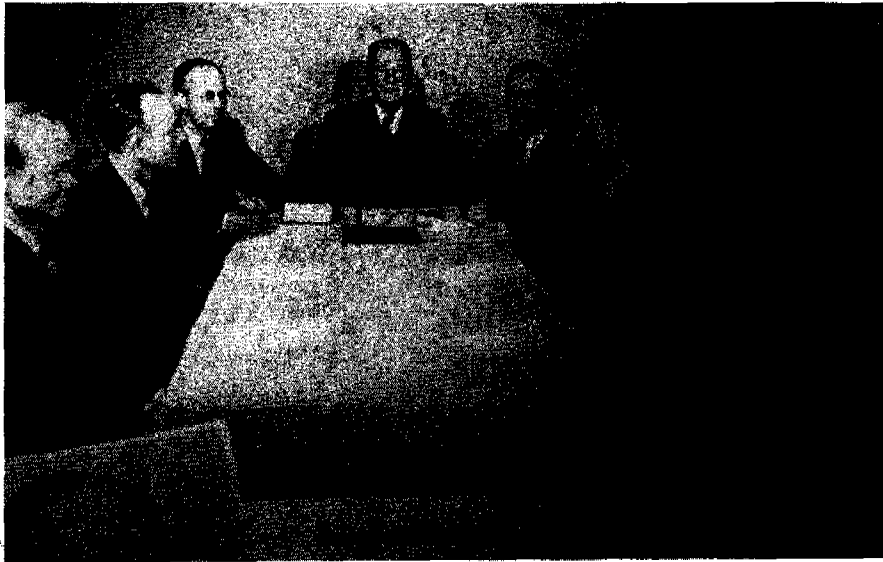
Norwood appointed a five-member committee composed of himself, County School Superintendent J.C. Watson, Ray Waller of Dawson, W. B. Harrison of Frost, and G.H. Wilemon of Kerens. The charge to the committee was to explore the idea further and report their findings to the group at the May meeting. At that meeting, they presented a strongly favorable report, indicating that their respective communities

were highly enthusiastic about the proposal.

In the meantime, Norwood approached the Corsicana Chamber of Commerce and the Corsicana City Commission with his idea, and both groups reacted favorably. A contingency of Navarro County business and civic leaders traveled to Fort Worth to meet with John Murray McGee of the War Assets Administration, a government agency charged with the responsibility of disposing of government-owned buildings and other properties. A former resident of Corsicana, McGee personally knew many of those in the group. After listening to their proposal to use the abandoned air field as a campus for a college, McGee gave his blessing to the idea and promised to lend his support for final approval which had to come from Washington.

The mayor of Corsicana, John C. Calhoun, and Fred Harvey of the Industrial Committee of the Corsicana Chamber of Commerce went to Washington to meet with federal authorities concerning the process involved in the city acquiring the property. Once again they received a positive response, and the transaction was approved, calling for the property to be turned over to the city of Corsicana.

With the groundwork now laid, Mr. Norwood, who had been a driving force behind the junior college project, decided it was time for him to relinquish that dominant role and turn over the reins to local business leaders. In a meeting held May 28, 1946, in the Navarro County Courthouse, O.L. Albritton and Ralph Brown were named co-chairmen of an 11-member steering committee whose objective was to devise a strategy to win a county-wide approval of the college by means of an election. Other members of the committee included Mrs. George Daniel and W.H. Norwood of Corsicana, R.E. Huling of Emhouse, Mrs. J.K. Bradley of Rice, C.M. Chapman of Kerens, Jim Richards of Richland, C.M. Newton, Jr. of Dawson, Buell Robinson of Barry, Bruce McCormick of Blooming Grove,



*The original Navarro College Board of Trustees.*

and Curtis Patterson and G.L. Haley both of Frost. The committee members were asked to survey their respective communities regarding attitudes about the creation of the college, and their findings were overwhelmingly positive. In light of such favorable responses, the steering committee designated July, 16, 1946, as the date for an election to approve the creation of the institution and a 10 cent ad valorem tax rate to provide for its funding, and to choose a 7-member board of trustees to govern the institution.

P.T.A. groups and other local civic organizations did much of the work in securing support for the election by obtaining voters lists and writing letters to every registered voter in Navarro County. Others spoke at meetings of civic organizations and service clubs promoting the advantages of a college for the county. There were telephone canvassings and door-to-door campaigns urging voter support for the college. No organized opposition arose against the election, and the hard work paid off. The final tally was 1,219 votes in favor of the college and only 374 opposed, a margin of nearly 4 to 1. The voters had created the

Navarro Junior College district.

Voters also chose a 7-member board of trustees to govern the new institution. Original Board members included O.L. Albritton of Corsicana; L.B. Bonner of Eureka; Lloyd Carraway of Corsicana; Bruce McCormick of Blooming Grove; Curtis Patterson of Frost; J.W. Richards of Richland; and Ralph Brown of Corsicana. Some of the early Texas junior colleges such as Paris, Hill, and Tyler, had been appendages of the

local independent school districts, offering classes on the high school campus, run by the same administrators, and governed by the same board of trustees. Such was not the case for Navarro Junior College. From the outset it was understood NJC was to be a separate entity from the local independent school district with its own administration and governing board.

The makeup of the Board also demonstrated another predetermined premise, namely that the institution would be a county, not a city, institution. The Board members came from every geographical segment of the Navarro County to insure that every area was represented on the Board. In addition, selecting the name Navarro Junior College indicated that there was a legitimate attempt to include the entire county, not just the city of Corsicana, in the College district. The founders intent was to provide an institution to serve the educational needs of the students of the entire county.

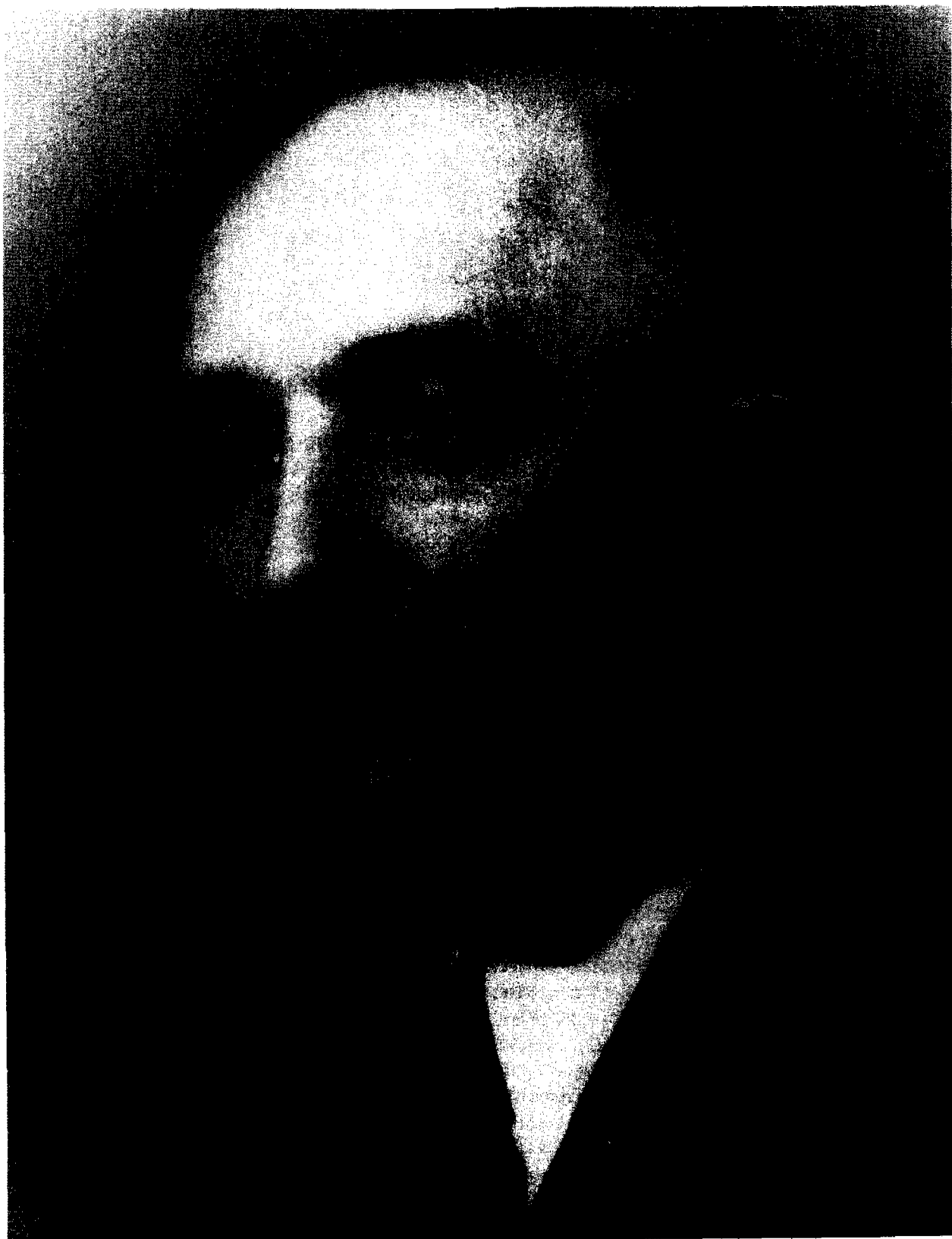
Before the new college could assume control of the property that was to serve as the campus, it was necessary to restructure some of the existing contractual agreements. Initially, the federal government had leased



the land occupied by the Air Activities of Texas from J.N. Edens. By mutual agreement, the lease had been transferred to the city of Corsicana at the end of World War II when the base closed. The city planned to develop a municipal airport at the site. The lease was due to expire in 1952, but it carried a 10-year renewal option. Corsicana attorney Jerry C. Roe handled the transaction in which the Board of Trustees of Navarro Junior College agreed to pay the city of Corsicana \$500 per year for use of the 311-acre tract under lease from Edens.

Since the lease agreement applied only to the land, it was necessary to make other arrangements for utilization of the buildings. A contract signed August 7, 1946, gave the College temporary use of 7 buildings, 1 hanger, and 2 barracks. The College now had a campus. The following year, July, 17, 1947, the Federal Works Agency transferred permanent possession of the buildings, including all fixtures and equipment, to the College. The total value of the property donated to the College was estimated to be in excess of \$90,000.

With a campus secured and a Board of Trustees in place, the dream of a "first class junior college" initially envisioned by A.A. Allison, despite interruptions caused by the Depression and World War II, was now closer to becoming a reality. The next step involved taking the plan off the drawing board and putting it into action by getting the college operational.



*Ray L. Waller - Navarro College President - 1946-1956*

## Chapter II

### *Laying the Foundation: The Waller Administration, 1946-56*

The newly elected Board of Trustees of Navarro Junior College convened for its initial meeting July 22, 1946, and chose O.L. Albritton as chairman, L.B. Bonner as vice chairman, Lloyd Carraway as secretary, and Ralph Brown as treasurer. The Board's first official act was to name Ray Waller as the institution's first president. A native of Louisiana, Waller had graduated from high school in Winnsboro, Texas. He held degrees from Texas Tech University and Southern Methodist University. Waller had taught and coached at several schools in



C.G. (Connie Strickland)

Texas, and he had for a time served as superintendent of schools at Rice, a small community north of Corsicana. At the time he was named president of NJC, Waller was a superintendent of schools in Dawson in western Navarro County, and he had been among

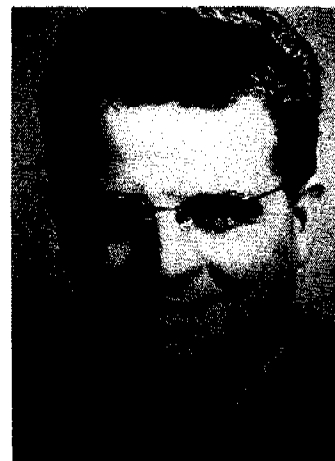
the most ardent supporters for the creation of

a junior college in Corsicana. A monumental task lay before President Waller as he prepared to put everything in place by September, when classes were scheduled to begin.

Joining Waller in the school's first administration

were C.G. (Connie) Strickland as dean and Gaston T. Gooch as registrar. Both men were well known and highly respected personally and professionally in the Navarro County area. Strickland was superintendent of schools at Purdon and had served as assistant county school superintendent. Gooch, who had worked with Waller at Dawson, was principal at Corsicana Junior High School before joining the staff of Navarro Junior College.

The Board directed President Waller to prepare a proposed budget and present it at the next meeting, which was scheduled for the following week. The budget which Waller presented and the Board approved totalled



Gaston T. Gooch

\$52,500 and was based on a projected enrollment of 200 students. Next came the task of hiring faculty members.



*M.S. Cook - English Instructor*

According to Board minutes, the first two instructors to be employed by Navarro Junior College were M.S. Cook in English and James Edgar in science. Librarian Dorothy Hawthorne and Margaret Pannill, an instructor of music and English, were added shortly thereafter. Mr. Edgar recalled that his salary for that first year was \$3,000. Because several perspective male students inquired about an athletic program, the Board voted to field a complete sports program with football, basketball, and tennis. Kenneth Clark was hired as the first coach. Other members of the original faculty included Lucille Boyd, Paul Floyd, Eva Crowder, A.L. Whitfield, Sue Rouse, Ernest Gray, William Thomason, Evelyn Foley, Jimmie Sue Akers, Margaret Berry, and Charlotte Ballard. The faculty were well trained, holding degrees from such prestigious universities as SMU, TCU, Baylor, Columbia, Texas A&M, Northwestern, and the University of Texas. Although many had secure teaching positions in public schools, they left those jobs to come to Navarro at somewhat of a risk. After all, this was a new endeavor that may fail. But there seemed to be no hesitancy whatsoever to take jobs with the newly emerging institution. "I never doubted for a minute the college would make it," Lucille Boyd recalled, and those same sentiments were echoed by several other members of the original faculty.

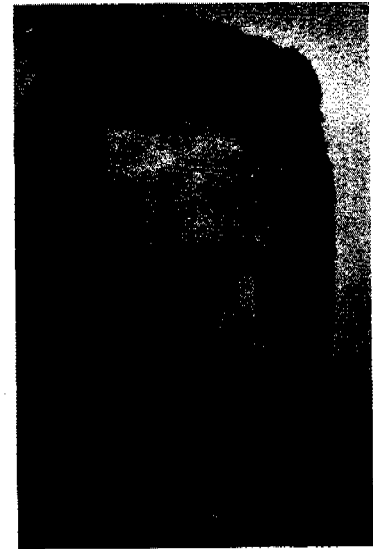
Since the campus was located approximately six miles from downtown

Corsicana in a rather remote area, and the hope that students from all over Navarro County would enroll in school, transportation to and from the campus was a potential problem. Consequently, the Board authorized the purchase of four buses which would run specified routes from various communities in the county to the campus. The College continued to run buses for students until the late 1960s.

The Board designated September 16 as the first day of classes, only 63 days after the voters of Navarro County had approved the creation of the College. In the meantime, a dedication ceremony was held at the campus in mid-August. John Carpenter, a native of Corsicana who had made a name for himself as an executive with Texas Power and Light and founder of the Southland

Life Insurance Company of Dallas, addressed an enthusiastic crowd assembled in the sweltering heat to dedicate the new facility. What had been a facility to train men for war would now be used to prepare young people of Navarro County to be leaders in society.

Registration for fall classes began September 9. Charles A. Skelton was the first student to enroll. When classes began the following week on September 16, 238 students had registered. The student body assembled that morning to hear remarks from Governor-elect Beauford Jester of Corsicana, as well as from other state and local dignitaries. Approximately 80



*Charles A. Skelton - The first student to enroll at Navarro College.*

percent of the first student body consisted of veterans of World War II who were now ready to begin or resume their college studies. Only 44 women were included in the first student body.

Jimmy Morris, a Corsicana attorney who was a member of the first student body, commented how important it was for him personally to have a local junior college to attend. "If Navarro Junior College had not been started when it was, I might not have gone to college at all," he remarked. He had visited Texas A&M after he graduated from Corsicana High School, but he was intimidated by its size, and he merely came back home without enrolling. Then came the

semester. "As it turned out," he commented, "Navarro Junior College was the best thing that ever happened to me." He completed his studies at Baylor after leaving Navarro and returned to Corsicana to open a private law practice. He also later served as District Attorney and as a State Legislator.

The fact that the student body consisted of such a high percentage of veterans gave it a unique flavor. The students were more mature than typical beginning college freshmen. They were older chronologically since military service had delayed or interrupted their college careers, but they were also more emotionally mature because of their war-related experiences.

Many of them realized this was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity made possible by funding from the GI Bill and the creation of a local college. Consequently, for the most part, they were conscientious students, serious about their studies. It took time for some to adjust to civilian life after their military experiences, however. Margaret Pannill recalled teaching class one day when a car in the parking lot backfired. A young man who had been involved in some of the most intense combat of the war dived under his desk,

an instinctive reaction resulting from years on the battle front.

All in all, the students and faculty involved in those first days recalled an atmosphere of incredible enthusiasm. There was a sense of being in on the ground floor of something special and significant, and they welcomed the opportunity to be part of it. Coach Ken Clark recalled a feeling of family among faculty and students alike, a sense of cooperation and support that almost defies explanation. This was illustrated by an



*1946-47 faculty and staff*

Second World War, and like thousands of other young men, Morris answered the call to arms. After he completed his tour of duty, he was undecided as to what he wanted to do. Also, he had little money. He arrived back home in Corsicana as the new College was just starting operations. The fact that he could stay home, study in a small college atmosphere until he decided what he wanted to do, and at the same time be with people he knew, prompted him to utilize his GI benefits to enroll for classes that first

incident that occurred during the first year of the College's existence. Dean Strickland's wife became seriously ill and required numerous blood transfusions. A busload of students traveled to Dallas to donate blood for her, and more were prepared to go if they were needed. Because of that incident, Strickland commented he developed a strong feeling of family toward his colleagues and the students.

This is not to say there were no problems. Jim Edgar, chemistry instructor, recalled his first day of classes. His classroom was completely empty. "There wasn't a chair, a table, or anything in it--nothing," he said. After calling the roll, he dismissed the class and promised them that when they returned he would at least have a lecture for them. In the meantime, he went home and built some tables and borrowed some chairs from a local funeral home. At least the students would have a place to sit while he lectured. Over the next several months he struggled to secure supplies and equipment for his laboratory, and little by little the College acquired materials, most of which became available through government surplus.

Dean Strickland remembered that he, President Waller and Registrar Gooch had one typewriter between them, and it was an old "beat-up" one that Strickland had used in graduate school. Eventually desks, chairs, filing cabinets, typewriters, and other supplies and equipment were secured through government surplus as well.

The campus itself was somewhat of an inconvenience. It was utilitarian in that the buildings were adequate but they were less than desirable in appearance. After all, those structures were plain white buildings, designed for use as a military base with little concern for aesthetics. The buildings sat in an open field, obviously an important feature for flight training but not the image portrayed for a college campus. Margaret Berry, an instructor and administrator, recalled how drab the campus was. It certainly did not

resemble a tree-lined college campus with ivy-covered walls. She and some of the other women personnel tried to brighten it up somewhat by planting flowers around the buildings.

Despite the inconveniences, classes got underway as scheduled. The College catalog outlined a strenuous attendance policy which permitted three absences for unavoidable emergencies in each course each semester. Absences on the day preceding or following a holiday or from any announced quiz counted as a double absence. Every Friday instructors were required to turn into the dean's office a list of all absences for the week. Euneva Herod Burleson recalled that the community was obviously unaware of how colleges operated. As the switchboard operator, she frequently received telephone calls from concerned townspeople reporting they had seen college students downtown in the middle of the day. Why, they wondered, weren't those students in class? Apparently they thought college classes were arranged like high school classes, and students were expected to be in class from the time they arrived on campus in the mornings until the school day was over in the afternoon.

While academics were the focal point of the newly created institution, there is more to college than just classes. A college needs traditions and symbols, and obviously a new institution like Navarro Junior College had none at that point. It was up to the first group of students and faculty to establish them. Margaret Pannill recalled that early in that first school year students and some faculty gathered informally outside near the administration building to choose school colors, a school mascot, and other school emblems. During the discussion of a name for the athletic teams, someone suggested the name Drillers in keeping with the oil heritage of Navarro County, but eventually the talk turned to animals and finally narrowed to breeds of dogs. One girl, Miss Pannill remembered, even suggested



*Coach Ken Clark with Basketball Team in Locker Room*

"spaniels." When Jimmy Morris pointed out the admirable traits of strength and determination of the bulldog, an informal vote taken by the group decided the Bulldogs it would be. Perhaps the fact that President Waller and Registrar Gooch had both been associated with the Dawson school system whose mascot was the bulldog may have influenced the decision somewhat.

Students formed various campus organizations. The veterans organized the KVB Club. The Choral Club and the Drama Club attracted students interested in the arts. A Student Council was elected with Sammy Palmeri chosen as the first president. There was the B.A. Club for business majors and an Aesculapius Club for those interested in science. Margaret Pannill sponsored the Canterbury Club, a student religious organization supported by the Episcopal Church.

Students and faculty expressed an interest in publishing an annual to record the year's event. In a faculty meeting early in the semester in which the publication of a yearbook was under discussion, Waller asked if any of the teachers had any experience working with such a publication. Mr. Edgar commented that he had been business

manager of the yearbook when he was a student at East Texas State College in Commerce. "You're the yearbook sponsor," commented Waller, and Edgar continued that responsibility until 1970. The first yearbook, El Navarro, was dedicated to A.A. Allison for his tireless efforts in the late 1920s in getting the College started. Robert Jackson, who later would serve as Navarro County Judge, was the editor of the first edition

of the yearbook.

One of the most unusual organizations on campus was a volunteer fire department. Coach Ken Clark was elected chief of the group which consisted of both faculty and students who lived on campus. They held practice sessions and at times had a fire truck available to them. The department was called into action when a fire caused by a faulty heater broke out in the science building one cold evening in early 1947. The firefighters were hampered in their efforts to quell the blaze by the fact that the water froze in the hoses. After some struggles, they were able to contain the fire in one end of the science building and kept it from spreading to other structures on campus. Mr. Edgar's papers and books were destroyed, but he recalled that several buildings on campus could have gone up in flames had it not been for the valiant efforts of the firefighters.

Clubs and social events kept the students occupied, but most extracurricular activities revolved around athletics. Many of the young men in the original student body had been active in sports in high school, and they were eager to continue their athletic careers at NJC. Considering the prominent



*Navarro College Football Team resting during practice.*

role that sports played in communities throughout Navarro County, it is not surprising that the Board of Trustees approved a full slate of athletics from the very outset. Initially the Board thought they would wait a year or two before beginning an athletic program because of the cost involved, but demands from prospective students led them to implement a program the first year.

Ken Clark, a three-sport letterman at Baylor, was hired to coach the teams. He was the only coach. "I was the entire staff," he commented. Clark, who had served in the Army Air Corps during World War II, was hired in August, and he had to put together a team, find equipment, and arrange a schedule in only one month. Finding equipment was the most difficult. There simply was none available. Many of the players practiced in tennis shoes during the early workouts, while others took off helmets or shoulder pads and gave them to the substitute who was replacing them in the lineup. Finding players was no problem at all for Coach Clark. Because the returning GI's were eager to play, he did not have to recruit a team. He had no scholarships or other inducements to offer them, only the opportunity to participate. The players did receive some financial assistance. In place

of a scholarships, they were given jobs on campus, such as working in the library, cleaning classrooms, or maintenance work on the buildings and grounds. The money which they earned was applied to tuition and fees and other school-related expenses. What they lacked in equipment and facilities, they made

up for in enthusiasm and desire.

The Bulldogs traveled to Sequin to play Texas Lutheran College for the first game of the initial season. In light of the short preparation time and the lack of equipment (the last shipment of shoes arrived the day before the first game), no one expected the Bulldogs to fare well in their first contest. But they scored an impressive 21-14 victory. "I wasn't surprised," remarked Coach Clark. "Those boys had a lot of desire, and we had some good athletes. The football team finished the season with a respectable record of 4 wins, three losses, and 2 ties.

When basketball season began, Coach Clark had a problem in that there was no gym on the campus. He brought the players into Corsicana three days a week to practice in the YMCA gym. Home games were scheduled in high school gyms around the county as well as at Corsicana Junior High School. The Bulldogs managed to win some games and were competitive in all of them.

Success on the athletic field can be attributed partially to the fact that the players who participated were quite mature for college freshmen and sophomores. Most were in the early to mid-twenties and had been through some harrowing experiences in the war. They had learned discipline in the





*Homer Wasson suited up for basketball. Currently Mr. Wasson is the Chairman of the Navarro College Board of Trustees.*

military. Coach Clark commented, "There is a lot of difference between an 18-year-old boy and a 22-year-old man, both physically and mentally. That difference is obvious on a football field."

Clark added the fact that his players had been accustomed to taking orders made his job much easier.

"All I had to do was tell them what I wanted, and they did it without questioning, just like they had done with their commanding officers in the service."

Much of the success of the early Bulldog athletic teams can be attributed to Coach Clark. An outstanding athlete himself, Clark had an in-depth knowledge of the sports he was coaching. But more importantly, he was a man of character who quickly earned the respect of his players. A rather quiet and unassuming man off the field, he demanded that his players perform with class. He expected them to give their best efforts athletically but to do so with sportsmanship. Several of Coach Clark's Bulldogs went on to play at four-year colleges after completing their eligibility at NJC.

All of the student activities were not necessarily done through organizations, clubs, or teams. The students found various unstructured ways to entertain themselves. The old air field provided a "playground" for the students. The winter of 1948 produced

a heavy snowstorm, a rather unusual event for Navarro County, which is characterized by relatively mild winters. Classes were cancelled for several days, as most off-campus students were unable to get to campus. Consequently, the students living on-campus frolicked in the snow. The male students built sleds and hooked them up to the buses. The men had a wide range of experiences in the military driving all types of transport vehicles, so maneuvering a school bus for a sleigh ride was no challenge for them at all.

Living in a residence hall provided some unique experiences for the students. The "dorms" were the barracks that cadets had lived in during their Air Activities training. The rooms opened out on the boardwalks, and they were sandwiched between faculty members' apartments. Apparently, the administration had planned it that way so as to provide some supervision for the students. Most of the rooms were designed to house two students, although there were one or two "suites" available with accommodations for four students. Living in a dormitory gave the students a real sense of being in college, even if the campus was an abandoned air base.

Although the College was off to a good start, there were some problems, most of which were financial in nature. President Waller did a remarkable job of managing the limited funds available during that first year, but the budget was strained to the limit. The Board of Trustees found it necessary on several occasions to borrow money in order to meet operating expenses. The \$65 per semester that students paid for tuition and fees coupled with the funds collected from Navarro County property owners simply did not generate enough revenue to operate the College adequately. Some relief came in January, 1947, when the Texas Legislature appropriated \$325,000 to be divided among six junior colleges that had been organized since the Legislature had adjourned in 1945. Later during the 1947 session, the lawmakers

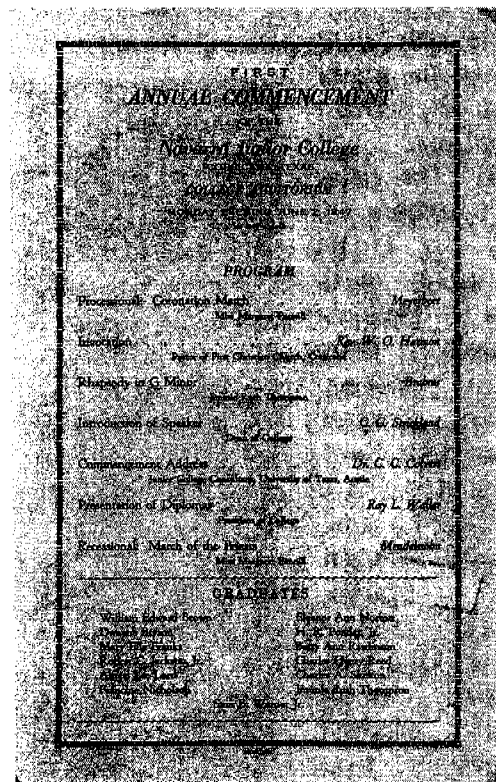
passed a bill raising the per capita apportionment from the state from \$60 to \$100, providing additional revenue for the College. In addition, the Board of Trustees called an election to raise the property levy from ten cents to twenty cents, and voters approved the proposal by a comfortable margin. Those additional revenues generated from the state as well as from local property owners helped considerably in alleviating some of the institution's financial burdens.

Two important personnel matters occurred during the spring of 1947. Ralph Brown, a member of the original Board of Trustees, announced that he would not be a candidate for re-election. The original Board elected in July, 1946, was designated as an interim governing body that would serve until the election of a permanent Board. All the original Board members, except Brown, were re-elected to full terms in the spring of 1947. Leighton B. Dawson, a Corsicana attorney, announced he would be a candidate for the seat being vacated by Brown. Dawson was elected to the Board in April, 1947, and he continued to serve in that capacity until 1989, a tenure of 42 consecutive years. In 1977 the auditorium at the west end of the Administration Building was named in his honor for his many years of service to Navarro College.

Also in the spring of 1947 Euneva Herod Burleson joined the College staff. Her first assignment was to work in the testing center for veterans. The College contracted with the Veterans Administration to test returning GIs for occupational interests and aptitude. Based on the results of those tests, the veterans would be advised concerning the curriculum and training they should pursue. After a stint in the testing center, Mrs. Burleson was assigned to operate the telephone switchboard on campus in addition to running the bookstore and serving as secretary to the dean and the registrar. "I was the entire clerical staff," she commented. She also ran the campus post office and was the cashier in the

cafeteria during the lunch period. In her "spare time," she duplicated tests and handouts for instructors on an outdated mimeograph machine. She epitomized the intense level of dedication demonstrated by those people involved in launching the College. Mrs. Burleson retired in 1980 having completed 33 years of service to Navarro. She spent the latter part of her career working in the Records and Registrar's Office.

Instructors were equally dedicated to the task at hand. Mr. Edgar taught biology and chemistry, both general and organic, and ran the labs associated with those courses, sponsored the yearbook and coached the tennis team. Mrs. Boyd taught Spanish, French, physics, and psychology. She was the most versatile teacher on the staff. One instructor commented that "anything we couldn't find a teacher for, Lucille would teach it." Multiple preparations and limited



The program for the first Commencement at Navarro College.

resources were simply part of the job for the faculty.

As the first academic year came to a close, students, faculty, and staff could look back with pride on some rather significant accomplishments. The year ended with the first graduation ceremony, which was held June 1, 1947. Thirteen students had completed enough hours from other institutions and from NJC to receive diplomas. Dr. C.C. Colvert of the University of Texas at Austin, a pioneer in the junior college movement across the state, addressed the graduates. The first student to receive a diploma from Navarro Junior College was W.E. (Bill) Brown of Richland. He had attended Hill Junior College during the 1945-46 academic year following his discharge from the Navy. When he heard in the spring of 1946 that plans were underway for a junior college for Corsicana, he was elated, and he eagerly enrolled at NJC in the fall of 1946. The hours he had earned at Hill coupled with the courses he completed at Navarro were enough to qualify him for graduation in 1947. The other 12 members of the first graduating class were Dwayne Bryson, Mary Ella Franks, Robert Jackson, Alfred Lee Lord, Francine Nicholson, Eleanor Norton, H.R. Ponder, Betty Ann Rawlinson, Charles Reed, Charles Skelton, Jimmie Ruth Thompson, and Sam Warner, Jr.

Brown recalled he was the first graduate simply because he was first on the list alphabetically.

The next few years would prove to be less stressful than the first one. Increases in state funding coupled with voter approval of tax increases helped to ease some of the financial strain the College had experienced initially. An appreciable increase in enrollment generated more revenue from tuition and from state funding, but it also required the expansion of course offerings and the addition of staff and more extracurricular activities. In addition to the traditional academic transfer courses, NJC also offered some vocational-technical programs. Courses in auto mechanics and cabinet making attracted significant numbers of students, as did a program for training mid-level business managers.

The athletic program was also expanded during the second year of the school's operation. Guyle Akridge was hired as Coach Clark's assistant, and golf, track,



*The rodeo was a popular event for the students at Navarro College.*

tennis, and baseball were added to the athletic program. R.L. Arnold, who taught in the Business Department, coached the golf team, and Jim Edgar coached the tennis team in addition to teaching chemistry and biology and sponsoring the yearbook. Akridge coached the baseball team to a state championship in 1950, and the state's sportswriters named Clark Texas Junior College Coach of the Year in 1948.

Some of the ag boys persuaded Coach Clark to organize and stage a rodeo, and it did not take a great deal of persuading on their part to get him to agree. Clark was often called "Cowboy" as a nickname, and he had participated in some rodeos as a youngster. At the first football banquet, which was sponsored by the Corsicana Rotary Club, the team presented Clark with a pair of hand-tooled cowboy boots. Consequently, because of Clark's personal interest in the sport and the urging of the ag boys, in May, 1947, NJC hosted the first Texas Championship Junior College Rodeo, which was held at the local fairgrounds. The event attracted entrants from junior colleges all over the state, and the rodeo became an annual activity at the College for several years thereafter.

The increase in enrollment prompted the expansion of other extracurricular activities. C.E. Beene joined the faculty in 1947 as the band director and music instructor. Soon after he came to Navarro, Beene composed the school song, "Hail, Navarro." A campus newspaper, The Growl, began publication that same year. The editorial in the initial issue was written by sophomore McAfee Daniel, who later became one of Navarro's most beloved instructors and chairman of the Department of Letters. Lucille Boyd sponsored the Spanish Club, the Cheerleaders, and the Future Teachers Club in addition to her teaching duties. There was a Folklore Club, a Barbershop Quartet, a Pre-Engineers Club, an Aggie Club, and the "N" Club for athletic lettermen. In 1950 a girls' dance and drill team called the

Señoritas was organized to perform at halftime at the football games. Mrs. R.L. Arnold was the group's sponsor.

One of the most prestigious organizations on campus, Phi Theta Kappa, the national academic honor society for two-year colleges, was formed in 1948. The administration asked Margaret Pannill to sponsor the Navarro chapter. To her surprise, the national office accepted NJC's first application for membership, despite the fact the College was in only its second year of existence. Charter members included Martha Allen, Helen Ganze, McAfee Daniel, Charles Herd, William H. Balcom, Jr., Helen Gayle Watkins, William J. (Bill) McKie, Marjorie Prine, J.C. Redden, Wade Johnston, Marilyn DuBose, and William Stewart. Through the years, Zeta Omicron (Navarro's local chapter name) was recognized repeatedly on the state and national levels for its accomplishments in various PTK activities.

Navarro Junior College reached a major milestone in 1948 when the American Association of Junior Colleges notified President Waller that NJC had been accepted for membership in that organization. The designation of Navarro as a "first class junior college" assured students that courses they had taken there would transfer to senior institutions for full credit.

From the earliest days of the operation of the College, the Board determined that the Air Activities facility would be a temporary campus. In December, 1947, the Board authorized Waller to meet with officials of the IOOF (International Order of Odd Fellows, a men's fraternal lodge) to discuss the purchase of some property owned by the Lodge west of downtown Corsicana. The two sides reached an agreement whereby the College acquired a 47-acre tract which would be developed for use as a permanent campus at some undetermined future date. The purchase price was \$14,176.26. Highway 31 split the property with approximately three acres

located on the south side of the highway and the remainder on the north side. The three acre tract was subdivided into residential lots and sold. The revenue from the sale was applied to the purchase of the main tract. In 1949 Navarro County voters approved a \$540,000 bond package to raise revenue to construct a permanent building on the site. The Board planned to have other buildings moved in from the Air Activities campus and renovate them for use at the new location. The College employed E.E. Burkhart, a local contractor, to supervise the moving of those buildings. The most challenging project in the endeavor was the relocation of an airplane hanger which was designated to be used as a gymnasium at the new campus. Because of its enormous size, Burkhart and his crew had to dismantle the structure into sections and then reassemble it at the new site. Other buildings moved from the old campus would serve as dormitories, a science building, and a cafeteria-student union building. The administration building was to be the only new structure on the new campus.

O.L. Albritton headed a five-member building committee to plan and design the new structure. Other members of the committee included John Corley, Mrs. W.H. Hastings, B. Lynn Sanders, and Lloyd Carraway. Albritton, who had been the first chairman of the Board of Trustees, had resigned from the Board in 1948 because of a potential conflict of interest. He was also a member of the Board of Directors of the First National Bank, which was the depositor of College funds. According to his widow, Albritton commented that he could work just as hard for the College even if he were not on the Board, and did precisely that. Verda Gooch, longtime business manager of the College, remembered that a common sight virtually every afternoon at the new campus was Mr. and Mrs. Albritton sitting in their blue Mercury automobile, observing the construction of the new building. She laughingly commented that he counted every

brick. The new structure recommended by the building committee and approved by the Board provided for 16 classrooms, administrative and faculty offices, and an auditorium. The central heating system was a welcome feature for those who had shivered through winters at the old air field campus.

The Air Activities site had served the College well in its beginnings. Students who attended classes there commonly referred to themselves as the "Barracks Bunch," and they held many fond memories of their experiences at the original campus. They commented on the closeness that existed among the students and the faculty as they struggled together during those early, difficult years. Looking back over their experiences during those formative years, many expressed amazement at what they accomplished under challenging circumstances. Others marvelled over some of the pranks they pulled. For example, during one of the bus rides from an outlying community to the campus, some passengers complained of being cold. Since the bus was not equipped with a heater, they attempted to solve the problem by building a fire in the aisle of the bus. "It's a wonder we didn't blow that bus up," one former student commented in reflecting on the episode.

But now it was time to leave the Air Activities site for a new and improved campus. Plans were to move into the new facility in the fall of 1951, but the new administration building was not quite completed and ready for occupancy at the beginning of the semester. Since many of the buildings from the Air Activities site had already been moved to the new location, that campus was not available for use either. Consequently, although the College had two campuses, neither of them were adequate for use. The Board and Administration decided to begin classes at the new site that fall. Some classes were held in the lobby of a dormitory, and Miss Pannill taught an English

class in the science lab. The Señoritas rehearsed their routines at one end of the gym while a typing class was meeting at the other end. At the same time other classes were meeting in the grandstands in various parts of the gym. "You talk about open classrooms--we had them!" recalled Miss Pannill.

On the first day the new administration building was ready for occupancy, a rainstorm hit, turning the campus into a quagmire since there were no sidewalks or paved parking lots. At every entrance to the new building there were rows of shoes, neatly lined up just inside the entrance. Determined not to track mud into the new building, students removed their shoes as they entered and walked to classes in their stocking feet. That scene was repeated often during the unusually rainy spring.

A formal dedication ceremony and open house for the new campus was conducted April 1, 1952. The completion of the new administration building and the occupation of the new campus were major achievements for NJC, giving it a sense of permanence. No longer was the school a struggling institution housed on an abandoned military base. Only four buildings sat on the 44-acre campus, giving the appearance of wide open spaces, but at least it was a real college campus. Putting brick veneer on the old buildings that had been transported from

the Air Activities site eliminated the barracks appearance. Besides, the open campus provided plenty of room to expand, and that indeed would be a legitimate need in the not-too-distant future.

December 6, 1954, was a landmark date in the history of Navarro Junior College. On that date President Waller received word from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) that NJC had been fully accredited by that agency. This meant that credits earned by Navarro's students would be accepted by any college or university in the entire United States. Although already



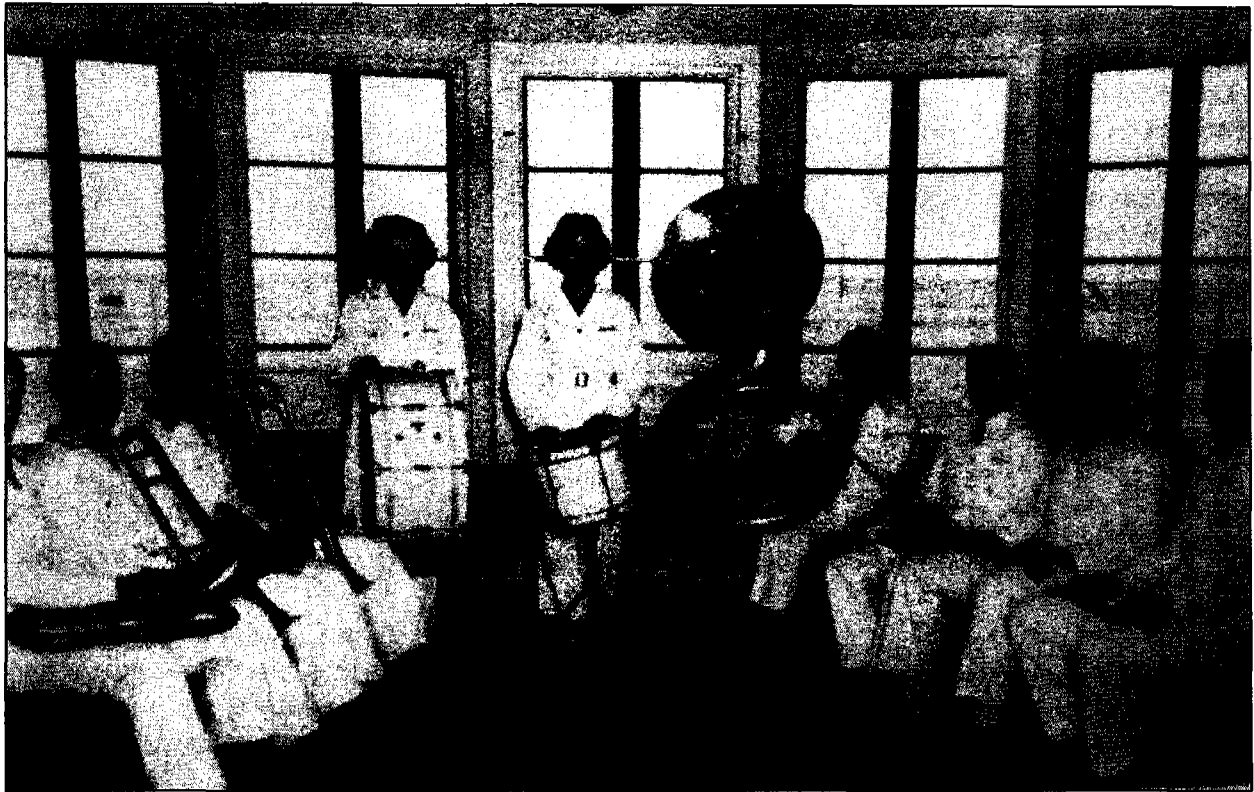
*Dedication ceremony and open house for the new Navarro College campus. April 1, 1952*

accredited by the Association of Texas Colleges and by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), NJC's acceptance by the Southern Association marked the highest accreditation possible. Navarro was one of the first institutions to win SACS approval on its initial application. In remarks published in The Growl, President Waller attributed the successful application to a highly qualified faculty, a sound financial program, and the new campus that had just been opened. Full membership in the Southern Association after only eight years of existence indicates how far the institution had come in an

incredibly short time.

The College, as well as the community, was saddened by the sudden death of President Waller on February 11, 1956. His passing marked the end of an era for NJC. He had provided strong leadership for the infant institution. His administration was a difficult one as he stretched limited financial resources, recruited faculty and staff personnel, planned for future expansion, established a new permanent

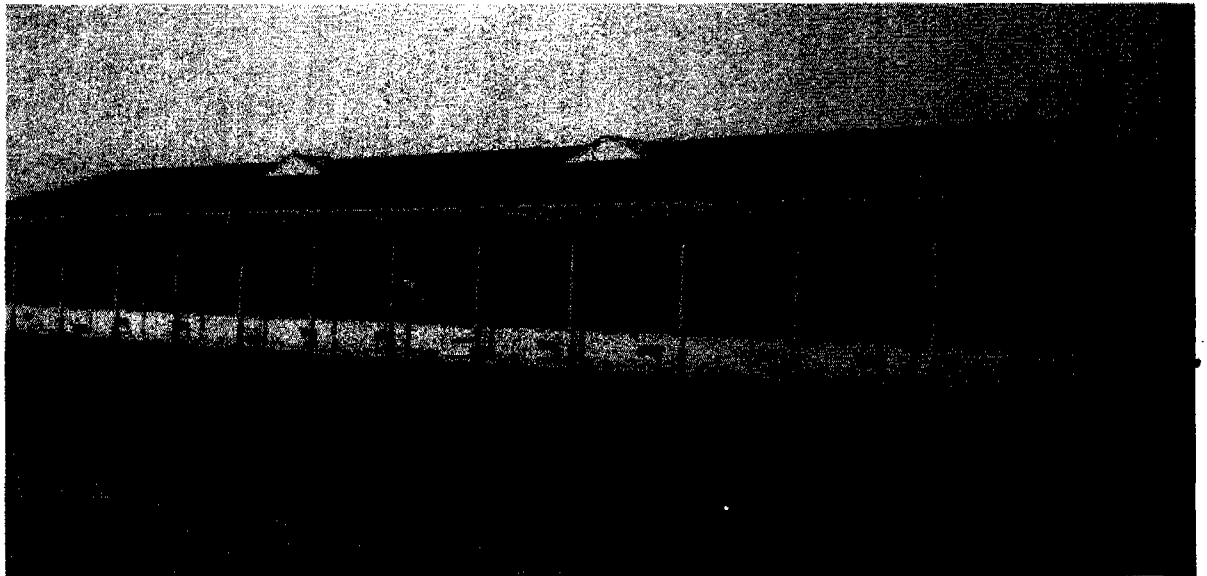
campus, and worked toward full accreditation for the College. As the founding president, he was the pattern-setter for succeeding administrations. Waller was fortunate to have had an outstanding and dedicated faculty and staff, a visionary Board of Trustees, and overwhelming community support. Those factors combined with his decade of positive leadership laid a solid foundation for Navarro Junior College as the institution moved to its next phase of development.



*The first Navarro College Band.*



*The Science Building - Better known as "Atom Hall"*

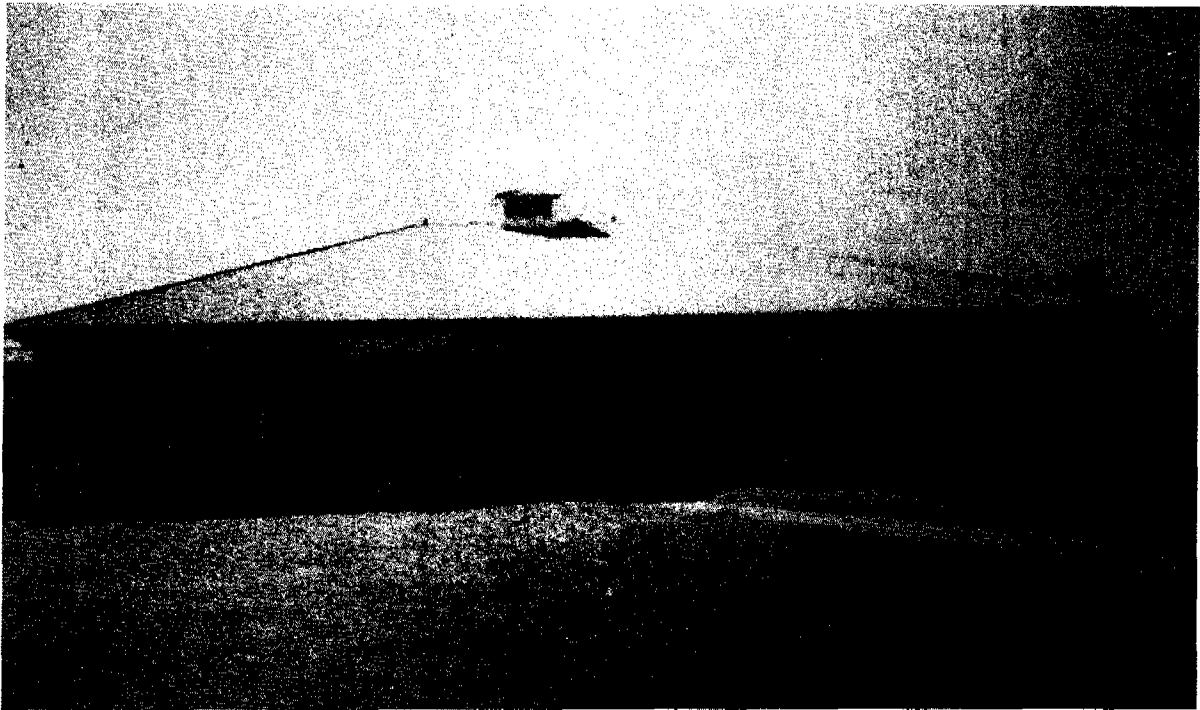


*Class Rooms*



*Library and Cafeteria*

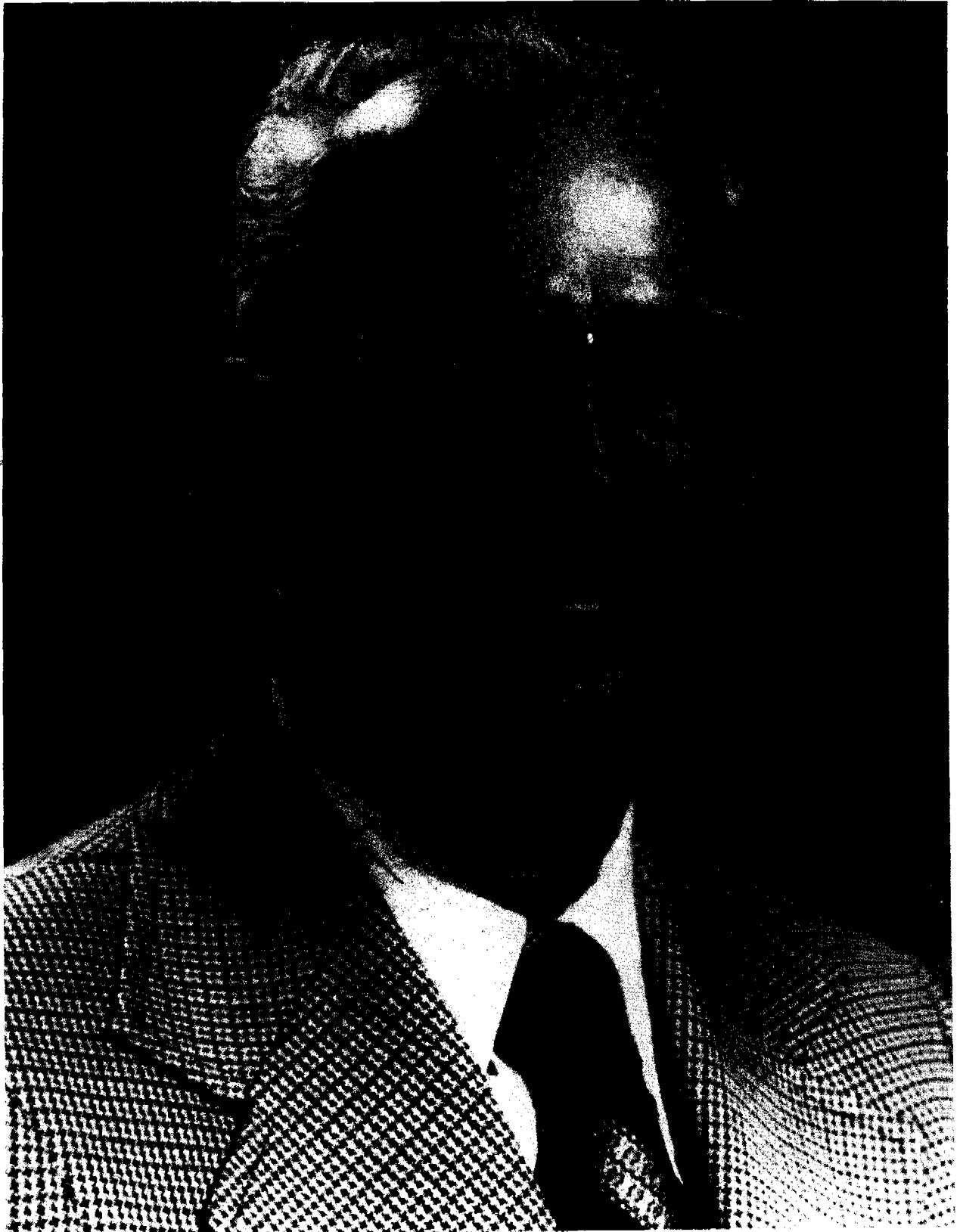




*The original Administration Building at the Airfield Campus*



*Music Room and Assembly Hall*



*Ben Jones - Navarro College President 1956-1973*

## *Chapter III*

### *The Building Years: The Jones Administration, 1956-73*

The sudden death of president Ray Waller in February, 1956, marked the end of an era for Navarro Junior College. He had laid a solid foundation for the institution, and now it was time to build on that foundation. The Board of Trustees offered the presidency of the College to Gaston Gooch, but he declined the offer, preferring to remain in his position as dean. He did serve as president on an interim basis until a permanent one was employed.

The Board selected Dr. Ben W. Jones as Navarro's second president. A native of Georgia, Jones held a bachelor's degree from Georgia Southern and a master's degree from George Peabody College. Following a tour of duty in the army during World War II, Jones enrolled at the University of Texas at Austin, completing his doctorate in 1948. His professional experience included public school teaching and administration in Arkansas. In addition, he had been assistant director of extension courses at the University of Mississippi. In 1952, he was named president of Northeast Mississippi Junior College in Booneville, a position he held when he accepted the presidency of Navarro.

In 1954 Dr. Jones met Ray Waller at ceremonies in which their respective institutions were admitted into the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges for accreditation. "We were seated next to each

other. They had us in alphabetical order according to schools--Navarro and Northeast," Jones remembered. Two years later while he was visiting relatives in Kilgore, Texas, Jones learned of Waller's death and the Board's search for his replacement. He applied for the position and was hired, beginning his duties June 1, 1956.

At that time the campus consisted of six permanent buildings, and enrollment totalled slightly more than 500 students, most of whom were traditional eighteen and nineteen-year-olds enrolled in two-year transfer programs, completing their basic core courses before transferring to 4-year institutions. Jones made no administrative personnel changes when he assumed the presidency. Gaston Gooch remained as the academic dean, a position he had held since the spring of 1947. He had been the school's first registrar, but he became the dean when C.G. Strickland left Navarro to join the faculty at Baylor University. Actually the two titles of dean and registrar were combined into one position, which Gooch held until 1963.

According to his widow, Gooch enjoyed his association with students and welcomed every opportunity to get out of the office to mingle and converse with them. As a result, he developed a special rapport with the student body. This relationship was

demonstrated when in 1957, because of illness, Gooch was confined to his home, unable to come to campus. Wanting to give him a gift to show their concern, a group of students questioned his secretary, Euneva Burluson, regarding what she thought would be appropriate. She remembered that Gooch had always wanted a basset hound, so the students collected money and bought him one. They presented Gooch with the dog and a doghouse, which they painted the color of the Gooch's living room. "Pup Dog," as he was called, became a campus pet, and students would borrow Pup Dog to take home for the weekend. Mrs.

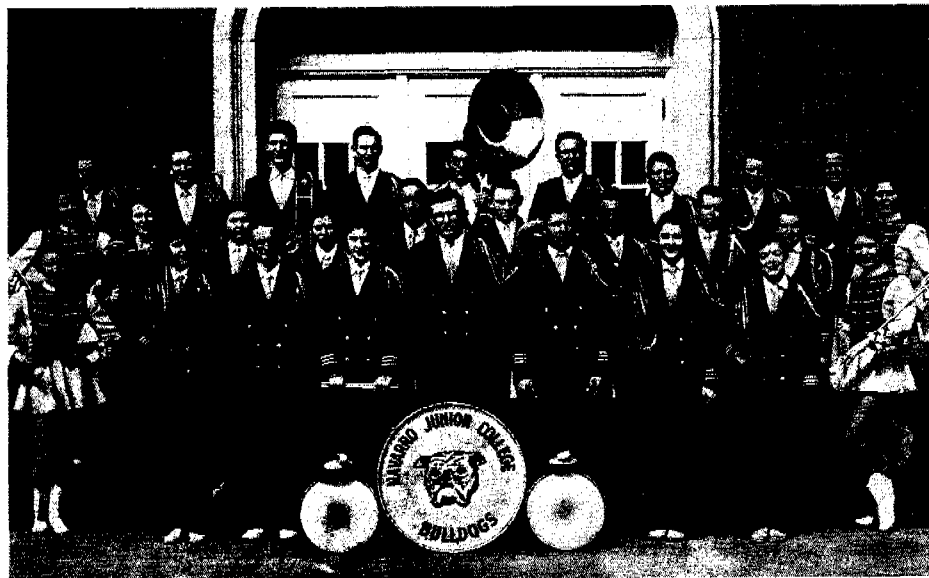
Gooch commented that the dog really came to belong to the College.

Mrs. Gooch (Verda) had gone to Navarro in 1948 to "help out Mr. Waller" because he was without a secretary. Although her title in this "part-time" arrangement was secretary to the president, her primary responsibility was to

keep financial records for the College. She continued in that role until 1956 when the Board of Trustees created the position of Business Manager and named her to fill the post. "That is what I had been doing since I first started working at the College in 1948," she commented. "They just gave me the official title in 1956." Mrs. Gooch continued as Business Manager until she retired in 1971.

The student body was undergoing some changes in the mid-1950s. Most of the students enrolled at NJC came from Corsicana, Mildred, Frost, Blooming Grove, Ennis, Dawson, Kerens, and other nearby

communities, just as the founders of the institution had envisioned. But there were also students from Dallas, Waco, and points even farther away. It was during this period that the first international student enrolled at Navarro. The young man was from Greece and was a nephew of a Corsicana restaurant owner. In 1958 Cecil Williams, a business instructor at NJC, received a grant to teach in an American school in Oruro, Bolivia. When he returned to Corsicana the following year, he brought five Bolivian young men with him, and they enrolled at NJC.



*The 1955-56 Bulldog Band.*

During the next several years, scores of international students attended Navarro. Eager to study in the United States, those students found it easier to gain admission to junior colleges than to four-year institutions. By 1970 Williams estimated that approximately 100 Bolivian students had attended Navarro. He was pleased with the community's response to the foreign students. Since many of them had limited financial resources, they had to find jobs, and several local businesses employed them. Local families "adopted" international students, periodically taking them into their homes and teaching them about American customs and

culture and helping them overcome problems of being homesick. Through the years there have been students from Argentina, Chile, Mexico, Canada, Germany, Thailand, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Micronesia, Srilanka, Israel, Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Pakistan, Lebanon, Ethiopia, Surinam, Venezuela, Gambia, Nepal, and numerous other countries, giving the campus a truly international atmosphere.

Another major change in Navarro's student body occurred in 1961. Seven years earlier the United States Supreme Court had ruled in case of Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas that the concept of "separate but equal" had no place in the area of public education and that public schools must end racial segregation "with all deliberate speed." The Court left the mechanics of how that task was to be done to the individual schools. The original settlers of Navarro County had migrated from states in the Deep South in the 1840s, bringing with them their slaves and racial attitudes that were typical of that time and region. County voters overwhelmingly supported secession in an 1861 election, and more than 400 young men from Navarro County served in the Confederate army during the Civil War. When the Corsicana Independent School District was organized in the 1880s, there was a separate school for Black students, and racial segregation remained the rule not only in the school system but in the community as a whole.

No Black students attempted to enroll at NJC following the Brown ruling until 1961. Verda Gooch recalled that the College did offer courses in the Black community of Corsicana prior to the actual integration of the campus, but that arrangement did not work very well. According to President Jones, Navarro had no policy per se regarding integration following the Brown ruling. "We just decided to play it by ear," he recalled. The College made no active attempt to recruit Black students, but the administration decided that if and when Black students attempted to enroll, they would be

allowed to do so.

A group of five Black females enrolled in the fall of 1961. Thelma Butcher (Johnson), one of that group, remembered attending meetings in the spring and summer of that year in Corsicana's Black community. During those meetings, which were conducted and attended only by African-Americans, the topic of discussion was the possibility for Black students to attend Navarro if they were interested. She recalled no pressure to attend or not attend, nor did she recall any screening process to hand pick particular students to break the color barrier. "I wasn't militant or angry. I just wanted an education. It was something I wanted for my own benefit," she recalled. She cited the same reasons for attending Navarro that hundreds of other students had given; namely, "It was where I lived, and it was convenient."

Shirley Carroll (Winn), also among the first African-American students to enroll at Navarro that fall semester, concurred. "I didn't consider myself a pioneer in trying to desegregate the school. It was just simply that I wanted to further my education." Noting that her parents were financially unable to send her elsewhere to college, she realized that she could live at home and afford the cost of attending Navarro. The other Black students who enrolled that fall were Lois White Kelly, Corine Haywood, and Margaret English Hall.

Both Thelma Johnson and Shirley Winn commented that other than some name-calling and subtle remarks, there were no real problems with the desegregation experience. Although both commented that they felt more tolerated than accepted by the student body and faculty, they both agreed that, overall, the integration process was relatively peaceful. Neither Ms. Johnson nor Ms. Winn joined any campus organizations or clubs, but they both indicated they were not prohibited from doing so. On the other hand, they were not specifically invited to join either. "I just wasn't interested in joining any

of them," recalled Ms. Winn.

As more Black students enrolled in the following years, they began to assimilate more and more into the student body. Through the years, some of Navarro's most outstanding students have been Black. They have excelled in every phase of campus life including academics, athletics, and the arts. Many have held leadership positions in campus organizations such as the Student Government Association and Phi Theta Kappa.

The increase and the diversity of the student population required the expansion of student life and extracurricular activities. The traditional discipline-related organizations continued to function as they had from the earliest days of NJC's existence--the Spanish Club, the French Club, Future Teachers, Future Business Leaders of America, the Pre-law Club, and the Industrial Arts Club. The Aggie/Rodeo Club was among the most active groups on campus. Ranch Day, held in conjunction with the annual College rodeo, was one of the students' favorite times of the school year. Both students and faculty dressed in western attire and participated in rodeo-related events. There was a beard-growing contest for the men, but all facial hair must be shaved off the day after the contest was over.

Journalism students continued to publish the Growl to keep the campus informed about College happenings, and the staff of El Navarro captured the highlights of the school year in the annual. The Student Council planned a variety of social events for students including the Christmas Formal, the Sweetheart Dance, and the Spring Formal.

In the spring of 1960, Political Science instructor Pat Murphy organized a men's service club called Los Vaqueros (The Cowboys). Membership, which was by invitation only, ranged from 15 to 25 men. Distinctive by the wheat-colored jeans, white shirts, red string ties, and black Western hats, Los Vaqueros served as a campus spirit organization, performing skits at pep

rallies and sitting as a group at football and basketball games. They drove student buses to out-of-town athletic events. Marvin Ray, a business instructor and long-time sponsor of the group, commented that for ten years in succession, he attended every Navarro football game wherever the Bulldogs were playing.

In addition, Los Vaqueros served as ushers and guides for various campus events, assisting visitors in finding their way around campus. They sponsored a variety of social activities for students in addition to hosting service projects, most notably an annual blood drive.

In the mid-1960s History instructor Eloise Stover organized Las Amigas, a similar group for NJC's women students. The organization was highly visible around campus, performing various services for the College and the community, as well as sponsoring various campus social activities. Wanda Gillen, one of the later sponsors of the group, noted that it was somewhat exclusive and prestigious, since membership was by invitation only and standards for admission were rather rigid. Both Las Amigas and Los Vaqueros disbanded in the early 1970s.

Another men's service organization on campus was Circle K. Comprised of 15 to 20 men, t h i s organization was an extension of the Kiwanis Club, a civic and service



Margaret Pannill

organization composed of business and professional men. The objectives of Circle K



1972-1973 College Board of Trustees

purposes of the program were to offer college-credit courses in Bible and religious studies and to provide spiritual and social activities for NJC students. A committee composed of Ferma C. Stewart, Ralph Evans, and Earl Craig met with College administrators regarding the

were to develop leadership skills among its members and to be available for service projects and activities on campus.

Zeta Omicron, NJC's Phi Theta Kappa chapter, played a dominant role in state and national Phi Theta Kappa activities during the 1960s. Margaret Pannill, Bill White, and Cecil Williams sponsored the chapter during those years. Williams recalled that in 1965 Zeta Omicron received five national awards. In addition, Carlos Moore and Dana Arnold were elected national president of PTK in 1962 and 1964 respectively, and Williams served on the national board of directors. Bill O'Neal, an NJC student and later honored as Navarro College Ex-Student of the Year, recalled that Mr. Williams took seven PTK members to the 1961 national convention held in Wyoming. They traveled by van with a sign emblazoned on the side reading, "Zeta Williams and his 7 Little Omicrons."

There were also organizations on campus to address the spiritual interests of Navarro students. In early 1955 the West Side Church of Christ in Corsicana approved the creation and sponsorship of a Bible Chair program at the Navarro campus. The

implementation of the program. In March, 1955, Navarro's Board of Trustees approved the proposal, and the Church acquired property immediately southeast of the campus on 41st Street to construct a Bible Chair Building. Dedication ceremonies for the facility were held September 6, 1955. Through the years the Bible Chair offered religious studies courses and provided opportunities for spiritual growth and development for students.

In September of 1955, the Corsicana's First Baptist Church established a Baptist student organization at the College. Since NJC served all of Navarro County rather than just Corsicana, Baptist leaders decided the program should be funded and administered by the Navarro County Baptist Association. In 1956 that Association purchased property directly across Highway 31 south of the campus for the construction of a student center. In the meantime, while the building was under construction, the Baptists taught Bible and religion courses for college credit at the Emmanuel Baptist Church, which was located on 7th Avenue near the Navarro campus.

The Baptist Student Union Building was completed in 1962 with dedication ceremonies held on September 2. The BSU has remained one of the most visible and active organizations on campus, providing students with opportunities for spiritual development, recreational and social activities, and Christian service.

In January of 1956, the Methodist Student Movement (MSM) was organized on the NJC campus under the supervision of the Wesley Foundation. Tom Tribble was named director of the program. The Corsicana District of the Methodist Church, consisting of some 35 churches, contributed funds to purchase a building site directly across from the campus, adjacent to the BSU. Ray Waller, Navarro's first president and an active Methodist lay leader, was a member of the first board of directors of the MSM. When he died suddenly in February, 1956, the board voted unanimously to name the proposed campus center in his honor.

The First Christian Church and Westminster Presbyterian Church of Corsicana asked the Methodist Conference if they could be included in the program. When a suitable arrangement was made among the three denominational groups, the organization's name was changed to the United Christian Fellowship. The UCF, like the Bible Chair and the BSU, offered credit Bible courses and provided social activities and spiritual service programs for Navarro students.

Catholic students found spiritual and recreational activities and opportunities through the Newman Club. That organization, named for Cardinal John Newman, had originated on the campus of the University of Pennsylvania in 1893. A chapter formed at Navarro in 1956, but it disbanded in the mid-1960s.

Despite a wide variety of student extracurricular activities on campus, athletics continued to be the focal point of campus life. Lee Smith became the head football coach in 1951, and he led the Bulldogs to national prominence. Under Smith's direction,

Navarro won outright or shared six conference championships. His 90 career victories included a win over Perkinston, Mississippi, Junior College in the Hospitality Bowl played in Gulfport, Mississippi, in 1962. In the 1966 Shrine Bowl played in Shreveport, Louisiana, the Bulldogs lost to Perkinston. Several of Smith's players were named Junior College All-Americans, and many went on to successful football careers at major universities. Some went on to play professional football in the NFL or the Canadian Football League. Smith stepped down as head football coach in 1966, but he continued to teach physical education courses at Navarro until his retirement in 1974.



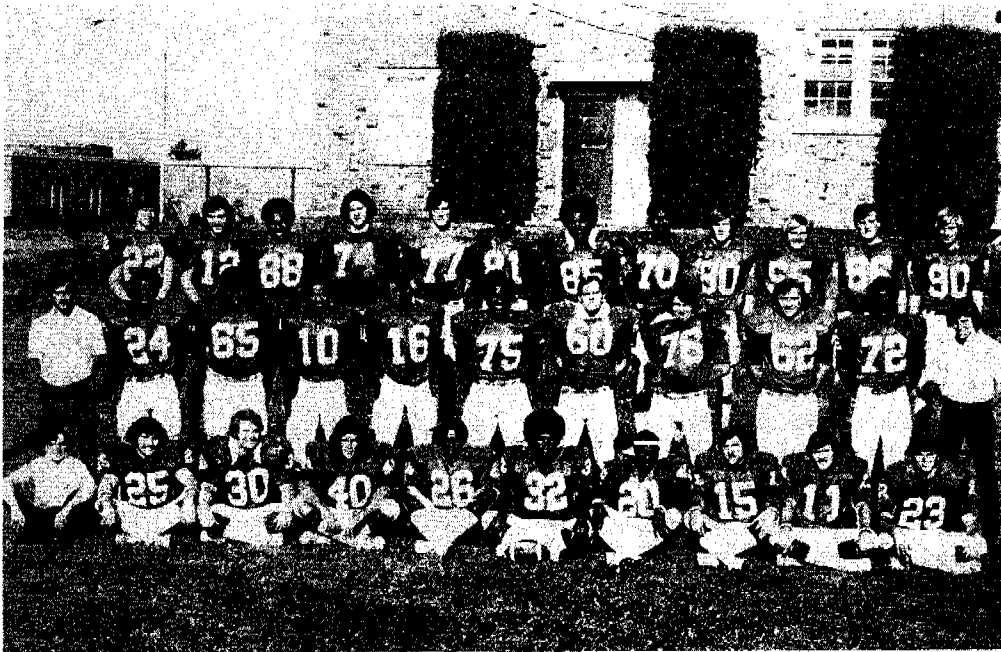
Lee Smith-Football Coach-1951

Al Carmichael replaced Smith as head football coach. From 1967 through 1969, he compiled a record of 8 wins and 23 losses. Donnie Duncan replaced Carmichael in 1970. The Bulldogs were 11 and 1 that season, including a victory over Grand Rapids, Michigan, Junior College in the Wool Bowl played in Roswell, New Mexico. Duncan's overall record as head coach was 24-7-1. He left Navarro after the 1973 season to become an assistant coach at the University of Oklahoma. He later was the head coach at Iowa State University, before he returned to OU as athletic director.

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In 1961 NJC and the Corsicana





*Navarro College Bulldog Football Team.*

Football was not the only successful sports program at Navarro. The basketball team won the conference championship in 1960, while the baseball team claimed conference titles in 1954, 1958, 1959, and 1960. The Bulldogs also fielded

Independent School District entered into a joint agreement to build a new football stadium to be used by both athletic programs. The new facility was located on a 22-acre tract of land on Highway 31 approximately a mile west of the Navarro campus. Total cost of the facility was \$120,000 with Navarro contributing \$20,000, while \$45,000 came from the Drane Foundation, and the remaining \$55,000 from the CISD. Although the Corsicana School District retained ownership of the facility, and it was officially named Tiger Field in recognition of the Corsicana

High School mascot, the College was granted a use privilege agreement. The Navarro Bulldogs have played all their home football games at Tiger Field since the facility was completed in 1961.

competitive teams in golf and track.

The sport that Navarro came to dominate through the 1960s and 1970s, however, was tennis. Herschel Stephens came to NJC in 1963 to teach English and



*Herschel Stephens and the 1973 Tennis Team.*

journalism and to coach the tennis team. Beginning in 1967, the Bulldog netters compiled the nation's longest winning streak, posting 122 consecutive victories before dropping a one-point decision to a university

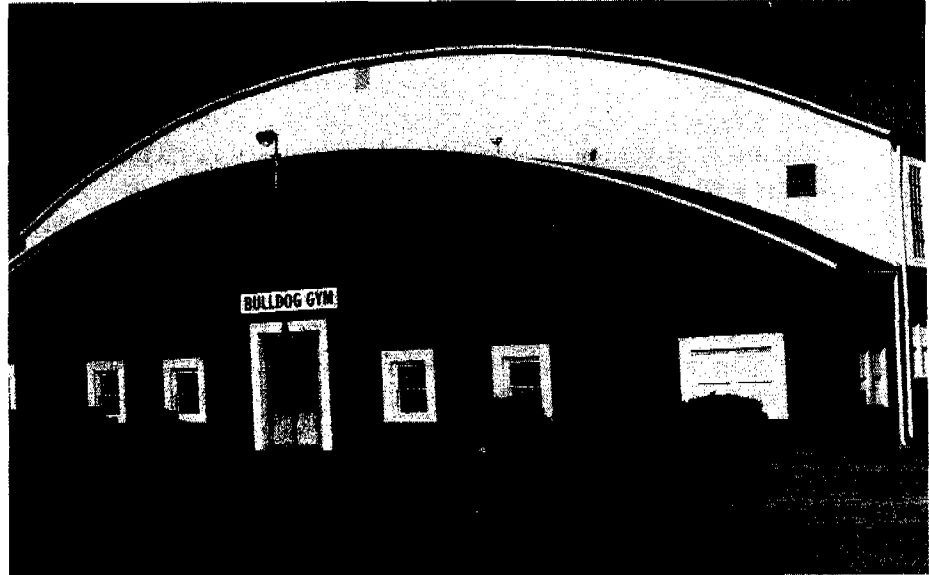
team in 1974. Stephens' record of 354-33-5 included 11 consecutive conference championships. He was named Texas Junior College Coach of the Year in 1973. Both the men's and women's tennis teams consistently ranked among the top ten squads in the nation during Stephens' tenure as coach.

The Bulldog athletic teams were supported by an enthusiastic group of cheerleaders and a lively mascot. NJC's first mascot was Beauregard III, a fifty pound bulldog of championship stock. Jimmy Morris, a Corsicana attorney who had been a member of Navarro's first student body, donated Beau to the College. Beau lived in the athletic dorm and attended all the Bulldog football games until his death in 1961. He was buried on the campus with a granite marker in the Courtyard, designating his final resting place.

Mr. and Mrs. Jay Brown donated a replacement for Beau, another bulldog named Timbo. His reign as team mascot was rather short lived, however, as he died in 1963. Doc Hanks, president of the Student Senate, and Billy Dyer, president of Circle K, directed a drive to raise \$200 to purchase the next mascot, named Empire. However, Empire was struck and killed by a car after the purchase. In the summer of 1968, Bob Corley, son of the one-time Board of Trustees member John Corley, presented a one-year-old bulldog named Precious to carry on the tradition of the Navarro mascot.

The Student Council sponsored a variety of social events such as the

Christmas Formal and Sadie Hawkins Days when the girls invited the boys out on dates. Freshmen were initiated into the student body each fall with nonsensical pranks and freshman beanies required attire. But all the campus activities were not necessarily structured around formal clubs, organizations, or teams. Students gathered in the SUB for games of "42," Hearts, and Spades. Rudy Carroll, president of the Student Senate and a member of the Bulldog football team in the mid-1950s, recalled several spontaneous activities planned by students with limited financial resources. "We would pile into someone's old car and drive around the football practice field hunting rabbits with a stick," He remembered. There were hayrides, and every Tuesday night there was a dance that ended promptly at ten o'clock. Some of the football players lived in the north end of the Bulldog Gym. One half of those "living quarters" was affectionately called "The Executive Suite," while the other half was known as "The Hole." Admittedly



*The original Bulldog Gym was the last building on the new campus from the Corsicana Airfield Campus.*

there was little luxury in either half and almost no privacy, but, according to Carroll, there were some strong ties of friendship

made in those living arrangements.

Besides changes in the makeup of the student body and the additional extracurricular activities, the physical appearance of the campus was also undergoing significant change. Increasing enrollments required expanding the facilities. In the fall semester of 1959, enrollment totalled 579 students, and that number increased by 100 the following year. To accommodate the growing numbers of students, Navarro County voters approved a \$200,000 bond package in 1959 for the construction of an east wing to be added to the Administration Building. The primary purpose of the new annex was to house the library, which had been located on the second floor of the Administration Building since its construction in 1951. By the end of the decade, the library had simply outgrown those facilities.

The new two-story wing, which was completed in 1960, housed the library on the first floor and a theater-in-the-round and classrooms, known as the English wing, on the second floor. In 1968 the theater was officially named the Spruill and Sue Cook Arena Theater to honor Mr. Cook, one of Navarro's original faculty members. In addition to teaching speech and drama, Cook had coached the tennis team for several years. He had also sponsored the Curtain Club and had directed numerous dramatic productions that had won awards from the Texas Junior College Speech Association. His wife Sue, or Cookie as she was called, worked diligently alongside her husband in directing those award-winning plays, although she was never an official member of the NJC faculty or staff.

In 1960 Robert S. Reading donated his extensive collection of Indian artifacts to the College. A native of Richmond, Texas, Reading held a degree in electrical engineering from Texas A & M. He moved to Corsicana as manager of the local office of Lone Star Gas. Reading was active in civic and community affairs, serving as City Commissioner from 1957 to 1959 and as

Mayor of Corsicana from 1959 to 1965. His interest in Indian culture dated back to the 1930s, when he began his collection of artifacts. Since he was a resident of El Paso, Texas, at the time, he was able to travel extensively throughout Mexico, West Texas, and New Mexico, in search of additional items to include in the collection.

Reading authored two books on Indian culture, Arrows Over Texas and Indian Civilization. The collection which he donated to the College consists of some 44,000 items mounted in 502 cases. Composed of arrowpoints, grinding tools, sinkers, beads and other ornaments, knives, scrapers, and spear points, the Reading collection is one of the most extensive of its kind in the entire Southwestern United States. Initially the Reading Collection was housed on the second floor of the Administration, but it was moved to the Gooch Library in 1979.

A major landmark in NJC history occurred in 1962 when the Navarro Community Foundation, commonly called the Drane Foundation, awarded a grant of \$450,000 to the College to construct a new science building. Frank Neal Drane, founder of the Corsicana Power and Light Company and a dynamic civic leader in Corsicana, established a trust fund upon his death in 1938 to finance worthwhile projects in Navarro County. Drane had long been an avid supporter of higher education, serving on the Board of Trustees of Trinity University. Along with A. A. Allison, Drane had been one of the leading proponents for a junior college in Navarro County in the 1920s. Consequently, the directors of the Drane Foundation had been especially generous to Navarro Junior College from the time the institution was established in 1946. For example, when the East Wing was constructed in 1959, the Drane Foundation contributed \$20,000 to the building project, bringing Drane Foundation contributions to more than \$60,000 at that time. The \$450,000 grant in 1962 for the science building was the single largest private

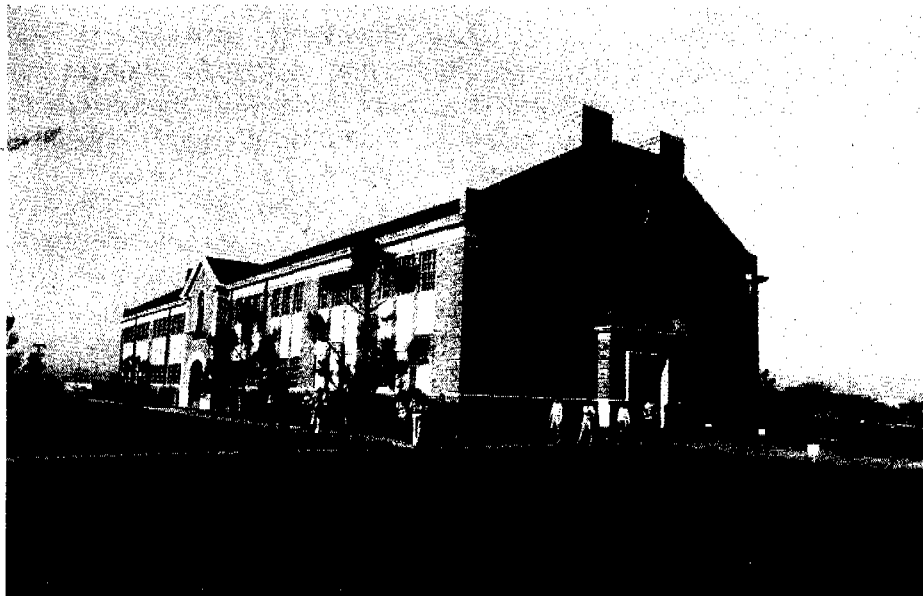
contribution the College had received at that time.

Without doubt, the happiest individual over the announcement of the Drane gift was James Edgar, Chairman of the Science Department. "That was one of the greatest pleasures of my life when they announced they were giving us the money for the science building," he smiled. As one of the original faculty members at NJC, Edgar had struggled through those early years with less-

the design of the building. When the Frank Neal Drane Hall of Science opened in the fall semester of 1963, Navarro could boast of a science facility second to none. In addition to the funds for the actual construction of the building, the Drane Foundation donated an additional \$25,000 to the library to purchase math and science books and other materials related to those disciplines. Ben McKie presented Mr. Edgar with a sizable financial gift to buy some

specialized laboratory equipment, and the Navarro Pharmaceutical Society provided scholarships and additional equipment. According to Edgar, Drane Hall surpassed the facilities of any junior college in the state and was superior to those at many four-year institutions.

"I would have to list Sputnik as one of the major contributing factors to our getting the new science building," Edgar commented.



*Frank Neal Drane Hall*

than-adequate facilities and only a minimal amount of equipment. Nevertheless, he had managed to build a remarkable science program, training countless numbers of students in pre-med, pharmacy, engineering, pre-dentistry, and other science-related fields. With a highly publicized reputation for excellence already established, Navarro would now have even greater opportunities to expand programs in those areas.

Along with President Jones and Dean Gooch, Edgar visited campuses across the state of Texas to get ideas for the new facility. The administration polled science and math instructors for their input regarding

The Space Age began in October, 1957, when the Soviet Union launched Sputnik I, the first man-made satellite to orbit the earth. One month later the Russians successfully launched Sputnik II with a dog on board. The first two American attempts ended in failure, creating a feeling of fear and apprehension coupled with determination across the nation. The nation's educational system was blamed for America's poor showing in the space race. When President John Kennedy announced in 1961 the United States' commitment to have a man on the moon by the end of the decade, there was a redirected emphasis on the teaching of

math and science in nation's schools. After reevaluating the methods used to teach math, public schools developed a new instructional technique called "new math."

The interest in science and math that swept across the country in the late 1950s and early 1960s attracted more students into those disciplines, prompting educational institutions to expand and upgrade both their facilities and course offerings in those areas. With a new, first-class facility in Drane Hall, NJC was prepared to offer its students an even higher quality of instruction in mathematics and sciences.

While the math and science departments had received widespread recognition for excellence in instruction, other areas of the faculty were also being acknowledged for their efforts. One of the most prestigious honors given to college and university teachers in Texas is the Minnie Stevens Piper Award. Each year the San Antonio-based Piper Foundation names ten Piper Professors from across the state in recognition for their dedication to the teaching profession, their outstanding teaching skills, and contributions to their respective institutions. In 1961, Margaret Pannill, NJC

English instructor, was named as one of that year's ten honorees to become Navarro's first Piper Professor. In 1971, Lucille Boyd, who taught Spanish and French, was also named a Piper Professor.

The Texas Junior College Teachers Association named a male and female Teacher of the Year each year at its annual convention. Navarro instructors who received that award over the years included James Edgar, Margaret Pannill, Lucille Boyd, Lee Smith, and Cecil Williams. The Manufacturing Chemist Association of the United States honored James Edgar for his many years of teaching excellence. It was obvious from the numerous honors and awards bestowed upon NJC instructors that the faculty was a major strength of Navarro's educational program.

Enrollment continued to increase through the mid-1960s. Part of the growth can be attributed to the expanding role of the United States in the Vietnam War. Young men who enrolled as full-time students, which was defined as a minimum of 12 semester hours, and maintained at least a 2.0 grade point average received student deferments from the Selective Service System. In other words, they were exempt from the draft. Therefore, many young men who may not have gone to college at all chose to enroll to avoid or defer military service. The academic standards required to maintain their draft-exempt status also provided incentives for those young men to study harder and to stay in school. By the fall of 1965, when American build-up in Vietnam increased significantly, Navarro's enrollment reached an all-time high of 1,184 students, an increase of nearly 250 over the previous fall semester.

Existing facilities simply could not accommodate the expanding numbers of students. Once more the voters of Navarro County exhibited support for the College by approving a \$1 million bond proposal for the construction of several new buildings on campus. Local monies would be supplemented by federal funds provided by



*Lucille Boyd, a recipient of the Minnie Stevens Piper Award.*

the Higher Education Act of 1964, one of the major pieces of legislation in President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society.

Among the new facilities to be constructed with the recently approved revenues was a vocational-technical building. Lary Reed, a 1959 graduate of NJC who, two years later after completing a baccalaureate degree at East

Texas State, returned to Navarro as a drafting instructor, was named director of the new technical arts division. Reed was highly involved in the building's planning and design, a role he would play often in his long career at the College. The new facility was completed in 1966 and was named the A.L. Bain Technical Arts Building in honor of Mr. Bain, who had served 21 years as a member



*The A.L. Bain Center for Technical Arts*

of the Navarro Board of Trustees. The bond proposal also provided funds for the construction of a new library. The East Wing, which was added to the Administration Building in 1959 to house the library, was no longer adequate to accommodate the book collection. The new library building was located between the Administration Building and the Bulldog Gym and became the center

of the campus as other buildings were added later. The process of removing the books from the previous library location in the Administration Building to the new home in the recently completed building was done by students who formed a "bucket brigade," so to



*The Gaston T. Gooch Learning Resource Center*

speak. They formed a continuous line from the old site to the new one, and passed the books hand-to-hand, and they placed the volumes in the proper location on the shelf when they reached the end of the line.

The new facility was completed in 1967 and was named in honor of Gaston Gooch. Dean

Gooch died in 1965, shortly after construction on the building began. Reflecting on the dedication and naming of the building the Gaston T. Gooch Learning Resource Center in her late husband's memory, Verda Gooch commented how pleased he would have been to have the library named for him. After all, he had spent his career as the dean of the college and had demonstrated a deep concern for Navarro's academic excellence.

Along with the Bain Technical Arts Building and the Gooch Library, the bond proposal and federal funds also provided monies for the construction of a women's physical education building to be located on the northwest corner of the campus. The facility was to be used for physical education classes, as well as for intramural activities. The building was officially named Louis Gibson Hall to honor longtime member of the Board of Trustees, Dr. Louis Gibson, a Corsicana surgeon.

Increases in enrollment created a greater demand for on-campus housing. Consequently, in 1967 the Board authorized



*Louis Gibson Hall - The Women's Gym*

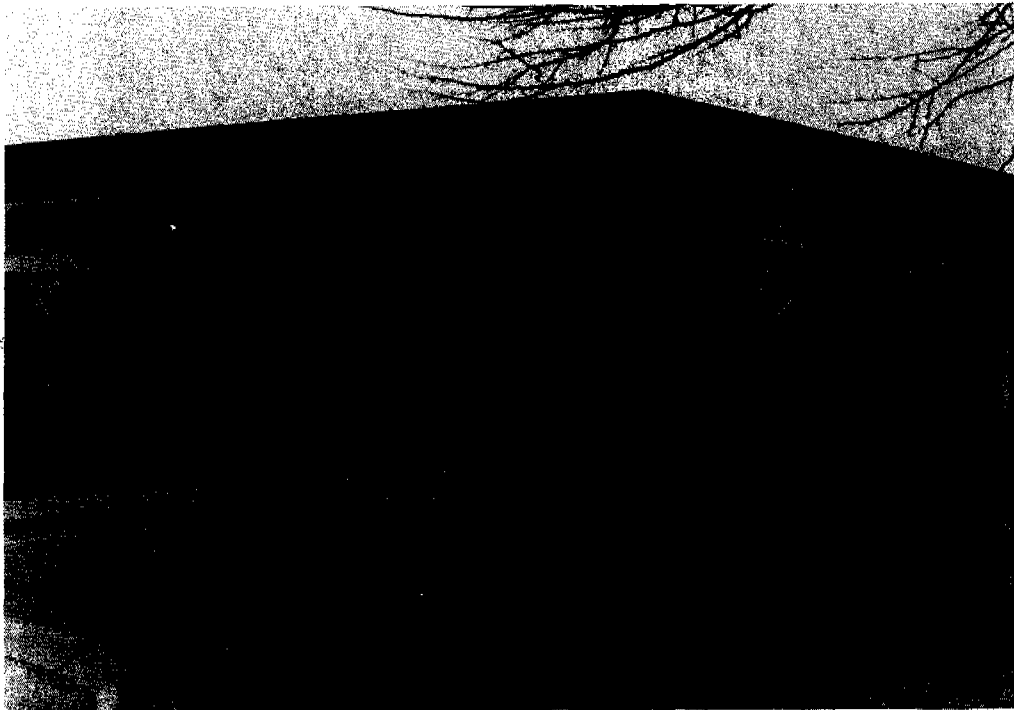
the sale of revenue bonds to generate funds for the construction of two new dormitories. The barracks that had been moved from the original campus at the Air Activities of Texas site had provided the only on-campus residence halls for students. Plans called for the continued use of those buildings, but the

new dorms would both increase and improve available student housing.

In 1969 ground was broken for the construction of a new student union building to house the cafeteria and bookstore. The SUB would also provide facilities for a variety of student recreational activities. Since a number of Navarro students had lost their lives in various military conflicts, namely the Korean and Vietnam wars, the Board decided to dedicate the new building to their memory. A plaque containing the names of those students was erected near the west entrance to the building. In 1981 the building was renovated and officially named the Ray Waller Memorial Student Union Building to honor the first president of the College, as well as Navarro's war dead.

Upon completion of the new Student Union Building in 1970, the Board of Trustees once again secured the services of local contractor E.E. Burkhart to transform the old SUB into a music building. Located immediately west of the Administration

the estate of T.E. Roberts, extending the campus to the State Home Road on the west. With the acquisition of the Roberts property, the campus had grown to 92 acres, more than double what it had been originally when the College moved to the site in 1951.



*Ray Waller Memorial Student Union Building*

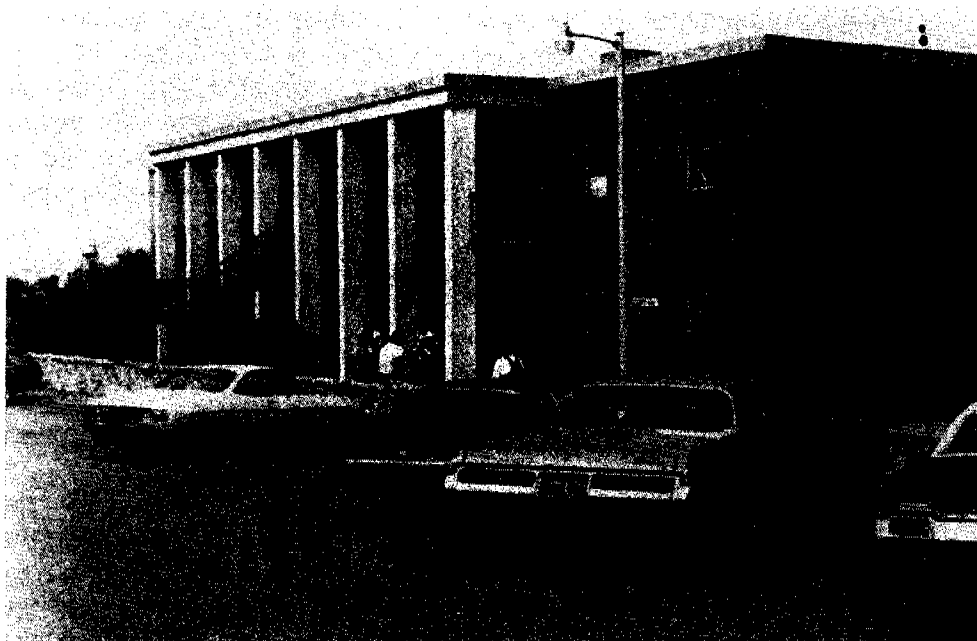
Building, the structure had been moved from the Air Activities site to the new campus in 1951 and had served in various capacities since that time. When Burkhart completed the remodeling, the building was named in honor of C.E. Beene, NJC's first band director and composer of the school's alma mater, "Hail Navarro."

Not only was the number of buildings increasing but the campus itself was expanding significantly during the 1960s. In 1962 the College purchased 20 acres of land from Oscar Burns estate. The newly acquired property joined the existing campus on the west and increased the size of the campus to 64 acres. Seven years later the College bought an additional 26 acres from

far as student enrollment and had expanded the size of the campus. Eight buildings currently in use on campus were constructed during the Jones's tenure, including the library, student center, women's gymnasium, Drane Hall, the Technical Arts Building, the East Wing Annex to the Administration, and two dormitories. Enrollment at Navarro had doubled during its first decade of existence from 238 students on opening day in 1946 to 500 students in 1956 when Dr. Jones began his administration. Increases continued for the next several years, peaking in 1969 when enrollment reached 1,200 students. Most of the students came from the immediate area, with 41 percent from Navarro County, while 32 percent came from Hill, Limestone,

Dr. Jones's administration was marked by several significant advancements in the development of the College. He had led the institution through a peaceful desegregation process and assimilated large numbers of international students into the student body. The College had grown numerically as





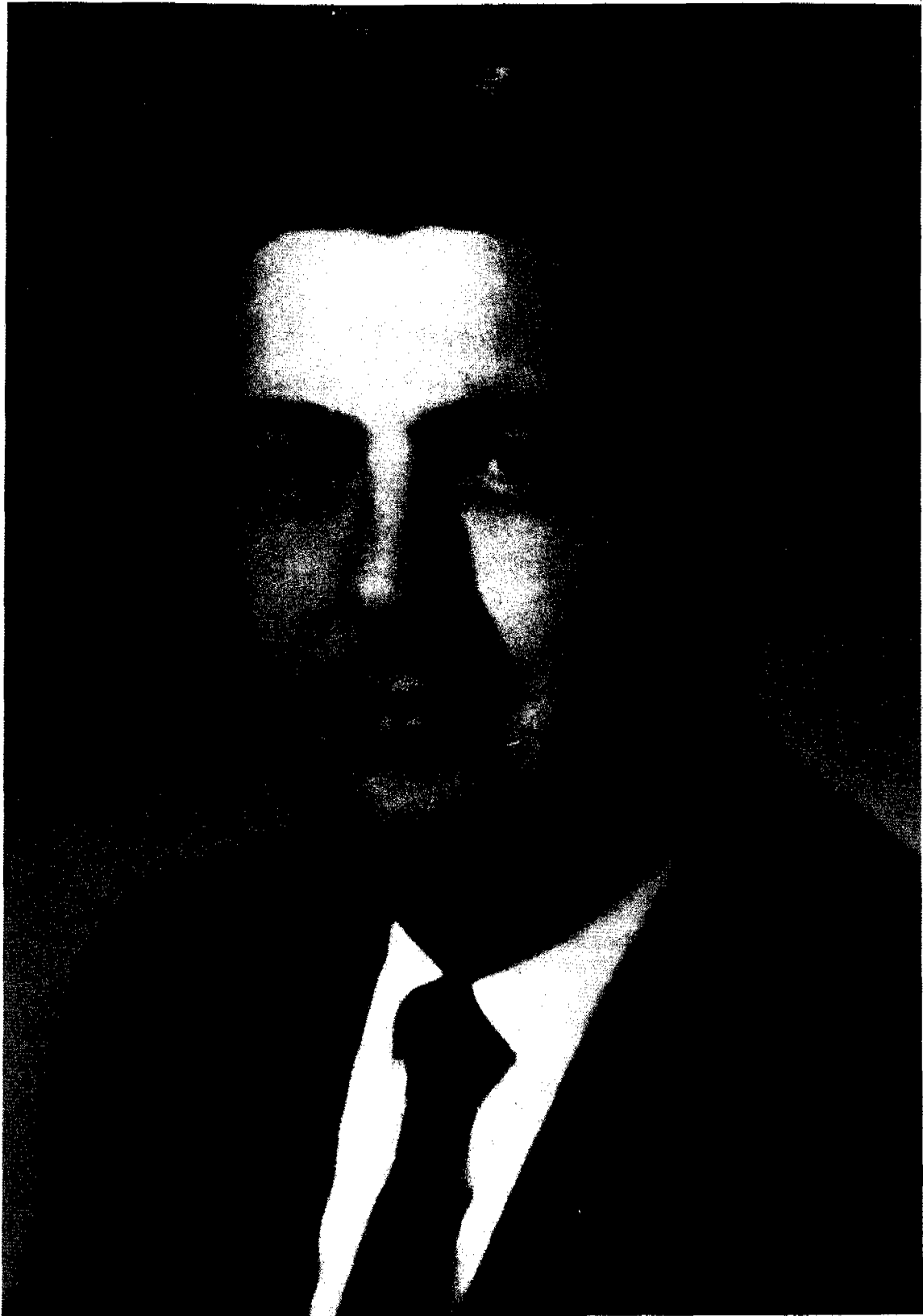
*Eady Hall was one of the first new dormitories built on the new campus.*

Freestone, and Ellis counties. Ten percent came from Dallas County and the metroplex area, while the remaining 17 percent were from other Texas counties, other states, and foreign countries. With excellent academic programs, a faculty that was gaining state-wide recognition for its performance, a permanent campus with room to grow, the dream of a first-class junior college envisioned by its founders was becoming a reality.

Between 1969 and 1973 significant developments in the junior college movement in Texas impacted Navarro Junior College. The State Legislature created new community college districts in McLennan (Waco), Tarrant (Fort Worth), and Dallas counties. Students that previously might have attended Navarro enrolled at those new institutions. Hill Junior College, which was closed in 1950, reopened in 1962, drawing away more prospective students from NJC. By 1973 Navarro's enrollment declined to 970 students. The newly created colleges in the surrounding counties were not traditional junior colleges but were designed to be comprehensive community colleges with both credit and non-

credit offerings, expanded student services, and traditional and non-traditional learning opportunities.

Navarro Junior College had enjoyed both growth and progress under Dr. Jones' leadership. However, in a November 20, 1973, letter to Board of Trustees chairman Leighton Dawson, Dr. Jones resigned as president of NJC to permit "... a new individual with fresh ideas and a different philosophy... to find new answers to the needs which those of us close to the situation may not see." In a press release, Dr. Jones eloquently expressed his feelings for Navarro, an institution he had led for 17 years. He stated, "When we rear our children, we know that some day we must part with them. Evidently, that time is at hand for me and Navarro." With Dr. Jones' resignation came an end to the second major stage of Navarro's development.



*Dr. Kenneth P. Walker - Navarro College President, 1974-1988*

*Chapter IV*  
*The Advancing Years: The Walker Administration, 1974-88*



*An aerial view of the Navarro College campus - 1983*

Following the resignation of Dr. Jones, the Board of Trustees named Dr. Lary Reed as interim president of Navarro. A native of Kerens and a 1959 graduate of NJC, Reed had returned to the College in 1962 as a drafting instructor after completing a bachelors degree from East Texas State University. In 1967 he was appointed head of the newly created Technical Arts Division. When he was named acting president in

1973, Navarro's enrollment was slightly less than 1,000 students. The campus consisted of 104 acres with 15 permanent buildings, some of which were structures that had been moved in from the original campus at the Air Activities site. Navarro's annual budget at that time was slightly under \$2 million.

The Board named Dr. Kenneth P. Walker as Navarro's third president, and he assumed that position March 1, 1974. A native of Greenville, Texas, Walker received

a B.A. from the University of Texas at Austin, and an M.A. from East Texas State University. In addition, he earned a Ph.D from the University of Texas at Austin. He began his professional career as a political science instructor at Odessa College, after which he served as Dean of Student Affairs and Director of Admissions at the University of Texas, Medical Branch. From 1966 to 1972, he was dean and vice president of Central Texas College in Killeen, and in 1973 he was vice chancellor of American Technological University, also at Killeen.

The Walker Administration marked a change in direction for the College. The first indication of the new direction came with the changing of the institution's name from Navarro Junior College to simply Navarro College. The traditional role of the junior college had been to provide basic academic courses for students who planned to transfer to four-year institutions. That had been Navarro's primary emphasis since its founding in 1946, and it would continue to be the institution's main thrust. However, in 1968 the Coordinating Board of the Texas College and University System broadened the scope of the state's two-year colleges, referring to them as community junior colleges. Those institutions would continue to provide lower division transfer courses, but in addition, they were directed to offer expanded technical programs to train persons in the occupational skills needed in the particular geographic area where the college was located. Navarro had provided technical programs since its inception, but under the new directive from the Coordinating Board, those offerings were to be greatly expanded.

In addition to offering academic transfer courses and technical programs, a third role for the community junior colleges as outlined by the Coordinating Board was to provide continuing education courses. Cultural and public service programs were to be offered in response to community interests and needs, and they were to include both credit and non-credit courses.

The new Coordinating Board policies also required the community junior colleges to provide compensatory education programs designed to fulfill the commitment to an "open door" admissions policy. In short, anyone with a high school diploma or its equivalent (GED) could be admitted to Navarro or any of the state's community junior colleges. In addition, anyone 18 years of age or older could be admitted by individual approval from the institution by providing evidence of appropriate experiences in lieu of a high school diploma. Some of those students would perhaps be academically disadvantaged. Consequently, institutions would be required to provide assistance through remedial courses to help such students achieve their educational goals.

Essentially, the community junior colleges would seek to broaden their scope to provide a wider range of educational opportunities to as many different people in the community as possible. According to the new directives, the community would include not only the particular city or town in which the institution was located but the entire surrounding vicinity, commonly referred to as the service area. Navarro had served basically four counties since its inception-- Navarro, Limestone, Freestone, and Ellis counties. Under new Coordinating Board guidelines, Navarro College would attempt to provide as many educational services to as many people in those four counties as possible. Although the College was already involved somewhat in the programs outlined in the new Coordinating Board policies, efforts in those areas would be increased and intensified. The dropping of the word "junior" from the institution's name indicated the new emphasis and direction Navarro would pursue under Dr. Walker's leadership.

The mission statement of the College committed the institution to comply with the new directives outlined by the Coordinating Board. In a statement of philosophy adopted by the Board of Trustees, Navarro College

pledged itself to meet the challenges of providing accessibility to educational opportunities embodied in the open door policy of admissions while at the same time maintaining standards of excellence.

Among Dr. Walker's early acts after assuming the presidency was to re-evaluate the current status of the College and to formulate an overall master plan for the future. In that light, he named W.D. Wyatt, a prominent Corsicana banker and civic leader, to assemble a committee comprised of leading citizens in the community. That

committee would have a two-fold charge: (1) To evaluate the current status of Navarro College as an educational institution, and (2) to project the directions the College should take in the future. The Wyatt Committee studied the current status and future projections of the College in the areas of educational programs, research and development, human resources, financial resources, and physical facilities.

Mr. Gary Brown headed a committee to poll the community regarding the kinds of educational services and programs which the College might develop in the future. The responses to that poll provided a basis for recommendations ultimately developed by the Master Action Plan (MAP) Committee. The MAP Committee, consisting of eight members and chaired by Mrs. Art (Gioia) Keeney, was to analyze the data that had been gathered and develop a master plan with specific goals for the College, assign timetables for the accomplishment of those goals, and

assist with the development of resources which could be utilized in achieving those



*Dr. Walker and Dr. Reed discussing the Master Action Plan with members of the faculty.*

goals.

From the original steering committee came six subcommittees concerned with the following specific objectives: (1) improvement of the physical facilities; (2) construction of new facilities; (3) expansion of the College district; (4) evaluation, improvement, and expansion of educational programs; (5) community awareness and public relations; and (6) an annual endowment fund drive. From those efforts came a Master Action Plan or MAP with specific short-range, medium-range, and long-range goals for the College. Basically everything the College undertook in the succeeding years would be an outgrowth of the goals that the MAP Committee had developed.

In keeping with the initial objective, improvement of existing facilities, work began in 1975 to renovate the Administration Building. Few changes had been made in the building since its completion in 1951, and it was in need of some obvious

improvements. While the remodeling was underway, it was necessary to relocate faculty and administrators whose offices were housed in the building. For example, the Social Science Department moved to the Women's Gym. In addition to having faculty offices in that unlikely building, instructors taught courses in history, political science, psychology, and sociology in the classrooms there, sometimes amid the noise of bouncing basketballs on the gym floor. The arrangement was reminiscent of the early days of the College prior to the completion of the Administration Building when classes were "farmed out" all over campus. The Administration Building renovation was completed in 1976, and at that time it was officially named the O.L. Albritton Academic-Administration Building in honor of the first chairman of the Board of Trustees of Navarro Junior College.

Mr. Albritton was most deserving of the honor of having the building named for him. Long interested in education, he had attended a one-room school in Bazette, a small community in eastern Navarro County near Kerens. After he graduated from Sam Houston Normal School (currently Sam Houston State University) in Huntsville,

Albritton taught at several rural schools in Navarro County. He was elected Navarro County School Superintendent and in that capacity worked for the consolidation of small schools with larger ones which would be better suited to serve the educational needs of the County's young people. Albritton had been a driving force in the founding of Navarro Junior College in 1946, and he was elected its first chairman of the Board of Trustees.

When it became apparent that the Air Activities of Texas site was inadequate for a permanent campus for NJC, Albritton helped to secure a better location for the school. When the present site became available, Albritton, although no longer on the College Board, borrowed the money himself to purchase the property and gave it to the College. Eventually the College repaid him at exactly the price he had paid for the land with no interest.

As the Administration Building was under construction, he drove to the site virtually every day to watch the structure take shape. His son, Oliver, recalled the family teasing him about counting every brick that was laid. Over the years as the campus developed and expanded, he

demonstrated a profound sense of pride. Oliver recalled that as they would drive by the campus in his father's last years, he would gaze at the buildings and smile broadly, obviously pleased with the role he had played in the early years of the College. It was fitting that the main building on the campus be



*The Albritton Administration Building after renovation.*



*Robert S. Reading*

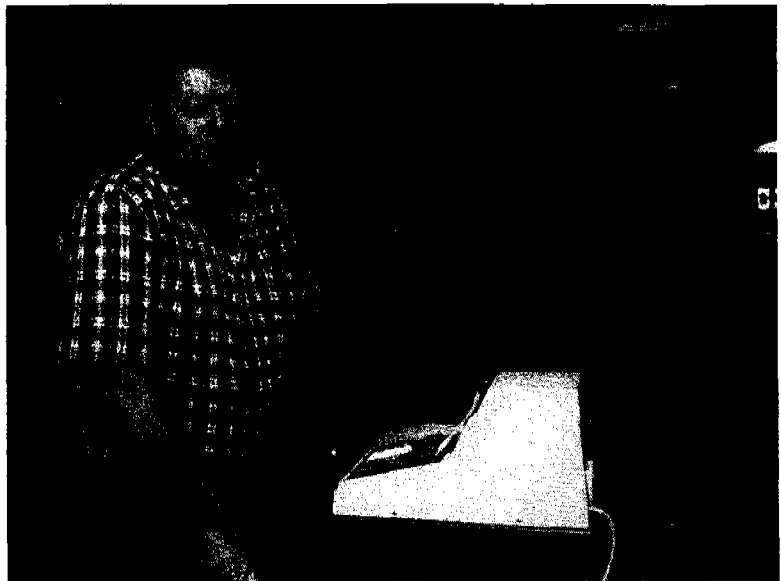
named in his honor.

After the renovation of the Administration Building was completed, work began on remodeling the Gooch Library. The book collection, which had been housed on the main floor of the building, was moved to the newly renovated basement area. While the project was in progress, the library collection was moved to the Women's Gym. Library patrons walking on the hardwood floor created more noise than is usually found in a library, but the problem was short-lived. The main floor of the Gooch Library building was redesigned for use as a counseling center, the book collection was in the basement, and the upper level housed offices and the newly decorated Arrowhead Room where the Reading Arrowhead and Indian Artifact Collection was displayed. The Arrowhead Room was also designated for use for faculty and staff meetings, as well as a meeting place for community and civic functions. By the late 1980s, the Board of Trustees began holding their regular monthly meetings in the

Arrowhead Room as well.

In conjunction with the remodeling of the Library, there was a ceremony to honor Verda Gooch, long-time business manager of the College and widow of Gaston Gooch, namesake of the new building and dean of the College. By a resolution, the Board named the courtyard area located between the Administration and the Library in her honor. She was on hand to assist Board Chairman Leighton Dawson unveil a plaque, marking the Verda Gooch Courtyard. With its immaculate grounds and attractive flowers and shrubbery, the Courtyard quickly became a popular gathering place for students and a showcase for campus guests to visit.

The Ray Waller Memorial Student Union Building also underwent extensive renovations during this period. Besides serving as the cafeteria for students, the SUB also housed a game room and facilities for other recreational activities. The new



*Rick Neumayer, Director of Food Services, is responsible for all student meals and banquets held at the SUB.*

design of the building created some private dining areas for small gatherings and increased the size of the large dining area normally utilized by the students at meal



*The Fine Arts Building*

1970s.

The College had obviously complied with the recommendations of the MAP Committee to upgrade existing facilities. In addition, that committee had called for the construction of some new buildings. The first goal listed under new facilities was a fine arts building, and that goal was achieved

time. The SUB was used not only for such campus activities as the Ex-Students Banquet as part of the Homecoming Activities in the fall and the Student Activities Banquet in the spring but also for many civic and community functions such as the Chamber of Commerce Breakfasts and the annual Chamber of Commerce Banquet.

Many of the old buildings that had been moved in from the original campus were beginning to show their age, and the maintenance of such structures was becoming more and more expensive. The only alternative was to demolish the buildings. The old barracks-type dormitories were torn down and replaced with modern apartment-

style facilities for student on-campus housing. The old student union building and the music building were also demolished in the late

with the dedication of a new building in May, 1985. Located immediately west of the Albritton Administration Building, the \$3.2 million structure contained art studios, sculpture labs, a choir room, a band hall, individual practice and rehearsal rooms, photography studios, and a dark room. In addition, there was a formal meeting room



*The K. and Ida Wolens Special Events Center*

designated as the PTK Room and dedicated to honor Margaret Pannill, long-time English instructor and Phi Theta Kappa sponsor.



Once again, the Navarro County Foundation (commonly called the Drane Foundation) provided substantial funding to the College to aid in the completion of the Fine Arts Building. In addition, funds from the Katherine Carmody Trust were made available to assist in the project. With a new and commodious facility, Navarro began to promote programs in the fine arts area, most notably music and drama productions, disciplines that had been somewhat dormant for several years.

By 1986 the only building from the Air Activities campus still in use was the Bulldog Gym. The building had been an airplane hanger at the original campus, and under the supervision of local building contractor E.E. Burkhart, it had been dismantled and moved to the new campus in 1951. It was now beginning to show its age and needed repairs would be expensive. Consequently, the Board approved the demolition of that building and the construction of a new facility. Completed in the spring of 1986, the new building provided the Bulldog basketball

team with a first-class facility for their games. With a seating capacity of 1,800, the Special Events Center (SEC) contained racquetball courts, a weight room, dressing facilities, and offices for the coaching staff and physical education faculty.

The facility was named in honor of Kalman and Ida Wolens, prominent local citizens. A native of Poland who had immigrated to the United States as a child prior to the turn of the century, Wolens had first settled in Chicago, but as a young man, he had been attracted to Texas in search of a better life. Beginning as a street peddler in downtown Corsicana, he borrowed enough money to open a small dry goods store. With the profits from the store, he was able to buy a small farm south of town, and during the oil boom of the 1920s, drillers hit a major producing well on his property, making Wolens a wealthy man virtually overnight. His new prosperity enabled him to expand his dry goods business into a chain of stores across Texas. Wolens shared his good fortune through various philanthropic

endeavors in Navarro County. After his death in 1953, Wolens' son Louis continued to operate the business and to contribute generously to various worthwhile causes. The College showed its gratitude for the many gifts it had received over the years from the Wolens estate by naming the new building for Mr. K and his wife Ida. The first official use for the building was for the 1986 graduation exercises.

One of the reasons the College was able to expand significantly during the 1970s and 1980s was its success in acquiring sizable federal grants for funding several major projects. During the 1970s the United States acknowledged an emerging energy crisis due to declining oil resources. The problem was



*Graduation Ceremonies are now held in the SEC.*

compounded by political confrontations with some nations in the petroleum-rich Middle East who imposed an oil embargo on the United States. The results were higher gasoline prices and acute shortages causing long lines at the gas pumps and creating fear and frustration. American auto makers re-engineered their cars to produce more fuel-efficient engines, and the government began exploring ways to develop alternative fuels to replace the depleting gasoline and petroleum reserves. Congress set aside federal funds for educational institutions for such research projects.

Navarro College received a substantial federal grant to develop a curriculum for the production and utilization of solar energy as an alternative for petroleum. The research done at Navarro was disseminated throughout the country and served as a model for colleges and universities teaching solar energy methods and procedures.

Another grant funded a geothermal demonstration project. Wells drilled on the campus were used to provide low-cost energy for dormitories and other buildings on campus. Among the more unusual grants awarded to Navarro was one which concerned aquaculture research for shrimp and catfish production. Findings from that project were later put to use in the state of Oregon.

The National Science Foundation provided funding for the development of instructional video tapes for teaching biology, chemistry and anatomy and physiology. The United States Department of Commerce awarded the College a grant for the construction of an on-campus low-power television station. The Cook Theater, located on the second floor of the East Wing of the Albritton Administration Building, was renovated from a theater-in-the-round to a television studio. NCTV went on the air in 1984 with educational and local interest programming. In addition, the College developed a radio/television curriculum,

providing students in broadcast journalism with unique hands-on opportunities to learn to operate state-of-the-art equipment and to develop skills needed for positions in that expanding profession. All told, between 1974 and 1984 Navarro received more than \$5 million in federal grants for various research programs and projects.

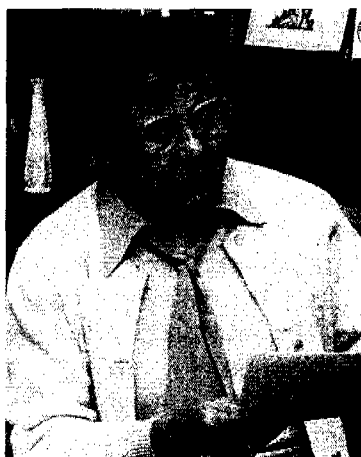
The grants which the College received were administered through the Mid-Tex Education and Research Corporation, a private, non-profit entity chartered in 1974 specifically to benefit the College. Original members of the Mid-Tex Board of Directors included Oliver Albritton, Don Bowen, Leighton Dawson, Dr. Louis Gibson, and C.E. Middleton. The Mid-Tex Foundation was able to receive grants, arrange leases, acquire property, and conduct several types of business that would not have otherwise been possible for a public institution like Navarro.

The grant which Navarro received to construct the live-broadcast television station is an example of such an arrangement between the Foundation and the College. The grant included a matching funding requirement which could be met by the donation of equipment in lieu of money. Consequently, the Mid-Tex Board of Directors donated television equipment valued at \$100,000 to the College to meet the matching requirement. The construction of on-campus residence halls and the contribution of scholarship and development funds were other examples of Mid-Tex activities. By the mid-1980s the Mid-Tex Foundation had assets in excess of \$1 million and an operating budget of \$318,000. According to Leighton Dawson, who served as chairman of the Board of Trustees of the College and also as a member of the Mid-Tex Board of Directors, the College Board was able to avoid increases in the ad valorem tax rate yet still see the institution grow and expand.

As part of the new direction the College was pursuing, the administration made a commitment to establish satellite

campuses within various communities in the service area. Navarro was offering college credit courses in such places as Mexia, Fairfield, Midlothian, Kerens, Waxahachie, and Ennis in the early 1970s with those classes being taught in the evenings, usually at the local high school in those respective communities. Most of the students enrolled in such courses were adults who were employed full-time, and evenings were the only time they could attend class. Obviously such course offerings enabled Navarro to expand its educational services to a greater segment of the population.

One rather unique concept that President Walker explored was the possibility of expanding Navarro into a 4 year



*Geraldine Johnston - English instructor and Phi Theta Kappa sponsor.*

community college. Plans called for adding the upper division but financed with local funds rather than state funding. Timing for the endeavor proved to be less than desirable, however. The state was experiencing economic difficulties because of

declining oil prices. The Texas Legislature was investigating the possibility of closing some colleges, and obviously 4-year institutions who were struggling for survival strongly opposed Navarro's proposal to expand its offerings to upper level courses. Consequently, the proposal never gained significant support from state officials.

When there was a significant emphasis on buildings and programs during the Walker Administration, people remained the foundation on which the College was built. As had been the case from the outset, NC continued to provide its students with top quality instructors. In 1981 Geraldine Johnston, English instructor and Phi Theta Kappa sponsor, was named Navarro's third Piper Professor. A graduate of Weatherford College and Sam Houston State College, Mrs.



*McAfee Daniel - Chairman of the Division of Communications and English instructor.*

Johnston had taught in the Corsicana Public Schools before joining the Navarro faculty in 1962. In 1986 McAfee Daniel, chairman of the Division of Communications and an English instructor, was also named a Piper Professor. Mr. Daniel had been a freshman in the first class at NJC when the institution began in 1946 and served as associate editor of the campus newspaper The Growl. After thirteen years of teaching in public



*James Edgar retired in 1973 while Lucille Boyd retired in 1975.*

schools in Bronte and Ulvalde, Texas, Mr. Daniel joined the Navarro faculty in 1965.

Dr. Walker's leadership earned recognition and honors for himself and for the College. In 1977 the Association of Community College Trustees presented Walker with the Marie Y. Martin Professional Educator Award as the most outstanding community college president in the United States. The following year the Corsicana Chamber of Commerce named him the recipient of the K. Wolens Distinguished Service Award. In 1982 Dr. Walker received the Michael Bennett Distinguished President's Award for outstanding service to Phi Theta Kappa. In addition, he was named to the national PTK Board of Directors.

Some familiar people were also retiring after long years of service to the College. In 1970 original faculty member Margaret Pannill retired, and three years later chemistry instructor James Edgar also announced his retirement. In 1984 the Board of Trustees recognized Edgar's contributions to Navarro by naming the lecture hall in the Drane Science Building in his honor. In 1975 Roy Reese, long-time biology instructor, and Lucille Boyd, the last remaining member of the original faculty, also retired. Mrs. Boyd's teaching career at Navarro spanned 29 years. Euneva Burleson closed out 33 years with the College when she retired in 1980. Dorothy Hardgrave, a familiar fixture as manager of the College Bookstore since 1962, retired in 1985 after 23 years of service to Navarro. Odis Kindle's 31-year tenure as Navarro's head



*Euneva Burleson retired in 1980.*

librarian ended with his retirement in 1987. Dr. Louis Gibson, a prominent Corsicana surgeon, left the Board of Trustees in 1987, having served 32 years in that capacity. He was replaced on the Board by Corsicana attorney Robert N. (Rob) Jones.

The student body as well as the campus was undergoing change in the late 1970s and early 1980s. While most of Navarro's students were "traditional" 18 and 19-year-olds recently graduated from high school, more and more "older" students were enrolling as well. This can be partially explained by the return of large numbers of young men coming home after military duty in Vietnam. Like Navarro's first students, they were taking advantage of GI benefits either to begin or to resume their educational careers. In addition, Navarro attracted older students by broadening its scope of educational services in keeping with the community-based educational philosophy. Non-academic courses or continuing education courses aimed at particular groups attracted people to campus who would not have otherwise come.

Changing social attitudes also account for the new look in the composition of the student body. Many middle-aged women who had passed up college for various reasons after completing high school were now taking advantage of educational opportunities available to them at Navarro. Some came to earn degrees in academic areas, while others took courses for personal growth and enrichment. Others enrolled in certificate programs that took them directly into the job market, and still others were learning new skills required in a changing work place.

One unique program that brought more mature students to the Navarro campus was called Partners in Active Living or PAL, which was designed for senior citizens. Under the direction of James Spivey, this program was designed for people 60 years

old or above. They could enroll in non-credit courses such as defensive driving, health and nutrition, arts and crafts, and social security benefits. Some enrolled in academic courses for credit, and a few secured enough hours to earn degrees from Navarro. In a few instances, some PAL members went on to 4-year institutions after completing their studies

attendance at various times in the PAL Center, which was located in the Women's Gym.

The international student population declined because of an incident that occurred in summer of 1977. At the time some 200 Iranian students were enrolled at Navarro. In an effort to identify students who needed



*Members of the PAL group boarding the Navarro College bus for one of many adventures.*

remediation in basic skills such as reading, writing, and math, the College required incoming students to take placement tests, and those who scored below approved levels would be enrolled in non-credit developmental courses. Because of their limited background in English, many of the Iranians qualified for developmental

at NC.

The social opportunities which PAL offered appealed to its members. A morning "walking class" evolved into a physical education course. Monthly luncheons with guest speakers were both social and educational functions. Educational trips were also a significant part of the PAL program. They began on a rather small scale with excursions to Waco and Galveston, but they eventually expanded to ventures to New York City, the Pacific Northwest, Washington, D.C., and the New England States.

A monthly newsletter kept members informed of PAL activities and a directory listed the names and addresses of the more than 700 members who were enrolled in the program. On an average day, 25 people would be in

classes. Feeling that such requirements were discriminatory to them, those students staged a demonstration to protest the policy. They congregated in front of the Administration Building as registration for summer school was beginning-- marching, chanting, and carrying protests signs. Students coming to enroll were having difficulty entering the building. Some, upon seeing the disturbance as they entered the parking lot, simply drove away. When the protestors refused to comply with a directive to disperse, the Administration called in the Navarro County Sheriff's Department. A confrontation between law enforcement officials and the students occurred in front of the Albritton Administration Building, resulting in the arrest of several of the students.

They severely damaged a bus being used to transport them to jail, and they also caused extensive damage to the County jail.

The episode obviously created negative public relations for the College. Consequently, the Board of Trustees initiated a policy limiting the number of international students who could enroll at Navarro and restricted the number that could come from individual countries. Consequently, the international student population declined in numbers over the next several years.

Despite some changes in the physical appearance of the campus and the makeup of the student body, student life on campus did maintain a degree of continuity. Zeta Omicron, under the leadership of Geraldine Johnston, Jim Chapman, Ileen Ray, and Wanda Gillen, continued to play a prominent role in state and national Phi Theta Kappa activities. Long-time campus organizations like the Baptist Student Union and the Rodeo Club continued to attract students, but changing times were also reflected in some of the newer student groups on campus. For example, African-American students formed the Ebony Club to promote awareness of Black culture and Black history, while radio/television students and computer science students each organized clubs for those interested in those respective areas of study. Video games replaced cards and dominoes as popular recreational activities in the SUB and dorm rooms.

Athletics continued to play a prominent role in campus life. The Bulldogs remained a national football power through the 1970s and 1980s. Harold Hern, a one-time Navarro player and later an assistant coach, was named head football coach in 1973. That season the Bulldogs rolled to a brilliant 11-1 record. Although having an identical 6-1 conference record with arch-rival Henderson County Junior College of Athens, the Bulldogs defeated the Cardinals in the last game of the season before a crowd of 6,000 at Tiger Field in Corsicana. Navarro was invited to play in the Wool Bowl in Roswell,

New Mexico, where they defeated Fort Scott, Kansas junior College to cap a remarkable year for Hern and the team. The Bulldogs won the conference championship outright in 1976, and as a result were the host team for the Texas Junior College Bowl played in Garland. Navarro defeated Northeastern Oklahoma in that game. Hern's teams shared the conference title with Kilgore twice and played in the 1980 Wool Bowl, losing to the New Mexico Military Institute. Hern's overall record was 91-40-2, and his conference record of 63-27-1 ranked as the best of any coach in the history of the conference at that time. Hern resigned in 1986, and he was replaced by long-time assistant Bob McElroy.

Basketball became more prominent at Navarro in the 1970s with the arrival of John Underwood as head coach. Underwood had been a standout player at Kilgore Junior College and Texas A & M prior to his being named NC's coach. The exciting, fast-paced style of play and the presence of talented players increased interest and fan support for the Bulldog basketball team. Underwood resigned in 1976 to become an assistant coach at the University of Oklahoma and he later held a similar position at SMU.

Underwood's replacement was Louis Orr, a veteran coach who had been an assistant at SMU and a highly successful head coach at Lon Morris College in Jacksonville prior to coming to Navarro. Under Orr's direction, the Bulldogs captured the conference championship and the NJCAA Region 14 championship in the 1977-78 season. The Bulldogs repeated as champions of the Texas Eastern Conference the following season, and they remained strong contenders each year under Orr's leadership.

In 1975 women's basketball was added to the athletic program, and Ileen Ray, physical education instructor, was named coach of the team. The following year, tennis coach Herschel Stephens coached the team. Because of limited success and

minimal interest and support from the student body and the community in general, the program was discontinued in 1984.

The tennis team under coach Herschel Stephens continued to be a dominant force in the Texas Eastern Conference, but the tennis program was scaled back significantly following Stephens' death in 1983.

Baseball was part of the athletic program from the beginning of the College, but the program was dropped in 1969. In 1983 it was re-instated with Al Arman as the coach. Despite competing with such junior college powers as Panola, McLennan, and Ranger, the Bulldogs became competitive right away, compiling a respectable record. Within a short time, they were contending for the conference championship, and turning out players who were continuing their collegiate careers at four-year colleges, and some were being drafted by professional teams. When Arman became athletic director in 1985, Adron Paul was named baseball coach, a position he held for the next four years. In 1989 Keith Thomas, a former Bulldog All-America football player, was named head baseball coach.

Joining the Bulldog Band at football game halftime shows was a new dance and drill team called the Showstoppers. The original drill team, the Señoritas, had disbanded in the mid-1970s. Scottie Arman was the director of the new group, which consisted of approximately twenty young women. The cheerleading squad also changed during this period by adding men to the group. Under the direction of Jon Fisher, the Showstoppers and the Bulldog cheerleaders consistently finished high in the rankings in national competitions held by the National Cheerleaders Association (NCA) during the late 1980s and early 1990s.

For all the positive accomplishments of Navarro in the 1970s and 1980s, there was some negative publicity as well. The Coordinating Board of Colleges and Universities in Texas questioned the

academic quality of some credit courses which the College offered to residents in area nursing homes. Following a lengthy investigation and extensive audits, the College agreed to return \$200,000 to the State, an amount equal to what the institution had received in state funding for the courses in question. Obviously, the incident had a profound effect on the future of the College, not only in the loss of funds but in the perception of the mission and purpose of the institution. The incident also created a serious negative image for the College in the community as well as across the state of Texas. The impression that Navarro had engaged in unethical conduct was contrary to its reputation established by a long history of integrity and academic excellence. It would take some time for the College to overcome the negative perceptions that arose from the "nursing home" incident. Although enrollment remained consistent during the episode, restoring the public confidence and the school's reputation that had been tarnished by the incident would be challenging.

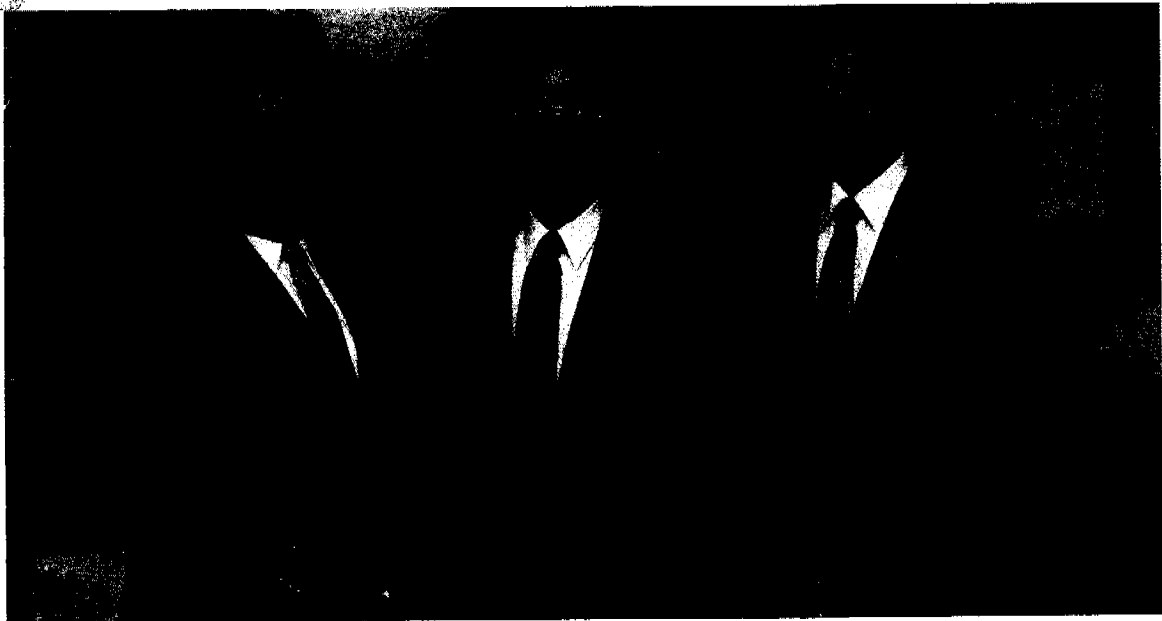
Navarro's growth through the years was aided by the generosity of various individuals who donated sizeable financial gifts to the College. Besides large contributions from the Drane, Wolens, and Carmody foundations, there have been other donations of varying amounts from both individuals and organizations. Many of those gifts came in the form of scholarships. Civic clubs, churches, sororities, and businesses and industries provided funding through the years to help alleviate costs for students to attend Navarro. Some of those scholarships date back to the earliest days of the institution and continued for many years, while others were short-term, given for only one or two years. Many of the grants were given as memorials for deceased friends or family members. For example, among the highlights of the annual Homecoming Banquet was the announcement of the recipients of Gaston T. Gooch Scholarship and the A. Lee Smith Scholarship, honoring two long-time

Navarro staff members. James Edgar was usually on hand each year to personally award a scholarship funded by his former students and given to an outstanding science student.

The most significant Navarro scholarship as far as the amount of money awarded and the large number of recipients was the Caston Scholarship, named for M.C. and Mattie Caston. Mr. Caston, a native of Navarro County, had been quite successful in the oil business and had acquired substantial amounts of land in the southern part of the County. Upon his death in 1963, his widow inherited his estate and eventually created a trust fund with the stipulation that the assets

1980, the value of the land was appraised at \$135 per acre, according to Mr. Dawson. In addition, there were oil royalties included with some of the land. However, shortly after her death, officials of the Tarrant County Water District began investigating the possibility of building a lake in southern Navarro County. Since the Caston property would be included in the lake site, the value of the land skyrocketed, and the estate increased dramatically. At the time the scholarship program was implemented, the trust had holdings of approximately \$1 million.

According to Mr. Dawson, the Caston Scholarship program was patterned after the Collins Scholarship program at Corsicana



*Members of the first Caston Scholarship Board of Directors - Blake Gillen, Leighton Dawson and Hoyt Moore.*

would be given to some worthwhile endeavor within Navarro County. The Castons had no children. Mr. Leighton Dawson, her attorney and at the time chairman of the Navarro College Board of Trustees, encouraged her to consider the College as a worthy beneficiary of her estate, and she agreed. Thus she and Dawson planned the scholarship program.

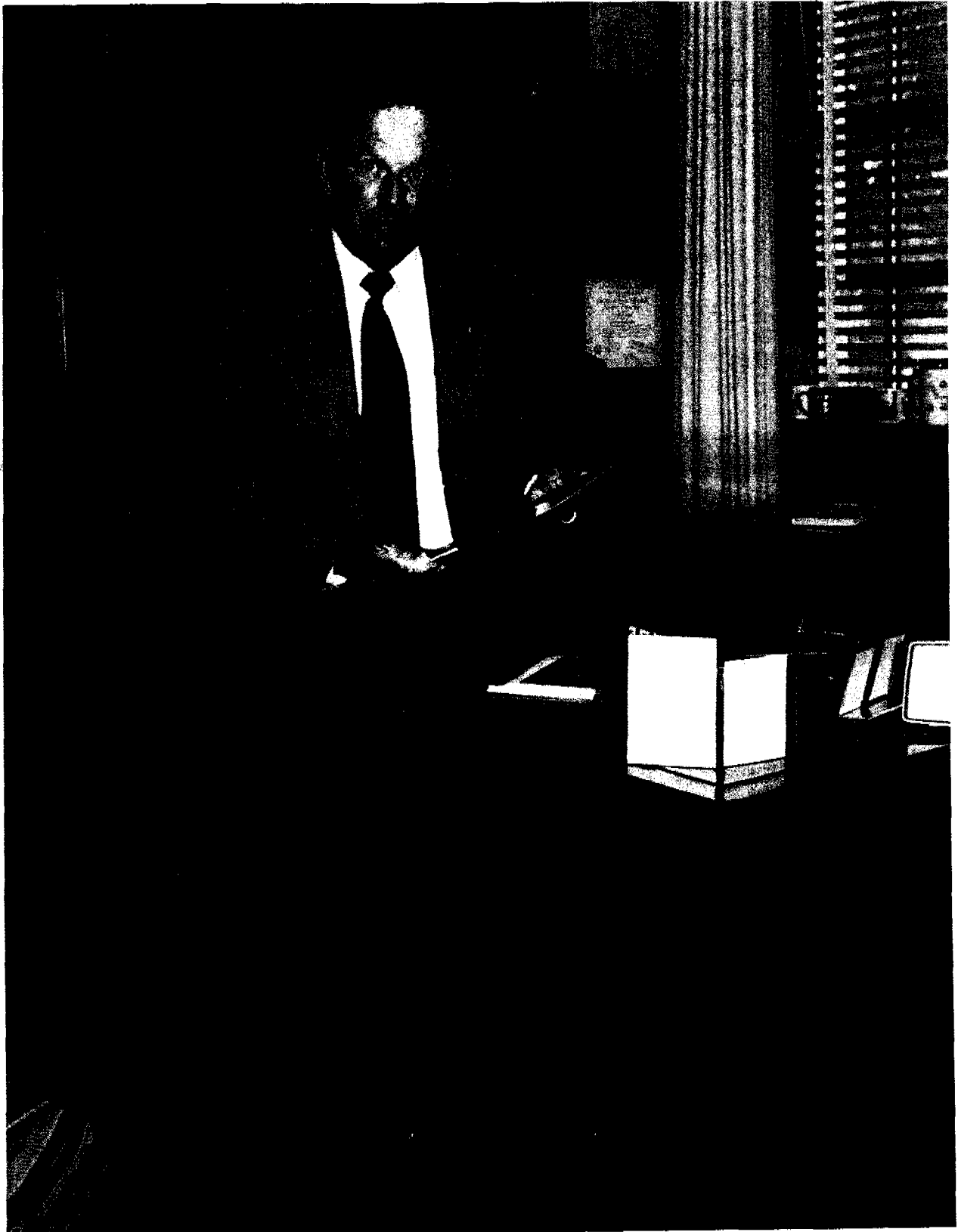
At the time of Mrs. Caston's death in

High School. It differs, however, in that the Caston scholarships were available to deserving high school graduates from the entire Navarro College service area, namely Navarro, Ellis, Limestone, and Freestone counties. The first awards were made in 1982, and over the next decade approximately \$200,000 was distributed to some 500 different students from those counties.



There was one unique feature of the Caston Scholarships, however. Mr. Dawson noted that virtually every college and university offers scholarships to students to attend their institutions. Each year at commencement exercises four students received special Graduate Caston Scholarships valued at \$10,000 each to continue their studies at any four-year institution of their choice to complete their baccalaureate degrees. "This is the only case I know of," Dawson remarked, "where a college gives scholarships to students to go somewhere else to study. This is a real unusual program. In fact, there is not another scholarship program like it in the country." The announcement of the Graduate Caston Scholars have become a highlight of the graduation ceremonies each year.

The Walker Administration had been responsible for many changes at Navarro College. The mission of the College had been modified to provide expanded educational opportunities to more students in the College service area. Enrollment had increased significantly, and the renovation of existing buildings and the construction of new ones produced a strikingly attractive campus. Dr. Walker introduced some innovative ideas not only for the operation of Navarro but for community college education in general. When he resigned in 1988 to accept the presidency of Oklahoma City Community College, he could look back over 14 eventful years at Navarro.



*Dr. Gerald Burson - Navarro College President 1989 -*

## Chapter 5

### *Into the Future: The Burson Administration, 1989-*



*Dr. Lary Reed - Executive Vice-President*

When Dr. Walker resigned as Navarro's president in 1988 to accept the presidency of Oklahoma City Community College, for a second time, Dr. Lary Reed served as interim president until the position was filled on a permanent basis. The Board of Trustees formed a search committee composed of members from every part of the College community--administration, faculty, and support staff--as well as several townspeople. After extensive screening and

interviewing of the applicants by the committee, the Board accepted the group's recommendation and named Dr. Gerald Burson to serve as Navarro's fourth president.

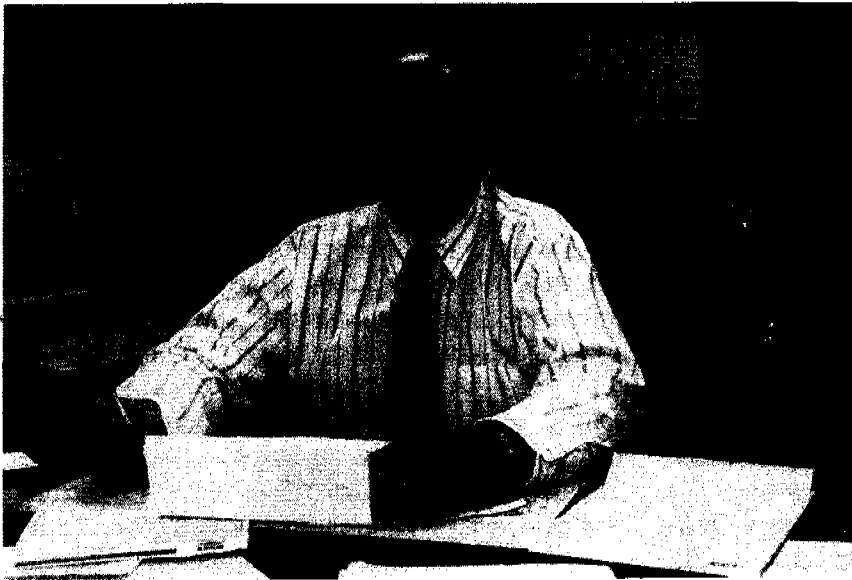
A native of Oklahoma, Burson had been an Air Force pilot prior to beginning his career in education. He held three degrees from Oklahoma State University, and prior to accepting the presidency at Navarro, he had

spent the previous 27 years as an administrator at Northern Oklahoma College, a two-year institution in Tonkawa.

On November 19, 1989, with the faculty and administration in full academic regalia, Dr. Burson was formally inaugurated as the new president of Navarro College, the first time such a ceremony had been held for a Navarro chief executive. A large crowd gathered in the Wolens Special Events Center for the ceremony, which was followed

by a formal reception in the Waller Student Center. Navarro College was about to enter a new phase of its development.

At the beginning of the Burson administration in the fall of 1989, Navarro had an enrollment of 2,600 students. The majority of the students were traditional 18



*Darrell Raines - Vice President for Finance*

and 19-year-olds enrolled in transfer academic programs, taking basic core courses such as English, history, government, and biology before enrolling in a 4-year institution to complete a baccalaureate degree. However, the student body also consisted of students enrolled in certificate or degree programs preparing themselves to move directly into the work force. Those students enrolled in such programs as aviation/career pilot training, criminal justice, secretarial/office management, computer science, occupational therapy, hardware store management, medical lab technology, and nursing.

Many "non-traditional" students also enrolled at Navarro. Many of those students were housewives or single parents who were beginning their college careers or returning to school after having their studies interrupted. A federal program created under the Carl

Perkins Vocational Assistance Act provided a wide range of assistance measures for economically disadvantaged students. Named for its sponsor, Democratic Congressman Carl D. Perkins of Kentucky, the Navarro College Carl Perkins Career Center was under the direction of Robbye NeSmith and Mary Dickerson. The Carl Perkins Career Center attempted to eradicate some of the financial and emotional barriers which prevented such students from pursuing vocational post-secondary education. Through the Carl Perkins Center, single parents and displaced homemakers who had custody of children could receive group counseling, career guidance, financial assistance for day care, textbook loans, current information regarding employment opportunities, and referrals to various

support agencies.

Persons with physical disabilities could also find assistance through the Carl Perkins Center. For example, notetakers and tutorial assistants were available for those who were visually or hearing impaired. The center also made available audio and video materials to students with limited English proficiency.

Many of the students who were involved in the Carl Perkins program were adults whose circumstances had prevented them from attending college. Others were returning to college to upgrade their skills or to acquire new skills required in the changing job market. Although most of the Navarro student body consisted of traditional 18 to 20-year-olds, the expansion of this new segment of the student population raised the average age of the student body to 25.

The increased numbers of this aspect of the student population led to the

expansion of a new program called Adult Basic Education (ABE). Begun in 1986 under the direction of Ben Aldama, the ABE program had first been operated by the Corsicana Independent School District as a cooperative effort of 23 school districts. ABE's basic objective was to serve undereducated adults with basic instruction in reading, writing, and mathematics. The program also provided preparation for GED (General Education Degree, an equivalent to a high school diploma) and instruction in English as a second language. Since its inception, ABE has grown steadily, serving over 1,500 adults in its first year of operation and over 2,400 during the 1994-95 academic year. Navarro's Adult Basic Education Program earned statewide recognition for the quality of its instruction and its proven successes in meeting student needs.

In June, 1991, a commencement ceremony was held for GED graduates. Dressed in traditional caps and gowns, 50 adult GED graduates ranging in age from late teens to mid 60s walked across the stage to receive their diplomas. By 1993 the event had grown to the point that it had to be moved from Dawson Auditorium to the Wolens Special Events Center, which had a larger seating capacity. The 1995 ceremony had 84 graduates and marked the beginning of a new tradition by awarding a scholarship to attend Navarro College to the highest ranking graduate of the GED class. Programs such as the Carl Perkins Career Center and Adult Basic Education demonstrated NC's commitment to the community college philosophy of providing maximum educational services to a broad range of the community's population, many of whom would never have enrolled in college otherwise.

Most of NC's student body came from the immediate area of Navarro, Ellis, Freestone, and Limestone counties, but 6 percent came from the Dallas-Fort Worth area, and an additional 12 percent came from other Texas counties. Residents from

27 different states were enrolled, and there were more than 200 students from 46 different countries from every corner of the globe, including Asia, Latin America, Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. Harold Crouch, who came to Navarro in 1986, served as international student advisor. His expertise helped the students acclimate to their new environment and to become part of the student body. The presence of international students on campus continued a practice that had begun in the 1950s. The student body was obviously becoming more diverse in its makeup.

The Elleair Program brought an added dimension to the international student population. The Daoi Paper Company of Tokyo, Japan, sponsored several young Japanese women each year in this program with the number of participants varying from year to year, ranging from a high of 18 to a low of 6. Under the terms of a contract with Navarro beginning in 1990, Daoi hoped to achieve several objectives through the Elleair Program. One was to teach the young women golf skills. Although the game of golf enjoyed enormous popularity in Japan, limited space and opportunities to play made it quite expensive. Daoi hoped to send young women to the United States, namely Navarro College, to develop their playing skills to a level that perhaps would enable them to compete on a professional level. To that end, Nancy Stuart, a licensed LPGA (Ladies Professional Golf Association) teaching pro, gave the Japanese women intensive instruction in golf. (Stuart resigned in 1994 and was replaced by Kerry Dowlin). Daoi also provided funding for the women to attend, as spectators, several major professional golf tournaments in various locations across the United States, and they also competed in some tournaments with other nearby colleges.

In addition, Daoi hoped to introduce the young women to American culture and to improve their English language skills-- to "internationalize" the young women, as it

were. To that end, they enrolled in ESL (English as a second language) classes, and some other courses as well, including business and office education classes. They lived in campus housing to give them the opportunity to interact with the other students in day-to-day situations. Keiko Inagaki, director of the program, arranged various cultural activities for the Japanese students to expose them to different phases of American life. After completing the one-year course of study, most of the women returned to Japan, but some stayed at Navarro, enrolled in traditional courses, and continued their studies. The program was discontinued at the end of the 1995-96 academic year.

One significant change in the academic area of the College was precipitated by a state mandate. In July, 1986, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) prepared a report entitled "A Generation of Failure: The Case for Remediation in Texas Higher Education." The report called attention to the underpreparedness in academic skills of many Texas college students. The problem was not unique to Texas, as the same conditions existed among college students across the United States. In response to the THECB report and a demand from the general population for more accountability from public education, the Texas Legislature amended the Texas Education Code in the spring of 1987, requiring the development and administration of a basic skills test, which came to be known as TASP (Texas Academic Skills Program). Along with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and National Evaluation Systems, the Coordinating Board developed the TASP test to measure entering students' skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. Those who failed to demonstrate designated skills would be required to enroll in non-credit remedial courses in those areas in which they were deficient and continue in remediation until they had passed the section(s) of the test where they had substandard skills.

Navarro had been administering assessment tests and requiring remediation for skills-deficient students prior to the TASP mandate. With the more stringent demands from the state, Navarro and other Texas colleges saw the number of remediation courses and the enrollment in those classes increase significantly. The Developmental Studies department became a separate entity within the academic program, addressing the needs of students whose basic academic skills were deficient.

Not only was the student body changing in its makeup, but it was also increasing in numbers. Fall enrollment for 1989 was slightly above 2,600 students. Three years later fall semester enrollment surpassed 3,200 students. Additional and expanded facilities were needed to alleviate the crowded conditions. The Board approved a proposal to renovate and expand the East Wing of the Albritton Administration Building. The addition provided offices for the Student Services Area, including the Financial Aid Office and the Advising and Counseling Center.

On the second floor of the new addition were four new classrooms, additional faculty offices, and expansion of the television studio. An elevator was also installed in the building. Congress had passed the Americans with Disabilities Act, requiring facilities in public buildings be made accessible to those with physical handicaps, including persons who were wheelchair bound. Other modifications, such as the installation of ramps and automatic doors, were made around campus in an effort to eliminate barriers and obstacles for handicapped persons, and an elevator was added to Drane Hall in the spring of 1996, making its second floor more accessible to wheelchair-bound persons.

Another renovation occurred in the Gaston T. Gooch Learning Resource Center (the library). The College was the recipient of a collection of books, legal documents, and other materials, some of which dated

back to the 1860s. The collection had been the original working law library of two Corsicana attorneys, W.D. Ralston, Sr. and J.C. Roe. Upon Mr. Roe's death in 1991, his law partner, Mr. Ralston, and the families of the two men, donated the collection to the College as a gift to the library. A special room was designed in the Library to house the collection, which included over 5,000 items, and it was open both to the legal community and to the general public for research. The Ralston-Roe Law Library was a major asset for students planning to attend law school and for those enrolled in the paralegal program, which was designed to train students to work as legal assistants.

In addition to the Ralston-Roe Law Collection, the Library also housed the Samuels Hobbit Collection. Mr. and Mrs. Irvin Samuels, owners of a men's clothing store in Corsicana, became interested in characters created by author J.R.R. Tolkien in his works The Hobbit, The Fellowship of the Ring, and Return of the King. The couple commissioned Ludwig Kieninger, a native of Germany who moved to Dallas, to carve various characters from the Tolkien books. Over a 14 year span, Kieninger created for the Samuels 40 intricately detailed statues of the Hobbits. In 1995 the Samuels donated the collection to the College. The unique craftsmanship of the statues invariably caught the attention of library patrons, and they have been special favorites of children who visited the Gooch Library.

The College also received an unusual gift from Mr. Charles Pearce. Mr. Pearce had amassed a sizeable collection of handcuffs and other restraints, and in 1987 he donated the collection to the College. He made an additional gift in 1991 of other related devices. A renovated classroom in Drane Hall where criminal justice courses were taught was used to display this unusual collection. Some items dated back to the 18th century and included handcuffs, manacles, leg irons, neck collars, and chain gang shackles.

In the spring of 1996 Mr. Pearce announced yet another gift to the College. He had amassed a series of Civil War documents including handwritten letters from Ulysses S. Grant, Robert E. Lee, Abraham Lincoln, Jefferson Davis, and other notable figures from both the Union and Confederacy. The Pearce Civil War documents collection was housed in the College Library Archives and made available to serious researchers.

Gifts such as the Ralston-Roe Law Documents, the Hobbits, the Restraints collection, and the Civil War documents were administered by the Navarro College Foundation. Originally called the Mid-Tex Educational and Research Corporation, it was re-named the Navarro College Foundation in 1990, and James Schmaus was named executive vice president. The Foundation was instrumental in raising funds used for expanding College operations and was a vital part of the growth of the institution through the 1990s.

Not all the construction and renovation pertaining to the College was taking place in Corsicana. For a number of years, NC had offered courses in various locations throughout the 4-County service area. Navarro taught college credit classes on local high school campuses in communities such as Mexia, Waxahachie, and Ennis. Obviously, such an arrangement limited course offerings primarily to evening classes. In order to expand its course offerings, Navarro established permanent locations at centers in Ellis and Freestone counties.

The Navarro College BiStone Center was located in the heart of the business district in downtown Mexia at the corner of Commerce and Sherman Streets. The building was originally a K. Wolens Department store owned by a Navarro College alumnus, Jon B. Holloway. In 1991 Mr. and Mrs. Holloway donated the building

to the Navarro College Foundation, and subsequently, the facility was renovated to include classrooms and faculty offices. Following a dedication ceremony in August, 1992, with Cindy Hancock as director of the center, Navarro began offering a full slate of both day and evening classes at the site that fall.

College officials saw great potential for growth in Ellis County, especially in the Waxahachie area.

Because of its proximity to the Metroplex area of Dallas and Fort Worth, northern Ellis County was experiencing significant growth. In addition, the Federal Government proposed the construction of a Superconducting Super Collider, (the SSC), a giant "atom smasher," to be located near Waxahachie. Expectations were that the project would enhance the already growing population and economy of the region.

Plans called for Navarro to be involved in some of the educational phases of the SSC project. Consequently, to meet increasing demands for its services, the College acquired a building on John Arden Drive. Situated on a six acre tract, the 37,000 square foot structure had been a woodworking facility owned and operated by J. M. Alderdice III as the Alderdice Woodcraft Company. Upon Mr. Alderdice's death, the Navarro College Foundation purchased the property from his widow in 1991 and renovated the structure to include classrooms and offices. Following a dedication ceremony in August of that year, Navarro began offering courses at the Ellis County Center in the fall semester. Dr. Larry Gilbert serves as center director.

Enrollment increased consistently at



*Ellis Center.*

the two centers. By the fall of 1995, the BiStone Center had approximately 400 students, while about 900 students attended classes at the Ellis County campus with expectations of even greater enrollments. However, the SuperCollider project became embroiled in political conflict, and eventually Congress canceled funding for the facility after a substantial amount of work had already been completed. The project was abruptly discontinued. Consequently, Navarro had to restructure its plans for the Waxahachie Center in regard to course offerings and programs, concentrating on more traditional classes instead of those that would have been especially geared toward the SSC. Enrollments at the Ellis Center continued to increase but not as dramatically as anticipated prior to the cancellation of the SSC.

Meanwhile, as changes were occurring in some areas, some activities remained the same. The Navarro Bulldog athletic program continued to excel on the field of competition. Coach Bob McElroy led the Bulldogs to national prominence. A highly successful 1987 football season was capped off with a 47-38 Bulldog victory over Mesa Community College in the Valley of the Sun Bowl in





*The Bulldogs celebrate their NJCAA national championship title.*

Phoenix, Arizona. The 1988 ended with the bulldogs losing to Kansas Junior College in the Jayhawk Bowl in Coffeyville, Kansas. The 1991 Bulldogs defeated Dixie Community College in the Dixie Bowl in Utah in 1991. But the highlight came when McElroy's 1989 team claimed the NJCAA national championship. In the title game played in Tulsa, Oklahoma, the Bulldogs defeated Ellsworth Community College of Iowa by a score of 41 to 17, a climax to a perfect 11-0 season. Several members of the championship team continued their football careers at major universities and three were eventually drafted by National Football League teams. Although Navarro's football program had consistently ranked among the strongest in the nation, the 1989 team was the only one to claim a national title.

Louis Orr's basketball teams continued to be a competitive force in the Texas Eastern Athletic Conference. Beginning in 1993, the Conference held a championship tournament in Waco to decide its representative to the national tournament held each year in Hutchinson, Kansas. Orr's Bulldogs were strong contenders in the

tournament each year, playing competitive basketball against some of the best 2-year college basketball programs in the nation, barely missing the opportunity to advance to the national tournament on several occasions.

The Bulldog baseball program, led by coach Keith Thomas, became a conference power in the 1990s. A major step forward

came in 1989 with the completion of a new baseball field on campus. Prior to that time, the Bulldogs played their home games at a field located in the Corsicana City Park. It was both inadequate in size and inconvenient in location. Located immediately behind Drane Hall, the new field was named in honor of Perry D. "Peno" Graham. A successful Dallas retailer, Graham had ties to Corsicana. Upon his death, he left a trust fund to be administered by Corsicana's Nations Bank with broad guidelines regarding the use of the monies. As a young man, Graham had played semi-pro baseball, and he remained an avid fan of the sport throughout his life. Consequently, executors of his estate determined that the new NC baseball diamond would be an appropriate recipient of funds from the Graham trust. The baseball team began play at the Graham field in the 1989 season. Many Bulldog baseball players continued their careers at major colleges and several were drafted by professional teams. The Bulldogs claimed the conference championship in 1994, 1995, and 1996.

In 1988 a golf team was added to the

Navarro athletic program. A former Navarro student, Roark Montgomery, was named golf coach, and within a short time, he led the Bulldog linksters to national prominence. There were outstanding individual performers as well as notable team accomplishments. In the first 8 years of its existence, the Bulldog golfers finished among the nation's top ten team 3 times.

In 1993 a women's volleyball team was added to the Navarro athletic program. Tina Vaughn, a former volleyball standout at Baylor University, coached the team. Taking advantage of the growing popularity of the sport among area high schools, Vaughn was able to attract outstanding players from the Navarro College service area, and she consistently fielded highly competitive teams.

Besides her duties with the volleyball team, Vaughn also coached the Bulldog men's and women's tennis teams. NC tennis teams had been a national power throughout the 1970s and into the mid-1980s, at which time the program had been restructured. Under Vaughn's direction and rebuilding, the tennis program began a resurgence, hoping to regain the status it had once enjoyed.

The availability of a full scale athletic program has made Navarro unique among two-year colleges, giving the institution more of a true college atmosphere. Many community colleges are merely commuter schools with few extracurricular activities available for students, but Navarro's sports program and its accompanying support

groups such as the drill team, the cheerleaders, and the band make students feel more like they were really "going to college" rather than merely attending classes.

In addition to the varsity sports, Navarro had an active intramural program, allowing students to compete in a variety of activities. In addition, students living on campus keep physically fit by playing racquetball on the courts in the Special



*The 1996 production of "Oklahoma" played to a sold out crowd.*

Events Center, working out in the weight room in Gibson Hall, and playing "beach volleyball" on courts constructed near the dormitories. There are also less strenuous activities in the Game Room in the Student Union Building.

The Bulldog cheerleaders and the Showstoppers have performed in the National Cheerleaders Association national competition each year, and consistently ranked in the top groups in the country, despite competing against much larger institutions.

Other extracurricular activities also claimed students' time and energy. The Music Department was highly visible both on the campus and in the community. Each fall in conjunction with Homecoming Activities,

the Choral Department under the direction of David Timmerman presents "Fall Capers," an extravaganza featuring a wide variety of music ranging from classical to country-western to barbershop quartet harmony. In the spring, students from the choral, instrumental, dance, and drama departments combine their talents for the spring musical, featuring such well known Broadway productions as "Hello, Dolly," "Fiddler on the Roof," "Oklahoma," "The Unsinkable Molly Brown," and "My Fair Lady." Presented in Dawson Auditorium, the productions have provided an excellent opportunity for students to display their talents, and they play to capacity audiences at each showing.

Navarro instrumentalists and vocalists present concerts each Christmas season. As part of Corsicana's annual community-wide Christmas celebration called the Festival of Lights, the College has displayed a giant Christmas tree and other decorations in front of the Administration Building. The Music Department combines its Christmas concert with the ceremonial tree lighting by providing appropriate music of the season for the occasion.

While many of the traditional courses and activities continued on campus, the emergence of technology in every aspect of the life of the College became more and more apparent. For example, the library moved from the long standing card catalogue to an electronic system, enabling students to examine the holdings by computer. There was also an electronic system allowing for faster methods of doing research for papers required in various classes. A computer lab

in the lower level of the library was available to students, resulting in word processors and printers replacing typewriters to produce term papers. Many faculty members and administrators "surfed the net," exploring the Internet in seeking information and data regarding a wide variety of topics.

In the classroom, VCRs, videos, laser disc players, and compact discs (cd's) replaced film strips and 16 mm projectors to supplement class lectures. Some classes utilized various computerized activities to complement traditional lectures, and many instructors used the computer to generate tests and handout materials and to calculate grades and keep up with various student records. Some students enrolled in telecourses which involved their receiving the course material from watching video tapes and reading assigned texts rather than attending a designated class at a specific time. Plans also called for various other



*Carol Hamann, Pam Anglin and Dr. Richard Miller were among the recipients of the NISOD award for teaching excellence.*

techniques of distance learning via live broadcast of classes. Electronic mail, commonly called E-Mail, replaced much of the paper communications and memos that had been so commonplace around campus for so many years.

Registration also became part of the technology explosion. The long tedious process of selecting courses and choosing class times and instructors became rather simplified as students and advisors compiled a schedule by means of a computer.

Although machines became a vital part of the life of Navarro College, people have remained the heart of the institution. Outstanding instructors had been a longstanding part of the Navarro tradition, and various faculty members earned recognition for the College and for themselves through awards they received. Each year the faculty chose from among its ranks individual instructors to be recognized at the annual NISOD (National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development) Convention. Among Navarro recipients of the NISOD award for teaching excellence were Dr. Richard Miller (Psychology and Sociology); Pam Anglin (Accounting); Carol Hamann (Developmental Reading); Don Mershawn (Computer Science); Amy Patterson (English); Jim Chapman (Government); Lynn Anderson (Developmental Reading); Pat Johnson (Nursing); John Garner (Management); Tom Knox (Management); and Lisa Dillman (Biology).

In 1994 Jim Chapman received national recognition from the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) for a special project he developed using computerized instruction in teaching government. He received his award at the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) national convention in Washington, D.C.

In 1989 Dr. Richard Miller, instructor of psychology and sociology, became Navarro's fifth Piper Professor. Dr. Miller joined the Navarro faculty in 1977, after having taught in various other colleges and universities in California and Texas. He also received national recognition for his sponsorship of Navarro's chapter of Psi Beta, a national honor society for students of psychology.

In 1994 Dr. Tommy Stringer was also named by the Piper Foundation as a Piper Professor. Dr. Stringer joined the Navarro faculty in 1972 as a history instructor. In addition to his work in the classroom and as director of the Division of Humanities and Physical Education, Dr. Stringer researched



*Homer Wasson, Chairman of the Navarro College Board of Trustees.*

and wrote extensively about the history of Navarro County and the city of Corsicana. McAfee Daniel, who was named Piper Professor in 1984, Dr. Miller, and Dr. Stringer gave Navarro three active Piper Professors on its faculty, a unique distinction for any college or university.

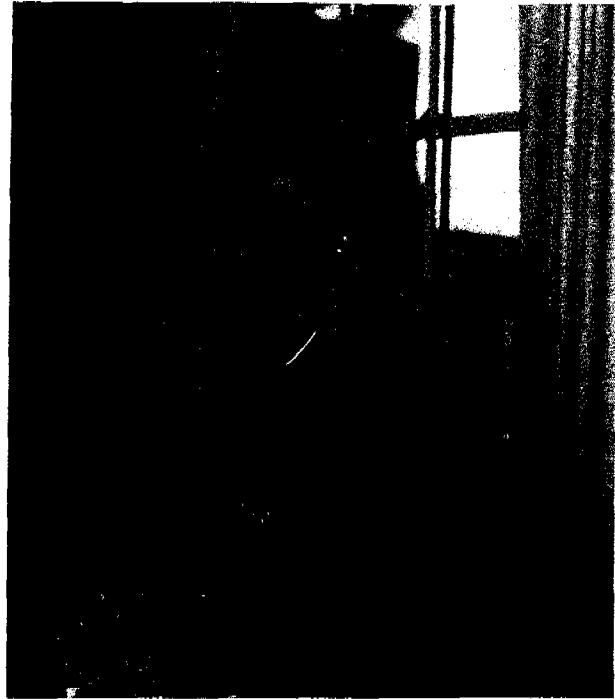
In the spring of 1996, Board of Trustees chairman Homer Wasson received word that Dr. Burson had been selected by the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) to receive the Western Region Chief Executive Officer Award. Each year the ACCT recognizes one exemplary community college president in each of its five regions. The Western Region consists of eleven states and three Canadian provinces. At the awards ceremony held in Phoenix, Arizona, the presenter elaborated on Navarro's accomplishments under Burson's

leadership.

A number of Navarro faculty members were active in state organizations and served on various committees pertaining to their individual disciplines. Many made presentations and read papers at state, regional, and national meetings. Without question, outstanding and dedicated faculty and staff that had been part of the Navarro tradition since the institution's founding continued as the College approached its 50th anniversary.

Navarro's reputation for overall excellence received strong support from the Institutional Self-Study, which was completed in 1995. For a college or university located in the 11 states of the Southern region of the United States to be fully accredited, it must meet specific criteria outlined by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). Navarro had first been accredited by the Southern Association in 1954, and the accreditation has to be reaffirmed every ten years. The process for the reaffirmation of accreditation entails an extensive internal examination of the entire operation of the institution including its financial status, academic programs, facilities, faculty and administrative credentials, and extracurricular activities. The entire self-study process takes approximately two years to complete, and it involves the entire college community, including administrators, faculty members, support staff, and students, serving on various committees to investigate every facet of the college.

After the institution has examined itself in light of the prescribed criteria, a team of educators from other institutions in other states visits the campus, reads the institutional self-study report, and examines documents and conducts interviews with college personnel to see if, in fact, the report accurately represents the institution and its operation. Following their examination, the visiting committee then offers suggestions and/or recommendations to bring the institution into full compliance with the SACS



*Dr. Linda Timmerman, Academic Dean, played a major role in recruiting the John Deere Program to Navarro College.*

criteria. In almost every case, the committee always has suggestions and/or recommendations, but the visiting committee that came to Navarro in the spring of 1995 had no recommendations to offer, a situation that is virtually unheard of in the SACS accreditation process.

Navarro's 1995 Self-Study Reaffirmation Accreditation Report was different from the traditional approach. NC was selected as one of only three two-year colleges in the entire Southern Association region to pilot test a new approach to the accreditation process. The typical self-study looked back at the previous ten years of the institution's operations to see how effectively it complied with the stated criteria. While Navarro did precisely that, the new approach added an extended facet to the process. It called not only for looking backward to the previous decade but also a looking forward to the upcoming ten years with specific goals and objectives which the College planned to accomplish as it moved forward into the



*The John Deere Ag Tech Center*

future. To that end, Navarro compiled a Strategic Focus Plan containing goals and timelines which the institution hoped to accomplish in the next ten years.

Another indicator of Navarro's looking to the future was the implementation of a new program in the fall of 1995. Located in a rural area with agriculture as a major part of the economy, NC had offered various ag courses for a number of years. However, farming, impacted by new technology, was undergoing significant changes, and the College had to adjust its approach to its agriculture curriculum. Dr. Linda Timmerman, dean of academic services, initiated discussions with officials of the John Deere Corporation, a major manufacturer of farm equipment. Under the terms of an arrangement between Navarro and John Deere, the College initiated a program to train technicians for the repair and maintenance of high-tech tractors and other John Deere equipment. The two-year Ag-Tech program, directed by Dr. Steve Thompson, combines academic courses with studies specifically aimed at the machinery and its maintenance and repair. John Deere supplied the College with approximately \$2 million worth of its latest state-of-the-art equipment, allowing students to have "hands-

on" experience in learning to service the sophisticated machines.

The College constructed a new building on the north end of the campus to house the program. Students, who were sponsored by John Deere dealers from all over Texas and Oklahoma, were carefully screened for academic competence and mechanical aptitude before being admitted to the

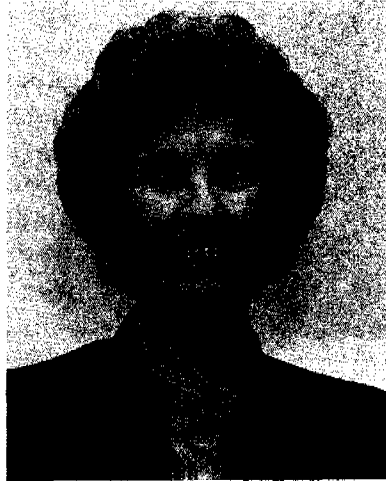
program.

Implemented in the fall of 1995, the program was filled to capacity almost immediately. Plans call for adding an extension of the program to include managing a parts department for John Deere dealers.

Changes in the physical appearance of the campus and among the makeup of the student body and curriculum were accompanied by changes in personnel. Many longtime Navarro personalities retired in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Ralph Vaughn, welding instructor, and art instructor Dr. Margaret Hicks each had completed 25 years of service to NC when they retired in 1990 and 1991 respectively. Registrar Helen Thornton retired in 1994, and her husband Bodie Thornton, who had managed the College Bookstore for 15 years retired the following year. Biology instructor Marvin Burns' 30-year teaching career at Navarro ended with his retirement in 1993. Head football coach Bob McElroy stepped down after the 1993 season, completing a highly successful career which included two bowl wins and a national championship for the Bulldogs. Scott Anderson was named the new head football coach in 1994, but he resigned after only one season amid allegations of recruiting improprieties. Keith

Thomas, a former Bulldog All-American football player who had been the head baseball coach, took over the reins of the football program in 1995. Skip Johnson, Thomas' assistant, assumed head coaching duties for the Bulldog baseball team.

Changes also occurred on the Board of Trustees. Wanda Gillen, who had spent 22 years as an instructor, counselor, and administrator at Navarro, was elected to the Board in 1989, becoming the first woman to serve in that capacity.



*Wanda Gillen, the first woman elected to the Navarro College Board of Trustees.*

Oliver Albritton, whose tenure on the Board began in 1964, was replaced by Paul Curington in 1991. Lynn Cooper completed 12 years of service on the NC Board in 1995, choosing not to run for re-



*James Borkchum, the first African American to be elected to the Navarro College Board of Trustees.*

election. His seat was filled by Dr. James Price, a local dentist who had compiled a distinguished record as a member of the Corsicana Public School Board prior to becoming a Navarro Trustee. The 1995 election was also notable in that Mr. James

Borkchum won a seat on the Board to become the first African-American trustee in Navarro's history.

Navarro's first half century of service concluded with an exciting view toward the future. Shortly after assuming the presidency of Navarro, Dr. Burson proposed the construction of an Arts, Science, and Technology Center (AST). Working through the Navarro College Foundation to secure private funding for the project, Dr. Burson envisioned the new facility serving as an educational magnet for both the College and the 31 surrounding school districts. The center would provide a year-round science program for the more than 40,000 students enrolled in those schools. The centerpiece of the AST would be a 60-foot domed planetarium, making it the largest in the entire state of Texas, and an observatory containing a 14-inch Celestron computer-operated telescope. In addition, the Center would house a museum with displays tracing Navarro County's extensive contributions to the development of the fossil fuel industry.

Plans call for the building and grounds in effect to be a perpetual, living science and arts center with the latest technology. Fiber optics would be used to link the planetarium and observatory with classrooms on campus and with schools throughout the immediate area. Movies and star and laser shows would be featured along with traveling arts and science displays.

As word of the planned facility spread, it attracted attention from unexpected sources. Mr. Frank Hughes, director of training for the National Aeronautical and Space Administration (NASA) spoke at groundbreaking ceremonies for the new facility. Even before actual construction of the building began in March of 1996, space capsules, lunar modules, and equipment used in conjunction with the "Challenger" mission were on display adjacent to the building site. Excitement was in the air as the structure began taking shape in the spring of 1996, with the community and the College eagerly



*The COOK CENTER - under construction - Opening April 1996*

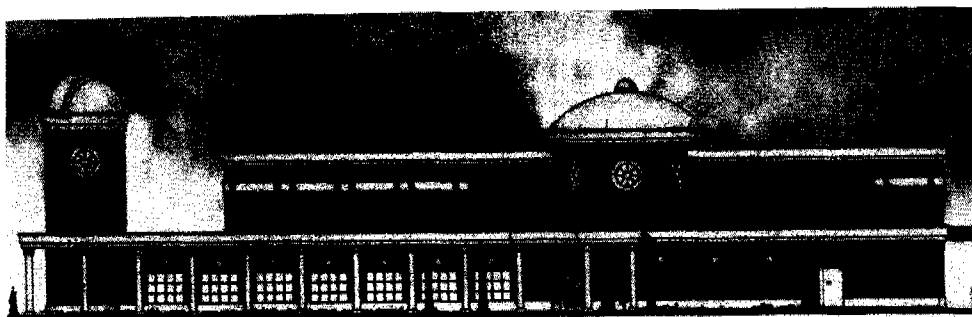
intense level of commitment and dedication to the struggling institution, determined to see it succeed. Their efforts were rewarded as the College grew in size and scope.

The Arts Science and Technology Center affords current and future students with the same types of opportunities but with more sophisticated

anticipated its opening scheduled for the spring of 1997. The new facility will be called The COOK CENTER in honor of the Leland and Byron Cook families, major donors to the project.

technology. The goals of the current students are essentially the same as those of the first students who enrolled at Navarro.

The opening of the Cook Center was a fitting way to close the first fifty years of Navarro's history and to mark the beginning of its entry into the 21st century. The College has come a long way since its beginning at the Air Activities of



*The architect's rendition of The COOK CENTER upon completion.*

Texas facility in September of 1946. The first student body had consisted primarily of GIs returning from the horrors of war, hoping to build a better life and prepare themselves for a changing world. Limited resources brought challenges for the students, faculty, and administration, but they demonstrated an

They too want a better life for themselves, and they are preparing themselves for a rapidly changing world. For fifty years Navarro has been a vital contributor in helping people realize their dreams.



## *Epilogue*

A reoccurring theme that runs throughout the history of Navarro College is the turning of dreams into realities. Two decades before the College came into existence, people such as A.A. Allison envisioned such an institution for the citizens of Navarro County. At the end of World War II when the Air Activities of Texas site became available for a campus and servicemen returning home with GI educational benefits in hand providing the nucleus for a student body, men like W.H. Norwood and Ralph Brown had the foresight to act and launch the College. Educators such as Margaret Pannill, Lucille Boyd, Ray Waller, and Gaston Gooch left secure positions in public schools to cast their lots with the newly emerging junior college. Because of inadequate facilities and limited resources, theirs was a struggle in the early years of the College. They too, however, were able to see what the future held for the emerging institution.

When it became apparent that the Air Activities facilities could serve as only a temporary campus, men such as O.L. Albritton sought the best site available for the location of a permanent campus. Dr. Ben Jones and the Board of Trustees saw opportunities in the 1960s to expand the campus and construct new buildings to meet the needs of a growing and changing student population. As the junior college philosophy began to give way to the broader concepts

of the community college, the Board secured the services of Dr. Kenneth Walker to lead the institution in new directions. Dr. Gerald Burson looked to the past to see the enormous contributions that Navarro County had made to the petroleum industry, and he looked ahead to see the role that Navarro College could play in education students for the future. Both the past and the future will be addressed in the Arts, Science and Technology Center. That ability to envision, anticipate, and act on opportunities has been a major factor in the growth and development of Navarro College throughout its history.

Another secret of Navarro's success has been its people. As Board member Oliver Albritton related, the philosophy of the Trustees during his tenure was to secure the very best people to fill vacant positions at any and every level, and that has been true since the beginning of the College. Consequently, the College has employed people who were competent and well trained but were also quality human beings of character and integrity dedicated to the concepts of quality and excellence. During the history of the College, the people who have served as members of the Board of Trustees have been successful in the business and professional world and have given tirelessly of their time, energy, and talents to lead the College forward. A commitment to excellence was in the minds of those who first explored the possibility of

a "first class junior college" for Navarro County, and that has continued to be the fundamental goal of the institution. Navarro has been blessed with talented and dedicated people throughout its history.

There is no way to measure the influence that Navarro College has exerted or to count the number of lives it has touched since it first opened its doors in 1946. It has been a major contributor to the local economy, producing one of the largest payrolls in the entire area. The College has enriched the community culturally with musical presentations, dramatic productions, artistic displays, and athletic events. Navarro has met a wide range of educational needs for a diverse student population. Today there are many successful business and professional people across Texas, throughout the United States, and even in far corners of the world who began their college studies at Navarro. For many of them, college would not have been possible had there not been a campus in the immediate area where they lived.

Mr. Allison expressed precisely that idea in 1928 when he challenged the citizens of Navarro County to support a local junior college. Contending that cost prohibited many young people from pursuing a college education, a high quality institution within driving distance of home would enable them to continue their studies following graduation from high school. A junior college would assist them in making the transition from high school to college in a more "user friendly" environment rather than on a huge university campus. Literally thousands of students have proven Mr. Allison correct.

Oliver Albritton related a story of a young man named "Jack" that provides a classic illustration of what Allison and others who were instrumental in founding the College envisioned when they started Navarro. Jack's family lived in a rural isolated section of Navarro County with only a dirt road connecting their house to the main highway. When the spring rains turned

that road to a quagmire, it was impossible for Jack to get to school. In addition, his father often needed Jack at home to work on the farm. Since neither of his parents were educated themselves, they saw little value in his going to school; therefore, they discouraged him from seriously thinking about continuing his education after high school. Despite all those barriers, Jack did well in high school, compiling an above-average academic record.

"My dad (O.L. Albritton) knew the family and was interested in Jack, as he was in all young people," Oliver Albritton recalled. When Mr. Albritton asked Jack if he planned to go to college, the young man replied that college was out of the question because of the family's limited financial resources. Upon consulting with some of Jack's high school teachers to determine if he were "college material," Mr. Albritton learned that Jack had made a favorable impression on his teachers, and they were convinced he would excel in college. Consequently, Mr. Albritton arranged a job for Jack driving the bus transporting students from his community to the NJC campus. He also helped Jack secure additional financial assistance to help him take care of other expenses.

Oliver remembered that he and his father went by Jack's house the first day he was to drive the bus to campus and begin his college career. With tears literally streaming down his face, he tried unsuccessfully to verbalize his appreciation to Mr. Albritton for his help in providing him with the opportunity to go to college. He vowed he would take full advantage of the opportunity, and he did precisely that. After completing two years at Navarro, where he compiled a remarkable academic record, Jack then transferred to a four-year institution, earned a degree, and became highly successful in his chosen profession.

Jack's story could be repeated by hundreds of students for whom Navarro was their only hope of obtaining a college education. With the availability of a low-cost,

high quality, easy access institution staffed by caring, well-trained instructors, what had seemed to be an impossibility became a reality. Albritton added that once they completed their two years at Navarro, students received the psychological boost of realizing they were "half way there" in completing a baccalaureate degree. This often gave them the incentive to continue their studies. In addition, they had saved enough money by staying at home for their first two years so they could more easily afford to go away for the final two years. A.A. Allison had discussed those very points in the 1928 article which first explored the possibility of establishing a junior college for Navarro County. His projection proved to be absolutely correct when he said that a first class junior college would add immeasurably to the quality of life for the people of the area.

But Navarro's impact has far exceeded the dreams of its founders. In the 1996 spring graduation ceremonies, more than 400 students received degrees or certificates in such fields as aviation, criminal justice, computer science, radio/television, as well as traditional academic areas such as English, history, mathematics, and pre-professional programs. They ranged in age from traditional 20-year-olds to those well past middle age with grandchildren in the audience. There were students from 18 different nations represented in the class of 1996, quite a contrast to the first student body that attended classes in 1946.

As Navarro College begins its second half century of service, it can look back with pride on its record of accomplishment. Just as it has from its very beginning, Navarro College continues to be committed to the concept of turning dreams into realities.

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## Personal Interviews

Albritton, Mrs. O.L. Mrs. Albritton was the widow of O.L. Albritton, first chairman of the Board of Trustees of Navarro Junior College.

Albritton, O.L., Jr. Mr. Albritton is the son of O. L. Albritton, was a member of the Navarro Board of Trustees himself for 32 years.

Armistead, R.A. As principal of Corsicana School, Mr. Armistead participated in the organizational meetings of Navarro Junior College. He also taught at the College from 1969-1974.

Barnaby, Charles. Mr. Barnaby was a civilian employee of the Air Activities of Texas.

Berry, Margaret. Miss Berry was a member of the original faculty at Navarro Junior College.

Boyd, Lucille. Mrs. Boyd was a member of the original faculty at Navarro Junior College.

Brown, Ralph. Mr. Brown was a member of the original Board of Trustees of Navarro Junior College.

Brown, W.E. Mr. Brown was the first graduate of Navarro Junior College.

Burkhart, E. E. Mr. Burkhart, a building contractor, directed move to the current campus.

Burnett, Ann. Granddaughter of A.A. Allison, who first proposed the creation of Navarro Junior College.

Burson, Gerald. Dr. Burson is the fourth president of Navarro College.

Chapman, James A. Mr. Chapman is a longtime Navarro College faculty member.

Clark, Kenneth. Mr. Clark was the first athletic coach at Navarro Junior College.

Corley, John. Mr. Corley was a member of the Navarro Junior College Board of Trustees.

Cumby, Glen. Mr. Cumby was an employee of Air Activities of Texas and later was director of the Corsicana Municipal Airport.

Daniel, McAfee. Mr. Daniel was a member of the original student body of Navarro Junior College and is a longtime faculty member.

Dawson, Leighton. Mr. Dawson was a member of the Navarro College Board of Trustees for 42 years.

Edgar, James. Mr. Edgar was a member of the original faculty of Navarro College.

Estes, Lowell. Mr. Estes was a member of the Navarro Junior College Board of Trustees.

Fry, Silas. Mr. Fry was an enlisted officer at the Air Activities of Texas.

Gaffney, George. Mr. Gaffney was a cadet at the Air Activities of Texas.

Gaines, Alon. Mr. Gaines was a member of the first student body at Navarro Junior College.

Gilbert, Mable Waller. Mrs. Gilbert is the widow of Ray Waller, first president of Navarro Junior College.

Gillen, Wanda. Mrs. Gillen was an instructor and counselor at Navarro Junior College and is currently a member of the Board of Trustees.

Hutchinson, Wendell. Mr. Hutchinson was a cadet at the Air Activities of Texas.

Johnson, Thelma Butcher. Mrs. Johnson was one of the first African-American students to attend Navarro Junior College.

Johnston, Geraldine. Mrs. Johnston was a longtime faculty member at Navarro College.

Jones, Ben W. Dr. Jones served as the second president of Navarro Junior College.

Justiss, Verda Gooch. Mrs. Justiss is the widow of Gaston T. Gooch, longtime Navarro Junior College administrator, and she served as College Business Manager.

Kindle, Odis. Mr. Kindle was the head librarian of Navarro College for 31 years.

McClung, Gerald. Mr. McClung was a civilian flight instructor at the Air Activities of Texas.

McFerran, Billie Love Robinson. Mrs. McFerran was a civilian employee of the Air Activities of Texas.

Miller, Richard. Dr. Miller is a longtime faculty member at Navarro College.

Morris, Jimmy. Mr. Morris, a Corsicana attorney, was in the original student body at Navarro Junior College.

Pannill, Margaret. Miss Pannill was a member of the original faculty at Navarro Junior College.

Patterson, Curtis. Mr. Patterson was a member of the original Board of Trustees at Navarro Junior College.

Ray, Ileen. Mrs. Ray is a longtime instructor and counselor at Navarro College.

Ray, Marvin. Mr. Ray is a longtime instructor at Navarro College.

Reed, Lary. Dr. Reed is currently Executive Vice President of Navarro College.

Reed, Tillman. Mr. Reed was a civilian flight instructor at the Air Activities of Texas.

Schmaus, James. Mr. Schmaus is the Executive Vice President of the Navarro College Foundation.

Stephens, Jody. Mrs. Stephens is the widow of Herschel Stephens, instructor and tennis coach at Navarro College.

Strickland, C. G. Dr. Strickland was the first academic dean of Navarro Junior College.

Taylor, Euneva Burleson. Mrs. Taylor was employed for 33 years at Navarro College.

Timmerman, Linda. Dr. Timmerman is the current academic dean of Navarro College.

Walker, Kenneth. Dr. Walker was the third president of Navarro College.

Watson, J.C. Mr. Watson was the County School Superintendent at the time Navarro Junior College was established.

Whitfill, A. L. Mr. Whitfill was a member of the original of Navarro Junior College.

Winn, Shirley. Mrs. Winn was one of the first African-American students to attend Navarro Junior College.

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