

CAMERON TODAY

NEWS FROM OKLAHOMA'S INTERACTIVE UNIVERSITY

Spring

2002

President to leave after 23 years of service to Cameron

Davis announces retirement plans

BY KEITH MITCHELL
CU MEDIA & PUBLIC RELATIONS

Dr. Don C. Davis has announced his plans for retirement as president of Cameron University on, a move that will end an association with the Lawton higher education institution that dates back to the 1950s.

On Jan. 29, Davis informed a crowd of more than 350 CU faculty and staff that he would officially announce his retirement to the university's board of regents at its monthly meeting that afternoon in Norman.

His retirement will become effective June 30, 2003 – the day before his 23rd anniversary as Cameron's president.

"When planning these remarks, I thought long and hard



Davis

about the best way to make this announcement and thank each of you for your commitment and contributions to Cameron and our students, and to express my further gratitude for the support and encouragement you have given me personally as we have worked together the past 22 years," Davis told faculty.

"It has been an exciting and enriching experience for me, and afforded opportunities to be both proud to be your leader and, at the same time, humbled by my association with some of the most incredibly

intelligent and caring people on earth. Without the mutual respect and support which have existed among faculty, staff, administrators and students, far less would have been

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A tale of Olympic proportions

BY LESLIE BLAIR
CU MEDIA & PUBLIC RELATIONS

Three individuals with ties to Cameron University played important roles in the 2002 Winter Olympic Games.

Glen (Skip) Hyde III, an alumnus (Class of '98) and current graduate student, and freshman biology major Tara Spencer were selected as torch bearers to carry the Olympic flame as it made its way to Salt Lake City for the Games.

Meanwhile, CU career services director Theres Stiefer (Classes of '87 and '90) traveled to Salt Lake City to serve as a volunteer. She and her sister, Shannon Cox, served as site coordinators for a Salvation Army canteen.

Carrying the Flame

For Hyde, carrying the Olympic Torch was a great honor, but the reason he was carrying torch means even more.

Hyde suffered from depression for several years, and even tried to end his life. But one day, he decided he needed help. "I checked into Taliaferro, got my medication straightened out, and was then able to enroll at Cameron and

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Davis announces retirement --

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accomplished during our time together. I sincerely thank you for your help and support."

Regents have already appointed a 15-person search committee that began reviewing applications in May. A selection by regents is expected to be finalized in the near future.

"I will have an off-campus assignment for the Spring 2003 semester," Davis said. "I plan to end my service as president on or before the end of the Falls 2002 semester, at which point I have requested to be designated as president emeritus."

With 22 years of current service, Davis has been president longer than any of the 17 other men who served in that office since Cameron's creation as an agricultural high school in 1908. Only Langston University president Dr. Ernest Holloway, who assumed office in 1978, has a longer tenure among sitting Oklahoma college and university presidents.

During Davis' administration, Cameron was transformed from

a struggling regional college to one of the state's premiere educational institutions. It has become an integral part of Southwest Oklahoma's culture and economy, and its use of cutting-edge technology has placed it on the forefront of innovative education.

Davis' interest in Cameron extends to the late 1950s when his father, Clarence L. Davis, served as its 13th

president. He became a student there in 1961 and served as president of the freshman class. Davis went on to earn degrees in journalism and law from the University of Oklahoma before going into private legal practice in 1969.

When Davis arrived as president in 1980, Cameron was \$6 million in debt, unable to meet payments on revenue bonds and a substantial portion of the campus was leased to outside agencies just to satisfy principal and interest requirements. The new president - who served in the Oklahoma House of Representatives from 1970-80 - drew upon his political experience to convince legislators to invest funds from one of the state's surplus accounts to satisfy the bonded indebtedness of Cameron and two other regional universities, putting them all on sound financial ground.

In 1986, Cameron expanded its educational offerings with the addition of a graduate degree program - the first Southwest Oklahoma higher education institution to do so.

In 1992, Davis set the wheels in motion to transfer Cameron's governance from the A&M Board of Regents to the University of Oklahoma Board of Regents. The ensuing partnership with OU has enabled Cameron to bring a bachelor's degree in nursing and a master's degree in communications to Southwest Oklahoma. Likewise, it has expanded its Master of Business Administration program to seven other

sites in the state, as well as to eight locations in Europe. By the end of 2003, the business program will expand to the East and West Coasts and across the Pacific Ocean to Japan.

During his years as president, Cameron has established a \$14 million endowment program, accepted the gift of a \$6 million supercomputer from Wal-Mart and the NCR Corporation, expanded its library resources, constructed a state-of-the-art Sciences Complex, become involved in research efforts benefitting Southwest Oklahoma's economy and utilized rapidly developing computer technology to offer college courses over the Internet.

His dedication to Cameron has earned him Distinguished Alumni and Distinguished Faculty awards, and CU's chapter of the Phi Kappa Phi honor society named a special award of excellence in his honor in 1993. ■



Davis' career as a leader began early. He was elected president of the freshmen class at Cameron State Agricultural College in 1961.



President Davis in 1982.



The Davises arrive at Cameron in 1980: Don and Beverly with sons Casey and Josh.