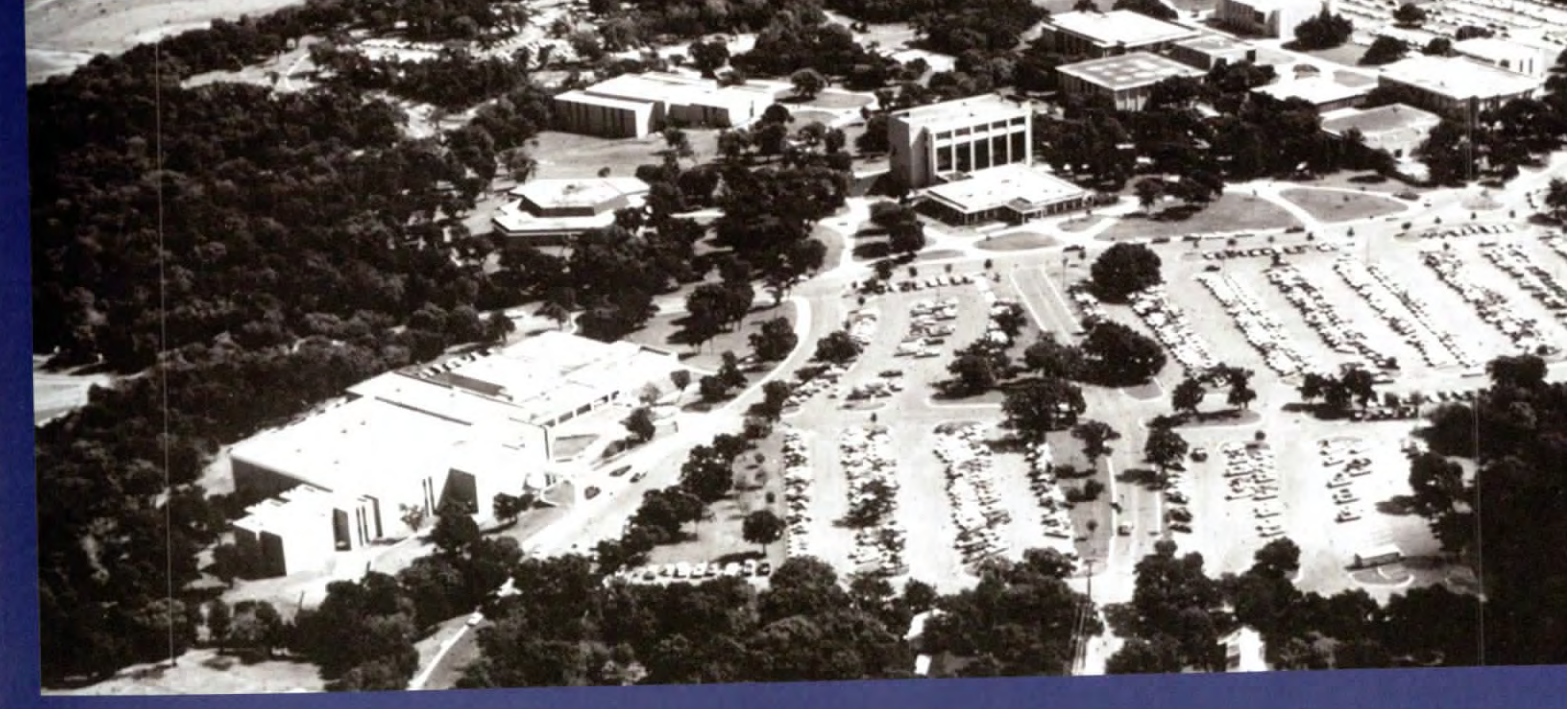




McLennan Community College
Celebrating 40 Years of Serving Central Texas

written by Sandra Sánchez
designed by Clif-Ann Paris



McLennan Community College

*Celebrating 40 Years
of Serving Central Texas*



1966-67 to 2006-07

written by Sandra Sánchez

designed by Clif-Ann Paris

Our Mission

McLennan Community College affirms its mission to provide a comprehensive range of educational programs and services for students and a dynamic, multicultural community. The College is committed to excellence in all of its educational programs. McLennan Community College endorses the concept of open admissions and provides support services designed to assist students to succeed in their educational goals.

To accomplish its mission, McLennan Community College will periodically assess community needs and provide:

1. Freshman and sophomore courses in arts and sciences which may apply to an associate or a baccalaureate degree;
2. Vocational and technical programs leading to an associate degree or a certificate which prepare students for employment or job advancement;
3. A program of continuing education that provides courses, activities, and services, both on campus and within the community, for personal growth, skill development, and career enhancement;
4. Opportunities for economic growth, cultural enrichment, and the development of good citizenship through courses, activities, and services.

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To my children
Alec, Armand
& Aviana
and to
my inspiration
Carlos
- S.S.

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40th McLennan Community College Anniversary

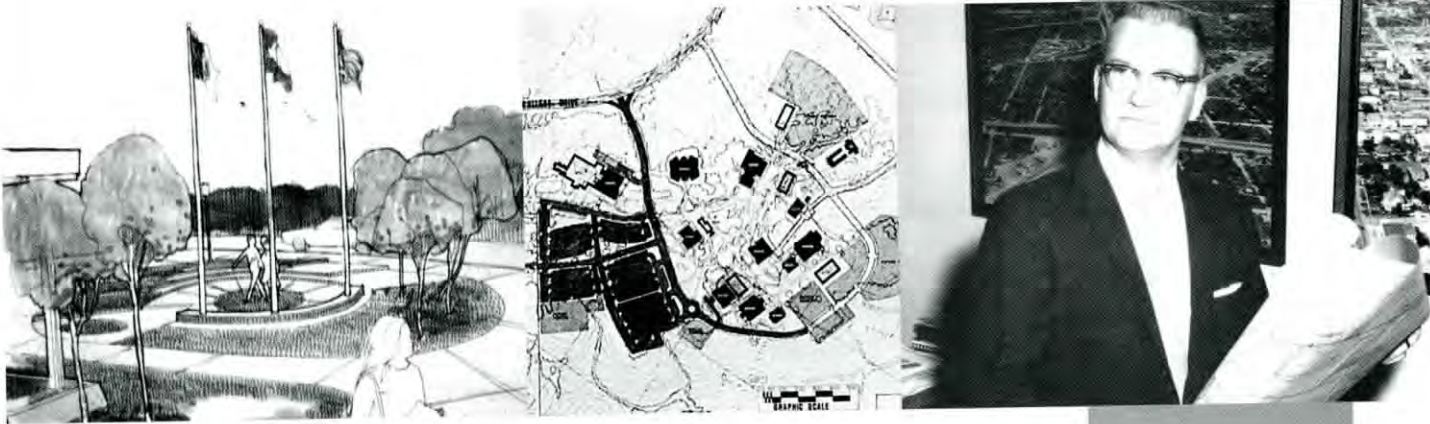
McLennan Community College

Celebrating 40 Years of Serving Central Texas

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the Vision



During the height of the Civil Rights movement in the fall of 1966, at a time when President Lyndon Johnson supported higher education and junior colleges were opening across the United States, McLennan Community College opened in Waco, Texas, with an open-door admissions policy and a strong commitment to serving the community, which it still upholds 40 years later.

The creation of McLennan Community College could not have happened without the sheer determination and effort of a few visionaries who steadfastly believed in providing affordable higher education. Their feat forever changed Central Texas by providing quality higher education to populations that previously had limited

access. It also provided a college that has been dedicated to meeting the needs of the ever-growing community for four decades. When the idea first surfaced in the early 1960s, many citizens questioned the need for another college in Waco, and some were openly opposed to paying more taxes to fund a junior college. However, this opposition did not deter the early McLennan Community College founders. They mounted an aggressive campaign that eventually persuaded taxpayers to open a two-year college that would serve all students from all races for many generations to come. The concept of a community college was ahead of its time; McLennan Community College became the first two-year college in Texas to incorporate the word “community” in its name.

*Left to Right:
Early sketches of the
MCC campus plan*

*Paul Marable Jr.,
Waco Chamber of
Commerce general
manager in the 1960s*

McLennan Community College became the first junior college in Texas to incorporate the word “community” in its name.

access. It also provided a college that has been dedicated to meeting the needs of the ever-growing community for four decades.

When these citizens were lobbying taxpayers to approve a two-year college in McLennan County, Waco was already home to three institutions: Baylor University, the largest Baptist university in the world; Paul Quinn College, a predominantly black student body; and the newly

“We have left the word community in our college’s name intentionally because we feel it constantly reminds people and ourselves that we are all about serving the community,” said current MCC President Dr. Dennis Michaelis.

Serving the entire community has been the ongoing mission of McLennan Community College since its first day of classes on September 19, 1966, held in temporary quarters in the crude-



Dr. Abner McCall, former Baylor University president



Harry Provence, former Waco newspaper editor

ly renovated barracks of the former James Connally Air Force Base. Now on a picturesque sprawling 200-acre main campus in northwest Waco, McLennan Community College still puts its students and the community collectively first.

Through the addition of online and continuing education classes, vocational and technical courses and corporate training for local businesses, McLennan Community College continues to meet societal demands of today's busy students. The college partners with four-year institutions to offer bachelor's and master's degrees, post-master's certification, and doctoral degrees through the University Center located on the main campus. These partnerships add additional avenues for students to achieve their degrees from state-supported institutions without having to leave the area. What began with a handful of determined citizens has blossomed into an inspiring and dynamic academic institution that has become a vital part of the community and Central Texas.

Founding Fathers

Although it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine who originated the idea, what matters most is that the idea surfaced publicly one evening in March 1964 to resounding approval.

The education committee of the Waco Chamber of Commerce sponsored a meeting to query taxpayers and business leaders about interest or need for affordable higher education other than what the established institutions already offered.

Dick Moore Will Address Rotary Club

Dick Moore, assistant to the vice president of Rocketdyne, McGregor, will address Waco Rotary Club today noon on "Junior College Education."

Junior College Group Told Of New Education Demands

in West; Dr. L. H. McCloney, president of Paul Quinn College; Dick Moore and John Tormey, both of Rocketdyne in McGregor; and Claude Segrest, Waco

They publicized the meeting in the local newspaper, the *Waco News-Tribune*.

Paul Marable Jr., the general manager of the Waco Chamber of Commerce, said he had "float-ed the idea" about opening a two-year college in Waco business circles, but people had been hesi-tant. He speculated that skeptics viewed Baylor University as the primary seat for higher learning. Nevertheless, he continued to pursue the idea.

Careful not to offend Baylor officials, Marable said he approached Baylor's legendary president, Abner McCall, about one year before the education committee hosted that first meet-ing in March 1964. Marable, a World War II sol-dier and prisoner of war, was not easily dissuaded. He later admitted that he didn't know how McCall would react to the idea when he met with him; however, he was pleasantly surprised. "When I came here as manager for the Chamber in 1961, there were two things that I spotted that Waco needed badly; one was a junior college," Marable recalled, "and every time I mentioned that, my board would say 'Don't say that! Baylor's the greatest thing.'

"When you're new, you can afford to make a lot of errors and be forgiven, and so I went out and visited with Abner McCall at Baylor. I men-tioned, 'What do you think about having a junior college?' And he said 'It'd be one of the best things we could have.' He said that they have more applications than they can handle and many of those probably are not ... [ready] to be college students. 'If we had a junior college, they could live at home and save that expense and not have to pay [Baylor] tuition — which is much higher than it would be at a junior college. And they can find out if they are college material. [If they are,] they can do two years there and trans-fer whatever credits we can allow. It'd be a fine thing to have.' So we went from there."

Later, McCall became a key public and polit-ical supporter for the formation of a community college in Waco. On Oct. 31, 1965, just days before the historic Nov. 2 bond election that cre-ated McLennan Community College, McCall said, "I believe that it will supplement Baylor, Paul Quinn, and the James Connally Technical Institute and thereby give McLennan County and Central Texas a complete program of educa-tion beyond high school. In my opinion, the pro-posed junior college program of vocation is sorely

needed in our county," according to the *Waco Tribune-Herald* in an Oct. 31, 1965, article.

After his initial meeting with McCall in 1963, Marable assigned the project to the Chamber's education committee. The committee made little progress that next year, however, because of the Chamber's involvement in other community projects. Those projects included finding ways to help revive downtown Waco, still struggling to recover from a debilitating tornado 10 years earlier.

On May 11, 1953, downtown Waco had been ravaged by one of the most destructive tor-nados in United States history. The tornado struck without warning and ripped through the center of the city, killing 114 people and serious-ly injuring another 145. Nearly 200 business buildings were completely destroyed, and 400 additional buildings were so badly damaged that they had to be leveled.

After the tornado, many shoppers began to frequent suburban shopping centers, a phenom-enon that contributed to the decline of the city's downtown business district. In addition, the so-called "white flight" of Anglo residents moving to the southwestern suburbs to avoid desegregation of public schools added to the stalled demise of Waco's downtown. The redistribution of the city and county populations dramatically affected the downtown business district. In 1950, there were 84,300 people living in the city; 130,194 lived in McLennan County. That increased by 15 percent in 1960 to 97,808 in the city and 150,091 in the county. By 1970, the population in the city decreased to 95,326 while the county grew to 156,200, according to statistics from the *Texas Almanacs*. What had once been the sixth largest industrial center in Texas seemed to be in a spiral-ing economic free fall without the revitalization of downtown Waco.

On March 31, 1963, an article in the *Waco Tribune-Herald* detailed the findings from a study conducted by Walstein Smith Jr. on the deterio-rating condition of downtown Waco. The study concluded that opening a junior college could help revitalize the downtown business district. A Baylor business professor and former Waco city councilman, Smith also suggested that creating a junior college in urban Waco would help redev-elopment and attract businesses back to downtown.

The article on Smith's study, one of the first

articles touting the attributes of a junior college in Waco, stirred long simmering public sentiment and caught the attention of many in Waco. During the next few months, the local newspapers pub-lished several stories detailing the suc-cesses of junior colleges throughout Texas. Stories also spotlighted the eco-nomic downturn that Waco was suffering and projected more financial loss with the recent closing of the downtown Montgomery Ward. These articles prompted several business leaders to discuss the possibi-lities for the vacated Montgomery Ward building; some projected the site as an excellent location to open a junior college.



Retail businesses in downtown Waco were devastated by the 1953 tornado.

Junior College Approved Given Firm Guidelines
Jr. College To Be Discussed for Waco

Steps Toward Obtaining Junior College Outlined

Wake of Our First Tornado

Pictured Left to Right:
O.K. Armstrong,
former Waco city
manager;
B.F. Musgrave of the
Texas Education
Agency; and
N. Lee Dunham of
Baylor University

Community College and its first Board of Trustees. "He was Mr. Waco. He was the guy that if you wanted help on anything, you went to Harry. He was an interesting guy," said Richard K. Moore, who was elected to the first MCC Board of Trustees in 1965. "There wasn't much happening in Waco that Harry wasn't behind."

Throughout 1964, the idea of a junior college seemed to be getting a lot of talk around town and among civic groups. "It got a lot of talk because there were a few of us who made sure it did," said Ken Smith, former manager of public relations for the Waco Chamber of Commerce and a former on-air television broadcaster for KWTX in Waco. "Not everyone was just gung-ho for a community college. There were

concerns that Baylor would not want a community college," he said.

But the timing was right. Nationally, many communities were creating junior colleges because the federal government made funds available for higher education through the Higher Education Facilities Act of 1963. The act, signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson on Dec. 16, 1963, provided a significant amount of federal money designated for construction and renovation costs for undergraduate and graduate institutions, junior colleges, community colleges, and technical institutions.

Taking a cue from the national trend, the Waco Chamber began to pursue more aggressively the idea of opening a junior college. The chamber assigned Baylor professor Billy Hinton to head a subcommittee to probe the idea. Under Hinton's leadership, the first public

meeting was held on March 26, 1964, to discuss creating a two-year college in Waco.

About a dozen people showed up for the first meeting held in the administration building of the Waco Independent School District. B.F. Musgraves of the Texas Education Agency in Austin spoke to the group and outlined what would be required to start a junior college. Among those attending were Waco ISD Superintendent Avery Downing, Editor Provence, Chamber General Manager Marable, Waco City Manager O.K. Armstrong, and N. Lee Dunham, Director of the Evening Division at Baylor University and a member of the Chamber's Education Committee, according to a thesis written in 1968 by Baylor University graduate student Michael Allen Grant, *A Study of Community Leadership: The Issue Analysis Approach*. This thesis is part of the Texas Collection at Baylor and one of the only written sources to be found that documented this early meeting.

Also present was little-known Henry V. Griffin, a local federal parole officer, whose long affiliation with McLennan Community College began that evening. Griffin later recalled that, when he read the ad for the meeting, he knew it was a cause that he would see to the end. As a probation and parole officer responsible for 50 Texas counties, Griffin said he saw many convicted criminals who he believed could have stayed out of trouble if they had been properly educated. He was convinced that a community college could help educate those with limited resources and open doors for them to get better jobs. This education could eventually lead to better lifestyles and away from crime.

His dreams for such a school often came as he stood on the federal courthouse steps in downtown Waco. Across from the majestic domed courthouse was an abandoned building, once called the Hill building, which at one time had housed the Veterans Affairs Administration offices. Griffin said he would gaze at the building and wish that it could be utilized for higher education or as a technical school.

"I'd stand there and look at that building from the steps of the courthouse, and I'd say, 'Oh man, I wish I could get in there ... and put a trade school or something where I could teach these people ... to help them make a living.' Of course

when I read that blurb in the paper about anybody interested in helping to establish a community college, I said 'Eureka!'" Griffin recalled. "That's how I got started." The Hill building was never discussed at that first meeting on March 26, 1964, but it became evident with the few people assembled that there was a desire for some type of additional higher education.

A second meeting was called a few weeks later, and this time approximately two dozen people showed up. Excited chatter permeated the room as it became clear that many saw the need to start a community college, but few knew how to get started. They decided to informally poll their friends and neighbors before the next meeting to see if others shared in their sentiment. At the third meeting, a couple of weeks later, many in attendance reported their informal and unscientific polls, which showed that many people held a keen interest in opening a junior college in Waco. They agreed to contact Musgraves from the Texas Education Agency and ask him to return to Waco to advise them on how to proceed.

By the fourth meeting, held on June 30, 1964, the attendance numbered from 35 to 150 people, depending on who retold the story. Holding the meeting at Kayser Auditorium in Baylor University's Hankamer School of Business was a strategy to imply that Baylor had given its blessing to the idea of opening a community college in Waco, Marable later admitted. Musgraves and C.C. Colvert, a professor of junior college administration from The University of Texas at Austin, addressed the crowd for several hours explaining the procedure for beginning a college, which included the formation of a steering committee. Musgraves also told them about the litany of federal funds available under the Higher Education Facilities Act — \$2.7 million earmarked per year for Texas — and he speculated that a junior college in Waco would be eligible for federal assistance, according to a *Waco News-Tribune* article from July 1, 1964.

Recalling the evening, Griffin said, "Keep in mind that none of us had a clue as to how to go about doing it." Questions abounded, and the hours ticked away. Griffin was getting impatient with what seemed to be all talk and little action. A self-described workaholic who turned 83 in September 2006, Griffin finally stood up around

10 p.m. and expressed his frustration. "I don't know how to keep my mouth shut sometimes, and so I said 'Well, if we're going to do anything, let's do it. Otherwise, I'm going home,'" Griffin recalled. Mariam Smith, a former public school teacher, immediately stood up and made a motion that went down in McLennan Community College history. "She said, 'I nominate Henry Griffin to be chairman of the steering committee,'" Griffin recalled. "And I was nominated by acclamation and approved, and it went from there."

It wasn't immediately apparent, but 40 years later, people involved with the college recognized that one of its most devoted founding fathers stepped forward that night. After 20 months as chairman of the McLennan County Steering Committee for a Junior College, Griffin went on to be the first president of the MCC Board of Trustees following the 1965 bond election that taxpayers approved to start the college. He left an indelible impression on the college and helped structure its philosophy and grass roots in the early days as well as kept a reign on spending to the delight and appreciation of taxpayers.

On that warm June evening at Hankamer, Griffin did not know that another man had been "earmarked" to head the junior college steering committee. Marable said another gentleman had been "hand-picked" to be chairman and had been waiting in the crowd when Griffin stood up and accepted the nomination. The name of that man is long lost, but Marable did recall that it was not Griffin.

Marable had been in the back of the room. Before he and other Chamber officials even realized what was happening, Griffin was elected and standing up and smiling, he said. In fact, Marable later said he never heard the teacher nominate Griffin. He only heard Griffin's acceptance. "We didn't know Henry Griffin from anybody," he said later. "But he sure has done a great job for MCC." Griffin later remarked of his long involvement with McLennan Community College that began that evening: "I either got all the credit or all the blame for it."



Murray Watson Jr., former Texas state senator



Henry V. Griffin became chairman of the McLennan County Steering Committee for a Junior College in 1964. In 1965 he became the first chairman of the MCC Board of Trustees.



Junior College Panel Will Study Possibilities

By JANE WILLIAMSON
Waco News-Tribune Staff

The Waco Chamber of Commerce Education Committee was asked Thursday to take the reins of a steering committee to organize a junior college in McLennan County.

George Nokes is chairman of the CC committee and Dr. Billy Hinton is vice chairman. About 50 persons representing a cross section of Waco attended a meeting Thursday afternoon in the School Administration Building and expressed their interest and desire for the creation of a junior college to serve Waco and surrounding communities. The group asked the CC to take the lead in further preliminary studies.

Representatives from the Waco city council, school board, county schools, Paul Quinn, Baylor University, banking institutions, and the Chamber of Commerce attended the meeting.

Criteria Outlined

B. W. Musgraves, assistant commissioner of education for public junior colleges, answered questions and outlined the criteria for creating a junior college.

He said the state board may waive the requirement that a new junior college district be at least 50 miles distant from another junior college in lieu of population of the area.

Waco is within 50 miles of Hill Junior College and Temple Junior College. McLennan County students commuting to colleges outside the county total 128. Of these 64 go to Navarro Junior College, 62 to Temple Junior College, and 72 to Hill Junior College.

Nokes and Hinton plan to call on representatives of neighboring communities that have high schools and to enlist a county-wide steering committee to develop information on the educational need for a junior college. State regulations require the committee to include at least seven persons.

To Make Survey

The committee's first duty will be to make a comprehensive survey of the potential for a junior college. See COLLEGE, Page 7

**SURVEY REPORT
and
APPLICATION TO ESTABLISH
A
PUBLIC JUNIOR COLLEGE
for
McLENNAN COUNTY, TEXAS**



Left to Right:
The executive steering
committee consisted
of Tina Ware,
W. Earl Harrison,
Richard K. Moore,
Champé Fitzhugh,
and N. Lee Dunham,
with Henry Griffin
as the chairman.

Burning the Midnight Oil

Although memories faded somewhat and minutes from those early meetings did not survive, two things remain for certain: Griffin dug right in and began working; and Marable, Provence, and other Chamber leaders offered the steering committee financial and political support that cleared the way for the formation of the college. The Chamber, under Marable's direction, provided Griffin with \$1,000 in seed money. Marable also assigned Ken Smith to help Griffin and provided them with secretary Janis Davis and office supplies. Griffin reflected that MCC started with \$1,000 — not much money, even then. What they lacked in funds, they made up for in enthusiasm.

Together, the three “burned the midnight oil,” Griffin recalled. They churned out press releases and planned ways to get media attention. They conducted a survey of local high school students to gauge interest in those who would attend

a community college in Waco. They prepared a lengthy application report to the State Board of Education for permission to establish a public junior college in McLennan County. They gathered voter signatures for a required petition to hold a local election concerning the creation of a junior college district.

Smith and Griffin saw more of each other than they did their own families that first year. “I worked with Henry Griffin in the mornings and the afternoons and the evenings,” said Smith, who later went to Vicksburg, Miss., and Mesquite, Texas, as manager of their Chambers of

Commerce. “It took a great deal of midnight oil to kick this off. Waco was the largest town in Texas without a community college, and Waco needed one.”

Although Griffin had a young family at home and a full-time position working for the federal courts, his energy seemed boundless. “I didn't get much sleep that first year because I had another job that paid the bills,” Griffin said.

Tina Ware, secretary of the steering committee, said under Griffin's leadership, committee members met with local business leaders and took day trips to other community colleges to gather information for their formal application proposal to the State Board of Education in Austin. “I've never known anybody more enthusiastic about that college than Henry Griffin,” said Ware, who was later voted in as one of the original seven board members and the only woman elected to the post.

The executive steering committee consisted of Henry Griffin; Secretary Tina Ware; W. Earl Harrison, president of the First National Bank of Waco; Richard K. Moore, public relations director for Rocketdyne (a division of North American Aviation), in McGregor; Champé

Fitzhugh, senior member of Fitzhugh and Company Insurance Agency; and N. Lee Dunham from Baylor University, according to Grant's 1968 thesis.

Harrison was co-chairman of the committee. Now deceased, he left a legacy of civic service to Waco and McLennan County that many recognized. When asked about his work on the committee, specifically about working with Griffin, Harrison called Griffin a “ramrod” who was the focal point for all activity involving the college, according to Grant's thesis.

Griffin, Smith and Davis met with all of the local school superintendents and requested recommendations for committee members. Ultimately, they recruited 32 citizens from throughout McLennan County for the committee, many of whom were already involved in the local school districts and parent-teacher organizations and were familiar with education issues. “We wanted people ... we knew were interested in education, so we tried to get people that were involved in their local school districts such as PTA and teachers,” Griffin said.

Charles Maddux, a Hewitt rancher serving his first term on the Midway Independent School District Board in 1964, was among them. “The idea was if they could get people from the stronger school districts to buy into it, a junior college would happen here,” said Maddux, who was nudged into joining the steering committee by then MISD Superintendent M.T. Rice, who was also on the committee. Maddux's involvement that summer began a lifelong commitment to civic service in education for central Texas, including 14 years on the MISD board. Looking back on his involvement in the steering committee, he says he is proud that he and his wife, Margaret, volunteered a few hours each week to help develop McLennan Community College. His son, Bert, played basketball for the college and graduated from the college in 1978. His daughter and granddaughter also attended classes there. “We just felt it was a good thing,” Maddux said. “At that time, Baylor was not as expensive as it is now, but we thought it could help a lot of children to have a college education. [They] ... might not have a lot of money to afford to go to the big schools, and they could stay at home.”

Incorporating that sentiment into the application report to the state was essential.

Committee members dispersed throughout the county and met with business and community leaders to ascertain the types of skilled workers that local employers would like a two-year college to develop. They found many. One of the most immediate concerns was the shortage of regis-

tered and vocational nurses, X-ray technicians, and laboratory technicians in McLennan County. Employers also indicated a void of trained personnel in civil, mechanical and chemical engineering jobs, electronic technicians, machinists, computer programmers, bank tellers, insurance agents, mechanics, welders, sheet metal workers, air conditioning and TV repairmen, draftsmen, and bookkeepers.

“We feel that a junior college would serve our county and area to the fullest extent by bridging the gap between high school and further educational training,” McLennan County Superintendent Joe R. Hatcher wrote in a May 24, 1965, letter to the steering committee. “Many of our high school graduates will have a better opportunity to go beyond the high school level, if we can have a junior college in this county.” Hatcher's letter was included in the committee's application report, *Survey Report and Application to Establish a Public Junior College for McLennan County, Texas*, which was presented to the State Board of Education in June 1965.

The application report also included a March 1965 survey of all junior and senior high school students in McLennan County to poll stu-

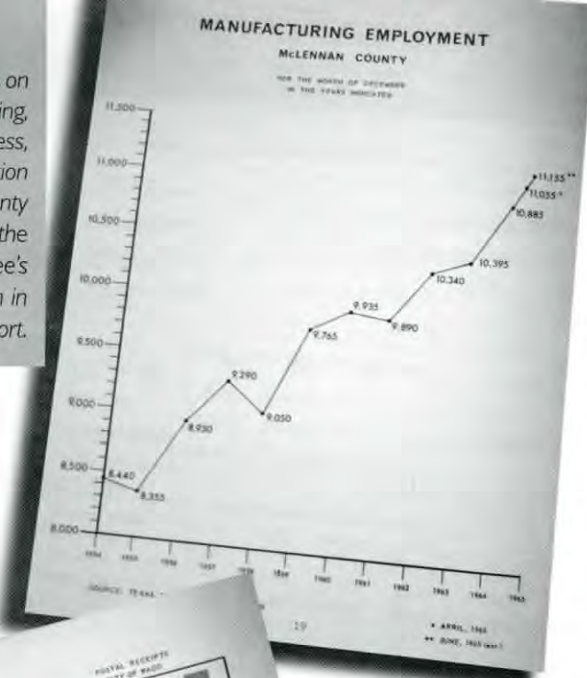
Year	District	Enrollment
1957-58	1024	2860
1958-59	1147	2986
1959-60	1173	3078
1960-61	1214	3207
1961-62	1265	3380
1962-63	1310	3510
1963-64	1368	3698
1964-65	1428	3858
1965-66	1490	4000
1966-67	1554	4134
1967-68	1620	4260
1968-69	1688	4380
1969-70	1758	4500
1970-71	1830	4620
1971-72	1904	4740
1972-73	1980	4860

Above: McLennan County school enrollment for grades 1-12 and projections as presented in the 1965 Survey Report and Application to Establish a Public Junior College for McLennan County, Texas



Ken Smith, former public relations director for the Waco Chamber of Commerce, helped prepare the 1965 survey report.

Detailed reports on manufacturing, business, and population for McLennan County were among the steering committee's extensive research in the 1965 survey report.



dent interest in attending a local junior college. The poll of 3,414 students found that 1,230, or 36 percent, would be interested in attending a local junior college if one was available. An additional 700 said they planned to attend a technical school after graduation.

The supporting data boosted committee enthusiasm, Griffin said, but they hit their first "snag" in the spring of 1965. The 59th Texas State Legislature voted to establish the James Connally Technical Institute at James Connally Air Force Base, which the military was shutting down in Waco. The institute was to be the Lone Star State's first statewide high-level technical vocational training center. Gov. Connally promptly signed the bill supporting the state-funded technical school to be supervised by Texas A&M University. In January 1966 James Connally Technical Institute held its first classes. The first semester's enrollment rolls contained only 70 students. By the fall of 1967, 1,000 students enrolled at the technical institute. Whether taxpayers would see a need for two new institutions in Waco was a question on everyone's minds.

The Need

The announcement of the opening of James Connally Technical Institute was a surprise to many, but it proved to be a blessing for a future junior college in McLennan County because it brought out vocal support from some high-ranking state leaders, including Texas Gov. John Connally.

Gov. Connally's office sent a letter to Ken Smith strongly supporting a junior college in McLennan County. Joe G. Moore Jr., administrative assistant to Gov. Connally, wrote the May 3, 1965, letter, which was included in the *Survey Report and Application to Establish a Public Junior College for McLennan County, Texas*:

"Throughout the discussions considering the possibility of using the James Connally Air Force Base as a state operated technical institute, all participants have been aware of the possibility that McLennan County would establish a county-wide junior college. Under no circumstances can the proposed Institute be regarded as a

substitute for, or in conflict with, such a junior college. In fact, it would be unfortunate if the authorization passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor should defeat or in any way retard planning contemplated for the establishment of a junior college in McLennan County. ... Governor Connally has repeatedly emphasized the expansion of public junior college education in Texas. There has been no thought during his consideration of the James Connally Technical Institute that this Institute would replace or supersede any existing or proposed junior college."

Other letters of support also were cited in the steering committee's application report to the state, such as one by state Sen. Ralph Yarborough, who in February 1965 wrote to Griffin and suggested that a junior college in McLennan County also could share space with the Institute at the Connally Air Base. This idea eventually came to fruition when McLennan Community College held its first classes on the renovated Connally Air Force Base in September 1966.

In creating James Connally Technical Institute, lawmakers deliberately put a clause in the bill that would allow MCC to share space at Connally Air Force Base. Moore explained in his letter, "Texas A&M University is authorized to contract with local agencies to provide educational programs designed to meet the need for trained personnel in Texas. This authorization is specifically intended to permit Texas A&M University to lease space to a McLennan County junior college, in the event one is created," Moore wrote.

Texas state Sen. Murray Watson Jr. wrote the bill that formed James Connally Technical Institute. He said the clause to allow other classes to be held on the military base was intentionally put in the bill to encourage the opening of a local community college, as well as the expansion of other higher education classes by other institutions at James Connally Air Force Base. The base had been a training facility for the military and was well-equipped with plenty of classroom facilities. The hangars also could be easily renovated for vocational and technical classes.

"We put in that they could work with the community college, and they could also work with Baylor or Paul Quinn. Primarily we were trying to leverage off all the groups here to get this started because there ... [were] synergies involved with having vocational/technical on the same campus that you have arts and science," said Watson, who still lives in Waco and operates a law practice. "I thought they'd complement each other," he concluded.

Watson fought hard to convince lawmakers in Austin to approve the bill that formed James Connally Technical Institute. His impetus was to improve what he saw as a declining workforce in Texas. He also was trying to salvage the military base, which equaled a loss of \$27 million for McLennan County, including 2,400 military personnel and 800 civilian workers.

"Governor Connally ... had been secretary of the Navy, and he was aware of the fact that the services were having a hard time hiring people with the skills. They had to train them all. So he jumped at the idea of setting up a trained workforce," Watson said. "The State of Texas had historically depended upon the armed services for their trained workforce. The colleges

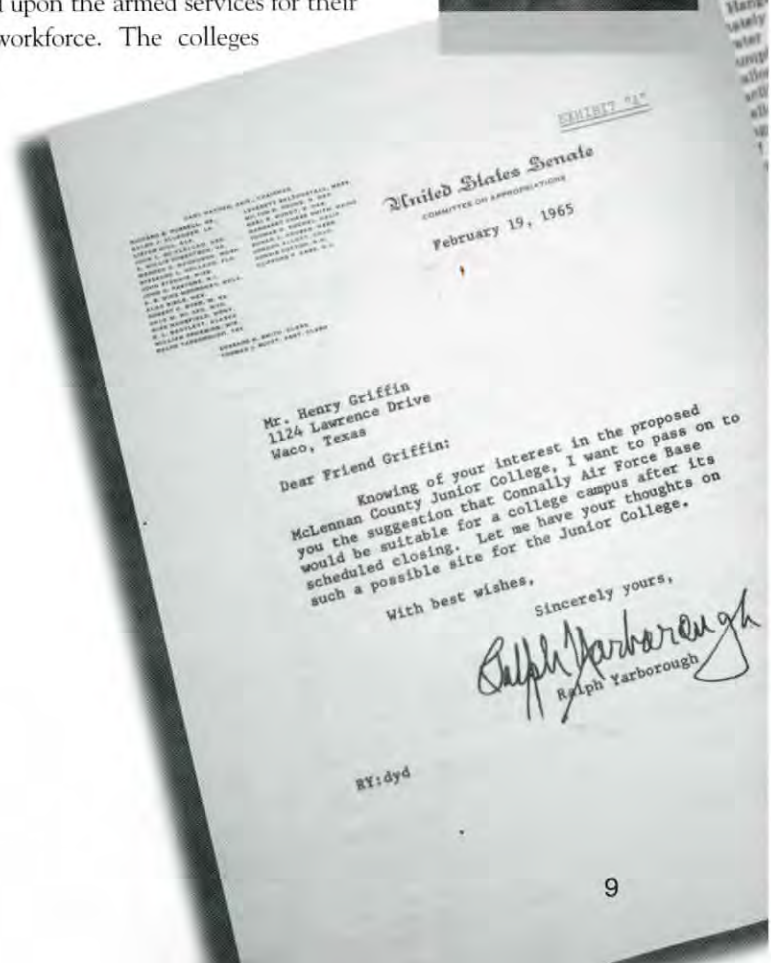
Base Offers Big Inventory Of Facilities

AUSTIN—General information on the \$41 million facility at James Connally Air Force Base was furnished the legislature today by Gov. John Connally to buttress his request that the state take over the facility and operate it as James Connally Technical Institute.

The governor's inventory sheet on JCAFB follows:

James Connally Air Force Base was originally activated in the early spring of 1942 as a pilot training base, and has been in continuous operation since that time. It was named for James A.M. Connally, a graduate of A&M University, who was killed in action in Japan in 1945.

Ralph Yarborough, former United States senator



and universities just didn't do it. They had some programs, and early in my first session in the House, I worked to get a pilot program funded at a community college." That pilot program fell short, but a few years later when the idea of a community college in McLennan County emerged, Watson jumped in again full steam.

Watson, a member of the powerful Finance Committee, recalled being surprised that funding a community college in McLennan County was not the tough sell that he had expected. He credited the creation of James Connally Technical Institute with focusing momentum among Texas lawmakers toward expansion of higher education

and actually helping to pave the way for McLennan Community College. "Once we got TSTC created, we started working to help get the community college up and going," Watson explained.

Dr. Roy Dugger, the first executive director of James Connally Technical Institute, even urged local citizens to support the proposed junior college. The *Waco News-Tribune* on Oct. 27, 1965, recorded Dugger's speech to the Waco P. S. Local Unit No. 2, which included principals, supervisors and administrative staff of Waco public schools: "We feel the junior college program will strengthen our program, and we feel our program will in no way conflict with that envisioned by those planning the junior college." He projected for the school officials, "There in fact would be no conflict and no overlapping."

Dugger said his institution would offer highly specialized training courses that the average junior college could not afford to meet, such as mechanics courses for very specialized heavy machinery. Dugger, who was a vice president of Texas A&M University, which supervised the technical institute, even offered that there was sufficient room at James Connally for the junior college to open on the base. The junior college can "open up its doors right by our side, and we welcome them," he said, according to the *Waco News-Tribune* article on Oct. 27, 1965.

"The establishment of a public junior college in McLennan County, the development of the James Connally Technical Institute, and the continuing expansion of the university and private colleges in the area, would create a balanced and complete system of education beyond the high school," explained Dugger in an Oct. 31, 1965, *Waco Tribune-Herald* article. This still holds true as McLennan Community College and Texas State Technical Institute — formerly James Connally Technical Institute — continue to have a close working relationship that has benefited students, faculty and employers of Central Texas for four decades and undoubtedly will for many more decades to come.

Current TSTC President Elton E. Stuckly Jr. said the relationship between MCC and TSTC grows with every academic year. There is a mutual respect between Stuckly and current MCC President Dennis Michaelis. He says both presidents even consult with one another when

attempting to add courses to their curricula to ensure that the new courses do not overlap with classes being taught at the other institution. "Dennis and I just have a great relationship," said Stuckly, who became TSTC president in July 2003. "We have that mutual respect, and it just makes things a lot easier."

The campuses are located only 10 miles apart, which makes it easy for students to frequent both institutions. TSTC even offers certain science courses on its campus for MCC students, and MCC allows TSTC students to take academic courses at MCC for credit at TSTC. "It's just a sweetheart deal for the community because we have them jumping back and forth all the time," Stuckly said.

In 1965, McLennan Community College steering committee hired C.C. Colvert of The University of Texas at Austin as a consultant. In a May 1965 letter to the committee, he predicted that just such a working relationship would evolve between TSTC and MCC. Colvert also reported that there existed "no conflict whatever between the A&M Vocational School and the program for a public junior college in McLennan County." At the time, it was in part because the technical institute was not offering any college credit courses and would only offer non-transferable academic courses necessary for certain technical and vocational curriculums.

In addition, Colvert wrote that a visible need and desire by local employers for a junior college existed. He speculated that the local economy could sustain the institution and suggested that it offer technical courses in electronics, data processing, two-year nursing, drafting, and mechanics. Academic core courses that are transferable to four-year institutions should also be offered, he suggested, courses such as pre-law, pre-medicine, education, engineering, and music. He also urged that the junior college stress adult education courses and community service offerings.

The steering committee application report took all of these suggestions and proposed a four-fold function for a junior college in McLennan County:

- Offer technical curriculums to high school graduates, usually two college years in length to prepare students to enter technical fields, such as junior engineering and electronics or executive secretaries.

- Offer vocational curriculums to high school graduates and non-high school graduates, such as repair technicians, plumbing, or machine shop trades.
- Offer pre-professional and liberal arts courses for those pursuing four-year degrees.
- Offer adult education courses and community services in the evenings.

At the time, the steering committee's application report was one of the most comprehensive applications presented, Smith remembered. For years Smith received phone calls from other towns trying to start community colleges that used their report as a model to present to the state.

"The survey of high school students that we conducted was not required by the state; it was not necessary for us to do it. But if you're going to do a



C.C. Colvert of The University of Texas at Austin

DUGGER EMPHASIZES

Institute and College Will Work Together

Dr. Roy W. Dugger, director of James Connally Technical Institute, asserted again Thursday his belief that the Institute and a McLennan County junior college would work together to "develop a complete and balanced educational program for this community."

Speaking at a noon meeting of the Waco Board of Realtors, Dr. Dugger said Gov. John Connally had recently pointed with pride at the new institute when a group of business and industry executives asked him what Texas is doing to prepare itself to furnish business and industry with scientists, engineers and teachers.

The institute is already a reality, but will not accept its first students until next spring, Dr. Dugger said. The first full year of operation will begin in September, 1965, and the director said the projected enrollment will be at least 500, growing to an estimated 3,500 by the fourth year of operation.

He has repeatedly, in speeches, before the city's organizations, called for the formation of a junior college. The county's voters will decide the fate of the projected college in an election Nov. 2.

Dr. Dugger told the realtors he thinks the "only gap remaining" in the county's educational program is a "high quality educational institution that can serve the needs of those young people who want to enter a liberal arts training program but who are unable to finance



Dr. Roy Dugger, former vice president of Texas A&M University and first executive director of James Connally Technical Institute

300 Students Commute To Area Junior Colleges

Junior College Panel Briefs County Officials

McLennan Meets Standards For County Junior College

Colvert Cites Need For Junior College

JUNIOR COLLEGE STEERING COMMITTEE CIRCULATES PETITIONS

Junior College Study Reviewed

Junior College Petition Calls for Tax Bond Issuance

report like this, it is in my nature to do it right," Smith said later. "We wanted to go beyond what the state had requested in order to demonstrate the need for a community college in Waco."

Despite its thorough report, the committee had to petition the board to consider the application by gathering signatures from 10 percent of the voters in McLennan County, approximately 3,000 signatures. The petition was due in Austin by May 25, 1965, for the board to consider the application when it met on June 5, 1965. The support from Gov. Connally and other prominent state leaders helped garner local support. Using publicity on radio, television, and in the newspapers, the committee announced that it had placed petitions in several banks. Citizens came out in droves to sign the petition. Ultimately, 7,000 signatures were collected well before the May 25 deadline.

Griffin's crew was up until 11 p.m. on May 24 binding 100 copies of the report that Griffin and Smith drove to Austin on May 25. "It was worth it. I've never regretted one minute of it," Griffin said.

All of their hard work paid off. The Board of Education accepted the report and sent a review committee to Waco on June 17, 1965, to investigate the prospects for the success of a junior college. On July 12, 1965,

the board approved the application. That approval cleared the way for the measure to be placed on the ballot in the upcoming November 1965 election.

The steering committee's timing was just right. Soon afterward, the Legislature created the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to oversee all higher education matters in the state. The State Board of Education's last approval for a higher education institute was the acceptance of a junior college in McLennan County. Looking back on it, Maddux said all the hard work paid off; the growth that McLennan Community College has sustained over its 40 years in existence confirms his belief.

The application report projected that the college would open with 500 students. Its opening day far surpassed that estimate; 855 students registered for classes on Sept. 13, 1966. The report also predicted that by 1971 there would be 1,500 students. In the fall of 1971, MCC had 2,454 students. By the fall of 1981, there were 4,251 students; in the fall of 1991, there were 5,704 students; and by fall 2006, MCC had 7,853 students.

Griffin and other founders said they never imagined growing to nearly 8,000 students in four decades with projections indicating even larger enrollment in the future.

"It's a lot bigger than I ever thought it would be. I never dreamed of it being that large. I think it's really filled a void," Maddux concluded.

Stumping for a Dream

In 1965, McLennan Community College was just a dream. In order to make that dream a reality, the voters of McLennan County had to buy into the idea. The steering committee braced for a bond election on Nov. 2, 1965. The election would decide whether to create a junior college district in McLennan County and whether taxpayers were willing to fund the institution. It also would elect the initial seven charter board members for the McLennan Community College Board of Trustees. The advocates for the college marshaled their forces and began a vigorous campaign. A central speaker's bureau was formed, which recruited 33 citizens to tout the virtues of a two-year college in McLennan County. They spoke throughout the county at their own expense.

One volunteer, young Waco lawyer Coke Mills, fresh out of law school, had recently worked for U.S. Rep. William R. "Bob" Poage in Washington, D.C. On Oct. 12, 1965, just weeks before the election, he addressed the Speegleville PTA and pleaded his case for a Waco junior college.

"A junior college is tailored to meet the

By the mid 1960s, junior colleges were opening at a near record pace across the United States. Spurred on by increasingly available federal funds through the Higher Education Facilities Act of 1963, many towns saw establishing junior colleges as a way to boost the local economy while educating their youth at home. The creation also kept talented workers from moving to other

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needs of the specific local area," he stumped, according to an Oct. 14, 1965, article in the *Waco News-Tribune*. He told the audience that a junior college would not detract from Baylor University, Paul Quinn College, or James Connally Technical Institute, but would provide one more seat of higher learning in Waco for those not interested in the other institutions.

Recalling that speech 40 years later, Mills said that he was "fired up" over the prospect of having affordable higher education in Waco. At the time, Baylor tuition cost about \$375 for 15 hours of courses. If a two-year college opened in Waco, a full course load for one semester would cost about \$50 — roughly one-seventh the cost of Baylor's tuition at the time — he told the PTA. "I was always interested in good educational opportunities, and I thought it was important to have a junior college available to young people here," he said.

"Back in the 1890s and early 1900s, Waco had the reputation of being the Athens of Texas because it had Baylor [University] [and] TCU ... it had Paul Quinn ... it had a number of private schools, too. So it was really an education center for the state of Texas. And so I realized that it was important to have an opportunity for kids all through the Central Texas area to go to a junior college as well," Mills said. U.S. Rep. Poage had helped to establish James Connally Technical Institute in Waco. He also was among the first members of Congress to introduce a bill to provide educational loans for students and among a handful of influential southern Democrats during the early 1960s who helped to push higher education to the forefront of legislative agendas.

cities. Two-year colleges also provided a venue for vocational courses not typically offered at four-year institutions.

Consequently, admissions to junior colleges exploded. By 1964, about one in every four college freshmen attended a two-year college. The Higher Education Act of 1965 boosted admissions to junior colleges even higher. The Act, signed by President Johnson, increased federal financial assistance for higher education. To say that Johnson was behind education was a gross understatement. "Lyndon was president in '65, and he wanted to be known as the Education President," former state Sen. Watson said. Watson said the time was perfect for the opening of higher education facilities, especially within Texas, which was the home state of not only President Johnson, but also John Connally, a sup-



Steering Committee Chairman Henry Griffin (right) shows U.S. Rep. William R. "Bob" Poage a model of the campus.

Council Backs Junior College

Waco City Council passed a resolution Tuesday endorsing the Nov. 2 junior college election and urging all qualified voters to support the proposal.

Henry Griffin, chairman of the junior college steering committee, W. East Harrison and other members of the committee appeared before the council to ask for official endorsement.

"I believe that we are all agreed that education is essential for democracy," Harrison told councilmembers. "It is especially true in these times when our country is being led by a man who has no respect for the rights of the individual."

Harrison pointed out that McLennan County already has outstanding public schools, Baylor University, Paul Quinn College and the prospect of a nationally prominent technical institute at James Connally Air Force Base.

"To round out our facilities

3,000 Taxpayers Must Endorse Junior College

McLennan County steering committee to try to get a junior college established in Waco will meet at 7 p. m. Tuesday to start a 30-day campaign to start a bond election to fund the college.

The steering committee will meet in the school building at its headquarters, 1001 W. 10th St., at 7 p. m. Tuesday. The committee will discuss the campaign plan and the need for a bond election to fund the college.

The steering committee will also discuss the need for a bond election to fund the college.

First Test of McLennan Junior College Is Begun

Petitions are now being circulated as the first step toward an election to determine whether the people of McLennan County want to create a junior college district covering the entire county and to launch a two-year public college using part of the facilities at James Connally Air Force Base.

In the months of study and detailed survey of the college, the countrywide steering committee found no negative answers. The need is demonstrable by exact figures, with a predicted enrollment of 400 students the first year of operation, rising to 1,500 in five years.

The ability of McLennan County taxpayers to exact a modest sum to start and support the proposed junior college is unquestioned, too. The average cost has been estimated at less than \$1 a month per taxpayer at the most, and for the first two or three years would be considerably less than that. The question is: Do the taxpayers want to do this?

The fact that such a public junior college would supplement and add to the attraction soon to be created here by the new James Connally Technical Institute is an extra plus that should weigh heavily in the public decision. The institute, to be operated by Texas A. & M. University, will not offer courses toward a college degree. Its work will be solely in the expensive, highly technical vocational training field. Inevitably, some of these learning new skills at the institute will desire to continue college-level courses as well. The availability of a junior college on the same grounds as the institute will work both ways. Each will enrich the other's appeal to learners.

There have been intermittent public discussion and private conversation for more than two years about the desirability of having a public junior college in McLennan County. The petitions now being circulated must be signed by 10 percent of the qualified taxpayers in the county to set the election for Nov. 2, 1965.

Junior College Steering Panel To Map Strategy

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Junior College Campaign Set

Members of the junior college steering committee for McLennan County will begin immediately to sign 3,000 property-owning, qualified taxpayers to set the election for Nov. 2, 1965.

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Petitions For JC Growing

The list of signatures on petitions calling for an election to determine whether the people of McLennan County want to create a junior college district covering the entire county and to launch a two-year public college using part of the facilities at James Connally Air Force Base is growing rapidly.

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Former Texas Gov. John Connally and President Lyndon B. Johnson helped expand higher education during the 1960s. President Johnson pushed an aggressive education agenda throughout his presidency.

portive governor who backed education.

"We were able to get money [for programs] when Lyndon was president. ... After he left, it wasn't the same game," Watson reminisced.

In the 1960s, about 60 out of every 100 Americans over the age of 25 had not graduated from high school. Of the 60, about 22 had not completed elementary school.

Gov. Connally's office reported that there were 700,000 illiterate adults in Texas.

Nationally, the potential workforce was increasing and expected to rise from 77 million to 84 million by 1970. However, jobs for unskilled labor were decreasing and expected to total only 3.5 million, Richard K. Moore of Rocketdyne told the Waco Rotary Club in a speech in late summer of 1965.

The need for higher education was visible. "The junior college — although not a new concept in higher education — has really started to

Registrar records showed that McLennan County students accounted for 159 of the 460 students at Hill Junior College, 69 of 945 at Navarro Junior College, and 53 of the 1,000 students at Temple Junior College.

Dick Moore Will Address Rotary Club

Dick Moore, assistant to the vice president of Rocketdyne, McGreggor, will address Waco Rotary Club today noon on "Junior College Education." Moore is a member of the Waco Chamber of Commerce special junior college committee. The speaker will be filling in for his boss, Vice President Tom E. Myers of Rocketdyne, McGreggor, who had been scheduled to address Waco Rotary Club today, but who is detained in California on Rocketdyne business. Moore has been at Rocketdyne, McGreggor, since 1958 and active in civic enterprises in Waco.

come into its own in recent years. I believe this growth can be traced to the fact that junior colleges serve a vital purpose in higher education. ... Added to these statistics is the fact that a high school education or even a college degree is no guarantee that a person will get a job or keep it for long. In addition to the impact of specialization, automation and other great revolutions in technology are increasing the risk of human obsolescence in certain specialized occupations. Besides putting the displaced worker through the emotional drain of feeling useless and unwanted, these factors are forcing many people to start job training all over again, many times in some other field," Moore told the Rotary Club that hot, sticky afternoon. "The community junior college opens the door for many young people to gain a vitally needed higher education at a substantially reduced cost," said Moore, who was later elected to the first Board of Trustees for the college in November 1965.

Those on the Speaker's Bureau also promised McLennan County voters a good return on their investment, explaining that other junior colleges in Central Texas had received significant federal money for higher education: Navarro Junior College in Corsicana received \$2.5 million worth of funding for building construction on a \$1 million initial investment. Not far away, Grayson County Junior College in Sherman expected to reap a \$4.5 million plant from a \$1.8 million local bond issue. Young lawyer Mills figured taxpayers

would relate kindly to earnings, and he made that a centerpiece of his speeches. "I told them that they were going to get a good facility and good opportunity for their investment," Mills said later.

In addition to the economic boost a college could bring to a town, the youth would greatly benefit. In particular, rural youth had little access to higher education. Having grown up on a farm in Speegleville in McLennan County, Mills especially empathized with the plight of many farmers' children who lived in the Waco area.

Waco, known for its cotton crops, once proclaimed cotton as "king." Many youth in the 1960s tried to balance higher education with working on the family farm. Farm responsibilities prevented many from leaving to pursue degrees. Yet, those who attended higher education institutions often returned home better equipped to handle the farm finances, also bringing home their knowledge of the technology available.

"I grew up in Speegleville on a farm," Mills said. "So I was very familiar with the school system out there, and that's one of the things that impressed me because going to MCC would offer young people in the rural areas an opportunity to get at least two years of college education there."

"The young farmer seeking specialized training that will help him raise better crops often can turn to his community college," Moore told the influential Waco Rotary Club. "Local industry can find the junior college a fertile source for well-trained technical employees. Retail establishments and public institutions can find in the junior college the trained accountants, sales people, nurses and dental technicians, draftsmen and clerical personnel that are so vital to their growing competitive needs."

Another reason for forming a community college in McLennan County was to cut the commuting time for those Central Texas students who lived in McLennan County yet traveled great distances to attend other community colleges. A Nov. 5, 1964, article in the *Waco News-Tribune* reported that 300 McLennan County residents were commuting that fall to junior colleges in neighboring counties. Registrar records showed that McLennan County students accounted for 159 of the 460 students at Hill Junior College, 69 of 945 at Navarro Junior College, and 53 of the 1,000 students at Temple Junior College.

Gary Willis, who graduated in the first class

300 Students Commute To Area Junior Colleges

Almost 300 McLennan County residents are commuting this fall to junior colleges in neighboring counties. Registrar records at three nearby colleges show McLennan County students account for 159 of the 460 students enrolled at Hill Junior College, 69 of the 945 enrolled at Navarro Junior College, and 53 of the more than 1,000 enrolled at Temple Junior College this semester.

of McLennan Community College, traveled in a carpool with three other students every day from Waco to Temple Junior College. Willis, who now works for McLennan Community College overseeing food services, said it was quite a daily commute. "We all worked, and we all took morning classes. We ... rode together first thing in the morning for 8 o'clock classes and then around noon we came home as a group," said Willis, who held a full-time job, often not returning home until 9 p.m. Then he stayed up to complete homework. To be on time for their first classes, their cramped little carpool set out from Waco at 6:30 a.m. Although Interstate 35 — which was built in the 1960s, was not nearly as traveled as it is today — Willis said it still "was quite a drive."

Although they potentially faced losing some students, the presidents of Temple Junior College and Navarro Junior College both openly supported a community college in McLennan County. "Knowing the value that a junior college can be to a local community, I ... feel quite confident that your voters will approve the project because it is most evident that the majority of your people want the junior college," Dr. Hubert M. Dawson, president of Temple Junior College, wrote in an October 1965 letter to the McLennan County Steering Committee, according to an Oct. 16, 1965, article in the *Waco Tribune-Herald*.

Dr. Ben W. Jones, President of Navarro Junior College, wrote in an October 1965 letter to the McLennan County Steering Committee: "Considering all aspects ... I would recommend that the citizens of McLennan County establish and support a junior college," according to an

College Receives Many Endorsements

The proposed McLennan County Junior College has received a host of endorsements from clubs, organizations and civic bodies over the past few weeks. Besides those whose pictures appear on this page, those endorsing the junior college include: 1. McLennan County School Board 2. Waco City Council 3. Woodway City Council 4. Waco Advancement Committee 5. China Spring Independent School District Board 6. Waco Independent School District Trustees 7. Presidents of Navarro, Temple and Hill junior colleges 8. Downtown (Waco) Merchants Association 9. Waco Quota Club 10. Hillcrest School of Nursing director 11. Waco Chamber of Commerce

Among the many speakers who have made appearances on behalf of the issue are Dr. C. C. Colver, professor of junior college education at the University of Texas, and Dr. Roy Dugger, director of the New James Connally Technical Institute. "We are well pleased with the endorsements by all of these important organizations and

FOR AVERAGE PROPERTY OWNER Junior College Cost: 2 Cents a Day

The Steering Committee for McLennan County Junior College and a tax cut even now to the voters. The tax cut amount to \$100 valuation based on McLennan County assessments. The tax cut amounts to about 20 per cent on the original proposal, and that will have the potential cost of the local property program for two-year college courses for local property owners. Even at the full rate, the tax cut will amount to about ten cents a day. In terms of property owner would spend more to mail three letters a week. It happens so be the same amount the Texas Legislature raised the tax on cigars this year—2 cents per cigar when it's a pickled cigar as a two-cent cigar. The cigar smokers equal to a pack a month.

On a few packages of property even gets to the voters. Legislation before the Texas Legislature this year see the growth and voted for junior colleges. The McLennan County program was already in the State House to go before the tax rate was set up in all ways. grapes, and surplus. The McLennan County program was already in the State House to go before the tax rate was set up in all ways. grapes, and surplus. The McLennan County program was already in the State House to go before the tax rate was set up in all ways. grapes, and surplus.

sources of income for a junior college: (1) the local district tax, from 10 to 25 cents per \$100 on the present program, (2) from tuition fees which students will pay, and (3) from the education funds. The maximum 25-cent levy will be left in the voting precincts so the election need to have numerous elections in those change. The steering committee's figures for the local cost is based on a piece of property worth \$10,000 on the open market. It indicates that's too high for an average, since the county average taxes on the basis of one-fourth of fair market value. And tax deputies say there's a world of property that won't hit the \$10,000 average. The state will bear about 62 per cent of the cost, the rest, and tuition about 20 per cent.

ONLY PEANUTS



I intend to vote for the McLennan County Junior College. I believe that it will help our community and give our children a better education. I am a member of the Chamber of Commerce and I believe that this college is a necessary part of our future. I am a member of the Chamber of Commerce and I believe that this college is a necessary part of our future.



The work being done on the creation of a Junior College in our City receives my highest commendation and approval. I believe that this college is a necessary part of our future and I intend to vote for it. I am a member of the Chamber of Commerce and I believe that this college is a necessary part of our future.

Oct. 16, 1965, article in the Waco Tribune-Herald.

To save future students from enduring such a commute, members of the Speaker's Bureau themselves traveled to far regions of the county to give speeches and generate electorate interest for supporting a tax increase for the college. Steering committee co-chairman, W. Earl Harrison, was president of the First National Bank of Waco, one of the largest tax-paying organizations in McLennan County during the 1960s. Harrison is credited by many as a leading force to rally support from other business and community leaders to convert many cynics into believers. "Earl was a great man and a great helper and he was loved by everybody that knew him," Griffin said. "He was really one of the leaders of the Waco community."

Harrison contacted the other major tax-paying business owners in the county to inform them of the tax impact that the college district could have on them and held lengthy discussions with those opposed to a tax increase. He conducted extensive research on the county tax rate. After the election, he traveled to New York City with Griffin, Smith, and Moore to persuade the bond agencies to issue a favorable "Provision A" bond rating for the college.

Michael Allen Grant wrote in his 1968 master's thesis for Baylor University that "perhaps the

most influential actor in addition to Griffin was Earl Harrison ... [who] possessed a long-time interest in the idea of a community college." Waco Independent School District Superintendent Avery Downing told Grant in a March 1968 interview that Harrison was a "result-getter."

Downing explained, "Harrison's record in community betterment and progress over the years had been outstanding. From the very beginning of the issue, he would mention in informal conversations the need for a junior college for McLennan County. Aside from the fact that he was a generally influential man, held in great respect by the downtown businessmen, Harrison contributed greatly to the decision-making stage of the issue. Of all the leaders in this issue-area, he possibly possessed the greatest amount of overall knowledge of the community." Grant surmised that Harrison's "special contribution was in his knowledge of financial matters pertaining to the support of the college."

Grant wrote, "Waco taxpayers were saved a sizeable amount of money by his [Harrison's] success in convincing the bonding agencies that Waco and the surrounding area were not an economic risk and thus were deserving of a lower bond interest rate than at first suggested." However, county voters had to approve a bond election before they could seek a bond rating.

J. Robert Sheehy Sr., elected as one of the seven Board of Trustees charter members, recalls that convincing business and homeowners to swallow a maximum property tax increase of 25 cents per \$100 valuation wasn't easy. "That was the big hurdle. There were lots of people who would talk about it until they realized it would cost money," said Sheehy, who later was elected chairman of the Board of Trustees for McLennan Community College. Years later, he served as mayor of Waco.

"We didn't talk about a tax increase," Sheehy explained about his strategy to garner voter support. "You ... [have] to sell them that this is worth putting the money into it. ... We came up with a pretty good spiel that we could give to a group as a whole."

"A lot of people didn't [want to] vote for it because of the tax increase it would cause," Griffin said.

Tina Ware said several physician friends of

hers were opposed to a tax increase, yet the application report to the state board cited an overwhelming need for more certified nurses in McLennan County. "Even the doctors were against it, and we had so many good friends that were doctors. ... They didn't want a college because of the taxes," Ware said. "Later on so many of them told me, 'Oh, we wouldn't have any nurses here if it weren't for that school.'"

Ware, Harrison, and others were able to point out delicately the inconsistencies in their opponent's arguments as they stumped throughout the county. Meanwhile, Griffin and Smith peppered citizens with literature. The steering committee board mailed about 50,000 brochures to voters to elicit support. Generating all of this information to the public, however, cost money, and the initial \$1,000 provided by the Chamber quickly ran out.

By the end of 1965, the steering committee had not only spent all of the \$1,000, but it had also accrued a debt of an additional \$1,022.90, according to several letters from Provence, who was president of the Chamber board. The Chamber shifted funds and absorbed the debt, but Provence made it clear to his board that they should fully support a junior college and encourage all other Chamber members to do the same.

The creation of a two-year college district "is a cause to which all should give best effort," Provence said during an Oct. 20, 1965, meeting of the Chamber Board of Directors, according to the official minutes from that meeting. "The eyes of Texas are upon us for this election," he observed.

Election Day 1965

On the evening of Nov. 2, 1965, Griffin, Ware and others huddled at the federal courthouse waiting for election returns.

On the ballot, voters were to decide whether or not to:

- Create a junior college district encompassing McLennan County.
- Elect seven trustees to govern the college.
- Authorize a tax increase not to exceed 25 cents per \$100 county evaluation for bond retirement and maintenance tax.

TO BE VOTED ON TUESDAY

Cross-Section of County Represented by Trustees

When residents of McLennan County go to the polls Tuesday, they will find on the junior college ballot the names of seven proposed trustees. These are the nominees selected by an executive committee from the junior college steering committee, and unanimously endorsed by the entire steering committee. The seven will operate the institution if voters approve the proposal. The trustees will draw lots if they are elected to determine the length of their term, and future elections will be held on a staggered basis.

Steering committee officials said selection of the trustee candidates was made after "much thought and consideration." Committee spokesmen said they believe the trustees represent a sound cross-section of the entire county, from housewife to bank president.

sketch of each

HENRY V. GRIFFIN
Henry V. Griffin, 1 Lawrence Drive, 1 probation and parol the Waco-Austin d' eral court. He is of the Heart O' Credit Union a' scouting work. Griffin was 1 He attended A verty of A ceived his bac master's de University. Prior to o position, he teacher in a and a pho lips Petrol or. He and children. WT Pryor teacher public worke mack as a secy Agri past unti e is H lisco-of bri lonia, be high di d the C ard Jr. fresh- iversity m is a old High ary of th z comm

BOB SHEEHY
Bob Sheehy, 1000 Waco, Texas

MRS. EDWARD M. WARE
Mrs. Edward M. (Tina White) Ware, a housewife, lives at 2925 Woodland Drive. She is a member of the Women's Council of the Waco Symphony Association, has worked in the women's division of United Fund and YWCA campaigns, has been active in P-T-A work, Providence Hospital.

DICK MOORE
Dick Moore, 1000 Waco, Texas

EARL HARRISON
Earl Harrison, 1000 Waco, Texas

W. C. DAVID
W. C. David, 1000 Waco, Texas

DR. GEORGE HENDERSON
Dr. George Henderson, 1000 Waco, Texas



HENRY GRIFFIN BOB SHEEHY MRS. EDWARD WARE DICK MOORE EARL HARRISON W. C. DAVID DR. GEORGE HENDERSON

■ Authorize the trustees to issue a maximum of \$2 million in bonds to finance construction of the college.

Griffin said he never doubted that the proposals would pass. Most seemed equally as optimistic. A final round of editorials and endorsements from the local newspapers prior to the election suggested support for the college was all but assured. One editorial in the *Waco News-Tribune* on Nov. 1, 1965, said, "Educators, businessmen, industrialists, parents and youth have gone on record in favor of the proposed junior college. ... It is the opportunity of a lifetime to complete McLennan County's varied educational resources. The addition of a public junior college

will make our present schools stronger and will raise the brainpower level of Central Texas in an important way." The editorial went on to say "Not a whisper of opposition had been heard." That editorial proved to be sorely wrong. As the votes trickled in on Election Day, it became obvious that the opponents had also marshaled their forces and had launched a fierce assault against the idea of a two-year college. They were out in force and voting.

As Griffin and the others waited at the federal courthouse, the numbers looked bleak. Many of the communities outside of Waco voted against the tax and bond proposals. Nevertheless, around 11 p.m., after all of the returns were counted, they received the news for which they

of McLennan Community College. "I want to offer my sincere congratulations on the creation of the new Junior College. This is a great tribute to you personally and to education and a big asset to Waco to have such an institution as this," Watson wrote on formal stationery bearing the Great Seal of Texas.

Years later, Griffin's hands still tremble, and his eyes fill with tears as he proudly holds up that letter — a tribute to what he considers his small gift to Central Texas. Others see it much differently and say he forever changed the academic landscape for a city that was once a sleepy cotton farming town.

In retrospect, the timing of McLennan Community College's creation was everything. If the steering committee had been formed two years later, all involved doubt that the college would be in existence today. By the late 1960s the federal funds for higher education began drying up, and grants were becoming more difficult to secure. Many believed that had the college not started classes in the fall of 1966 in temporary facilities at James Connally Air Force Base, it might never have gotten off the ground. Had Watson not pushed so hard to start James Connally Technical Institute in the old military base, MCC might not have had a place to start classes on its first day, Sept. 19, 1966. Had Griffin and his crew not worked tirelessly touting the idea of a college, voters might not have financially approved it. Had newspaper editor Provence

not publicized it, the word might have never gotten out. And if Marable had not gone against the grain and first publicly surfaced the idea of a community college, the idea might still be dormant.

The founders — whether lobbying lawmakers behind the scenes or running articles in the newspaper or preparing application reports on the necessity for a community college in McLennan County — all came together with a synergy that helped form this institution that has survived four decades and grows stronger with each passing year. They are credited with having the foresight, energy, and determination to take advantage of a narrow window of opportunity in history that allowed for the birth of McLennan Community College.

Fate of Junior College Rests on Voters Today

Where to Vote

Polls open Thursday at 7 a. m. and close at 7 p. m. on the special election. Below are listed the voting areas and their locations:

- | Ward | Location |
|------|---|
| 1 | Five Station, Eleventh and Columbia |
| 2 | Ranger School, Eighteenth and Ranger |
| 3 | Kirk-Wilson School, Second |
| 4 | West Avenue Junior High, Fifteenth and West |
| 5 | Cedar Ridge School, 2225 Sheridan |
| 6 | Harrold School |
| 7 | St. James |
| 8 | La Vega School Administration Building |
| 9 | Comstock Community Building |
| 10 | Haltom School |
| 11 | Starr City Hall |
| 12 | Meador School, 4218 Beverly Drive |
| 13 | Elm Street School |
| 14 | Chalk Hill Baptist Church |
| 15 | Chelton School |
| 16 | Home School |
| 17 | West City Hall |
| 18 | Pepperville School |
| 19 | Spartanville School |
| 20 | Patrol |
| 21 | China Spring School |
| 22 | South Bowge |
| 23 | Johnson Fire Station |
| 24 | Garley, Dave Sitons residence, South Third Street |
| 25 | Madrege City Hall |
| 26 | Lerna Fire Station |
| 27 | Emmerville - Eddy School, Crossman |
| 28 | Oakleaf Baptist Church |
| 29 | Mindy |
| 30 | Prater Chapel |
| 31 | Crawford School |
| 32 | Gene |
| 33 | Patton |
| 34 | Arndt |
| 35 | Lery |
| 36 | Elk |
| 37 | Wander |
| 38 | Lery-Lakeview City Hall |

Officials See Big Turnout

Voters in starting day in McLennan County and the largest turnout for an election year since April of 1962 is expected to vote on a proposed county junior college and 10 State Constitutional amendments.

Polls will be open from 7 a. m. to 7 p. m.

April of 1962 was when voters sent John Tower and Bill Blakely into a runoff for the U.S. Senate after holding them out of a field of some 70 odd candidates.

The potential vote that year was roughly 25,000. About the same as it is this year. Some 15,700 persons, or just under 50 per cent, actually cast their ballots.

The junior college issue has stirred the eggs local interest.

See Sample Ballot, Page 5-A

It involves four propositions: creation of a countywide district election of seven trustees, an increase in taxes up to 25 cents per \$100 county valuation, and issuance of \$2 million in bonds.

The \$2 million in bonds would be used to finance construction and equipping of the college. The tax money would be used to maintain the college and repay the bonds.

A tax scale submitted to the State Board of Education showed that the total tax levy probably would be 37 cents in 1967, 38 cents in 1968, 39 cents in 1969 and 40 cents in 1970.

The college would open with an estimated 500 students and grow to a full-time enrollment of 1,500.

Operating costs would be paid in the proportion: state funds, 62 per cent; student tuition, 25 per cent; and county taxes, 13 per cent.

Property owners may vote on all four proposals. Qualified voters who do not own taxable property may vote on only the first two.

The ballots on the junior college

As Griffin and the others waited ... the numbers looked bleak. Many of the communities outside of Waco voted against the tax and bond proposals.

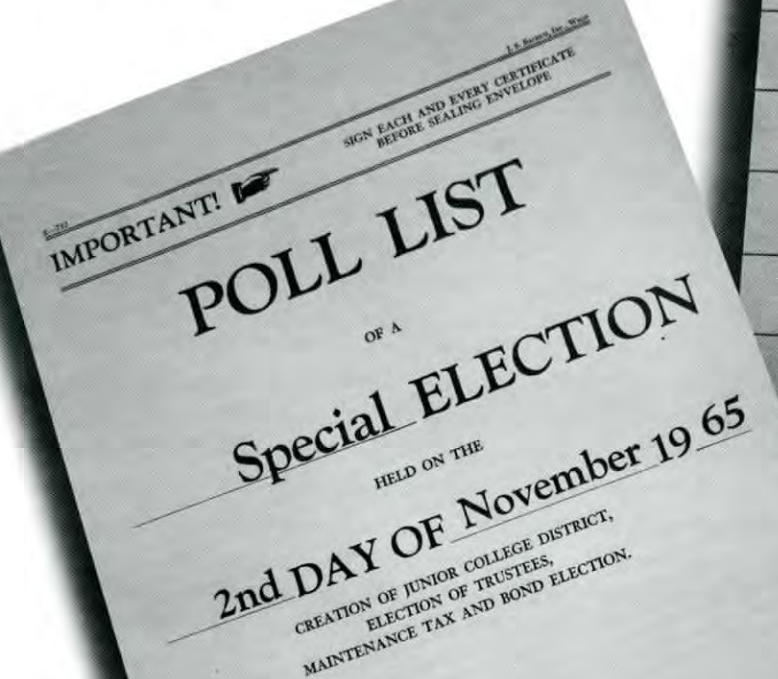
had waited nearly two years: All four proposals relating to the junior college passed. They would have a junior college. Some of the proposals passed by slim margins, however. The tax proposal passed by only 158 votes: 5,568 for and 5,410 against. Out of 12,212 votes, 7,516 voted to create a college district; 4,317 voted against it. The bond proposal passed by a slightly larger margin: 5,871 for and 5,114 against. "We made it by the skin of our teeth, but we made it," Griffin proclaimed at the courthouse.

"It was close, wasn't it? But I had all the confidence in the world that it would pass. I'm a perennial optimist," Griffin recalled later. "It looked kind of shaky for a while, but I wasn't scared. I thought, 'Surely people weren't that stupid.'"

State Sen. Murray Watson sent Griffin a congratulatory letter that is now yellowed and frayed but remains among Griffin's coveted collection of papers and memos from the early years



VOTERS — Despite damp, cloudy weather and an off-election, cloudy day, large numbers of McLennan County residents turned out to vote Tuesday on the proposed county junior college and 10 State Constitutional amendments. Above, voting at the School Administration Building are Mrs. Mrs. Hugh Wilkins, 601 North Third Street, and her son, a long-time printer, and her eight-year-old son, John. (Don Cavella Photo.)



Name of Officer	Names of Persons or Object Voted on
Proposition No. 1 The creation and incorporation of the Junior College District of McLennan County, Texas, with boundaries coincident with those of McLennan County, Texas.	FOR
	AGAINST
Proposition No. 2 Seven Trustees For Junior College District	W. C. DAVID
	HENRY V. GRIFFIN
	W. EARL HARRISON
	DR. GEORGE W. HENDERSON
	R. K. MOORE
	J. ROBERT SHEEHY
	MRS. EDWARD M. WARE
Proposition No. 3	FOR
Maintenance Tax for Junior College District.	
Proposition No. 3	AGAINST
	Maintenance Tax for Junior College District.
Proposition No. 4	FOR
	The issuance of bonds and the levying of the tax in payment thereof, Junior College District.
Proposition No. 4	AGAINST
	The issuance of bonds and the levying of the tax in payment thereof, Junior College District.

the Reality

A New Board and a New College

Through the successful passage of the 1965 bond election, the founders had financially secured a community college for McLennan County. Now they had to make it a reality. Their accomplishments to date took many by surprise. Suddenly they went from theoretically speaking about the economic virtues that a junior college would bring to McLennan County to actually starting a college. Few had any experience in this arena, and most admitted they were “flying by the seat of our pants,” according to former Steering Committee Chairman and Board of Trustee Henry Griffin. “We didn’t know what was going on to begin with, so we had to feel our way. It was just like building a building: You have to build it a block at a time.”



They literally drew straws to determine their length of terms.

Barely a week after the historic bond election, the seven newly elected McLennan Community College Board of Trustees assembled on Nov. 10, 1965, in the second-floor conference room of the First National Bank of Waco. Judge Raymond Mormino administered the oath of office, and the following were sworn in as the first charter board members:

- W.C. David
- W. Earl Harrison
- Dr. George W. Henderson
- J. Robert Sheehy Sr.
- Henry Griffin
- Richard K. Moore
- Tina M. Ware

(Note: Names are listed in the order of the photo above, back to front, left to right, and with the addition of MCC President Wilbur Ball at center back.)

The steering committee officially disbanded, and to no one’s surprise this time, Griffin was unanimously elected board president — a title that was later changed to chairman. Moore was elected vice president and Ware, the only woman on the board, was elected secretary. Then they literally drew straws to determine their length of terms.

The luck proved to be with Griffin, Ware, and Sheehy Sr., who drew six-year terms and who would all faithfully fulfill their civic duties until April 1971. Harrison, the banker, and Moore, the public relations executive, drew four-year terms. Henderson, a local dentist, and David, the only African-American board member and a retired Texas Agricultural Extension Service agent, drew two-year terms. At the time, the board bylaws prevented them from serving additional consecutive terms, a rule that has since been changed.

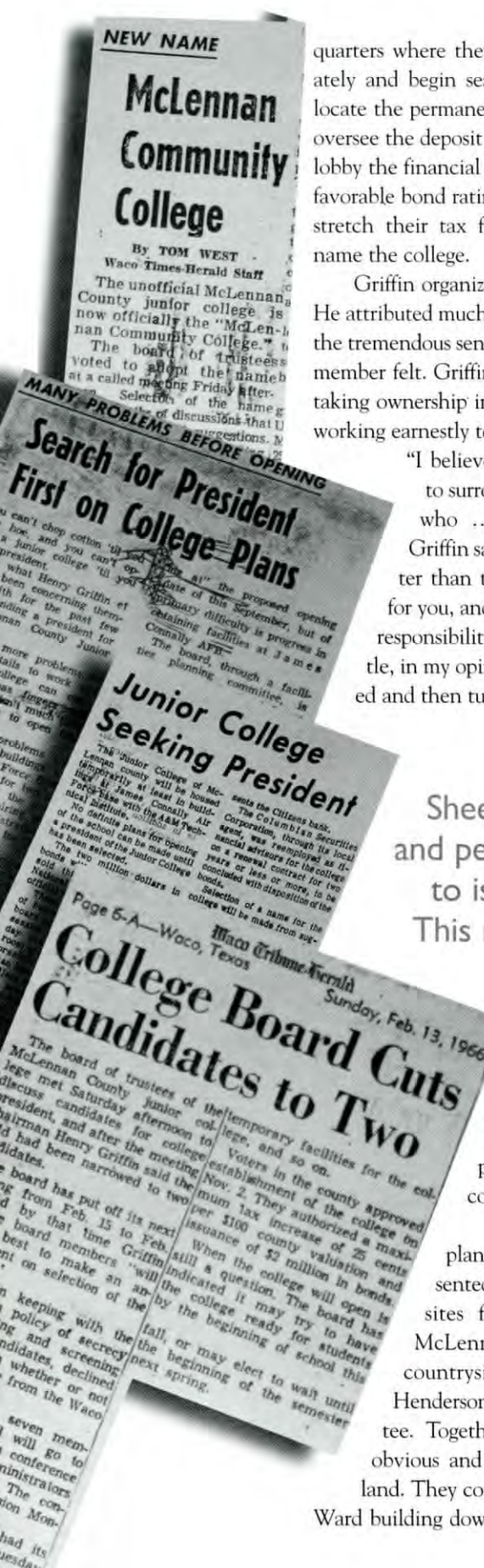
The board members had many tasks ahead of them. First, they needed to find a president who would set the direction for the college and lead the board. Next, they needed temporary

Junior College Trustees Face Big Responsibility

The election results on the coming year college for McLennan County put the responsibility on the seven trustees to launch this new institution. The trustees themselves have to drawing lots for length of terms, naming and other board officers.

Junior College Officers Named

McLennan County's junior college trustees Wednesday elected Henry V. Griffin board chairman, Richard K. Moore vice chairman, and Mrs. Edward Ware secretary. Griffin, who is chairman of the steering committee that planned and opened the college, presented to the president at a meeting Tuesday night. Members also agreed to select a president for the college. Next meeting has been set for Monday, Nov. 22. Members also agreed to select a president for the college. Next meeting has been set for Monday, Nov. 22. Members also agreed to select a president for the college. Next meeting has been set for Monday, Nov. 22.



quarters where they could hold classes immediately and begin searching for a suitable site to locate the permanent campus. Also, they had to oversee the deposit of collected county taxes and lobby the financial forces in New York City for a favorable bond rating that would enable them to stretch their tax funds. They even needed to name the college.

Griffin organized the tasks into committees. He attributed much of the success of the board to the tremendous sense of responsibility each board member felt. Griffin credited each member with taking ownership in the birth of the college and working earnestly to assure its success.

"I believe in delegating responsibility, to surround[ing] yourself with people who ... can [take] responsibility," Griffin said. "A business is not any better than the people you have working for you, and unless you can delegate that responsibility, you're fighting a losing battle, in my opinion. I like to get things started and then turn it loose."

In February 1966, Harrison, Griffin, Sheehy, and Ken Smith traveled to New York City and persuaded Wall Street financial representatives ... to issue a favorable "Provision A" bond rating. ... This rating meant an estimated \$38,000 to \$40,000 savings for the college.

Sheehy, Ware, and David constituted the personnel committee, whose primary task was to secure a president. Sheehy chaired the committee.

Moore chaired the facility planning committee, which presented to the board various possible sites for the college throughout McLennan County's vast rolling countryside. David, Sheehy, and Henderson also served on this committee. Together they examined both the obvious and the obscure plots of county land. They considered the old Montgomery Ward building downtown, a site adjacent to the

McGregor Executive Airport southwest of Waco off Highway 84, and a heavily wooded remote weekend home of former Waco lumber magnate William Cameron near the Cameron Park Zoo in northwest Waco. In August 1966, that 160-acre former Cameron country estate was purchased from the then owners, the J.D. George family, as the new home for MCC at the bargain price of \$290,000.

Harrison, a banker, chaired the finance committee on which Moore and Henderson also served. Together they selected an attorney to represent the college and a bank for the college deposits. They also set the tax rate with County Tax Assessor-Collector Joe Alexander and oversaw the deposit of tax monies.

In February 1966, Harrison, Griffin, Sheehy, and Ken Smith traveled to New York City and persuaded Wall Street financial representatives from Moody's Investors Service Inc., to issue a favorable "Provision A" bond rating for the college. This rating meant an estimated \$38,000 to \$40,000 savings for the college and added to the

initial \$2 million in startup capital funds approved by voters, according to the minutes from the March 8, 1966, meeting of the MCC Board of Trustees.

With momentum gathering, the board realized they still lacked a name for the college.

Curiously, it was on this issue that they disagreed most. Perhaps it was because something as obscure as a name brought out all of the simmering tensions that had been building over the long months of hard work. Harrison liked the name Heritage College. Moore wanted to call it Dos Rios College — Spanish for the confluence of the two rivers, the Bosque and Brazos, which are located at the heart of Waco and were instrumental in the founding of the city by early settlers. Other suggestions included: McLennan County

College, Waco College and McLennan College. However, the majority of board members felt strongly that the college should include McLennan in its name, since it was drawing a tax base from the entire county, and they hoped to attract students from every town in the county. They also wanted to emphasize that the college would serve the community through adult education courses and by making its facilities available to the public.

On April 29, 1966, the board approved the name McLennan Community College. In doing so, it became the first college in the state of Texas to be named a "community college." Since then, several colleges throughout Texas and the nation have named their institutions "community colleges." "We decided that there weren't any community colleges in Texas, so we named it McLennan Community College," Board Chairman Griffin said proudly years later.

The first board and its advisors, such as Ken Smith and The University of Texas professor C.C. Colvert, are credited with keeping a tight reign on the purse strings of the institution and with stretching the startup funds as far as possible; they also developed the bylaws and policies. The burden on these charter trustees was a heavy one, but they accepted it with grace, strength, and courage. Many meetings and long hours were required of these dedicated citizens that first year. They made many difficult decisions. However, their honest, unending devotion to their cause helped them to endure the many tasks and to reap the rewards that lay ahead.

A President and Leader

The tasks before the new board appeared daunting. Foremost, the members knew they needed to find a president who would set the tone for the college. Then they hoped all the rest would fall into place. "We got elected, and we sat down and said, 'What the devil do we do now?'" Sheehy said. "And that's when we went and hired our first president." At the first board meeting of 1966, Sheehy reported on Jan. 11 that his personnel committee had 30 candidates for president.

Wilbur Allen Ball, a vice president at Wharton County Junior College southwest of Houston with a doctorate from The University of Texas, was on the list. As the board whittled down the list to the few finalists, the candidates

were brought to Waco with their spouses for interviews. Dr. Ball and his wife, LaWanda, stood out.

A young and not physically imposing man of 37 years, Dr. Ball projected unbridled optimism that he could hire a staff, set a curriculum, and find a location for the permanent campus within the next nine months to open for fall classes in September 1966. Dr. Ball later admitted that he basically told the board what he thought they wanted to hear. "During the interviewing I said, 'Yes.' I thought my [future] job depended on it. I thought, for one thing, that was the answer they wanted," Dr. Ball said, laughing about it more than four decades later. "I wasn't born yesterday. And I thought it could be done."

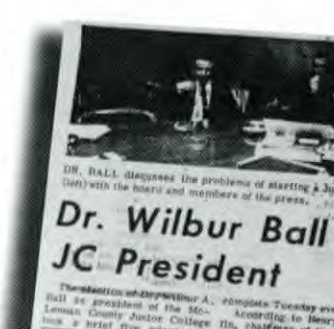
Sheehy, a respected 35-year-old trial lawyer who served as Waco's mayor from 1992 to 1996 (see page 26), said Dr. Ball exuded confidence during the interview process. "First and foremost, when I talked with him, I got some confidence. I try lawsuits, and I have to figure out a witness and whether you trust him or believe him," Sheehy said. "We soon decided we both looked at this the same way. It was one of those things."

Dr. Ball's belief in the seemingly impossible won them over. On Feb. 22, 1966, the board voted unanimously to hire Dr. Ball. He began as president of McLennan Community College one week later on March 1, 1966. His selection proved to be a crucial decision that all agreed was to benefit Central Texas. He led the college for 22 years until his retirement in 1988, and he left an indelible impression on thousands of students, faculty, and staff through the expansion of courses and community services offered by the college. "Our selection of Dr. Ball was either brilliant or lucky. He led seven blind mice and did an outstanding job," Moore said. Dr. Ball had never been president of a college, but he took the reigns and never looked back, board members said.

Born and reared in the Lone Star State, Dr. Ball came to MCC after serving as a vice president of Wharton County Junior College from 1963 to 1966. Prior to that, he had worked at Del Mar College in Corpus Christi, Texas, in the registrar's office and later as an assistant to the president. Dr. Ball credits his tenure in the registrar's office at Del Mar College with helping



Dr. Wilbur Ball



to prepare him for a better understanding of the business side of a college, as well as learning the curricula to offer, including which courses would transfer to four-year institutions and which courses adult students most wanted. In the registrar's office, "I was able to see so much of the operation of the college," he said, adding that he had considerable contact with faculty and students in that position.

As assistant to the president, he typically worked from 1 p.m. until the close of evening classes. Unofficially, he referred to himself as the pseudo-president of the evening school at Del Mar College, he mused. "I had to decide the courses to offer, the people to hire, and the advertisements to use and then the management of it," Dr. Ball said. He also had to oversee faculty and recalled once having to confront a professor who was accused of smelling like alcohol while teaching on campus. "At the same time, that was only one of my jobs. I was also responsible for the dormitories and all the discipline ... and working with parents," Dr. Ball said. "That assistant to the president job was just marvelous because I had so many, many things I did."

Dr. Ball also took this opportunity to study and examine how the Del Mar president worked with that college's board and kept harmony

you're not going to get fired if you don't lose one," Dr. Ball said. "If you're about to lose one, do what is necessary to make it all right."

Griffin, who was the first board chairman, concurred that their relationship was built on trust and respect. "Sometimes we'd have a disagreement about something, but it wasn't anything we couldn't work out. Usually it would be about money," Griffin said. "Bob Sheehy and I pretty well held the reigns on the finances as well as we could."

One thing Dr. Ball and the board mutually agreed upon from the beginning was establishing an open-door admissions policy and the importance of attracting students from all races and cultural backgrounds to the new school as well as providing continuing education courses for working adults. "You don't even think of it not being open-door. You don't. You think of taking as many people as you can and doing the best you can to move them forward. If they're not prepared for college, you take them and get them prepared for college. ... They can't do it in high school because they're already out," Dr. Ball said. "A community college has to have something for everybody."

Perhaps his strong convictions toward an open-door policy stemmed from his early roots in

One thing Dr. Ball and the board mutually agreed upon from the beginning was establishing an open-door admissions policy ... attracting students from all races and cultural backgrounds to the new school.

a segregated south Texas town. He was born in 1928 and grew up in the tiny then-segregated town of Berclair. Today the population is about 70 people — down from its heyday of 350 when Dr. Ball was a youngster. Despite the small population, there were three different schools during his elementary years: one school for whites, one school for blacks, and one school for Hispanics, Dr. Ball remembered. "The biggest fighting you ever heard ... was when the Hispanic students

among the staff. Professor Colvert at The University of Texas had taught him the importance of maintaining tranquility between the president and the Board of Trustees. Dr. Ball made that his priority at McLennan Community College. "Not that we didn't have some arguments from time to time, but there was never any rupture of relationships, and that's the main thing we were taught in the doctoral program: At all cost don't lose a single board member because



Left to Right:
Dr. Ball speaks to a gathering while still at Wharton County Junior College.

Dr. Ball with his children, Christi and Jason, at an MCC basketball game

Dr. Ball plants trees on Faculty Work Day.

were integrated into the white schools. I'm using the terminology that was used then. It was horrible," Dr. Ball said recalling the turmoil that shook his town and made an indelible impression on him. By his fifth-grade year, his school closed, and he rode a bus to Goliad, 15 miles away, where he graduated in 1946 as salutatorian in a class of 38 students.

He admits that his parents, who were ranchers and raised hogs and Spanish goats, were as racist as the others in town. But it was something that he never accepted. "My father was a small rancher, and my parents were highly prejudiced. Just about everyone was in those days. Both my father and mother were about 40 years old when I was born. They had come from way back. It was very, very common," Dr. Ball reflected. He recalled that his brother owned a little restaurant that had a back room. The sign hanging outside had a hand with a finger pointing to the back entrance and the word "Mexicans" to indicate where Hispanics could eat.

Refusing to embrace prejudice, Dr. Ball befriended several Hispanics and blacks. He played pool and baseball with several Hispanic children and went swimming in local creeks with his Hispanic and black friends. When he worked as a clerk in a Berclair grocery store, which primarily served Hispanic residents, his interest in Spanish increased. He was so taken with the Hispanic culture and language that he chose Spanish as one of his teaching fields and taught the language for several public school districts in Texas.

He graduated from The University of Texas in 1952 with an undergraduate degree in education, paid partially by the GI bill for his three years of service in the Air Force. He enlisted in the Air Force immediately after graduating from

high school and served three years as a way to afford college. He completed his master's degree in school administration at The University of Texas in 1953 after teaching high school English and Spanish in New Braunfels, Texas, from 1952 to 1953. He then taught Spanish and English in a Corpus Christi junior high school from 1953 until 1955, when he went to work for Del Mar College.

He recalls a disturbing incident in 1946 after he had enlisted in the Air Force. He was traveling by bus to San Antonio with another enlisted GI, who was Hispanic. Dr. Ball invited the soldier to dine with him at a stop, but the restaurant owner would not serve the soldier because of his skin color. "It wasn't that long ago, and it was that bad," Dr. Ball said. Twenty years after that bus trip, as the newly hired president of McLennan Community College, he had an opportunity to make all races and genders feel welcome at his college — students and faculty alike. It was a challenge that he embraced.

"Dr. Ball is a wonderful man. He has a love for the Hispanic culture," said Fay Gutierrez, hired in 1975 as a secretary and in 2006 served as the program director for the Alternative Teacher Certification Program.

Throughout his 22 years as president, Wilbur Ball was known for his frank and congenial style coupled with a tenacious work ethic and a drive for perfection. He admits that his administrative style was at times controlling and calls himself a micromanager. However, many say his job required those characteristics, especially during those early formative years. Those character traits and his undying determination helped to launch the institution.

HIRING FACULTY Junior College Head Prepares for Fall

By PARKEY CHESHIRE
Lariat Staff Writer

Like many college students, Dr. Wilbur A. Ball went through several majors before finally deciding to make education his career.

Ball is the first president of the newly formed McLennan County Junior College and a graduate of the University of Texas.

He said, "I, as many new college students, entered college without any definite goal. I had several, one right after another to quick success."

"I happened to take a course in educational psychology and the professor in that course illustrated one toward education," he said.

Ball went on to take a bachelor of science degree in Spanish and English teaching from U.T. and graduated to a teaching position in New Braunfels.

He remained after a year to U.T. and received a master of arts degree in education administration.

Again he took a teaching job, this time in Corpus Christi. Next he went to an assistant registrar's position at Del Mar Junior College in Corpus Christi and after three years moved up to administrative assistant to the president.

One year later he was back in school. This time working toward a doctorate.

In two more years he was back at Del Mar where he finished his dissertation and moved to the vice-presidency of Wharton County Junior College in Wharton. His next step was McLennan County and Waco.

"I know the more education a person has, the more he is able to approach the prob-

lems of the county and city to contribute to the progress of the county and city," he explained that the purpose of the junior college is based on the needs of the community. It has several and is not strictly devoted to producing students for colleges.

He divided the college into three areas: the college program, technical and cultural courses and special adult classes.

"Junior colleges are called to give every child a chance. We are not known as 'the open door college,'" he said.

Ball said this is especially oriented to subjects that are desired for.

Another facet of the college is the counseling program. "Counseling is an important part of the college," he said.

He feels that institutions that are often deprived of attention of the state.

Ball hopes to see the junior college in 1966. It has 400 to 500 students and the total is 200 to 300.

"We're doing our best to get our share of the state funds and if we can't get them, we'll have to look for other ways to get them."

For the first time in the history of McLennan County, Texas, the state will be able to approach the prob-

Charter board member J. Robert Sheehy Sr. served four years as Waco's mayor, from 1992 until 1996, but Sheehy lists among his greatest contributions to Central Texas the six years he spent on the MCC Board of Trustees. Politically, Sheehy said that up until the founding of MCC in 1965, Waco had looked to a few well-established

abilities. "It really started with the Jaycees that I enjoyed working with other people who were willing to get together and do something. We had a strong Jaycee group in the city of Waco," he recalled.

During the 1965 bond election year, Sheehy had his 35th birthday, the cutoff age for being in

Serving MCC is a *Sheehy Family Tradition*



J. Robert Sheehy Sr.

lished families to lead the county. A new group of citizens like former MCC Board of Trustees Chairman Griffin and Sheehy, a Catholic in a predominantly Baptist town, had great influence on an organization that would come to mean much to Central Texas. "For the first time the younger people had a pretty big influence on getting this going. It wasn't just the ones down in the banks and the big businesses. This is one thing everybody can crank into, and they didn't know how to stop us," Sheehy declared.

Sheehy's election to the MCC Board of Trustees followed his 1962-1963 reign as Texas president for the Junior Chamber of Commerce, a nonprofit national service organization that provides leadership opportunities for young men. While Sheehy served as Jaycees state president, he won a national leadership recognition award from the organization after being the local president of the Jaycees in Waco from 1959 to 1960. He credits his involvement in the Jaycees with helping him to develop confidence in his leader-

Jaycees. Taking on the role as a charter board member for McLennan Community College seemed the next logical step in his lifelong dedication to community service. His father, John F. Sheehy, taught him the value of performing civic duties. He also served as Waco's mayor in 1934 as one of the youngest men ever elected to that post.

After being elected to the charter board in 1965, Sheehy Sr. served as board chairman in 1969 when the college relocated to its present permanent campus in northwest Waco. Not surprisingly, 25 years later, his son, J. Robert Sheehy Jr., followed in his footsteps and was elected to the Board of Trustees in 1994. In 1998 the younger Sheehy was elected board chairman — a position he still held in September 2006 as the college celebrated its 40th anniversary.

Sheehy Sr. said they have always been a family that prides itself in welcoming others. They strongly believed that the addition of McLennan Community College would help to expand McLennan County's economic base by preventing more of its educated citizens from moving away. Their theory has proved to be correct. At the time, they thought, "If we are able to get more people to stay in Waco, Waco's going to grow and prosper," Sheehy said. "We were tired of seeing our best people go look elsewhere."

The senior Sheehy recalled that no one on that charter board had any previous experience in running a college, but they all shared a common drive and open-mindedness. In retrospect, he said they did well: "We had to take a leap of faith, and the good Lord watched upon us pretty well. I don't think we fouled up too bad."

The Sheehy Family



A Day at a Time

Dr. Wilbur A. Ball started work as President on March 1, 1966, just six months prior to the first day of classes. From the very beginning of his tenure at McLennan Community College, Dr. Ball was pressed to accomplish a litany of tasks to open the college on time. At first he was the sole employee with no working staff.

He immediately hired an old colleague, Chester R. Hastings, as the first dean of instruction; the two began a cycle of very long work days and nights that lasted for several years. Hastings began working on April 1, 1966, a month after Dr. Ball started. Dr. Ball and Hastings met in 1960 at The University of Texas in Austin, where they had been enrolled in a college administrative doctoral program. Both were among an elite group of 10 doctoral students who received tuition and grants from the Kellogg Junior College Leadership programs. The Kellogg programs helped to train many community college leaders across the United States during this decade of growth. At the time, 10 Kellogg programs existed throughout the United States, including the Austin site. Professor Colvert directed the program at The University of Texas. Hired as a consultant by the steering committee, Colvert proved instrumental in helping to get MCC started. In fact, Colvert gave Wilbur Ball's name to the personnel committee.

Also, Colvert ingrained into Dr. Ball and Hastings certain tenets that a community college should follow. "A community college has all these facets: technical education, college transfer, voca-

"A community college has all these facets: technical education, college transfer, vocational, adult education, opportunities for adults in the evenings." — Dr. Ball

tional, adult education, opportunities for adults in the evenings," Dr. Ball explained. "That's what a community college is all about, and the people who went through the program that Chester Hastings and I went through had that pounded into our heads for two full years."

Aside from philosophically structuring the direction of the college, there was much to do physically before the first day of classes on Sept. 19, 1966. "We had no faculty, no catalogs, no books, no staff ... no campus," Hastings said.



Chester R. Hastings, the first Dean of Instruction (left), and Dr. Ball

Looking back on it, Hastings said they took a day at a time. "Things just fell into place," he remembered.

"All of this was terribly hard, back-breaking work for years. It was years before I could take more than a half-day a week off," Dr. Ball said. "But it was such fun, and it was so rewarding." Working from a suite of borrowed offices in the First National Bank building downtown, Dr. Ball and Hastings poured over 400 applications and resumés from which they built their first staff. With a limited budget and virtually no income because county taxes had not yet been collected, they had to be prudent. Cheap was more like it, they said.

With funds tight, the board decided that MCC would offer only college transfer courses the first academic year. Their strategy was to hire instructors qualified to teach multiple subjects because they could juggle class loads. Their initial staff included 22 faculty members who performed multiple tasks. Other types of specialized and vocational courses would be added later, based on local demand. By 1968, adult continuing education courses commenced and have been expanded





Wilbur A. Ball, President



Chester R. Hastings, Dean of Instruction



Paul Gartner, Business Manager



Robert L. Gilliam, Director of Counseling and Testing



Burton Mason, Registrar



Donald Tebbetts, Librarian



Charles S. Adams, History



Kenneth E. Alford, Coordinator of Music



Homer Allison, Mathematics



Ruth Harper Bullard, Business & Office Ed.



Hoyt Jackson Burnette, Biology



Vernon Cole, Director Health & Physical Ed.



Ann Cunningham, Health & Physical Ed.



Billy Dowdy, English



Marcia A. Jacobs Duke, Psychology



Milton Hawkins, English



Ezra L. Henderson, Business & Office Ed.



Dorothy Karnes, Coordinator of Office Ed.



Marilyn Kelly, Speech & Drama



Charles M. King, Coordinator of English



Clyde Koehne, Coordinator of History/Gov.



S. Jerry Matthews, English



Aubrey Pattillo Owen, Mathematics



Don Tatum, Coordinator of Physics, Mathematics



Robert J. Trout, Economics, Government, Business



Robert Schrope Wade, Art



Michael A. White, History



Joe D. Zajicek, Chemistry

In 2006, Joe Zajicek celebrated his 40th year with MCC. He is the only member of the original faculty still teaching full time at MCC.



annually. "We were looking for people who had multi-talents," Hastings said of that first faculty. "I remember we hired a recently retired Army colonel who had a master's [degree] in accounting and a master's in government and a master's in economics, so he could teach all three of those."

Robert J. Trout, the retired colonel, had received his undergraduate degree from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, his M.B.A. from Harvard University, a master's degree from Trinity University in San Antonio, and a master's degree from George Washington University in Washington, D.C. Trout's impressive academic background exemplified the quality of instructors that Hastings sought, yet still kept down the faculty budget.

The charter faculty also included six women and one African-American instructor. Marilyn Kelly, one of the first instructors hired,

would teach speech and drama. Dubbed "the baby" by Hastings, at age 22, she was the youngest faculty member brought on that first semester. She was fresh from her studies as a master's student at Baylor University, and Kelly said she was younger than many of her students that first year.

"There were very few females on that first faculty, and men definitely were predominant in college teaching at that time, but there were at least [a few] of us," Kelly said. "They really were looking for a cross section in age. They were aware that there would be some type of turnover — and in fact MCC has very, very low turnover — but the idea that some would be retiring and others would be hiring ... they hired with that in mind." Ironically, their theory proved to be incorrect as the faculty and staff typically don't leave MCC; most keep their positions until they retire. Even then, many return to teach as adjunct instructors.

Kelly enjoyed working at McLennan Community College so much that she spent most of her life there, ebbing in and out of the faculty as she took some years off to raise a family. MCC, she says, ultimately became her family. In 2004, she retired to spend more time with her grandchildren. "The administrators and others who were far more informed and experienced than I was in education saw this as the opportunity to put the word 'community' in there. We didn't see ourselves as a junior college, per se. We had our own function within the community that was unique. And we wanted to have an extensive continuing education program to serve the community," Kelly explained.

Chemistry instructor Joe D. Zajicek celebrated his 40th anniversary with the faculty in 2006. As the college celebrated its 40th anniversary, Zajicek was the only original charter instructor still teaching full time. Hired at the age of 27, Zajicek said the college has given him a lifetime of fulfillment in teaching a tough subject. He added that he has the utmost respect for Dr. Ball and his leadership of MCC in the early years. "As a president, he did a very good job," he said. "Coming in, he had an idea of how it should operate and operated it in the black during that period of time."

Faculty Interviews Coming Soon For Junior College, Ball Reveals
By CLARENCE WEIKEL
Waco News-Tribune Staff
Dr. Wilbur Ball, president of the still new McLennan Community College, said, "Estimates we hear run from 1968," he said, adding "Dr. Ball, the site of the campus is still under construction."

Basic English Course To Prepare Students
A basic English course for persons who did not have the course in high school will be offered at McLennan Community College. Charles King, chairman of the department of communication at DePaul University, will be coordinating the course. King said the course will be offered in the fall semester.

Three to Teach Social Science At College Here
Social Science offerings at McLennan Community College will consist of one year of social science and one year of western history. The college is planning to hire three social science teachers. The college is currently interviewing candidates for the positions.

Several Options In Business Study
McLennan Community College's business department offers a variety of options for students. Students can choose to study for a two-year associate degree or a four-year bachelor's degree. The college offers programs in business administration, accounting, and management.

Centexans Can Begin Studying Toward Art Degree at College
McLennan Community College is offering a new program for students who wish to begin work on a degree in fine arts or who wish to complete a degree in fine arts. The college is currently accepting applications for students who wish to begin work on a degree in fine arts or who wish to complete a degree in fine arts.

Music Instruction Program Outlined
McLennan Community College has outlined a music instruction program for students. The program will include courses in music theory, applied music, and music appreciation. The college is currently accepting applications for students who wish to enroll in the program.

College Will Offer Speech Day, Night
McLennan Community College will offer a speech day and night program for students. The program will include courses in public speaking, debate, and speech writing. The college is currently accepting applications for students who wish to enroll in the program.

Community College Sets 'Must' Course
McLennan Community College has set a "must" course for all full-time freshmen. The course is an introductory psychology course. The college is currently accepting applications for students who wish to enroll in the program.

Five Teachers for Math and Science
McLennan Community College is hiring five teachers for math and science. The college is currently interviewing candidates for the positions. The college is currently interviewing candidates for the positions.

Bridging the Gap

At the time, Dr. Ball and Hastings had no idea the impact their choices for faculty would have on the community in later years. As they scrambled to fill positions with less than six months until classes began, their goal was to fill the positions with as many qualified, diverse ages and backgrounds as possible to reflect the diverse population of the area they serviced.

During this racially charged time in America's history, President Ball and Dean Hastings strived to hire the most qualified instructors, and they admitted that they actively sought out minority applicants, as well. They and the Board of Trustees wanted a faculty that accurately reflected the varying faces and races of their students — individuals who the students would feel comfortable with and approach with questions and problems.

Their objectives went contrary to much of American society at the time. From the mid 1950s through early 1960s, most of the country had been divided over civil rights issues that culminated with multiple deaths and were particularly visceral in the South.

As the schism between blacks and whites widened throughout the country, McLennan Community College founders were determined to close it in McLennan County by providing a higher education institute that was a melting pot for students from all backgrounds. And during its 40 years serving the community, MCC has strived to continue that trend.

In the fall of 1975, the earliest recorded data for minority enrollment, 3,552 students were enrolled at MCC; of those, 80 percent were white, 11 percent black, 6 percent Hispanic and 3 percent of other ethnicity. By 1988, of the 5,389 students, 78 percent were white, 14 percent black, 7 percent Hispanic and 1 percent of other ethnicity. Ten years later in 1998, there were 5,628 students, and the population of white students dropped to 71 percent; black students remained at 14 percent; Hispanic students increased to 11 percent, and 4 percent were of other ethnicity. By fall 2005, of the 7,690 students, 65 percent were white; 18 percent were black; 15 percent were Hispanic and 2 percent of other ethnicity (see Figure 2.1).

The college also has strived to employ qualified minorities to represent the diverse races and cultures of Central Texas. During its startup, how-

ever, finding qualified minority applicants was not always easy. The first faculty in fall of 1966 had only one African-American instructor, Ezra L. Henderson, who taught business and office education. Black county extension agent W.C. David sat on the charter MCC Board of Trustees and was the only minority on the seven-member board.

In fact, David recommended Henderson for a position at MCC. David was an alumnus from predominantly black Prairie View A&M University outside Houston, where Henderson had been employed as a secretary to the president and had earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in business administration. David had come in contact with Henderson numerous times, and Henderson said she later learned that he had been impressed with her office skills and professionalism.

Henderson had grown up in Waco. She said she jumped at the chance to work at an integrated college in her hometown, although she had some trepidation. She was leaving a minority institution where she felt comfortable and was well-respected; she was hesitant about beginning at a new college that had yet to establish a reputation or even achieve accreditation. In addition, she was the only African-American person on the faculty.

"I was the very first African-American instructor employed in the teaching area," said Henderson, who turned 85 in August 2006. "I was apprehensive about that. But Dr. Ball called and wanted me to come in for an interview ... After I talked with Dr. Ball and Dorothy Karnes, who was the office education coordinator, I felt a little better about it. Dr. Ball was a very nice person, and I really appreciated that."

Henderson taught at McLennan Community College for 18 years before retiring in 1984. Over the years, she watched as more and more faculty minorities were hired. "There weren't many of us [at first], but there were quite a number of us when I retired," Henderson said. "I worked hard. I'm not saying it was the easiest thing, but I had help from some nice people."

Throughout his presidency, Dr. Ball continued to recruit qualified minority faculty and administrators. In 1973, when the position of dean of Vocational and Technical Education was vacated, Dr. Ball said that he made an effort to

seek out minority applicants for the position.

Alvin L. Pollard Sr., an African-American assistant director at the black, state-run vocational school Drake State Technical College in Huntsville, Ala., appeared on the short list. Pollard later acknowledged that he was taken aback by the surprise call from Waco in the spring

"MCC has been very careful not to try to identify itself as being a community college for just one group — whites. It has always been interested in diversity." — Alvin Pollard

of 1973. However, Pollard said he was intrigued at the possibility of working in the administration for an integrated college that offered academic, vocational, and technical courses, but he was concerned that they may not be aware of his race. As the time drew near for him to visit Waco for a formal interview, Pollard decided to ask Hastings if he was aware that he was African-American.

"I didn't want to waste my time and their time. It never came up, and of course I would never say whether I was black, white, Hispanic, or whatever. Finally, I said, 'Now, Dr. Hastings, now you know who you're talking to, is that right?' And Hastings said something along the lines of — in his very deep voice — 'Yes, and we're still interested in talking to you.' Then I said, 'Well, I'm still interested in the opportunity.' And so I came out to the interview."

Hastings recalled the conversation years later. "He said, 'Do you know who I am?' ... And he couldn't believe that we ... asked him to come," Hastings said. "I said, 'Yeah, we know who you are.' ... And we still talk about that."

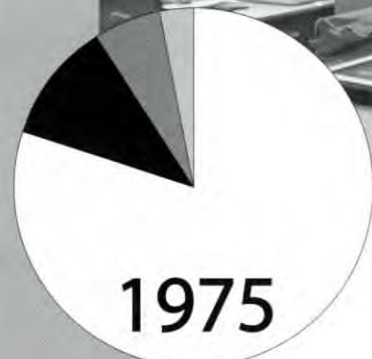
Pollard was hired as dean of Vocational/Technical Education in August 1973, which, at the time, was the highest ranking minority position. He held that position for 29 years, and in 2002, he was promoted to vice president of program development under President Dennis Michaelis — a position he still held as the college celebrated its 40th anniversary in fall 2006. During his tenure at MCC, Pollard served for several years as the campus Equal Employment Opportunity Officer helping to settle grievances among faculty and students concerning race relations and charges involving sexual harassment.

Pollard credits the college's first president,

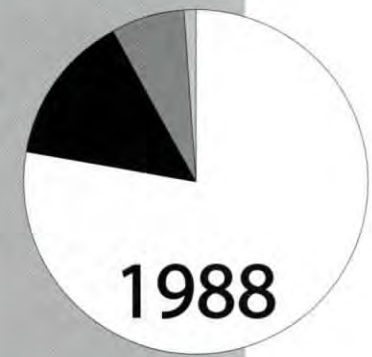


Top: Ezra Henderson teaches class at James Connally Air Force Base.

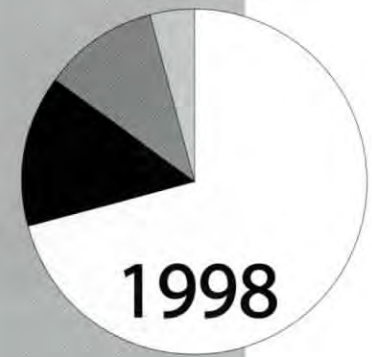
Above: Photo from a news article on newly formed Business and Office Education department



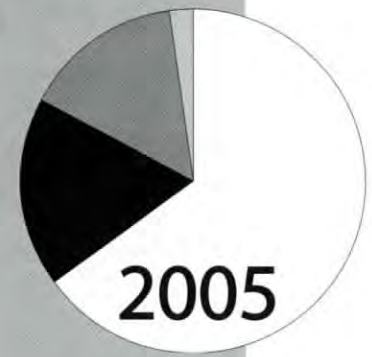
1975



1988

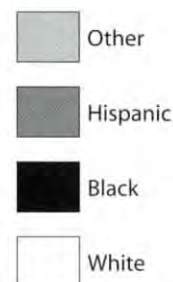


1998



2005

Figure 2.1
Racial Breakdown of MCC Students Over the Years



Alvin L. Pollard Sr., dean of Vocational/Technical Education, in the 1970s



Alvin L. Pollard Sr., vice president of program development, in 2006



The soon-to-be shuttered James Connally Air Force Base in 1966 was home to James Connally Technical Institute and MCC.

Temporary Quarters

On March 8, 1966, the McLennan Community College Board of Trustees officially voted that they would open the college in September 1966 despite the lack of a permanent campus. This meant the school would operate without state funding that first year as the biennial Legislature was not in session and could not vote on whether to allocate funds for the institute until it reconvened.

The quick opening also meant that the college would not have time to achieve accreditation before the first semester, but Dr. Ball assured the board that he would work to secure a commitment from senior colleges to accept MCC transfer credits. He also promised the board that he would aggressively pursue accreditation through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, one of six regional accrediting associations in the United States. In fact, Dr. Ball entertained a visit from SACS representatives just a year later, on March 13 and 14, 1967. By December 1968, just weeks before they moved into their new permanent campus, MCC received national accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

What they needed immediately was temporary quarters to hold classes until their new campus could be built, which could take a few years. Why such a rush? Why not wait to hold the classes on the new campus? The board and Dr. Ball proved to be savvy enough to realize that the funding was available, so they shouldn't wait.

Many credited state Sen. Murray Watson Jr. with conveying to them the political urgency for opening as soon as possible. At the time, the political stars seemed to be perfectly aligned for higher education institutions to open in Central Texas: Sen. Watson served on the powerful Senate Finance Committee in Austin; Gov. John Connally was soundly behind the opening that year of a technical and vocational institute in Waco, and the president of the United States, Lyndon B. Johnson — who hailed from Texas — was pushing an aggressive education agenda through Congress.

Had they waited to hold classes on their permanent campus, which was not completed until January 1969, funding might have collapsed, and the campus might never have been built. Indeed, by 1968, funding had substantially dried up, and they managed to keep the college going through other financial venues, but at least by then they had the core foundation for the campus built. "The federal funds did start drying up very soon after we got our first grants and loans," Dr. Ball said.

They needed a site that they could remodel fairly inexpensively to serve them temporarily, so they could start classes in the fall of 1966. The James Connally Air Force Base, which was slated to close, proved the perfect venue for provisional quarters. Watson steered them toward the base, which, in 1965, was being converted into James Connally Technical Institute through a bill proposed by Watson and signed by Gov. Connally. The technical institute opened its doors to about 500 students in January 1966, and Watson convinced the MCC board that there was plenty of room on the base for MCC students also. The more higher education offered there, the better, he thought. "I thought they'd complement each other," Watson said later. Watson was highly respected; when he spoke, the MCC board listened.

"He helped on the state level. What strings he pulled I don't have a clue," Griffin said years later. "It certainly helped to have Senator Watson on your side, let's put it that way." In fact, it was Watson who is credited with helping to keep MCC's name on the list for funding every year in succeeding years. When questioned four decades later about his involvement in securing funding for McLennan Community College, Watson smiled and shrugged with modesty. "At the end of the day we're talking about educating people. We're not talking about just teaching one program, we're educating people. And I never cared who taught them as long as they taught 'em," Watson said.

After the suggestion of using James Connally Air Force Base, Dr. Ball quickly toured it and surveyed the prospects. Several of the buildings had been used for military classes and could be easily converted into classrooms with a little paint and added desks, he thought. Others would take a bit more work but could be made ready for the first day of classes on Sept. 19, 1966, he reported to the board. Aesthetically, the buildings were old and not very attractive, and a major criticism was that the base was located too far north of Waco, not centralized to downtown Waco as many had hoped.

However, Dr. Ball, who himself served in the Air Force in 1946, believed that the first class of McLennan Community College could withstand a bit of discomfort in exchange for quality, affordable higher education in their own hometown. So it was off to the old military base for the first classes, where the old barracks were converted into chemistry labs, and the speech classes abutted a recreational area where the ping pong of ping pong balls could be heard all hours of the day.

Dr. Ball negotiated 40 classrooms on the base to be renovated for the college. The Lindon Coone Co. of Waco received the renovation contract, which totaled \$23,852 and involved 16 buildings. Most buildings were decaying structures built during World War II. Chalkboards, movie screens, chemistry labs, typing facilities for business classes, and improved lighting expanded the functionality. Even after classes began, some of the work had not been completed. Some of the classroom walls and lighting were not finished. Sinks in the science labs needed to be added as

Junior College Trustees Discuss JCAFB Location

By TOMMY WEST
News-Tribune Staff

Trustees of the McLennan County junior college unanimously approved a recommendation Tuesday night that an architect be retained to develop preliminary sketches and cost estimates on utilization of James Connally Air Force Base as temporary location for the college. The recommendation was one of five submitted by trustee Dick Moore's facility planning committee. The other four recommendations, which were also unanimously approved, were:

1. Recognize that planning and construction of a new campus is a long-range project (3-4 years) before first start the college in temporary facilities that will be available and suitable for 3-4 year period.
2. Make preliminary commitment to James Connally Technical Institute, relative to space and location requirements; and make no definite plans for temporary or permanent campus until a chief administrator has been retained.
3. From information and suggestions offered by Moore and trustee Bob Sheehy, the board authorized Moore's committee to make a preliminary probe into feasibility of obtaining parts of some of the facilities on five adjoining sections of James Connally.
4. Moore placed a telephone call during a break in the meeting to Dr. Roy Dugger, director of the James Connally Technical Institute, and said Dugger would relay the board's preliminary interest in those sections to a university board this morning. The technical institute is being developed under the jurisdiction of A&M.
5. Sheehy, chairman of the board's personnel selection committee, reported that his committee will send out requests for information from 18 persons who have been mentioned as candidates for president of the college.

He said he will have all the information and the committee's recommendations ready for the next board meeting on Dec. 14.

The board has given top priority to the task of hiring a president. A report board heard a report from Harrison's finance committee and instructed William Peeler, attorney for the board's legal counsel, to request the county tax assessor, Joe Alexander to assist in collecting the junior college forms to all county depositories for junior college.

Members of the administrative staff should be able to move into the new facilities from temporary offices at 819 Washington Avenue by Aug. 1. Dr. Wilbur Ball, college president, said Thursday during a tour of the facilities.

Linden Coone Co. of Waco is contractor for the project.

See COLLEGE, Page 3

Renovation of JCAFB Immediate

Renovations will begin immediately to convert former barracks at James Connally Air Force Base into administrative office quarters for McLennan Community College.

Members of the administrative staff should be able to move into the new facilities from temporary offices at 819 Washington Avenue by Aug. 1. Dr. Wilbur Ball, college president, said Thursday during a tour of the facilities.

Linden Coone Co. of Waco is contractor for the project.

Junior College Temporarily At JCAFB, Ball Tells Educators

By Elaine Sparks

Dr. Wilbur A. Ball announced that the McLennan Junior College will be temporarily located at the James Connally Air Force Base at a luncheon given by the Education Committee of the Chamber of Commerce at noon Wednesday in the Gold Room of the Allico Center for the county superintendents of the two new educational institutions.

The decision on the location of the school as well as several other matters Tuesday night according to Dr. Ball.

Dr. Ball, who is the only faculty member chosen so far, told the guests, that he is "eager to get started" and "wants to make a start in the right direction."

Dr. Ball said, "We hope to represent what has been the 'missing link' (the school system) in this area." Ball also told the educators present that the very best education possible was their job. First on a list of plans announced by Ball is the hiring of a faculty, including a librarian, a business manager, and administrative personnel. He said that interviewing for faculty members will start soon.

It is hoped, he said, that a full range of majors can be offered the first year although this may not be possible because the school will not get any state appropriations the first year.

All of the facilities are not available yet, he said, but there are many possibilities at JCAFB where the school will be located for at least two years. Gymnasium, athletic fields, classrooms, and a pool are all on the base.

Neither a permanent location or a permanent name for the junior college have been chosen.

Ball asked the educators present to run another survey among the seniors at their schools to determine how many students expect next fall when the junior college will open for the first time.

T. C. Fitzhugh welcomed Dr. Ball and his family to Waco. Dr. Ball said that he was looking forward to having his family with him in Waco.

There was a question and answer period after the brief meeting.

Jr. College Credits Will Be Accepted

Students attending McLennan County junior college should have no difficulty in transferring their work to a senior college. Dr. Wilbur A. Ball said today.

Dr. Ball, president of McLennan County junior college, reported on a survey of Texas public and private colleges and universities to determine whether credits earned at McLennan County junior college would transfer to the senior institutions.

"Responses already received from a majority of the institutions indicate that a student attending McLennan County Junior College the first year of operation will have no difficulty transferring his work, provided satisfactory grades have been earned, and provided the student makes satisfactory progress in the senior institution to which he transfers.

Baylor University and Paul Quinn College will accept transfer work from the Junior College under the conditions stated above.

Rice University is the only institution stating that work will not be transferable until the new Junior College is fully accredited.

Dr. Eell stated, "We are able to assure our students that their work will be accepted by the senior institutions."

Senior Colleges Will Take Credits

McLennan County Junior College District announced today the results of a survey of Texas public and private colleges and universities to determine whether credits earned at McLennan County Junior College would transfer to the senior institutions.

Responses already received from a majority of the institutions indicate that a student attending McLennan County Junior College the first year of operation will have no difficulty transferring his work, provided satisfactory grades have been earned, and provided the student makes satisfactory progress in the senior institution to which he transfers.

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During McLennan Community College's early years, many students attended classes through the GI Bill benefits. In March 1966, just six months before MCC opened, President Lyndon Johnson added more benefits and services to include education and training programs under the Veterans Readjustment Benefits Act of 1966.

MCC — Serving our Veterans



Under this act, for the first time in the GI Bill history, service personnel also were eligible for GI Bill education and training while they were on active duty. These added benefits provided education to post-Korean War veterans, who served between Feb. 1, 1955, and Aug. 4, 1964, as well as to Vietnam-Era veterans, who served between Aug. 5, 1964, and May 7, 1975. To be eligible, a veteran had to have served more than 180 continuous days, any part of which was after Jan. 31, 1955, and have other than a dishonorable discharge. Participants on active duty had to have served two years. This was later changed to 180 days. Originally, this GI Bill provided one month of education and training for each month of service, for a maximum of 36 months. In December 1976, maximum entitlement was extended to 45 months.



Roy A. Barker, a member of MCC's first graduating class in 1967 and a retired Air Force major

The Veterans Administration paid veterans directly, out of which the veterans paid their tuition, fees, books, and other training costs. A single veteran received up to \$100 a month at first. This was increased to \$130 in 1967, \$175 in 1970, \$220 in 1972, \$270 in 1974, \$292 in 1976, \$311 in 1977, \$327 in 1980 and \$376 in 1984.

From 1966 through 1989, the Veterans Affairs Administration spent more than \$42 billion to provide educational assistance for veterans. More than 6 million Vietnam War veterans, 1.4 million post-Korean War veterans, and 751,000 service members trained under the program. A total of 5.1 million trained in colleges, 2.5 million in other schools, 591,000 on the job, and 56,000 in on-farm training, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

'Rice on the Runway'

With new books in hand, the first students of McLennan Community College entered the freshly painted barracks and began classes on Sept. 19, 1966, at the renovated James Connally Air Force Base. The first class was 855 strong — 355 students more than anyone had expected.

To meet the increase in students, adjunct instructors were quickly hired and more courses were added. Nearly 100 courses were offered through MCC in the fall of 1966, including standard core academic courses, business vocational courses and courses in physical education, choir, religion, foreign languages, music and theatre, according to the 1966 *McLennan Community College General Catalogue*. By the second semester, the faculty grew to 35 full-time instructors. By the fall of 1967, the student population jumped to 1,500; the faculty swelled to 40 full-time instructors teaching 140 courses. In 1977, there were 322 courses. By 2006, the school's 40th anniversary year, more than 52 different degree tracks totaling more than 1,665 courses were offered for more than 7,800 enrolled students.

"We grew like Topsy," Hastings said. "Initially, my title was dean of instruction, and the second year, because we'd grown so much, we hired a dean of instruction, and I became the academic vice president." Hastings and Dr. Ball speculated that the open-door admissions policy attracted hundreds of students who would not have otherwise attempted to take college courses. Students did have to meet certain requirements for some courses such as attaining a high school diploma or passing entrance exams — depending on the curriculum they wanted to pursue.

Former student Danny Uptmore, now an MCC employee responsible for the college's Corporate and Professional Training Program, said there was a very welcoming "can-do" attitude toward students in the early startup years. There was an "open-door concept of community college where anyone can come here, and you don't have to have those academics rigors of getting into a ... university," he said. "Many of us were from the same economic class and had the same goals. We knew we had to get college to succeed. Education was going to be a way to improve our spot in life."

To attract students from other institutions, the college also allowed students to get credit for courses taken from accredited institutions. At

first, MCC was not accredited through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, but by December 1968, MCC received national accreditation during the association's annual meeting.

"Our credits were transferable from the beginning," Dr. Ball told MCC student Kathy Kultgen, who conducted an oral history interview of him on March 24, 1976. "It is not possible to have accreditation the minute you open your doors. At that time, the minimum time in which you could achieve full accreditation was about two years, and we achieved our accreditation in December of 1968, which was in the minimum length of time."

Realizing that they could receive affordable tuition and transferable credits drew many students to MCC. Tuition for a resident of McLennan County taking 12 credit hours or more was \$65. Tuition for out-of-county residents taking 12 hours or more was \$80, and out-of-state students paid \$200. With additional fees and books, the average cost to the local student was less than \$150 per semester.

Danny Uptmore was the first in his family to attend college. Neither of his parents graduated from high school, and they had little money to spend on college for him. He went on to be MCC

college also had federal work-study funds available, and veterans took advantage of the GI bill benefits (see sidebar at left).

Regardless of the rapid increase in students, the community college atmosphere still prevailed. In order to help students achieve their best academically, Hastings and Dr. Ball mandated that classes were not to exceed 35 students in order to allow students more individualized time with instructors. Of course, the renovated classrooms at the old military base could hardly hold more than 35 students anyway.

The first two years of the college's existence in the old barracks posed special challenges for faculty and students. Despite the renovations, the crude barracks had thin classroom walls, and students complained about the noise from adjacent rooms. "People who sat in the back of my classroom felt they should get credit for the other class too,



Left to Right: A biology class at the James Connally Air Force Base campus

The first MCC cheerleaders

The first student government

Junior College Tuition Set \$65 Per Semester

By TOMMY WEST
Waco News-Tribune Staff

Trustees for the McLennan County junior college set the tuition rate for the coming year Tuesday night at \$65 per semester for full-time students living in McLennan County.

The board also hired its first faculty member and tended to several other items, but took no action on two items expected to come up: naming the college and discussing specific proposals for location of the permanent campus.

So the McLennan County junior college is still without an official name.

The board, by a unanimous vote of 4-0, approved the tuition and fee schedule recommended by college president Dr. Wilbur Ball.

Tuition sets the security Texas but outside McLennan County, and \$17 if they live outside Texas.

Ball said the tuition rates are "moderate."

"They're not the cheapest and they're certainly not the highest," he said. He said the rates are "in line" with other colleges in the area — Navarro in Corsicana, Hillsboro, Temple in Tarrant and Central Texas in Kerrville.

In addition to the tuition schedule approved by the board, the major ones are: a student activity fee, applied in the courses. The first teacher college is Mrs. Karnes. Ball said business education is an instru-

McLennan College Gets Study Grant

McLennan Community College received approval Friday for the first half of a \$10,800 work-study grant from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Dr. Wilbur Ball, college president, said the money will be able to about 30 needy students stay in school by working part-time for the college.

The \$5,400 approved Friday for the period from July Dec. 31, 1966.

Dr. Ball said an additional \$5,400 is expected after Dec. 31 to complete the fiscal year. He said the junior college will contribute \$1,200, making the total program for 1966-67 fiscal year total \$10,800.

Most of the students are from low-

Junior College Quizzing TEA On New GI Bill

Dr. Wilbur Ball, president of McLennan County junior college, said today college officials are seeking approval from the state for the training of veterans.

McLennan Community College Approved For Vets Training

McLennan Community College has received notification from the Texas Education Agency that it is now officially approved for the training of veterans.

Vets Eligible For Schooling

Thousands of veterans eligible for educational assistance will enroll in schools throughout Texas during the next few days, according to Jack Coker, Manager of the Veterans Administration Office, Waco.



could be heard constantly since her room abutted a base recreational area. She says she gave consideration to the difficulties students faced in making speeches to the class amidst the hiss of ping pong games. "We made some adjustments," she laughed. "It's hard for students to give speeches of introduction with the sounds of ping pong balls in the background."

Since it had been a male-dominated military base, each floor had been equipped with two restrooms for men only. To accom-

University in Houston and the deafening noise the students endured whenever jets took off. Often, lectures would come to a complete standstill as students and instructors waited for tests on B58 bomber jet engines to be completed before lectures could resume.

"The two things I remember the most about that first year was that when they would start up the jets or do whatever process they would, you just couldn't hear ... and it just shut down the entire campus for that five minutes or so that they fired up the jets," Uptmore said. "The other thing that I remember was that our security people at the campus were actually military police. You had to really watch how you drove around there because you weren't only getting in trouble with the local campus security, but you were going to get taken to the MPs."

modate female students, one of the restrooms on each floor was designated for females with handwritten signs. Mysteriously, those signs frequently disappeared — leading to several embarrassing incidents for female students that first year, White said.

In the building where history courses were taught, all of the electrical fuses blew if instructors used the overhead projectors at the same time. In another building, one student broke her ankle when part of a porch collapsed. White picked up the injured student and personally drove her to the emergency room of a local hospital that first semester, he recalled. Up to four instructors shared one office and phone. And instructors recall that the library inadequately stocked reference books and periodicals.

Students playfully referred to the college as "Rice on the Runway," a reference to Rice

Several students and faculty recall how confusing that first year was because of the military jurisdiction. Since Connally Air Force Base was still a functioning military installation, it was under jurisdiction of military police. But the addition of MCC and James Connally Technical Institute on the base placed students under the jurisdiction of campus police as well. Students who violated parking restrictions could return to their vehicles to find multiple tickets from the campus police and military police.

White said his early days teaching history for MCC were challenging, but he still looks back on those days fondly. The base did offer some advantages to MCC students, such as the use of its gym, bowling alley, and theater, where the first graduation ceremony was held in spring 1967.

Unearthing a School Spirit

With classes underway and instructors finding their way through the maze of barracks at James Connally, there was one thing substantially lacking within the college: a unified school spirit.

In the administration's haste to start classes, several tasks had not been completed that would have helped in creating school spirit, such as the naming of a school mascot and the formation of school organizations, bands, choirs, and athletic teams.

A student committee was formed to unearth a school spirit and connect with student needs. Hastings oversaw the committee. He suggested they select a Scottish Highlander for their mascot to commemorate the early Scot founder of McLennan County, Neil McLennan.

McLennan settled in Central Texas at the mouth of the Brazos River in the fall of 1835 from the Isle of Skye, Scotland. Hastings got the idea for using a Scottish Highlander on a return trip from Austin, where he was attending a library seminar at The University of Texas. After the seminar, he stopped midway in the 100-mile journey in the little Central Texas town of Salado. There he visited the Wee Scots Shop and Scottish Museum where the proprietor explained to Hastings about the rich Scottish history of McLennan County and showed him a swath of the McLennan tartan and crest. Hastings became enamored with using a Scottish theme for MCC. Another Scottish connection was the former owner of the land purchased for the permanent campus. The father of Waco lumber magnate William Cameron was born in Perthshire, Scotland, and immigrated to America in 1852.

The 26-member Students' Association agreed with Hastings and chose the McLennan tartan as the school's colors, which included orange and white in an intricate plaid design. Later, the organization received special permission from the Laird of the McLennan clan in Scotland to use the McLennan shield and motto. Keith Geisler, an MCC counselor, designed the fighting Highlander figure in battle position holding a short sword that would be used on MCC publications and advertisements for years to come. The first course catalog for the Fall 1966 semester was decorated with a plaid tartan on the cover. Still waiting on permission from the McLennan clan to use their official tartan design for that first catalog, MCC

administrators paid an artist to design a plaid using layers of colored tape.

"We hired an artist who took colored tape and tried to make it look like a tartan. So if you look [at] a first-year catalog, you can see the vast difference. And then we got in a yard of the tartan, took pictures of it, and we have used that since," Hastings said.

The Students Association also helped to organize several social events and dances that first year. Many Waco students who had taken courses at junior colleges in other towns had rarely returned to the campuses for night or social events. These dances enabled many students to get to know one another and form lasting friendships.

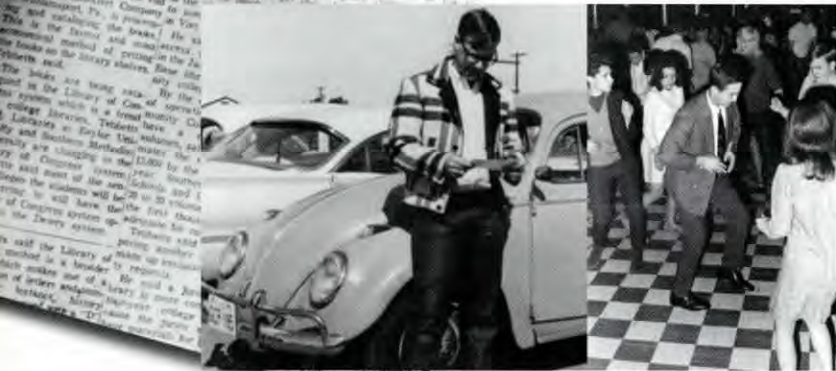
"I guess probably the best term for it was it was a period of awakening for me," former student Gary Willis said. "I developed a lot more social skills that year than I had in the past. In the past I had gone to school, gone to classes, and went home. When I was at MCC, I had more of an opportunity to meet the other students, interact with the other students, and do things with them."

In January 1967, the school newspaper, the *Highland Herald*, began publication twice monthly, reporting on the happenings on campus. A student-run magazine, *The Clan* — named for the Scottish McLennan clan that was the college's namesake — also began publishing short essays and poetry once a semester.

In May 1967, administrators hosted the first annual Highland Games for students and faculty on the site of what would later be the permanent campus for MCC. Having just broken ground on the land, this was the first official event for students held on the new property. The administration also felt that a day of Scottish games was just what students needed after a hectic first year. The tradition is still carried on today as the annual

McLennan College Library Has Periodicals, Few Books

Community College Library, which has 222 periodicals but only 200 books, is the only one of its kind in the area. The library is located in the old brick building on the corner of 10th and 10th Street. The building was built in 1900 and was used as a warehouse until the late 1950s. The library was established in 1967 and has since then been a source of pride for the college. The library is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The library is a member of the Texas Library Association and the American Library Association. The library is a valuable resource for students and faculty alike. The library is a source of information and a place where students can find the books and periodicals they need for their studies. The library is a place where students can find the books and periodicals they need for their studies. The library is a place where students can find the books and periodicals they need for their studies.



Left to Right:
A student receives a parking ticket at James Connally AFB.

An early MCC dance

The first MCC graduating class in 1967



MCC Highlander mascot and tartan fabric

Highland Games are held on the campus each spring and include a variety of games patterned after Scotland's traditional Highland Games, such as football, volleyball, races, egg-toss contests, and ice cream-eating contests. In May 1968, the caber toss was added to the games and involves hoisting a pole that is equipped with a twist that makes the pole loop in a 360-degree arc before hitting the ground. "It is a great day, a great mixing of students. It brings student and faculty out and shows spirit. ... It is something we can all do together as students," said Jerrie Fletcher, 20, a second-year education major who enjoyed participating in the May 2006 games.

Shortly after the first Highland Games were held, the college had its first graduation on the base theater stage on June 1, 1967. Willis and his carpool mate Cynthia Ann ("Candace") Shivers and 10 other students received diplomas that day. At the time, MCC offered two degrees — Associate in Arts (A.A.) and Associate in Science (A.S.). The A.A. degree was for students who completed the first two years of a baccalaureate curriculum, and the A.S. was for those who completed the required curriculum in technology or vocational areas.

It was perhaps fitting that MCC founding father Harry Provence, managing editor of the

Danny Uptmore has spent much of his adult life serving and working for McLennan Community College. His connection with MCC began in early 1967 when he would visit his uncle Richard "Lefty" Uptmore, who was groundskeeper for MCC and lived on campus in a garage apartment during the construction of the permanent campus. After graduating from China Spring High School in spring 1967, Uptmore began classes at MCC that fall. Classes were then

In November 1979, Uptmore was appointed to the MCC Board of Trustees to fill the unexpired term of banker W. Earl Harrison, who had recently died. In 1980, Uptmore was elected to the board, a position he held until 1994 — serving several of those years as chairman of the board. Under his tenure, there were major campus renovations and the construction of new facilities, as well as the purchase of the former Waco High School, which now houses many



Danny Uptmore as student body president in 1968

From Student to Faculty *Danny Uptmore*



Danny Uptmore as executive director of Corporate and Professional Training in 2007

held in the renovated barracks at James Connally Air Force Base; the distraction of jet engine testing at times tested Uptmore and other students' patience.

Uptmore served as student body president from 1968 through 1969 and was among the first students to take classes in the newly built permanent campus in the Spring semester of 1969. He graduated from MCC in August 1969 with an Associate in Arts degree and then went to The University of Texas in fall 1969. He returned to MCC in the spring of 1970 and took some advanced business courses and then went to The University of Texas in Arlington, where he graduated in December 1973 with a business degree in finance. He worked for several local insurance companies while he worked on his Master of Business Administration degree from Baylor University in 1977. Upon receiving his M.B.A., he sold mainframe computers throughout Central Texas for the next 15 years.

departments, including Cosmetology, Law Enforcement, and Child Development.

Uptmore left the board in 1994, and in 1995 was hired as executive director of the MCC Foundation, which raises funds for the college and awards scholarships. Since 2001 he has been executive director of Corporate and Professional Training for the college, which offers continuing education training for local businesses and their employees. Coincidentally, his offices now are in the old Waco High School building, now called the Community Services Center.

The son of a farmer who grew up in China Spring, west of Waco, and the first of his family to graduate from college, Uptmore said he realized early on that he didn't want to drive a tractor the rest of his life. MCC afforded him with the skills to be able to achieve advance-level degrees and to return to help lead the institution that started it all for him.

Waco News-Tribune, introduced the keynote speaker, Grady St. Clair, a vice president of Del Mar College, during that first graduation on June 1, 1967. Provence commented during his speech that less than two years prior, MCC had only been a gleam in a few bleary eyes, and now it had come to fruition and was sending forth 12 graduates into the world.

Unbeknownst to many that day, Provence whispered something to Dean Hastings on stage that became a tradition that is still carried on today. "He whispered to me on the stage, can't you see a Scottish bagpiper leading the procession for the graduation? And that's where it started," Hastings said. The kilt-clad Scottish bagpipers were added at the next commencement and have been a fixture of MCC graduations ever since.

Board Chairman Henry Griffin handed out diplomas at that first graduation. For all of the years of volunteer work and sacrifice, Griffin had never asked for anything in return. But he beamed about the gratitude one student exhibited that afternoon. "This one girl put her arms around me and said, 'I want you to know if it hadn't been for you. I could have never gone to college.' So that was worth all of my troubles."

New Campus Site Called 'Major Blunder'

Not all Central Texans agreed with the Board of Trustees' decision to locate the college on the former Cameron country estate, in what was the northern edge of Waco. Many business owners and Waco Chamber of Commerce members had hoped that MCC would be located in downtown Waco. After all, the impetus for starting the college had begun with trying to revitalize the downtown corridor, many argued, and a community college located there would certainly draw people back into the downtown hub, proponents said.

One Waco newspaper editorial asked, "What's the tearing hurry to make this decision? ... How do the junior college officials know, for example, whether they couldn't save money and

serve more students more conveniently by dovetailing into this new downtown development?" The editorial went on to ask, "Has any thought been given to linking a new college site closely to other available facilities?"

Jack Williams, former Texas commissioner of higher education, echoed that thought on a visit to Waco in August 1966. Williams advocated the



Mannequin legs advertising the Highland Games

Students participate in the first Highland Games at the future home of MCC in May 1967.



Dr. Ball with pie on his face at the Highland Games

college's opening its classes at James Connally Air Force Base, where James Connally Technical Institute had just opened in January 1966. At the time, he said a move to the permanent campus site would be "a major blunder, a tragic blunder." Williams said it would be a more financially prudent use of state taxpayer dollars for both institutions to be housed side by side and share a library and other expensive facilities. Newspapers carried his quotes, and the Waco Times-Herald on Aug. 17, 1966, led with a headline that called the land purchase a "Major Blunder." "They really did pan us and said we picked a tragic blunder," charter board member J. Robert Sheehy Sr. reflected on their criticism.

Nevertheless, this headstrong board had the foresight to realize that in order for the college to grow and accommodate thousands of students in later years, it would have to be located away from Connally Air Force Base and outside what was then the immediate confines of downtown, in an area that would lend itself to expansion.

'MAJOR BLUNDER' SEEN Expert Hits College Site

Dr. Jack Williams, hired as Texas commissioner of higher education, said he had just finished, before he moved to the Coordinating Board of Higher Education, developing joint programs with the University of Texas at Waco and the University of Texas at Austin. Williams said he was in Waco last week to see the progress of the college building. Williams said he was in Waco last week to see the progress of the college building. Williams said he was in Waco last week to see the progress of the college building.



DR. JACK K. WILLIAMS, left, Texas commissioner of higher education, visited with Dr. H. Frank Coates, Waco physician and surgeon, during his visit to the University of Texas at Waco last week. Williams said he was in Waco last week to see the progress of the college building. Williams said he was in Waco last week to see the progress of the college building.

The old Cameron country estate became the future site for the permanent campus of McLennan Community College when it was purchased from the J.D. George family in August 1966 for \$290,000. This lush and tranquil land has a rich history dating back to the Huaco Indians, who, historians speculate, used the bluff to gaze over the valley and took water from the Bosque River in the early 1800s.

1900s, and it was completed by 1920. The river-front property came to be known in Waco as the Cameron country estate and included a majestic main house with swimming pool, a separate office building, servant's quarters, a gaming and gambling log cabin, and tennis courts adjacent to an adobe shade structure for the viewing of matches. At the time it was built, when many still traveled by horse and carriage, the estate was located far

The Cameron Estate A Land Rich with History



Neil McLennan



William Waldo Cameron



Jesse David George

Majestic cedar and oak trees marked the property, and according to legend, the early Huaco Indians camped under these trees. The city of Waco is named after the Huaco Indians (pronounced Waco), the first inhabitants of the area. The Huacos were a branch of the Wichitas, closely related to the Tawakonis. They cultivated hundreds of acres of farm land to produce fertile crops of corn, beans, melons, peaches, and pumpkins. The Texas Rangers arrived in Central Texas in 1837 and attempted to build a fort at Waco Village, but after three weeks of trying to cut a road through the woods, they decided the outpost was too far from any white settlement to offer protection. In 1844, an Indian trading post was established on a bluff eight miles south of Waco on the east side of the Brazos River. A year later a rugged Scot, Neil McLennan, the namesake for McLennan County and McLennan Community College, established another settlement.

The city of Waco grew first as an Indian and frontier trading post and then as the trading center for the plantation economy existing along the Brazos River during the Civil War. Located on the Chisholm Trail, the city's growth resumed after the war during the great cattle drives of the 1870s and 1880s. Three railroads that entered Waco during this period established its position as the distribution center for Central Texas. Production of principal agricultural products greatly increased during this time, including cotton, grain sorghums, beef and dairy cattle, and poultry. As agricultural production increased, a number of related industries also relocated to Waco, including several lumber plants.

Lumber magnate William Waldo Cameron developed the 160-acre site sometime in the early

enough from town that visitors would often stay for entire weekends in comfort and luxury. Visitors might take a dip in the ample pool or engage in a tennis match on the lavish courts before sitting down to a full-course evening meal. After dinner they took refreshing walks near the Bosque River or engaged in an evening of dancing and gambling in the log cabin.

The *Waco Tribune-Herald* described the estate as "a luxurious vacation place of lavish entertainment in the 1920s," according to a Nov. 3, 1968, article. Cameron's widow, Helen Miller Cameron, sold the estate in 1954 to Jesse David George, a contractor who went by the initials J.D. His son, Terry George, said a most unusual two-story log cabin used for entertaining came to be known as a "party house." This rustic wood cabin, built by Cameron himself for entertaining, had an upstairs saloon and dance floor, roulette table, card tables, and gambling rooms, Terry George said. Indeed, the rustic cabin was the site for many wild soirees where guests signed the wooden walls before leaving for the evening. After William Cameron died in October 1939, George said that his widow had their groundskeeper throw several jugs of liquor off the log cabin balcony into the woods. Helen Miller Cameron, who was opposed to liquor, later remarried to an Episcopal bishop, Everett Holland Jones.

Terry George said that when his family purchased the property, the Cameron's groundskeeper — whom George only remembered by his first name, Sylvester — went to work for them and often told of the wild parties and entertaining at the estate prior to their moving there. "The honchos from Waco would come out and gamble and drink and dance and eat. That place was just built

as a party house," said Terry George, who graduated from Baylor University's law school and practices law in San Antonio.

Like Cameron's widow, J.D. George's widow, Lillian George, also was opposed to partying and alcohol. However, Terry George, who spent his high school years on the property in the mid-1950s, admits that cabin was too perfect to pass up, and he too hosted many parties there — much to the dismay of his mother. Years later, Lillian George leased the building to the 12th Air Force for use as their non-commissioned officer's club. The rowdy soldiers managed to burn down the cabin during a wild party on New Year's Eve in 1960. A blown fuse triggered the fire. Because they were "so far out in the country," no one had a replacement fuse handy. According to Terry George, someone apparently tried to "make do" with a copper penny to replace the fuse. After everyone had left, the penny got so hot it ignited a spark, and the wood cabin burned to the ground, he said.

"The walls from the saloon to the gambling hall and dance hall were lined with bare plywood and not stained. All these guys and their wives had signed the walls; every name that you could think of was on it. All the bankers, big store owners, and community leaders had signed the walls. I always wished that we had saved a panel before it burned," Terry George rued.

After the fire, Lillian George leased the main house to the 12th Air Force for use as their non-commissioned officer's club. She took up residence in what had been the renovated former servants' quarters located on the property. With her children grown and gone, though, she longed to be rid of the vast property that was set so far from town. At the time MCC was interested in purchasing the property, the George family was ready to sell. Their lawyer, Cullen Smith, negotiated the sale for the 160-acres of land for \$290,000. "Mom was eager to get out of the big house and into a more manageable place," Terry George said. "It just overwhelmed my mom, and it was too much for her."

Lillian George died in 1970 but lived long enough to see the grand opening of the permanent MCC campus in January 1969. "I think Mom would be very pleased by what MCC has done with it," said her daughter, Jeanette George Spink.

Photos of the Cameron summer home taken from a family publication



The wooded grounds and water tower on the Cameron estate



MCC MAP—Looking like a patchwork quilt, the map of the permanent McLennan Community College gets the go-ahead by its architects and tenor, Dr. Wilbur A. Ball, left, college president, points out a strategic feature to architects Jim Witt and John Dudley, right, of the firm of Bush & Witt. Ball revealed the plans Wednesday in a news conference on the permanent college site. (John Bennett photo)

5 Buildings Included in First MCC Construction to Begin This Summer

- Liberal Arts building
- Applied Sciences building
- Fine Arts building
- Faculty Office building



continued from page one
 complete and ready for occupancy in June, he said. Construction on the remainder of the five-phase building program should be started within a month of the time he said.
 Ball said source of the \$5.7 million from a bond issue authorized and approved by the state legislature. He said the \$2 million loan for renovation of the existing building is a program loan issue in federal dollars. More of the federal money would be granted on the basis, Ball said.
 The MCC president said construction schedule almost entirely open to the various federal and state commitments are this adequate funds will be made available in the state of most of the construction during the summer of 1967 at least before June.

Top: Dr. Ball (left) reviews campus plans with architects.
 Left to Right: Board members break ground at the new permanent campus site in July 1967.
 Several hundred community members attended the ceremony.

Building a Campus

On July 27, 1967, the former Cameron estate became the location of the festive groundbreaking ceremony for the new permanent campus site. A photo of the groundbreaking ran on the front page of the *Waco Times-Herald* evening edition that same day. John R. Guemple, assistant commissioner for vocational and adult education with the Texas Education Agency in Austin, was the guest speaker for the several hundred assembled for the groundbreaking of the first building, the \$610,000 Applied Sciences building. "We have high hopes for this college," Guemple projected. "It combines the best of vocational-technical education and the best of academic education opportunities." He continued, according to the *Times-Herald* article: "You can point with pride here ... with the pride of foresight, of prophesying what the future will be."

President Ball invited onlookers to grip the

golden shovel and heave some dirt. Many in the crowd were hesitant, but Dr. Ball chided them saying, "We have to move this whole hillside."

The construction process, a major undertaking that involved several different contractors, architects, designers, engineers and landscape architects, took 16 months to complete the first nine buildings. Construction on the first phase of buildings totaled \$5.7 million and included the following buildings, which totaled 250,000 square feet of floor space:

- Library
- Lecture Hall
- Student Center
- Science building
- Administration building
- Gymnasium
- Central Utility building

The Waco architecture firm of Bush and Witt was hired to design the initial 11 buildings, and the civil engineering firm of Uran-Roden was hired to construct the streets, sidewalks, and a parking lot to accommodate 900 automobiles.

The college employed landscape architect Hal Stringer as campus master planner to ensure that all design elements blended with the natural landscape. Originally, all buildings were no more than two stories and not allowed to protrude above the tree line. Two years later, Stringer proposed adding a four-story tower to the administration building, which currently houses the offices

of MCC President Dennis Michaelis, the vice presidents, and deans and majestically looks out over the campus. Initially the board balked, wanting to preserve the pristine environment, but they eventually consented.

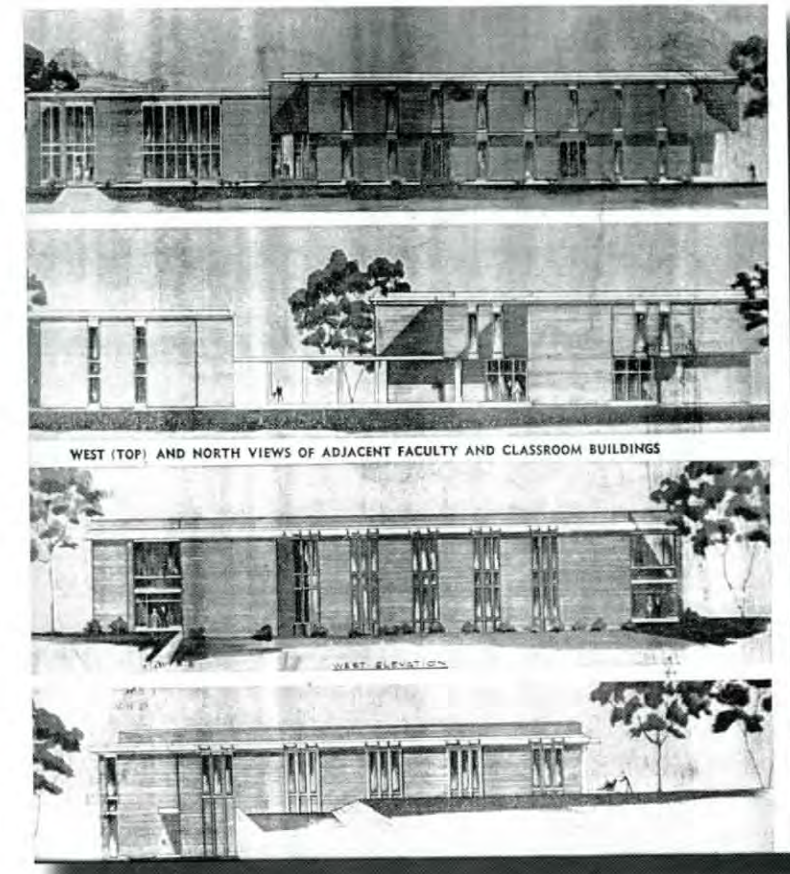
From the first time he traversed the rugged, hilly property in 1966, Stringer adored the land and all it had to offer. He first toured the property in an old Volkswagen owned by a George family member, but the early-model car wasn't able to get very far into the property. They had to walk most of it. Deep ravines divided the top limestone plateau from the bottom alluvial plain where the Bosque River laps at the property's edge. Stringer was initially stumped as to how to join the bottom land to the top land, but he later designed two walking bridges that connected the plateaus and built a road in place of the ravine to circle the campus.

Initially, the architects had suggested to the MCC board to build one towering mega-structure building for all classes and lectures and labs. Stringer convinced the board to build several buildings spread throughout the campus all within a 10-minute walking distance where students could enjoy the majestic scenery and stroll between classes on the 12-foot wide pebble walkways amidst the live oak, Burr oak, mountain cedar, and elm trees in a parklike atmosphere.

"I loved the ravines and primarily the trees," said Stringer, who at 81 is still employed as landscape architect for the college. He has designed several additional structures over the years, including a stunning fountain and outdoor stage in the central campus core. "I wanted it to be a landscaped feeling where you walked between buildings and trees. We established a walking radius of 10 minutes in locating buildings between classes, and it was just ideal."

As several different construction companies labored on the buildings, Stringer implored them to save as many trees as possible. In Central Texas, where summer temperatures regularly top 100 degrees, a tree is a coveted commodity that can reduce air conditioning costs and provide a brief respite from the bleaching sun.

In fact, Stringer tagged many of the trees and ordered the builders not to harm a branch. He even transplanted a rare native Persimmon tree that was in the line of construction. Those trees usually do not survive being transplanted, but



WEST (TOP) AND NORTH VIEWS OF ADJACENT FACULTY AND CLASSROOM BUILDINGS

Stringer nurtured it daily, and it still stands on the campus today.

Board Chairman Henry Griffin said he and Stringer personally transplanted several oak trees from a ravine near a creek to the front of the current Administration/Classroom building. In addition, 300 new trees were purchased from area nurseries to complete the landscape. Later, after the move to the new campus, many trees and shrubs were grown in the MCC greenhouse and transplanted, saving the college the cost of purchasing greenery.

"Hal did a wonderful job for us landscaping and where he thought the buildings should be located," Griffin said.

Because of the natural beauty of the site and through the efforts of Stringer, MCC has one of the most beautiful campuses in the state. The design has won state architectural awards and has inspired the design of other college campuses, Stringer said.

"Part of it has been an architect's nightmare and delight. When people learned that was going to be the campus, they said, 'What in the world can you do out there with all those ditches and things?'" Hastings recalled.

Several different construction companies were hired to build the various buildings. Hooker

Above: Early architectural sketches of MCC



Hal Stringer, MCC landscape architect (at right), with his wife, Mary



FRONT VIEW OF CENTRALLY-LOCATED ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

Construction Co. of Waco was the first to break ground on the Applied Sciences building, which later housed the computer center and data processing, as well as other technical and vocational programs. Hooker also constructed the Science building where biology, chemistry, and physics classes and labs were later held. The company also built the Lecture Hall where various academic courses were taught, and the physical education building and gymnasium.

J.J. Fritch Co. Inc. of Dallas was general contractor for the Fine Arts building for art, music, and drama classes, as well as the Administration building and the Library. Smith Building Co. Inc. of Waco built the Faculty Office building and Liberal Arts building where several academic courses were taught, such as English, history, government and religion.

ing enrollment figures, the MCC board voted in May 1968 to increase the 1968 ad valorem tax levy for the district to 25 cents per \$100 valuation, up from the previous levy of 24 cents. It would be broken down to 6.7 cents for general obligation bond debt and 18.3 cents for operating expenses.

The added funds and strict spending guidelines imposed by Dr. Ball and upheld by the board helped to keep costs in check.

Throughout the design and construction of the new campus, Dr. Ball kept faculty and staff updated. Dr. Ball and Hastings often ate lunch with the faculty in the makeshift faculty offices at James Connally Air Force Base and used that time to query them on suggestions for the design of their departments. The faculty had input into the design of the theatrical stage in the Fine Arts building, science labs and work tables in business education, as well as the library acquisitions and other library materials necessary for student research.

"We all had lunch together, and that was absolutely a terrific opportunity to sit around with Dr. Ball and Dr. Hastings and listen to the issues and the items to be decided all the way down to the color of the brick of the new college," drama and speech instructor Marylin Kelly recalled. "We could give feedback at any time. The most important thing is that we were very relaxed in discussing things, even to what went on in our classrooms, and our administrators had the pulse very much of how the college was going, how things were getting started."

"It was exciting because all of us were involved in the design of the campus," said history instructor Michael White.

The earthy, light sandstone outer brick, which still stands today, was chosen by a majority of the board with input from Dr. Ball, Hastings,

the architects, and the general contractors. Not everyone agreed with the selection, which was made by viewing three 8-foot-tall walls constructed from different brick from various brick sellers on the permanent campus site. They selected the same popular brick used in the 1968 world's fair, HemisFair '68, held in San Antonio.

"They selected that one because they thought it blended best with the towering cedar trees," Hastings said.

Construction pressed along at a quick pace, and buildings were being finished one after another. Within a span of 10 weeks, eight buildings were completed, according to MCC board minutes. On Oct. 11, 1968, board members conducted their first walk-through of the Applied Sciences building. Two weeks later, the Administration building was complete, followed by the Faculty Office building, the Science building, and Lecture Hall, which were inspected on Dec. 12, 1968. A day later, they inspected the Fine Arts building. A week later, the Health, Physical Education building was ready, followed by the Library, which was completed Dec. 27, 1968, just four days before the New Year.

"The college is very fortunate regarding the progress that has been made in the design and planning of the handsome buildings we have plans on to date," board member Tina Ware told the MCC Board of Trustees during a special executive meeting on July 21, 1968, to discuss building plans.

New Board Chairman W. Earl Harrison — who succeeded first Board Chairman Henry Griffin — told board members also at that July 2 meeting that "all who have contributed to the college's building program have gone all out."

With the buildings completed in time for the New Year, the big move to the college began in earnest in early January 1969 just prior to the start of the Spring semester, which began on Jan. 23. The move included five pianos, band instruments, 50 typewriters, six hospital beds, two large globes, ping pong tables and archery bows, microscopes, photography dark room equipment, data processors, and hundreds of boxes filled with papers and books. Faculty members loaded up their personal items in their own cars, trucks, and anything else that could carry books, equipment and supplies and formed a winding caravan to the new campus. It was a caravan filled with hope

and anticipation, for they were embarking on a new academic home that would be a jewel to Central Texas for years to come.

An article in the *Highland Herald* student newspaper by editor Susan Jones on Jan. 16, 1969, summarized the emotions felt by many as they came to the campus in the woods:

"The new campus is a thing of beauty. As 1969 began, so began a new era for present and future MCC students. The new era is one of unity as a college, unity as a student body and unity as a place of learning. No longer are we 'the junior college kids that go to school in barracks.' Now we have a unified goal of knowledge and higher learning. Now we have a place among the colleges and universities of the nation. The eyes of Waco are on us as a college."

"I loved the ravines and primarily the trees. ... I wanted it to be a landscaped feeling where you walked between buildings and trees."

— Hal Stringer

During construction, federal funding started to decrease, and Dr. Ball appealed for more money. "In the latter stages of the first-phase development of the permanent campus, financial resources are extremely limited due to reduction in expected federal grant funds resulting from drastic federal cutbacks in spending for college facilities and increases in construction costs for the Physical Education Building and Student Center," Dr. Ball told the MCC board during a May 1, 1968 meeting. "The funds for this purpose have been reduced by almost one-half."

To help offset the construction costs and ris-



FRONT VIEW OF OCTAGON-SHAPED FINE ARTS BUILDING

SOUTH VIEW (TOP PICTURE) AND NORTH VIEW OF BUSINESS-TECHNICAL BUILDING

SPLIT-LEVEL LIBRARY FROM THE FRONT

Story By ROGER CANTRELL

the Foundation



The 1969 dedication ceremony of the new campus

Serving the Community

The permanent campus was officially dedicated on May 3, 1969, at the close of the Spring semester during McLennan Community College's third academic year. With the construction of the campus complete — for the time being — President Wilbur Ball was able to begin developing what he felt the college had failed to excel at thus far: providing programs and facilities for the Central Texas community. This became a central theme of his administration throughout his 22-year tenure and is still a cornerstone of the college's mission statement today.

In the early 1970s, Dr. Ball believed strongly that community colleges could offer more to their citizens than four-year universities. Under his direction, the board offered the following to better serve the community:

- Academic and Transfer Programs — which allow students to take their first two years of basic college courses at MCC before transferring to four-year institutions. Students receive quality instruction at reduced rates and with a lower student-to-instructor ratio than at larger universities.
- Vocational and Technical Courses — Which offer one- and two-year programs to help adults acquire marketable job skills.

Dr. Ball believed strongly that community colleges could offer more to their citizens than four-year universities.

- Adult Education Courses — which allow working adults to take continuing education courses during evenings and weekends.
- Community Programs and Facilities Usage — which offer programs for citizens of all ages and allow the citizens of McLennan County to use MCC facilities.

Prior to its own permanent campus in 1969, MCC had done what it could for the community in its limited borrowed quarters on the former James Connally Air Force Base. Now, administrators would open up the new campus to a litany of programs and courses for citizens of all ages. Free music recitals, theatrical performances

OPEN HOUSE and SPECIAL EVENTS*

May 3-9, 1969

SATURDAY, MAY 3 2:00 p.m. 5:50-6:00 p.m.	Concert - Highlander Pipe Band and Dancers Open House Exhibits and Demonstrations (See inside for details)
SUNDAY, MAY 4 2:00-5:00 p.m.	Open House Exhibits and Demonstrations (See inside for details) Band Concert - Outdoor
MONDAY, MAY 5 10:00 a.m. 7:00 p.m. 8:00 p.m.	"Andros and the Lion" - Fine Arts Theatre Ballroom Set, Pop Folk Music - Gymnasium **"Andros and the Lion" - Fine Arts Theatre
TUESDAY, MAY 6 8:15 p.m.	MCC Stage Band Concert - Fine Arts Theatre
WEDNESDAY, MAY 7 10:00 a.m. 8:15 p.m.	Talent Show - Gymnasium "An Environment Performance" - Music Art Drama participants
THURSDAY, MAY 8 8:15 p.m.	Concert - McLennan Singers Speech Choral Reading - F.A.T.
FRIDAY, MAY 9 10:00 a.m. 12:00 noon	Concert - McLennan Singers Speech Choral Reading - F.A. Highland Games - Gann Club House

*All presentations are given without charge.
**For more information, please 756-6331 or in performance.

**McLennan
Community
College**

51

DEDICATION PROGRAM

MCC's new home
as seen in the
September 1971 issue
of *The Texas Architect*



Administration building



Fine Arts building



MCC Library



Liberal Arts and
Faculty Offices buildings

and plays would be performed for the public at the Fine Arts building. The public would be invited to hear speeches by guest lecturers in the Lecture Hall, receive free immunization clinics for young parents on campus co-sponsored by the Texas Department of Health, and enjoy quiet study time in the handsomely stocked MCC Library.

"A community college serves all the needs of the community — technical, vocational, adult education of all kinds, continuing education and even other kinds of services that don't involve classroom instruction like use of the facilities by the community," Dr. Ball said. "All of those things were part of a concept. ... It's a beautiful concept."

During an Oct. 13, 1970, meeting, the Board of Trustees, under the suggestion of Dr. Ball, voted to revise the college's statement of purpose to incorporate these themes. The college's new mission statement became:

"McLennan Community College's human and physical resources exist for the purpose of meeting the post-secondary educational needs of the college's tax district and contiguous areas and of serving as a base for other community services and events.

To accommodate the needs of a diverse student population, the college shall provide the first two years of a baccalaureate program and programs of a technical-vocational nature in the areas of business, health and community services; using research, programs and services in cooperation with government, business and other educational agencies. The college shall provide opportunities to develop job-related vocational, cultural and personal skills.

Scope and excellence, consonant with financial resources, shall characterize the institution's programs, supportive services, personnel and physical facilities. The college shall provide an open door to self-realization through curricular and co-curricular learning resources; innovative and traditional, under girded by evaluation, human orientation and teamwork."

Popularity Explosion

Throughout his tenure as president of MCC, Dr. Ball kept in touch with local business leaders to inquire about the skills that they desired in their employees. He and Chester Hastings, who had been promoted from dean of instruction to academic vice president, also kept in touch with student needs and varied course offerings according to popularity and desire. They even adjusted the times that certain courses were offered to meet the demands of many working students. Hastings worked closely with the deans of technical education — Cecil Reynolds was the first and Alvin Pollard took that position in 1973 — to establish new vocational and career tracks for MCC students.

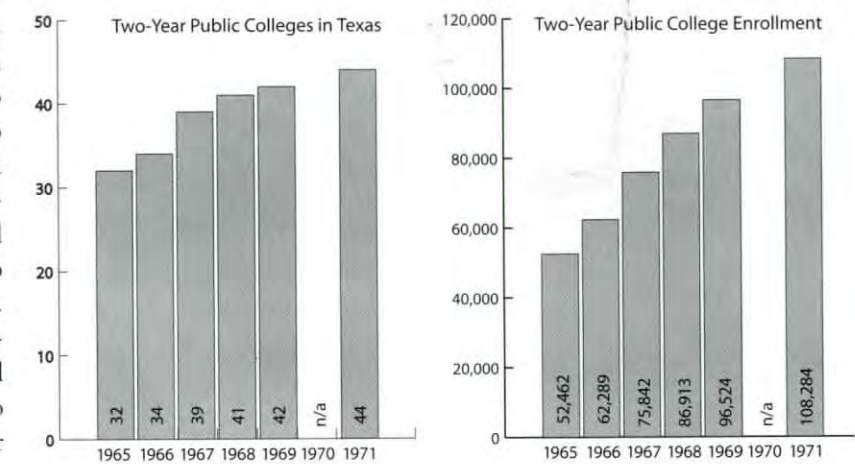
This was an exciting time because community colleges throughout the country, including Texas, were experiencing a burgeoning population growth. In September 1971, the monthly magazine *The Texas Architect*, published by the Texas Society of Architects in Austin, reported that there had been a 100 percent increase in enrollment in Texas community colleges from 1965 to 1971. One out of every four college students in Texas in 1971 was enrolled in a public two-year community college, the magazine reported. Statewide, 12 new campuses had been

"They were planning for the future, and they wanted more and more additional programs, and that was the challenge." — Alvin Pollard

created between 1965 and 1971, including MCC in 1969 (see Figure 3.1). By 1971, MCC had an enrollment of 2,200 students.

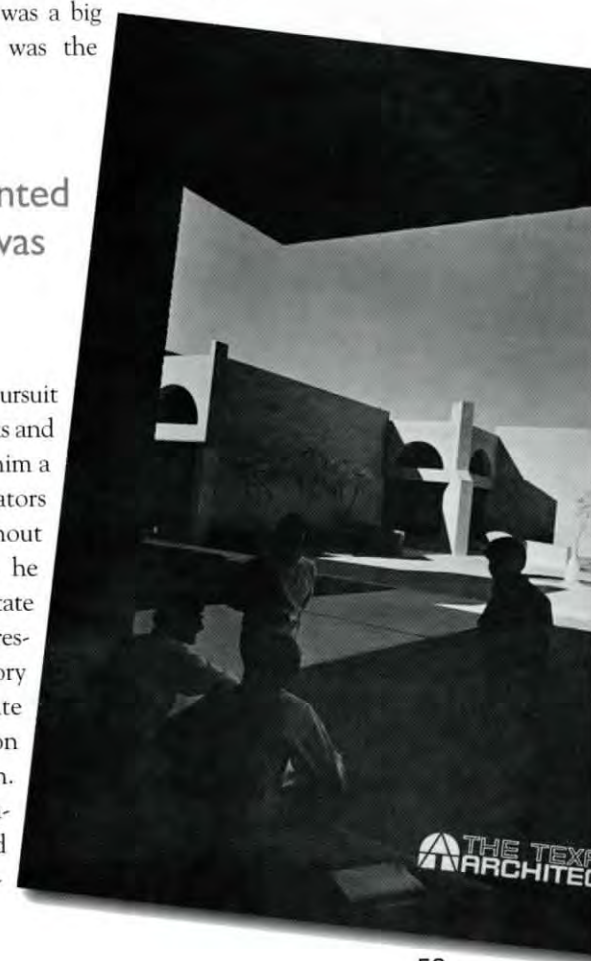
Much of the growth at community colleges was attributable to vocational and technical education tracks that created a multitude of job opportunities, Pollard said. As more students enrolled in community colleges, more four-year universities were honoring their transfer credits. At the same time, more employers in Texas were depending upon community colleges, like MCC, to prepare the ever-growing workforce with job skills. This was especially true in burgeoning fields such as computers and the health care industry.

Expansion of Texas Community Colleges: 1965-71



Source:
The Texas Architect
monthly magazine,
published by the
Texas Society of
Architects in Austin,
September 1971

"They were planning for the future, and they wanted more and more additional programs, and that was the challenge," said Pollard, who served as dean of Vocational and Technical Education for 29 years from 1973-2002. "They wanted to expand the vocational technical programs within these three areas: the areas of health, business, and human services or protective services, because law enforcement was a big part of that. And that was the vision."





Left to Right:
Early classes in
data processing,
nursing,
business,
and scuba diving

pational education. The committee also tracked trends in vocational development. In 1973, the committee, including Dr. Ball, reported to the 63rd Texas Legislature in Austin on the growing vocational and technical education fields.

From all accounts, Dr. Ball's research and contacts throughout the state regarding vocational and technical education benefited MCC as far as helping to expand the school's own vocational and technical curriculum. In 1972, MCC offered 15 Associate of Arts degree programs, including business administration, fine arts, drama, speech, liberal arts, science, engineering, journalism, education, pre-dentistry, pre-pharmacy, medical technology, pre-medicine, nursing, and pre-law. There were 14 certificate and Associate in Applied Science degree programs, including junior accountant, management development, data processing, law enforcement, child care development, X-ray technician, legal secretary, nursing (RN), executive secretary, medical secretary, vocational nursing (LVN), clerical typist, medical transcription, and legal transcription. Continuing education, non-credit courses included bookkeeping, shorthand, business machines, speed reading, real estate law, bridge, sewing, golf, tennis, nurse's aid, interior decorating, flower arranging, poodle clipping, oil painting, cake decorating, sketching, and GED preparation.

Pollard said Dr. Ball and Dr. Hastings were unwavering in their determination to offer as many educational opportunities for the citizens of Central Texas as possible. Simply put: "They knew where they wanted the college to go," he said.

In the early 1970s, McLennan Community College also began to advertise aggressively in the local media to attract more students and to edu-

cate the public on the myriad of courses and programs that the college offered. The following advertisement, which appeared on Aug. 10, 1972, in *The Waco Citizen* summed up the sentiment:

"What is a community college?"

'Answer: It is a college that fills educational needs of its community — the people in the surrounding area who want to participate in the courses the college offers. McLennan Community College is one of the new breed of educational institutions called 'comprehensive community colleges.' Students can attend MCC and work toward bachelor's degrees; obtain certificates and associate in applied science degrees [and] enlarge business and hobby skills in non-credit courses.'



The Board of Trustees at the 1970 meeting where the decision was made to hold a bond election

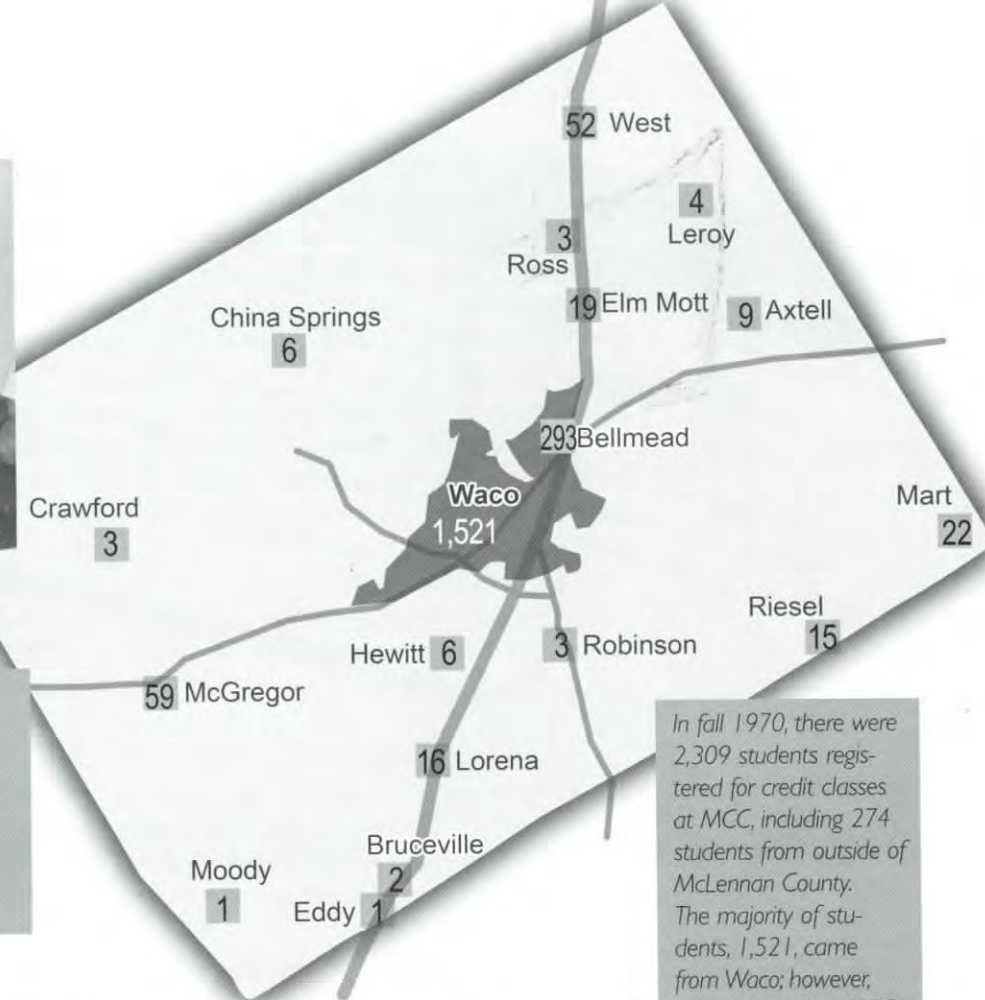


Figure 3.2
Fall 1970 Enrollment Breakdown by Community
In-county students: 2,035
Out-of-county students: 274
TOTAL ENROLLMENT, FALL 1970: 2,309

In fall 1970, there were 2,309 students registered for credit classes at MCC, including 274 students from outside of McLennan County. The majority of students, 1,521, came from Waco; however, many traveled to MCC from towns throughout Central Texas.

1970 Bond Election

No sooner had students and faculty settled into their new campus than the MCC Board of Trustees announced they would hold a \$4 million bond election on Sept. 26, 1970, to provide funds for expanding the existing campus. An overwhelming community response to the new campus, coupled with the addition of many new

courses and degree tracks, led to unexpected numbers of students inundating the campus. To everyone's surprise, they were running out of room almost as soon as they had moved in.

In fall 1969, enrollment rose more than 40 percent over the previous year. By the fall of 1970, there were 2,309 students enrolled in credit classes, up from the 855 students during the college's first semester in 1966. Students came from all over Central Texas, including the outlying communities of Axtell, Leroy, McGregor, Mart and Riesel (see Figure 3.2). The faculty and administration had swelled significantly, as well, from the 22-member initial charter faculty in fall 1966 to a faculty of 97 in 1970, with an additional 54 in support staff positions. Waco itself was rated the 13th largest city in the state of Texas in 1970 with 92,000 people in the city and 114,895 in the surrounding suburbs, which included McLennan County.

Much to the surprise of many, it seemed that the new campus wasn't big enough to meet student and staff demands. They were literally bursting at the seams. "The future has arrived ahead of schedule!" proclaimed a campaign mailer encouraging voters to support the \$4 million bond election.

The \$4 million in funds would be used to expand the Student Center and add a physical education building connected to the existing gymnasium complex. Initial construction of both buildings had been curtailed by about one-half of the originally intended design in 1969 because of budget restraints. If approved, the bond election would also provide funds to build a health sciences building and maintenance buildings, which were omitted during the 1969 construction. Parking and street improvements also would be made to the campus.

"We need more of what we've got to take care of our present enrollment and the students we expect to have in the next five years," Dr. Ball told the *Waco Tribune-Herald* in a Sept. 6, 1970, article.

Once again the MCC Board of Trustees marshaled its forces to launch a bond election campaign. Led by Board Chairman J. Robert Sheehy Sr. and Vice-Chairman Tina Ware, the board followed the lead of veteran members G.W. Henderson, former Board Chairman Henry Griffin and banker W. Earl Harrison. They had all

\$300,000 also were expected to help fund construction. They inundated television and the newspaper with advertisements and sent representatives throughout the county to speak before PTAs, Rotary Clubs, the Kiwanis Club and other organizations.

Cullen Smith, a well-respected Waco lawyer, headed a Citizens Committee to get the word out about the importance of passing the bond in order to expand the campus. Smith was a strong presence in the Central Texas community and had been a longtime supporter of MCC. In 1966, Smith had represented the J.D. George family, who had owned the former Cameron property; he helped convince the MCC Board of Trustees to approve the purchase of the land for the permanent campus site. In fact, at first the George family was turned down when they approached the board, but after Smith presented their land pitch to the board, they collectively changed and approved the \$290,000 sale, Smith later recalled. This time, Smith's task was to change the collective minds of McLennan County voters who might be against voting for another tax increase

additional funds.

"Everybody realizes that this is important and that we must not slow down the progress of MCC," Smith was quoted in a Sept. 17, 1970, MCC press release. MCC "is one of the greatest things that has happened in this county," citizen committee member Champe Fitzhugh told voters, according to a Sept. 10, 1970, MCC press release.

Years later, Klaras and Smith recalled the campaign and how they persuaded voters. "If you're going to pass a bond issue it better be [an] aggressive [campaign]," Smith said. Dr. Ball recalled his tenacity: "Cullen Smith was a very prominent local attorney whose wife served on the MCC Board of Trustees later. They helped a lot [with the election]. I made a lot of presentations with them."

Klaras had been involved in the first Citizens Committee for the 1965 bond election, and he recalled having a much harder time convincing voters the first time around. By 1970, the success of MCC was evident; most voters easily backed it and wanted to ensure the college's continued success, he said. There was a momentum of support that "steamrolled," Klaras said. "It was an exciting time, and that's what I remember most."

Like the 1965 election, once again the local media helped to usher through the election by supporting it. The *Waco Tribune-Herald* ran an editorial on Sept. 6, 1970, endorsing the bond election. The Waco Chamber of Commerce also supported the bond election and urged its members to do the same.

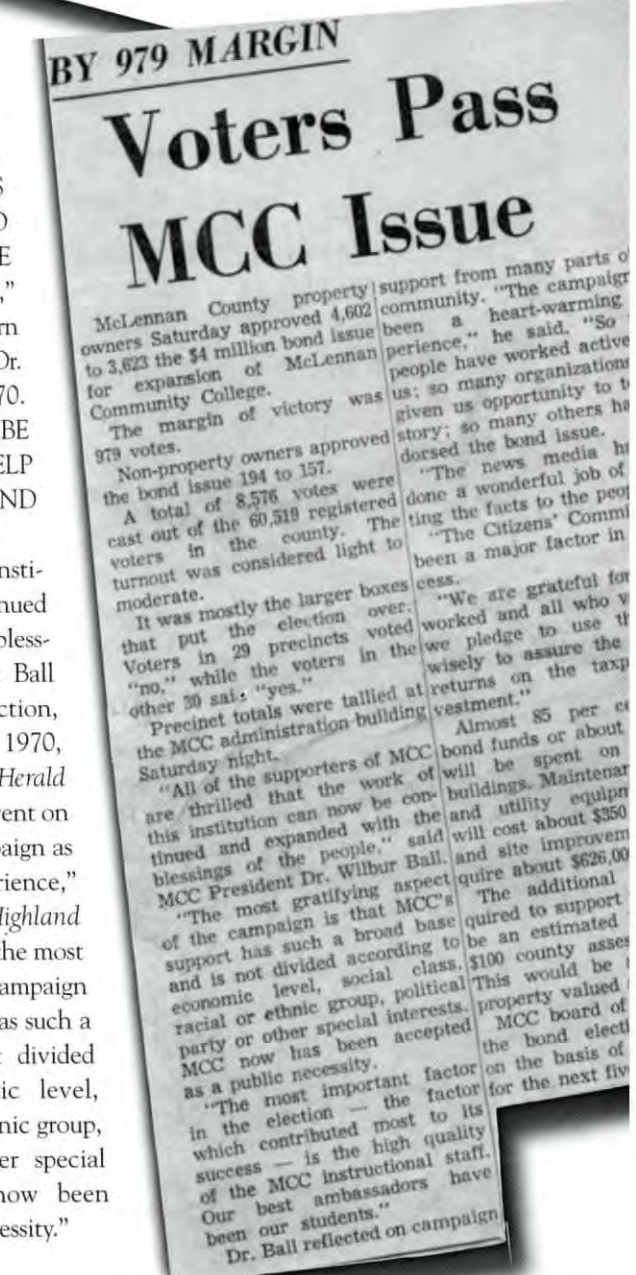
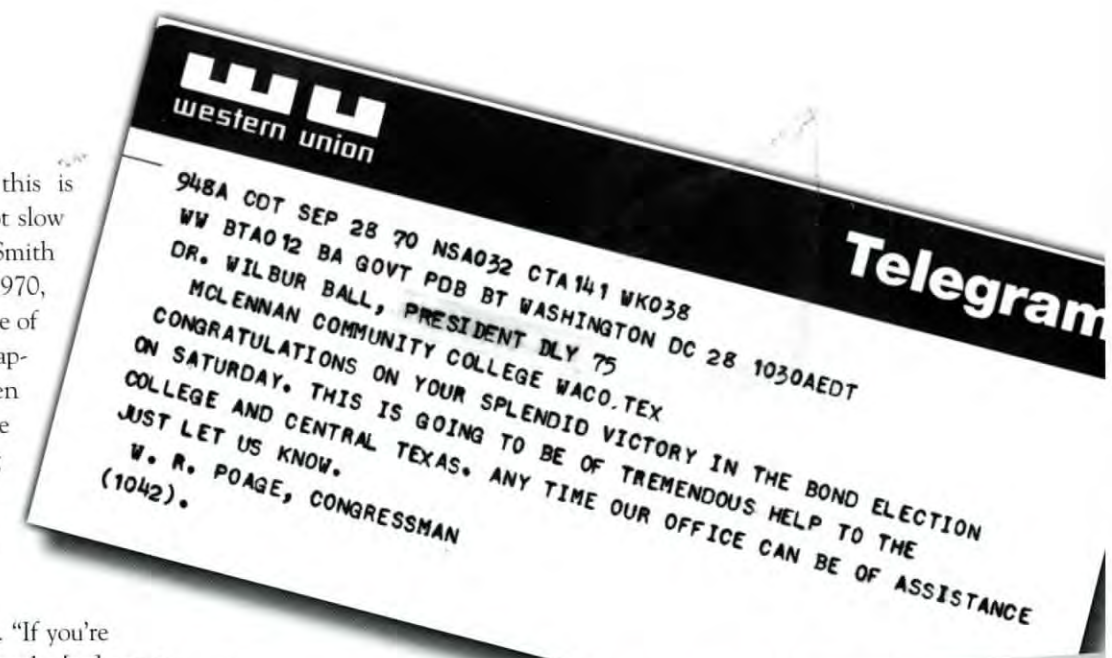
The election was a resounding success. Whereas the 1965 election passed by fewer than 200 votes, the 1970 election passed by a margin of 981 votes and was approved 4,599 to 3,618, according to MCC Board of Trustee minutes from Sept. 29, 1970. Once again, former Board Chairman Henry Griffin reveled in the victory. He made a motion at the September board meeting following the election that the board adopt "a resolution expressing appreciation to all the people who helped in conducting the successful bond issue campaign."

Many citizens phoned and wrote letters of

congratulations, including U.S. Rep. William R. Poage, whose district includes Waco. "CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR SPLENDID VICTORY IN THE BOND ELECTION," Poage wrote in a Western Union Telegram sent to Dr. Ball on Sept. 28, 1970. "THIS IS GOING TO BE OF TREMENDOUS HELP TO THE COLLEGE AND CENTRAL TEXAS."

"The work of this institution can now be continued and expanded with the blessings of the people," Dr. Ball said following the election, according to an Oct. 6, 1970, article in the *Highland Herald* student newspaper. He went on to characterize the campaign as a "heartwarming experience," according to the *Highland Herald* article and said "the most gratifying aspect of the campaign is that MCC's support has such a broad base and is not divided according to economic level, social class, racial or ethnic group, political party, or other special interest. MCC has now been accepted as a public necessity."

"The most important factor in the election — the factor which contributed most to its success — is the high quality of the MCC instructional staff. Our best ambassadors have been our students," Dr. Ball reflected on campaign



Left to Right: Citizens who lobbied for the 1970 bond election included Cullen Smith, Nick and LuAnn Klaras, Noel Johnson, and Board of Trustees Chairman J. Robert Sheehy Sr.



been elected to the charter board via the first bond election in 1965, and they knew the tough battle they might face. They were no strangers to the challenges the election could pose, and they pulled out all the stops in making sure the citizens voted favorably for expansions. Their task was to convince voters to approve a tax hike of 14.4 cents per \$100 property valuation or roughly \$7.20 per year on a \$20,000 property. Federal grants of about

to benefit the college.

Taking a cue from the work that the first steering committee had done in advance of the 1965 election, Smith broke down his 34-member citizen's committee into groups responsible for the following: raising funds, distributing election materials, and generating publicity. James R. Hawkins, a Waco accountant who later entered into a successful financial investment career, was appointed to chair the finance committee responsible for raising funds. Other respected business leaders, such as restaurateur Nick Klaras, also were on the committee that traveled throughout McLennan County proclaiming the need for the



Health and Physical Education center



Administration/ Classroom building



Marina Amphitheater



Expanding the New Campus

The successful 1970 bond election helped secure a portion of the money needed to expand the new campus. The rest of the funding came from two federal grants, according to an Aug. 10, 1972 article in *The Waco Citizen*.

A building boom was about to happen. In 1971, construction began on a \$1.2 million Health and Physical Education center (HPE). This two-story, 52,000-square-foot building was completed in September 1972 and included a 25-yard lap swimming pool, 120-seat lecture hall, student lounge, racquetball courts, several classrooms, and men's and women's locker rooms. The architecture firm of Bennett, Carnahan, Hearn & Thomas designed the building so that it was joined to the existing gymnasium and virtually doubled the size of the original building. The new building allowed for a litany of new physical education courses to be taught at MCC, including bowling, golf, modern and social dancing, football, fencing, and gymnastics. The heated indoor swimming pool allowed for swimming courses to be taught on campus for the first time. Thirty-five years later, this pool is still one of the best in Waco.

The HPE was the first building to be completed in this second phase of construction, which lasted until 1975. Five additional buildings were added during this phase, as well as other facilities:

- A towering four-story Administration and Classroom building was completed in 1974 by Barsh Construction Co. at a cost of \$871,000. This 25,660-square-foot building, which houses the offices of the vice presidents and current President Dennis Michaelis, can be seen above the heavily forested tree line for miles on approach to the picturesque campus.
- In 1974, Barsh Construction completed a two-story 15,600-square-foot Health Careers building for \$627,000, according to MCC Board of Trustee minutes from June 28, 1973. For the past three decades, this building has been home to the Nursing, Radiological Technology and Mental Health Programs.
- In June 1972, the Marina Amphitheater complex was added on the college's land adjacent to the Bosque River. The water-

front development needed to be done prior to the impounding of Lake Brazos, which was scheduled for January 1973, according to MCC Board of Trustee minutes from a Nov. 9, 1971, meeting. The construction firm of C.L. Hendrick built the amphitheater and, in 1973, built a \$24,000 pedestrian bridge on campus to help students cross the rugged ravines that divided the campus land.

“...This exciting beginning will be dwarfed by future developments. MCC will continue to grow and serve the community in ways which now cannot be imagined.” — Dr. Ball

Left to Right: New buildings allowed space for a swimming pool, the Child Development Center and tennis courts.



- In 1974, the firm also built a baseball field and clubhouse on the campus' flat bottom land at a cost of \$65,000, according to Board of Trustee minutes from a Feb. 12, 1974, meeting.
- During this period, several tennis courts were added, and a media center was built beneath the Lecture Hall by finishing out a ground floor to the building. The media center included a projection room and state-of-the-art technology equipment for staff and faculty.
- In 1973, the Child Development Center was built by purchasing and renovating a house located adjacent to the campus at a cost of \$40,000.
- In 1975, completion of the Student Center by Barsh Construction for \$468,000 rounded out the construction during that busy building phase.

voted a unanimous verdict in favor of the college and ordered Waco Construction Co. to pay all damages and attorney fees associated with the flooding, according to minutes from an Oct. 9, 1973, MCC Board of Trustee meeting.

Bad luck seemed to plague the gymnasium, however. In September 1974, it again sustained water damage caused from excessive rains. Two days of heavy downpours caused a break in a 4-inch cast iron water main beneath the sidewalk entrance that connected the old gymnasium with the HPE, according to MCC Board of Trustee minutes from an Oct. 8, 1974, meeting. This time, the \$6,000 in associated damages were not covered by insurance or paid by an outside party, so the college had to fund the repairs.

By the fifth anniversary in 1975, the permanent campus had undergone much visible physical change. This change would continue throughout Dr. Ball's tenure as president until he retired in 1988. “The dramatic response to our new community college is convincing evidence of the need for more community/junior colleges in Texas and the soundness of philosophy behind them,” Dr. Ball said during a ceremony celebrating the college's fifth anniversary, according to a Jan. 8, 1975, article in the student newspaper, the *Highland Herald*. “I know that in reality this exciting beginning will be dwarfed by future

The campus makeover wasn't seamless, however. There were glitches along the way, such as a ruptured water pipe in September 1972 during construction of the HPE, which flooded the gymnasium and caused \$25,000 in damages, according to MCC Board of Trustee minutes from a Sept. 22, 1972, meeting. The college sued Waco Construction Co. In October 1973, a Waco jury



The Highlands gym



Community Services Center



developments. MCC will continue to grow and serve the community in ways which now cannot be imagined," Dr. Ball said.

He later joked that his primary job was to build buildings those first 10 years, and he built plenty. However, he didn't stop there. During the next 13 years prior to his retirement in 1988, Dr. Ball built and added steadily onto the campus:

- In February 1976, construction began on a 19,000-square-foot basketball gym and field house named The Highlands at a cost of \$541,000. The new gymnasium was large enough to accommodate 2,700 spectators and helped attract many more students to home games.
- In 1982, four tennis courts were added at a cost of \$137,000, along with a paved jogging track located across from the HPE building. Hal Stringer, landscape architect for the main campus plan, designed the \$22,000 track nestled under a canopy of trees. The track provides a shaded place

to run on a hot Texas day and is still a favorite among joggers.

- In 1982, Stringer also designed another pedestrian bridge on campus at a cost of \$68,000.
- In November 1985, a magnificent \$4 million, 41,411-square-foot Performing Arts Center would be unveiled and named after Dr. Ball as a lasting legacy to his presidency (see page 82).
- In 1987, the college purchased the old Waco High School, located adjacent to the MCC campus, for \$3 million. The 40-acre site included the old high school, four tennis courts, and parking for 420 vehicles. It was abandoned after Waco Independent School District decided to merge the school with Richfield High School. Dr. Ball saw the property as a future spot to offer courses. This property, now the Community Services Center, proved to be a worthy investment and has added about 25 percent more academic classroom space and offices on campus.

The Highlanders basketball team has had eight All-Americans over the years. Two Highlander All-Americans have gone on to play in the National Basketball Association: Vinnie Johnson and Sam Worthen.

From MCC to the NBA — *Sports Legends*



Vinnie Johnson



Sam Worthen

Vincent "Microwave" Johnson

Vincent "Microwave" Johnson is arguably the most successful Highlander to play for the NBA. Johnson was a key player on the Detroit Pistons. The team won the NBA championship in both 1989 and 1990. He earned the nickname "Microwave" for his ability to score many points in a short period of time. One of his most famous moments occurred on June 19, 1990, when he sunk the winning basket — a 14-footer — in the last second of a game against the Portland Trail Blazers. That basket gave them the win and the Pistons' second straight NBA championship. Born in Brooklyn, N.Y., in 1956, Johnson played for MCC during the 1975-1976 and 1976-1977 seasons. He played for Baylor University from 1977 until 1979 when he was selected seventh overall in the NBA player draft by Seattle. After two successful seasons with the Seattle SuperSonics, he was traded to the Detroit Pistons. After he retired in 1995, he founded an automotive company in Detroit. He is a member of the Michigan Sports Hall of Fame and the New York Sports Hall of Fame, according to his official fan Web site, www.vinniejohnson.com.

Sam Worthen

In 2006, Sam Worthen was coaching the Iona College men's basketball program in New Rochelle, N.Y., according to Iona College's Web site, www.iona.edu. Worthen played for MCC during the 1976-1977 season with Vincent "Microwave" Johnson and during the 1977-1978 season. He left MCC as an All-American point guard to play for Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wis., from 1978-1980. At Marquette, he led the Warriors in assists in his junior year and in scoring and assists in his senior year. In 1980, he was drafted by the Chicago Bulls in the second round of the NBA draft. He played in the NBA for two seasons: with the Bulls from 1980-1981 and the Utah Jazz from 1981-1982. Worthen started coaching in 1985 as a player/coach of the United States Basketball League's Springfield Fame, guiding them to the league title in 1988. He has been the head coach of the Albany Patroons (CBA), Miami Tropics (USBL; 1987 champions), New York Whitecaps (USBL), Harrisburg Hammerheads (CBA), Fort Wayne Fury (CBA), Long Island Surf (USBL), Brooklyn Kings (USBL) and Baltimore Bayrunners (IBL).

Sports Boom — Hoops and Hoopla

The addition of The Highlands gym in 1976 greatly contributed to the popularity of athletics at MCC. The 19,000-square-foot gym and field house could hold 2,700 spectators — much more than the original gymnasium located next to the Health and Physical Education Center.

Although the first men's basketball team — named the Highlanders — had been formed in the fall of 1967, until the new campus gymnasium opened in 1969, the players had no home court. From 1967 until 1969, the first team of 12 practiced at James Connally Technical Institute's gym. They alternated playing home games at the Richfield High School gym and the Waco High School gym in Waco. "The players took it in stride," first MCC basketball coach James Burroughs recalled. The charter team consisted of 12 players from throughout Texas, including Tyler, Fort Worth, Huntsville, Sherman and Waco. Ten full scholarships including dorm space and meals were offered that first year, said Burroughs, who had coached the Waco Richfield High School basketball team through its best season in school history in 1966, prior to being hired by MCC. The charter MCC team ended the first season with 13 wins and 13 losses, placing fourth in the Texas Junior College Conference.

The first campus gymnasium, opened in 1969, was a welcome addition and seemed to boost their scores. In their first season on their new home court, the men's basketball team won the zone championship and went on to take second place in the Texas Junior College Conference. Despite an early winning streak, the games were not frequented as well as administrators had hoped, however. The addition of the spacious Highlands gym in 1976 greatly helped to change things.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the Highlanders remained fierce competitors, winning the Conference championship 14 times. Over the course of 39 years, the men's basketball team has had 804 victories, 21 conference championships, two Region V championships, and has spawned eight All-American NBA players, including former Detroit Piston's guard Vinnie Johnson (see sidebar at left).

Although the wins have been great for school spirit, Burroughs said it has been the ath-

letes who have benefited from the rigors and discipline of their various sports as well as learning how to work together as a team. "You want them to believe in themselves. You want them to believe 'Hey, you can learn these skills and master these skills and put them into something worthwhile for your future,'" said Burroughs, who stepped down from coaching basketball in 1972 to be a full-time MCC physical education instructor — a position he still held in 2006. On Nov. 9, 2006, Burroughs was honored with the prestigious Frank Fallon Sportsmanship Award from the Greater Waco Chamber of Commerce in honor of longtime Baylor University sports broadcaster Frank Fallon.

"When you see them successful, then you feel successful because you know you played a small part in helping them achieve their education and their status. And then they go out and later become teachers or coaches or preachers or engineers, but you feel, as a teacher, that you had a chance to be a small part of that," Burroughs said.

That was also a dream of Vernon Cole, who had been hired as the college's first athletic director in 1966. He had vowed that McLennan Community College would eventually compete in all intercollegiate sports — including basketball, track, baseball, tennis and golf — except



Former MCC basketball coach James Burroughs



The Highlanders' first game vs. Camp Gary Job Corps in the Richfield High School Gym on Nov. 13, 1967

1967-1968 MCC Highlanders basketball team



The 1983 Highlanders celebrate winning the National Junior College Championship.



Rick Butler Bob Ammon Carmack Berryman
National title-winning coaches from 1983

The college was so elated at the wins that in June 1983, the Board of Trustees took time to recognize the efforts of these three coaches and their teams in the official board minutes.

College won the National Junior College Championship.

1983 proved to be a very good sports year for MCC. Aside from the baseball team winning the National Championship, the golf team, coached by Bob Ammon, won fourth place in the nation; the MCC tennis team, coached by Carmack Berryman, won fifth place nationally. The college was so elated at the wins that in June 1983, the Board of Trustees took time to recognize the efforts of these three coaches and their teams in the official board minutes.

In retrospect, this was quite a feat for these coaches, especially since most of their players rotated in and out of the college within a short two-year period. They constantly had to recruit and train new players and lose their star players to four-year universities.

"That's reality for the community college [coach]," Burroughs said. "We're only going to have a maximum of two years, so we need to do the best with them as we can and help them develop academically in their grades as well as with their basketball [or other sports] skills. From there we wanted them to go on to a senior institution of their choice."

football, which would be too costly to operate. He wanted not only to draw out school spirit but also to offer the sports for the betterment of the young athletes' minds and spirits. In addition, MCC would offer an extensive intramural program in which clubs and student groups could compete to bring out the very skills that Burroughs' early teams achieved.

The first baseball season opened in the spring of 1969 on the new campus under head coach Jerry Walsh. Again, MCC won its first games played on its new home turf against Concordia College, 5-4 and 4-0. The baseball team ended its first season with an 8 and 9 season record and with a 1 and 5 conference record. In the 1970s and 1980s, the baseball team would win the conference championship a total of 12 times, the regional championship 10 times and participate in the junior college world series four times. In 1983, under the leadership of head coach Rick Butler, McLennan Community

The 1982-1983 academic year was very successful for MCC Athletics.

Left to Right, Back Row: Carmack Berryman, tennis coach
Rick Butler, baseball coach
Bob Ammon, golf coach
Ken DeWeese, athletic director and men's basketball coach

Front Row: Dub Kilgo, assistant baseball coach
Charlotte Mason, women's basketball coach

Art Center Waco

As the popularity of MCC spread throughout McLennan County in the early 1970s, a few ladies who held leadership positions in the Junior League of Waco took note. They had long been searching for a suitable place to locate a public arts center on behalf of the City of Waco, and McLennan Community College caught their eyes.

The Waco Creative Art Center had been housed in the old Waco Chamber of Commerce offices on Franklin Avenue in downtown Waco since October 1972. However, the facilities were cramped and not highly trafficked and it did not provide much space for future growth. The Junior League had taken on the project for the city of finding a new home for the Art Center that would not only provide an attractive place to exhibit art, but would also offer a venue to hold art classes for all ages. At the same time, MCC was gaining a lot of local press and accolades from the community. Laura "Mickey" Risher Dossett Smith, a well-known member of the Junior League who later opened her own art gallery, called Dr. Wilbur Ball to inquire about relocating the Art Center on MCC property.

With tentative words and much formality, the Junior League, led by Smith, presented its idea to open the Art Center in the 10,000-square-foot former Cameron family home to Dr. Ball and the MCC Board of Trustees, Ball later recalled. The ladies did not realize that, from their very first conversation, Ball thought locating an art center at the community college was a great idea. He saw the plan as a way to attract

more people to the campus who might be interested in taking MCC courses. The Art Center also would serve the community, which was part of the college's mission. He said it took no effort to sell the idea to him or to the board. However, the ladies were unaware of his support and quite nervous. Looking back on it, Dr. Ball speculated that perhaps they were nervous because they knew renovation of the main house would cost quite a bit of money, and they didn't know how much money the college would charge to lease the property.

After he informed them of his support, he said they broke into big grins and literally jumped up and down with their elegant suits and perfectly pressed dresses flapping wildly and clapping their gloved hands. He laughed as he recalled how surprised he was at their outburst of emotion, and he said at that moment he knew in his heart that they would unequivocally usher this project through to perfection because they were all so

With tentative words and much formality, the Junior League, led by Smith, presented its idea to open the Art Center in the 10,000-square-foot former Cameron family home.

"Mickey" Smith led the drive to relocate the Art Center to the MCC campus.



The former Cameron family home prior to renovation. It would later serve as Art Center Waco.





J.J. Mayes,
former Board of
Trustees chairman

emotionally vested in providing art to the citizens of McLennan County. He said the ladies smiled even bigger after the MCC board on Sept. 11, 1973, voted unanimously to lease the main house and surrounding property that overlooks the Bosque River to the City of Waco for 25 years for the grand sum of \$10 per year, according to a lease signed Sept. 11, 1973, between Board of Trustees Chairman J.J. Mayes and the Art Center. The college would pay utilities, security and maintenance, according to a Sept. 17, 1975, article in the *Highland Herald* student newspaper. This agreement was still in effect in 2006, more than 30 years later.

"They just approached us, and we were just receptive," Dr. Ball said. "We thought it was a good idea that they were going to fund the renovation of the building."

There was, however, the matter of raising money to renovate the old Cameron house. The two-story, Mediterranean-style home with a full basement built in the 1920s was badly in need of repairs, and it would take much money to fix it up before it could house an art exhibit. This very expensive detail did not seem to faze Mickey Smith, however, who was the wife of revered Waco lawyer Cullen Smith. Coincidentally, it was Cullen Smith who was the lawyer representing the J.D. George family, who sold the campus property to MCC in 1966. The Smiths were quite familiar with the property and knew it was a bargain. After all, it was riverfront land being offered for \$10 a year.

Mickey Smith became chairman of the Junior League's Development Committee for the Center, which oversaw the project for the City of Waco during the next three years until the facility opened in January 1976. She pledged to the board and Dr. Ball that the Junior League would raise the \$400,000 needed for renovations, and she lived up to her word. Years later, Dr. Ball marveled at how the demure and soft-spoken Smith managed to raise \$300,000 herself for the project. "She was very gentle and kind and to use some old stereotype terminology, 'unassuming.' She was known and well-liked and well-respected and therefore was powerful in a way. Cullen was powerful," Dr. Ball said.

"She raised most of the money ... to fix up the old Cameron house, including the plaza out front," Cullen Smith said of his wife years later.

"She was extremely involved with the establishment of the Art Center and in fact wrote grant proposals with different foundations and went to visit with different foundations to help raise the money," her daughter, Elizabeth Smith said, recalling her mother's enthusiasm for the project.

Elizabeth Smith remembered that her mother also worked closely with the architecture firm on the design. Renovations to the Cameron House were done by the architectural firm of Ford, Powell & Carson Inc. of San Antonio and included a gift shop, audio visual room and large exhibition area. Funding for the new Art Center was provided by the City of Waco, Junior league of Waco, Moody Foundation of Galveston and the Cooper Foundation, according to a Sept. 17, 1975, article in the *Highland Herald*. The Cooper Foundation of Waco, a philanthropic, nonprofit organization, was established in 1943 as a nonprofit, unincorporated trust wholly for the purpose of benevolent public usefulness "to make Waco a better or more desirable city in which to live," according to the organization's Web site, www.cooperfdn.org. Coincidentally, Mickey Smith's daughter, Elizabeth Smith, later became the executive director of the Cooper Foundation, a title she still held in 2006.

Enough money was secured that renovations on the old main house began in September 1975, and the building opened in January 1976 — ahead

**"It is said that science
feeds man's body,
but that the arts
feed man's soul."**

— Bob L. Thomas

of schedule, despite having to clear away an unexpected trove of bananas found in the basement of the old mansion (see *Monkey Business sidebar at far right*). A public dedication ceremony was held on April 4, 1976.

Elizabeth Smith says that watching her mother write grants and lobby rich and powerful citizens to gain their support for the Art Center spurred her to later pursue a similar lifestyle. In a way, she is carrying on her mother's work, only she is paid a salary by the Cooper Foundation. In the 1970s, her mother was a full-time volunteer

who left an indelible impression that forever expanded the Waco art scene. "I remember her excitement of being able to work with such a fine [architecture] firm," Elizabeth Smith said. "It was very exciting but also scary, and it was a wonderful experience for her to be able to grow and develop her talents in working for a project that she believed very strongly."

On June 22, 2006, Mickey Smith died of cancer after leading a full life devoted to providing art for all citizens.

"It is said that science feeds man's body, but that the arts feed man's soul. Such is the new Art Center; food for man's soul," County Judge Bob L. Thomas said during the April 4, 1976, dedication ceremony for the Art Center, according to an April 7, 1976, article in the *Highland Herald*.

The first art displays included exhibits of oil paintings, water color and sculptures. Since then, hundreds of paintings and sculptures from local and well-known artists have been displayed at the Art Center. During the next 30 years, thousands would frequent the center, and hundreds more would financially support the nonprofit organization. In the 1990s and early 2000s, an annual art festival was held at the Art Center and throughout the college grounds, which attracted thousands of artists and patrons. It was a huge fundraiser for the art community every year, said LuAnn Klaras, who chaired the Art Center board and oversaw several of the festivals. "An awareness of Waco was made possible by virtue of having these people from all over the state and outside the state to come to Waco to be part of that event. It was important for people to have an opportunity to see a great deal of Waco and get acquainted with working artists from this area and to get acquainted with other artists," Klaras said.

McLennan Community College is to be credited for offering the space and having the foresight to realize its potential to the community, said Danny Uptmore, a former Board of Trustees chairman who served on the board from 1979 until 1994. "We've had a very big tradition of partnering with organizations. We own the Cameron facility, but we allow the Art Center of Waco to utilize that in a partnership relationship ... at a much reduced cost to the Art Center," Uptmore said. This has "made it very economically feasible for them to be in that facility."

Monkey Business

When renovations for the Art Center began on the old Cameron home in September 1975, construction workers literally went bananas over what they found in the basement of the old mansion. Stored in the cool, damp basement was a trove of bananas that had been grown on the MCC campus by the former MCC groundskeeper, according to Vice President Chester Hastings.

Apparently, the former groundskeeper — T.W. Chaffin, who is now deceased — ran a little side hobby of growing bananas on MCC lands. He stashed his stock in the basement, Hastings recalled years later with a laugh. "There were bananas all over the place. We all were aware of it. He wasn't making any money on it."

It seems the banana growing was a horticultural experiment, of sorts, by Chaffin, who later opened a nursery and flower shop north of Waco. He liked to test his luck at growing the tropical fruits despite the arid and rugged soil conditions of Central Texas. However, because of the conditions, he was forced to dig up the plants and replant them every year, as the tender stalks did not survive the unpredictable Central Texas winters.

He was rather good at it, as the mass of bananas collected in September 1975 proved to be quite healthy. "He had to dig them up every fall, and he was storing them in the bottom of what is presently the Art Center, and that building was decaying," Hastings said.

Alas, when the renovation of the Art Center began, Chaffin had no place to store his goods. It is rumored that Dr. Ball did not get angry about the plants, but he did not offer him other accommodations either. Chaffin is said to have given up the banana business for good that year.



T.W. Chaffin,
former groundskeeper



The old Cameron estate
was an unlikely nursery
for a banana trove.



A banana tree
on campus





The old Cameron home undergoes renovations to become the Art Center.

All agree the partnership probably would not have come to fruition without the handful of determined ladies from the Junior League of Waco who started it all.

Mickey Smith, who had a degree in art history from Baylor University, "was a big believer in the benefit to the public of art," Cullen Smith said of his late wife. "She had an appreciation of art that was extremely unique."

The MCC Board of Trustees was so grateful to Mickey for her efforts that years later, in 1977, she was appointed to fill a vacancy on the board. To her husband's surprise, she successfully ran to keep the seat when the term expired; she stayed on the board until 1984, serving as chairman from 1979 to 1980. "MCC was very happy to have [the Art Center] there, and it gave the Art Center a home and an opportunity for the public to come out and see the campus," Cullen Smith said reflecting on his wife's legacy. "The board appreciated what she'd done, and when there was a vacancy on the board, they asked if she would [serve]," he said.

Klaras, who chaired the Art Center board in later years, never had the chance to work with Smith, but said her reputation was revered among board members, even 20 years after she had left the organization. "Her vision was absolutely essential, and her energy [was endless]," Klaras said. "She was not satisfied with things that were not first quality, so she pushed for that building to be the very best site that it could be."

Klaras' husband ran a full-time restaurant, and she was working too much to get involved. "I was just on the sidelines at that point in time, applauding and thinking, 'I'm so grateful this is happening,'" she said. "There had not been a museum or a place in the community to encourage the creative arts ... until the establishment of the ... Art Center."

In 2006, as the college celebrated its 40th anniversary, the Art Center was looking for a new home to accommodate its popularity, which had caused it to outgrow the old Cameron house confines, Klaras said. Wherever it moves, she said, the success of the early days shall follow.

Displaced Homemaker Program — A Second Career Chance

The Junior League of Waco not only was attuned to furthering the arts in Central Texas, but also kept abreast of societal issues affecting McLennan County. In the late 1970s, an upsurge in divorces led to an increasing number of women in the community who were in need of work, yet lacked marketable job skills. Once again, the Junior League took the initiative and paired with McLennan Community College to help resolve what they perceived as a growing problem.

The league calculated there were 1,200 to 1,500 divorces a year in Central Texas. This was based on a two-year community survey conducted by the league, said counseling specialist Marylea Henderson. She was hired by MCC in

September 1979 to oversee the new program, which was at first called the Community Career Center for Displaced Homemakers and Other Special Interest Groups. "[The Junior League] did projects to see what was needed in their community, and this was their research [finding] ... that this was needed: a support place for those who were going through those traumas," said Henderson, who has overseen the program for the past 27 years. "The nearest place for help with those who were divorced was in College Station, [Texas], so they came to the college and said, 'We'd like to work together and start a support system here.' That's how it started."

For the first five years from 1979 until 1984, the league supplied volunteers to help counsel women and men who were suffering from the effects of divorce, desertion, death or disability of a spouse. Many of the volunteers were psychologists, counselors, lawyers and doctors, Henderson said. MCC provided the office space in the Student Center and paid Henderson's salary. The Texas Education Agency oversaw the program and, with the league, helped provide the initial \$46,675 startup fund. To qualify for free counseling, participants must have been one of the following: homemakers needing to seek employ-

ment due to divorce or disability of a spouse; single parents who lacked job skills; homemakers or part-time workers seeking full-time employment; or those facing problems brought on by the empty-nest system with grown children. "The whole idea is to get them into the workforce and successful," Henderson said. From the very first semester in the fall of 1979, the program was instantly popular. About 350 participants signed up that first year, and the numbers have since not wavered. In 27 years, 8,000 participants have been helped through the program, Henderson said. Since renamed the Single Parent/Displaced Homemaker Program, it has received a number of federal grants and has expanded with every passing year. Several men — mostly single parents — also have sought help through the program. In the 1980s, the program, in conjunction with the American Cancer Society, even offered counseling to help families coping with cancer. In 1985, the program began serving handicapped participants to help them mainstream into society. In 1999, the program was given an exemplary rating from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board covering a 10-year period. It also has been recognized nationally by the Junior League as an outstanding community achievement, Henderson said.

"Marylea Henderson is a wonderful person. She serves some hard-up people," Dr. Ball said. "There was such a need to get them financial help and moral support and everything that they needed to help them overcome the horrible situation that they were in."

"She absolutely helped many, many people to get out of the holes in which they were living, and she brought them up to be successful," said LaVerne Wong, who was dean of student services from 1975 until 1991 and oversaw the Displaced Homemaker Program.

Henderson credits Dr. Ball and the board — which in 1980 was chaired by former Junior Leaguer and Art Center Waco founder Mickey Smith — for seeing the potential to develop the program. She credits current MCC President Dennis Michaelis for continuing to allow the program to flourish and expand.

"It's a unique ... program," Henderson said. "We've had people come from all over Texas who want to start a program like this in their colleges. We've been one of the pioneers."

"We've had people come from all over Texas who want to start a program like this in their colleges."

— Marylea Henderson



Marylea Henderson started the Displaced Homemaker Program in 1979.



Marylea Henderson in 2006 with MCC graduate Christi Plaa, who benefited from the Single Parent/Displaced Homemaker Program

Dedication Next Sunday

New Home for The Art Center

Things are stirring at "Valley View." The former summer home of lumber magnate William Cameron will blossom forth as the new home of The Art Center next Sunday. The official dedication is scheduled for 3 p.m. The public is invited to the ceremony and to view the center's spacious new quarters as well as a million dollars worth of borrowed art.

For a short while last week, things at the house were in a state of utter confusion as ladies in long dresses mingled with art interrupted the workmen so they could have their pictures taken. The results are shown on this page.

Both the contractor and the ladies promise everything will have settled down by the end of Saturday evening prior to the dedication ceremony. A private reception will be held from 3 to 5 p.m. for Art Center members and their guests. Distinguished guests will include the boards of approval of the local habitation of the Cameron house and members of the staff and boards of directors of art museums, art schools and art galleries from around the state.

The reception also will mark the opening of "At the Time of the Flood," an exhibition of paintings, drawings, prints, photographs, furniture and objects borrowed from the period 1818 to 1833. The material has been borrowed from museums and private owners and represents a number of internationally known artists and designers. It will remain on view through May 14.

The opening of the new center marks the fulfillment of a dream and the culmination of a lot of hard work on the part of many Wacoans who have worked for the past five years to provide their city with a truly outstanding visual arts program. It is their bi-centennial gift to Waco.

BASEMENT BONANZA — The contractor's office in the basement of the renovated Art Center building yielded both hard hats and a complete set of plans for the prying eyes of the center's director, Paul Rogers Harris, and Mrs. Dan E. Swenke Jr., chairman of the committee which selects and schedules the documents who act as hostesses, tour guides and art historians. The plans were drawn by famed restoration architect Ford, Powell & Carson Inc. of San Antonio. The basement will house the sculpture and ceramic studios.

STAIRWAY SUMMIT — Mrs. Cullen Smith and Mrs. E. L. Humphreys III are standing on the attractive iron balustraded stair which has been built at the rear of the house to provide additional access to the upper floors and also to serve as an emergency exit. Mrs. Smith is chairman of the center's Development Committee which successfully garnered more than \$200,000 from a variety of

WINDOW WATCHERS AND WASHER — Mrs. Carroll W. Sturgis and Walter B. Dosselt Jr. look on as James Harris cleans the paint off the window panes in the main floor exhibition gallery. Mrs. Sturgis is chairman of the board of The Art Center and Mrs. Dosselt is treasurer. A number of partitions were removed and the staircase rerouted to form the large open space in the center of the building.



Lynn Abernathy as a full-time counselor in 1992



Lynn Abernathy, vice president of student services, in 2007

“Many of my contemporaries had been through a situation where they didn’t have the skills to support their families in a time of great need.”

— Lynn Abernathy

Lynn Abernathy, now MCC vice president of student services, was a member of the Junior League in 1979. Her first foray onto the MCC campus was that year as a league volunteer who helped to set up the program that first semester. She held a master’s degree in counseling from Baylor and was a happily married, stay-at-home mother of two. However, Abernathy said she felt an affinity to help women who were struggling. Many of her friends and acquaintances were divorcing, yet they lacked the job skills to land the salaries that they needed to sustain their families. “It was a time in the [American] culture when many women — say in their mid-30s and early 40s — were divorcing. It just really peaked around that time, and there seemed to be a great need for [helping them],” Abernathy said. “Many of my contemporaries had been through a situation where they didn’t have the skills to support their families in a time of great need.”

She and other league members traveled to other colleges and viewed similar programs. They

worked closely with Chester Hastings in establishing the early mission of the Displaced Homemaker Program, and she helped counsel program participants that first year. Participants received free individual and group counseling, career assessment, and career counseling. Many were also put in touch with other support agencies within the community to help with other needs. The college assisted in helping to get these people into courses that would better their career track. “Some of them had degrees, but they had never really worked. The degrees were old, so we worked at it from that angle, too,” Abernathy said. She also offered moral support.

The participants were not the only ones to benefit, Abernathy said. Working with them gave her a new perspective and appreciation for life. This spurred a desire within her to continue to help people further their educations. In 1980, she was hired by MCC as a full-time counselor paid by federal funds to help persuade high school students to pursue higher education degrees after graduation. By 1981, she was working back in the Student Center as a counselor through a Carl Perkins federal grant. She held this job of counseling students until a promotion in 1994 hoisted her into the administration, which later led to a vice presidency.

Funding for the Displaced Homemaker Program comes from several different sources, one of which is a Carl Perkins federal grant that pays for participants’ child care and transportation expenses while in school. “The Perkins funds have been a tremendous help to these students,” Henderson said. Annually, about 150 of the participants receive Perkins grants,” she said.

In August 2006, Christy Plaa graduated from MCC with an associate’s degree in radiology technology. The 23-year-old single mother said she could never have completed her degree in three years had she not received a Carl Perkins grant, which paid her \$250 per month for child care expenses for her 3-year-old daughter, Haley. “I’m a single mom, and they helped pay for child care the entire time I was in school,” Plaa said. “Without that help, there is absolutely no way I would have graduated.” In fall 2006, Plaa was working full time at a Waco radiology office and at Hillcrest Baptist Medical Center. This is a substantial career advancement from the secretarial job she held prior to enrolling in MCC.

Plaa is profusely grateful to the program and to Marylea Henderson, who was her counselor. There were many days that Plaa wanted to quit school and stay home with her daughter. The full-time course load was grueling, and the clinical rotations took a lot of time away from her daughter. Many days she cried to Henderson, who encouraged her to stay in school and promised there would be better days ahead. “She, on many occasions, lifted my head up for me when I didn’t think I could do it myself. There were many times I just wanted to throw up my hands and quit. And she was adamant about it and would say, ‘You’ve gone this far. You’ve done great.’ She just encouraged me to keep on going,” Plaa said.

When she stepped across the graduation stage at the Waco Convention Center on Aug. 15, 2006, Henderson was in the audience. “She was one of the first people I ran up to and hugged because I wouldn’t have made it without her. There’s no doubt in my mind,” Plaa said. “I will always think she was my little guardian angel who helped me through school.” Emboldened and empowered with her new career, she wants more out of life. Plaa now wants to return to pursue a bachelor’s degree through the University Center (see *University Center*, page 112), which offers four-year degrees with several partnering Texas universities on the MCC campus. “I’m going to go back, and Marylea is going to be who I talk to,” Plaa vowed.

New Careers Program Launched Careers

Throughout Dr. Ball’s tenure as president, he pursued ways to reach out to the Central Texas community. From 1968 to 1972, McLennan Community College sponsored a New Careers Program, which was an innovative program that helped low-income students and local employers. This federally funded job outreach program targeted low-income students, paid them a stipend, and helped them acquire on-the-job training to work in local agencies associated with health, education, and social welfare industries within Central Texas. The program had been started in fall 1968, and by September 1970, there were 71 student participants. By 1972, there were 80 participants, with 37 graduating with Associate in Applied Science degrees that year.

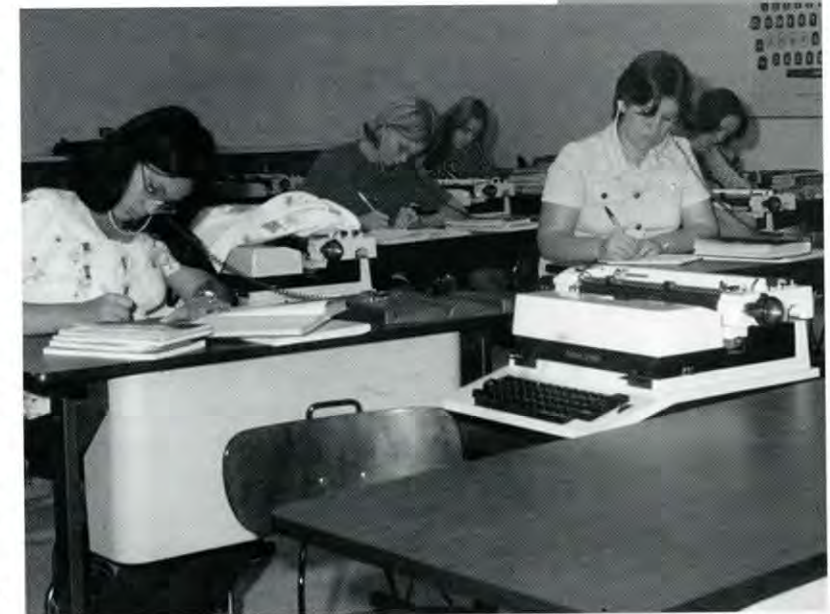
The program was co-sponsored by the Texas

Employment Commission and the Concentrated Employment Program, which paid the students’ wages. The students’ outreach extended to 13 neighboring education agencies, 14 social welfare agencies, and nine health facilities in McLennan County. Students were paid federal minimum wage for their various jobs in an internship-like atmosphere. Those that showed initiative were promised the possibility of being hired full time, said Vice President Hastings, who oversaw the program. “It was a program aimed at providing training and employment,” he said. “The businesses, as I recall, over a period of time would contribute more and eventually hire them if they were proven to be successful in whatever position they held.”

Students were assigned jobs as data processing aides, educational aides and instructional aides with agencies that committed to hiring the trainees upon successful completion of the two-year work-study program. MCC provided on-the-job supervision and in-service training for the students as well as counseling to help keep them on track in career development, according to a Jan. 12, 1971, memo from Dr. Ball.

Many of these students came from low-income neighborhoods and had never previously worked in an office or professional environment, Hastings said. The college helped to counsel these students on proper business etiquette, dress and mannerisms, as well as required them to take English grammar courses.

Students in the New Careers Program took writing and secretarial classes.



“There was an in-classroom training aspect also,” Dr. Ball said. “I remember going to their classes and practicing eating, using forks and knives with them ... to help them develop the social skills that they needed.”

Waco Independent School District, Waco Mental Health Mental Retardation, the Waco Methodist Children’s Home and Hillcrest Baptist Medical Center were among the employ-

ers that participated in this program by placing students in positions with possible upward job mobility.

LaVerne Wong, who was dean of student services from 1975 to 1991, credits Dr. Ball with striving to meet the community’s needs: “When you talk about outreach, we did it,” Wong said.

“We paid a lot of attention to developing programs that we thought needed to be developed,” Dr. Ball said.

ers that participated in this program by placing students in positions with possible upward job mobility. “The concept of upward mobility does prevail,” former New Careers Director Charles D. Moore wrote in an April 20, 1971, memo to Cecil Reynolds, MCC assistant dean of technical education. “The concept of New Careers is for upward academic mobility and job mobility.”

“The concept was good, and I think we did reasonably well in pursuing that and implementing it,” Hastings said. Unfortunately, the program was not continued after its fourth year due to a decrease in federal funds. Nevertheless, this program laid the foundation for future work-study programs offered through MCC over the years that has helped hundreds of low-income students enter the workforce and achieve the job of their dreams. The idea continued in later years through other programs that cater to low-income students, such as Upward Bound — a federal program that helps tutor high school students to persuade them to seek higher education (see *Upward Bound*, page 104). Also, the Displaced Homemaker Program provides money to help with child care and transportation costs for single and divorced parents and widows. Both of these programs were started following the New Careers Program under Dr. Ball’s reign, and both have continued

Making it Right

In 1968, New Careers Program Director Charles Moore became the first African-American hired in an administrative position at MCC. Later he was joined by Alvin Pollard, who served as dean of Vocational Technical Education from 1973 to 2002. LaVerne Wong, who is of Asian descent, was dean of student services from 1975 to 1991.

Although Dr. Ball was quite diligent to try and find administrators who mirrored the diverse students at MCC, it wasn’t always easy.

Initially, Pollard said there were concerns that blacks weren’t being admitted into the nursing program. In retrospect, the story below turned out to benefit MCC by putting into place a system of checks and balances to ensure adequate minority representation in the admitting process. Many say it also helped to integrate the student population.

Pollard said that just weeks after he moved to Waco in August 1973, he received a visit from Robert L. Gilbert, who was an outspoken leader of Waco’s black community on issues involving civil rights. Pollard describes Gilbert as the “Martin Luther King of Waco.” In fact, Gilbert was a groundbreaker himself in overcoming educational barriers. In 1967, he was the first African-American to graduate from Baylor University. He later became Waco’s first African-

American teacher in an all-white school. He was also the first African-American man to serve on the Waco Independent School District Board of Trustees. Since the inception of McLennan Community College, Gilbert had visited numerous times with Dr. Ball and Vice President Hastings on issues concerning the black community. Now he felt that he had an automatic ally in Dean Pollard regarding issues of race. Years later,

Pollard has helped devise a system to help them also, whereby MCC guidance counselors offer counseling sessions to all applicants who have been rejected from a career or program track. The counselors then try to steer them to a different career path or encourage them to repeat certain academic courses to sharpen their skills before applying for the program again.

“We counsel with the students — all stu-

MCC administrators have worked throughout the years to make minority students feel welcome and help them mainstream into the student body.



Left to Right: The New Careers Program and revised nursing admissions system allowed low-income and minority students a greater opportunity for education.

At far Right: LaVerne Wong speaks at an MCC graduation.

history will reflect that he most definitely did, and the actions that resulted helped to balance more fairly the admissions process at MCC for generations to come.

There had been charges of racial discrimination against admitting black students into the MCC nursing program. To Pollard, Gilbert cited several alleged cases of minority applicants who, he claimed, were denied entry without sufficient explanation. Because nursing is one of the most academically challenging degree tracks at MCC, students must pass certain entrance exams, and their grades from high school are also considered before they are admitted into the program. Pollard took a hard look at the situation and was instrumental in instituting a new admitting system that included a review by an admissions committee, not just the nursing director. The committee began reviewing applicant entries on a point system that included test scores, high school grade point averages, and current grade point averages and would not indicate the race of the student. More than three decades later, this system is still in place.

Despite this system, many students — especially minorities — still have had trouble getting admitted into some of the health career fields because of low entrance examination scores and grade point averages from basic core classes.

dents — who are not successful. It’s one thing to say, ‘I’m sorry you didn’t make it.’ To me that was not enough,” Pollard said. “And that’s where the individual, one-on-one counseling comes in. Sometimes they would go into another program, but some of them are determined. They want to be nurses, and it has happened. They get their averages up [in] math, English and the sciences [and are accepted].”

An MCC study conducted in 2004 by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning found that from 2000 to 2004 fall enrollment by African-American students jumped from 891 to 1,293, a 45.1 percent change during a five-year period. Enrollment by Hispanic students during the same period increased 58 percent from 693 to 1,095.

MCC administrators have worked throughout the years to make minority students feel welcome and help them mainstream into the student body. Aside from hiring qualified minority instructors, several minority student groups also have been formed, such as the African Student Kindred black student group and the Hispanic students’ Chicanos Unidos Club. In 2006, the International Students Association on campus attracted students from 13 other countries: Algeria, China, Columbia, Ecuador, Egypt, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Nicaragua, Russia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Zimbabwe.



The Veterans Club



Military recruiters visit the MCC campus.

Returning Veterans Program

As the Vietnam War raged in the 1970s, its effects were strongly felt in Central Texas. A study conducted by McLennan Community College in fall 1971 and fall 1972 found that one in six MCC students was a veteran of the Vietnam War, was a dependent of a veteran, or had lost someone to the war, according to an August 1973 MCC press release. At least 400 of these students were on campus, and Dr. Ball's administration sought ways to help them transition into campus life.

In August 1973, the college established an Office of Veterans Affairs to provide expanded service to Central Texas veterans. Ronald H. Smith was appointed director of the program, which was financed through a \$14,000 grant from the Health, Education, and Welfare Department's Veteran's Cost of Instruction Program. The program was designed "to reach veterans and determine their educational needs, recruit veterans to take advantage of postsecondary training and provide special programs designed for remedial, tutorial and motivational programs to promote success in the college career; and counsel the veteran on personal, family, educational and career decisions," Smith was quoted in an Aug. 21, 1973, MCC press release.

Aside from veteran's benefits through the GI bill (see page 38), the college worked to help counsel and advise veterans and their families to help them pursue higher education opportunities. "MCC will make every effort to provide persons eligible for benefits of necessary assistance," Vice President Hastings said.

LaVerne Wong, dean of student services, oversaw the Veterans Program. She worked with many veterans during this era and said she respected their desire to attain higher education for a financially fruitful transition back into civilian life. "A large percentage of the students were veterans," she recalled. Some of the veterans struggled with emotional and financial dilemmas, she remarked, and "there were also those who were very sincere about completing their work and going forward."

Filling a Niche

With James Connally Technical Institute (later known as Texas State Technical College) and McLennan Community College located only

eight miles apart, both institutions have worked together through the years so as not to offer overlap by offering the same courses. A limited student base in McLennan County and surrounding Central Texas communities would not support both institutions offering the same curriculums, nor would it be a good use of taxpayer dollars. So over the years, the state-supported technical and vocational institution and MCC have developed a working relationship that has evolved into somewhat sister institutions. What one institution carries, the other avoids. For instance, James Connally Technical Institute already was proficient in offering mechanical and industrial



"We all kind of have our own niche. I look at it as a benefit to the community."

— Elton Stuckly Jr.

degrees such as automotive and electronic technology. To date, those courses are not offered at MCC. Likewise, TSTC does not offer a nursing program because it would conflict with the programs offered at MCC.

"When you build a vocational program, you build it around what your community and service needs are," said Alvin Pollard, whose current position as MCC vice president of program development is specifically geared toward earmarking and providing the courses and programs that business and community leaders would like MCC to offer. In the 1970s, for instance, a drive emerged to expand health care, and MCC noted the niche.

"We all kind of have our own niche," TSTC President Elton Stuckly Jr. said. "I look at it as a

benefit to the community. I've been very pleased in working with Dennis [Michaelis] and the folks from MCC."

Although Stuckly is president of TSTC, his wife and daughter attended nursing classes and earned their nursing degrees from MCC. His daughter, Elaine, graduated in spring 2006 and was hired at Hillcrest Baptist Medical Center in their medical surgery department. His wife, Peggy, graduated in the late 1990s and works for a Waco gastroenterologist. "People kid me on [my] campus because my wife, who did a career change at 40, went through the nursing program at MCC. My daughter just graduated with her

Vocational Nursing (LVN) Program also was added. Nearly 40 years after the first nursing program was offered, nursing is considered one of the most competitive and popular degree tracks at McLennan Community College. It also is one of the curriculums that community leaders and citizens agree has given a great deal back to the community by training qualified nurses who typically stay in Central Texas and work at local hospitals, doctors' offices and clinics after graduation.

Many Central Texas community leaders say Dr. Ball's innovativeness in persuading the Board of Trustees to add the nursing programs helped McLennan County to retain many of its talented



RN. ... And people say 'I just cannot believe you're the president of TSTC, and your daughter is going to MCC,'" Stuckly said. "We don't offer nursing, but if my daughter and my wife want to do nursing, you go where they offer nursing."

From its first health care courses offered in the late 1960s, McLennan Community College quickly began expanding its health care fields. Today these are some of the most popular career tracks. Law enforcement was another popular field of study, as well as data processing and key-punch courses, which were precursors to today's personal computing.

Cornering the Nursing Market

With their pulse on the community, Dr. Ball and Vice President Hastings were able to define what was most needed in Central Texas in the 1970s. Health care fields topped the list and still remain among the most popular and competitive fields of study at MCC.

In February 1967, administrators started a two-year Associate Degree Nursing Program with a total of 28 students under the direction of Sara Moore. In fall 1971, a one-year Licensed

health care workers who otherwise might have had to move out of town for studies and might not have moved back to Central Texas after graduation.

Two MCC surveys conducted in August and September 2006 of the two major hospitals in Waco, Hillcrest Baptist Medical Center and Providence Health Center, found that 68 percent of the hospitals' registered nurses were graduates of an MCC nursing program, according to the surveys conducted by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning.

"Health was our lead area and still is today," said Alvin Pollard, former dean of Vocational Technical Education.

It wasn't always that way. At first Dr. Ball had to persuade one local hospital to curtail its own in-house nursing program and he convinced administrators from both hospitals to hire MCC nursing graduates. Since 1921, Hillcrest had offered its own nurse training program, with the exception of 16 years from 1935-1946 and 1952-1957, said Wetona Mayfield, a former graduate of the Hillcrest School of Nursing and 2007 secretary/treasurer of the Hillcrest Nursing Alumni

Far Left:
Dr. Dennis Michaelis

TSTC President
Elton Stuckly

This page Left to Right:
Nursing students receive
their pins at a
candlelight ceremony.

Students participate
in early MCC
nursing classes.



Sara Moore started the
MCC Nursing Program
in 1967.

Association. Hillcrest offered a three-year RN program and a licensed vocational nursing program. This was quite common and followed a trend that originated in the 1950s when hospitals began offering their own nursing programs to fill

Baptist Health System, according to the Texas Nurses Association. By 2006, most community colleges in Texas offered associate degree nursing programs.

“When nursing actually moved into an aca-



Left to Right:
Providence
Health Center

Hillcrest Baptist
Medical Center

A nursing student in
the MCC nursing lab



Cherry Beckworth,
MCC Nursing
Program director

shortages caused by the Korean War. Providence also had operated its own in-house nursing training program until August 1960. Dr. Ball and Chester Hastings convinced the hospital administrators that McLennan Community College would offer a comprehensive nursing program that would produce qualified and talented nurses and would free up the Hillcrest nursing staff to help patients, rather than train young nurse protégés.

Dr. Ball and Hastings met with executives from both hospitals, and soon there was “No trouble at all. They were ready to let us have it,” Dr. Ball explained. “I’d like to think we were flexible as far as the curriculum and programs, and we were downright aggressive when it came to things such as starting a registered nursing program. [Hillcrest was] doing their own education because they didn’t have anybody to do it for them. A hospital is not an educational institution, but they were acting as such in self-defense.”

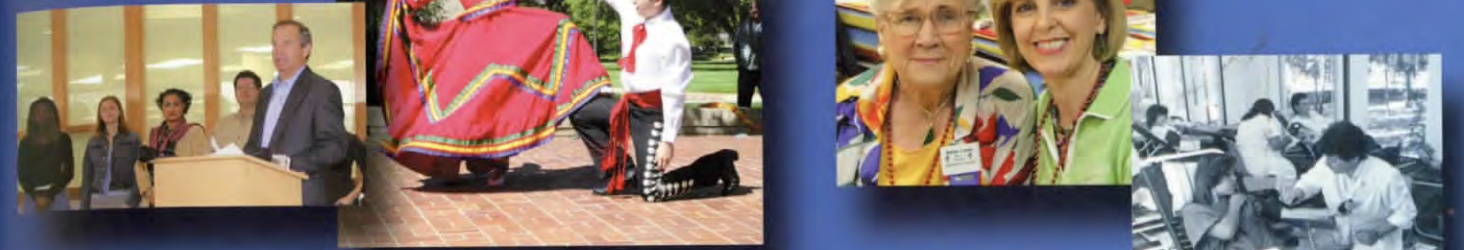
MCC wasn’t the only community college in Texas to corner the local nursing education market. Other community colleges and higher education institutions throughout the state also have been successful in offering nursing programs that over the years have all but replaced hospital programs in Texas.

Most hospital-based programs, known as diploma programs, have been phased out in Texas. By fall 2006, there were only two diploma nursing programs in Texas: Covenant School of Nursing in Lubbock, part of Covenant Health System, and San Antonio at Baptist Health System School of Professional Nursing, part of

democratic setting, there were a larger number of programs with bachelor’s degrees, and nursing moved almost completely away from the hospital setting,” MCC Nursing Program Director Cherry Beckworth said. Prior to that, Beckworth said, “The programs pretty much were run and taught by people in hospitals. Many times the hospital would prepare them (to work) for their hospital, but we want to be able to prepare them for any setting to go into work.”

During the first five years of the Associate Degree Nursing Program at MCC, 79 nursing students obtained associate’s degrees. The program earned national accreditation through the National League for Nursing and the program was among only seven nationally accredited associate degree nursing programs in Texas, according to an MCC press release from April 1972. The national accreditation in 1972 was above and beyond any requirements the college was expected to achieve. The Associate Degree Nursing Program at MCC had already received full accreditation from the Texas Board of Nurse Examiners in 1969, but this national accreditation was further proof of the program’s success and drive to educate nursing students. “We applied because we are not satisfied with meeting minimal requirements. We want to develop a top quality program that ranks with the best in the nation,” first Nursing Program Director Sara Moore was quoted in the April 1972 press release.

Four months later, in August 1972, the Licensed Vocational Nursing (LVN) Program received notice of approval for certification by the Texas Board of Vocational Nurse Examiners.

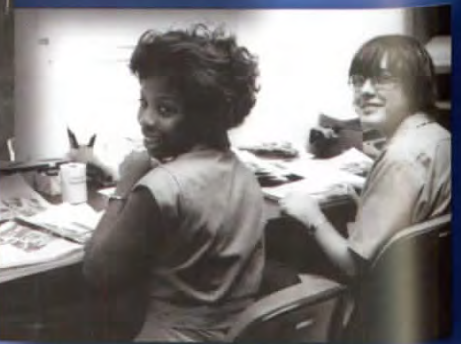
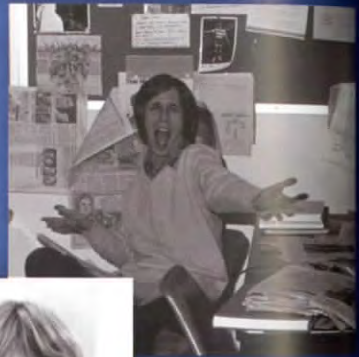


Community



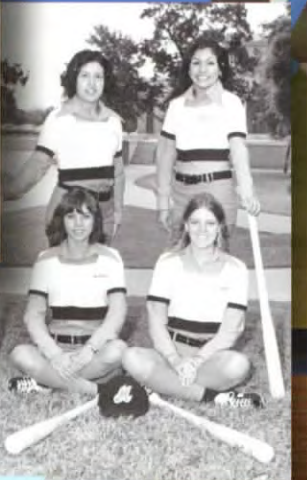
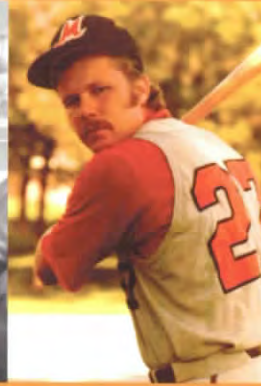


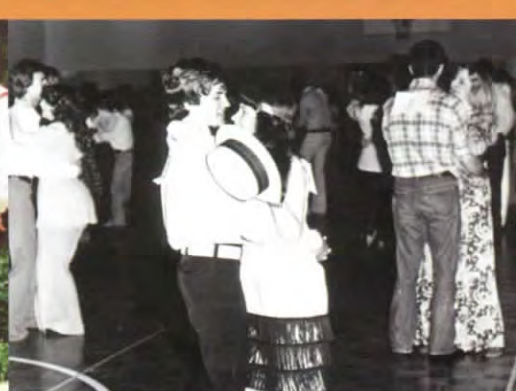
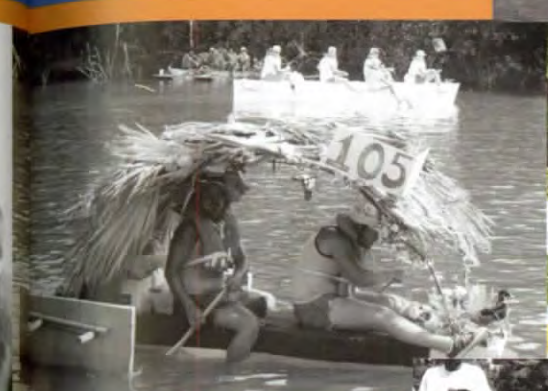
Students



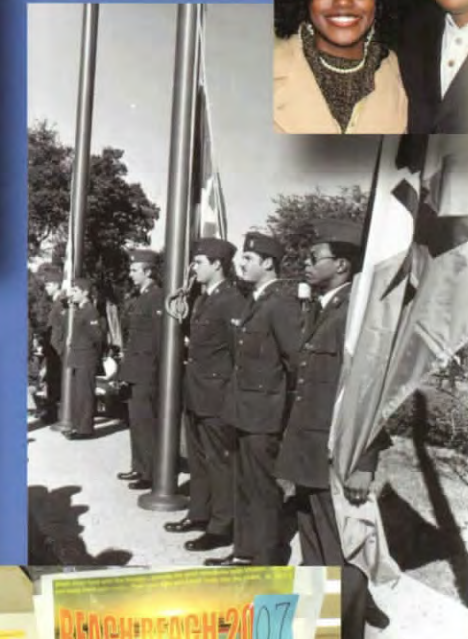
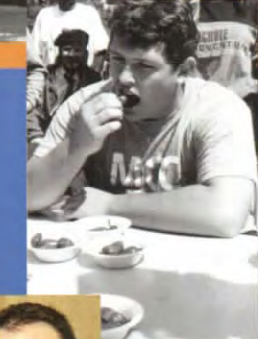


Athletics



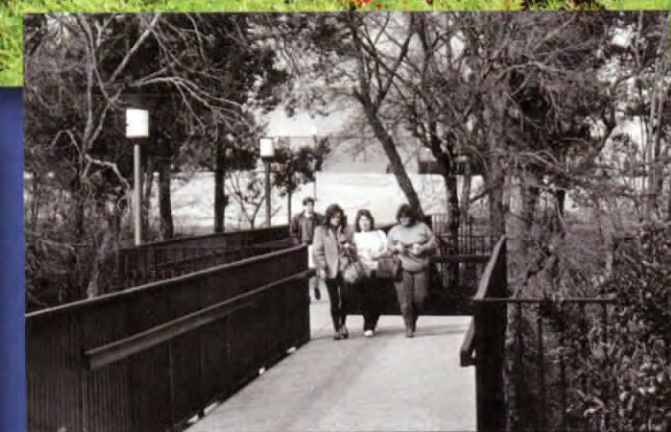


Events



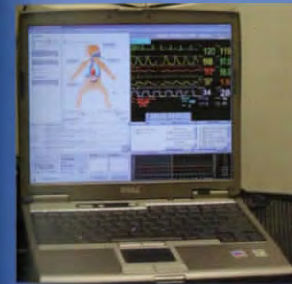


Campus

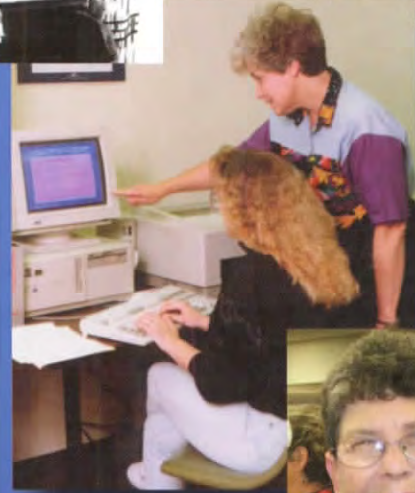
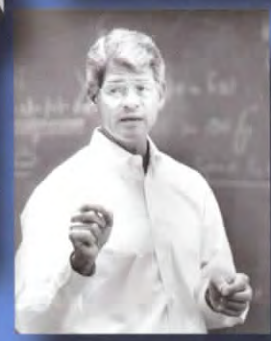
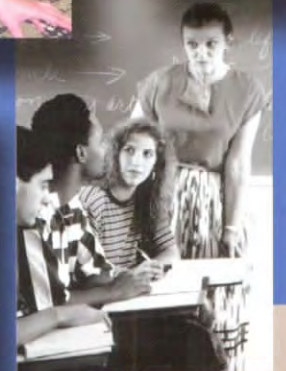
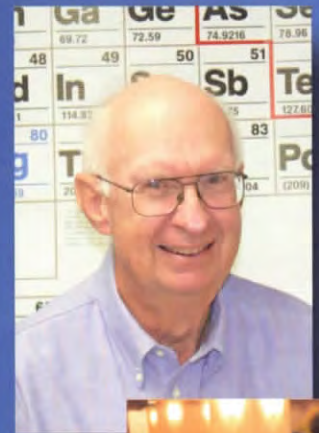
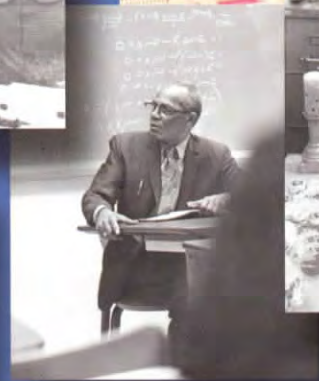
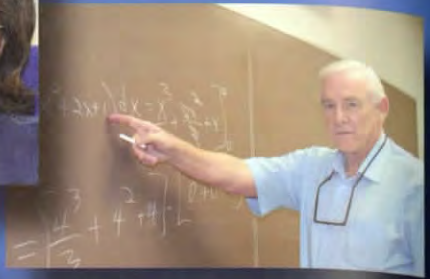




Health Careers



Faculty, Staff, & Board of Trustees



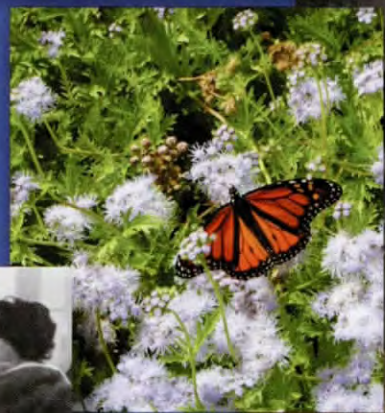


Performing & Visual Arts





Campus



Registered nurse Nelda Grunden was the first director of the LVN Program, which was still in existence as the college celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2006.

The first Associate Degree Nursing class at MCC in fall 1967 had 28 students. By fall 2006, there were 240 students, said Beckworth, who began working at MCC as an instructor in January 1973 at the age of 23 after graduating from Baylor University's nursing program. Over the years, enrollment at MCC has been as high as 264 students during some semesters, Beckworth said. She believes that more students would surely be admitted to the program at MCC, but she also emphasized that many are turned away due to stringent regulations by the Texas Board of Nurse Examiners, which requires a low ratio of 1 faculty member to 10 students. This limits the number of students accepted into the MCC program. This ratio ensures that all nursing students in Texas get as much personalized attention with instructors as possible. In addition, all nursing graduates — whether from a two-year or four-year college program — must pass a board-certified state licensure exam prior to starting nursing practice. To ensure that the associate degree nursing programs are properly educating nursing students, the Board of Nurse Examiners also requires that at least 80 percent of all nursing school graduates pass the NCLEX-RN licensure exam. In 2006, MCC reported that 86 percent of its nursing student graduates passed the NCLEX-RN, Beckworth said.

Although the courses are tough, and the MCC program is thorough, the instructors work so closely with students that most return for the second year of study. In fall 2006, retention of first- to second-year students in the Associate Degree Nursing Program was at an all-time high of 94 percent, Beckworth said.

Spurred by a local and nationwide shortage of nurses, Providence and Hillcrest administration officials openly admit that they await MCC nursing graduates. "Some of the best nurses that we've had have come straight from [MCC's nursing] school," said Judy Taylor, director of Surgical Services for Providence Health Center, who was also head surgical nurse for Providence for 10 years. "Both [Waco] hospitals need nurses and [MCC] has the program set up to where both facilities are able to take the students and rotate

and learn their curriculum at both hospitals, and that's a good thing."

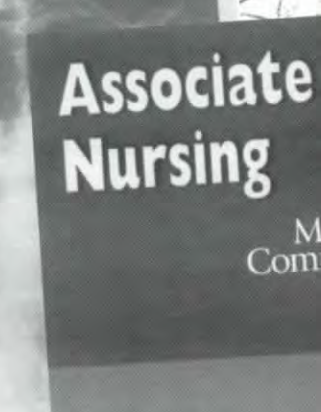
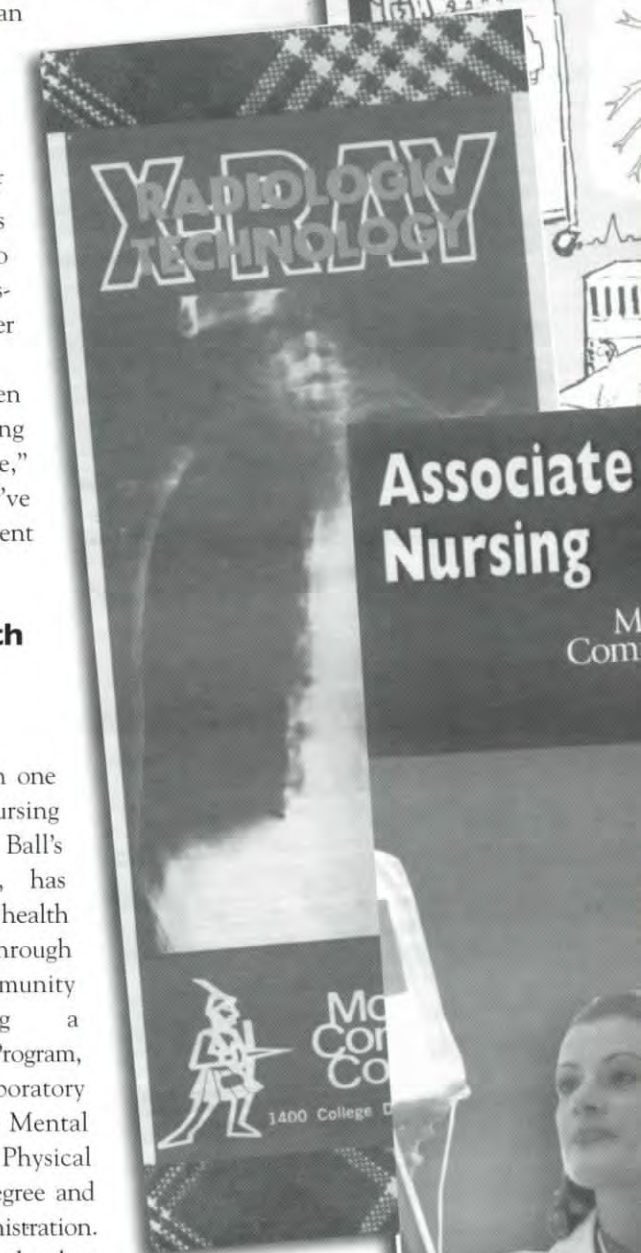
Beckworth's staff schedules the MCC student nurses at clinical rotations in all the various surgical and health departments at Providence, Hillcrest, and the Waco Veterans Affairs Medical Center as well as doctors' offices and clinics throughout McLennan County. Meanwhile, Taylor and other health care administrators advise MCC officials on what types of skills nursing graduates need and ways to expand the MCC nursing curriculum and other health care fields.

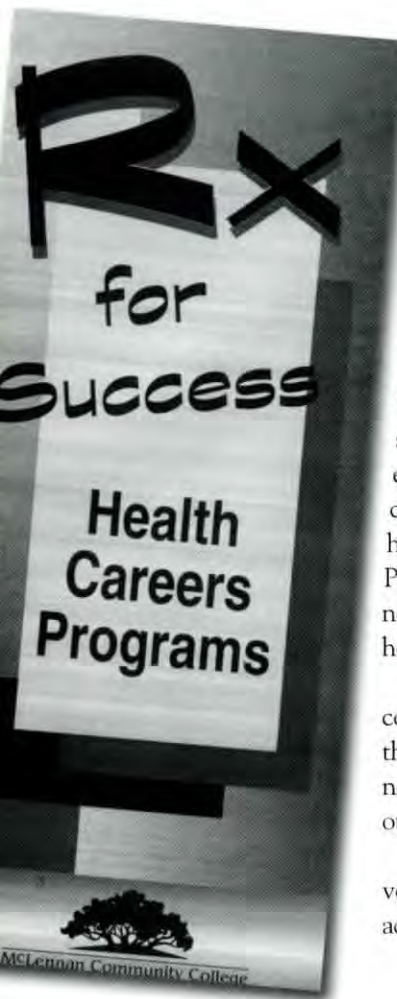
"They have been receptive to learning what our needs are," Taylor said. "And they've just turned out excellent students."

Emerging Health Care Fields — 'The Sky is the Limit'

What started with one Associate Degree Nursing Program under Dr. Ball's leadership in 1967, has evolved into several health care fields offered through McLennan Community College, including a Respiratory Therapy Program, Medical Laboratory Technician degree, Mental Health degree, Physical Therapist Assistant degree and Nursing Home Administration. A Nuclear Medical Technology even was offered for a short time. Current MCC President Dr. Dennis Michaelis has continued that trend and, in fall 2007, MCC was slated to begin offering a Certified Surgical Technician Program that would add to the burgeoning health care degrees offered at the college.

Alvin Pollard, vice president of program





development, has worked with both presidents and has seen the health care fields explode with students, faculty, and jobs throughout Central Texas during his 33 years at MCC. During his 29 years as dean of Vocational/Technical Education, Pollard saw a rapid increase in students signing up for health careers. In 2002, he became vice president, and his job now is to facilitate relationships between all different industries and the college and explore what fields and new courses can be expanded to help the local workforce. Health care is a major developing industry that keeps him busy. Working with advisory committees, Pollard seeks out what worker's skills are most needed in McLennan County. He says that health care always tops the list.

"We have to always feel the pulse of the community and feel the pulse of the industries that we want to serve and find out what their needs are — whether it is in the health area or other areas," Pollard said.

Pollard credits Dr. Ball with having been very aggressive in the 1970s about requesting additional funding from the MCC Board of

Institutional Effectiveness and Planning.

The story always goes that more than likely if you have to go to a hospital in Waco or any of the surrounding communities in Waco, the people who are taking care of you, taking X-rays, taking blood, or performing respiratory services, or physical therapy [assistants] are graduates of MCC," said Pollard.

Hastings worked closely with Pollard to help establish these programs. "Originally we had no vocational/tech courses, and that's what we started building," Hastings said. "I spent a lot of time working on health programs especially."

McLennan Community College was innovative in its expansion of courses and wasn't afraid to offer even controversial career tracks, like the Nuclear Medical Technology Program. This program was started in 1979 and ended in 1987 when its director, a physician specializing in nuclear medicine, retired. There was a large demand for this type of training, which taught students nuclear medical assistance skills that could be parlayed into jobs involving nuclear medical equipment and testing. Class size was limited to 15 students, and, that first year, 13 stu-

"We have to always feel the pulse of the community and feel the pulse of the industries that we want to serve and find out what their needs are."

— Alvin Pollard



Trustees to start more medical programs. He and Hastings saw it as niche that MCC could fill. The programs have been wildly successful, and, like the Associate Degree Nursing Program, tout a high number of graduates who are employed at the two Waco hospitals, Providence Health Center and Hillcrest Baptist Medical Center. A September 2006 survey of Hillcrest and an August 2006 survey of Providence conducted by MCC found that 67 percent of both hospitals' respiratory care technologists are graduates of MCC, and 89 percent of the hospitals' radiologic technologists are MCC graduates. The surveys were conducted by the MCC Office of

dents signed up for the course. Throughout their training, they participated in clinical rotations at two Waco hospitals and two hospitals in Temple, Texas, 30 miles south of Waco, according to a Sept. 6, 1979, article in the *Highland-Herald*.

Another emerging health care curriculum, the Physical Therapist Assistant two-year degree program, was slow in starting but four decades later was one of the most sought-after program tracks. Hastings said initially a local industry group that represents physical therapists refused to back the college's proposed program. Members of that organization said they feared the new program would compete with similar programs

offered by the local physical therapists. However, five years later, the association approached Hastings, and the MCC Physical Therapist Assistant Program began.

"Five years later, they came back and wanted it because the physical therapist assistant has to be under the direction of a physical therapist, and it's grown ... ever since," Hastings said.

In 2006, 89 percent of physical therapist assistants at Providence and Hillcrest hospitals were graduates of MCC, according to the 2006 college surveys of the hospitals conducted by the MCC Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning. "The survey suggests that MCC plays a vital role in providing a qualified workforce for Hillcrest Health System ... [and] Providence Healthcare Network," the surveys concluded.

Dr. Ball said that in the early 1970s there was plenty of federal funding for development of vocational courses — especially health care related courses — through the Vocational Education Act of 1963 (see page 33). In 1973, MCC received \$500,000 in federal grants through this Act, which was used to build the Health Careers building. In 2006, this building remained the home to the LVN and ADN nursing programs, as well as the Respiratory Technology Program and other health care-related courses of study.

Years after his retirement in 1988, Dr. Ball reflected on the growth of vocational/technical health care courses. He said that the standard academic transfer course load that students who are moving on to four-year universities take at MCC has not changed over the years. Math, biology, English and history are still required, but the vocational/technical courses are nothing like what they were 40 years ago; they are constantly evolving. "Once you have established in a community college the standard college transfer curriculum — this is the so-called academic curriculum ... you have just about done it all. There isn't much way to grow in curriculum breadth. This is not true with the technical/vocational fields, which are changing every day. You have new fields coming in, and there are a great number that we are not yet into yet," Dr. Ball said.

He sees these courses as the future for increased community college growth and cites the expansion of new programs every academic year offered under his successor, Dr. Dennis Michaelis. "A great deal of our expansion, if we



An MCC Physical Therapy instructor demonstrates proper patient care.

have much at all in the future, will be in technical/vocational education in one- and two-year programs [that will be] preparing people to go to work at the end of those programs and in continuing education, or as some people call it, adult education. There's a growing demand for continuing education," Ball said. "The sky is the limit. There is almost no limit to the possibilities for expansion of continuing education."

Computer Craze Begins

Back in the 1970s, a little electronic box was being developed that would change the world within the next two decades. It would become the personal computer; its early ancestor was the data processor and involved an old punch-card system and a giant mainframe computer that was anything but portable.

President Ball and Vice President Hastings had the foresight to offer data processing courses, but they had no idea what would follow or how personal computers would later dramatically change the MCC campus as well as virtually every home and business in the United States and throughout the globe.

"We had an old system, called data processing, the old card system, with key punching. It was really big at that time. You could get a very good job in key punching," Dr. Ball said. "All the banks and big companies employed key punch operators,

Left to Right:
Early data processing
equipment

The old Waco High School on 19th Street was remodeled into the MCC Community Services Center, which includes a cosmetology department and a community conference center.



and you could almost take a course in key punching and be employable.”

Neither Dr. Ball nor Hastings knew much about this new type of system that was rapidly replacing the typewriter, but that didn't stop them from offering courses. Every academic year more and more data processing equipment was added onto the campus, fueled by local demand.

A June 1973 press release from MCC touted that more data processing courses were to be added in fall of 1973 to meet local employee demand: "MCC has more requests from employers for data processing keypunch operators than it can fill. To meet this demand, the continuing education division is adding data processing courses." The non-credit courses cost \$24 for 42 hours of instruction and included learning to make program cards, keyboard operation, and improving keypunch skills and speed.

From the college's first computer lease, which the Board of Trustees approved on Oct. 8, 1968 — for IBM Model 360-20 data processing equipment that linked via a phone line to another computer on another college campus at a cost of \$3,000 per month — to the myriad of electronic equipment that laces the campus today, it all started with initiative into the academic unknown. This type of initiative is still McLennan Community College's hallmark as it continually pushes to offer new curricula to students.

"We were reacting to a need, and that's the whole ball game. There was a need for that kind of training and education, and we felt the responsibility to do it," Dr. Ball said.

Metamorphosis of Old Waco High School

As McLennan Community College strived to offer the vocational and technical courses that the local businesses and community seemed to want and need, the college quickly began to run out of space again. In 1987, the answer to the space problem came in the form of an abandoned high school building located a stone's throw from the campus.

The old Waco High School, a 112,000-square-foot building and 40-acre site, was deserted when the Waco Independent School District decided to merge the school with Richfield High School. Dr. Ball convinced the Board of Trustees to buy the property in March 1987 for \$3 million. The investment has proven its value over the years, for it has added about 25 percent more classroom and office space and has provided a community conference center and much needed additional parking.

"This was an abandoned property and probably had no suitable use other than education, and we were able to purchase it from the Waco Independent School District. I think it has really allowed the campus to grow far in excess of those original buildings," said former MCC Board of Trustees Chairman Danny Uptmore, who served on the board during the purchase of the old high school. Coincidentally, in 2006, Uptmore was executive director of Corporate and Professional Training for MCC, and his offices were located in this renovated high school, which was fittingly renamed the

Community Services Center.

The metamorphosis of the Community Services Center has been slow over the years. In fact, the Conference Center was just completed in 2003. Several other sections of what was originally a decaying old building also were slowly renovated throughout the past 19 years. With the Conference Center complete, the Community Services Center now houses several vocational and technical education programs and other career tracks, including cosmetology, visual arts, a state-of-the-art nursing laboratory, a fire training academy and the police academy.

The investment has proven its value over the years, for it has added about 25 percent more classroom and office space and has provided a community conference center and much needed additional parking.



A student receives help in the computer lab in the Learning Technology Center in 2006.

WISD votes to sell Waco High to MCC district for \$3 million

By LINDA McNABB
Tribune-Herald staff writer

The board of trustees of the Waco Independent School District voted Thursday night to sell the old Waco High School to the McLennan County Junior College District for \$3 million.

The board of trustees of McLennan Community College offered to buy the property at 4601 N. 19th Street at a meeting a few hours be-

fore the school board meeting. Smith-Neugebauer Co. appraised the property at \$3 million, said Phil McCleery, attorney for MCC and WISD. It is valued by the McLennan County Appraisal District at \$3.6 million. McCleery said the private appraisal figure is closer to market value.

"No one but MCC would pay \$3 million," he said. "How many people want to buy a high school?"

The school district paid \$2 million for the high school when it was built in 1971, said Charles Thornal, director of school and community relations. It has been closed since last fall when three Waco high schools were consolidated at the old Richfield High School campus.

The school board also sold R.L. Please see WISD, Page 5A



Dave Keel, former Waco police officer and the first director of the MCC Police Academy

MCC Police Academy — A Force to be Reckoned With

In the fall of 1977, MCC opened its own police academy, which at the time was a historic venture for a community college. Until then, no other community college in the state had received the licensing to take over a council of government-run police academy, said Dave Keel, a former Waco police officer who was the first director of the MCC Police Academy — a position he held for 26 years.

“We were the first to move to a junior college and take advantage of state funding,” said Keel, who had been director of the Heart of Texas Police Academy run by the Heart of Texas Council of Governments (HOTCOG) prior to the move. Keel convinced MCC to move the academy onto campus lands from its location on the corner of 12th Street and Austin Avenue in downtown Waco where it was run by HOTCOG. During that time, most law enforcement officers from less populated areas throughout the state were trained by academies operated by councils of governments. The councils supplied the training for smaller municipalities, constables and sheriff’s deputies. Larger cities, such as Waco, ran their own police academies and still do today. Smaller communities could not afford to do so and relied



did not qualify for this reimbursement. Relocating the academy to a bigger facility also would provide more training opportunities for smaller police forces, such as those operated by the towns of Clifton, Marlin and Mart.

McLennan Community College seemed like the logical place. There had been a healthy law enforcement education program in place at MCC under the direction of former FBI agent William H. Buckler since 1969, and Vice President Hastings was amenable to the idea of opening a full-fledged police academy on campus. After all, Keel had a history with MCC. In May 1970, he

“It was an honor and a privilege to train the men and women who attended the academy during my tenure. I can say without hesitation I met some of the finest people I know.”

— Dave Keel

on their councils to supply the training, Keel said. MCC became “the first licensed police academy in Texas to move from a Council of Governments — where virtually all regional academies were originally located — to a community college campus,” Keel explained.

However, getting the academy to relocate onto campus lands took much persuasion and work. Keel said the idea originated with his former boss, HOTCOG Executive Director Hugh Davis, who suggested that he find a new home for the academy where it could qualify for state funding in the form of contact hour reimbursement. While the academy was located at HOTCOG, it

had been the first person to graduate from MCC with an Associate in Arts degree in law enforcement. Then he went to Baylor University and had achieved his Bachelor of Science degree in criminal justice by 1976. By the time he approached Hastings, he was a well-respected authority on law enforcement in Central Texas.

The move was complicated, however, because it involved several different local police forces and their governing bodies. “I met with Dr. Hastings almost every week during the next 12 months working out the details of moving the academy. The move was quite complicated because of funding issues from the Governor’s



Office of Criminal Justice, regulatory issues of the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement, requirements of MCC, and requirements of HOTCOG,” Keel said. “There were government monies involved. There were assets involved, but it was a good thing, and everybody knew it.”

In the late summer of 1977, an agreement was reached with HOTCOG to move the academy. At that time, HOTCOG represented and trained law enforcement officers for 50 agencies within Central Texas, Keel said. The MCC Academy opened in fall 1977 and has been going strong ever since. The idea was so good that it spread throughout the state, and several other community colleges and junior colleges have followed suit and opened police academies on their campus lands. “Over the next few years, several representatives from [different] community colleges and Councils of Governments came to see me for copies of documents and suggestions on how we performed such a seamless move,” Keel recalled. Today, the MCC Police Academy serves about 40 smaller departments from six counties throughout Central Texas.

The academy’s expansion over the years also has caused it to move physically several times. When it was first started, the MCC Police Academy was located on the third floor of the Administration building. In 1983, it moved to the Health and Physical Education building. And in the early 1990s, it relocated to the old Waco High School, which was bought by MCC in 1987 and renovated into the Community Services Center. As the college celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2006, the Academy was still located in this facility.



Keel retired in 2003, but during his 26 years as director of the academy, Keel helped more than 1,400 students graduate from the program. In doing so, he said he “made many friendships” and has much pride in what the academy has accomplished. “Graduates have moved on to larger departments in Texas, various departments across the United States. Many work for the federal government in some law enforcement capacity,” he said.

Shortly before he retired, Keel received a letter of congratulations from the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education, which regulates and approves all law enforcement academies within the state. The letter stated that the MCC police graduates from 2000 through 2003 had scored in the top 10 percent of the state police licensure examination. “It’s a very difficult test,” Keel emphasized with his pride in his graduates’ high scores.

Keel credits MCC with having the foresight to be the first community college to take over a Council of Governments’ training facility to help smaller communities and municipalities. Had it not been for the MCC Police Academy, “departments needing new and/or additional officers over the years would have had difficulty finding other academies to train their officers, and they would have incurred a long drive to attain training,” Keel said. “It was an honor and a privilege to train the men and women who attended the academy during my tenure. I can say without hesitation I met some of the finest people I know while they were enrolled as police academy students at MCC.”

For Left to Right: Early law enforcement cadets practice dispatching, and guest police officers gather at a training meeting.

In 2006, MCC law enforcement cadets practice target shooting and arrest procedures.

The Waco Community Band performs at the Nov. 1, 1985, opening of the Wilbur A. Ball Performing Arts Center.



The PAC — Dr. Ball's Lasting Legacy

To commemorate the 20th anniversary of the founding of the college, MCC held a grand opening for its new Performing Arts Center on Nov. 1, 1985. The \$4 million, 41,411-square-foot building called the "PAC" was added to accom-

modate the college's Fine Arts Program. The new building was an exciting blend of advanced technology and cutting-edge equipment in an aesthetically beautiful structure that melds nicely with the park-like campus central core. The building was officially named the Wilbur A. Ball Performing Arts Center and is to date the only building on campus named after a person. It is marked by reflective glass canopies and highlighted by a 350-seat theatre and stage professionally equipped to produce multi-scene shows. The building also faces a relaxing and beautiful triple-tiered fountain named "fountain plaza," which is complete with cascading rippling and circulating water and makes a nice stop for students in between classes. And it is equipped with state-of-the-art technology to house MCC's elaborate Commercial Music Program.



Since its opening in 1985, the PAC has served not only students and faculty, but also has been one of the most used buildings by the Central Texas community. Musicals, theater productions, concerts, lectures and art exhibits have all been held in the grand hall of this ornate building, which is marked by an exquisite 12-foot-by-7-foot unique wool painted tapestry by Scandinavian artist Bjørn Wiinblad, which hangs in its grand foyer. In fact, former MCC border member Mickey Smith secured the sale of this



singers in the Waco Civic Chorus along with many other influential people from the community," Balmos said. The Waco Boys Choir and Waco Girls Choir also were sponsored at MCC for several years. In 2004, MCC began to sponsor the Waco Jazz Orchestra, a melding of big band musicians. Baylor University had previously sponsored the group.

tapestry, of which there are only four others located in the world.

Danny Uptmore was president of the board during the construction of the PAC. At that time, the board realized that MCC could serve the community better by providing a place for theatrical and musical performances. "Many times the fine arts get [overshadowed] by athletics because it doesn't have as large an audience maybe," Uptmore said, "but it's something that a lot of our students ... need as an outlet. ... One of the things of being a community [college] is that you need to give a venue for all individuals, and one of those venues is [to display] artistic ability."

From the first day its doors opened, the community has taken advantage of this facility. Aside from providing a venue for MCC musicians and artists, others from the community have joined the stage. The Waco Civic Chorus was founded and sponsored by MCC for 15 years until it disbanded in 2000. Donald Balmos, director of Visual and Performing Arts, conducted the Civic Chorus for its duration. Some of the early chorus members included MCC founder and former Waco Chamber of Commerce General Manager Paul Marable Jr. "Paul was actually one of the first

draws musicians from throughout Central Texas, including Hamilton, Gatesville, Temple and Hillsboro, who travel to the campus to practice with the 60-member band every Tuesday evening, Balmos said. The band started in 1981 after a local dentist, Dan Davis, inquired about performing in a concert for the opening of downtown Waco's Indian Spring Park. When told only professional musicians would be performing the Pops Concert, it led to discussions with the college about forming an amateur band. "Those discussions led to recognizing the need for an instrumental organization for people in the community," Balmos said. Charter band director Roger Rush started the band, which gladly took its place on the PAC stage once the building opened. As for Davis, he happily tooted his tuba for several years in the band before retiring his brass, Balmos remembered.

The theatrical and musical performances by MCC students are among the best in Central Texas. When one thinks of seeing a show, the Hippodrome Theatre, Baylor University's Waco Hall and McLennan Community College's Performing Arts Center top the list of venues.

"Many community people get on the campus because of our performing arts. The performances

Far Left to Right: The Ball Performing Art Center boasts a Scandinavian tapestry and fountain plaza. The venue provides a stage for MCC and community performing arts.



that are put on by the students are very well attended, and then from time to time we have guest lectures," said Lynn Abernathy, vice president of student services.

Drawing citizens to the campus is essential to the growth of MCC. A 2001 study on the impact of the arts on Texas communities and cities conducted by M. Ray Perryman for the Texas Cultural Trust in Austin listed Waco as the sixth most "arts intense" area in Texas. The January 2001 study, *The Catalyst for Creativity and the*

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Dr. Wilbur Ball,
MCC's first president



Incubator for Progress: The Arts, Culture and the Texas Economy, found that Waco accounted for 13.8 percent of total production output from the arts, compared to 17 percent for Fort Worth and Arlington; 16.1 percent for Dallas; 16 percent for San Angelo; 15 percent for Austin/San Marcos, and 14.6 percent for San Antonio. Overall, Texas is a very art-heavy state, according to the study. "The contribution of the cultural arts as traditionally measured (visual, literary, media and performing) has a substantial impact on the economy of Texas. The overall effects include

\$63.7 billion in total expenditures, \$31.5 billion in gross product, \$18.7 billion in personal income, and more than 600,000 permanent jobs. On a smaller scale, the study found that "the arts are a key component of the educational system ... and a vital part of our lives, our communities, our well-being, our economy, and our very social fabric."

Balmos credits MCC for helping to propel Waco high on Perryman's "art-intense" list. "In my opinion, we have two institutions with very active and intense arts programs, Baylor University and MCC," Balmos said. "As I look around the state at towns and cities the size of Waco and even larger, I don't find anything that even compares to that. That's why I think there's such intensity for arts (here). ... It's quite an intense area." And he credits Dr. Ball with having a passion for the arts that has transcended generations. Balmos sums up Dr. Ball's interest in music in recalling this story:

"I never will forget, we had just completed a little concert in the Fine Arts Theatre and were using a harpsichord, which we had borrowed," he said. "After the concert, Dr. Ball walked on stage and asked what it was, and when he learned it was borrowed, he said, 'Let's get it.' He was off the cuff; it was very refreshing to see that. ... Even after his retirement he remained interested in helping the arts and the community."

Turning Over the Reins

Throughout his 22-year tenure at MCC, Dr. Wilbur Ball laid a foundation for the college that has proven to be both literal and physical. He not only built a myriad of sturdy buildings, which still stand today, but he also established a system of programs and carried through a mission to serve all of the citizens of McLennan County. His enthusiasm for the institution was infectious to his staff and students who came in ever-growing numbers to the campus each year.

"Dr. Ball has to be given credit for his vision in developing the college. He was the first president," MCC Vice President Alvin Pollard said. "He was very well structured and organized and very methodical. He had steps in mind to develop and to grow the institution. His

greatest charge was to build the college, and that's what he did very well. He [also] pulled together very good people, very qualified people to assist him in doing that. From the outset, he established a reputation of developing high quality instructional programs for McLennan Community College," Pollard said. "To me, his focus was growth and development and quality. He never had to step back and correct something that was weak. It was strong and stayed strong all the way through."

"He was rough and tough, and he expected a lot," said LaVerne Wong, who was dean of student services under his administration. "I appreciated his straightforwardness."

Aside from his firm grip on the institution, in April 1987, Dr. Ball announced his retirement. On Sept. 1, 1988, his successor, Dr. Dennis Michaelis, assumed the presidency — a position he still held in 2006 during the college's 40th anniversary celebrations.

Dr. Michaelis has the utmost respect for both the literal and figurative foundation laid by Dr. Ball and his administration. "It is unbelievable what he did for this community and this college," Dr. Michaelis said. "It's obvious to me that he was involved in absolutely every [aspect of the college], and that's the way it is when you're starting something from the ground up, literally. ... I think he just did an absolutely remarkable job.

He got the right people in to do the right things at the right time."

Dr. Michaelis says he has tried to expand upon the same philosophical mission started with Dr. Ball: to serve the community of McLennan County. He gives credit to Dr. Ball for leaving a legacy of solid buildings, which have held firm for decades — with the occasional needed touch-up, of course. "Everyone in this community, when they see MCC for the first time ... they talk about what a beautiful campus it is. Hal Stringer and Wilbur Ball had everything to do with that," Dr. Michaelis said.

In 2006, Dr. Michaelis joked that during his 19 years as president, he had overseen the replacement of nearly every building roof and internal plumbing — yet he had not had the opportunity to construct a building from scratch. "I have kind of been the renovator president, as opposed to the builder president. Dr. Ball was the builder president," he said.

Throughout the next 19 years, Dr. Michaelis would go on to greatly expand the technological development of the college, lay a grid for computers, and continue to expand upon programs that benefit low-income students and citizens from all sociological and economic backgrounds. But he gives the initial credit for all of his administration's success and its firm foundation to the first administration led by Dr. Ball.



Dr. Dennis Michaelis,
MCC president



Staff photo — Rod Aydelotte

Only president in history of MCC plans to step down

By BILL HUNT
Tribune-Herald staff writer

The only president in the history of McLennan Community College announced plans on Friday to retire from the post he's filled for 21 years. Wilbur Ball, MCC president since 1966, won't leave the school until August 1988 but gave "advance notice" so trustees can orchestrate an "orderly, unhurried" search for a new president.

"It's been a 21-year honeymoon," Ball said. "We haven't had some of the problems that other colleges have had. The college is strong in every aspect."

Ball and his wife, LaWanda, who will celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary this summer, will continue to be an active part of the Waco

Trustees say it will be difficult to replace 21-year veteran Wilbur Ball

some part-time, business-related associations that don't include pressures that accompany a position such as the MCC presidency.

"I want to quit while I'm still healthy and going strong," said Ball, who becomes eligible for full retirement benefits from the Texas Teacher Retirement System in 1988.

"I'm full of fire now, but one of these years I'll start to decline. I'm not at my peak, but I feel like it."

Ball said retiring while the school

tract applications from "some of the best qualified college administrators in the country."

MCC's vacant presidency might grab widespread attention, but trustees say few applicants can replace Ball.

"It will be very difficult to replace Wilbur Ball because the college is his baby," said the Rev. Eric Hooker, chairman of the MCC Board of Trustees.

"We've gotten attached to him and his administration. He's done an excellent job, and finding someone to come in and do as good a job or better will be a task."

The Board of Trustees will formulate a search plan during the next few months and will not accept ap-

Community greets MCC president

By LaMARRIOL SMITH
Tribune-Herald staff writer

McLennan Community College's new president greeted area leaders and praised emeritus president Wilbur Ball during a reception Sunday afternoon at the MCC Performing Arts Center.

MCC trustees selected Dennis Michaelis, 44, from 60 applicants to succeed Ball, the only president the community college has ever had.

Ball announced his plans to vacate the position in April 1987, and his retirement became effective Aug. 31.

He had served the college a total of 22½ years.

Michaelis, a graduate of the University of Kansas at Lawrence; his wife, Beverly Jo Michaelis; and two sons, Ryan Michaelis, 16, and Joel Michaelis, 20, received greetings from members of the community for almost two hours.

Joel Michaelis is a junior at Texas A&M University and Ryan Michaelis is a junior at Midway High School.

Area leaders including Mayor R.D. (Pat) Pattillo, City Manager John Harrison, McLennan County Judge Raymond Matkin, League of United Latin American Citizens President Robert Gamboa, state Rep. Betty Denton, D-Waco, and employees at other area colleges were on hand to welcome the Michaelis family.

In a brief address to the crowd of

about 150 people, Michaelis expressed gratitude for the acceptance he has received in the community. He also complimented Ball for "bringing MCC to its state of excellence."

Ball and the MCC faculty have done "an incredible job" in just 22 short years, Michaelis said during a later interview.

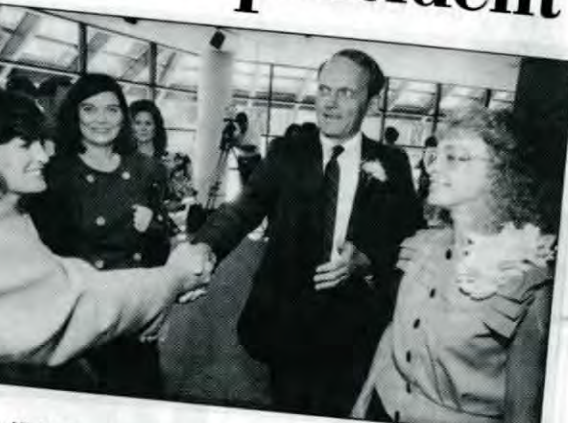
"There are not many times I like being second, but I appreciate being second this time," he said about his succession to Ball.

Often, college presidential retirements are an indication of budgeting and financial problems or some other in-house turmoil, Michaelis explained. However, Ball made MCC an "ideal college" for taking hold of the reins, he added.

Michaelis said his agenda as president will include overseeing the development of a master plan for the college for the 1990s.

The ideology and attitude that exists among the faculty at MCC is to serve the community and to see that all students receive the best education possible, he said.

The college was founded and continues to serve as a two-year institution preparing students for four-year institutions and to enter technical fields, Michaelis said, adding that he does not foresee MCC converting into a four-year college in the near future.



Staff photo — Steven D. Reece

Dennis Michaelis and his wife, Beverly Jo Michaelis (right), greet well-wishers at a reception in his honor.

Michaelis served as president of Paris Junior College in Paris, Texas, from 1983 until this summer. Prior to that, he spent four years as president of Lake Region Community College in Devils Lake, N.D.

Mrs. Michaelis, a homemaker, has worked in a bank, held secretarial jobs and completed two years of college.

Mrs. Michaelis, who served as a deacon in her First Christian Church in Paris, was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis in 1974.

"The arthritis keeps me from doing a lot more things than I'm doing," she said. "You can't get up and go to work every day. It's tough."

the Evolution



The Michaelis Years — Putting Students First

For the first 22 years of McLennan Community College's existence, the institution had just one president. After Dr. Wilbur Ball retired in 1988, the Board of Trustees had the daunting task of finding the next president. The charter board had undoubtedly picked well the first leader, and now the current board felt the pressure to do the same.

They couldn't have known at the time that the new president would take the college through a technical evolution and population explosion that hit a high of 8,500 students in spring 2005. They couldn't have known that the college would partner with senior four-year universities and offer bachelor's degrees and master's degrees to form what is now the University Center. And they couldn't have anticipated the ensuing needs that the community would place on the college and how the new president would help raise funds to accommodate these additional demands through the MCC Foundation. They only knew that they needed to choose a leader who would guide them into the 21st Century and continue the mission of the college — to serve the citizens of McLennan County.

On their short list was Dr. Dennis Fredrick Michaelis, president of Paris Junior College, located northeast of Dallas. A charismatic and energetic Midwesterner originally from Kansas,

"There was something about his chemistry." He was an "ideas man," not afraid to speak his mind.

— Pauline Chavez, board member

Dr. Michaelis brought a can-do attitude and limitless ideas to the interviewing process in 1988, several Board of Trustees members later recalled. "There was something about his chemistry," said Pauline Chavez, who has been on the board since 1985. He was an "ideas man," not afraid to speak his mind, she added. He embraced the idea of starting an MCC Foundation to raise scholarships and endowment funds to help more students afford higher education, another board member recalled. He put students first and foremost, and he vowed to technologically overhaul the college — regardless the cost, they said.

"One of the criteria we had of the new president was that he had experience in working with foundations and would want to do that. One of his challenges from the board's perspective was to start a foundation to get some grant dollars and some money for scholarships," said former MCC board member Danny Uptmore, who was involved in the 1988 interviewing process.

Dr. Michaelis in early days at MCC and with students on campus



Dr. Michaelis and his wife, Beverly



Dr. Michaelis with Greta Watson, wife of former state Sen. Murray Watson, in 2006 at an MCC Foundation scholarship event

Left to Right: Dr. Michaelis at Lake Region Community College in Devils Hill, N.D., where he was president from 1979-1983



Dr. Michaelis at Paris Junior College, where he was president from 1983-1988



Dr. Michaelis before coming to MCC



Dr. Michaelis participating in the 10K run for MCC's 25th Anniversary.

"We had a foundation, but it was just sitting there, and everyone that we interviewed we asked about that," said Ray Perry, who also was on the MCC board during the hiring process. Perry recalled that Dr. Michaelis stood out from the other candidates. "He satisfied us that he could make that Foundation grow, along with other things, and that really impressed us that he had a vision," he said.

Dr. Michaelis says it was made clear to him that the board wanted to hire a president who could deliver a vibrant fund-raising arm to work in conjunction with the college. And he was up to the challenge, having developed similar fund-raising institutions while president of Paris Junior College from 1983 to 1988 and president of Lake Region Community College in Devils Hill, N.D., from 1979 to 1983.

"The fact that I had had experience at other colleges, working with endowment associations ... was one of the real reasons that I was hired here." — Dr. Michaelis

"The fact that I had had experience at other colleges, working with endowment associations ... was one of the real reasons that I was hired here," Dr. Michaelis said. "I'm passionate about this business of convincing people to give money to a foundation to endow scholarships so that those funds are always there. My perspective is that there are not many things that you can do in life that are forever but ... people who give scholarships and give money to endow scholarships, that's something that can go on forever. Long after you are gone, the earnings from what you give can go to help a student that you'll never know, or the children of students and their children and their grandchildren. And that's what education is all about: giving people an opportunity to have full, successful lives."

The board quickly realized that Dr. Michaelis was a visionary and a strong leader. On Jan. 27, 1988, the MCC board voted unanimously to hire him as president. He began his tenure on Sept. 1, 1988.

After he started as president, several board members said that the board basically stepped back to allow him to step in. As the college celebrated its 40th anniversary in September 2006, and Dr. Michaelis began his 19th year as president, many community leaders marveled at all that he has managed to accomplish for the college and how he has helped it to evolve technologically and academically and to weave itself so intricately within the fiber of the Central Texas community.

"MCC is such an integral part of the community," said Texas state Rep. Jim Dunnam, D-Waco, who represents McLennan County. "Dr. Michaelis is such a goodwill ambassador who campaigns for the school. He keeps us informed. Things are always changing out there."

When asked how MCC contributes to Central Texas, Waco Mayor Virginia DuPuy remarked: "Let me count the ways." She added: "MCC educates the whole community."

Dr. Michaelis often remarks that the college has changed so much over the years, it's almost as

though he has been president of virtually four different institutions that have changed significantly regarding technology, course curriculums, student enrollment, and the various community services that MCC provides for Central Texas. But regardless of the changes, Dr. Michaelis has remained unwavering in his commitment to students. He wants to help all students achieve their academic bests and reach their lifelong goals.

Dr. Michaelis' own personal story has helped him to reach out to students and to understand the importance that community colleges play in American towns. Although he achieved a doctorate in higher education administration from Kansas State University and a Master of Arts degree in English from Fort Hays State University in Kansas, Dr. Michaelis wasn't always a stellar

student. "I wasn't a very good student, even through college," he admitted. In fact, he nearly flunked English in high school, earning a D in the course his junior year in Hill City, Kan., a farming community with a population of 2,000.

He attributed his lackluster grades to everyday distractions from playing varsity football to helping his father, who operated a milk route, most mornings. The school system was set up for

"He cares that the students who come on this campus really get what they came for."

— Fay Gutierrez

all students to learn the same way, and there was little room for change or for adapting to students who don't necessarily learn by rule or rote. Visual learning was not a common word in the 1950s. And he was not overly encouraged or necessarily mentored by any specific teacher or counselor. In short, he slipped along as an amiable student who caused no trouble, yet did not live up to his potential.

Like most hardworking families in this Midwestern community, his parents had never been to college. His father, Fred, had a sixth-grade education; his mother, Minnie, completed eighth grade. The youngest of four children, it was always assumed that Dennis would be the one to attend college, but they had little money.

"It was always understood that I would be the one who went to college, but we didn't have a plan as far as [how] to pay for it," he said. He also didn't have an academic game plan. "I think I was fairly bright, but I wasn't a very good student. ... I didn't develop good learning habits in high school, and so I struggled through college." Holding several jobs didn't help either. He worked as a counselor during the school year and for the U.S. Department of Agriculture in the summers measuring wheat crops. To this day, he empathizes with working students and says he has a profound appreciation for the community college student who juggles work in addition to a full course load. "I think that's why I've been so dedicated to the community college [concept]," he said.

After graduating from the University of Kansas in 1965 with a Bachelor of Science degree in education, he taught junior high school and high school before returning to pursue his master's degree. In 1971, he went to work at Colby Community College in Colby, Kan., teaching English. He was later promoted to dean of student services/admissions at Colby.



Left to Right: Dr. Michaelis with wife, Beverly, and sons, Ryan (left) and Joel

"That's where it all started with me, as far as my focus on the students, because I think there are an awful lot of young people out there, like I was, who are first-generation college students who might not have had the best grades in high school ... but are really worth it," he said. "It isn't whether children can learn; it's unlocking the key to how they learn and how you can reach them, because all children can learn."

Unlocking the keys to learning has been a lifelong goal of Dr. Michaelis. His passion for students and their success transcends his administration and encompasses every aspect at McLennan Community College. Not prone to formalities, he regularly can be seen shaking hands with students in the campus cafeteria, cheering alongside students at basketball games, or even helping a lost student find a classroom.

"Dennis Michaelis just amazes me because of his energy. I absolutely get tired watching him sometimes," said Jack Schneider, vice president of instruction. "He literally lights up when he's around students. He is committed to them. He enjoys them, and he knows we exist for them."

"He really cares. He cares that the students who come on this campus really get what they came for. He wants to make sure that the interest of the student is always the most important thing," said Fay Gutierrez, program director for the Alternative Teacher Certification Program and former senior executive assistant to Dr. Michaelis. "As employees, he treats us well, but if

Dr. Michaelis with students in the LTC



Dr. Michaelis speaks at a commencement ceremony.



Dr. Michaelis with one of his grandchildren



Dr. Michaelis and Johnette McKown during their early years at MCC



Johnette McKown with her nephew on the day she received her doctorate in 1990



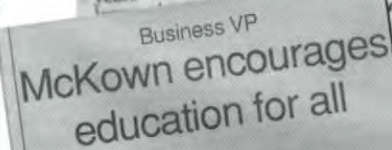
Johnette McKown in 1992 as vice president of business services



Johnette McKown in 2006 as executive vice president

he has to choose between employees and students, he's going to make sure that students get what they need."

"Dr. Michaelis is very, very student-centered," said Lynn Abernathy, vice president of student services. "He just really makes it very clear what his position is on the importance of students: If ... we're not helping them or encouraging them to move forward in a positive way, then we really don't have an institution here. That's the whole point. That's the mission."



McKown just received her doctorate from East Texas State University. The degree hangs proudly over her desk. However, McKown seems proud of her work on a completely new degree. Learning McKown. At age 40, she has four times the need to be out there doing things at learning jobs or to help. "We do not want to lose any of our students," she said. "My work is never-ending. This is the most interesting and diverse job I've ever had." She said McKown said she thinks Texas is lucky to have so many community colleges. She comes from Louisiana and said there isn't a very strong community college system there. "Community colleges are important because they offer education to people of every age who might not have the opportunity for higher learning."



Inheriting a \$41 Million Campus

When Dr. Michaelis took over McLennan Community College, he knew it would be a challenge. Course curriculums were rapidly changing, electronic technology was constantly evolving, and the existing campus was in need of renovations to meet growing student demands. He knew he needed help, so he called on a former colleague from Paris Junior College, Johnette McKown.

McKown had worked at Paris Junior College since 1974 and at the time was director of business operations. She and Dr. Michaelis had forged a solid working relationship when he took over as president there in 1983. Having inherited a 200-acre campus valued at \$41 million and a staff of 400, Dr. Michaelis needed someone whom he deeply trusted and respected to oversee the finances. Dr. Michaelis hired McKown as vice president of business services. She began her tenure in January 1989 and has been his right hand ever since. In May 2002, she was promoted to executive vice president, a title she still holds.

Although they work closely together, they don't always agree. In fact, disagreements and debate have often been the cornerstone of their relationship. Nevertheless, it has remained a healthy relationship that has led to sound business decisions for the staff and students at MCC over the years.

"We have a very open and honest relationship, and I am probably the one person who always tells him what I think," McKown said. "[I] always understand that he is the president and he is my authority, but he also knows that he can depend on me to tell him exactly what I think without fear. But at the end of the day, I clearly understand that he is in the position to make the ultimate decision."

Likewise, Dr. Michaelis deeply respects McKown. "She has absolutely been central to my success, if I've had any, and I openly admit that," Dr. Michaelis said.

McKown has proven to be a stalwart supporter, steadfastly loyal throughout his entire presidency. As their relationship has evolved over the years, so has the college. "There are so many things we've done since we've been here," McKown said. "It's been an



Former resident receives award from Girl Scouts



evolving process." Together they have weathered some tough times, including the sudden death of a Highlander basketball player during a game in 2002 and a tragic Valentine's Day bus accident in 2003 that killed two MCC employees and severely injured a dean. They also struggled through the stunning defeat of a \$73 million tax bond by McLennan County voters in March 2005. But they also have celebrated many successes together, which mark their reign at MCC, such as:

- In spring 1990, MCC opened satellite centers in downtown Waco and in nearby Woodway and Hewitt. In fall 2003, a campus in McGregor was opened and offered courses until spring 2007.
- In 1990, MCC was chosen to host the federal Retired Senior Volunteer Program for a six-county area. The program pairs 1,400 area seniors with organizations that need volunteers, such as the Meals on Wheels program.
- In November 1991, MCC celebrated its 25th anniversary with four days of festivities including an open house, business after-hour reception, bonfire and homecoming dance.
- In 1992, the first scholarships from the MCC Foundation were awarded.
- In spring 1997, the MCC Women's Tennis Team won the National Junior College Athletic Association Women's Tennis Division I Championships.
- In fall 1997, MCC opened its Firefighter's Academy.
- In spring 1999, McLennan County voters approved a \$17.95 million tax bond package to benefit the college — the first bond

election held since 1970. These funds helped to finance the finishing renovations to the Community Services Center, formerly the old Waco High School, and to renovate the library.

- In spring 2001, the University Center opened with the first classes offered by The University of Texas at Arlington taught on MCC soil.
- In September 2001, MCC celebrated the grand opening of the Bosque River Stage.
- In January 2002, an \$8.7 million Learning Technology Center was opened that replaced the former library and has forever changed the campus.
- In January 2002, the nearby 150-acre Highlander Ranch was purchased for \$750,000, and renovations began to turn it into a teaching facility. In spring 2003, MCC began offering a veterinary technician program on the property — one of only six such programs offered in Texas.
- Throughout the years, partnerships have continued to flourish with neighboring higher education institutions, which led MCC to expand its nursing program to Hill and Temple colleges and to later help those colleges start their own nursing programs.
- MCC courses have been offered as dual credit to area high school students and have led to the academic success of many students. MCC staff and students have been nationally recognized for their achievements, such as former student Troy Dodge, who enrolled at age 12 and graduated at age 15 and was featured in USA TODAY.

Left to Right: Dr. Michaelis with former Baylor University President Robert B. Sloan at a Jan. 21, 1997, ribbon cutting ceremony for the opening of the Downtown Higher Education Center

Trainees at the MCC Fire Academy

Singer José Feliciano performs at the Bosque River Stage on Sept. 28, 2006.

MCC acquired the Highlander Ranch in 2002.

On Nov. 16, 2004, author Tamim Ansary was the first presenter for the McLennan Distinguished Lecture Series.

Left to Right:
The laying of fiber optic
cable in the early 1990s
paved the way for
technological advances
on campus.

A student uses
the computer lab.

Students use wireless
computers in the
Learning Technology
Center rotunda.



- In 2004, the “Discover Life” program started, which brings 200 local fifth-graders onto the campus every year for a day.
- The popular McLennan Distinguished Lecture Series began in fall 2004 and has attracted such renowned speakers as Bill Nye “The Science Guy”; author Tamim Ansary; Nobel prize-winner James Watson and former U.S. Labor Secretary Robert Reich.
- On Sept. 19, 2006, MCC celebrated its 40th anniversary with a daylong carnival on campus and live radio broadcasts. The yearlong anniversary celebrations were to culminate in summer 2007 with the release of this history book, *McLennan Community College – 40 Years of Serving Central Texas*.

Era of Technology — Riding the Electronic Wave

If there is one specific way that Dr. Michaelis has dramatically changed McLennan Community College, it has been his commitment to technology. He ushered in an era of technology in the late 1980s that has not ceased.

He is forever upgrading computer systems and furthering the education of instructors regarding technology. His administration is constantly finding ways to supply computers to students and increase online courses offered. Innovative new uses of technology are being integrated into the classrooms. And in fall 2006, the college received a \$1.9 million, five-year federal grant to design an e-campus that will take MCC into the future.

“He’s always been just a little bit ahead of everyone else in technology,” said Executive Vice

- In fall 2006, MCC was one of only 34 colleges nationwide to receive a Title III federal grant to launch an e-campus. The \$1.9 million grant will provide \$400,000 annually until 2011.
- In 2006, McLennan County voters approved a historic \$74.5 million bond election that will allow for the construction of three new buildings, major renovations to several buildings, the expansion of the University Center, and a brighter future for McLennan Community College.

President Johnette McKown. “And that’s had a lot to do with where we are today.”

“Technology has really revolutionized the way that some ... courses are distributed now. And Dr. Michaelis has done an outstanding job in leading us into that generation,” said Danny Uptmore, executive director of Corporate and Professional Training for MCC and former board member.

When Dr. Michaelis arrived in 1988, there wasn’t a fax machine on campus. A mainframe computer system stored records, but individual employees did not have their own computers. The entire business office shared one computer. And there was one central copying station where

secretaries took documents and waited in line for copies.

Much has changed during Dr. Michaelis’ tenure. From 1990, when an underground fiber optics grid was laid, to the present campus, which now houses hundreds of computers — including the 125 desktop systems in the Learning Technology Center for students — the technology at the college has evolved significantly. Now, every MCC faculty member and virtually every employee has a computer. Most buildings have fax machines and scanners, and duplicating equipment has been vastly expanded.

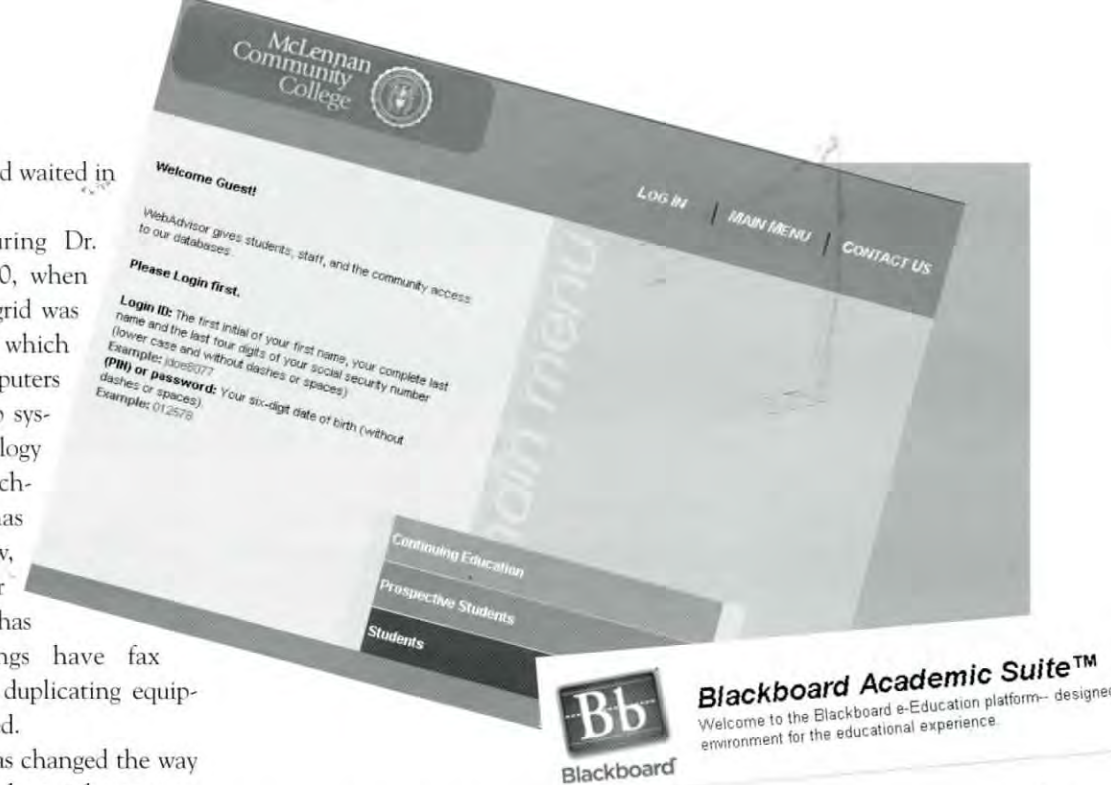
The added technology has changed the way instructors teach and how students take courses. It has even streamlined the registration process, which now includes online registration.

The first online courses were offered in the fall of 1997. In spring 2007, 60 unique courses were offered exclusively online, and 124 additional hybrid courses were offered partially online and partially on campus. The total student population taking online courses exceeded 3,000 in fall 2006. Technology also was being expanded to include podcasting, which allows students to electronically download lectures onto their portable MP3 players and remote personal response systems, also known as “clickers.”

This does not degrade the technology supplied under Dr. Ball’s administration, considering that at the time Dr. Michaelis was hired in the late 1980s, a revolutionary technological boom was on the horizon. Dr. Michaelis saw the importance of getting the college up-to-speed with technology and riding this electronic wave.

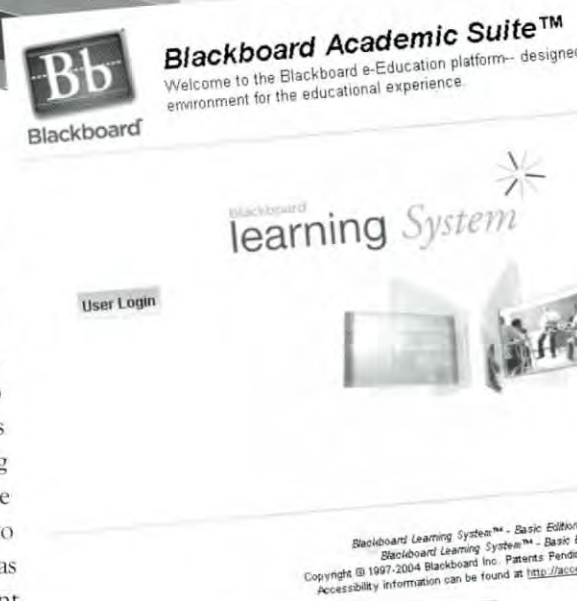
“Dr. Michaelis came in on the real cusp of technological growth,” said Alvin Pollard, vice president of program development, who has been with the college since 1973.

“He’s been a great supporter and advocate of technology,” said Herman Tucker, director of records and registration. When Tucker came to McLennan Community College in 1985, class registrations were written in books, and names were erased and added in pencil. The addition of computers on campus has done away with that. In spring 2000, the college began Web registrations



for courses. By spring 2007, 70 percent of MCC students were registering online. Grades no longer are mailed to students but are posted on the Internet and accessible to students who provide their passwords. “His real strong push for making sure that everybody had the technology and was trained to utilize the technology ... has made our office more efficient and more efficient to our students,” Tucker said.

Fay Gutierrez started as a secretary at MCC in 1975 during Dr. Ball’s administration and in 1989 became Dr. Michaelis’ executive secretary. She later was promoted to administrative assistant to the president and worked very closely with Dr. Michaelis until July 2005 when she was promoted to program director for Alternative Teacher Certification at MCC. Over the years, she has watched as Dr. Michaelis has made great strides in technology and says he was able to recognize its importance long before other business leaders. “He saw that money was needed for technology. He brought technology into play and made sure that we had a computer on every employee’s desk and got proper training,” she said. “Dr. Michaelis thinks very much outside the box, and he just seems to love technology.”



Herman Tucker,
director of records
and registration

For many employees, his zest for technology has proved challenging. Gutierrez said that over the years they constantly have had to learn new computer programs and systems, as he has upgraded their technology. He has not been content to stay with antiquated programs and is always looking for more advanced systems. "It was never boring and it was never like you could get comfortable, because as soon as you felt that you knew what you were doing — you knew the program, technology-wise — then bam! He would come in and change everything. He is a very innovative person who really likes to keep up with technology, and he likes everything to be real current," Gutierrez said. "We constantly have to change and learn, but it's good because he really keeps us up-to-date."

Financially, he has also challenged the Board of Trustees to approve more funds for technology than had previously been requested. Former board member Ray Perry recalls Dr. Michaelis requesting the board to approve purchasing 32 computers and three printers totaling \$66,784 during his first board meeting as MCC president on Sept. 18, 1988. "For us that was a lot of money. I remember that he would ask for enough computers for a classroom, and we would cringe about spending that much money," Perry said. "He asked over and over [for money], and now we're a leader in technology."

Dr. Michaelis makes no apologies for the time and money the board has invested in tech-

nology for the college, and he vows to continue upgrading systems throughout his presidency. He recalls that first request to the board for 32 computers and his anxiety over whether the board would approve the funds: "I remember saying to them 'Folks, this is just the first of what is going to be a very long ride. It will be a very long time before I stop asking you to approve technology,'" he said.

"We were [one of] the first electronically connected boards. It kind of got McLennan Community College's name out nationwide as being innovative."

— Fay Gutierrez

Over the years, he has not only requested money from the board for computers — sometimes as many as 120 computers in a batch — but he also upgraded how the board operates. In 1996, MCC became one of the first community colleges in the nation to issue electronically the minutes and agendas for Board of Trustee meetings, Gutierrez said. All board members were assigned laptop computers, and for the first time in the history of the MCC board, the paper trail, which began under first Board Chairman Henry Griffin, was replaced by the electronic keyboard. Gutierrez, who was in charge of issuing the agendas and keeping the minutes, said there was widespread interest among other community college boards about the innovative electronic system. Gutierrez recalled that she, Michaelis and other MCC administrators were asked to explain their electronic board system at national conferences sponsored by the Association of Community College Trustees that were held in Dallas, New Orleans and Atlanta.

"We were [one of] the first electronically connected boards," Gutierrez explained. "It kind of got McLennan Community College's name out nationwide as being innovative."

J. Robert Sheehy Jr., chairman of the MCC Board of Trustees in 2006, says the college's success with technology is a tribute to Dr. Michaelis' skills, and he promises that the board will contin-

ue to fund technology on campus. "We were one of the early boards to get computerized and do all the communicating through e-mail," said Sheehy, who has been on the board since 1994. "We acknowledge that technology is a big component of our budget, and we want it there because we want the students who are graduating to train for what they'll be coming out and using."

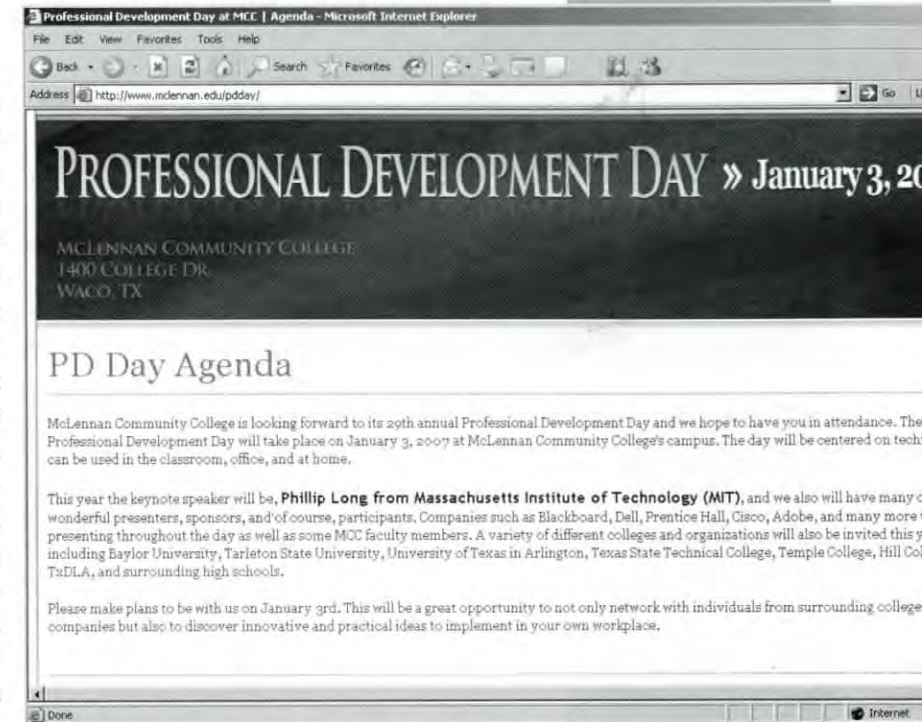
Michaelis said his quest for knowledge about computers began when he was president of Lake Region Community College in Devils Hill, N.D., in the early 1980s. At that time, mainframe computing systems were changing dramatically, and he was constantly getting sales inquiries from companies trying to solicit his business. "I remember these salespeople would come in, and I resolved to myself, and I actually would tell them: 'I'm not going to have you come in here and talk to me about technology in terms I can't understand. If you're going to sell me something, and I'm going to buy it, you're going to help me understand it. I don't want a bunch of gobbledygook and techno-speak. What I want to know is how this will make us better and help our students learn,'" he said.

"It's great because students can listen to the lecture again and go over things that they might have missed the first time."

— Darrel Ross

Throughout the years, he has taken numerous computing and programming courses, and he has attended countless computer conferences. Although he admits he is no expert, he is confident in his computing skills. He requires the same proficiency of his staff, who are required to take certain computer courses.

Computer training seminars have been regularly offered on campus for faculty and staff for many years. The college also opened its own professional training department, the Center for Professional Development and Training, in fall 2004, which replaced the Center for Instructional Innovation. The Center for Professional Development and Training offers training courses for instructors who teach online courses to edu-



cate them about the Blackboard computer software and other electronic programs. Since 2004, the courses have been mandatory for instructors who teach via the Internet. Instructors learn how to post grades, assignments and tests online, as well as the educational differences and challenges that online students can face as opposed to students in face-to-face lecture courses.

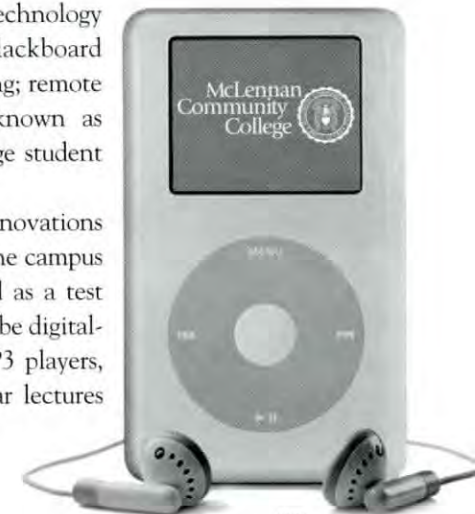
"They go through a one-semester course that teaches them what's different about online courses and teaching for the online learner," said Stephanie Abright, who in fall 2006 was appointed the first dean of distance learning at MCC.

Each fall and spring, the campus hosts additional training conferences. On Jan. 3, 2007, the college held its 29th annual Professional Development Day, a daylong series of seminars for faculty and staff. This retreat was nearly entirely devoted to helping staff and instructors better understand and upgrade their technology skills. Courses were offered on Blackboard Enterprise; digital Adobe Movie Making; remote personal response systems — also known as "clickers" — which electronically gauge student responses; and podcasting.

Podcasting is one of the latest innovations to reach students and was brought to the campus in fall 2006 via one history class used as a test pilot. The process allows for lectures to be digitally recorded and downloaded onto MP3 players, such as an iPod®, so students can hear lectures again and again.

Every fall and spring, the campus hosts Professional Development Day to offer additional training for faculty and staff.

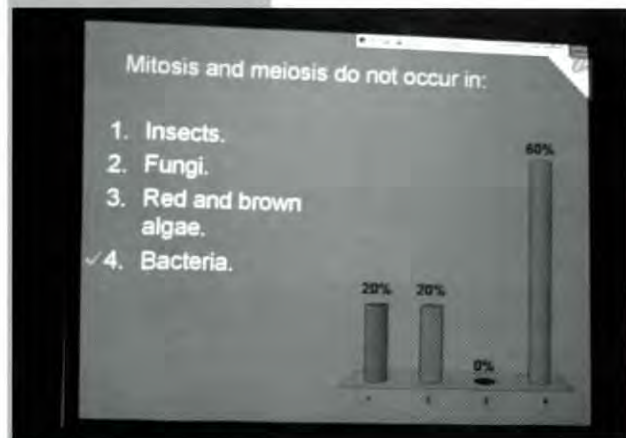
MP3 players like the one shown below are used for podcasting.



Laptop computers are available for use by students, faculty and staff at the Learning Technology Center.

Dr. Michaelis and the Board of Trustees in 2004





Remote personal response systems, called "clickers," (below) electronically gauge student responses in classrooms (as shown above).



"The great thing that has happened with technology marrying with education is that it provides alternate methods of learning for the varying learning styles of students." — Dr. Michaelis

Darrel Ross, a systems specialist, digitally recorded the test pilot history lectures and posted the lectures on the Internet for MCC students to download free onto their MP3 players. Ross says that podcasting has opened a new door to technology and was well received among students in the history class. "It's great because students can listen to the lecture again and go over things that they might have missed the first time," he said. At first, MCC anticipated having to supply the MP3 players for students but quickly found out that nearly all had their own, Ross said. Many students download the lectures as a way to help them study, contrary to fears that students would use it as a way to skip lectures, which has not seemed to happen. The administration is looking to expand this service for other classroom lectures in the next few years. "We're hearing more and more about what is possible with iPods," Abright said.

A survey of 152 MCC students conducted in November 2006 by the Office of institutional effectiveness and planning found podcasting to be quite popular, with 37 percent of students saying that they had accessed the podcasts weekly, 52 percent having accessed between one and five podcast lectures over the course period, and 90 percent saying the podcasts were easy to access.

Another innovative electronic device recently incorporated into the curriculum is the remote personal response systems — also known as "clickers." These devices resemble television remote controls and use infrared or radio-frequency technology to transmit and record student responses to questions. A small, portable receiving station is placed in the classroom to collect responses. The system allows for active participation by students and immediate feedback to the instructor, according to the Educause Learning Initiative Web site, www.educause.edu.

"The instructors can ask a question in front of the class, like [the television game show] 'Who Wants to Be a Millionaire,' and poll the audience, and they can see what percentage of the class votes for what," Abright said. "It's particularly useful in large lecture halls but can also be used in smaller classrooms. It's a way to keep students engaged."

Expanding the use of clickers on campus, podcasting more courses, improving the Blackboard platform system, adding online courses, and upgrading other online elements will be made possible, in part, due to a Title III federal grant for \$1.9 million that the college received in October 2006. The grant will provide \$400,000 in additional funding for MCC per year, through 2011, and will enable the college to design an e-campus, Abright said. MCC was among only 34 colleges nationwide chosen to receive grants from the 268 colleges that applied.

"E-learning is just going to be a part of the future, not only at this institution but institutions of higher learning all over the world," said Jack Schneider, vice president of instruction. "Who knows where we are headed."

"It's not just the technology; it's where technology takes us. The great thing that has happened with technology marrying with education is that it provides alternate methods of learning for the varying learning styles of students. Technology helps educators recognize that every student is different and learns differently," Dr. Michaelis said. "When I was a kid going to school, everyone was taught exactly the same way, and if you got it, 'great,' and if you didn't, 'too bad.' And now we really have the opportunity with technology that if a student is a visual learner, we can help them approach it that way; if it is repetition that is needed, technology can help. That process of figuring out how technology helps students learn is ... so very important."



MCC Foundation — A Financial Foundation

When Dr. Michaelis began at McLennan Community College, no fund-raising organization existed to help underwrite campus activities and programs. The board had made it clear that the next president would make this a priority as well as jump start the MCC Foundation, which until 1988 had mostly been a concept on paper but never brought to life.

"One of his challenges, from the board's perspective, was to start a foundation and see if we can ... get some grant dollars and get some money for scholarships," said Danny Uptmore, who was on the board when Dr. Michaelis was hired and who later became executive director of the MCC Foundation from 1995 until 2001.

"We had a foundation, but it was just sitting there, and everyone that we interviewed we asked about that, and [Dr. Michaelis] satisfied us that he could make that foundation [work]," said Ray Perry, MCC Board of Trustees chairman in 1988.

The idea behind the Foundation was to form a separate, nonprofit organization with its own governing board to raise money for scholarships, fund staff professional development, and help pay for the capital building needs of the campus. This was an idea that in the late 1980s was growing in popularity among community colleges.

Dr. Michaelis eagerly began approaching businesses and community leaders about the

necessity of building funds for MCC. He also directed the first executive director, Jesse "Buz" Sawyer, to initiate a fund-raising campaign. From its inception, the Board of Trustees wanted the college to pay all of the organization's expenses, so that 100 percent of all received donations would go directly to the purpose for which they were intended.

The first major fund-raising campaign was launched in 1990 with a goal of \$4 million. The hard work done by all volunteers paid off, and the \$4 million goal was met with cash, gifts and in-kind donations, said current MCC Foundation Executive Director Harry Harelik. The first scholarships were given out in 1992. In 1995, the MCC Foundation received a Title III federal grant dedicated to professional development. The two-for-one matching grant was for \$500,000, and the MCC Foundation raised a \$250,000 donation for the match, putting the initial corpus of the fund at \$750,000, Harelik said.

By the end of 2006, the total Foundation funds had grown to nearly \$6 million, and \$1.2 million have been given to students throughout the MCC Foundation's history. About 275 scholarships are given each academic year, totaling about \$200,000, Harelik said. The Foundation helps fund about \$35,000 annually for professional development for staff and has helped supply capital building needs at the college, such as supplementing \$200,000 toward the construction and opening of the Bosque River Stage in 2001.



About 95 percent of the gifts are from local donors, said Harelik. "It's a healthy dose of money — it really is — but we do need to do a lot better. We have a lot more students now and certainly a lot more who need financial assistance," Harelik said.

The three executive directors of the MCC Foundation:



Jesse "Buz" Sawyer



Danny Uptmore



Harry Harelik

The first recipients of the First Generation College Student Initiative scholarship, in 2006



A nursing student presents flowers to Lucile Saunders, who in 2006 donated \$250,000 to the college for nursing scholarships.

The Foundation has a governing board of 24 elected members who serve six-year terms, in addition to the Foundation executive director and MCC president, who also serve on the board. Every fall, the Foundation hosts an annual golf tournament fund-raiser, which raises about \$40,000. Every spring, the Foundation's Hearts in the Arts committee, in conjunction with the Visual and Performing Arts Department of MCC, also hosts a theatre gala fund-raiser.

The Hearts in the Arts committee formed in 1992 to help supplement theatre performances and encourage performing arts students by offering scholarships for the performing and visual arts, which include theatre, photography, visual

"That is really the main focus of the Foundation, to make sure students in McLennan County and the surrounding areas are afforded the opportunities to go to school."

— Jo Spark

art, transfer music and commercial music. The gala started in 2001 when Harelik came on board and now includes a dinner prior to the performance and an elegant dessert reception with cast and crew following the production. Proceeds from the annual gala run between \$10,000 and \$15,000, Harelik said. In 2006, the Foundation began offering scholarships from funds raised from this gala to students in all departments throughout the campus.

James SoRelle, a history professor at Baylor University and husband of MCC Theatre Department Coordinator Cynthia SoRelle, happened to term the phrase "Hearts in the Arts" "because there are so many people in Waco who do have their hearts in the arts," Cynthia SoRelle said.

"Hearts in the Arts really grew out of the need to support the fine arts at MCC outside the usual budget," said Jo Spark, who served as committee president and served on the MCC Foundation Board from 1995 until 2005. "We raise money to make sure that scholarships are available for students who need them. There are many, and the list just grows by the day."

However, despite the efforts of the Hearts in the Arts committee and the MCC Foundation, there still are many students in need of financial assistance. Every academic year, about 500 to 600 students apply for scholarships, but only 275 are awarded money, Harelik said. Nevertheless, he remains optimistic that more scholarships will be given each academic year.

"That is really the main focus of the Foundation, to make sure students in McLennan County and the surrounding areas are afforded the opportunities to go to school, and that some of that financial burden of books and tuition can be alleviated by scholarships through the Foundation," Spark said.

"A lot of the students cannot afford to pay



for their classes," said local businessman Jim Hawkins. His wife, Nell, is on the Foundation board and they hosted a pre-party at their Waco mansion in spring 2005 prior to the gala performance of "No, No, Nanette." "It's a good college, and it's for a good purpose."

"The Foundation is made up of people who wish to support the college and, to me, that was the key thing that needed to be put in place, because invested dollars equate into earnings that

can be spent on scholarships," Dr. Michaelis said of the many volunteers and hundreds of donors who have supported the Foundation over the years.

Although the Foundation has raised nearly \$6 million since 1990, securing donations has been a challenge over the years because of competition with other colleges and charitable organizations. Fortunately for McLennan Community College, many local businesses have generously donated to the college and realize the tremendous need that MCC fulfills for the community.

"As far as dollars and earning capacity, there are many Baylor alumni who make big dollars and give big dollars back to Baylor," Harelik said. "So it is hard to compete in that way. But what we do find is the phenomenon that four-year colleges and universities are for the most part supported by their alumni. Community colleges are supported by their community, so the world is our oyster. We have a pretty big market."

In fall 2006, the MCC Foundation received its largest donation to date, \$250,000, to support the MCC Nursing Program, from Waco resident Lucile T. Saunders, a descendant of a founding family member of the Big Red soda company. From fall 2006 through 2013, that donation will provide 20 nursing scholarships of \$2,000 each.

Harelik's goal is to raise the total Foundation funds to \$10 million, primarily through endowments. "The idea behind the endowment is to

create a permanent fund on which only the income is used for educational requirements, so that the fund is always there, and there is always income, and we are providing dollars for future students," Harelik said.

McLennan Scholars — Luring the Top 10 Percent

In Texas, those who graduate within the top 10 percent of their high school senior graduating class are guaranteed acceptance into any state institution of higher learning. Many who fall within the top 10 percent of their graduating class pursue educations at four-year public universities, such as The University of Texas in Austin. But to counter that movement, McLennan Community College is trying to entice those with the highest academic honors in McLennan County to stay in Central Texas and attend MCC. The school is doing this by offering the McLennan Scholars award: free tuition to MCC for two years to anyone graduating from a McLennan County high school in the top 10 percent of their class. Those graduating from very small high schools must have graduated with a certain grade point average.

Trevor Beuerlein, 18, was one of 87 students named McLennan Scholars in fall 2006 who will receive free tuition for two years. The Connally High School graduate — who was 13th in his graduating class — could easily have attended a number of colleges and universities within Texas, but he chose McLennan Community College because of the lure of free tuition, small class sizes, and the college's excellent academic reputation. In addition, Trevor also received a \$1,000 general institution scholarship, which further persuad-

ed him to attend MCC. As he sat eagerly awaiting his name to be recognized at the 2006 MCC Foundation Scholarship Banquet — held on the college's 40th anniversary on Sept. 19, 2006 — Trevor and his parents talked glowingly about what the scholarship money has meant to their family:

His father, Joe Beuerlein, who services elevators, said his son was getting a quality education

Far Left to Right: MCC Foundation member Nell Hawkins with Dr. Michaelis

A 2006 McLennan Theatre gala performance of "No, No, Nanette"

Dr. Michaelis participates in the MCC Golf Tournament.

Steve Fallon, MCC alumnus and Foundation supporter



Dr. Michaelis with 2006 McLennan Scholar Trevor Beuerlein and his family

for free due to the generous McLennan Scholars program. Trevor's mother, Cheri Beuerlein, also attended MCC and graduated in 1995 with a teaching certification. She knows firsthand the attention afforded to students at MCC. She then went to Tarleton State University, where she graduated in 1996. She said she was pleased that every course she took at MCC transferred without a glitch. "One of the things about MCC is it doesn't matter where you go afterwards, because all the credits transfer. The big universities in Texas know that MCC is equivalent to what they would teach, and so they honor the credits," said Cheri Beuerlein, a preschool teacher. Their daughter, Courtney Beuerlein, also attended MCC on a full scholarship through the Presidential Scholars program (see section below) and received her nursing degree in 2004. She went on to receive a bachelor's degree from The University of Texas in Arlington and is currently supervising a neonatal unit at a hospital in Albuquerque, N.M., while working toward a master's degree.

Trevor was taking 16 hours in course work intending to achieve an associate's degree in business. He was enjoying the smaller class size and one-on-one attention. "The professors at MCC really enjoy what they do," he said.

Presidential Scholars — Money and Face Time with the MCC President

In 1998, Dr. Michaelis started a special scholarship program that pays all tuition, campus fees and books for two years to a select group of students chosen to be Presidential Scholars. Every fall, Dr. Michaelis personally selects 10 students to be Presidential Scholars. In exchange for the financial rewards, the students are expected

to attend monthly meetings with Dr. Michaelis, semester trips, and special dinners, as well as perform volunteer services throughout the campus and community.

Dr. Michaelis sees it as an opportunity to learn from students what they like or dislike about MCC courses and the campus. The students see it as an opportunity to pursue their college dreams and be mentored by one of the best academics in Waco who truly cares about students.

"It's awesome that he pays so much for all of us. He doesn't have to do that, but it shows that he's kind and caring," said 2006-2007 Presidential Scholar Kayla Kocian, 19, of Axtell, Texas. Kocian was studying English at MCC with plans to transfer to Tarleton State University to pursue a degree in education. She said the scholarship program has enabled her to meet other students, receive invaluable time with the president, and give back to the community through volunteerism. "They're giving so much to us. We get tuition and books paid for. So I think that it's a great opportunity for us to give back to them," said Kocian, who has volunteered as an usher at MCC theatre performances and mentored high school students interested in MCC as part of her scholarship duties. "[This program] opens a lot of doors for us. We have the opportunity to do volunteer work, which looks good on our resumé, and the opportunity to meet other people. This expands our world," she said.

MCC adjunct history instructor Brad Turner was a presidential scholar at MCC from 2001 to 2003. After graduating from MCC with an associate's degree, he received a bachelor's degree in history and political science from the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor in Belton, Texas, and a master's degree from Baylor University. Now back

at MCC teaching history while currently pursuing his doctoral degree through Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Turner says he wishes he had the kind of personal time with Dr. Michaelis as an MCC instructor that he enjoyed as a student. "We could talk with Dr. Michaelis about any different ideas or anything that was going on with the school," said Turner, who admitted that at first he was a little bit nervous to be in the presence of Dr. Michaelis. But that quickly changed. "He's such a personable guy. It became very easy to talk with him," he added.

From Dr. Michaelis' perspective, these meetings with students provide invaluable insight into how he can better the college. "I started the Presidential Scholars Program because I really felt it was important for the president of the college to have a group of students that he or she can get to know by meeting with them occasionally and get to know them on a personal basis," Dr. Michaelis said. "It keeps you in touch with issues that are facing students, and it keeps you in a mindset so that your focus stays on students and doesn't drift away to things like political issues and what the Legislature is doing. All of those things are important, but if an institution loses focus on the students, then it's lost."

His former senior executive assistant, Fay Gutierrez, said the Presidential Scholars Program is especially near and dear to Dr. Michaelis, and he put a lot of effort into finding appropriate venues to take the students to expand their worlds. "The students were given the opportunity to be exposed to different things, which builds leadership qualities, and they could mingle with the top officials of the college," Gutierrez said. Likewise, Dr. Michaelis "was getting an opportunity to talk to students and hear from them their comments and their concerns."

The program began with 10 students in fall 1998 and is paid through the college's institutional funds. Each fall, 10 freshmen are selected so there are always at least 20 students in the program. The number of students varies each year with need. If Dr. Michaelis cannot choose between two equally qualified participants, then he will award both. All recipients go through a lengthy interview process that leads up to a final interview with Dr. Michaelis. He tries to select a diverse group of students that vary in age, race, culture, economic background and academic

major. But all are high academic achievers. "We have all of these programs that focus on low-income students, but we really didn't have anything that focused on high-achieving students," Dr. Michaelis said.

Throughout the years, Presidential Scholars have visited the State Fair in Dallas, Sea World in San Antonio, major league baseball games, operas, presidential libraries, art galleries, attended a rock concert with Dr. Michaelis where they heard the bands Journey and Styx, and some studied abroad in Germany for three weeks in June 2001. "I'm trying to expose them to things that most well-educated people are exposed to, and my feeling is just because you can't afford to go to a large university right out of high school doesn't mean you shouldn't have some exposure to that sort of thing," Dr. Michaelis said.

[Dr. Michaelis] tries to select a diverse group of students that vary in age, race, culture, economic background and academic major. But all are high academic achievers.

Before he retires, Dr. Michaelis would like the program to be funded through the MCC Foundation and for all of the scholarships to be endowed. By 2006, two of the 20 presidential scholarships were endowed at \$25,000 each through the Brazos Higher Education Service Corporation Inc. The Brazos Corporation is a nonprofit organization that helps finance funding for student loans nationwide and for about 85 percent of loans offered at MCC. The organization was founded in 1975 by former Texas state Sen. Murray Watson, who had helped to found MCC 10 years earlier. In 2006, the organization was the sixth largest holder of student loans in the United States, said Watson, president and CEO.

With the program currently paid through institutional funds, there is the threat that the scholarships could be reduced or taken away by the MCC Board of Trustees if a financial crisis arose at the college. Dr. Michaelis said he wants "to replace the institutional funds with Foundation funds, so that it is permanently endowed, so that when budget times get tough, and things have to start being cut ... that this program doesn't get compromised."

History instructor Brad Turner was once a Presidential Scholar.



Presidential Scholars met in 2004 for a reunion at the Highlander Ranch.



Presidential Scholar Celie Mireles with MCC Foundation patron Luwenda Pollard at the Hearts in the Arts Gala in 2007

McLennan County high school graduates have a unique financial opportunity to attend college not afforded to all those graduates within Texas. A scholarship program known as MAC

The Duncans fund the costs of the program, and the Waco Foundation manages the investment and administrative aspects. An advisory

A Unique Gift for McLennan County Students — *Mac Grants*



Malcolm Duncan, the originating donor of the MAC Grant, greets grant recipient Kenneth Jones.

Grants allows any qualifying McLennan County graduate to receive free tuition for two years, up to \$3,000 to cover classes, books and fees to attend MCC or Texas State Technical Institute.

MAC Grants are named after the originating donors, Malcolm and Mary Ruth Duncan of Waco, who were both longtime activists in the Waco Independent School District and former WISD board members. The Duncans started the MAC Grants in December 1994 as a way to encourage middle- to low-income McLennan County high school students to strive to attend higher education courses at these two institutions. The Waco Foundation, a separate, nonprofit organization in Central Texas, oversees the administration of the scholarships, according to its Web site, www.wacofoundation.org.

board helps determine recipients, who must come from families with an annual household income of \$50,000 or less, reside in the county, and apply for federal financial aid. "The goal is to guarantee that every needy high school graduate in the county could go to college," according to the Web site.

"It was set up so that no student in McLennan County would be denied a college education if they want it," said MCC Foundation Executive Director Harry Harelik.

In June 1995, President George W. Bush — who was then Texas governor — joined the Waco Foundation for the first grant award ceremony. Bush told the graduates: "You've got a big responsibility to fulfill your dreams as these dreamers have done for you."

First Generation — A First Chance

In fall 2006, MCC began the First Generation College Student Initiative, to provide financial scholarships and academic counseling to MCC students who are the first generation in their family to go to college. The program also provides counseling to elementary school-aged children to encourage them to strive to attend college after high school.

The program was launched largely with the help of the Bernard and Audre Rapoport Foundation, a Waco-based philanthropic organization. The Rapoport Foundation provided a \$100,000, two-year grant to the MCC Foundation for the First Generation program, of which \$50,000 was earmarked for scholarships for students who are the first generation in their household to attend a higher education institution. Another Central Texas-based company, TG Benefits of Round Rock, also donated \$68,000 toward the program, which helped to pay for marketing and administrative costs, MCC Foundation Executive Director Harry Harelik said.

In fall 2006, the initial 17 First Generation scholarship recipients each received \$4,000 in scholarships or \$1,000 per semester for tuition

and books to attend MCC for the first two years of college, said Vivian Jefferson, MCC director of admissions and recruitment, who oversees the scholarship program.

But the program is not just for adults. The First Generation Initiative also targets third- and fourth-grade children from mostly economically challenged backgrounds and encourages them to strive to attend higher education after graduating from high school. It plants a seed of hope in their young minds that they can achieve a higher education degree, said Jefferson, who regularly travels to elementary schools throughout McLennan County speaking to children about the benefits of attending college.

"The scholarship is only one part; the other part is to reach out to third- and fourth-grade students of African American and Hispanic descent. And that's the population who are not attending college in the Waco area and not getting degrees. So there is another huge component to First Generation that really entails education and access to those two populations," Jefferson said.

Those who receive scholarships also receive counseling throughout the academic year from Jefferson's staff in many areas that far exceed academic boundaries. Simple questions about using their electronic MAC card to pay for meals or logging onto the computer often stump them, said Zaragosa "Mito" Espinoza, who helped counsel students until 2007. Others need help buying textbooks, applying for financial aid or finding parking on campus. Aside from academic counseling, First Generation scholarship recipients also are matched with a second-year student mentor to help them get through the daily rigors of academic life. "These students need a little extra support group to be successful in college," Espinoza said. "We offer them an extended family while they are here."

In Texas, 60 percent of college students who are first-generation do not continue into their second year of college, Jefferson said, quoting statistics from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. "One of the major problems is they don't have the background or the history or anyone to ask what to do, so every issue becomes a major issue with these students. So that is what the First Generation Initiative is about: providing information and resources ... in order for them to be successful," Jefferson said.



Waco philanthropist Bernard Rapoport with Dr. Michaelis

"One of the major problems is they don't have the background ... or anyone to ask what to do, so every issue becomes a major issue. ... The First Generation Initiative is about, providing information and resources." — Vivian Jefferson



Vivian Jefferson, First Generation College Student Initiative director

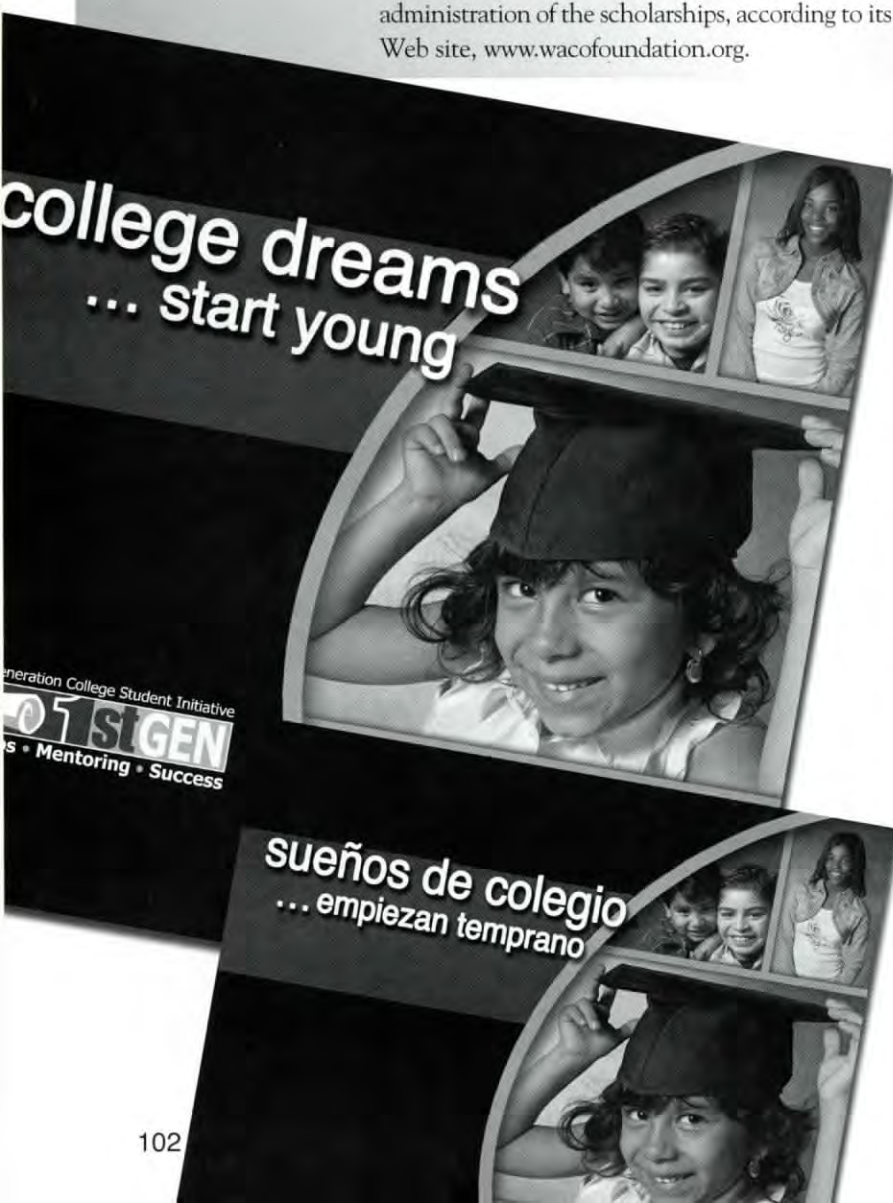
In the 2006 academic year, 80 percent of the First Generation scholarships cohort were minority students. This minority outreach is in line with a 2005 report by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board imploring Texas communities, four-year universities and community colleges to reach out to minority citizens to pursue higher education classes.

The report, *Closing the Gaps, the Texas Higher Education Plan*, advocates innovative programs and initiatives, such as the one started at MCC, to get more students to seek higher education degrees. According to the report:

"A large gap exists among racial/ethnic groups in both enrollment and graduation from the state's colleges and universities. ... If this gap is not closed, Texas will have proportionately fewer college graduates. ... Texas stands at a crossroads. ... Enrollments in the state's public and independent colleges and universities are not keep-



Zaragosa "Mito" Espinoza, former First Generation coordinator



Upward Bound students navigate a space ship simulator at the NASA Space Center in Mississippi in 2005.



ing pace with the booming Texas population. There is a shortfall in the number of degrees and certificates earned. And, fewer degrees and certificates earned leads to a less educated workforce. ... Texas must take bold steps for the future success of its people."

helping students to develop socially and academically and emotionally," said MCC Registrar Herman Tucker, who oversees the Upward Bound Program.

Program Director Patsy Jones has been on both sides of the fence: At one time she was the parent of two students in the program. Both of her sons graduated from high school, and one received a four-year college degree. Now she directly supervises the 75 student participants and actively recruits from five high schools throughout Central Texas. Throughout the years, she has witnessed hundreds of youths succeed because of the foundation that the program has provided them.

"Some of my program participants come from single-parent households, young women who have seen the struggles that their moms have endured trying to put food on the tables and a roof over their head," Jones said. Most participants strive "to get out of that cycle of poverty ... and to be able to move forward to the next level," she said.

The nationwide program is sponsored by the Department of Education. In fiscal year 2005, there were 61,359 participants throughout the United States, according to the U.S. Department of Education Upward Bound Web site. Most programs, like the one hosted at MCC, average 75 students at a cost of \$4,712 per participant each year, according to 2005 fiscal data on the program. The funds cover tutoring expenses, guest speakers, field trips, a weeklong cultural enrichment trip every year, and even meals in the summer. The students are paid a monthly stipend of \$40 during the school year and \$60 per month in the summer. In return, they are required to attend all of the tutorials and seminars during the aca-

"It is to encourage those students who are first-generation college students that meet certain economic criteria to complete high school and then go on to college."

— Herman Tucker

Upward Bound — No Boundaries

In a noisy corridor on the second floor of the Community Services Center, twice a week and throughout the summer months a torrid of activity emanates from a group of high school students who come to MCC for free tutoring and supplemental classes. They are part of a federally subsidized program, Upward Bound, which has been offered through MCC since 1986 to help low-income students graduate from high school and pursue higher education.

MCC supplies the space. The students provide the need. Most come from very economically depressed homes; they are driven by a desire to make a better life for themselves than what they currently have. On Wednesday evenings, they receive free tutoring in math and English from certified, devoted local teachers who believe in these youths. Every other Saturday, they attend motivational seminars, and their parents attend special classes designed to help them help their children.

"It is to encourage those students who are first-generation college students that meet certain economic criteria to complete high school and then go on to college. It's a real neat program,

demical year and attend eight hours of training during weekdays for five weeks in the summer. "It's a real commitment on the students' and the parents' part," Jones said.

Upward Bound participants also receive one-on-one counseling that they might not normally receive in their crowded high schools. "If they didn't have this program, I see a lot of these students just falling through the cracks," Jones said.

MCC sophomore LaKendra Coleman is confident that she will break that cycle of poverty that has plagued her parents. In fall 2006, she was taking academic core curriculum courses at MCC on a full scholarship in pursuit of a medical degree. She wants to be a pediatrician one day, she said in fall 2006 while working in the Upward Bound corridor. Back in the same noisy hallways where she spent so many of her high school evenings, Coleman was now mentoring and tutoring other students. She knows firsthand their daily struggles, and they seem receptive to her as she motivates and encourages them to try their best and not to give up on academics.

"It was just a good start for me. I knew it would help me out, and I knew I would need the tutorials," LaKendra said. "That's where Upward Bound comes in. It helps us out a lot. It provides us the services that we don't have access to at home."

MCC supplies a computer lab where participants can conduct Internet research, write term papers for school, and search for scholarship applications. They also can use the MCC library. And at the end of every summer term, the students are treated to a weeklong cultural enrichment trip. Throughout the years, Upward Bound participants have visited many places that these students otherwise would not have had an opportunity to visit, such as Orlando, Fla.; St. Louis; Denver; Atlanta; and San Antonio. The program offers so much to students that most enter as freshmen and hold on to their slots through their senior year of high school.

Upon graduation, the students are encouraged to enter college, any college, not necessarily MCC. Of course, MCC makes it a priority to try and fit these graduates with scholarships and help them. One former Upward Bound graduate, Teresa Duron, even returned to MCC in fall 1995 as the first alumni to receive a college degree and return to MCC on the college's staff. She worked

for several years as an admissions specialist and was among the first class of Upward Bound participants at MCC, according to a May 4, 1996, front page article in the *Waco Tribune-Herald*.

Tucker says he has personally benefited from working with the students over the years. A highlight of his academic year is an annual graduation banquet where graduating seniors are recognized. "It's always exciting to see the accomplishments they've made during the year," Tucker said. "It's an inspiration to be around them and to hear sometimes some of the stories they have and the challenges that they face and how they overcome those challenges."



RSVP for Retired Senior Volunteer Program

McLennan Community College hosts a federal RSVP volunteer program, formerly called the Retired Senior Volunteer Program, which not only provides the Central Texas community with volunteer workers, but helps senior citizens to overcome challenges and maintain their motivation through work. The impetus for starting the program was Dr. Michaelis' own mother, who had been an avid volunteer in Kansas prior to her death.

When Dr. Michaelis arrived at MCC in 1988, Central Texas did not have an RSVP. He immediately instructed his staff to write grant applications to host the federal program on campus. He knew that providing an outlet for seniors to volunteer their time and energy would benefit not only the elderly in Central Texas but the whole community.

Central Texas RSVP Director Susan Copeland (left) with senior volunteer Marie Byrd in front of a map of Texas showing cities with senior volunteer programs



Dr. Michaelis at the RSVP Recognition Ceremony on June 2, 2006



RSVP Advisory Council member Johnnie Curtis and guest speaker Ann Harder at the RSVP Recognition Ceremony on June 2, 2006

His mother, Minnie Michaelis, who died in Kansas in 1986, had been an RSVP volunteer at a Kansas hospital. Volunteering kept her young in attitude and spirit and gave her something to look forward to, Dr. Michaelis remarked. "My dad had died 16 years before she did, and she lived alone as a senior. That program in Kansas was a wonderful thing for her because it gave her something meaningful to do and it gave her a group of people to be around and [enabled her] to make friends and ... to volunteer her time to do something worthwhile in the community," Dr. Michaelis recalled.

MCC was awarded the grant to host the Heart of Texas Retired and Senior Volunteer Program beginning on Sept. 30, 1990, according to MCC Board of Trustee minutes from Sept. 5, 1990. The college was initially awarded \$49,176 in federal funds and \$18,888 in state funds. RSVP is part of Senior Corps, a network of national service programs that provide seniors, ages 55 and older, with the opportunity to volunteer and serve their communities. The program is administered through the Corporation for National and Community Service and the Texas Department on Aging. The college supplies office space for the program to be hosted and supplements the salaries of the staff. Currently there are 1,400 RSVP senior volunteers who serve six counties in Central Texas: McLennan, Falls, Bosque, Hill, Limestone, and Freestone, according to Susan Copeland, RSVP director for Central Texas.

In Central Texas, about half of the 1,400 RSVP volunteers serve McLennan County. Most volunteers work four to eight hours per week. Altogether they average 1,000 hours a week in Central Texas, Copeland reported. They deliver food for Meals on Wheels and work in hospital gift shops, lobbies and labs. They volunteer in police departments, libraries and museums; they also tutor students and assist teachers in schools. Their volunteerism totaled 125,000 hours in 2005 to 2006 and saved Central Texas taxpayers an estimated \$2.1 billion that year, according to a June 21, 2006, press release by the Heart of Texas RSVP.

Nationwide, RSVP volunteers tutored more than 100,000 elementary- through high school-aged students in 2005-2006 and distributed nearly 40 million pounds of food, feeding more than 2.5 million people. When Hurricane Katrina

struck on Aug. 23, 2005, devastating New Orleans and coastal Mississippi and causing at least 1,800 deaths and \$82 billion in damages, RSVP volunteers in Texas responded to offer help. Texas supplied between 15,000 and 20,000 RSVP volunteers, thousands of them working at the Astrodome in Houston, where victims sought refuge. A month later when Hurricane Rita ripped through the Texas and Louisiana border

"We know that it helps folks age well. They stay active. They stay healthier. It's a win-win on both sides. The seniors are involved and stay plugged in with their community, and the win is what they do for their community."

— Susan Copeland

on Sept. 24, 2005, killing at least seven people and causing \$11 billion in damages, Copeland said the Senior Corps volunteers once again came out in the thousands to help victims. "They set up shelters and food drives and blanket drives," said Copeland, who in 2006 also was serving as president of the Senior Corps of Texas. "They do whatever needs to be done."

As Senior Corps state president, Copeland oversees 51 programs in Texas and 43,000 volunteers. Behind her desk at MCC hangs a giant map of the Lone Star State with colored pins marking all of the various Senior Corps programs throughout the state. Aside from RSVP, Senior Corps programs also include Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion programs, which match senior volunteers with foster children and elderly citizens who need some assistance, yet do not want to be placed in permanent nursing homes.

Aside from the economic benefits, the seniors make a host of friends and the work helps to stimulate their minds and fill their days. Seventy-three-year-old Marie Byrd volunteers 20 hours a

week as a receptionist for Copeland. Byrd, a retired police officer from California, said she considers herself lucky because part of her job is to communicate with the volunteers. She said they all bring a tremendous amount of energy to their posts and are eager to work. "I get a lot of happiness out of it. This is a wonderful place to work. The volunteers are so wonderful ... and they are all so nice and caring," Byrd said. "Volunteering is a wonderful thing because they are helping people. And I'm helping people as well."

"We know that it helps folks age well," Copeland said. "They stay active. They stay healthier. It's a win-win on both sides. The seniors are involved and stay plugged in with their community, and the win is what they do for their community."

Helping Other Community Colleges

Throughout the years, MCC has not only helped the citizens of McLennan County and Central Texas but has also reached out to assist competing community colleges. In particular, MCC has helped launch nursing programs at Temple College in Temple, Texas, and at Hill College's Johnson County campus in Cleburne, Texas. In fall 1983, MCC took its Associate Degree Nursing Program to Temple College, located about 45 miles south of Waco, and administered the second year of course work there so that the Temple students who had completed their first year of a licensed vocational nursing program could pursue an A.A. degree through MCC to become registered nurses. The program operated like a satellite campus for 10 years and ended with the graduating class of spring 1993, according to Cherry Beckworth, director of the MCC Nursing Program. After that graduation, Temple College started its own associate degree RN program in the fall of 1993, which is still in existence today.

In 2000, Hill College — located about 70 miles northwest of Waco — approached McLennan Community College for help in starting an associate's degree registered nurse program at its Cleburne campus in Johnson County. Once again, MCC willingly obliged, Beckworth said. "Dr. Michaelis just felt that was something we should do to try to help them, and then actually

when they were going to take the program over they needed a little more time, so we took an extra class out there to help ... get them started," Beckworth said.

Jeanean Boyd, Hill College dean of health sciences and director of the Registered Nursing Program, said the process wasn't as easy as Beckworth describes; five years elapsed from the time the concept was launched until Hill College took over the program.

In fall 2001, the first 12 students were accepted into the nursing program being operated by MCC at Hill, and the first classes began in January 2002. "Hill College provided the space and the TV interactive equipment, and MCC provided the instructors and all of the course curriculum content. It was a distance learning site," Boyd said. Nursing students received degrees from MCC until the last class graduated from the Cleburne campus in December 2005. By then,



MCC nursing students

Hill College had received approval from the Texas Board of Nurse Examiners to transition the program to its own college. In fall 2006, Hill began its own program, which is similar to the MCC program and fully accredited with the Board of Examiners.

Hill College is grateful to MCC, said Boyd, who openly doubts whether Hill could have afforded to start their own RN program without help from MCC. She adds that MCC also taught Hill College how to operate and sustain the program, which is flourishing today. "They came up and offered the program for four years. All along, Hill College and MCC knew it would not be a long-term relationship. MCC was doing it in order to allow Hill College to figure out how to do it for themselves," Boyd said. "These two colleges have been very cooperative in terms of working together to service the individuals of Central Texas." As MCC celebrated its 40th



Cherry Beckworth in 1991 as a nursing instructor

anniversary in fall 2006, Hill College was celebrating its first cohort of 30 RN nursing students. They were slated to graduate in May 2007.

"The right thing to do was to help them," Dr. Michaelis said. "I'd like to think they'd do the same thing for us if we needed that kind of help."

Boyd says she hopes McLennan Community College and Hill College will continue to partner on additional health science ventures in the future; she is particularly interested in partnering with McLennan's radiologic technology and respiratory therapy programs. Future collaborations between Hill's administration and McLennan's administration might also be facilitated by another connection between the two colleges: In 2006, Dr. Michaelis' son, Joel Michaelis, became vice president of instruction for Hill College.

"There is a fondness in my heart as dean of health sciences, not only for everything MCC has done with Hill College in the past but will do with Hill College in the future," Boyd said. "Health profession careers are very expensive programs to run in isolation. The future of health profession careers, particularly in small community colleges, is to figure out how to forge partnerships and collaboration with other community colleges in your immediate area and offer the education together."

Satellite Centers — Expanding Within Central Texas

Aside from assisting neighboring colleges by opening satellite nursing program centers, MCC has also operated satellite centers within local neighborhoods and in downtown Waco to make it more convenient for Central Texans to take classes. In spring 1990, the first satellite centers opened in downtown Waco and in the growing suburban communities of Hewitt and Woodway, southwest of Waco. In fall 2003, another satellite campus was added in McGregor on the southwestern edge of McLennan County, and it offered MCC classes until May 2007.

"When I first came here, I had a gut feeling that we needed to reach out in the community more than we were." — Dr. Michaelis

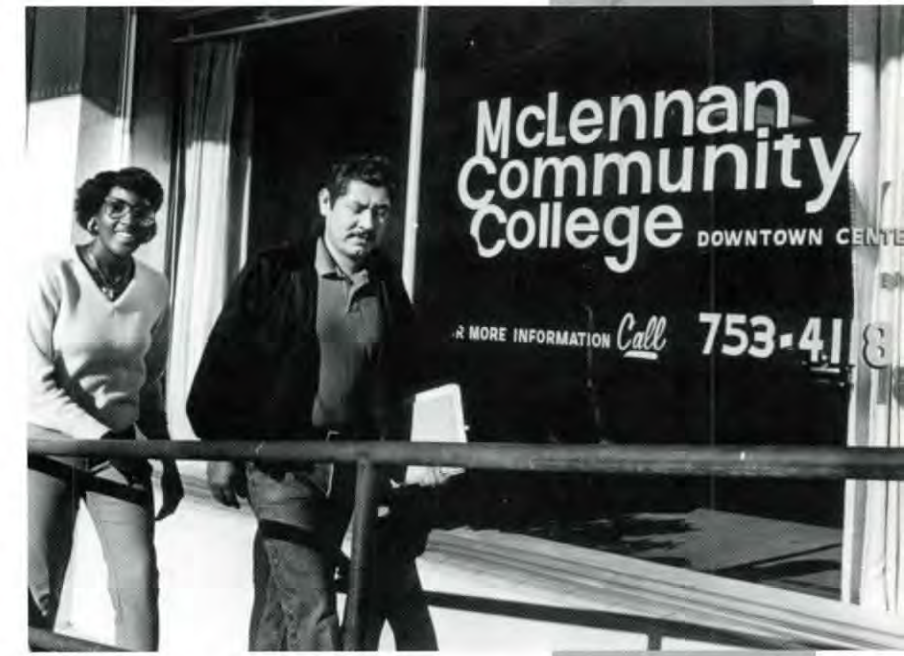
Realizing that the original impetus to start MCC began with a drive to revitalize downtown Waco in the mid 1960s, Dr. Michaelis sought to offer courses in the business district, where he thought downtown workers could have easy access to classes. After all, the MCC main campus is located northwest of the city, and for some workers it was not convenient for them to make evening classes on time. On July 26, 1989, the MCC Board of Trustees approved his request to fund the facilities. "When I first came here, I had a gut feeling that we needed to reach out in the community more than we were, and we established a downtown center," Dr. Michaelis said. "We did it to help the downtown develop."

The 8,000-square-foot Downtown Center was located at 711 Washington Ave., just two blocks from the historic McLennan County Courthouse in the heart of downtown Waco. A litany of credit and non-credit courses were offered, including: basic grammar, elementary algebra, introduction to computers, word processing, personal finance, business management, business psychology and technical writing. Remedial courses also were offered. Similar courses were offered at the 2,000-square-foot Woodway facility located in the Crossroads Center at Highway 84 and Hewitt Drive, about 10 miles southwest of

the main campus. In addition, the MCC Crossroads Center offered courses that would also attract suburban homemakers, such as silk flower construction, knitting and pediatric first aid. A few miles up Hewitt Drive from the Crossroads Center, MCC also offered a few courses at the Hillcrest Health System clinic in Hewitt. More than 300 students took credit courses and nearly 300 students attended non-credit classes at the satellite facilities that first academic year, according to the MCC 1989-1990 *Annual Review*. By the end of spring 1991, 434 credit and 674 non-credit students had attended classes in Hewitt and Woodway, and 273 credit and 725 non-credit students had taken classes at the downtown center, according to the 1990-1991 *McLennan Community College Annual Review*.

Herman Tucker was director of off-campus education from 1990 to 1995 and oversaw the satellite facilities, which operated until fall 1996. The MCC Downtown Center specifically attracted many minority students. And the suburban satellite campuses clearly attracted residents from outlying areas. "We were making it easier for the residents of those areas to take advantage of college courses, both credit and non-credit," Tucker said. "Hewitt is a growing area, and we knew a good portion of our students came from that area. We wanted to make it more convenient for those individuals. In the downtown area ... we offered some things [relating to] computers and the types of courses and software program that would allow folks to enhance their skills."

In 1997, McLennan Community College joined forces with Baylor University and Texas State Technical College to open the Downtown Higher Education Center, located at 209 N. Eighth St. An elaborate ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on Jan. 21, 1997, six days before classes began. The Downtown Higher Education Center "was established to expand educational opportunities for the community," according to the 1996-1997 *MCC Annual Report*. "The goal of the Center is to service an underserved area," Vice President Jay Box said at the grand opening ceremony. By January 2002, the Downtown Center was home to a newly opened Office Technology Academy, which provided courses for one- and two-year legal and medical certification programs. But despite its successes, in March 2003 the Downtown Center was closed due to budget



MCC offered Adult Basic Education at its downtown Waco centers.

constraints, according to the March 4, 2003, board minutes.

The administration soon began researching where another center might be better located. Since early 2002, the City of McGregor had been actively wooing MCC to locate a satellite campus in a vacant elementary school. McGregor ISD Superintendent Kevin Houchin was pushing for MCC to relocate into the former T.H. Jenkins Elementary School. But Dr. Michaelis had learned a thing or two from the Downtown Center, as he likes to say, and wasn't going to jump into opening a center in McGregor without first conducting research to see if it was warranted.

The Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness, under the direction of Paul Illich, began conducting several surveys in November 2002. The office also studied population data from the 2000 U.S. Census, which showed a dramatic increase of residents living to the west of Waco in the towns of Gatesville, Crawford and McGregor and to the

Right to Left: Dr. Michaelis with former Baylor University President Robert B. Sloan and MCC board member Don Hay at a ribbon cutting ceremony for the opening of the Downtown Higher Education Center on Jan. 21, 1997





MCC McGregor Center

south in Woodway and Hewitt. The towns located off of Highway 84, which included McGregor, Woodway, Lorena and Hewitt, were termed the Highway 84 Corridor and appeared to be an area ripe for expansion by MCC. The area had experienced a burgeoning population boom since the middle 1990s with significant growth noted from 1997 to 2002. A survey in fall 2002 found that 1,495 of all MCC students — nearly a quarter of all students at the time — lived in the Highway 84 Corridor.

In July 2003, the McGregor Center opened at the former elementary school. Twenty-six classes were offered that first semester in fall 2003 to an initial student body of 254, according to board minutes from July 29, 2003. By October 2003, the enrollment had grown to 460 students. By fall 2006, MCC once again partnered with Texas State Technical College and leased a section of the McGregor campus to TSTC where it offered dual credit courses to local high school students. Unfortunately, expectations were not met, and enrollment declined at the McGregor Center. The college decided to close the center in May 2007.

Adult Basic Education — Providing Basic Skills

Throughout the 1990s and until its closure in 2003, the Downtown Center had provided an accessible venue for MCC to host free Adult Basic Education (ABE) courses. MCC also offered basic education courses for adults striving to achieve their GED (graduation equivalency diploma) in several different learning sites throughout McLennan County. By 2007, ABE courses were taught in four Central Texas counties — McLennan, Bosque, Hill and Falls — at 36 different sites. Classes were taught in whatever facilities were available, including industrial plants, churches, libraries, civic centers and even jails, said Shirley Crockett, ABE program director.

The venue doesn't matter; the goal is a high school diploma to help adults get viable employment. "The bottom line is for people to get their GEDs," Crockett said. "This will help them to progress on to college to break the cycle of poverty."

Nearly 4,000 students take adult basic education courses annually, according to Crockett. The courses are federally and state funded through



grants, and the college supplements the administrative-support staff and office space. MCC first offered the program from 1975-1978 but then discontinued the program. In 1990, the college began offering the program again after the Waco Independent School District gave up its grant to host the program. When the program started in 1990, it was serving one school district in Central Texas and had a budget of about \$70,000. By 2007, it was serving 43 school districts with grants totaling \$700,000, said Crockett, who has been with the program since 1977.

The program is a collaborative effort with service-area organizations and agencies. School districts help provide educational assessment; the Texas Workforce Commission, Heart of Texas Council of Governments, Heart of Texas Workforce Career Centers, and employers provide assessment on work-related matters. The Texas Department of Human Services, Mental Health-Mental Retardation Center, Waco/McLennan County Teen Pregnancy Council, Heart of Texas Good Will Industry, and various other public and private charitable institutions provide assessment of emotional and social skills. Several organizations also have donated to the program, such as the Rapoport Foundation and the Literacy Coalition Jurors of McLennan and Bosque Counties. The jurors donate a portion of their fees for students to help supplement the cost of the \$75 GED tests, which are administered by the Texas Education Agency. Many otherwise would not be able to afford to take the high school equivalency test, Crockett said.

As a result, thousands of adults have achieved their diplomas with the help of the ABE program throughout the years. Crockett has seen



entire families go through the programs: grandmothers and granddaughters and mothers and sons in the same graduating classes. "That's the neat thing. They can walk in and take a class any session they like until they reach their goal," she said.

Dr. Michaelis has personally witnessed the program help families and recalls one little boy whom he mentored whose own grandmother had learned to read through ABE. "The main job of the program is to help people," Dr. Michaelis said. "It is the key to the kingdom for a lot of folks who have dropped out of school. Adult Basic Education is the best thing for this group. It helps lift people up. ... There are a lot of people who haven't had the opportunities, and that's why Adult Basic Education is so important to the fiber of this community."

In March 2000, the MCC-run program received a national award for excellence, the Secretary's Award from the Secretary of Education, which recognized the program for "Outstanding Adult Literacy and Education from 1998-1999." The MCC program was one of only 10 programs nationwide to receive an award that academic year, said Crockett, who has also personally won awards from the Texas Association for Literacy and Adult Education because of her program's success. However, she says the real reward has been seeing so many adults grasp basic skills that many take for granted. "They might just want to build up their reading skills to learn to read to their children or read the Bible or read better at work," she explained. "My goal is for the program to continue to prosper and raise the academic achievements of students so that they can go on to get better jobs and live the lifestyle that they've always dreamed of."

Dual Credit — Two for One

McLennan Community College has offered dual-credit courses to local high school students since the mid-1980s and allows students to accrue college credits while still in high school at affordable tuition rates. Dual credit allows high school students to take college-level courses for high school credit and for college credit before graduating. Some students take so many dual-credit courses before graduating high school that when they start their first year of college, they have accrued enough credits to enter as sophomores.

"They are getting credit for high school and college," said Gilbert Montemayor, director of the Social and Behavior Sciences Division, which oversees dual credit.

"It is a way to serve students ... who are headed to college who want to get a jump start [on their college careers]," Dr. Michaelis added. "It is a tremendous economic benefit to a family to have a young person take classes here ... A student can get 12 or 15 hours [of college credits] prior to graduation, and that's [equal to] a semester. From a parent's perspective ... that's a tremendous thing."

Nationwide, there has been a growing trend by higher education institutions to offer dual-credit courses. This has partly been fueled by the overall increase in tuition at universities and the growing popularity of the community college. Many families find it far more affordable to take basic freshman and sophomore courses from a community college prior to entering a university setting. Students also find that they tend to understand the curriculum better and have more one-on-one with instructors at smaller community colleges.

Left to Right: The mobile literacy van operated by the Adult Basic Education Department in the early 1990s. ABE instructor Vernon Aldridge (at right) drove the van, and instructor Francine Logan provided assistance to individuals seeking improved reading skills.

An adult student takes a course at the downtown center.

An Adult Basic Education graduation ceremony



Dual Credit students receive high school and college credit for the same class.



Gilbert Montemayor oversees dual-credit courses.

By fall 2006, 745 students throughout McLennan County from 25 area high schools were taking MCC courses and simultaneously earning college and high school credit. MCC offered 39 dual-credit courses in 15 area high schools, including Crawford, Lorena, McGregor, Connally, University, Robinson and Moody, and at the Texas Youth Center in Mart, Montemayor said.

“These are kids willing to work. ... They’re getting the same exact class that every other student that goes to McLennan Community College gets.” —Dr. Michaelis

Students enrolled in dual-credit courses are expected to perform at college level and receive no special breaks or exemptions due to their youth. “These are kids willing to work. They’re not getting watered-down stuff; they’re getting the same exact class that every other student that goes to McLennan Community College gets,” Dr. Michaelis said. “Sometimes some of those young people are surprised at how hard it is and tough it is and demanding.”

Montemayor has taught dual-credit history courses at Lorena High School that were transmitted via two-way interactive audio and video transmissions to Chilton and Marlin high schools. Students are able to ask questions and respond to instructors via several televisions stationed throughout the rooms. “The TV follows you [instructors] as you talk, and you can see what you’re doing on the screens,” Montemayor said. “People at the other sites have instruments on their desks that they can touch and ask a question, and the camera automatically pans to them.”

Despite their young age, Montemayor said he has consistently been amazed at the high academic achievements of many high school students over the years. “They find themselves rising to the occasion and competing with college-level kids, and so they basically put a little bit more effort into it,” Montemayor said. “It’s a good experience for them. ... [Usually], by the time they graduate from high school, [they] can just flow right into a university [with] no problem whatsoever.”

University Center — Revolutionizing Central Texas Education

Paul Illich is a quiet, unassuming researcher who is vice president of research, planning and effectiveness at MCC. Since 1997, he has crunched numbers, tracked trends, and worked to identify the workforce and job skill needs of Central Texas by using a massive database, countless community surveys, and an overall patience for deciphering numbers. One day, a simple perception on his part — coupled by his ability to spot trends — led to the transformation of the MCC campus into a facility that now offers bachelor’s and master’s degrees with partnering four-year institutions through the MCC University Center. And it all began with a simple analysis of the 1990 Census.

Illich noticed that, according to the 1990 Census, adults ages 25 and older in McLennan County had achieved associate’s degrees well above the state average; however, a disproportionately lower percentage of adults within the county had achieved bachelor’s degrees as compared to the statewide average. The 2000 Census figures released an even greater disparity. In 1990, 6.7 percent of McLennan County adults had achieved associate’s degrees; that figure grew to 7.1 percent in 2000. This far exceeded the statewide average, which was 5.2 percent in 1990 and 5.2 percent in 2000, according to the U.S. Census data. But in 1990, only 10.8 percent of McLennan County’s adult population had a bachelor’s degree, compared with the statewide average of 13.9 percent. In 2000, only 11.8 percent had bachelor’s degrees, although the statewide average had jumped to 15.6 percent, the Census data showed (see Fig 4.1).

“We noticed that in McLennan County the percentage of individuals having an associate’s degree was higher than the state average,” Illich said. “But we were surprised to some degree that McLennan County had a relatively low education attainment rate according to the United States Census Bureau, in regards to bachelor’s degrees.”

Illich pointed out his observation to Dr. Michaelis in the late 1990s prior to the release of the 2000 Census data. Immediately Dr. Michaelis’ administration began exploring why the citizens of Central Texas lacked four-year

“We noticed that in McLennan County the percentage of individuals having an associate’s degree was higher than the state average.” — Paul Illich

degrees. The answer soon became obvious: The nearest affordable public four-year university was too far away for many to travel daily. Many adults worked in Waco and were not willing to pick up and move to get their diplomas. The desire for higher degrees was there, but the access was not.

The release of the 2000 Census data further fueled Dr. Michaelis’ determination to end this startling trend and find a way to increase the number of adults with four-year degrees in McLennan County. What if the college offered space on its campus to four-year universities for them to bring their degree programs and instructors to MCC? This would save students from moving or driving to other institutions, but would students be interested, and what other four-year institutions would buy into the idea?

Tarleton State University in Stephenville, Texas, had for the past few years inquired about offering graduate courses at MCC, Dr. Michaelis told the MCC Board of Trustees during a Jan. 13, 1999, board meeting. At that time, “he asked board members to be thinking of what they feel the college’s position should be when four-year higher education institutions ask to teach junior and senior classes on the campus,” according to the board minutes.

In February 2000, Illich’s office conducted a campus survey to assess potential interest among enrolled MCC students in junior- and senior-level courses offered at the MCC campus. The survey of 455 students also queried what types of courses and degrees students would likely pursue. The survey found that 91 percent polled would take junior- and senior-level courses from a four-



At Left:
December 2004
Bachelor of Social Work
graduates who complet-
ed University of Texas at
Arlington degrees
through the University
Center at MCC



Randy Schormann,
first director of the
University Center



Jay Box, former vice
president of instruction

Below:
U.S. Census data of
regional educational
attainment illustrated the
need for more higher
education opportunities
in McLennan County.

Figure 4.1

U.S. Census Data (1990 versus 2000)
Educational Attainment (Pop. 25 years and over)

	1990		2000	
	McLennan County	Texas	McLennan County	Texas
< 9 th grade	11.6	13.5	9.1	11.5
9-12 no diploma	16.9	14.4	14.2	12.9
HS grad (GED)	27.8	25.6	27.9	24.8
Some college, no degree	20.5	21	22.5	22.4
Associate degree	6.7	5.2	7.1	5.2
Bachelor’s degree	10.8	13.9	11.8	15.6
Graduate or prof degree	5.8	6.5	7.3	7.6
% HS grad or higher	71.6	72.1	76.6	75.7
% bachelor’s degree or higher	16.6	20.3	19.1	23.2



Fay Gutierrez,
University Center
graduate and MCC
Alternative Teacher
Certification Program
director

A&M University, Stephen F. Austin State University, Tarleton State University, Sam Houston State University, University of North Texas, The University of Texas at Austin, and Texas Woman's University. An April 28, 2000, letter sent from Dr. Michaelis to The University of Texas at Arlington President Robert E. Witt proposed "partnerships with selected senior institutions in an effort to expand educational opportunities to the citizens of McLennan County and Central Texas." The letter went on to say that:

"Though strategically located within the Heart of Texas, McLennan County, nonetheless, is not in proximity to a public senior institution. Thus many of our students, who may not be able to afford private tuition, are forced to commute if they wish to continue their education. Our institution-

al research shows that 70 percent of McLennan students are employed, half of that number, full time; 25 percent are married. Therefore, when they complete their studies at MCC, their options for future education are limited. ... The need for expanded baccalaureate opportunity for McLennan students and for many within the community, who have completed college hours either locally or elsewhere, is real. ... Our belief (is) that there is major support within this community for access to state-supported bachelor's programs."

UTA President Witt's response proved historic. In fall 2000, he invited Dr. Michaelis and his top administrators to a luncheon at the Arlington campus to discuss the idea. Before a boardroom filled with UTA vice presidents and other top administrators, Dr. Michaelis and his leading vice presidents stood poised to pitch their concept. They feared a tough sell. But President Witt surprised them all, and before lunch was served he announced that UTA would be taking four-year degree programs down to Waco.

Dr. Michaelis said President Witt took a leap of faith that they didn't expect. "Before the lunch even started, [President Witt] said, 'We're glad to welcome the people from McLennan Community College today, and in advance of lunch I want to make clear to all of you, we are going to take degree programs — not just a course or two here or there — we're going to take degree programs to McLennan Community College, so their students don't have to leave their campus.' And we might as well had just eaten lunch and gotten up and left because that was the deal sealer," Dr. Michaelis recalled.

Thus the University Center at MCC was born. Randy Schormann, director of the University Center from its inception until January 2007, recalled the surprise and elation by the MCC administrators, including that of former Vice President of Instruction Jay Box, following Witt's announcement. "In that meeting Dr. Michaelis and Dr. Box laid out their dream for this University Center," Schormann said. "We didn't have any particular courses we wanted at the time; we just knew there would be a need for

educators and educating the business community. And Dr. Witt looked at his people and said, 'I think we can do that.' And when we got back into the parking lot, Dr. Michaelis actually stopped all of us in the middle of the parking lot and said 'Do you realize what just happened? This is going to work!'"

"Dr. Witt was the boss there, and he saw the potential ... he jumped right on it," said Jack Schneider, vice president of instruction, who then was dean of arts and sciences. "I think we were all amazed by the quickness of his commit-

"We believe the University Center is having a large impact and has generated high demand for first- and second-year core classes." — Paul Illich

ment to go all out. Had it not been for Robert Witt, we might not have the University Center."

Once the decision was made, UTA moved quickly. In spring 2001, UTA began offering a business administration degree program and a criminal justice degree program at the MCC campus. Sixteen students were enrolled in the first business administration degree program and 10 in the criminal justice degree program, said Linda Wilson, assistant provost for The University of Texas at Arlington, who was assigned as a liaison to work between UTA and MCC. The objective was to bring affordable four-year degrees to Central Texas. "We believed it was part of our mission, which is to deliver education to the citizens of Texas. This was just another opportunity to be able to do that," Wilson said.

From the very beginning, there was overwhelming interest in the University Center partnership. Wilson recalls coming to MCC in fall 2000 to drum up student interest for UTA programs, but as she approached the Student Services Center, she was met with a line of about 75 students. It wasn't until she entered the building that she realized the students were waiting to talk to her about registering for UTA through the University Center. "We never imagined that long line was to find out about our programs at the

University Center," Wilson said. "We were stunned and thrilled and surprised at the outpouring of interest in the program."

UTA offered its courses through a number of innovative teaching methods, including video conferencing and online instruction and by sending its instructors to Waco to hold lectures. The popularity in the program caught on, and by fall 2001, UTA added an early childhood teacher certification degree, which in 2006 remained one of the most sought-after teaching degree programs in Central Texas.

In fall 2002, Tarleton State University joined in and also began offering business administration degree programs at the University Center. In spring 2002, The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston began offering a Bachelor of Science degree in clinical laboratory science. In fall 2006, The University of Texas at Brownsville was the last institution to partner with the University Center in offering bachelor's degrees in computer information system technology and health sciences technology.

What began with 26 students through two bachelor's degree programs offered through UTA in spring 2001 has expanded to include partnerships with four major state-supported institutions offering a total of 14 bachelor's degree programs, six master's degree programs, two post-master's certificates, and one education doctoral degree. Total student enrollment in these programs topped 500 in fall 2006 in more than 45 courses offered at the MCC campus, Schormann said.

This boom in interest is also thought to have greatly contributed to the boom in student population on the MCC campus in the mid 2000s. In spring 2005, student enrollment reached an all-time high of 8,500 — not including students attending the University Center. Nevertheless, the population explosion has been directly attributed to the popularity of the University Center because it is attracting more students to the campus to take freshmen and sophomore core curriculum courses as prerequisites for four-year degree tracks.

Suddenly students who had never before taken courses were registering for classes with the goal of a four-year degree. "We believe the University Center is having a large impact and has generated high demand for first- and second-year core classes," Illich said.



UNIVERSITY CENTER at MCC

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The University Center is a partnership between MCC and four-year institutions who have agreed to offer a complete bachelor's degree program on the MCC campus. Click below to find out more... To register for classes...

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Kim Patterson worked closely with Dr. Michaelis to ensure voter support for the 1999 bond election.

A simple statistical observation by Illich's office set forth a chain of events that has altered the lives of hundreds of students and added to the quality of the workforce in Central Texas. Commuting students, otherwise known as Route 6 Gypsies, traveling west to Tarleton and east toward Texas A&M, or I-35 vagabonds, traveling north to Dallas or south to Austin, were no longer forced to travel at least two hours in either direction to pursue an affordable bachelor's degree. The University Center "gives people the opportunity to complete baccalaureate degrees when they might not have had that opportunity," Schneider said.

"MCC has really tried to satiate the appetite for lifelong learning in Central Texas, and that speaks directly to why MCC stepped up and created the University Center," Schormann said.

"The whole board has been enthusiastic about it the whole time because there is nowhere you can go without going from 75 to 100 miles away for a four-year degree without going to Baylor," said MCC Board of Trustees Chairman J. Robert Sheehy Jr. "Being able to provide that opportunity without having to be a four-year college has been great. The University Center program works, and we're constantly looking for programs and partners to bring in."

"It was really a needs-based bond. We called it 'MCC's vision for the 21st century,' but in reality it was taking care of issues from the 20th Century."

— Kim Patterson

the time, MCC administrators did not know that they were on the brink of a population explosion that would increase from 5,500 students and peak at 8,500 students in spring 2005 — thousands more than the campus was designed to hold and a nearly 1,000 percent increase in students from the 855 who first started at MCC in 1969.

This was in part caused by spiraling tuition at nationwide universities and by the opening of the popular University Center in 2001. As Central Texans realized that a four-year state university degree could be attained without driving two hours to Dallas, Austin, Stephenville or College Station, hundreds of new students began signing up for prerequisite courses with the goal of com-

Growing Popularity Prompts 1999 Bond Election

Throughout the 1990s and into the turn of the next century, tuition rates at universities nationwide were steadily increasing with each passing year. By 2003, the College Board reported that tuition rates had increased 11 percent over 2002 rates at public four-year universities, according to a June 27, 2004, article in *USA TODAY*. Tuition at private universities increased 6 percent in 2002 from 2001. And a 2002 College Board survey found an overall 38 percent increase in university tuition costs nationwide from the previous decade, according to an Oct. 22, 2002, article in *The New York Times*.

Once again, community colleges began to grow in popularity, as they had back in the 1960s when MCC was founded. McLennan Community College's reputation as an affordable, yet competitive, institution of higher learning rapidly spread, and so did the college's student body. In 1989, a campus survey indicated that 68 percent of current students planned to take an additional course at MCC; 90 percent said they would recommend the college's continuing education classes to friends, according to a 1989 report published by MCC, *Directions — The Master Plan for McLennan Community College*. At

pleting advanced degrees through the University Center. Once again, the campus was bursting at the seams. Massive renovations were needed, but first the college needed money from the taxpayers in order to begin reconstruction.

In April 1999, the MCC Board of Trustees announced that they would hold a bond election in June 1999 to raise money to improve the library and finish renovations to the Community Service Center. This was the first bond election held since voters approved a \$4 million bond election in 1970 and was only the third bond election held in the history of the college. The board was asking McLennan County taxpayers to approve \$17.95 million in funds for the college. The money would be used to add 35,000 square feet onto the existing library to transform it into a state-of-the-art Learning Technology Center. The bond package also would pay to complete renovations to the Community Services Center (CSC), which had begun 12 years before when the building — the former Waco High School — was purchased in 1987. Over the years, the CSC had been slowly renovated room by room; now Dr. Michaelis was determined to finish the building where many vocational courses were taught and cap it off with a majestic conference center where community events could be held.

At the time, Dr. Michaelis and his staff thought that the renovations would add enough classroom space to accommodate students in the upcoming years. However, they later realized that the renovations were so well received that the new buildings enticed more students onto campus, and the need for even more classroom space increased as the college approached its 40th anniversary.

During the 1999 election campaign, the administration set out to sway voters to approve the \$17.95 million in tax increases. But they soon discovered that many Central Texans were not aware of all that MCC did for the community, nor did they understand the college's need for more funding. Dr. Michaelis set out to change that by educating the voters on how MCC was serving the community and what more it could do for citizens if it were allowed to expand and grow.

He hired Kim Harrison to be the college's voice and lead the campaign. Harrison was a former public relations director for a local utility,

Brazos Electric Power Cooperative, who came to MCC in 1995 as a part-time employee in the public relations department. She gained notoriety by successfully publicizing the first Waco Open Door Arts Fest, held at the Art Center Waco at MCC in 1997, which drew an initial crowd of 10,000. Her talents did not go unnoticed; Dr. Michaelis soon called upon Harrison to help change the college's image to sway voters to approve the bond funds.

"In '98, he came to me and asked me to help with this campaign and gave me a chance to show what I could do," said Harrison, who in 2000 married Frank Patterson, director of the MCC Firefighter's Academy, and changed her last name to Patterson. "It was really a needs-based bond. We called it 'MCC's vision for the 21st century,' but in reality it was taking care of issues from the 20th Century," Patterson said.

In addition to the renovations to the library and the CSC, most of the air conditioning and heating units and ventilation systems on campus

Informational material from the 1999 bond election

EQUATION:	
LTC	\$8.7m
Infrastructure	\$7m
CSC	\$2.25m
Total	\$17.95 million

Learning Technology Center

The Learning Technology Center, a 35,000-square foot addition to the MCC Library, will blend the best of the traditional library with the most up-to-date computer technology to give students access to academic opportunity, no matter where they are in their educational journeys.



MCC Bond Facts At A Glance



Infrastructure

Beauty is not only skin deep—and after 30 years, campus underground water pipes and electrical wiring need updating and replacing. The bond package also includes replacing heating and air conditioning equipment in four buildings and upgrading lighting throughout campus to create a safer and more comfortable learning environment.

Annual Effect on Homeowners

(\$17.95 million bond @ 20 years at an estimated interest rate of 6%. Tax increase would be approximately 3 cents per \$100 valuation.)

	Current	Increase	Total
\$38,000 home:	\$27.12	\$9.12	\$36.24
\$76,000 home:	\$54.24	\$18.24	\$72.48
\$152,000 home:	\$108.48	\$36.48	\$144.96

Community Services Center

In the 12 years MCC has owned this former high school building, it has become a hub for community meetings, fairs and educational seminars. It is also home to our nationally acclaimed child development center, the Options Program alternative high school, and several of our allied health careers programs. Portions of the building are in dire need of renovation for both utilization.



Early Vote
June
Election
Tuesday, Ju



also would be upgraded with the bond money. Patterson had never before spearheaded a bond election campaign and called it "baptism by fire," of the quick, five-week campaign.

A 20-member political action committee, Friends of MCC, was formed on April 21, 1999, to oversee the campaign led by well-known businessman Roane Lacy Jr., who was its chairman, and local banker Jim Haller as treasurer. The committee mailed 500 fund-raising letters

votes for and 1,159 votes against, according to a June 23, 1999, article in the *Waco Tribune-Herald*. The money would ensure major changes to the campus that would usher it into the 21st Century.

New LTC — Dubbed "Heart of the Campus"

Following the successful 1999 bond election, the MCC Board of Trustees started reconstruction of the new Learning Technology Center, which would replace the old library. In 2000, the library's 80,000 volumes of books and reference materials and 465 different titles of periodicals were packed up and moved in bulk to the Community Services Center (CSC), which served as a temporary library facility for 18 months until the grand opening of the Learning Technology Center (LTC) on Jan. 9, 2002. Trolleys and busses shuttled students and faculty to the temporary library, which was located on 19th Street, half a mile away from the former library.

"It was difficult, definitely," said Louise Banks-Smith, information desk supervisor, who oversaw the move to the temporary facilities. "It was so overwhelming to make such a radical move like that and to be in that temporary location for 18 months. And then the move back for me was horrendous." Banks-Smith said her staff had seven days to move all of the materials from the CSC to the LTC prior to the grand opening. That week was plagued with difficulties: The new elevator in the LTC kept breaking down, the shelving wasn't spaced wide enough to hold large reference materials, and the books were scrambled in the move and had to be reorganized prior to stacking. Her staff worked 12-hour days prior to the grand opening ceremony. "We had quite the upheaval, but we managed," said Banks-Smith, who has worked for the library since 1978. "Most of that hubbub was crazy, but we persevered much to the success of this center."

The *Highland Herald* newspaper wrote stories encouraging students to tolerate the changes, and Dr. Michaelis promised that the new Learning Technology Center would revolutionize the campus and include 120 computers for student use, multi-media classrooms, a food court, and private study rooms. "The Learning Technology Center is slated for the heart of developments planned for the campus," according to a Sept. 21, 1999, article in the *Highland Herald*. Little did students or

"The bond election of 1999 was when we moved into a whole new level of marketing and media relations." — Dr. Michaelis

throughout Central Texas and generated a total of \$19,761 in political contributions. About 1,300 flyers were distributed throughout the county explaining the renovation and campus expansion plans, and nearly 21,000 brochures were mailed to county residents. In addition, 1,000 "Vote Yes" yard signs were placed strategically throughout the county.

Patterson and Dr. Michaelis toured the county together, giving speeches to nearly three dozen community groups, paying special attention to Hispanics, African-Americans and rural communities. Two Sundays before the election, Dr. Michaelis visited six African-American churches. Patterson later reflected in a report that "this initiative was critical to our success."

"The bond election of 1999 was when we moved into a whole new level of marketing and media relations," Dr. Michaelis recalled. "Before that it was the same publications every year. We just hadn't put the resources into communicating our message. I got tired of hearing that 'MCC was the best-kept secret.' Anytime someone says they're the best-kept secret, you need to let people know who you are and what you're doing. You need to have your community informed about what you're doing."

"It was so intense, and Dennis and I were going everywhere together, and just by fate or luck, I could write for him, and it got to be this joke that everything that came out from him I had written. I had created a voice for him," Patterson said.

The election was held on June 22, 1999, and was a success. McLennan County voters approved the tax increase by 67.27 percent, 2,401



The Learning Technology Center (above) opened in 2002 and is marked by a majestic rotunda and an 8-foot bronze Highlander statue (below).

administrators know at the time that the LTC would later be dubbed the "Heart of the Campus" and would provide a welcoming place to gather and study that would entice even more students onto campus.

In a letter to students published in the *Highland Herald* on Sept. 21, 1999, Dr. Michaelis wrote:

"It is an exciting time to be at McLennan Community College! Not only is it a time of new beginnings for students, faculty and staff, but it is also an exciting time in our college's history. ... The upcoming year will be filled with changes for all of us as we begin one of the most ambitious capital improvement campaigns in our college's history. It will take a lot of teamwork and patience over the next two years to realize this vision for MCC's future. But these improvements to our campus will help provide the kind of education that will enable you to succeed in today's workforce and leave you well prepared to take on the challenges of tomorrow."

Former MCC spokeswoman Kim Patterson said that, in reality, the campus looked more like a war-ravaged Baghdad than an institute of higher learning. "There were 8-foot trenches all over the main campus. It was unbelievable. To take such a beautiful place and turn it into that, you had to have vision," she said.

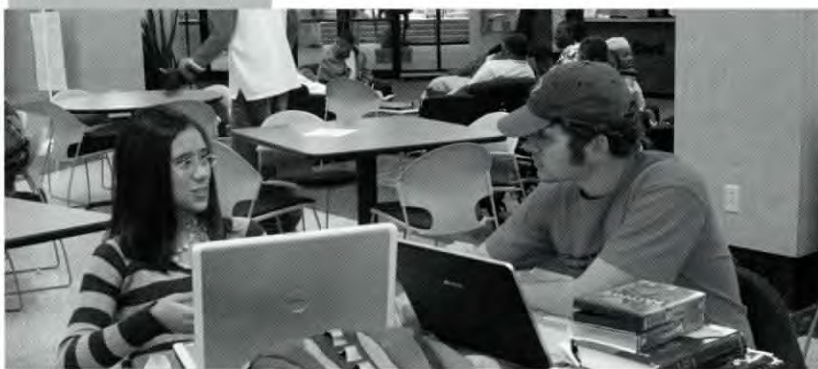
Dr. Michaelis' vision to turn the library into

a vibrant building that would be a hub of student activity stemmed from a visit he and vice presidents Jay Box and Johnette McKown took in August 1999 to George Mason University in Fairfax, Va. There they visited Mason's Johnson Center Library, which proved to later be the model for the LTC. That month they also visited Chemeketa Community College in Salem, Ore., soliciting design ideas. But it was the building at Mason, filled with student activity and rimmed by a center food court that caught their attention. "We felt that it was so close to what we wanted conceptually," McKown recalled.

The architecture firm of Raso, Bailey, Dudley & Rose, led by Joe Raso, who is now deceased, designed a prototype that was smaller than the Mason building but similar in integrity. Waco Construction was awarded the building contract and began construction in October 2000. The building included a second-floor cafeteria and third-floor library with a sweeping rotunda that today provides a scenic overlook to



Below Left: Sculptor Bruce Greene at the grand opening of the LTC and dedication of the Highlander statue



The LTC is more than just a library — it includes 125 desktop computers for students to use, a cafeteria and several study areas.

the campus and is a popular student study area. “Before that time, students didn’t stay much in the Student Center. It got to be where people weren’t there much, and now the LTC is a congregating place,” Executive Vice President McKown said.

“Frankly, I consider it to be the focal point of the campus. It’s ... where everything centers. It’s the hub for our students,” Dr. Michaelis said. “I have never seen a building change the personality of a campus as that one has.”

“It was a watershed time in the history of the college. It changed us from being sort of the best-kept secret to becoming ... as big as it has,” said Patterson, who was promoted during the construction to director of community relations and marketing. “It really is the heart of the campus

now. Before we had the LTC, we didn’t have a heart. People were tied to their individual buildings, but there wasn’t a sense of community like we achieved in the early 2000s when the LTC came on line.”

A grand opening dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on Jan. 9, 2002, for the \$8.7 million, 70,000-square-foot LTC, capping off 18 months of construction. The ceremony, attended by former state Sen. David Sibley, R-Waco, included the unveiling of an eight-foot bronze highlander statue placed outside the second-floor entrance to the LTC. Sculptor Bruce Greene of Clifton, Texas, crafted the statue in eight months. The model for the statue was local bagpipe player Danny Kohl, who is a collector of Scottish paraphernalia, as well as a bagpiper who has escorted thousands of MCC students for the graduation processions and recessions over the years. Patterson said Kohl had the costume and ancient swords and was willing to pose for hours in full Scottish regalia for Greene. Greene gained much notoriety for his highlander statue. In 2004, Baylor University commissioned Greene to create the “Immortal Ten,” bronze sculpture replicas of 10 Baylor athletes who were killed in a 1927 tragic bus accident. The life-sized statue was to be unveiled in 2007.

Waco Tribune-Herald Editor Carlos Sanchez wrote in a Jan. 13, 2002, editorial that with the addition of the LTC, MCC “must now be considered a jewel of Waco.” He added that, “Along with Baylor University and Texas State Technical College, MCC is part of a triumvirate of higher education opportunities in Waco making this city economically viable.” Sanchez concluded his editorial by writing: “This jewel must be shared by all.”

The Community Services Center — Serving the Community

With the grand opening of the Learning Technology Center in January 2002, college administrators were able to focus their resources on the reconstruction of the Community Services Center (CSC). This building — which had been purchased in 1987 and was the former Waco High School — had taken 15 years to rebuild, and Dr. Michaelis was frankly tired of the slow progress. The 1999 bond election afforded MCC money to renovate the building. Now that the

library was relocated in the LTC, and the reference materials had been shipped out of the CSC, they could begin work in earnest to build a Conference Center.

On Nov. 26, 2002, the Board of Trustees voted to award Waco Construction a \$735,000 contract to redo the massive center area of the former high school and transform it into a Conference Center. Despite the ratty Kelly-green

“I felt that we needed something nice for the community that they could rent out at a reasonable charge.” — Dr. Michaelis

carpet and scratched walls, Dr. Michaelis saw the potential for a giant rotunda-style conference room to host community events. The Conference Center was to be the crowning centerpiece of the sprawling 40-acre complex. Since its acquisition, the child care center had been added to the complex; the cosmetology school anchored another wing; the Law Enforcement Program and MCC Firefighter’s Academy were located there, as well as the Corporate and Professional Training Department. Now, Dr. Michaelis wanted to cap off the complex with an updated and versatile meeting room that would truly serve the college and community. “I felt that we needed something nice for the community that they could rent out at a reasonable charge that would be very versatile,” Dr. Michaelis said.

On Sept. 30, 2003, his dream Conference Center was revealed to the public with a grand opening celebration ceremony and business after-hours reception with the Waco Chamber of Commerce. The 6,000-square-foot room with paneled movable walls and 10-foot high ceilings holds 800 people and can be divided from one giant room into six smaller meeting rooms. “MCC purchased this building in the 1980s, and

we have spent most of the last 15 years renovating it,” Dr. Michaelis told the celebrating crowd, according to an Oct. 10, 2003, article in the *Highland Herald*. “I am pleased to finally be able to say that it’s finished.”

Since its completion, the Conference Center has hosted hundreds of events. The addition of the McLennan Distinguished Lecture Series at MCC in 2004 — in which renowned authors and scientists have delivered speeches at the Conference Center — has greatly added to the center’s use and twice has been booked to capacity. In 2005, the Center was booked about 80 days a year; by 2006-2007, it was booked upwards of 120 times per year, said Belinda Shelburne, MCC events specialist.

Prior to the formation of the Distinguished Lecture Series, MCC had hosted dozens of speakers, authors and artists through various departments on campus. The Language, Literature and Communication Division’s lecture series, for example, brought notable speakers to campus, including Pulitzer Prize-winner (and first African-American recipient), Gwendolyn Brooks. However, the Distinguished Lecture Series represented the first time that one central committee organized the events, said Cynthia SoRelle, who chaired the charter two-year, faculty-run committee.

“We’ve had a number of different lecture series committees on campus, and they were all entrepreneurially bringing people on campus. This is the first time it was organized. The president’s goal was to have an umbrella organization to bring in the real heavyweights, and it’s been so exciting,” explained SoRelle.

The first presenter brought to MCC was Afghanistan-born writer Tamim Ansary, author of *West of Kabul, East of New York*, who spoke on Nov. 16, 2004. That year, Ansary’s book was selected as the “One Book, One Waco” Book of the Year choice by the Waco Public Library. At the time, the United States had troops fighting in



The McLennan Distinguished Lecture Series has hosted four prominent speakers:



Tamim Ansary in 2004



James Watson in 2005



Bill Nye in 2006



Robert Reich in 2007

The Community Services Center houses many programs at MCC, including the Child Development Center, Law Enforcement, Cosmetology, community programs and Kids College.



Afghanistan and was embroiled in a war in a country that Ansary said few people fully understood. His lecture focused on further educating Americans on Afghanistani politics, poverty and religious cultures. Ron Wirtz, former director of library services, served on SoRelle's committee and had suggested bringing Ansary to MCC. "I had read his book and I thought that given the political and social situation in the world ... it was important for us to know about moderate Muslims," Wirtz said. Despite a wicked fall thunderstorm that was raging during his speech, Ansary managed to pack the Conference Center. His successful lecture was followed by several others through the Distinguished Lecture Series, including:

■ Nobel Prize-winning scientist James Watson gave two separate lectures to packed crowds on Sept. 21, 2005, despite a Category 5 Hurricane Rita that was churning toward Florida that day on a path that reportedly was scheduled to cut through Central Texas. The hurricane did not end up striking Waco, and Watson's speech was a success. Watson and fellow scientist Francis Crick were the first to describe the hidden double-helix structure of DNA molecules and, in 1962, were awarded the Nobel Prize in Medicine. Watson later served on the faculty at Harvard University for 21 years.

■ On April 15, 2006, Emmy Award-winning children's television series star Bill Nye, otherwise known as "The Science Guy," also spoke to a standing-room-only crowd. Nye, who ran a popular science-related TV show on Saturday mornings from 1992 to 1998, discussed the exploration of Mars, global warming and energy consumption in a somewhat controversial speech that also questioned the existence of God. The *Waco Tribune-Herald* reported that many people in the audience walked out during the lecture. "Bill Nye: The Science Guy appeared almost strident at moments about his views regarding the intersection of religion and science during a fascinating speech as part of MCC's Distinguished Lecture Series," *Waco Tribune-Herald* Editor Carlos Sanchez wrote in an April 9, 2006, editorial.

■ On April 11, 2007, former U.S. Secretary of Labor Robert Reich, who served under President Bill Clinton, gave a lively speech at MCC. Reich has written 10 books including the two best sellers *The Future of Success* and *Locked in the Cabinet*.

Bosque River Stage — Sweet Sounds on the River

The picturesque MCC riverfront land that overlooks the serene Bosque River has always been a highlight of the campus but has not always been well accessed. A rocky, terraced amphitheater was built there in 1972, but it had seen little traffic over the years; MCC administrators wanted more use of the property. With the help of the MCC Foundation, a striking Bosque River Stage was erected on the property and unveiled in September 2001. It has served as a venue for performing artists and the unique MCC Commercial Music Program ever since.

Of course, no one could have imaged the life-shattering events that would take place on Sept. 11, 2001, one day prior to the festival opening.

Dr. Michaelis "had this vision to turn this underutilized sad little place into this cool venue, tying it in with the Commercial Music Department as sort of a lab setting to help these kids learn about concerts, working with real artists, and giving them a place to perform," said Kim Patterson, director of community relations and marketing from 1999 until 2006.

Architect Joe Raso designed the unique stage and facility, which has stadium seating for 550 people with space for 200 more on a nearby grassy knoll and looks out over the river. Construction of the Bosque River Stage cost nearly \$1 million and was built by Barsh Construction, according to an Oct. 26, 2000, MCC Board of Trustees meeting minutes. It had been in the works since early 1999 and was slated for a weeklong kick-off ceremony Sept. 12-17, 2001. The kickoff ceremony, called the Waterfront Music Festival, was

scheduled to have different live musical performances every night ranging from Latin groups to country and jazz.

Of course, no one could have imaged the life-shattering events that would take place on Sept. 11, 2001, one day prior to the festival opening. Nearly 3,000 people died that day when four commercial airlines were hijacked by terrorists. Two commercial jetliners were flown into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, killing 2,600 and causing the buildings to crash into a jumble of metal and debris. Another hijacked jet struck the Pentagon outside Washington, D.C., killing 125 people. Passengers of a fourth hijacked commercial airliner managed to take control of the plane and crashed it into a rural Pennsylvania field near Shanksville, killing all 40 on board.

The 9/11 tragedies consumed every aspect of American life. Obviously a waterfront music festival was not appropriate, said Patterson, who canceled the grand opening celebration, which was to have also featured an after-hours business social with the Waco Chamber of Commerce for 500 people. During that week, most people stayed close to their families, attended vigils or went to church services. America was in mourning. But by the following Saturday, President George W. Bush and community leaders were encouraging citizens to come out of their homes and to resume normal activities. Dr. Michaelis and Patterson thought the time was right to baptize the waterfront stage.

The first concert was held on Saturday, Sept. 15, 2001, before a crowd of 400 and featured '70s pop singer B.J. Thomas, who performed his famous song "Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head." The concert was a hit, and the water seemed to almost cleanse away the bad events that had transpired, if just for a few hours. "By that weekend, people were ready to come out of their stupor and come back out," Patterson said. "We decided it was time. And it was great. It was almost like people needed that." The next night, a gospel concert was held, which also was well attended.

Since then, the venue has attracted its fair share of famous performers, such as Don McLean, who gained notoriety for singing "American Pie"; Three Dog Night; and the Lettermen pop group. And just a week after the college celebrated its

Waterfront Music Festival
Celebrating the Grand Opening of the Bosque River Stage
September 12th-17th

Bosque River Stage
at McLennan Community College

Wed., Sept. 12, 8 p.m.
Elephants Gerd
Jazz/Rock combo, Waco
\$7 reserved seating,
\$5 ground seating

Thurs., Sept. 13, 8 p.m.
Grave Combo
Nuclear Polka band, Denton
\$10 reserved seating,
\$7 ground seating

Fri., Sept. 14, 8 p.m.
Aztex
Salsa group, Austin
\$10 reserved seating,
\$7 ground seating

Sat., Sept. 15, 8 p.m.
B.J. Thomas
\$40 reserved seating only

Sun., Sept. 16, 5 p.m.
Michael McFrazier
Gospel concert
\$10 reserved seating,
\$7 ground seating

Mon., Sept. 17, Noon
Veronica Ortega
Dias y Seis celebration
Free concert

For Tickets call the
MCC Box Office at
254-299-8200

Tickets On Sale August 20th



40th anniversary, Latin superstar José Feliciano performed on Sept. 28, 2006. Local groups also have taken the stage several times, as well as many groups from Dallas and Austin, said Lisa Wilhelmi, who became director of community relations in February 2006.

The Bosque River Stage also hosts many amateurs, including the Waco Community Band, and free evening concerts featuring local perform-

The Veterinary Technology Program is offered at the Highlander Ranch and includes instruction on the care of many types of animals.



Highlander Ranch



Ronald Epps, division director for science, math and health and physical education

ers are offered on Thursday nights in May and June as part of the River Sounds music series. The stage also serves as a backdrop for the college's unique Commercial Music Program, which was started in 1981, and has been used by the performing arts students for several plays and concerts.

"Dr. Michaelis feels like this is a service to the community," said Donald Balmos, division director of Visual and Performing Arts.

Veterinary Technology Program — Helping Four-Legged Friends

McLennan Community College has pitched in to aid the four-legged friends of McLennan County, as well, through its purchase of the nearby Highlander Ranch, which has been renovated into an on-site facility to teach veterinary technology and help treat animals.

The Veterinary Technology Program began in fall 2002 with 33 students. By 2006, the fourth class of students seeking an Associate of Applied Science degree in Veterinary Technology were enrolled at the sprawling 200-acre ranch located six miles from the main campus. The two-year program is only one of six such programs taught within the state of Texas.

MCC students assist veterinarians in surgeries such as neutering animals. They vaccinate and immunize animals, draw blood, and start intravenous lines; they take X-rays, trim hooves, and clean teeth for a host of different types of animals on the property. In 2006, the Highlander Ranch was home to 52 horses, five cattle — three of them named "Hope," "Faith" and "Charity" — nine goats, two llamas, several dogs and cats from the local rescue shelter, and a pig named "Petunia."

"As veterinarians, we tend to treat anything that walks in the doors, or is carried in the doors, so therefore they have to have a good knowledge

of dogs and cats and horses and cows and birds and chickens and pigs and lions and tigers and bears. We try to expose them to a little bit of everything," said Ronald Epps, division director for science, math and health and physical education, who started the Veterinary Technology Program.

The curriculum is certified by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Upon graduation, students still must take their state and national exams administered by the Texas Veterinary Medical Association and the Association of State Boards before being fully certified. Luckily, a seemingly unending supply of strays from the local rescue society allows MCC students to hone their skills and practice on live animals. This also benefits the rescue society by providing free veterinary services for these animals, Epps said.

The MCC Board of Trustees on Jan. 2, 2002, approved the purchase of 150 acres of the ranch for \$750,000, according to board minutes. The land had been owned by Bill Latham and was the former home of Bentwood Farms, where an estimated 2,000 Arabian horses had been raised and bred. When MCC purchased the ranch in April 2002, it already contained a large building that had been used as a veterinary hospital when it had operated as Bentwood Farms. The former hospital proved to be an excellent facility to house a veterinary technology program and already was equipped with special stalls and pulleys attached to the ceiling to harness and treat large animals, such as cattle and horses. The property also contains several barns and other structures where feed and hay are stored.

Initially, Latham retained 50 adjacent acres and lived on that property, but on July 30, 2003, MCC purchased the remaining 50 acres for \$1.25 million, which included improvements to the property. Two months prior, on April 29, 2003, the board approved a contract to Barsh Construction for \$414,278 to perform renovations to the hospital to turn it into the Veterinary Technician Clinic. Part of the renovation also included adding another wing to the existing hospital for additional classroom space. Today, the combined 30,000-square-foot clinic contains several classrooms, a library/study area, an anatomy lab, an operating room, a surgical recovery room, separate rooms for dogs and cats and guinea pigs,

and even a simulated "SIM" dog named "Critical Care Jerry" that students use to practice intubation and listening to heart sounds.

From the program's startup, two local organizations donated substantial funds to McLennan Community College to help with renovations and the purchase of the Highlander Ranch facilities: The Cooper Foundation, a Waco-based philanthropic organization, gave \$100,000, and the

"As veterinarians, we tend to treat anything that walks in the doors, or is carried in the doors, so therefore they have to have a good knowledge of dogs and cats and horses and cows and birds and chickens and pigs and lions and tigers and bears. We try to expose them to a little bit of everything." — Ronald Epps

Waco Foundation, which supports community projects, donated \$37,000, according to MCC Board of Trustee meeting minutes. The Hillcrest Foundation, a philanthropic organization based in Dallas, also donated \$25,000, said Harry Harelik, executive director of the MCC Foundation.

Dr. Michaelis admits that owning a ranch isn't a common addition to most colleges, but what could be a more 'Texas thing' to do?

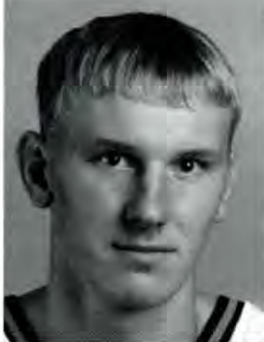
"It's the most unique facility in the state. There is not another college that has the combined facilities and assets. There are other colleges with that [veterinary] technology program, but not with a ranch," said Dean of Workforce Education Ricardo Solis. "This is a beautiful setting with a very practical application by having a 200-acre ranch with complementing facilities and laboratories in addition to the large animals that we can work with."

The facility also has other uses: 43 of the 52 horses are boarded there by private owners, and

dozens of citizens take riding classes at the ranch each semester. The MCC Kids College, which offers summer child care programs, often takes outings to the ranch for children to pet the goats or hike on the sprawling property. And the college's annual company picnic has been held there for several years.

Before the Veterinary Technology Program, "we didn't really offer much in the way of agriculture, and this is opening something else up where we can serve the community and serve the citizens of McLennan County," MCC Board of Trustee member K. Paul Holt said.





Bogdan Konontsuk was an MCC student and basketball player.

Learning from Adversity — Dark Days at MCC

Despite the successes that McLennan Community College has enjoyed during the past four decades, there have been some dark days. Namely, three events that occurred between 2002 and 2005 left indelible marks on the faculty and students and forever changed the campus:

- On Jan. 12, 2002, an MCC basketball player fell unconscious during a home basketball game in center court and died.
- In 2003, two MCC employees were killed, and one administrator was severely injured in a Valentine's Day bus crash on Interstate 35.
- In March 2005, McLennan County voters failed to approve a \$73 million bond package that would have helped to expand the college campus.

The deaths were horrific. The failed bond election was disappointing. To this there is no question. But prior to the events, the college had never truly been tested in dealing with such adversity.

The early 2000s showed that the MCC faculty and family could come together in times of tragedy and persevere despite all odds. The administration and staff grew from the experiences and became closer. It is not to say that adversity will never strike the college again, but it is certainly apt to say that when it does, the college will be ready to overcome any challenges in its future. Here are the events and how they unfolded:

'Toughest Loss of the Season'

The untimely death of 20-year-old Highlander basketball player Bogdan Konontsuk occurred on the evening of Jan. 12, 2002. The Highlanders were playing Grayson Community College in The Highlands gym before a packed crowd of hundreds of spectators. With just nine minutes remaining until half-time, sophomore forward Konontsuk was running down the court when he collapsed face down. He appeared to be unconscious, and MCC trainer Jason Johnston and a local registered nurse, Lisa Barnes, who had been watching the game from the stands, ran to his aid and began administering CPR. He was rushed via ambulance to Hillcrest Baptist

Medical Center. The basketball game was canceled. Dozens of MCC administrators, coaches, athletes and students converged upon the hospital to await the news on Konontsuk, an international student from Estonia in Eastern Europe who came to MCC on an athletic scholarship. Shortly after 10:30 p.m., they learned that he had died.

The news devastated the team and greatly affected the campus. In retrospect, however tragic, the death of Bogdan Konontsuk brought the campus community together as administrators, athletes, students and faculty took up collections and held memorial services to honor this fallen sophomore who had been born 5,300 miles away from Central Texas.

His parents, Natalja and Juri Konontsuk, arrived from Estonia with his 15-year-old brother, Roman, and were greeted by Executive Vice President Johnette McKown. She had been at the basketball game that fateful night, and she relayed the events, play-by-play, for the grieving

A memorial service ... was held on Jan. 16, 2002, and attended by more than 300 students, faculty, staff and athletes, including several mourners from other colleges.

family during the next week. With the aid of an MCC employee — who translated for them in their common language of Russian — they toured all of their son's favorite sites in Central Texas, met his coach and teammates, and came to know the town where their son had last lived.

McKown and Kim Patterson, director of community relations and marketing, planned a memorial service for the Konontsuks that was held on Jan. 16, 2002. The service was attended by more than 300 students, faculty, staff and athletes, including several mourners from other colleges. They helped to establish a memorial fund for the Konontsuk family that eventually raised \$4,500. They secured a visa from the Estonian embassy to send his body back to his homeland.

Local funeral director Darrell Simpson purchased a burial suit for Bogdan and even person-

ally flew with the body to Europe and oversaw the cutting down of the oversized coffin that held the remains of the 6-foot 8-inch athlete in a London airport so that it could fit on a smaller plane bound for Estonia.

"It was a very sad time," McKown recalled. "At the time, it was hard to know what to do. We just kind of decided we would do what we thought was the right thing, and it might not be the best business decision to make, but we felt like we would do what was the right thing, and so we did."

Initially, the Konontsuks did not trust the MCC staff and were angry about his death. "There was a lack of trust on the family's part. They didn't know what was going on," Patterson said. But in the ensuing week, they came to trust McKown and the MCC family. In a news conference held on Jan. 20, 2002, just days before they left with the coffin for Europe, the Konontsuks said they were grateful for the "outpouring of love, support and kindness," the MCC and Waco communities had shown them, according to a Jan. 21, 2002, article in the *Waco Tribune-Herald*. "What touched us the most was when people we didn't know came up to us and shook our hands or gave us a hug or offered a couple of words of comfort," Juri Konontsuk told the *Waco Tribune-Herald*.

Before they departed, they attended a basketball game at MCC and met with the team in the locker room. "That was something that we needed, and I think [the family] needed it too," MCC Basketball Coach Wendell Hudson told the *Waco Tribune-Herald* for the Jan. 21, 2002, article. "It was an emotional scene, but I think it was good for everyone." His mother, Natalja, told the newspaper: "When we were in the locker room, I had a feeling that his teammates were like children of my own. ... I was very thankful to all of them that they didn't try to hide their feelings or emotions. The emotions were there and I was happy about that. It helped us to deal with the fact that Bogdan wasn't among them. ... The last words that the team said touched our hearts in a very special way: Those words were, 'Even though you lost a son, you gained 12 others and 12 other brothers.'"

Patterson compiled a summary report detailing the events as they unfolded. The report concluded with the following:

"MCC paid several thousand dollars toward the Konontsuk family's hospital, travel and funeral expenses. Countless hours were dedicated to the Bogdan case to make sure that no communications detail, either private or public was left untended. It was a significant financial investment for the college ... but it was an even more significant investment in local reputation and international goodwill. The Bogdan Konontsuk case was, without doubt, MCC's toughest loss of the season. But whether life's tough losses are in athletics or in life, they are often the best teachers ... and this case reinforced the age-old lesson about the value of institutional integrity."

Valentine's Day Bus Crash Leaves Void

The single worst day in the history of MCC occurred on Feb. 14, 2003, when a charter bus struck a sports utility vehicle carrying three MCC employees, killing two and severely injuring another, on heavily traveled Interstate 35. Five people from the bus, which had been carrying a church group from Temple, Texas, also died, and 29 were injured in the Valentine's Day crash.

The MCC family was devastated. News of the deaths of Radiologic Technology Program Director Brenda Dobelbower, 48, and Janice Roberson, 61, division director of health sciences at MCC, swept through the campus. The mourning was compounded with news that Donnie Hagan, 52, dean of workforce education, was barely hanging on to life. Although Hagan would eventually recover from most of his injuries, he was left with no memory of the accident that happened without warning while the trio was traveling to Temple to meet with officials from Temple College and Scott & White Hospital about starting up a distance education Radiologic Technology Program in Temple.

The day had been rainy and turned progressively stormier as the MCC employees traveled south on I-35 en route to the meeting. It was Dobelbower's 25th wedding anniversary and her husband, John, was surprising her that evening with a shiny new red Corvette as an anniversary gift. They planned to celebrate with a special din-



Brenda Dobelbower was the director of the Radiologic Technology Program.



Janice Roberson was the division director of health sciences.



Donnie Hagan, director of program review and assessment and former dean of workforce education

ner and to finally open a bottle of champagne from their wedding reception, which they had saved for a quarter of a century, John Dobelbower told the *Waco Tribune-Herald* in an Oct. 19, 2003, article. The champagne would not get opened that horrible night as the families of Dobelbower and Roberson learned of their deaths.

The wreck occurred eight miles south of Waco near Hewitt after the northbound bus crossed the rain-slicked highway median and ran head on into oncoming traffic and collided with the black sports utility vehicle driven by Dobelbower. Roberson was in the front passenger seat, and Hagan was riding in the back seat. Hagan's family, including his wife, Cathy, rushed to the hospital to sit vigil and were accompanied by Dr. Michaelis and other administrators at Hillcrest Baptist Medical Center for hours as surgeons worked to save his life. Hagan suffered internal injuries and a broken back and shoulder. He eventually returned to work at MCC and, in 2006, was working for Vice President Paul Illich,

Vice President Johnette McKown said the accident and its effect on the campus was the worst she had experienced during her 18 years at the college. "To me, that was the darkest day and nothing really comes close to that," she said. Just weeks after the accident, Hagan, a 17-year employee of MCC, asked McKown to thank the MCC Board of Trustees on his behalf. At a March 4, 2003, board meeting, McKown told the board, "Dean Hagan asked me to thank the Board of Trustees for their support and to let them know that it has been overwhelming to him and his wife to see how the MCC family has responded to the whole incident." At that board meeting, Dr. Michaelis said, "The past month had been an extremely difficult month for the entire college with the loss of two employees, Brenda Dobelbower and Janice Roberson. Both women were wonderful employees and human beings. Their loss will be felt by many individuals."

Roberson had been a 31-year employee of MCC and was head of the health sciences.



During her tenure she had developed at least six of the 10 health careers programs taught at MCC at that time. Dobelbower ran the radiologic technology program and had worked for MCC for 27 years. Both were firmly entwined in the campus fiber.

Their loss drew reaction not only from the campus community but from the Central Texas community, Patterson said. "In the face of that tragedy, we bonded like I've never seen a group of 600-plus people bond. I didn't know such a dynamic was possible. On the street and in the community, people would stop you and ask 'How's Donnie doing?' as if they felt like Donnie Hagan was a personal friend of theirs and they, too, were a member of the community of MCC ... because of the sensitive handling of that situation by the administration and the media, the

community felt for MCC like never before."

A couple years after the accident, Dr. Michaelis, McKown and Patterson spoke at a national conference on crisis management and recalled the Valentine's Day bus crash of 2003. Patterson told the crowd: "We will never replace what we have lost. That is impossible. But we will move ahead. Never the same — a bit sadder and a bit wiser — and ultimately more closely knit than before."

A Failed Bond Election — A First for MCC

Forty years after the first bond election in 1965, which formed the college, administrators at MCC realized a desperate need to hold another bond election in 2005 to meet growing student and faculty demands. Enrollment had reached an all-time high in the spring of 2005 of 8,500 students. The campus, originally built in 1969, had been designed to hold only 1,750 students. Even with renovations made over the years, the buildings were designed to accommodate no more than 3,500 students. Current rolls far exceeded that figure. If enrollment rates continued at that clip, the college was surely expected to exceed 10,000 students by 2015. Once again the board realized they needed to ask voters for more money to expand, so the campus could continue to grow.

Ironically, it was the expansion of the Learning Technology Center, the completion of the Community Services Center, the acquisition of the Highlander Ranch, and the addition of the University Center — all accomplished under Dr. Michaelis' leadership and funded partly through the \$17.95 million bond election in 1999 — that led to the population explosion at the college. His goal to create a buzz had worked almost too well, said Kim Patterson, former director of communications and marketing.

"We did create our own monster, in a way, because people came and didn't leave. They'd tie up parking spaces all day, and with growth comes growing pains," she said, referring to a lack of parking spaces, classroom space and faculty offices.

On Jan. 24, 2005, the board voted to hold a bond election requesting taxpayers to approve an additional \$73.4 million for the college to begin expansion plans. This was the biggest bond package ever presented to McLennan County voters.

MCC expansion hopes go before voters today

College awaits community's decision on bond package

By Mike Anderson
Tribune-Herald staff writer

McLennan County voters are set to head to the polls today to cast their ballots on a \$73.45 million bond package for construction projects at McLennan Community College. MCC officials say they're hopeful residents will approve the package, which would fund construction of three new buildings, renovate several others, and build additional roads, sidewalks and parking spaces.

College boosters have spoken to dozens of local groups in recent weeks about the need to enlarge the campus, saying the nearly 40-year-old college was built for a population of 3,500.

■ Polling places for today's election/5A

Enrollment reached a record 8,543 this and, by the college's most conservative estimate, student population could increase to 12,000 in a decade.

"From my perspective, I think we have done a good job as possible to provide information for the future, and we wait for the community to decide," MCC Chairman Dennis Michaelis said on the eve of the election. "But regardless of what that decision is, we're going to continue to provide the best environment we can."

At the close of early voting Friday, 10,000 voters had cast ballots on the bond package.

See ELECTION, Page 3

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in research, planning and effectiveness where his wife also works. But the aftermath never escapes him.

"I had two friends that died within reach of me," Hagan told the *Waco Tribune-Herald* in a March 25, 2003, article. "There are a lot of wonderful people hurting, and a lot of families out there mourning."

"Two fabulous people died and it permanently affected another one, Donnie Hagan. It impacted the psyche of the college forever," Dr. Michaelis said. "It was like losing a family member with Brenda and Janice. ... It was one of those very dark days, and I'm proud of our college for the way people responded."

A memorial service was held in The Highlands gym on Feb. 18. There was not an empty seat or a dry eye in the stadium. Executive

At the time, courses were filling up within a week of registration opening and science courses were closing within 24 to 48 hours. Classes were being held anywhere on campus where crowds could gather. A kitchen in the Student Center was converted into a science lab and more electronic courses were offered to limit students on campus. Still, there were no signs of slowing enrollment.

A 2005 community survey conducted by the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness showed favorable support by the community for the college. Ninety-nine percent of respondents reported they strongly agreed that the college's workforce education programs were of high quality and 99 percent surveyed said that the MCC transfer programs were of high quality. In addition, the survey found that two-thirds of respondents would be in favor of an increase in the college's local tax rate in order to maintain the college's current level of services, and 78 percent were in favor of a tuition increase to maintain programs and services.

So administrators and a newly formed Friends of MCC campaign committee thought

the election would pass with no problem like the 1999 bond election had before.

They were quite wrong.

The bond failed by 260 votes. The final crushing tally was 3,059 to 2,799, or 52.22 percent against to 47.77 percent in favor. Those who were openly vocal about their opposition to the bond tended to be senior citizens who voiced concerns about higher property taxes. Another contributing issue was low voter turnout. The election drew only 5,858 voters from McLennan County to the polls, out of 130,000 registered voters.

"We all took it for granted and just assumed that it would pass, and there was a very low voter turnout," said Bill Goss, who was on the Friends of MCC campaign committee in 2005. "It was just a shame that so few people voted. We felt like if we had a larger turnout, then the community could have expressed their true feelings about MCC."

The election stunned the campus and shook the administration.

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"We knew the community liked us, according to the survey, and we'd gone from a 97 percent approval rating to a 99 percent approval rating. We felt like we were doing things the community wanted," Patterson said. "I felt like it was a very valid bond package. ... To us, who had been in the middle of all this and had witnessed so much growth, it seemed perfectly logical to us. But from the community's perspective, they felt that was a lot of money."

The administration put their best face forward. Dr. Michaelis issued the following statement a day after the failed election:

"We recognize that the current climate among taxpayers is apparently not conducive to supporting a bond issue of this size. Of course, all of us involved were surprised by the close vote and disappointed in the results, but the voters have spoken and we respect their wishes. ... We don't see this as indicative of a lack of support for what we do here at MCC."

Publicly, the response was everything it should have been. Privately, however, on the fourth floor of the Administration building where Dr. Michaelis and the vice presidents have offices, the mood was somber.

"He was disappointed. Anyone would be. All of us were somewhat surprised," Executive Vice President McKown said. "People were starting to get very concerned about their taxes going up, and there were concerns about how much money it was and misconceptions about the taxes. We didn't do as thorough a job of getting the message out ... because everyone thought it would pass."

In the ensuing weeks, community leaders, citizens and business executives expressed bewilderment about the failed election to Dr. Michaelis and his staff. Perhaps the most frustrating comments came from those who said they had not voted because they assumed the measure would easily pass. Greater Waco Chamber of Commerce President Jim Vaughan had lobbied for the bond package and openly expressed his frustration at voters. "I think there are people who will not find getting a local education affordable, or it will take them longer because the classes they want are full," Vaughan told the *Waco Tribune-Herald* in a March 31, 2005, article.

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Sheehy and other board members tried to learn from the experience and began strategizing and formulating plans for another attempt. "We learned you can't hold a bond election separately from Election Day," Sheehy said later.

"We learned that times indeed had changed," Patterson said. In the six years since

the 1999 MCC bond election, there had been several other bond elections requesting additional tax funds from McLennan County voters, including Midway Independent School District, Waco Independent School District, the Cameron Park Zoo, and Heart O' Texas Fairgrounds.

But Patterson believes what caused the most grief among residents during that time was when the County Appraisal District conducted a reappraisal of all properties, which caused most homeowners' property taxes to go up. "Voters were much more aware of bond elections and likely to vote against tax increases of any kind," Patterson said. "Plus the fact that the 2005 [MCC] bond was the largest amount ever proposed in the county's history, pretty much doomed it."

A Successful 2006 Bond Election

Fourteen months after the failed bond election of March 2005, the campus was still in need of funds to expand to meet the demands of its 7,950 students. During that time, Dr. Michaelis and his staff had carefully evaluated the mistakes made during the failed campaign. On Aug. 22, 2006, the board voted to call another bond election requesting \$74.5 million from taxpayers — the largest bond package presented to voters in the history of McLennan County to date. This time the election would be held in conjunction with a general election on Nov. 7, 2006, in the hopes of drawing out more voters.

Although the amount requested from taxpayers was \$1.1 million more than the 2005 bond package, the new bond package would actually provide less on campus than the 2005 package due to rising construction costs, spiraling gas prices, and an economic downturn that was gripping the country. The proposed size of the Emergency Services Training Center and Science building each were reduced by 5,000 square feet, and building locations were changed to save money. The bond package would cost the average homeowner \$36 per year additional in taxes for a property valued at \$95,733.

This time the administration was taking no chances on a loss. The Friends of MCC Committee was again formed. Local commercial real estate executive Bill Goss was chairman and Ray Perry, a former Board of Trustees member who served from 1978 until 1990, was treasurer.

Voters Against MCC Tax Hike

McLennan County voters on Tuesday defeated a proposed \$73.45 million bond package for construction projects at McLennan Community College.

In a light turnout, the issue went down 3,059 against, to 2,799 for the proposal and the necessary taxation. At 6:30 p.m., only 56 votes had been cast.

Voters turn down MCC bond issue

By Mike Anderson
Tribune-Herald staff writer

A \$73.45 million bond package for construction projects at McLennan Community College was defeated Tuesday by a margin of 260 votes.

McLennan County residents voted against the package by a vote of 3,059 to 2,799, or 52.22 percent to 47.78. At the polls' close at 7 p.m., the bond appeared to have a sizable

Plan for construction projects loses by 260 votes

lead, with early voting totals showing 68.54 percent, or 1,144 voters, approving the bond, according to the McLennan County Elections Office. But as night wore on and Tuesday's votes were counted,

that advantage quickly crumbled. An hour later, with half of 42 precincts reporting, the margin had tightened to 57.76 percent for the package and 42.24 percent against.

The contest was nearly a dead heat by 8:30 p.m., when all but two precincts had been counted, showing bond approval votes 50.22 percent — at that point just

See MCC, Page 6A

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Orange and blue wristbands were worn by many supporters of the 2006 MCC bond election.

"We called on local businesses, and our primary focus was the financial community — the banks and credit unions in town were the lead donors — and then we followed up with various businesses in town." — Bill Goss

The committee totaled 66 members — the largest ever — and included some of the most influential and prominent business executives and community leaders from Central Texas. Together, they canvassed the county expounding the need for voters to approve the bond package. "We called on local businesses, and our primary focus was the financial community — the banks and credit unions in town were the lead donors — and then we followed up with various businesses in town," said Goss, who had been a student at MCC from 1970 to 1972. "We all benefit every day from the programs that MCC has put into place. The Friends of MCC wanted to get that word out and make everyone aware of the positive benefits that MCC brings to the community."

Altogether they raised about \$175,000 — an astounding \$155,000 more than was raised in 2005, committee treasurer Perry said. At least six banks and two credit unions each gave \$10,000, he said. "We learned from the last election [in 2005] that we couldn't just let it go; we had to make something happen. So we raised lots of money. ... It was unbelievable how generous they were," Perry said. "We had enough money to really put out a campaign."

Their slogan was "Grow MCC for the Greater Good!" and they flooded voters with their message via mailers, posters, bulletin boards and throughout the print and electronic media. One letter to voters read:

"We wonder — what would our community be like now if, in 1965, the voters had been unwilling to pass the first bond that established McLennan Community College. This extraordinary resource has trained our workforce and kept them here at home, which in turn, has helped the county attract new industries. What will our community look like 10 or 20 years out if we don't protect the future of MCC now? ... Lack of available space threatens the college's ability to meet demand. Your support of this bond will bring remedies ... Join us in voting Yes on November 7."

Tensions were high on election night as Dr. Michaelis, along with a couple hundred supporters and committee members, gathered at the Waco Regional Tennis Center near the college to await the voting results. Although most felt certain it would pass, this time no one was going to take anything for granted. Chatter prevailed about how much MCC has given to the community. The question on most minds was whether the community would give back to MCC.

As the night wore on, Paul Illich, who ran the Office of institutional effectiveness and planning, updated those assembled as voting results became available.

Results from early voting returns showed MCC winning 2-to-1, or 65 percent to 35 percent. But Illich cautioned that most early voting results included those cast by students at MCC, which had held a polling location on campus. By 9 p.m. victory was declared to a roaring crowd. The total vote tally was 30,794 in favor and 16,238 against.

"It really is ... of historic proportions that people have affirmed what MCC is doing and what it means for the community and the role that we need to play in the coming years," a jubilant Dr. Michaelis said just moments after learning that they had won with 65 percent of votes in favor of the bond. "There is a very bright future, and it's not just for faculty and employees and staff. It's for students and for the opportunities this affords all who live in and who love McLennan County and Central Texas."



MCC Nov. 7, 2006
Bond Election — Fact
at a Glance



Victory for MCC, us

Congratulations go to officials with McLennan Community College responsible for the overwhelming approval of a much-needed \$74.5 million bond proposal. A similar bond proposal lost in 2005 by only 260 votes in a stand-alone election in which only 4.6 percent of voters bothered to turn out. This time around, MCC officials scheduled the bond

proposal with a general election that included a number of hotly contested races. MCC officials also made sure voters understood the bonds were an important investment in the county's economy and quality of life. When the final votes were counted Tuesday night, voters approved the bonds by a stunning 65 percent margin. Good job.

Waco Tribune-Herald LOCAL & TEXAS

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More news on wacotrib.com

2nd time's a charm for MCC bond

County voters agree to pony up \$74.5 million for college's growth

By Tim Woods
Tribune-Herald staff writer

McLennan Community College officials related with the news that voters had their \$74.5 million bond proposal approved.

nis Michaelis said. "I think it means that we will be able to continue to provide for the additional needs and the anticipated growth of MCC for many years to come." It was the second time in less than two years that the school held a bond election. Voters rejected a similar proposal in March 2005 by a narrow margin.

MCC officials announced in August that they were placing the bond proposal on November's ballot in hopes that a larger voter turnout than the March 2005 stand-alone election would bring a positive result. Friends of MCC organized a campaign to encourage voters to



Nell Hawkins, MCC president Dennis Michaelis and Glenda Strum (from left) react to national poll results at an election party at Waco Regional Tennis Center. Voter passed MCC \$74.5 million bond initiative. Staff photo — Jesse Yau

the Future

Wrapping Up and Going On

Winning the 2006 bond election was a highlight of the Michaelis administration — one that shall live in the annals of the college's history. It represented the tenacity, energy and determination that Dr. Michaelis has brought to the college since he became president in 1988. It also represented how he rallied support from a community that was eager to give back to a college that has given so much to Central Texas.

"He's always been one of the people in the state who have been right on top of [education]

he does," said Lisa Wilhelmi, director of community relations. "I've heard him several times say, 'We need to always remember why we're doing these things,' because you get so involved in the little details that you lose sight, and he'll bring us back to why we're doing this: It's not for us. It's not for a legacy. It's for the students here now, and later on, and for the community."

But Dr. Michaelis doesn't rest on his laurels. Following the bond election, he immediately began to prepare for the future at MCC — a future that is sure to be filled with new buildings

"While it's great to celebrate, we're going to smile and be happy that the election has had a successful conclusion, but then we're going to roll up our sleeves and get to work. The next few years are going to be busy and exciting to say the least. So, get ready and hang on for this next great adventure!"

— Dr. Michaelis

and an advocate for it, and he has done a good job at it, as was evident by the bond election that passed," said Texas state Rep. Jim Dunnam, D-Waco, whose constituents include McLennan County. "That doesn't just happen every day. You have to have someone who is a goodwill ambassador who is out in the community promoting the issues."

Dunnam, who has served in the Texas House of Representatives since 1996, has led five successful campaigns himself and knows how difficult it is to reach voters. He credits Dr. Michaelis' tireless energy and enthusiasm and devotion to MCC for helping to lead it forward and helping the school to evolve.

"He's an irrepresible person," said former MCC spokeswoman Kim Patterson. "When you get around him and he has his mind on something, you just want to get in there and do it and make it happen, not to please him, but just because it's so darn fun. His energy is infectious."

"Everyone knows him out in the community. There are a lot of businessmen and businesswomen who have great respect for him and what

and much more space. The day after the election he issued the following statement:

"While it's great to celebrate, we're going to smile and be happy that the election has had a successful conclusion, but then we're going to roll up our sleeves and get to work. The next few years are going to be busy and exciting to say the least. So, get ready and hang on for this next great adventure!"



Left to Right:
Proposed plans of the
Classroom building,
Science building and
regional emergency
services training center

Construction begins
on campus in 2007.

The passage of the \$74.5 million bond election by McLennan County voters in November 2006 ensures McLennan Community College a bright and promising future that includes the construction of two new buildings on campus: a Science building and a Classroom building.

The money also opened talks with Waco city officials that led to the planned construction of an extensive regional emergency services training center that the college announced it would build in conjunction with the city of Waco to train emergency personnel throughout Central Texas. In June 2007, MCC President Dr. Dennis Michaelis announced that, pending approval of the Waco City Council and the MCC Board of Trustees, the regional training center would be located on city-owned land near the Waco Regional Airport and would provide fire, police and paramedic training services for towns and municipalities throughout McLennan County and Central Texas. This marked the first time that the college had negotiated directly with the city of Waco to help train Waco's large police force, and it offered further evidence of the growing relationship and evolving trust between the city and MCC.

"We believe this is a very important milestone for McLennan County, not just McLennan Community College or the city of Waco but ... in

terms of being able to provide services to the citizens of the entire county and maximizing the resources that all of us have," Dr. Michaelis said at a June 6, 2007, press conference, which was attended by several Central Texas leaders, including Waco Mayor Virginia DuPuy, Waco City Manager Larry Groth and Waco Police Chief Alberto Melis.

"Without question this will become an absolute center of excellence for public safety training," Groth said. "And what that will do for us is to put a lot of qualified people in our com-

"It is an exciting time to be at MCC, and it will take all of us to make this happen."

— Dr. Michaelis

munity, and we'll have the opportunity to keep them here. I salute MCC for their efforts."

Construction on the training center is slated to begin in January 2008 and should be completed by February 2009. Initial construction is expected to cost \$11.5 million, and plans include a two-story training center and a separate six-story fire burn tower.

The Science and Classroom buildings are slated to be built by May 2009 at an estimated cost of \$45 million. In addition, several existing buildings will be renovated, and campus parking



Dr. Dennis Michaelis,
MCC president



Johnette McKown,
executive vice president



Jack Schneider,
vice president of instruction

and roads will be upgraded by December 2009 for an additional \$21.3 million.

"It is an exciting time to be at MCC, and it will take all of us to make this happen," Dr. Michaelis wrote in a March 2007 memo to faculty and staff just as bulldozers began digging up ground to expand a parking lot near the existing Science building. "We are well underway with our bond projects, and no one will be left untouched in some way."

"This bond election is going to virtually change the face of the college and change the future of the college because it's going to provide a lot more opportunities for us to serve students better," Executive Vice President Johnette McKown said. "It's going to allow us to raise the bar on the way we do things and give us more space, so people can take the classes they need. ... The facilities of the future will provide ... more of a sense of community, and that's what we're trying to do."

"We are going to be able to expand our programs and offerings to meet what must be the continuing growth of the needs within the community," said Vice President of Instruction Jack Schneider.

Board members said the bond passage affirmed the community's commitment and dedication to MCC.

"Winning the bond election was so important because we need new equipment. We need new buildings and parking spaces. We need so much for the students," said longtime Board of Trustee member Pauline Chavez, who has served since 1985. Now, "the possibilities are virtually endless," added K. Paul Holt, who is the newest board member, having joined in 1999.

Two months after voters passed the bond package, MCC administrators received more good news when the college's Standard & Poor credit rating was improved to AA; Moody's Investors Service affirmed its rating for MCC at Aa3. As a result, the college's tax rate will be nearly 1 cent lower than expected, Matt Boles of RBC Capital Markets reported to the MCC Board of Trustees on Jan. 30, 2007. This will result in a reduction of \$25.5 million over the life of the bonds, much more than originally projected for McLennan County taxpayers because of more favorable interest rates, Boles said.



Sent: Thu 3/8/2007 11:34 AM
From: Dennis Michaelis
To: everybody
Cc:
Subject: Construction Update

Good morning!
I wanted to be sure everyone is fully informed as we proceed down the road of beginning the bond projects. We are on schedule and on target, and you will soon see results from the planning.
The first bulldozers should arrive on campus mid-March to begin preparing for the expansion of the Science Building parking lot, Lot H. When complete, we will have 105 additional parking spaces. This is very important because when construction of the new Science Building begins, we will lose part of Lot H for "lay down space" for construction material. The new spaces will help offset those we lose. There will be dump trucks and heavy equipment traveling campus roads during construction, so please be very careful when walking or driving and realize that it takes a lot of stopping space to bring them to a halt.
The Powell Street parking lot, relocated jogging track, and the reconfiguring of Highlander Drive are all on schedule to be completed this summer. This will give us a couple of hundred new parking spots and relocate the jogging track to the area behind the Physical Plant. The track will be a quarter mile and will have lights, a security camera, and an emergency call box in the area. Highlander Drive will be reconfigured to make room for the new classroom building which is on schedule to begin construction in September. I've seen a 3-D dimension of the building, and it will be very exciting.
Among the infrastructure projects that are on schedule to be completed this summer is the Central Plant remodel which includes a new cooling tower, new electrical service, replacement of underground chill water piping. These changes will not be like the extensive campus-wide digging that we did a number of years ago. What is really important is that the changes will allow us to add the new science and classroom buildings to the central plant which will save us energy dollars. Other projects this summer include PAC, Lecture Hall, and Faculty Office buildings HVAC retrofits. During these retrofits, we will be installing energy efficient lighting, data communication wiring, and updated computerized controls. These HVAC renovations will include environmental controls that will provide great indoor air quality with a reduced energy cost. What this also means is that people who typically are in the PAC, Lecture Hall and Lecture Hall Annex, and the Faculty Office Buildings will have to find another place to reside during the summer months.
The Science Building is on schedule to begin construction in November. We recently completed the process of selecting a Construction Manager at Risk for this project and are in the negotiation stage. Using a construction manager is a new method of construction for us, and it basically employs the contractor earlier to work with the architect on building design and implementation.
Finally, the three new buildings on campus are scheduled to be LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) projects. This concept is basically the "green" building or sustainability concept which is geared for the best interior air quality, the highest energy efficiency, and planning for the future.
As you can see, we are well underway with our bond projects, and no one will be left untouched in some way. It is an exciting time to be at MCC, and it will take all of us to make this happen.
Dennis—

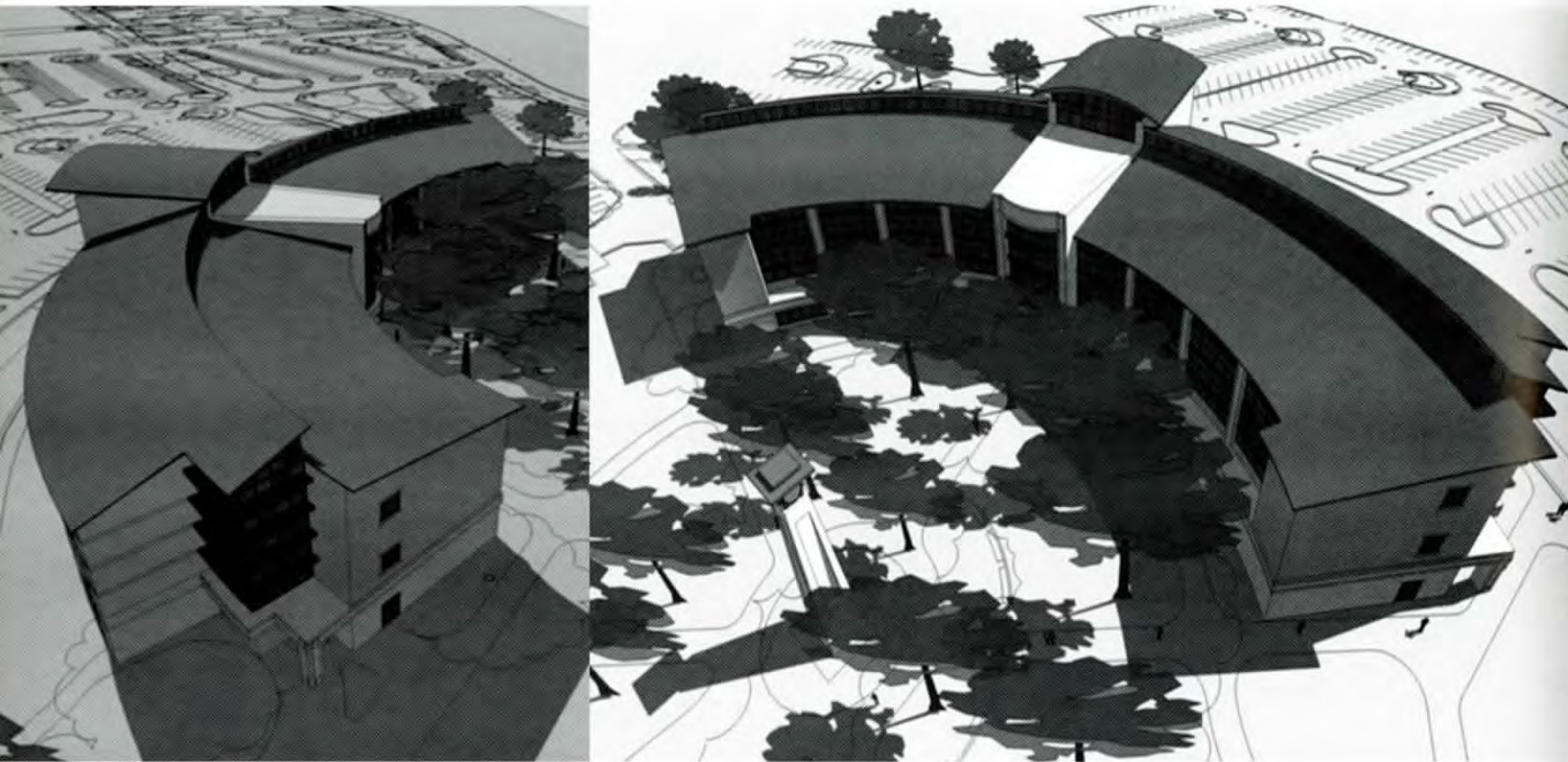
Master plan for the main campus

The mass construction projects will be implemented in phases, staggering construction to allow faculty and staff to switch from temporary facilities to the new buildings as they become available in the upcoming years.

The new Classroom and Science buildings are slated to be energy-efficient "green buildings," also known as LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) buildings under the Green Building Rating System by the U.S. Green Building Council. "This concept is basically the 'green' building or sustainability concept which is geared for the best interior air quality, the highest energy efficiency and planning for the future," Dr. Michaelis wrote in a March 2007 memo.

To produce LEED buildings, the architects

and construction managers plan to implement as many energy-efficient measures and recycle as much material as possible during the construction process. This includes mulching cut-down trees and possibly reusing some of the lumber, installing plenty of windows to use natural lighting, and putting in a system to capture rainwater. To comply with LEED standards, the buildings also will be accessible to public transportation, have plenty of bicycle racks, and offer special parking spaces for hybrid cars and carpools to promote energy conservation. Some of the furniture inside the buildings also will be "green furniture," meaning it is made from recycled products. "There is a lot that you can do to make the buildings environmentally friendly," Dr. Michaelis said.



“We are being very proactive in everything we are doing about these new facilities to make them sustainable and make them student-friendly.”

— *Johnette McKown*



“It is more comprehensive than just providing an energy-efficient building,” McKown said. “Being a LEED building is really part of an entire sustainability movement, which the college is really embracing right now.”

Dr. Michaelis and McKown were among a group of administrators who toured several colleges throughout the country to get architectural and design ideas for the new buildings. Immediately following the bond passage, the “construction team” was dispersed on several visits to view buildings at the University of Notre Dame near South Bend, Ind.; Albion College in Albion, Mich.; the University of California, Santa Barbara; Mt. San Antonio College in Walnut, Calif.; Valencia Community College in Orlando, Fla.; and Indian River Community College in Fort Pierce, Fla. The team also toured several Texas colleges, including Baylor University’s new Science building in Waco, St.

Edward’s University in Austin, Kingwood College in Houston, Texas A&M University — Commerce and the University of North Texas Dallas Campus.

Unlike the design process for the Learning Technology Center — which was planned in 2001 based on a library building that Dr. Michaelis, McKown and former Vice President Jay Box toured at George Mason University in Fairfax, Va. — these recent trips did not yield a specific design that the team wanted to emulate for the new buildings. Instead, the group will use collective ideas gathered from the various tours to create buildings unique to MCC.

“We are being very proactive in everything we are doing about these new facilities to make them sustainable and make them student-friendly,” McKown said.

“The focus is to provide as much instructional space as possible,” said Visual and Performing Arts Director Donald Balmos, who is on the construction team.

“We’re going to be designing and building these buildings to really accommodate learning opportunities for students both in the traditional classrooms and in informal settings,” Vice President Schneider said. “We have some plans that will be exciting for students and faculty.”

New Classroom Building

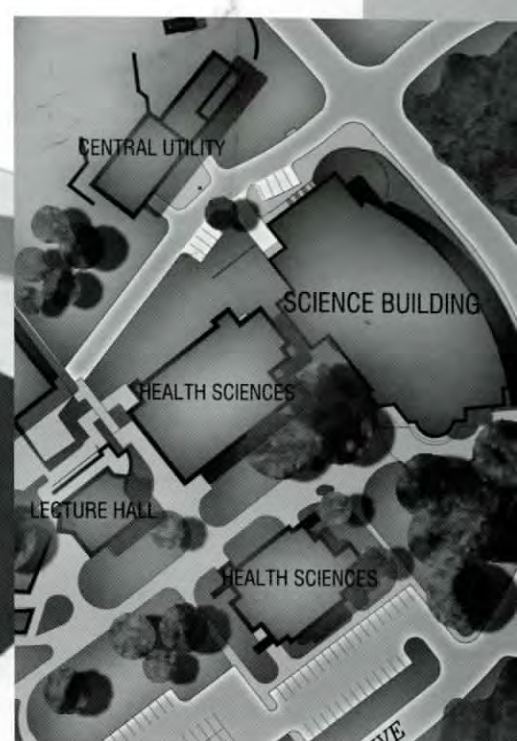
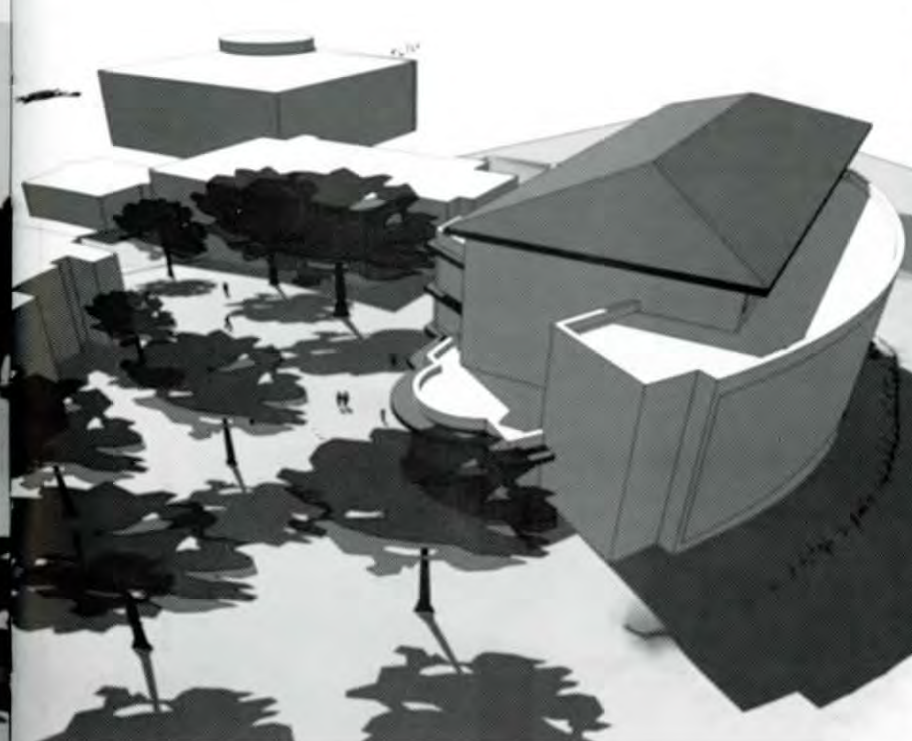
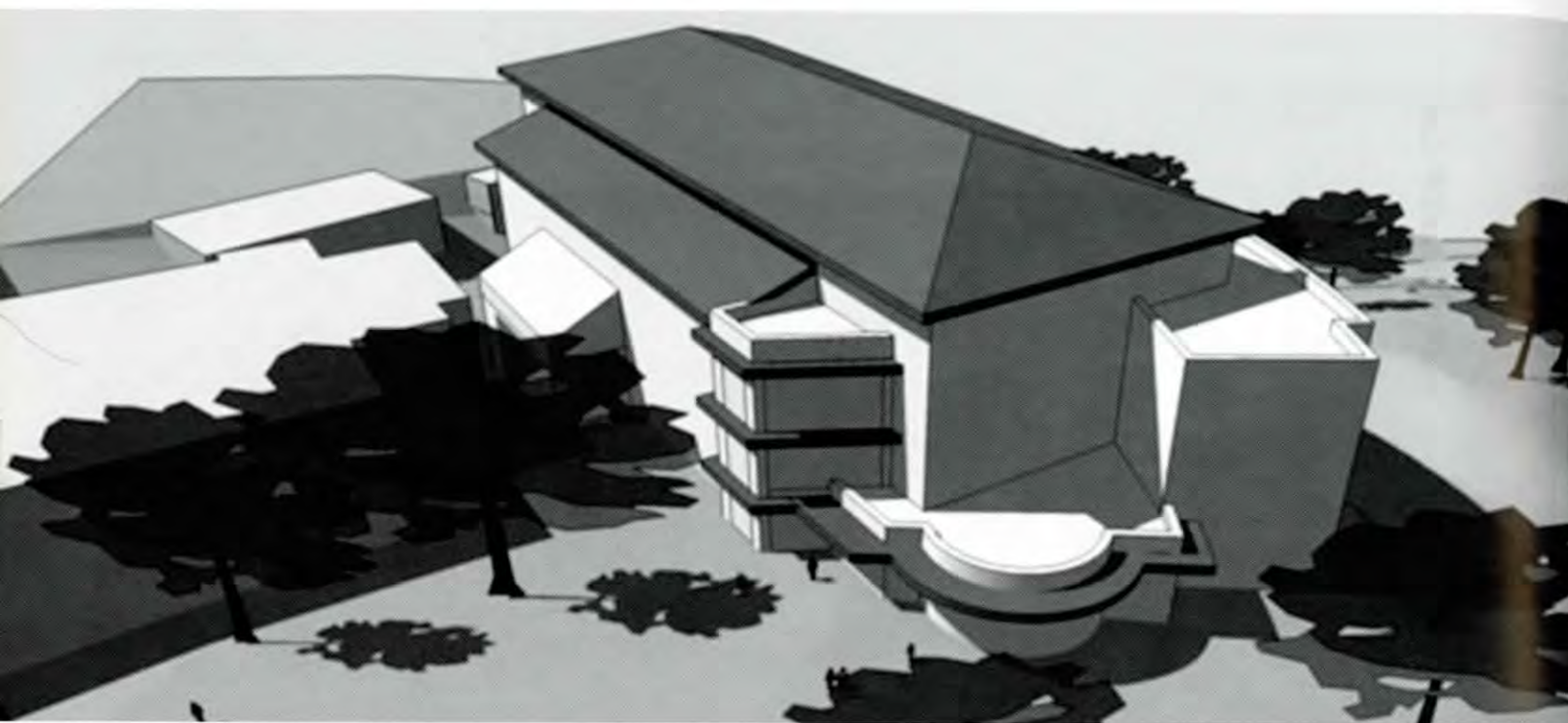
The first building scheduled for construction is the new Classroom building, a three-story, 93,600-square-foot structure that is expected to cost about \$16.5 million. Construction is scheduled to begin in September 2007 and should be completed by November 2008. The Classroom building is being designed in a curved shape in order to preserve a wall of majestic oak trees that has stood on the campus for nearly 40 years. The building will have a wall of glass on one side that faces the picturesque quad, and it will mirror the round rotunda of the adjacent Learning Technology Center. “There will be a major walkway or a mall between the buildings. The design ties into the design of the LTC,” Balmos said.

The Classroom building will feature a 5,000-square-foot bookstore on the first floor, a 100-seat lecture hall, several soft seating areas where students can gather and study, and small conference rooms for meetings. The second and third floors will house faculty offices “with beautiful views,” Balmos said. The University Center will move into that building, allowing more day classes for four-year and graduate degrees to be offered from some of the partnering institutions. Altogether, the new Classroom building is expected to provide 40 faculty offices, 30 classrooms with rough-

ly 1,000 square feet per room, several student study areas and a snack area. The building will feature a curved roof to allow additional light, Balmos said, and wide-open stairwells that encourage walking. It is being designed by the Waco architecture firm of RBDR P.L.L.C.

The Classroom building is being designed in an oval shape in order to preserve a wall of majestic oak trees that has stood on the campus for nearly 40 years.

Left to Right:
Classroom building
designs



New Science Building

Just two months after the ground breaking on the new Classroom building, construction is slated to begin on the new Science building, in November 2007. This building will not only offer relief to the crowded and congested core science classes and open up more slots for those courses, but it is expected to be a crowning highlight of the campus once completed in May 2009. The 93,000-square-foot, three-story building is expected to cost \$28.5 million and will house the biology, chemistry, geology, physics and medical lab technology departments.

Aside from its aesthetic beauty within the campus core, the Science building promises to be the most technologically up-to-date building at MCC.

"The new Science building will allow us to expand all of our science programs, which will in turn allow us to expand some of our health sciences programs," Vice President Schneider said.

"Getting a new science building on the ground is paramount because that's been the bottleneck preventing us from really being able to do

some more things," said board member K. Paul Holt. "We're teaching science everywhere, even in the old Student Center. Getting that new Science building is paramount to the future of all the health professions in our community."

"We definitely need a new Science building," said chemistry instructor Joe Zajicek, who is the sole remaining charter faculty member on staff and has taught in the same Science building since it opened in 1969. "We also need to upgrade our equipment. We have equipment that has been here for 35-plus years. We don't see people driving automobiles that are 35 years old that are still functioning."

The Science building also will be by far the most complicated building to design and implement, Dr. Michaelis said. RBDR architect Bernadette Hookham will be the lead architect; the firm of Harrison, Walker and Harper will be the construction manager at risk. Rather than employing a general contractor, the construction manager at risk will work closely with the architect early on to help design parts of the building for maximum energy and construction cost efficiency, Dr. Michaelis explained. RBDR also has hired the San Diego-based architecture firm of Research Facilities Design, which specializes in designing science buildings for colleges. Together,

they will design the extensive laboratories complete with running and distilled water, chemical baths, magnifying equipment, and a myriad of chemical experimentation equipment. The building is expected to include 17 offices, 12 classrooms, 14 laboratories, a greenhouse, and several student common areas, Balmos said.

The Science building will be located near the current Science and Health Sciences buildings and will be built around a bluff of majestic trees. In order to save as many trees as possible, a student drop-off area will be added close to the building with a parking lot built farther off. "We've tried to preserve trees as much as we can," McKown said.

The administration's efforts to save trees appears to be a repeat of what charter Board of Trustee Chairman Henry Griffin and early MCC landscape architect Hal Stringer did back in the late 1960s when the main campus was first built. At that time, they personally transplanted trees that were in the construction zone and tried to position buildings so as to disturb the fewest number of trees. Now, the current administration is trying in earnest to continue that preservation. "We know the board is committed to saving as many trees [as possible] and keeping the integrity of the campus," Balmos said.

Aside from its aesthetic beauty within the campus core, the Science building promises to be the most technologically up-to-date building at MCC. "It will be a 2015 building. We'll build it as far into the future as is practicable," Dr. Michaelis vowed. "No one knows the future, but as we're building all these buildings, we really are looking to the future and especially with regard to the incorporation of technology. We're trying to keep in mind the concept that technology is going to change, and it's going to change the way we think and do things and how can we build the building to accommodate that."

The new Science building will be three times bigger than the current 30,000-square-foot Science building. The two-story, 37-year-old Science building is slated to be renovated and converted into a new Health Sciences building for health career courses at an estimated cost of \$4.2 million. Renovations are planned to begin after the new Science building is opened in June 2009. The existing Health Careers building also is scheduled to be renovated at a cost of \$2.7 million to accommodate more health career courses. The renovations are set to begin in June 2009 and will entail reuniting certain course curriculums and their laboratories, such as the nursing lab, which will be moved back onto the main campus

Left to Right:
New Science building
designs

from the Community Services Center. One of the renovated buildings also will house the new surgical technology program, which is scheduled to begin at MCC in fall 2007 in conjunction with Providence Health Center and Hillcrest Baptist Medical Center. Renovations to both the Health Careers building and old Science building are expected to be completed by November 2009.

Workforce Education Dean Ricardo Solis

hopes that eventually several simulated laboratories for the various health care fields will be built, including a respiratory technology laboratory, surgical technology laboratory and medical technician laboratory in the renovated Health Careers building. This would allow students to get working experience in their chosen fields.

"It is something that would allow the comingling of different departments and faculty and would almost create a simulation of what a real hospital would be like, and I really like that idea a lot," Vice President Schneider said.

MCC partnership pays off

Emergency services training center a result of collaboration

Lives and property in McLennan County are about to receive an extra measure of protection. It would be possible only through collaboration.

The addition is a new \$11.5 million regional emergency services training center. The center will train all police, fire and emergency personnel for McLennan County municipalities.

Multiple benefits will flow from the construction of the facility. None of the benefits would have been possible, however, had it not been for the foresight and persistence of McLennan Community College officials who included upgraded emergency training services in a bond election approved last year.

MCC already provided a valuable service for McLennan County by producing trained and qualified men and women who make careers in fire fighting, emergency medical technicians and in law enforcement.

When the MCC proposal to build a new emergency services training center narrowly failed in a 2005 bond election, MCC officials that included the issue in a second bond election that knowledgeable voters approved overwhelmingly last November.

The original concept called for an \$8.795 million emergency services training facility at MCC in cooperation with the city and county.

Now, thanks to the partnership, an \$11.5 million regional training center will be on 40 acres off Steinbeck Bend Drive near the Waco Regional Airport.

MCC will fund \$8.8 million of it. Another \$2.7 million will be raised internally or through private donations.

When completed by February 2009, it will serve 19 or 20 area police departments and 27 fire departments.

Current local police and fire training centers will be closed.

The partnership will result in a bigger and better facility that will benefit everyone in McLennan County.

Officials should search for more intergovernmental partnerships.

As pointed out is only slightly more than the \$8.795 million the school had planned to use for an on-campus emergency services training facility.

Growing up

The money also will provide for a bigger facility. The on-campus plans had a 35,000-square-foot

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campus and done a great job," Groth said. "I think the collaboration on this will give us the opportunity to expand that so our horizons are not limited, particularly when you're talking about the needs we have for training."

The additional \$2.7 million for the project falls under the heading of "future development," Michaelis said, and he expects that money to be raised either internally or through private donations.

The money will be well-spent, Michaelis said, because the center will provide the training for 19 or 20 police departments in the county and 27 fire departments. The center also might bring in some funds by providing training on a contract basis for agencies.

McLennan County



MCC president Dennis Michaelis says the \$11.5 million will be well-spent.

training centers will be closed once the new regional center opens. That will free up valuable land along the Brazos River and elsewhere, Groth said.

Sticking around

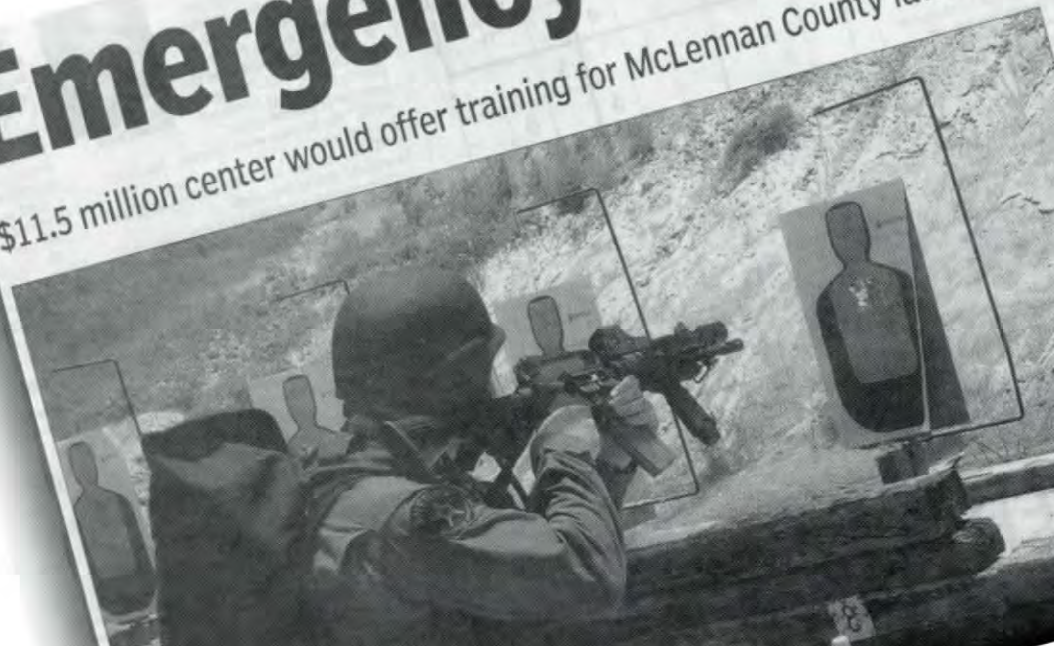
Michaelis said MCC plans to sign an 80-year lease with the city for the training center property and the city will pay for utilities. The amount as not available.

Groth said the center needed before it can begin, but it is expected to break ground in 2008, with completion by 2009.

com

Emergency numbers

\$11.5 million center would offer training for McLennan County lawmen, rescuers



McLennan County Sheriff's Office SWAT members train at the Waco police shooting range Wednesday. The shooting range will be expanded as part of a new training facility.



New Regional Emergency Services Training Center

The announcement in June 2007 that MCC would be partnering with the city of Waco to build a comprehensive regional emergency services training center was a pleasant surprise for many, as the facility will undoubtedly provide an economic boost for McLennan County. Just seven months after the passage of the bond election, Dr. Michaelis and Waco City Manager Larry Groth unveiled plans to build a massive facility that would offer police, fire and emergency medical training for all towns and municipalities within McLennan County and be available to towns throughout Central Texas.

The regional training center is to be located on a 40-acre plot of city-owned land near the Waco Regional Airport. The city of Waco plans to provide a long-term lease to MCC that could span up to 80 years, and the city also will help to offset utility costs on the property, Dr. Michaelis said.

The initial construction, which is expected to begin in January 2008, includes a two-story, 49,000-square-foot training building with a separate six-story burn tower for simulated fires. The center also will include an extensive driving course to practice maneuvering vehicles at high speeds, a shooting range and a mock fire station. Later construction is expected to include a rapid-water rescue facility, mock train derailment site,

rescue scuba training site, and a simulated apartment building and retail shopping complex where police and fire personnel can practice rescues and arrests. The facility also will house the University Center's popular four-year criminal justice program, which is offered through Tarleton State University.

The training center will provide one central facility where all of the emergency first-responders can work and learn together. "We will then be able to cross-train those people as appropriate, and the reason that is important is ... [in] an emergency, all these units respond," Dr. Michaelis said. "They need to be cross-trained to understand what each is doing, so they don't get in each other's way and so they can work together."

Waco City Manager Larry Groth said the tragic events following 9/11 forever changed how municipalities train their first-responders. Terrorism is a very real threat, and towns must work together in preparing for such emergencies, he added. "Times have changed," Groth said. "Training needs continue to accelerate, and it's the kind of thing that we have to make sure our folks are trained in, so this will help everyone — not just the city of Waco, but the citizens of McLennan County."

"This is going to be a feather in the cap for this region, not only this county," said Frank Patterson, emergency management coordinator for Waco and McLennan County. "Ten years ago,

Dr. Michaelis announces the development of a regional emergency services training center at a June 2007 press conference. Representatives from several police, fire and other emergency-response departments across McLennan County show their support.



Larry Groth, Waco city manager



Virginia DuPuy,
Waco mayor

Waco Mayor Virginia DuPuy called the development of the new facility “one of the most significant events” in Central Texas.

who would have thought of terrorist events? We recognize now that no community could stand on its own in a terrorist event so we have to rely on our partners, and so training together will go a long way.”

In 2007, there were 20 police departments and 27 fire departments within McLennan County, and Dr. Michaelis was optimistic that most would seek training services from MCC’s new regional training center. The center “can be a positive thing for all of the taxpayers in our county. So what we’re talking about is a real win-win-win situation,” Dr. Michaelis said.

Groth said that due to limited training resources within McLennan County, many departments had been sending their personnel to Tarrant County in northern Texas for additional training. He said this new regional facility would replace the need to travel and add to the economy of Central Texas by training the workforce here and keeping the dollars in McLennan County. “If we can take care of the absolute needs in our community for safety training and do that together, then we all win,” Groth said.

Waco Police Chief Alberto Melis said the 245 police officers on the Waco force are required to complete at least 40 hours of training every two years, and he is excited to be able to send them to the MCC facility. “The sky is the limit. This is wonderful,” Melis said. “There is no limit to what we can accomplish.”

Waco Mayor Virginia DuPuy called the development of the new facility “one of the most significant events” in Central Texas. She closed the June 6, 2007, press conference by saying “I applaud you. This is absolutely amazing, and it shows how the whole community needs to work together. I applaud MCC.”





Dr. Michaelis
MCC President

Looking Forward

McLennan Community College is certain to undergo substantial physical changes during the next few years, and the student population will undoubtedly continue to increase. However, the college's mission is sure to remain the same: to serve the evolving needs of Central Texas.

Through aggressive workforce education initiatives, challenging and competitive curriculums, community outreach programs, expanded partnerships with four-year institutions, and the generous financial support of the community, the college will achieve far more than its early founders ever envisioned.

"MCC is a pillar of our community, educating thousands of people in Central Texas and contributing immensely to our quality of life."

— U.S. Rep. Chet Edwards

One industry that is sure to continue to expand will be health career fields. MCC already provides a majority of the certified nurses for the region. With the addition of the new surgical technician program and the expansion of laboratories for the respiratory therapy and medical technician programs, the college promises to play a vital role in the health of the region.

"Now we will have the opportunity to serve the health needs of our community and beyond," Vice President of Instruction Jack Schneider vowed.

The University Center also is expected to expand and grow with the addition of the new Classroom building. Thousands of students will be able to attain four-year and graduate degrees by taking day classes through partnering institutions

at MCC. "We're providing opportunity for many adults," Executive Vice President Johnette McKown said. "I'm excited about the University Center and I think the best is yet to come."

And the addition of a regional emergency services training center will certainly help to improve the training provided for first-responders within McLennan County and better provide for the safety of the citizens of Central Texas.

As more people realize the wealth of value that MCC provides, the MCC Foundation hopes donations to the college will soon top \$10 million and will provide countless more scholarships for



future generations.

Programs aimed toward encouraging youth to pursue higher education degrees will undoubtedly continue and expand. More seniors will be tapped to volunteer, and MCC will spearhead and direct their efforts.

"MCC is such an integral part of the community. We have so many people that grow up in Waco and end up going there for at least some period of time," said state Rep. Jim Dunnam, who lives in McGregor and represents McLennan County. "MCC is our school. It's part of the community."

"MCC is a pillar of our community, educating thousands of people in Central Texas and contributing immensely to our quality of life," said U.S. Rep. Chet Edwards, whose constituen-

cy includes McLennan County. "Thanks to a dedicated faculty and staff, MCC has always made a real difference in the lives of countless students and will continue to do so in the years to come because it is a vital force for continued economic development and prosperity in the greater Waco area."

Dr. Michaelis has announced to the Board of Trustees that about the time the dust settles, and all the buildings are completed, he will be stepping down as president of MCC. Whoever succeeds him undoubtedly will inherit a new host of issues and challenges. However, that person also

will inherit a college with a solid foundation that began with the tenacity and dedication of first president Dr. Wilbur Ball and continued with the innovative and creative leadership of Dr. Dennis Michaelis.

Said Dr. Michaelis: "Whomever they hire as president of MCC is going to need to keep ... eyes on the future, because the idea of this college is to continue to serve the community and to serve the community as it changes and as it develops."

Graduates at the
Spring 2007
Commencement
Ceremony

40th Anniversary

McLennan
Community
College 

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Celebrating 40 Years of Serving Central Texas

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The College

For 40 years, McLennan Community College has been intricately woven within the fiber of the Central Texas community. Since McLennan County voters first approved the college in 1965 through present day, MCC has strived to give back to the community that gave it birth.

It was the first junior college in Texas to incorporate the word “community” in its name. Throughout four decades, its mission to serve the community has never wavered.

Through the staunch and steady leadership of only two presidents, the college has expanded course curriculums and has offered programs for the very young to the very old. It has sought to serve local workforce needs and provide affordable education to all.

From its humble beginnings in the borrowed barracks of the shuttered James Connally Air Force Base in September 1966, to the picturesque main campus that still stands in Waco, MCC has grown from 855 to 8,500 students.

Thousands of people have attained two-year degrees and certificates from MCC. Since the formation of the college’s University Center in 2001, hundreds more have achieved four-year degrees, master’s degrees, graduate certificates and doctoral degrees through partnering four-year institutions offering courses on MCC soil.

The community also has generously given back to MCC. A private nonprofit group, the MCC Foundation, has raised millions of dollars for the college, given \$1.2 million in scholarships, and paid for staff development and capital improvements to the campus.

In 2006, McLennan County voters passed a \$74.5 million bond package for MCC — the largest in the history of the county. The funds will enable three new buildings to be constructed and will greatly expand campus roads and services. A new majestic entrance also is to be erected in the coming years that will undoubtedly beckon others to enter the campus that has transformed Central Texas and will continue to do so for future generations.

The Author



Sandra Sánchez has been a lifelong newspaper journalist and a former reporter for *USA TODAY*. She has covered national catastrophes and events such as Hurricane Hugo in 1989; the 1991 Washington, D.C., riots; the 1992 Los Angeles riots; and the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing.

She began her career in 1987 as a clerk for *The Washington Post* shortly after graduating from The American University in Washington, D.C. She met her future husband, Carlos Sánchez, at *The Post*, where she wrote a weekly “Small Business” column. In 1998, she got her first daily newspaper reporting job at the *Fort Myers News-Press* in Florida, where she covered crime and business. In 1990, she returned to the Washington, D.C., area and was initially hired as a researcher for *USA TODAY* but was promoted to a rewrite reporter within a year. She worked as a rewrite reporter until 1994 when she and Carlos moved to Austin, Texas. She continued to write for *USA TODAY* as a Southwest Correspondent until the birth of the couple’s second child, Armand, in 1997. In 1999, she returned to newspapers as an assistant national editor for the *Austin American-Statesman*, where she worked until the birth of their third child, Aviana, in October 2001. Three months later, the family moved to Waco, Texas, where Carlos took over as editor of the *Waco Tribune-Herald*. She wrote several monthly columns for the magazine *Waco Today* until she was hired by MCC in early 2006 to write this book.

She and Carlos and their three children — Alec, 14, Armand, 10, and Aviana, 5 — live in McGregor, Texas. This is Sandra’s first book.