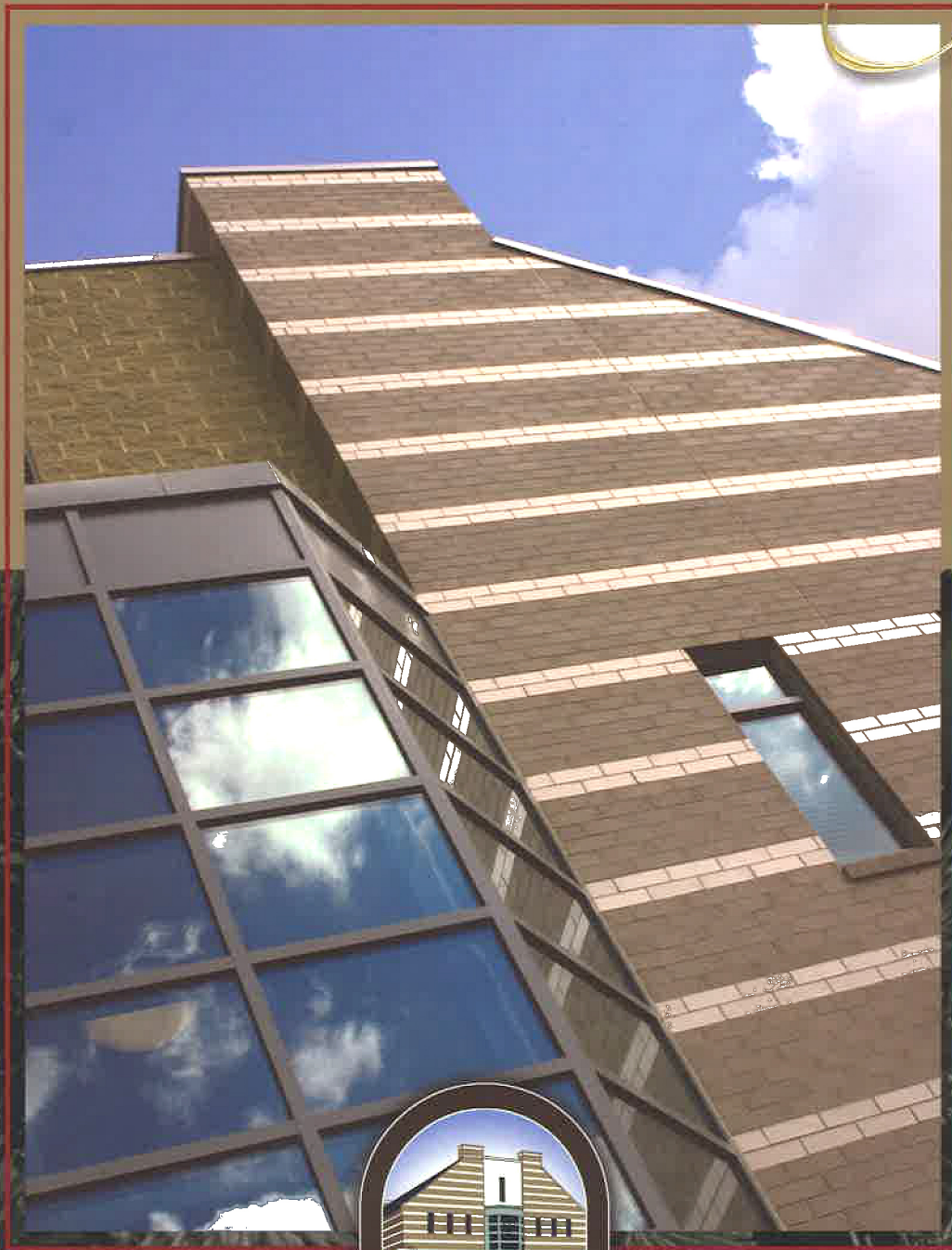


THE SEASONS OF *Rochester College*



1959

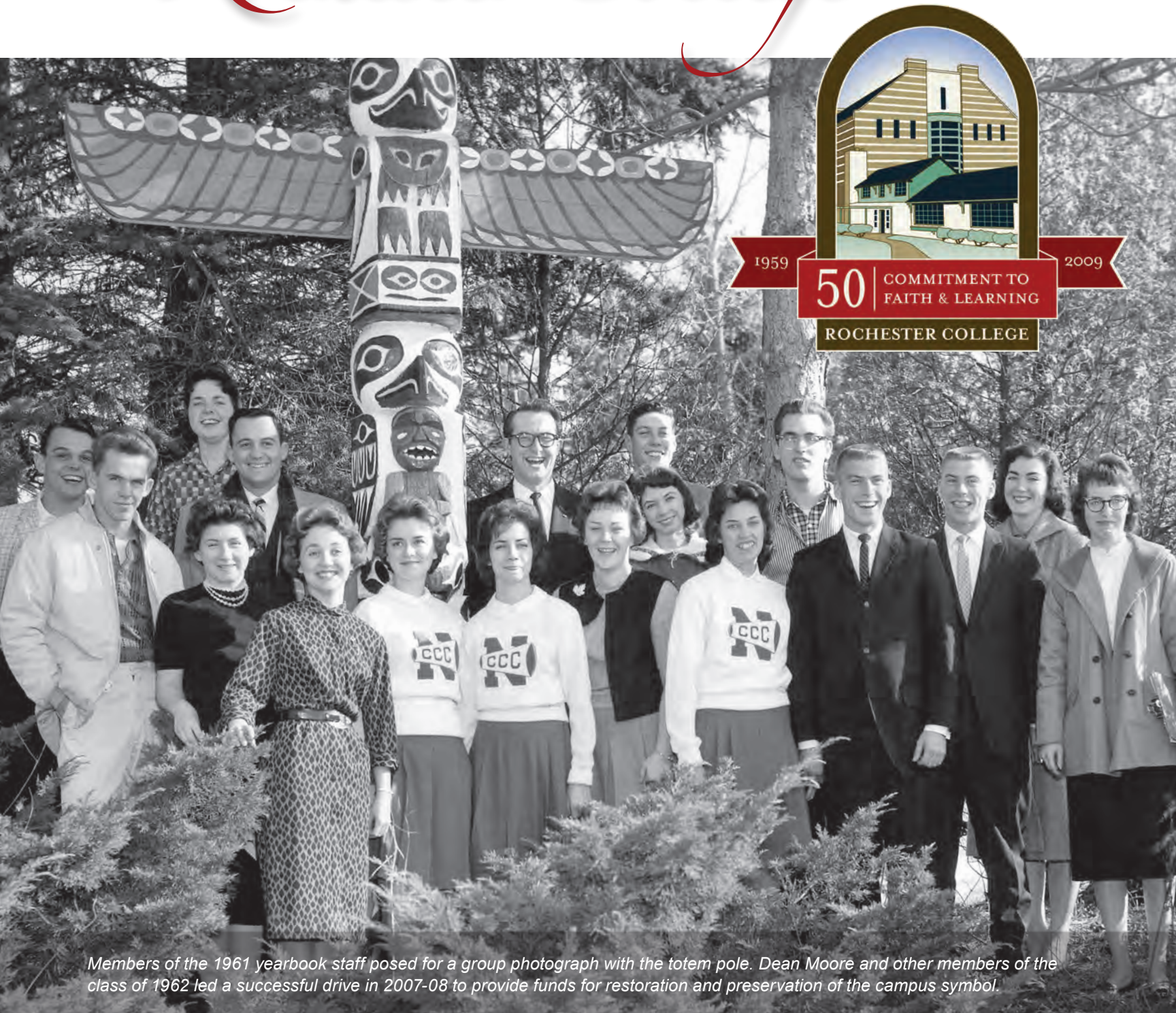
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COMMITMENT TO
FAITH & LEARNING

2009

ROCHESTER COLLEGE

THE SEASONS OF *Rochester College*



Members of the 1961 yearbook staff posed for a group photograph with the totem pole. Dean Moore and other members of the class of 1962 led a successful drive in 2007-08 to provide funds for restoration and preservation of the campus symbol.

A 50th Anniversary Publication of Rochester College, Rochester Hills, Michigan

Written and Designed by Larry Stewart, Class of 1970

Profiles on Individuals by Brad Irwin, Class of 1996

Cover Design by Ken Stewart, Class of 1982



Gallaher Center, the oldest campus building, quickly became an icon of the college. Ken Cleghorn, Andrea Kennamer, and Emily Anspach visited near the front entrance in 1993.

“I have thought about MCC many times since my return to campus. For a few days it was as though I had found a lost civilization of peace, brotherly love, innocence, and contentment in a world that has too little love, too many anxieties, too much criticism, too many pressures, and far too little concern for God. It would appear that you have indeed found the keys to the kingdom.”

Written by a member of the North Central Association team that recommended the college for accreditation in 1974.



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Introduction

The Seasons of Rochester College

Prior to the opening of North Central Christian College in 1959, the college's board hosted a series of open houses on their newly-acquired property. Hundreds "walked the campus," anticipating the day their dream of a new Christian college in the North Central region would become reality.

In a unique sense, the writing of this book is the result of a visit by a young couple who "walked the campus" as new Christians. Based upon their initial visit, Ken and Dorothy Stewart of Corunna, Michigan, decided they eventually would like to have their children attend the college that soon would breathe life into the former mansion and beautiful wooded acres they observed that day.

Eight years later, Ken and Dorothy's first son, Bob, enrolled at Michigan Christian Junior College. During his freshman year, Bob met his wife. Both received yearbooks, and one of those yearbooks ended up in the Stewart home. In the months that followed, an impressionable high school senior pored over the pages of the 1967 *Totem Pole* on numerous occasions. In the fall of 1968, that senior followed in the footsteps of his brother and began his freshman year at MCC.

MATURING WITH THE COLLEGE

When looking through the pages of the 1967 *Totem Pole*, little did I realize what impact the college would have on my life. I moved into Palmer Hall, then known as Dorm One, on September 15, 1968. Within a very short period of time, my fears about homesickness disappeared. Even though everyone was a new acquaintance, friendships developed quickly. Once classes began, significant role models surfaced among the faculty and staff. Before realizing it, I was totally immersed in campus life.

Fears of not being able to visit home often enough initially prevented my auditioning for the A Cappella Chorus. Fortunately, Ed Ritchie opened auditions at the end of the first semester and another important chapter of my college adventure began. After serving as photographer for the yearbook during my freshman year, I was persuaded by Dan Woodroof to edit the 1970 *Totem Pole*. Both the joy of



1972

singing and traveling with the chorus and the experience of producing a college publication would prove invaluable in the years ahead.

Before graduating from Michigan Christian College in 1970, several members of our class shared with one another their desire to someday return to the college as employees. I decided to act upon that desire during my senior year at Harding College and wrote to Lucien Palmer, asking if there were any job opportunities at Michigan Christian College in either student recruitment or publications. He responded cordially and referred my inquiry to Don Gardner, who was serving in his first year as president.

Don Gardner offered me employment scheduled to begin on June 1, 1972. By the time I graduated and arrived home, Dr. Gardner had left a phone message with my family requesting that I meet him that evening at a church where he was preaching in a gospel meeting. That night he asked if I could start work any earlier, so I asked when he had in mind. His response of "tomorrow morning" resulted in my first day of employment with the college on May 18, 1972.

That fall, Lynne Yoakum enrolled as a freshman at Michigan Christian College. Almost immediately,



2008

Lynne and several of her classmates

became some of my best friends. At the time, I was working as an admissions counselor, yearbook sponsor, and supervisor of the Campus Center Residence Hall. When David Matthews, editor of the yearbook, was called into military duty, we asked Lynne to edit the 1973 *Totem Pole*. The next year, Lynne sang in the first Autumn and again edited the yearbook, while I entered my first year as director of admissions.

Lynne graduated from Michigan Christian College in 1974 and moved on, but two years later both of us finally realized what many others had known for some time; we belonged together. Our first official date was a dinner hosted for the admissions staff in the home of Don and Audrey Gardner. We married in 1976 and within a year both of us were employed by the college.

In 1980, Beth entered our lives. The evening Lynne

went into labor, she had just finished sorting registration course cards at home. After Beth's birth, I stopped by the admissions office during the early hours of the morning to leave a note for the secretary. After writing that note, I peered out the window of Gallaher Center at the lake with its lighted island and tearfully thanked God for bringing Beth into our lives. Three years later, our son Kevin entered this world during a Homecoming game, where the announcement of his birth was met by the cheers of a halftime crowd.

In time, the college allowed me to move from the admissions office to a combined role as director of public relations, bookstore manager, and director of alumni relations. Lynne also changed responsibilities after years of service as registrar to a role as an advisor and certification officer for the college's new education program. Our children grew up playing on the campus and developed special relationships with many adopted brothers and sisters from the student body. When the time arrived for them to enroll in college, there was never a question of where they preferred to attend.

Beth enrolled at Rochester College in 1998. Like her mother, she sang in Autumn. While traveling the next summer with a college recruiting group, Beth met her future husband, Brian Bowers, at a Christian camp. After their marriage, Brian enrolled in the college's new master's degree program, often quipping that he too had to enroll so he would be an alumnus of Rochester College. Beth joined him as a student in the master's program in 2006. Beth and Brian welcomed Sophie, a future third-generation student, in 2008.

During middle school, Kevin often played pool in the student center after school. He boasted of his victories over the college students. I assumed the students were simply being nice until I one day watched him. Afterwards, I asked how he learned to play pool so well and he responded, "Coach Shinsky taught me." Kevin later enrolled at Rochester College and completed a bachelor's degree in marketing in 2004.

The story of my life and that of my family has been so interwoven with the history and events that have taken place on this campus that they are nearly inseparable. We have been shaped by the thousands of students, employees, and friends that make up the Rochester College family. Recruiting students, publishing catalogs and the *North Star*, scheduling and traveling with the chorus, and maintaining relationships with alumni have

each given me unique opportunities to share the special story of Rochester College and how it has shaped the lives of countless individuals.

PUBLICATION OF TWO BOOKS

The college celebrated its 25th anniversary in 1984. As part of that celebration, Milton Fletcher and Bob Utley wanted to publish a history of the college. I had been maintaining the college archives since the departure of Lucien Palmer in 1974 and had prepared most of the college publications for twelve years. Consequently, preparation of the book fell upon my shoulders. Most of the research and writing for the book had to be done at home. A patient wife graciously accepted that arrangement.



Photography introduced the author to years of work with college publications. He used a Pentax Spotmatic ES between 1972 and 1991 to photograph most of the pictures used in college brochures, catalogs, and news bulletins. He continued to photograph campus life with a new camera until changing responsibilities in 2001.

As the college began making plans for the 50th anniversary celebration, memories of time spent on the first book dampened my desire to publish a second. That began to change, however, when my brother, Ken Stewart, brought me a copy of the anniversary book produced by Abilene Christian University for its centennial. Ken, also

an alumnus of Michigan Christian College, served as a graphic artist for ACU's book during a three-year stint in Abilene. Ron Hadfield, a 1975 graduate of Michigan Christian College, edited the book. The book's exceptional quality and compelling format convinced me it would once again be worth the effort.

It is virtually impossible to write a complete history of Rochester College. Significant events and milestones form a natural framework for the story, but so many more details could be included. Space allows for the inclusion of only a limited number of people and groups of people who represent the thousands of individuals who have built, supported, served, and attended the college since its opening in 1959.

The journey you are about to take through the past five decades is designed to spark memories and help you relive the Rochester College story. From those who "walked the campus" in the late 1950s to those who are part of the college community today, the story of Rochester College truly is a story of "commitment to faith and learning." May you enjoy reading the stories, viewing the photos, and celebrating what God has done on some of the most precious acres on this earth.

Larry Stewart, May 2008



Featured on one of the college's first full-color recruitment brochures in 1982, Dan Ealey and Deanna Howe complemented the vivid colors of fall.

Spring blossoms appeared on the cover of the 2000-01 Catalog with Jason Debandt and Beth Stewart.

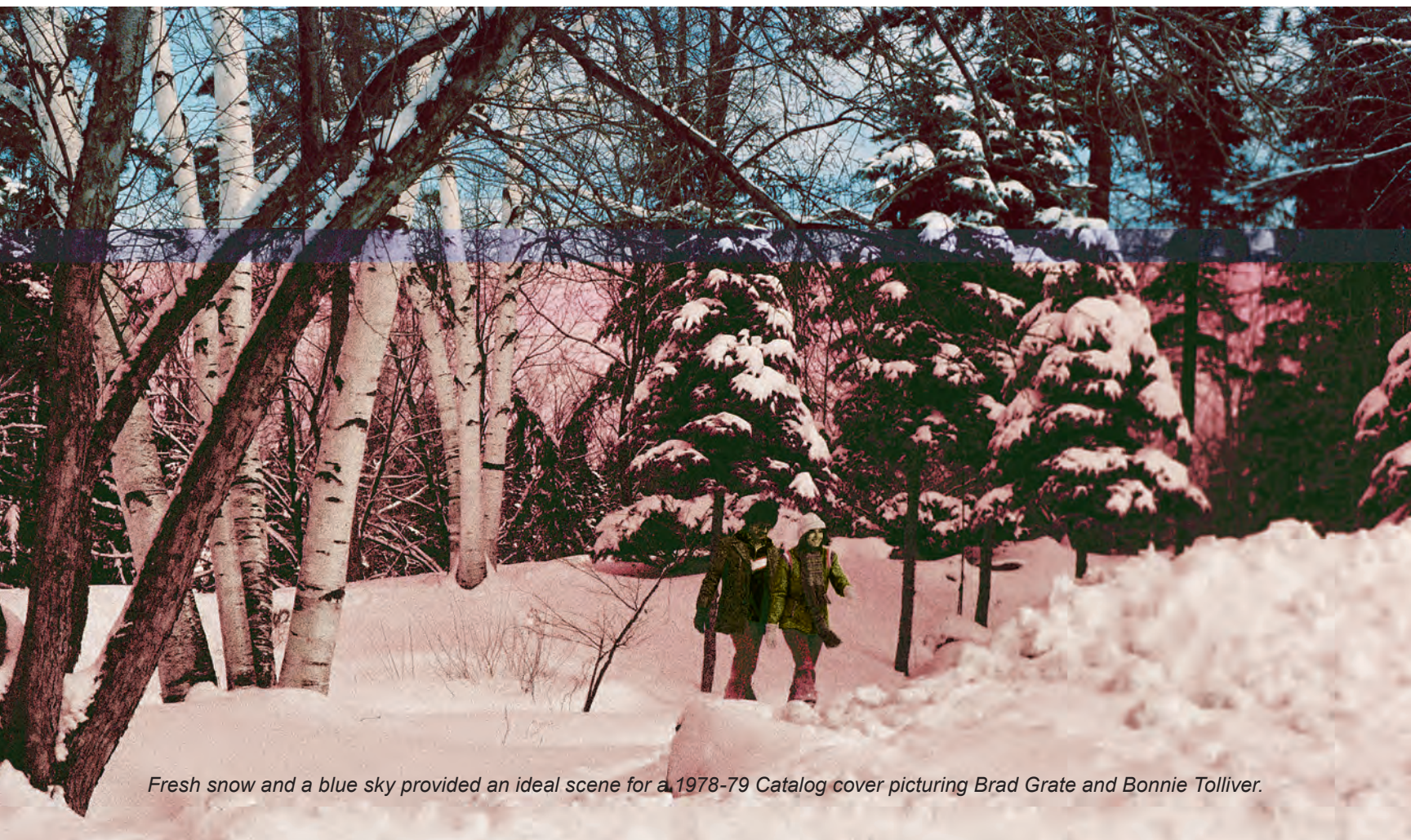


THE SEASONS OF *Rochester College*

Seasonal change is a vital dynamic of life. Amid the beautiful seasons of nature, Rochester College has experienced significant seasons of growth and development during its 50-year history.

Seven presidents have shaped the college. Four institutional names have appeared on letterhead. A small junior college has matured into a thriving senior college of over 1,000 students and more than 7,000 alumni.

Building upon its rich heritage, Rochester College continues to look to the future with a strong "commitment to faith and learning."



Fresh snow and a blue sky provided an ideal scene for a 1978-79 Catalog cover picturing Brad Grate and Bonnie Tolliver.



Shortly after the opening of the 1992-93 academic year, students enjoyed the sunshine of a summery day on campus.

After months of searching for a campus location, Wheeler Utley and Lester Allen discovered the Maxon estate in rural Rochester. The "mansion" initially housed the library, chapel, and the Gatewood family. Within a year, offices occupied the Gatewood's quarters and the building became known as the Administration Building. The college named the building Gallaher Center in 1973.



1954-1959



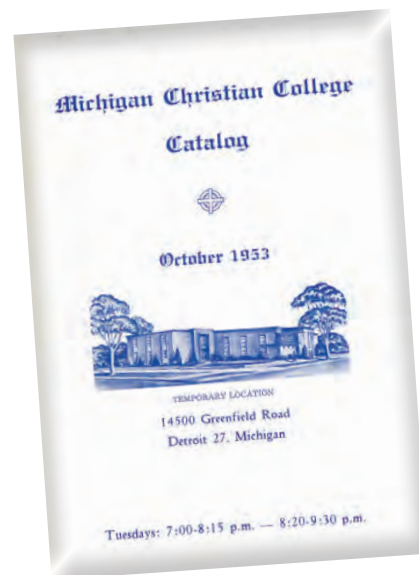
College officials hosted several open houses on the campus soon after the property purchase in 1957. High school students visited on several occasions during the spring of 1958, sparking vital student interest in the opening of North Central Christian College.



Lou Maxon included some of the furnishings from the house when he sold his estate to the college. Chairs from the living room seated guests in the lobby of Gallaher Center for many years. Bob Wineinger, a volunteer, recovered the chairs in 1985. The chairs appear in their original setting in the photograph on pages 12-13.

Milestones Prior to 1959 Opening

- 1946 • Classes conducted at the Hamilton and Tuxedo Church of Christ in Detroit in an attempt to launch a Christian school
- 1952 • Evening courses organized at the Strathmoor Church of Christ in Detroit in another attempt to form a Christian school
- 1954 • Board formed to establish a Christian school in the North Central region
• Board organizes as the North Central Christian College Foundation
- 1955 • Documents for incorporation as a non-profit organization signed by board
- 1956 • First financial campaign for \$150,000 results in gifts of nearly \$250,000
- 1957 • Search process for a president initiated by the board
• Maxon estate in Rochester selected as a campus site
• First of several open houses conducted on the newly acquired property
- 1958 • Series of rallies for teenagers conducted on the future campus
• Campaign for \$500,000 launched at the first lectureship
• Otis Gatewood named president of the college at the first lectureship
• Lucien Palmer named dean at a rally in Detroit's new Ford Auditorium
• Ground broken for first new facility, the Multi-Purpose Building
- 1959 • Rally at State Fair Coliseum with Pat Boone attracts over 8,500 guests
• Associates formed to raise funds for the college
• Opening of college delayed for two weeks while construction workers complete the Multi-Purpose Building



Organizers of a 1952-54 exploratory effort in Christian education named their institution Michigan Christian College.

Prior to World War II, a relatively small number of Churches of Christ existed in the state of Michigan. That number increased substantially in the early 1950s as thousands of church members migrated to the Detroit area to work in the automobile industry.

Eventually, southeast Michigan became home to the largest concentration of Churches of Christ in the northern United States. Members within those churches began to yearn for the presence of their own Christian college. They dreamed of the day when their sons and daughters

would no longer have to travel across the country to attend such an institution.

On two occasions, one beginning in 1946 and another in 1952, church leaders offered a series of courses in area church facilities. While neither of those efforts survived, they intensified the desire of individuals who longed for the opening of a new Christian college in the region.

In 1954, a group of individuals initiated a movement that would turn the dreams of many into reality. Their efforts resulted in the establishment of North Central Christian College.

FORMATION OF A BOARD

In the spring of 1954, area Christians met at the Northwest Church of Christ in Detroit to discuss their interest in establishing a Christian academic institution. As a result of that meeting, participants charged four visionaries with the task of developing guidelines for the formation of a board to lead their efforts.

On June 8, George Ford, Warren Jones, Wheeler Utley, and James Vaughn issued a letter to Churches of Christ in the region, requesting the names of individuals who would be

willing to serve on a board. The four men noted in their letter, "We realize that if this effort is a success it must have the support of all Christians in the area and have the blessings of the Lord."

A second area-wide meeting took place on September 20 at the Fisher YMCA in Detroit. The participants, who represented several congregations in Michigan and Northern Ohio, selected a nine-member board. The board included Oliver Bunting, George Ford, Harold Hawley, Wesley Hawley, Paul Lutz, Gerald Montgomery, James Thomas, Wheeler Utley, and James Vaughn.

At its first meeting, the newly-formed board elected George Ford as chairman, Wheeler Utley as vice chairman, Paul Lutz as treasurer, and James Vaughn as secretary. A year later, the board selected Wheeler Utley as chairman and Jim Thomas as vice chairman in the absence of George Ford, who had been drafted into special duty by the United States Army.

The board signed documents for formal incorporation as a non-profit organization on January 17, 1955. Incorporated as the North Central Christian College Foundation, the board immediately appointed committees for publicity and fund-raising. Those committees hosted a meeting at the Hamilton Church

of Christ in Detroit on May 19 for anyone interested in Christian education. At that meeting, board members shared their initial plans for the future and launched their dreams into the public arena.

INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTER

At its first meeting in 1954, the board discussed the nature of the institution that it would establish. Those individuals involved with the 1946 effort leaned toward the establishment of a high school because of the financial investment required to begin a college. Consequently, this critical question had to be answered before the board could proceed.

After considerable discussion, the board abandoned the idea of establishing a high school and decided to work toward the establishment of a junior college. Board members expressed an interest in adding a high school in time, but decided that the opening of a junior college was a more attainable goal and the most critical need.

The board described the proposed institution in printed materials as a "liberal arts college with Christian ideals." Those early leaders emphasized their commitment to a quality education that would meet requirements for

accreditation by the North Central Association. They often spoke of their plans for the college to become a four-year institution as soon as growth would permit.

The early board also expressed a strong desire for the college to be Christian in every respect. In an interview with the *Rochester Clarion*, Chairman Utley emphasized that the board had not designed the college to serve as a preacher training institution and that it would be open to students of all faiths. The board published an institutional goal of training "capable, enthusiastic, creative, and devoted Christian leaders."

Foundation board members held regular informational meetings to keep interested individuals aware of their progress. Wheeler Utley, Oliver Bunting, Jim Thomas, Harold Hawley, and Paul Lutz served on a panel for one of those meetings.



Memories of the Early Board by Jim Thomas

In 1954, I was invited by Hobart Ashby to attend a meeting of those interested in establishing a Christian school. We met in a YMCA building in Detroit. I was among nine men selected that evening to serve on the board. We immediately began meeting on the third Monday of every month in order to keep focused on the task of opening a school as soon as possible.

There were many discouraging moments in the early years. Many times Wheeler Utley would give a pep talk to keep us on course. Lester Allen later was added to the board. He was full of energy and confidence and helped us a great deal. Often we had to lean on one another for support and encouragement. One time a board member came to a meeting intending to resign. When the meeting was over, he told me that I said something during the meeting that changed his mind. I have no idea what I said to cause that decision, but he continued to serve.

Finding the property on Avon Road was a significant milestone that really helped us stay together. Thoughts about buying property replaced thoughts about not succeeding in our plans to open the college. The price of \$200,000 for the estate was a lot of money in those days, but we managed to purchase the property and move forward with our planning.

It was a great privilege for me to work for 40 years with the men and women who made up the Board of Trustees. Through the years those men and women exhibited zeal, humility, cooperation, and a desire to succeed. I count it an honor and a blessing to be a part of such a great body.

"I Know the Lord Will Find a Way for Me" was one of the favorite songs of the Gateways. The sentiment of that song certainly was true for North Central Christian College as well. We experienced tough times in those early years, but the Lord did find a way for us to establish the college and watch it grow.

Jim Thomas served on the Board of Trustees from 1954 until 1994. Jim's wife, Raída, attended the first meeting of the Associates and is a charter member of the group. The board honored Jim as the first trustee emeritus. Jim and Raída are model volunteers who played an integral role in the formative years of the college.

Members of the board ► outlined their case for Christian education in the North Central region with a small brochure entitled "More Precious than Rubies."

They noted, "Our children are our most prized God-given possessions. We spare neither expense nor effort for their health and the physical development of their bodies. We labor untiringly to give them happy homes and an abundant share of worldly goods. Often we forget that which is much more important, the training of their minds."

More Precious than Rubies

Ernie Stewart, Warren Jones, and Arnold Watson served as chairmen of the first fund-raising campaign for North Central Christian College. The board hired Henry King, a professional consultant, to assist with the 1956 fund drive. The campaign resulted in gifts and pledges totaling nearly \$250,000.





SEARCH FOR A CAMPUS

Completion of a successful financial campaign in 1956 provided the funding necessary for the board to begin the search for an appropriate campus site. Lester Allen led the process, which remained a priority on board agendas for several months.

By its February meeting in 1957, the board had considered 12 potential sites, including an abandoned school building in Detroit and a farm in Chelsea, but none of the locations seemed just right. Wheeler Utley reported his discovery of an estate near Rochester that seemed worthy of further investigation. That investigation so charmed the committee that a special meeting was called, and the board decided to pursue the Rochester property with a \$125,000 offer.

Months of counter offers and indications the owner might keep the property caused the board to feel a need to look for alternative sites. Finally, Lou Maxon, the Detroit advertising agent who owned the estate, decided

to accept an offer from the board and signed a purchase agreement on September 20. The agreement included the entire 37-acre estate for \$200,000 with a down payment of \$50,000 and a 10-year land contract with 5 percent interest on the balance.

The Maxon estate had been appraised at \$250,000 in 1952 and represented an estimated \$500,000 investment by the original owner. The *Detroit News* hailed the property as “an Oakland County beauty spot.” The paper described the grounds as the site of a former gravel pit Maxon had elaborately landscaped, complete with hundreds of large trees that were imported to expedite development of the property.

Responding to concerns that the Rochester location was too remote and too far from the city of Detroit, the board issued a response in an October newsletter. Committee members noted a site closer to Detroit was not possible because of price and the scarcity of large parcels of land with suitable buildings. They further

affirmed their conviction that the quiet atmosphere and scenic beauty of the Rochester site would make an ideal place for students to study and meditate.

FUND-RAISING EFFORTS

The board launched its first fund-raising effort in 1956 by engaging Henry King to direct a campaign for \$150,000. Realizing strong grass-roots support would be needed to make the campaign successful, the board established an advisory committee consisting of 53 members representing 40 congregations. This short campaign resulted in gifts and pledges of almost \$250,000, which provided funding for initial operating expenses and the down payment on a campus site.

After securing the campus site, the board launched its second major fund-raising drive in 1958. A spokesman for the board noted in a newsletter, “To have a Christian school worthy of our desires and worthy of our young people, we must learn to give and give again.” Lester

Allen and Ernie Stewart served as directors for this \$500,000 campaign. Many canvassed not only members in their congregations but also friends and neighbors. Some gave their entire savings, and even children did their part. One little boy was quoted as saying, “This ain’t much money, but Tommy and me raked leaves to get it. We want to go to NCCC when we get big.” One evening, Lester Allen’s 4-year-old daughter prayed, “Dear God, help me to do without some ice cream so we can give more to North Central Christian College.”

Without public ceremony, 30 individuals gathered on a snowy November day in 1958 to break ground for the first new structure on the college site, the Multi-Purpose Building. In order to assist with completion of that facility, the board approved its third fund-raising project in the summer of 1959. The group appointed Bob Utley to prepare a brochure for a national mailing list, requesting contributions to “Buy Bricks for North Central.” Each gift of \$5.00 purchased 80 bricks.

"New Horizons" outlined the need and plans for North Central Christian College. Unique for the 1950s, the booklet included color photographs of the campus. Advertising for the first lectureship drew large crowds.



▲ An artist's conception of the Multi-Purpose Building, later named the Associates Campus Center, appeared on printed materials while the building was under construction. The cafeteria in the lower level of the original structure featured large windows on two sides. The east windows disappeared with the addition of the cafetorium in 1961.

▶ Teen idol Pat Boone headlined a rally for North Central Christian College at the State Fair Coliseum on May 22, 1959. The program attracted nearly 8,500 individuals.



OPEN HOUSES

Immediately after finalizing the purchase of the Maxon property, the board issued its first general invitation to an open house. On October 26, 1957, the board proudly served as guides for the momentous occasion while those in attendance "walked the campus" and admired the superb acquisition. Since Maxon had not yet vacated the house, detailed flyers were given to guests specifying which items were included in the purchase. Visitors marveled at the numerous basement closets filled with suits and clothing formerly made available to guests of the Maxons.

In an attempt to begin generating student interest in the college, the board conducted a series of special events for teenagers during the spring of 1958. On five different occasions, an average of 200 teens from specific areas in southeast Michigan and northern Ohio gathered on the future campus. Other targeted open houses included one for the Rochester community, which attracted approximately 500 guests.

LECTURESHIP AND RALLIES

A new tradition began in October 1958, as 500 to 1,400 people gathered each night for the first of many annual lectureships hosted by the college. Although some

of the day sessions took place on the newly-acquired property, the majority of the program occurred at the Royal Oak Church of Christ and the Rochester High School auditorium.

At the close of the lectureship, the board announced that Otis Gatewood would serve as first president of the college. Prior to that announcement, a board committee had submitted the names of eight men whom the committee considered desirable candidates for the role. The insight behind that list of candidates became evident years later as six of the individuals became presidents of other Christian colleges.

November 1958 marked the first in a series of large rallies for the college. Nearly 2,000 attended the first rally in Detroit's new Ford Auditorium and heard the plans for North Central Christian College. President Gatewood introduced the college's first dean, E. Lucien Palmer, and reported that \$154,000 had already been given and pledged toward the \$500,000 campaign.

A second rally occurred in May 1959 at the Michigan State Fair Coliseum. By this time, everyone anticipated the opening of the college, which was scheduled for September 14. About 8,500 attended the event, which featured Pat Boone and Norvel Young. The May Rally continued as an annual event for the next six years.



Campus visitors admired progress on the college's first construction project, the Multi-Purpose Building.

BIRTH OF ASSOCIATES

Shortly before the college opened, Alma Gatewood shared with a small group of women her vision for a fund-raising organization. She later wrote, "Everyone was so interested and enthusiastic about it, we almost had to organize that very night." Desiring to give a larger number of women an opportunity to launch the group, Alma organized an area-wide meeting for September 1, 1959.

Despite stormy weather, about 350 women from 38 congregations packed in and around the recreation room of the Maxon estate for the evening. Alma Gatewood chaired the meeting, which resulted in the formation of the Associates. The group elected El Meta Ford as its first president, chose the first Tuesday of each month for meetings, and set dues at \$1.00 per month.

The enthusiasm of those attending the organizational meeting of the Associates spread quickly among area congregations, foreshadowing decades of loyal support. Within a year, membership blossomed to over 1,000. Participants soon discovered the benefits of a strong network of women working for a common cause and began forming a unique bond among church members in the North Central region.

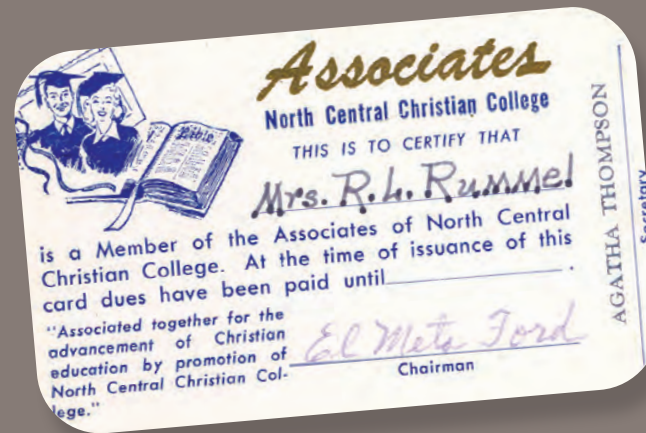
FINAL PREPARATIONS

An air of excitement filled the campus as opening day drew near. About 600 visitors filled the campus on September 7 for an open house that featured family picnics and tours. Construction workers labored feverishly toward completion of the Multi-Purpose Building, but finally realized their goal could not be reached by September 14. Consequently, administrators announced a two-week delay in the opening of the college.

On September 12, employees participated in their first meeting and picnic. Under the leadership of Otis Gatewood and Lucien Palmer, such individuals as Fred Alexander, Clyde Balderson, Doyle Earwood, Maurice Hall, Hugh Mingle, Bob Waggoner, and Morris Womack began serving as faculty members who would leave an enduring mark on the institution during its formative years. Many held second jobs during evenings and on weekends to support their families, demonstrating their commitment to the cause of Christian education.

As construction workers completed finishing touches on the Multi-Purpose Building, others converted facilities from the Maxon estate for college use. The greenhouse was adapted for science classes. The estate house, already known as the President's Mansion since it served as a home for the Gatewood family, was outfitted for student activities. The recreation room would serve as the location for chapel and the east wing basement as the first home for the library.

The library officially opened on September 21, 1959. An area formerly dedicated to the storage of clothing gave way to the pursuit of learning. In that modest location, three tables, a card catalog, and cedar-lined closets filled with 2,500 books awaited the pioneer class of North Central Christian College.



◀ Nearly 350 women gathered on the campus of North Central Christian College prior to the official opening to consider the formation of a fund-raising organization. The enthusiasm demonstrated that evening resulted in the formation of the Associates. Lola Rummel served as a faithful Associate until her passing in 2005. El Meta Ford, first president of the group, signed membership cards for the charter members.

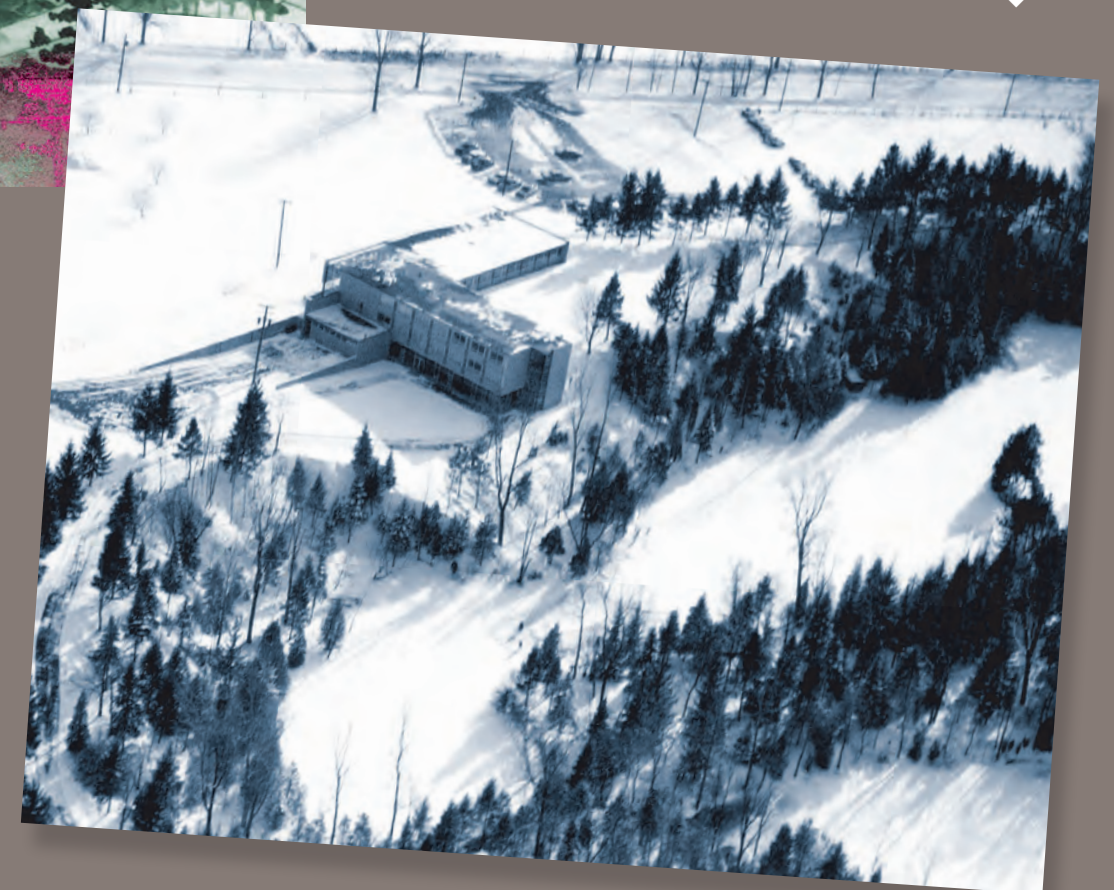
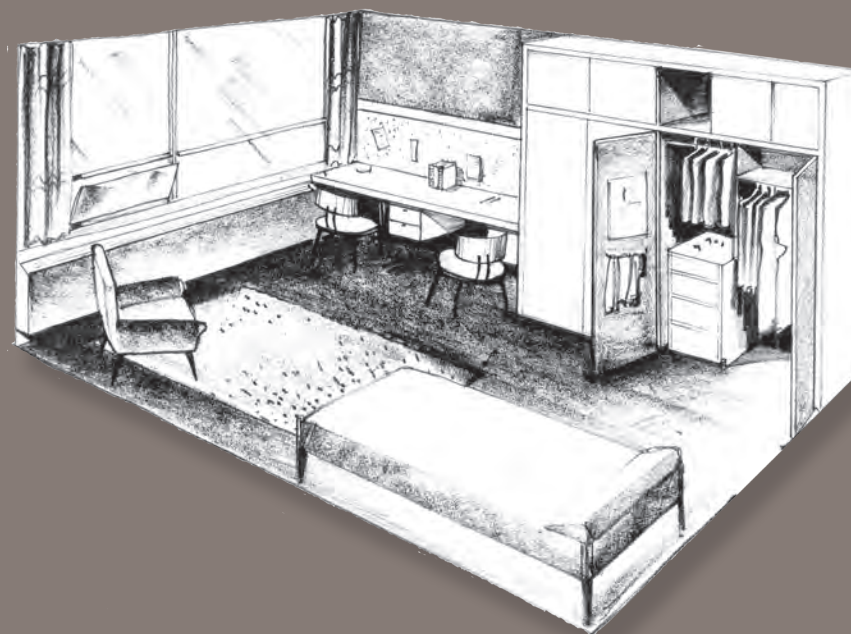
Administrators Otis Gatewood, Maurice Hall, and Lucien Palmer provided leadership on campus as the college community made final preparations for the arrival of the pioneer student body. ▶



◀ Architects prepared the college's first master plan while designing the Multi-Purpose Building, which appears in the plan on the left of the large building with the slanted roof. Parking needs, city regulations, and wetlands issues eventually necessitated a total revision of the master plan.

Aerial photography captured the campus as it would have appeared to the pioneer student body. The Multi-Purpose Building sits at a similar angle as shown in the master plan. ▶

A functional dorm room plan designed for the Multi-Purpose Building served students well until the residence hall was converted to offices in the late 1990s. Workers imitated the design in Barbier Hall while renovating that dorm in the summer of 1976. ▶



Once completed, the Multi-Purpose Building quickly became the hub of campus activity. The original facility housed classrooms, offices, the cafeteria, and all boarding students. Additions during the decade provided double the amount of cafeteria space, the Gold Room, and a bookstore. The building was renamed Campus Center in 1978 and Associates Campus Center in 1988.



1959-1969

Members of the 1961-62 A Cappella Chorus, under the direction of Fred Alexander, recorded the college's first album, "Arise, My Soul, Arise." The album's cover stated, "Hours of rehearsal and the many miles covered annually by the gold-robbed A Cappella provide opportunities for enjoyable and rewarding associations. The mutual achievement of high standards more than justifies the exacting demands placed upon A Cappella members."



Before the college added a variety of intercollegiate sports, students participated in All-Sports Days with area colleges. They won first-place trophies in 1966 and 1967.



Milestones of the 1960s

- 1959 • North Central Christian College welcomes first students
- 1960 • First addition to greenhouse completed for science classrooms
• Palmer Hall completed
- 1961 • Institutional name changed to Michigan Christian Junior College
• Second addition to Science Building completed for classroom space
• Barbier Hall completed
• Men's Club organized to raise funds for the college
• Cafetorium completed for use as a cafeteria and auditorium
- 1962 • Third addition to Science Building completed for a biology laboratory
- 1963 • First Homecoming held in conjunction with the Valentine Banquet
• Gymnasium completed
• State accreditation achieved
- 1964 • Gold Room completed
• Lucien Palmer named second president of the college
• Alumni Association formed
• Gierok farm purchased to provide 54 acres for future growth of the college
- 1965 • Muirhead Center completed for student center, library, and classrooms
- 1966 • Addition to Multi-Purpose Building completed for the bookstore
- 1969 • Candidate status achieved with the North Central Association
• First conference title won by men's basketball team



Knapp burgers and buttery-seasoned fries became a staple for many students during the 1960s, when Rochester offered limited restaurant choices that remained open past 9 p.m.

Early editions of the college yearbook and newspaper often referred to the faculty and students of North Central Christian College as pioneers. Those individuals endured inconvenience at times, but more importantly they set a positive tone and tradition for the future.

While the nation struggled through the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, early leaders of the college established a community with distinct standards. Their strong emphasis on missions fostered an open attitude toward diverse cultures and helped define the character of the

institution. The pioneer student body looked beyond race as they selected an African-American as Mr. North Central in 1960. Shortly after the Detroit riots, the students crowned an African-American as Homecoming Queen.

From the establishment of campus activities that have lasted for five decades to the standards of excellence seen throughout the college community, the pioneers of the 1960s paved the way for future generations. From opening day, it became evident that a unique college community had been formed.

OPENING YEAR

Prior to the opening of North Central Christian College, President Gatewood wrote in the *Christian Leader*, "The young people who enter North Central this fall will truly be pioneers in their own right. They will be blazing a trail that thousands of other youth will follow. The first classes will bring to reality the hopes and the efforts of Christians in the North."

Dreams became reality on September 28, 1959, as North Central Christian College's first class of 54 students began to arrive on campus. That evening, the Rochester Chamber of Commerce and local service clubs hosted a welcome picnic for the students of NCCC and nearby Michigan State University-Oakland, which also opened its doors for the first time that fall.

The year formally opened on October 13 during the second annual lectureship. About 750 attended the program, which featured George Benson of Harding College as guest speaker and the NCCC A Cappella Chorus in its debut performance. During the remainder of the week, nine presidents and deans from affiliated colleges spoke on the topic of Christian education.

In the first issue of the student newspaper, a staff writer stated, "We at NCCC have quite a responsibility in being the first students, for we must set patterns and goals which will last for many years. Realizing our responsibility, we have set our goals high." As the year unfolded, the entire college community initiated a variety of programs, activities, and traditions that have endured for fifty years.

The college initially offered the Associate in Arts degree for students planning to transfer to a senior

college and the Junior College Certificate for those desiring a limited collegiate background. Built upon a liberal arts foundation, the associate degree remained the mainstay of the academic program until the 1990s. The pioneer student body selected courses from seven academic divisions: Bible, business, fine and applied arts, language and literature, mathematics and science, physical education, and social sciences. Those divisions remained virtually unchanged for 24 years.

During the pioneer year, chapel met daily at 10:00 in the morning. One student characterized chapel as a time that brought "students and faculty together, and all closer to God." Explaining how the students became close friends, another stated, "We began to be drawn closer at our first chapel service." Along with the opportunities it provided for worship and reflection, chapel contributed to the formation of a cohesive college community.

The pioneer student body set an amazing precedent for student involvement. The yearbook featured 10 student organizations and one athletic team. The chorus boasted 31 members, involving over half of the student body. Special events also filled the calendar.

Reporting on the formation of a student council, a writer for the student newspaper described an election process that included "posters, campaign managers, and fiery speeches." Tom Lewis served as the first student body president after an election that required three runoffs. Tom later characterized the council's start as "somewhat disorganized" but noted that members eventually learned to work well with one another.

The Student Council sponsored the college's first dramatic presentation, *The Fatal Quest*. Described by

the yearbook as a "tragedy," the whimsical production featured a cast of characters that included Rodney Grantham as the beloved queen and Mary Lou Smart as the princess with the shapely arms.

Under the editorship of Jerry Burns, the students released their first issue of the *North Star* on January 20. The newspaper staff selected the publication's name based upon the college's northern location and the influence that would radiate from the campus. Friends of the college received the paper until the establishment of a regular news bulletin. The newspaper's name was adopted by the news bulletin in 1990 in honor of the original student publication.

Clyde Balderson organized a variety of on-campus sporting activities early in the academic year. Eventually, the college received an invitation to join a basketball league sponsored by Churches of Christ in the metropolitan Detroit area. Outfitting nine men in the institution's new colors of gold and white, the college fielded its first official athletic team. The team lost its first game, but attributed the loss to a lack of practice. After arranging a weekly practice session in an off-campus gymnasium, the team completed the season with a 5-5 record.

A yearbook staff was organized late in the academic year with Harold Brazier as editor. The staff named its publication the *Totem Pole* in honor of a favorite campus landmark. A writer for the *March North Star* noted that the yearbook staff worked until midnight on more than one occasion to make up for lost time and to meet required deadlines.

As would happen frequently in subsequent years, the pioneer student body occasionally stopped to absorb the magnificent beauty that surrounded them. A writer in the inaugural edition of the *North Star* described the first snowfall of the season. "We were allowed to make a complete tour of the campus about 8:30 p.m., and found what seemed to be a new campus. We realized to the fullest the beauty of God's glistening white snowflakes falling upon dark trees and grounds. We finished the evening by singing praises to our Creator from the pier on our own Lake Norcentra."

Reflecting upon an eventful opening year, a student commented in the *North Star*, "Yes, we are trailblazers, but we feel our advantages outweigh our discomforts and disadvantages. We feel that we will always be able to look back with pride to the days when we were pioneers at North Central Christian College."



Dianne McCullough wore an NCCC sweatshirt in high school before enrolling at the college.



Opening in the basement of the mansion's east wing, the library provided a quiet study atmosphere for freshmen Rodney Grantham, Harlan Huckaba, and Linda Kincaid.

Science students used the greenhouse of the former Maxon estate for a chemistry laboratory during the opening year.



Faculty, staff, and students met together in the former recreation room of the mansion for chapel during the pioneer year. Every year since that time, chapel has enriched campus life.

Otis Gatewood

President 1958-1964

Otis Gatewood emerged from a clan of fist-fighting, gun-toting, hard-drinking Texas scoundrels to become one of America's foremost agents of charity and peace in the 20th century.

Born August 27, 1911, in Meridian, Texas, Gatewood grew up on "the wrong side of the tracks" until he became a Christian as a teenager. The young convert dreamed of preaching the message of Jesus Christ and enrolled at Abilene Christian College in 1932 to train as an evangelist. In Abilene, Gatewood fell in love with Alma Morgan, a young woman two years his senior and the fiancée of another man. The young preacher convinced Morgan to break up with her fiancé and marry him instead.

After college, the Broadway Church of Christ in Lubbock, Texas, dispatched Gatewood to establish churches in the oil towns of New Mexico and among the Mormons of Salt Lake City, Utah. When World War II broke out, Gatewood canvassed the American West to recruit missionaries to go to Europe after the war. He declared, "If we can send our sons to Germany to kill and destroy, we should also be willing to send them to preach the gospel of peace."

Gatewood became the first American missionary to enter Germany after the war. He and Alma took up residence in the skeleton of the Frankfurt airport terminal where they lived without electricity, heat, or running water. Packs of half-naked and half-starving boys roamed the rubble and tuberculosis was epidemic. The Gatewoods opened an orphanage and school in the airport ruins. Gatewood even converted former Nazi and SS troopers, and trained them to become preachers.

During their mission in Frankfurt, the Gatewoods raised about \$1 million from Churches of Christ in America to fund relief efforts in Germany. In 1957, the Gatewoods returned to the United States and settled on a small farm in Texas. At the time, Otis Gatewood was perhaps the best-known man among Churches of Christ. In 1958, the North Central Christian College board asked Gatewood to be the first president of a new college opening in 1959. He accepted.

Gatewood's celebrity immediately put the new college on the map and attracted students from around the world. By 1962, Michigan Christian boasted the highest percentage of international students among all colleges and universities in the state. The president urged

students who came from places like Indiana and Ohio to consider Christian missions abroad. Even the college's seal featured an open Bible pointing to a globe and commanding students to "Go Ye."

Meanwhile, Alma became mother to the Michigan Christian family. She formed the Associates, an organization of over 1,000 women in the Great Lakes region who raised money for the college. In their first four years, the Associates raised over \$229,000 to pay for everything from scholarships to sports equipment. Alma also formed the Ideal Woman's Club as a way to train female students to be strong women.

The first lady's devotion seemed tireless. On January 18, 1963, she suddenly died of exhaustion.

Alma's passing hit Otis like an atomic bomb and the fallout buried him in grief. Unable to go on, the college's first president resigned halfway through the 1963-64 academic year and fled the scene of his heartbreak.

Gatewood taught at the Harding Graduate School for a few years until he became founding president of European Christian College in Vienna, Austria. In Europe, he led covert evangelistic missions behind the Iron Curtain until some countries banned him. The Soviets even assigned KGB agents to shadow his every move. In 1970, Gatewood married another missionary, Irene Johnson.

After 17 years in Vienna, the Gatewoods retired to the Rochester area and moved to a home within walking distance of Michigan Christian College. The living legend made frequent appearances in chapel

and continued to travel the world on missions of mercy, including the delivery of eight tons of food to Soviet premier Mikhail Gorbachev in 1992. Gatewood died on September 16, 1999, in Rochester Hills.

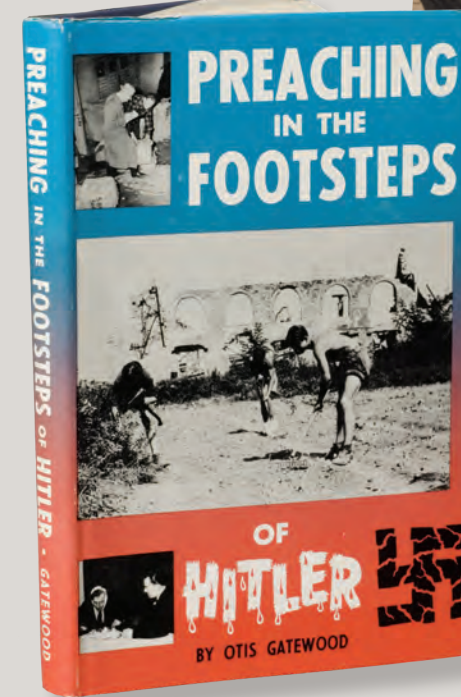
Otis and Alma Gatewood's legacy is alive and well at Rochester College. Fifty years after the Gatewoods drew back the curtain to the world, the college still stands as a gateway between suburban America and places like Africa, the Bronx, Central and South America, Eastern Europe, and Russia. That gateway is the conduit through which Rochester's alumni and students carry peace and goodwill to the nations. Although they may not know it, their missions of mercy continue to fulfill the dreams of Otis and Alma Gatewood.



Respected throughout the nation, Otis Gatewood brought immediate name recognition to the college.

Over half of the student body enrolled in missions courses during the pioneer year as a result of the strong emphasis placed on world evangelism.

Otis Gatewood's years of mission work in Germany at the close of World War II helped define the remainder of his career.



Representing the first graduating class, Dwinna Howard presented the college with paintings of Otis Gatewood and Lucien Palmer at the fall lectureship in 1961. The student body and friends of the college held both leaders in high regard.



Players on early basketball teams could choose either a sweater or a trophy for their participation in intercollegiate sports. Ron Losher earned a letter sweater in 1961 after completing his first year on the North Central Christian College team.

Michigan Christian College and MCC quickly became the names of choice for most members of the campus community once the college formally changed the institutional name to Michigan Christian Junior College in 1961.



Members of the class of 1963 donated the sign that identified the campus for over three decades. Karen Wise and Art Peddle posed by the campus landmark for a publicity photo in 1967. City regulations required removal of the sign in 1997.

COLLEGE NAME CHANGE

On May 1, 1961, the college submitted its first self-study to the state of Michigan as part of the process required for formal incorporation. Prior to an inspection visit, the state recommended a name change to avoid confusion with other institutions and agencies with North Central in their name. On May 27, just prior to the first graduation, the board officially changed the name of the institution to Michigan Christian Junior College.

The college's new name appeared quickly on the college seal and other official documents. Almost immediately, however, the college community began referring to the institution as Michigan Christian College or simply MCC. Nearly two decades passed before the board officially adopted Michigan Christian College as the legal name.

While the name change earned only two short paragraphs in the *North Star*, the staff of the 1962 *Totem Pole* dedicated the volume to the memory of North Central Christian College. A writer stated, "North Central Christian College has not succumbed to oblivion. The name is new, but the ideals are well established and shall never be antiquated."

The yearbook writer concluded, "Lake Norcentra shall abide as a memorial to the image of Christian idealistic principles which were the foundation of North Central Christian College. As education is the mirror of society, Lake Norcentra shall perpetually reflect the majesty of God in the beauties of North Central Christian College."

EMPHASIS ON MISSIONS

Broadening his personal interest in world evangelism, President Gatewood fostered a strong emphasis on mission work during the pioneer years of the college. Within a short period of time, the institution became known as a center for missions information, training, and promotion.

Administrators announced the establishment of a missions department prior to the college opening. In addition to related courses in Bible and languages, the first college catalog included a slate of 11 missions courses, described as the first curriculum of its kind to be offered among colleges affiliated with Churches of Christ. Maurice Hall served as head of the department.

Early college publications boasted of nearly 100 years of mission experience among the pioneer faculty. Those teaching missions or language courses brought diverse international experience to the classroom: Otis Gatewood, Germany; Lucien Palmer, Nigeria; Maurice

Hall, France; Hugh Mingle, Germany; Stephan Bilak, France; and Howard Schug, Mexico.

Over half of the students registered for missions courses during the opening year of the college. In November of that year, Stephen Bilak, a native Ukrainian, began recording programs in the small guest cottage of the former estate. That program developed into a weekly broadcast behind the Iron Curtain. By 1965, the broadcasts originated from a studio at the Rochester Church of Christ and aired five times per week from Radio Monte Carlo and a station in South Korea.



Marshall Keeble charmed those gathered on campus in 1968 for a special testimonial dinner held in his honor. Out of respect for the dynamic 90-year-old preacher, participants gave over \$1,900 to the Keeble-Palmer Missionary Fund.

North Central Christian College introduced the World Evangelism Workshop in June 1960. An estimated 500 guests from 14 states and 13 countries benefited from the lessons and reports of 31 missionaries. At the fourth annual program, held on the campus in 1963, planners expanded the venue to include students and faculty members from other Christian colleges.

In order to train international students for work in their home countries, the college established the Missionary Training Program. During the summer of 1962, the Gatewoods traveled over 10,000 miles to raise additional scholarship funding for the program. More than 2,000 individuals pledged, and by fall the number of international

students enrolled in the college doubled.

During the 1963 World Evangelism Workshop, Maurice Hall posted the names of all nations in the world without the presence of a Church of Christ. During the event, many students signed lists to express their intention of taking the gospel to a specific nation. Maurice and Marie Hall signed one of those lists and made a commitment to serve in Vietnam. That fall, the Hall family honored their commitment and left for Southeast Asia. On January 13, 1964, Otis Gatewood, still adjusting to the sudden death of his wife, resigned from his duties as president of the college and returned to full-time mission work and training.

The absence of Otis Gatewood and Maurice Hall resulted in less emphasis on world missions. Lucien Palmer continued to assist with efforts in Nigeria and Eastern Europe, but had to focus most of his time on new responsibilities as second president of the college. College officials established the Keeble-Palmer Missionary Training Fund in 1967 to provide scholarships for American students planning to pursue a career in missions. Though the number of such students declined in spite of scholarship funding, an alternative interest in domestic mission campaigns appeared on the horizon as the decade ended.



▲ Employees and spouses posed for a photograph after the 1962 Faculty Reception. The traditional event welcomed students for many years.



▲ "I'm a lowly, lousy freshman from MCC. The sophomores are much nicer than crummy little me. The sophomores are intelligent, witty, wise, and kind. Today I give them honor because I think they're mighty fine." Like many freshmen before them, Rick Watson and Mel Lowe wore gold and white beanies and recited this initiation poem in the fall of 1968 as a ritual into the campus community.



▲ Michigan Christian Junior College enrolled 24 international students from 14 nations during the 1962-63 academic year, the largest percentage of any institution in the state of Michigan. Most of the international students received scholarship assistance from the Missionary Training Program.

◀ Reflecting the culture of the era, the 1963-64 Student Handbook outlined very different expectations for male and female students. The same student handbook stated that the doors of the women's residence hall would lock at 10 p.m. and those of the men's residence hall at 11 p.m. during the week.

Excerpt from 1963-64 Student Handbook

GIRLS. First impressions are lasting ones. If you would create a favorable impression on the campus, you should always remember that personal appearance is important. The keynote of a well-dressed coed is simplicity. Good grooming is attention to details; no missing buttons, rundown heels, unbrushed clothes, unpolished shoes, neglected nails, or straggling hair. The smart girl never calls attention to herself by overdressing. Neat attractiveness is her goal. She avoids extreme and dowdy hairdos. She does not apply make-up like a circus clown or a stage performer. Girls are not to wear jeans, pedal pushers, or slacks into the dining area; they are to be worn only for physical education classes and picnics. Shorts of any type are not to be worn for on-campus or off-campus activities.

MEN. Shirts are to be worn at all times in the lounge and on the campus. Remember you are gentlemen and dress accordingly.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Based upon an enthusiastic response to the founding of North Central Christian College, early leaders anticipated rapid growth of the institution. Enrollment grew quickly from 54 to nearly 200 students in just four years. In a 1960 *North Star*, administrators projected 500 students by 1965, and 1,000 by 1970. Once the college reached 200, however, enrollment reached a plateau and remained near that level throughout the remainder of the decade.

In a 1959 feature, the *Pontiac Press* referred to North Central Christian College as Oakland County's first junior college. Between 1961 and 1965, six community colleges opened in southeast Michigan, undoubtedly impacting the enrollment of Michigan Christian Junior College. When students opted to begin their studies in a community college, they bypassed MCJC when moving on for a bachelor's degree.

The college also faced internal challenges that affected the enrollment. Students often filled available dorm space to capacity, even after the addition of new residence halls in 1960 and 1961. Three girls occupied rooms designed for two for the first time in the fall of 1962, causing college leaders to announce a halt in recruitment efforts until funds could be obtained to build another residence hall. The college accommodated the decade's highest enrollment in 1965 by reallocating space in the west wing of the Multi-Purpose Building for dorm rooms, but had to delay plans for a new residence hall because of financial constraints.

Recruitment efforts varied from year to year depending upon residence hall capacity, but the college continued to develop innovative methods of reaching high school students. In 1964, college officials separated two administrative functions. Hugh Mingle continued in his role as registrar, while Fred Alexander assumed leadership of an admissions office. The following fall, the college enrolled a record number of freshmen, and Wayne Baker, a 1962 graduate, began his role as the college's first admissions counselor. The college hosted its first Senior Day in 1965. An annual High School Day regularly drew 400-600 guests per year.

Early college leaders recognized the need to provide financial assistance for students. President Gatewood stated in an early newsletter, "No worthy student, willing to work, will be denied an education at North Central Christian College due to a lack of finances." Beginning with the first student body, the college provided work programs and scholarships for students.

In the fall of 1960, the college received approval for participation in the National Defense Student Loan Program. A few months later, the state granted approval for the college to provide training for veterans. During the fall of 1966, students from the college were among the first to receive the state of Michigan's new Tuition Grant. By the end of the decade, combined sources of federal, state, and institutional aid made it possible for an even greater number of students to experience life at Michigan Christian Junior College.

STUDENT LIFE

Strong campus traditions developed quickly during the 1960s. From annual events to the activities of campus organizations, those traditions provided the campus community with a sense of continuity that varied little from year to year during the entire decade.

Registration, the faculty reception, lectureship, winter banquet, a February banquet, and spring banquet anchored every calendar from the opening year. Fall Festival and graduation joined the event list during the second academic year, and freshman initiation during the third. The Valentine's Banquet evolved into an annual Homecoming in 1963 as former students gathered on campus and began the process of forming an Alumni Association. In 1966, Beautiful Day became a staple of spring when President Palmer first dismissed classes for a day of fun and relaxation at Bloomer State Park.

Campus organizations flourished during the decade, creating an active campus community. Every academic year the college offered a variety of venues for those interested in music, drama, religious activities, student government, publications, and intercollegiate sports.

Under the direction of Fred Alexander, the A Cappella Chorus made its first public appearance at the 1959 lectureship. The chorus immediately began pursuing an active schedule that combined local performances with weekend and extended tours. Smaller ensembles within the chorus provided additional opportunities for performance. The Summer Octet of 1961 traveled over 10,000 miles in 25 states on behalf of the college. Chorus camp debuted in 1962, providing the chorus with an opportunity to begin each year with a period of intensive rehearsal at such places as Michigan Christian Youth Camp and Camp Indogan.

Within a short period of time, the A Cappella Chorus became known for its exceptional quality and the bonding experiences it provided for students. Writers of a 1960 *North Star* stated, "The administration of the

school feels that a good A Cappella Chorus is a strong drawing point for an institution of higher learning. To this end, every effort will be made to mold the NCCC chorus into one of the best in the country." That tradition of excellence has prevailed for five decades.

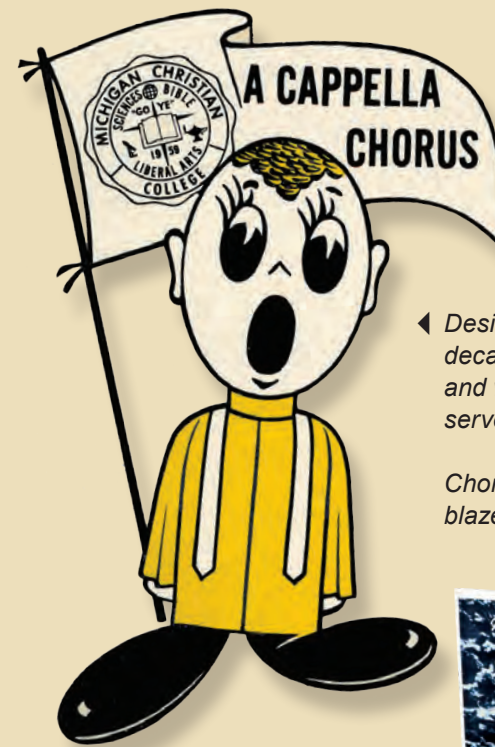
Drama enthusiasts presented their first mini-play, *The Fatal Quest*, during the pioneer year. Groups like Les Artistes and later the Drama Club assisted in the production of two to three plays during most academic years. The music and drama departments combined efforts in 1964 to produce *Pirates of Penzance*, introducing a series of musicals that lasted for nearly two decades. Other notable milestones included a 1965 production of *Macbeth* in honor of Shakespeare's 400th birthday, and 1967's *Oedipus the King*, based upon director Doug Marsh's translation of an ancient work by Sophocles.

A number of organizations provided outlets for students interested in Christian service and spiritual growth. Groups like Adelphoi, the Disciples Forum, and Preacher's Forum assisted in the establishment of new churches in Hillsdale, Howell, Lapeer, and Utica. Members often preached in area congregations and regularly visited

the Church of Christ Home for the Aged in Romeo. Les Bonnes du Christ and the Ideal Women's Club combined in 1963 as the W Club under the longtime sponsorship of Ida Palmer and the spouses of various faculty members. The women's groups provided toys for children's homes, clothing for needy families, and babysitting services for campus events. Groups like Mission Study and the Evangelistic Forum sponsored trips to the annual World Mission Workshop and conducted evangelistic campaigns throughout the region. The Way, formed in 1968, established the college's first ministry to the underprivileged. As stated in an April 1967 news bulletin, "MCC students have always responded well when some good work needs to be done."



Noel Wilson, Sandi Jones, and Tom Hurcombe appeared in 1964's "Pirates of Penzance."



◀ Designed by Sue Gentry, a decal of a mascot in the gold and white robes of the 1960s served as a chorus logo.

Chorus members traveled in ▶ blazers from 1965 to 1973.

Strong sales of "Abide With Me, 'Tis Eventide" ▶ required three pressings in 1966.

Attentiveness to good form ▶ typified the 1965-66 chorus.





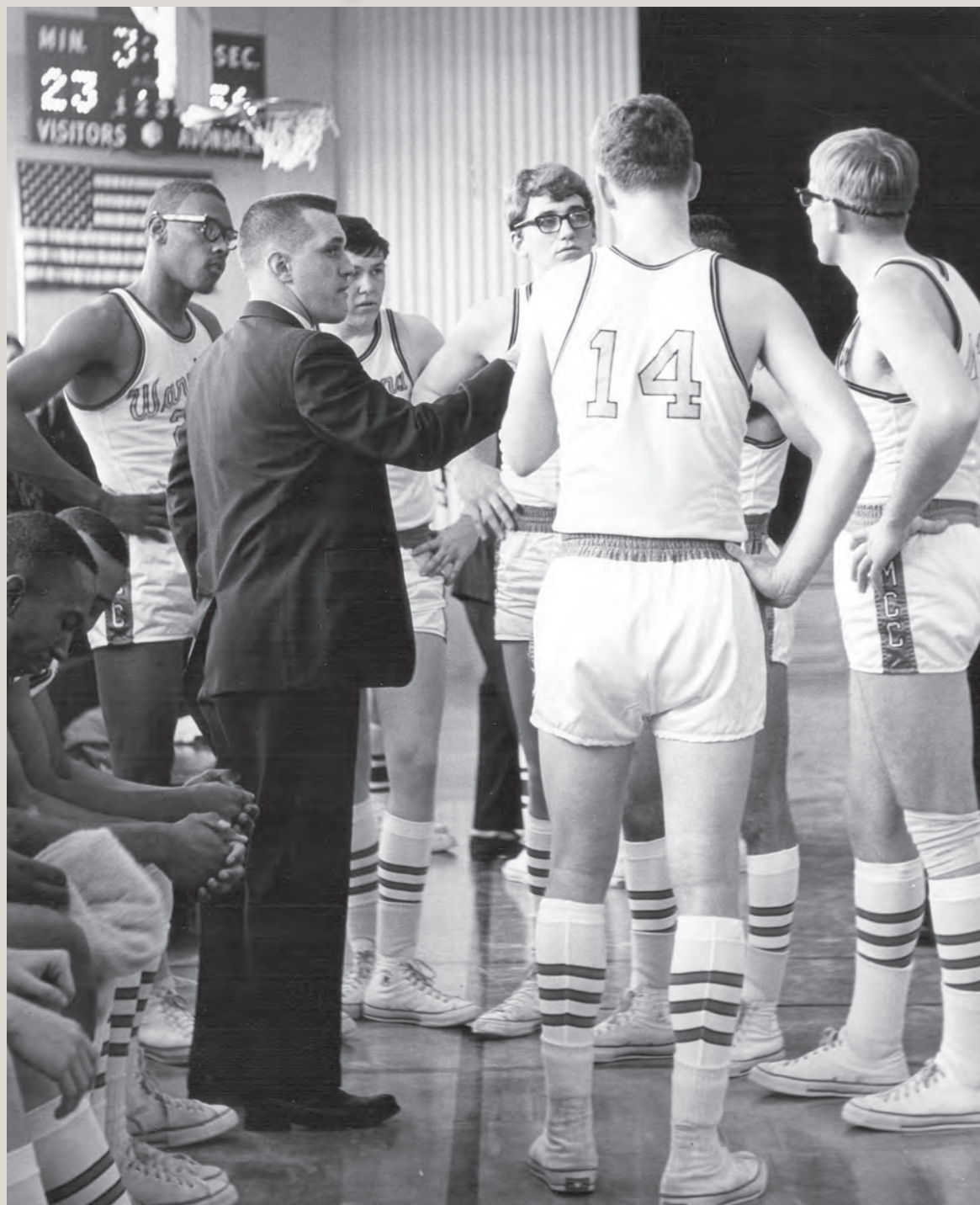
▲ Students formed strong relationships with one another in chapel during the 17 years it met in the cafetorium.

◀ Most students from the 1960s learned classic hymns from "Great Songs of the Church."



▲ Joining the Michigan Christian College Athletic Association in 1962, the Warriors earned their first MCAA trophy in 1965.

▶ Coach Bill Shinsky built the intercollegiate basketball program during the 1960s. The 1965-66 Warriors placed second in both league and tournament play. Teams played many of their games in the Avondale High School gym.



STUDENT LIFE

In addition to planning activities and serving as a voice for the student body, the pioneer Student Council set a precedent for student involvement in the college's development. Under the leadership of Leonard Blake, the council launched Operation 10 to raise funds for a residence hall. In the spring of 1962, the Student Council assisted in the formation of the first student center, a newly-furnished area in the northwest corner of the cafeteria. The class of 1963 provided funds for the large brick sign that identified the campus for over three decades. The sophomore class of 1968 decorated a new student center with paneling, paint, and drapes. Each project demonstrated the genuine interest of the student body in the future of their institution.

The college's first athletic organization, a men's basketball team, competed in a church league during the pioneer year. While still competing in that league, the team participated in its first intercollegiate competition during the spring of 1961. The Warriors and their new coach, Bill Shinsky, returned home from a road trip to Northeastern Institute for Christian Education and Great Lakes Christian College with three victories. The following summer, the Warriors became charter members of the Michigan Christian College Athletic Association and entered intercollegiate competition on a regular basis.

The Warriors achieved an important milestone in the spring of 1965 when they placed second in the MCAA tournament, bringing back a "trophy so large the showcase had to be rearranged so it would fit," according to an article by Judy Micciche in the April *North Star*. The Warriors won their first conference title in 1969 with a 15-10 record. The team tied for first place, and

co-captain Garth Pleasant earned all conference team honors and the league scoring title.

A cheerleading squad formed in 1960 to support the men's basketball team, assisted in subsequent years by a variety of pep clubs including the Warriors, the Indians, and eventually the Warriorettes. The college triumphed on an All-Sports Day with local colleges in 1966 and

1967 as students competed in softball, track, soccer, tennis, bowling, badminton, volleyball, table tennis, and horseshoes. Based upon the availability of individual talent, intercollegiate teams in tennis, track, flag football, softball, and women's basketball each surfaced briefly during the 1960s. Limited intramural activities occurred as early as 1962, but did not develop into a fuller intramural program until the end of the decade.

As students attempted to balance the rigors of the classroom with a full slate of annual events and student organizations, they always managed to develop a strong community of friends that helped them grow in faith and character.

A 1962 bulletin article described the

breaking down of

barriers among international students that typified the entire campus community. The writer stated, "The traditional arguments on the Germans and the French are buried beneath the bond of friendship." In a sophomore farewell, Mary Branstetter stated in a 1962 *North Star*, "Michigan Christian's dreams of perfection will not cease to be a part of our lives. This college has brought us very close to the Lord and all His majesty, not only in spirit but in His manifestations around us." The students indeed developed a unique campus life full of important traditions during the decade of the 1960s.



▲ Sharon Craft served as captain of the cheerleaders in 1966-67.

▶ Nola Lee's classic cheerleader sweater displayed the college colors in 1963-64.



E. Lucien Palmer

President 1964-1971

Edward Lucien Palmer was born August 12, 1921, in Ludowici, Georgia. A high school football star, Palmer aspired to become a coach. He went to work for the railroad, however, so he could afford to marry Ida Coates, a cheerleader from a rival high school.

In 1944, the Palmers moved to Nashville, Tennessee, so Lucien could attend college. While going to school, Palmer became the first minister to the Una Church of Christ in Nashville. Meanwhile, he and Ida had two children: Ed and Pat. After Palmer graduated from George Peabody College in 1950, he preached and taught school in Indiana. In 1954, the family moved to Ikot Usen, Nigeria, to help establish a Bible college.

Three years later, Palmer returned to Nashville to pursue a master's degree in education. At that time, celebrated African-American preacher Marshall Keeble retired as president of Nashville Christian Institute, one of only three schools affiliated with Churches of Christ that enrolled African Americans. Palmer succeeded Keeble as president of NCI and the men became famous friends. In 1958, they co-founded the Nigerian Christian Schools Foundation to build Bible colleges in Nigeria.

In 1958, Palmer accepted an invitation to become dean of North Central Christian College. While Otis Gatewood, the college's celebrity president, raised friends and funds, Palmer went to work creating academic programs, operational systems, and social values for the new college.

In 1961, Palmer hired Bill Shinsky to coach the men's basketball team. Over the next three decades, Shinsky started most of the college's intercollegiate sports programs. He also recruited a basketball star named Garth Pleasant, who later became a coach at Michigan Christian College. Pleasant married Palmer's daughter, Pat. One of their sons, Klint, became a vice president at Rochester College in 2005.

When Gatewood resigned in January 1964, the college's board invited Palmer to become president. Just a few months later, Palmer purchased the 54-acre Gierok farm, more than doubling the campus acreage. Over the next seven years, Palmer presided over several construction projects, including the athletic fields, the college's first library and student center building, and Gatewood Hall.

In 1966, after years of hard work dating back to before the college's opening, Palmer was ready to

establish a formal relationship with the North Central Association. As the pursuit of accreditation intensified, Palmer devoted more time to the endeavor. He inspected every detail of the self-study the college had to complete to qualify for NCA candidacy. The work paid off in 1969 when NCA granted Michigan Christian Junior College candidate status.

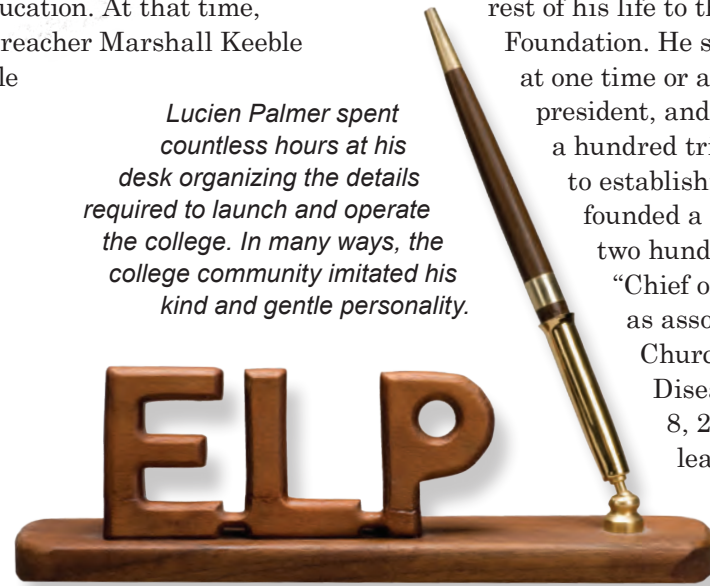
As the college moved closer to accreditation, Palmer had less time for campus activities. In 1971, the board made Palmer the college's first chancellor and invited Don Gardner to fill the president's office. Three years later, NCA finally accredited the college, concluding a 16-year process. Palmer's work was finally done.

Palmer returned to Nashville and devoted the rest of his life to the Nigerian Christian Schools Foundation. He served in almost every capacity at one time or another, including trustee, president, and chancellor, and made over a hundred trips to Nigeria. In addition to establishing Bible colleges, Palmer founded a hospital in Ikot Usen. Over two hundred villages gave him the title "Chief of Progress." Palmer also served as associate minister to the Una Church of Christ until Parkinson's Disease disabled him. On July 8, 2003, E. Lucien Palmer died, leaving a legacy that continues to influence tens of thousands around the world.

These words appeared in the 1962 *Totem Pole*: "A personality which typifies the ideals of Michigan Christian Junior College may be found in one man on our campus. Dean Lucien Palmer manifests the traits of a well-educated man who is so dedicated that he lives his vocation. Faculty, staff, and the student body are dependent upon him for major decisions relating to their organization and operation. Campus life revolves around this man. He is a living example of the adage that education should include knowledge of what to do with it."

History will remember many men as the college's "founding fathers," but E. Lucien Palmer is the enduring father figure. Those who build Rochester College into a world-class university will build upon Palmer's foundation, according to Palmer's blueprint. During the college's first two decades, Palmer fashioned the institution's academic programs, engineered its internal systems, and wove its social fabric. He breathed life into the organization and lent the college his own gracious spirit. Rochester College's culture, a family atmosphere where friends and strangers feel at home, is an extension of Palmer's personality.

Lucien Palmer spent countless hours at his desk organizing the details required to launch and operate the college. In many ways, the college community imitated his kind and gentle personality.



▲ Lucien and Ida Palmer welcomed freshman Hazel Smith along with other new students at the 1962 Faculty Reception.



▲ Often presiding at chapel, Lucien Palmer made thousands of announcements during his tenure as president.

◀ Lucien Palmer rarely appeared in public without a suit, including Beautiful Day at Bloomer State Park in 1969.

CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT

As a new institution with limited facilities, the college focused on the construction of several buildings during the 1960s. The absence of major donors and competing demands for financial resources often made construction projects an overwhelming challenge. Due to the consistent support of the Associates, however, the college managed to make substantial progress.

The greenhouse of the former estate served as the Science Building during the opening year. In order to provide additional classroom space, the college used a

attached to the greenhouse made the mansion addition indistinguishable. Major construction also began on another men's residence hall and the cafetorium.

Students moved into the new residence hall at the beginning of the fall semester even though the building lacked finishing touches. Known for many years as Dorm Two, the new residence hall was funded by the Grace Barbier estate. The cafetorium opened on December 5, doubling the amount of cafeteria space and providing a new home for chapel. Architects designed the facility to seat 800 for lectures and 350 for banquets.

say that we had a part in laying the foundation, and there are blisters to prove it.”

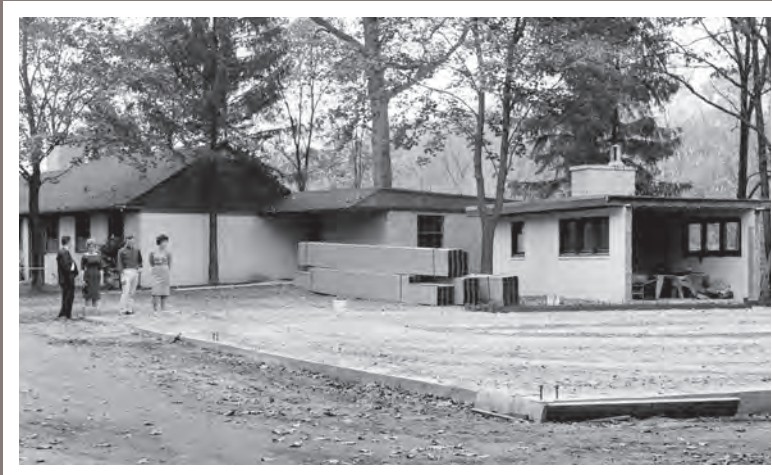
During construction of the gym, workers also enclosed the balcony off the recreation room of the former mansion for library stacks. Within a year, the Associates funded construction of the cafetorium annex, later known as the Gold Conference Room. The facility provided space for small banquets and meetings, and served as the campus headquarters of the Associates.

Multiple efforts to increase the college's acreage culminated on November 10, 1964, with the purchase

intention to build and open the facility by 1964, but had to postpone construction because of inadequate funding.

In November 1964, workers began preparing the site for a student union just to the east of the Multi-Purpose Building. The planned multi-level facility overlooked Lake Norcentra and included space for a student center, library, bookstore, and faculty offices. Once again, however, funding difficulties halted construction until a more feasible plan surfaced several months later.

Enrollment growth necessitated conversion of the Multi-Purpose Building's west wing to dorm rooms in



Early progress on the physical education building, later known as the gym, caught the attention of students in the fall of 1962.



Board chairman Wheeler Utley and President Palmer signed documents to purchase the Gierok farm in November 1964.



Earth moving equipment began transformation of a Gierok farm cornfield into athletic fields in the summer of 1965.



Construction workers poured concrete foundations for the Alma Gatewood Residence Hall during the summer of 1969.

small building attached to the greenhouse as a model for expansion. After removing the glass structure, workers added five rooms to the building in phases during the summers of 1960, 1961, and 1962.

Workers also began construction on a residence hall for men during the summer of 1960. The new hall, first known as Dorm One and later as Palmer Hall, opened shortly after the fall semester began. Later in the semester, the library moved to the recreation room of the mansion, while the music and art departments opened new quarters in the lower level of the building's west wing.

The summer of 1961 witnessed the beginning of four projects. In addition to completing a second phase on the Science Building, workers added a room to the east end of the mansion for use as an administrative office. The reuse of slate roofing tiles removed from the building

Construction began on a physical education building in the fall of 1962. Initially, college officials planned for the simple block building to serve as a temporary facility until a regular gymnasium could be built within a few years. They designed the building so it could be converted to a two-floor classroom facility. Before completion of the project, however, officials projected the addition of bleacher space and locker rooms at a later date.



Construction of the Gold Room in 1964 provided space for drama preparations, meetings, and special dinners.

An October issue of the *North Star* described a unique aspect of the gym construction. A writer stated, "Throwing dirt and pushing wheelbarrows were the main activities during past weeks in the gym classes. Coach had everyone working at this new type of exercise. It wasn't much fun, but it sure loosened a few of those forgotten muscles. Though workers will soon be here to start construction, we can

of the Henry Gierok farm. Earlier, the college had purchased seven acres from Otis Gatewood, but the Gierok farm separated the campus from the Gatewood property. The college purchased the 54-acre farm for a cash payment of \$54,000 and an annuity payment of \$6,600 per year. The cash payment had to be raised. The Associates agreed to pay the annuity payments and remodel the farmhouse for the college president. The Associates continued to fund the annuity payments until the death of Mrs. Gierok in 2003.

Most facility requirements had been addressed by 1964 except the need for another residence hall and a student center. Enrollment necessitated the assignment of three girls to some dorm rooms as early as 1962. Social space for students was limited to dorm lobbies and a small student center in the northwest corner of the cafeteria. Yet a need to fund operational expenses and debt retirement hampered the college's ability to move forward with construction and often resulted in the delay of announced building projects.

Three weeks after the sudden death of Alma Gatewood in January 1963, the board issued a resolution calling for the construction of a residence hall in her honor. By that time, over 250 unsolicited memorial gifts had been given to the college. The board announced its

1965. Workers also cleared the level ground in front of the former mansion for the Student Center Building. The new facility opened on January 4, 1966, with a student center, the library, and additional classrooms. Those facility changes temporarily relieved the pressure for additional housing, social, and academic space.

The college launched an expansion campaign in the fall of 1966 to raise funds for the Alma Gatewood Residence Hall and other campus initiatives. College officials actually broke ground for the building the following year, but again had to delay construction because of financing. Other than a 1966 addition to the east end of the Multi-Purpose Building for the bookstore, construction projects ceased for nearly three years.

In June 1969, large earth moving equipment appeared on the campus without fanfare and began site preparations for the long-awaited Alma Gatewood Residence Hall. The actual dorm fund had grown to only \$98,488 since its inception in 1963, and all proceeds from the expansion campaign had been allocated to operational expenses and debt retirement. As a result, the board authorized a first mortgage bond issue in order to begin construction on the \$700,000 facility. That difficult decision by the board had profound implications on the decade that followed.

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STEPS TOWARD ACCREDITATION

The college's founding board clearly stated its desire for the institution to be accredited by the North Central Association. College officials knew that such an achievement would require years of effort, so they immediately began laying the foundations necessary to attain that goal.

After obtaining membership approval from the American Association of Junior Colleges in the spring of 1962, the college decided to pursue accreditation by the Michigan Commission on College Accreditation. A self-study committee submitted its report to the state on April 5, 1963. One month later, an inspection team of four individuals, chaired by Dr. James Snyder of Muskegon Community College, visited the campus, resulting in state accreditation.

Knowing the importance of regional accreditation, the college next initiated action to establish a formal relationship with the North Central Association. On October 12-13, 1966, the association sent Dr. E.K. Williams of Westminster College to the campus for a consultation visit. As a result of that visit, college leaders decided to pursue candidate membership with NCA and attended a spring Junior College Accreditation Workshop in Chicago.

In the fall of 1967, the college received official recognition from the North Central Association as a correspondent institution. That status paved the way for increased interaction with NCA. The following April, Dr. Williams returned to campus to review a self-study document with the administration. The document, which requested candidate status with NCA, was submitted on May 1.

December 5-6, 1968, marked the college's first inspection visit by the North Central Association. Parker Lichtenstein of Denison University and Martin Koehneke of Concordia Teachers College represented NCA. Their review resulted in unconditional approval for candidate membership, effective March 26, 1969, bringing the college within one final step of achieving an important goal set by the founding board.

FUND-RAISING EFFORTS

Prior to the establishment of North Central Christian College, the board conducted two major financial campaigns to provide initial funding for the college. Throughout the 1960s, the institution faced the challenge of raising funds for facility construction, daily operational costs, and debt retirement. College officials often struggled with the reality of limited funding while trying to address all three of those issues.

The need to supplement income from students with

funds for operational costs became a necessity once the college opened. In September 1960, the college launched the Living Endowment Program under the direction of Lester Allen. Contributors became members of one of six clubs, depending upon their level of giving. By July of the next year, over 1,900 individuals were participating in the ongoing program, which provided the major portion of operational gifts for the next 12 years.

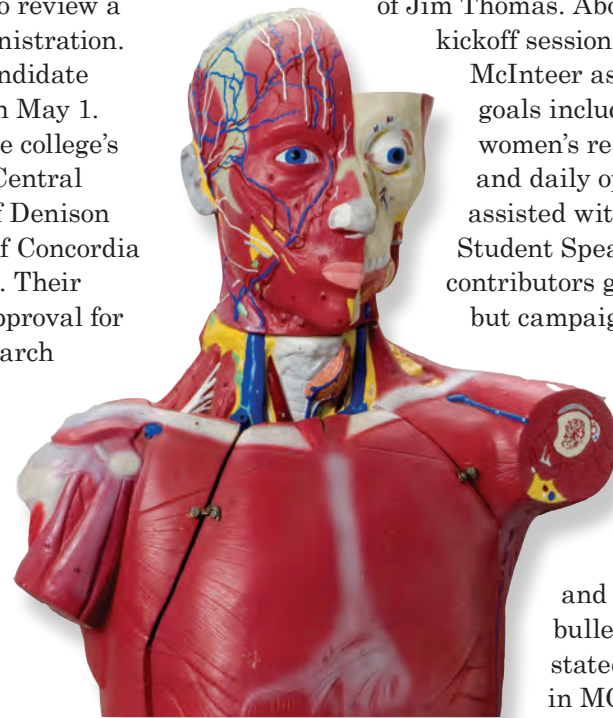
The board initiated a campaign for debt retirement in October 1962 under the leadership of Jim Thomas. The campaign focused on the remaining \$70,000 debt from the Maxon estate purchase and included such events as a donkey basketball game and a benefit banquet for area preachers. At the annual May Rally in 1963, President Gatewood announced that the board had raised \$1,600 more than the amount required to retire the mortgage on the property. In response, Maxon himself pledged a gift of \$8,000 to be paid over the next two years.

In order to supplement operational funds raised through the Living Endowment clubs, the college launched a Pay-for-a-Day program in December 1963. The program encouraged individuals to pay for a day's operating deficit, which at that time amounted to \$186.30. Such programs provided some relief, but the college remained burdened by debt. Even after delivering the final payment on the original property, the college carried a debt load of \$600,000.

The college launched the Million Dollar Expansion Campaign in the fall of 1966, again under the leadership of Jim Thomas. About 2,500 individuals attended a kickoff session at Cobo Hall, featuring Jim Bill McInteer as guest speaker. The campaign goals included funding for a library, a women's residence hall, debt retirement, and daily operations. Eighteen students assisted with the campaign as members of the Student Speakers Bureau. Within a year, 1,220 contributors gave \$321,178 in cash and pledges, but campaign proceeds had to be earmarked for the highest institutional priorities - debt retirement and operational funding.

By August 1967, the college found it necessary to form a financial relief committee to address the need for operational and debt retirement income. In a bulletin article, President Palmer stated, "We have come to the place in MCC's history where the annual interest on the initial debt plus the daily deficit have carried the college along in a semi-financial crisis each year and have gradually created a crisis year." Under the leadership of Jack Hoover, the committee focused on the Pay-for-a-Day Program,

which by that time sought to raise about half of the cost per day not covered by student revenue.



Addressing expectations of accreditation agencies, the college added a science requirement in 1962. General biology students have learned from the same anatomical model for over four decades.

Members of the inaugural Living Endowment Club received lapel pins for their participation in the fund-raising program. Many individuals proudly wore those pins during the 1960s.



Planners of the 1963 May Rally organized the "500 Voice Chorus" under the direction of Fred Alexander. Church members throughout the region sang in the group. Hugh Mingle, Milton Fletcher, and Dan Woodroof assisted with rehearsals in various locations. The college burned the mortgage on the Maxon estate at the 1963 rally, held at the Masonic Temple Auditorium in Detroit.



Self-study committees and inspection teams looked closely at library resources as the college sought accreditation from the North Central Association. The library moved from the east wing basement to the recreation room of the former mansion in 1960. Enclosure of the room's porch in 1963 helped accommodate growth of the book collection until the library moved to the new Student Center Building three years later.



Retired Army Major A.R. McCoy assisted the college with the development of a bookstore that served the needs of local churches while raising additional funding for the college. The expanded bookstore opened in the fall of 1960.



◀ Scotty Darnell, Marie Carter, and John Williams accepted honors on behalf of the Associates and Men's Club at the 1966 Michigan State Fair. The two groups received first place honors for the best restaurant booth at the event.

Members of the Junior Associates celebrated the organization's first anniversary in 1960. Wayne Baker and David Gatewood, first and second president of the group, joined President Gatewood for a photograph.



▲ Celebrating the college's 10th anniversary in 1969, the Associates sold a commemorative plate picturing the Administration Building, the college's original facility.



◀ Making their first major donation to the college in 1960, the Associates purchased a bus for \$7,223. While the bus occasionally had stubborn moments requiring the assistance of a wrecker, it served the college faithfully for 13 years.



◀ Associates Founder Alma Gatewood and President Bell Parsons presented Mildred Freeland with her lifetime membership pin in 1961.

Mary Utley, a founding member of the Associates, received her pioneer pin in 1987. She served as president of the group from 1977-1979.



VOLUNTEER SUPPORT GROUPS

As college officials struggled with pressing financial needs throughout the 1960s, three groups of dedicated volunteers addressed many of those needs by providing funds for special projects. The Associates, Men's Club, and Teenage Boosters each played a pivotal role in the foundational years of the college.

For months after the formation of the Associates, Alma Gatewood, Ida Palmer, Mary Utley, Mildred Freeland, Bell Parsons, and others traveled hundreds of miles, from congregation to congregation, in an intensive membership drive. As a result of their efforts, membership blossomed to 1,036 women in 72 congregations by the end of the group's first year.

The Associates funded the first phase of the Science Building and purchased a bus during their inaugural year. As the decade continued, the group provided either partial or total funding for six building projects. The Associates donated funds for library materials, furniture, salaries, debt retirement, sports equipment, parking lot construction, the Gierok annuity, athletic fields, and scholarships. Hardly an area on campus went untouched by their efforts.

On October 8, 1960, the Associates hosted their first Fall Festival, originally known as the Harvest Festival or simply the Fair. A total of 36 booths lined the sidewalk between the Multi-Purpose Building and the new men's residence hall. By noon, one booth alone sold 1,200 hamburgers. The Associates raised \$3,538 from the inaugural event. Three years later, they added a queen contest to the festival, allowing chapters to sponsor fund-raising events throughout the summer on behalf of the queen candidates.

The Associates initiated three additional traditions during the 1960s that lasted for many years. The organization hosted its first Gift Bazaar, later named

Gift-a-Rama, in 1963. At the suggestion of Wilma McKeel, the Associates joined forces with the Men's Club to provide staffing for a food booth at the Michigan State Fair beginning in 1965. Within four years, the Associates purchased a mobile kitchen for use at the fair and other special events. In 1966, the Associates hosted their first Spring Fashion Show, initially known as the Spring Carnival.

The Junior Associates formed during the fall of 1959 as a fund-raising organization with a membership of high school students. The group provided opportunities for interaction with other teens and introduced the college to many prospective students. During the group's first year, members sold Christmas cards and candy to purchase robes for the chorus. Among other projects, the Junior Associates sponsored an annual fund-raising trip to Boblo Island. The group reorganized during the fall of 1964 and functioned as the Teenage Boosters (TAB) until dissolving in 1971.

The Michigan Foundation for Christian Education was organized in September 1961. Nicknamed the Men's Club, the group initially decided to provide assistance for financial aid programs at Michigan Christian College. The Men's Club initiated a unique fund-raising program in 1965 with Christian Memorial Estates Cemetery Association. The association set aside a large number of cemetery lots and pledged \$40 to the college for each lot sold by the club. Fifty couples purchased lots within the first month of the effort. While never as large as the Associates, the Men's Club often worked with the Associates to provide invaluable support for the college during a critical time in the institution's history.



◀ Students from the pioneer year often cleared the snow on Lake Norcentra and enjoyed skating in the beautiful surroundings. The scenic area quickly became a trademark of the college.

TENTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

As the decade of the 1960s came to a close, the college celebrated its tenth anniversary. In November 1968, the board created a committee to direct the anniversary activities, chaired by Milton Fletcher. The celebration centered on the theme "Ten Years' Profile in Progress" and continued through December of the next year.

Commenting on the anniversary in a news bulletin, President Palmer stated, "The anniversary provides occasions for evaluation and occasions to pause and reflect upon the many achievements experienced. It means that Michigan Christian College has passed through some of her greatest tests of stability. It also provides opportunity to chart the next decade of growth and development."

A capacity crowd packed the cafetorium on May 8, 1969, for the Tenth Anniversary Banquet. The students produced "Michigan Christian College in Review" under the direction of freshmen Rick Watson and Bob Woodroof. The evening ended with a contribution of \$7,003 toward daily operational costs. Students, employees, and friends of the college celebrated the accomplishments of a remarkable decade that set the tone for an exciting future.

Memories of the Pioneer Year by Jerry Burns

The first semester of North Central Christian College was very exciting as it was a brand new college. I knew that the other students and I would be responsible for establishing traditions that would continue for a long time. I was enthusiastic and eagerly accepted the challenge of being the editor of the school paper. During that first winter, we skated on the lake around the totem pole, and I was thrilled to be on the first basketball team and in the first chorus. We had great Christian teachers. Chapel was also a highlight, when we assembled every day in the home of President and Mrs. Gatewood. It was a special place, and I have a special love for my fellow students from the first year.

After almost 50 years, I look at the first copies of the North Star and the first edition of the Totem Pole with great respect, awe, and love for all those associated with the college. I am even proud of the scar on my left hand, which I received when the guys in the dorm decided to throw me in Lake Norcentra. As they carried me down the dorm hall, my hand scraped along the wall and made quite a gash. Every day since, I have looked upon that scar and remembered my days in Rochester Hills.

During the next ten years, I attended a total of six colleges and universities, accumulating over 200 semester hours and graduating with majors in psychology, communication, and English. I have great appreciation and respect for all of those institutions, but have a special love for Rochester College.

We were thrilled to visit the campus in the fall of 2006, and to see the development and beauty of the campus. I was impressed with the quality of the administration, staff, and professors. There is a great, free spirit of spiritual development on campus that is very refreshing in our post-modern era. I am eternally grateful for the influence of Rochester College in my life.

Jerry Burns attended the college during the opening year. After preaching for several years, he founded Burns Manufacturing with his brother. For 20 years he manufactured Burns-Craft houseboats, cruisers, and yachts, while continuing to preach in North Alabama. He is now retired and lives in Plano, Texas.

◀ Betty (Cross) Losher, a member of the pioneer class of 1961, assisted Charlene Smith, secretary to Milton Fletcher, with the sale of tickets at the Tenth Anniversary Banquet in the spring of 1969. A capacity crowd filled the cafetorium for the milestone event. The evening also included an art show in the Gold Conference Room.



▲ Science, math, and physical education courses brought many students to the scenic area on the north side of Lake Norcentra during the decade of the 1960s.

▶ Art and music classes began meeting in the lower level of the former mansion in 1960. Richard Hackett, an adjunct professor with training from the Cranbrook Academy of Art, taught a drawing class in 1968.

▼ College officials presented the institutional flag at the spring banquet in 1969. Carol Fussell, a member of the Fairview Associates, produced the flag.



First a burden, then a blessing, the Alma Gatewood Residence Hall played a pivotal role during the 1970s. The college struggled to meet huge bond payments of over \$100,000 per year on the facility until the introduction of Partnership Dinner. By 1975, enrollment growth could not have been accommodated without the spacious building. The facility became known as Gatewood Hall in 1997.



1970-1979

Farrell's Ice Cream Parlour frequently attracted students during the decade. Photographed at the restaurant with Alison Kooi in 1973, Mike Weimer returned in 1977 to teach Bible. ▶



◀ Ken Franklin frequently read to his math classes from "God is No Fool." As a result, Randy Gill did the same with his music classes and chorus after joining the faculty in 1976. The book became a best seller in the bookstore and made a profound impact on thousands of students.

Milestones of the 1970s

- 1970 • Men's baseball added to intercollegiate sports program
• Alma Gatewood Residence Hall completed
- 1971 • Don Gardner named third president of the college
- 1972 • Partnership Dinner organized to meet annual payments on Gatewood Hall
- 1973 • Autumn formed to assist with student recruitment efforts
- 1974 • College accredited by the North Central Association
- 1975 • Over 300 students enrolled for the first time in college history
• Cross country added to intercollegiate sports program
- 1976 • Barbier Hall updated and Palmer Hall totally renovated with suites
- 1977 • Millionth dollar donated to the college by the Associates
• Celebration in Song introduced as an annual showcase of student talent
• Third year of coursework added to the Bible program
• Associate in Applied Science introduced for technical degree options
- 1978 • Westside Central Chapel and original Utley Student Center completed
• Walt Gilfilen named fourth president of the college
• Bachelor of Religious Education degree approved by state
• Institutional name officially changed to Michigan Christian College
- 1979 • Lobby, restrooms, and locker rooms added to gymnasium
• New campus master plan unveiled



Bill Hall, the only alumnus to lose his life in an international conflict, served as a pilot in Vietnam. As the war ended in 1975, several refugees enrolled as students.

Throughout the early 1970s, the college community faced uncertain times. A faltering economy and a lingering war in Vietnam tested the patience of a nation, while enormous challenges threatened the future of the college.

A new generation of college leaders emerged soon after the institution entered its second decade of service. Building upon foundations laid by the previous generation, those individuals blended creativity with fresh energy to propel the institution into a new era of growth.

As conditions at the college began to

improve, President Gardner declared 1974 as the "Year of the Yes." During the same year, President Nixon resigned and allowed the nation to refocus its energy on a more positive agenda.

After achieving accreditation from the North Central Association, the college moved into a time of enrollment growth and campus improvement. New traditions surfaced, enriching the entire college community. By the end of the decade, administrators completed most of the steps required for final approval of the college's first bachelor's degree program.

ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGE

During the early 1970's, the college experienced a major change in campus personnel. From the office of the president to the classroom, those who served the college during its founding years gradually passed the baton to a new group of employees. By the fall of 1974, Coach Bill Shinsky stood alone as the only employee who had served the institution since the pioneer years of North Central Christian College.

Lucien Palmer provided consistent leadership for the college from the day he arrived on campus in 1958 until his return to mission work in 1974.

During the spring of 1971, he decided to resign from the presidency and assume a new position as chancellor of the college. In his new role, Chancellor Palmer concentrated on long-range planning, board relations, and special events. The board named Don Gardner to succeed Lucien Palmer as the third president of Michigan Christian Junior College.

Prior to Dr. Gardner's arrival, the college faced a difficult situation involving Dr. Joseph Jones, a highly-respected administrator and faculty member. Dr. Jones accepted his role as academic vice president in 1967. He was held in high regard among the faculty for his academic vision and leadership. Beginning in 1969, the student body repeatedly selected him as the college's favorite instructor with a near-perfect score in all categories of a national survey conducted among junior colleges.

One evening after Dr. Jones preached for a gospel meeting in Flint, Michigan, a group of elders asked to meet with him concerning some of his viewpoints. Feeling that such a discussion could easily be taken out of context, Dr. Jones decided to forego that meeting. In the months that followed, several church leaders pressured the college until the board decided to terminate his employment during the summer of 1971.

Dr. Jones served as the coordinator of a self-study committee that originally planned to submit its report to the North Central Association later that year. His absence dealt a difficult blow to the accreditation process.

The board acted under pressure to protect the reputation of a very young college that could not withstand major controversy. While the decision angered many college employees and students, Natalie Kilmer, editor of the *North Star*, wrote, "I believe that we must all trust in God's wisdom and His complete knowledge of things present and things to come, and have faith that He is guiding us in the changes that have been made." Nearly three decades later, in a very different church climate, the college publicly apologized to Dr. Jones during the 2000 lectureship.

Don Gardner began work with the college on September 1, 1971. Immediately, he found it necessary to deal with tension resulting from the Joe Jones controversy. Additionally, he faced an urgent need to give his full attention to the college's critical financial condition. His very different style of leadership resulted in a complete turnover of administrative personnel within three years. As finances permitted, he gradually built a new team of

administrators to assist him as he led the institution. After an eventful presidency that allowed the college to achieve many significant milestones, Don Gardner resigned in May 1978 to accept the presidency of Greater Houston Christian Schools. The board named Walter Gilfilen as the college's fourth president. Opening chapel sessions that fall focused on new beginnings as the college inaugurated its twentieth year and welcomed the new president along with several new faculty members. President Gilfilen served the college throughout the remainder of the decade.

Memories from the 1970s by Jill Brazle

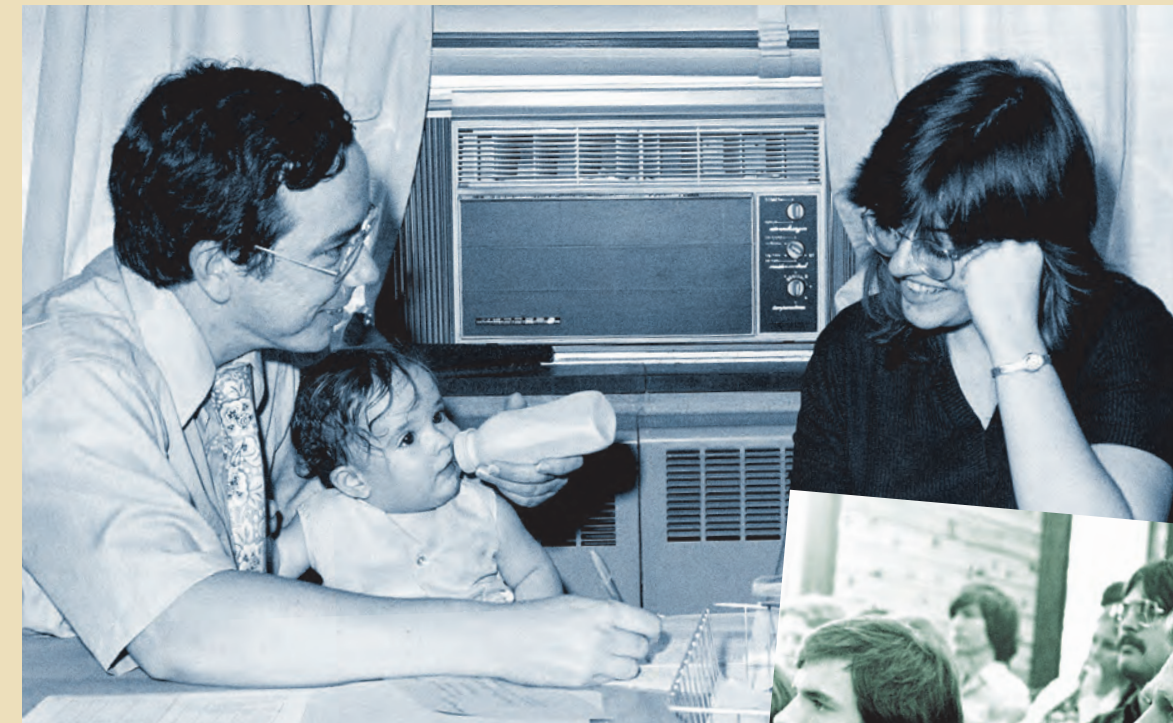
As I walked onto campus in 1971, little did I know what an impact the Michigan Christian College community would have on my life. The atmosphere was one of striving for academic excellence, learning life lessons in godly surroundings, and nurturing amazing relationships that still thrive to this day. For me it was a gift, a place to develop self-confidence and hone my leadership skills. My passion to serve God in missions took root at MCC. That desire eventually led me to work with my family in Belgium for 16 years.

I have such wonderful memories of MCC: devotionals, late night baptisms, chorus trips with Mr. Ritchie, tennis class with Garth Pleasant, Jerry Rushford's Bible class, the third-floor cronies, and many lasting friendships. During my time at MCC, I discovered how to deepen my faith and trust God more completely. All of these experiences were being pieced together into an intricate quilt that represents who I am.

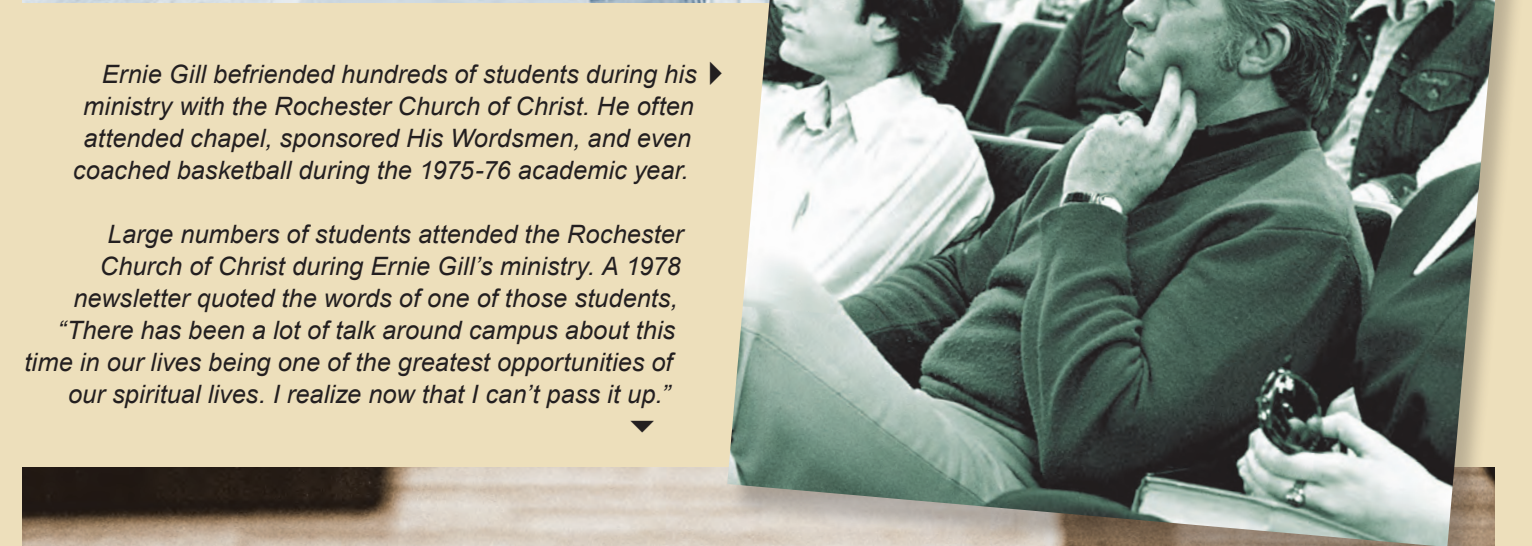
Thirty years later, my husband and I helped our son, David, move into Barbier as he began his freshman year. Our daughter, Karina, chose Rochester as well. Tears flowed as I thought about the life-changing experiences they would encounter. They experienced mission trips, feeding the homeless, chorus trips, singing with Autumn, and the making of lifetime friendships. Their lives were greatly enriched. As a bonus, a wonderful daughter-in-law, Lara, is now part of our family.

At Rochester College, God has brought together a rare, gifted, and passionate team of mentors for our college students. In addition to receiving an incredible education, they are instructed in how to become quality individuals. We feel blessed as parents to have had so many godly staff and faculty members touching the lives of our children.

Jill (Drummond) Brazle completed her associate degree in 1973 as Miss Michigan Christian College. While a student, she participated in student government, chorus, and drama. Her husband, Mark, currently preaches for the Church in the Falls in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio. Jill teaches at Stow-Monroe Falls High School.



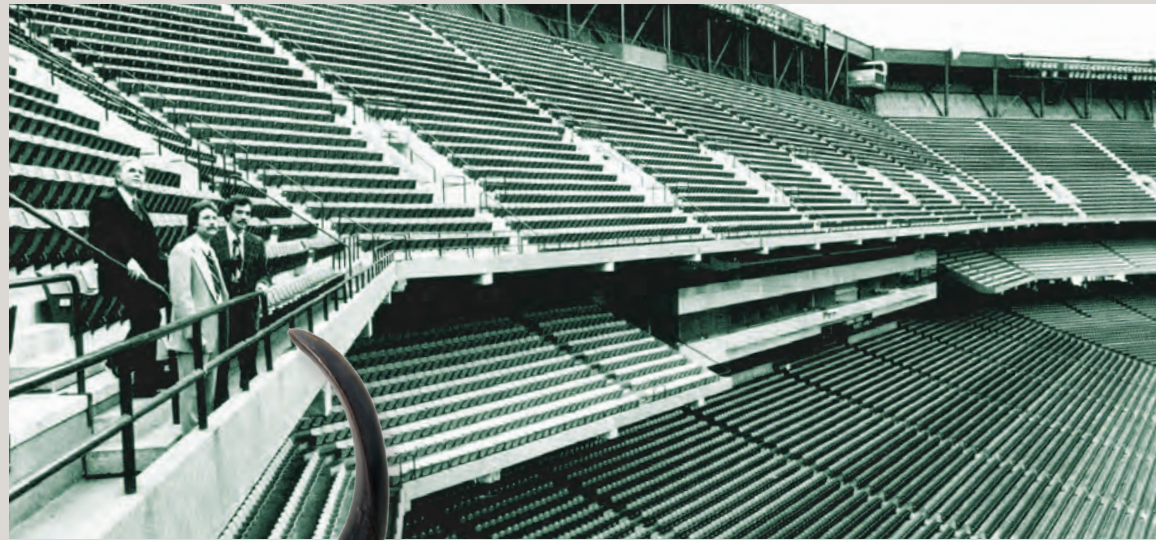
◀ *Multitasking during the 1973 registration, Larry Jurney assisted Brenda Gray with her class selection. In addition to teaching responsibilities, Dr. Jurney directed the drama program for many years. He began serving as academic dean in 1977.*



▶ *Ernie Gill befriended hundreds of students during his ministry with the Rochester Church of Christ. He often attended chapel, sponsored His Wordsmen, and even coached basketball during the 1975-76 academic year.*

Large numbers of students attended the Rochester Church of Christ during Ernie Gill's ministry. A 1978 newsletter quoted the words of one of those students, "There has been a lot of talk around campus about this time in our lives being one of the greatest opportunities of our spiritual lives. I realize now that I can't pass it up."





◀ Partnership Dinner campaign planners Don Gardner, John Gardner, and Steve Hudson visited the Silverdome before the 1978 dinner occurred in the massive facility.

Friends of the college filled the Cobo Hall ballroom in 1976 for the fifth annual Partnership Dinner. The dinner moved to a Cobo Hall exhibit area the next year.



◀ Students raised 43 percent of the total amount pledged during the 1979 Phone-a-Visit. Glenn Smith obtained \$15,000 in pledges.

Benefactors Alberta and John Muirhead visited the Muirhead Library shortly after a 1974 renovation they helped fund.



Westside Central church members donated a seal embosser with the land contract from their building sale in 1972.



◀ Phone-a-Visit volunteers of the 1970s rang bells as they received pledges.

FINANCIAL CRISIS

A “for sale” sign posted on the east end of the college’s property symbolized the critical financial condition confronting the institution during the opening years of the 1970s. Years of shortfalls in operational expenses resulted in serious cash flow problems and a growing debt load. The added burden of funding huge bond payments from construction of the Alma Gatewood Residence Hall made the financial condition almost intolerable at times.

Three major gifts during the 1971-72 academic year eased some of the college’s financial burden. Lectureship provided an opportunity for formal dedication of the Muirhead Library, named in honor of John and Alberta Muirhead of Dearborn, Michigan, who provided a \$45,000 gift to the library in response to the Million Dollar Expansion Campaign. A December dinner honored Jim and Bessie Gallaher of Bay City, Michigan, who made a \$75,000 challenge gift to be used for debt retirement. On April 15, the Westside Central Church of Christ in Detroit finalized a significant gift to the college in the form of a \$105,000 land contract from the sale of

their church building. Yet those gifts did not solve an impending financial crisis.

Bond payments on the new Alma Gatewood Residence Hall exceeded \$100,000 each year, increasing the amount of funding the college had to raise on an annual basis. To meet the need for immediate cash, President Gardner proposed a \$50-per-plate benefit dinner. Although his concept was met by some skepticism, he scheduled the first Partnership Dinner for May 27, 1972. The dinner had to be moved from the cafetorium to the gymnasium at the last minute to accommodate the positive response by friends of the college. The inaugural dinner resulted in gifts of \$48,500 including matching funds, representing 838 ticket sales. Success of the dinner campaign eventually allowed the college to remove the “for sale” sign from the property.

Ticket sales from subsequent Partnership Dinners at \$60-per-plate grew from 1,056 in 1973, to 2,655 in 1976, as guests enjoyed Cobo Hall’s largest banquet facility. The need for an even larger room to meet ticket sales of 3,350 required relocation of the dinner to a Cobo exhibit hall in 1977. Pontiac’s Silverdome hosted the 1978 dinner

during Dr. Gardner’s last year as president, when ticket sales reached an all-time record of 4,044 including tickets from matching funds.

In 1973, the college employed Royce Dickinson as vice president to help the institution curb expenses and increase efficiency. Many other positions on campus were filled either by young graduates of the college who were willing to live on a small salary or volunteers who donated their services. The 1976 *Totem Pole* noted, “This year again included a very high number of part-time teachers on the faculty. Lawyers, preachers, business men, and teachers from other schools shared their knowledge with the students, often without salary.”

The college introduced the Salary Sharing Program in 1973 to replace the Living Endowment Club. In a 1974 brochure, President Gardner made an appeal to donors by stating, “Your regular salary sharing gift is vital if we are to continue paying our teachers and staff their modest salaries (an average of \$607 per month).” In the fall of 1975, the college launched Phone-a-Visit as a means of promoting the Salary Sharing Program. A total of 72 preachers participated in the initial campaign,

which exceeded its goal of 500 pledges by obtaining 923 commitments from friends of the college.

Students became a strong force among Phone-a-Visit volunteers in 1977. They conducted an all-night prayer session before the campaign began and then assisted with the calling process. By 1979, the program raised a record \$176,400 under the leadership of Jesse Clayton. In a bulletin report, Clayton noted, “Students provided the enthusiasm and drive to see that all 18 phones stayed in use. Their spirit served as a magnet for board members, preachers, alumni, and others who called.”

After a decade of continual improvement in the college’s financial condition, members of the former Fairview Church of Christ in Detroit met on campus in the new Westside Central Chapel on July 1, 1979, to present the college with its first major endowment gift. Robert Jones, a former Fairview elder, presented a check for \$15,000 to the college along with a land contract from the sale of the congregation’s church building. The gift represented a value of nearly \$80,000, directed into an endowment fund for the development of a bachelor’s degree program in Bible.

Don Gardner

President 1971-1978

Don Gardner stood in the pulpit thousands of times before he found joy behind the president's desk at Ohio Valley College in Parkersburg, West Virginia. He presided at the new school from 1959 to 1964, then moved to Los Angeles to become vice president of special services at Pepperdine University.

In 1971, the board of Michigan Christian Junior College promoted the institution's president, E. Lucien Palmer, to chancellor. Gardner emerged as the best candidate to succeed Palmer, and moved to Rochester that summer.

Palmer and his right-hand man, Milton Fletcher, nudged Michigan Christian along for a decade before Gardner arrived on the scene. The new president commanded control over every aspect of the college. In the process, Gardner rocked the boat in his new harbor and many of Palmer's long-time employees sailed away in search of calmer waters.

Gardner preached growth. Only growth, said Gardner, could multiply the experiences and resources that could transform the college. Gardner cultivated three seeds of growth. First, he controlled costs and raised revenue. Second, he kindled a campus culture and accelerated enrollment. Third, he developed the college's first four-year degree.

The attrition of Palmer's employees allowed Gardner to hire recent Michigan Christian graduates who brought less experience to their jobs, but at a fraction of the cost. These young employees eagerly followed their president and the fire in their souls heated the campus culture.

Michigan Christian could not take off, however, until Gardner jettisoned the mortgage on the Alma Gatewood Residence Hall. The board voted to build the residence hall in the 1960s despite concerns the college could not afford it. The dorm became a monolith of debt as soon as it opened. In 1972, Gardner invited alumni, donors, and church leaders from Flint to Toledo to a Partnership Dinner in the college gymnasium. Over 800 people attended and raised \$48,500 for immediate relief from the residence hall debt.

Gardner believed nothing could attract students like a strong student body. If he could get a few "stars" to enroll, they would attract a constellation of admirers that would brighten the campus. He identified talented students and church youth group leaders, and personally assisted in the process of recruiting those students. He

considered every teenager a prospective student and submitted dozens of names to the admissions office.

The infusion of talent pollinated a full bloom of student activities. Gardner encouraged students to start such popular traditions as Celebration in Song and the ensemble Autumn. A master of public relations, Gardner leveraged the brilliance of his student body to raise money and recruit more students. He orchestrated every detail of campus life for maximum motivation. He even gave his era a name: "Decade of the Yes." The title fit. After all, few people could say "no" to Gardner.

The college set an enrollment record of 400 students in 1977 and Gardner could boast dazzling accomplishments during his seven years in office: Gift income grew 328 percent, the budget grew 189 percent, enrollment doubled, students received ten times the amount of financial aid, and debt decreased 50 percent.

Gardner promised to build a chapel and student center on campus. In 1977, he excavated a site on the bluff over Lake Norcentra. Construction suffered starts and stops. Administrative challenges added to the pressure. In August 1978, the college dedicated the Westside Central Chapel and Utey Student Center,

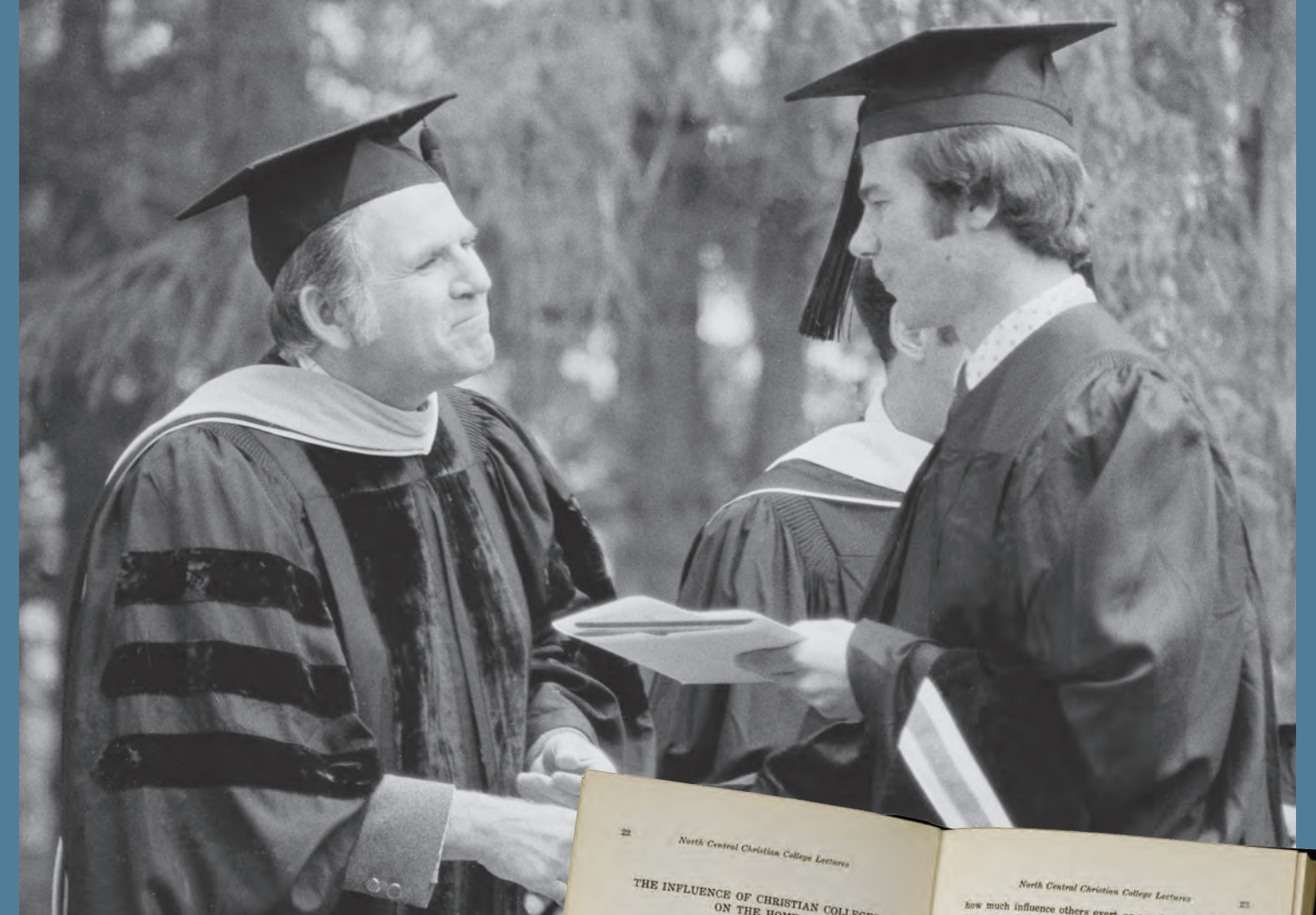
but without Gardner. He resigned a few months earlier to become president of Greater Houston Christian Schools.

Over the next 18 years, Gardner became an elder statesman for education among Churches of Christ. In 1980, he formed what became the National Christian Schools Association and led the organization until his death. As president of York College from 1987 to 1992, Gardner worked with a young administrator named Michael Westerfield to transform that institution into a four-year college. Gardner also negotiated the establishment of Cascade College in Portland, Oregon, in 1993. He died in Oklahoma City in 1996.

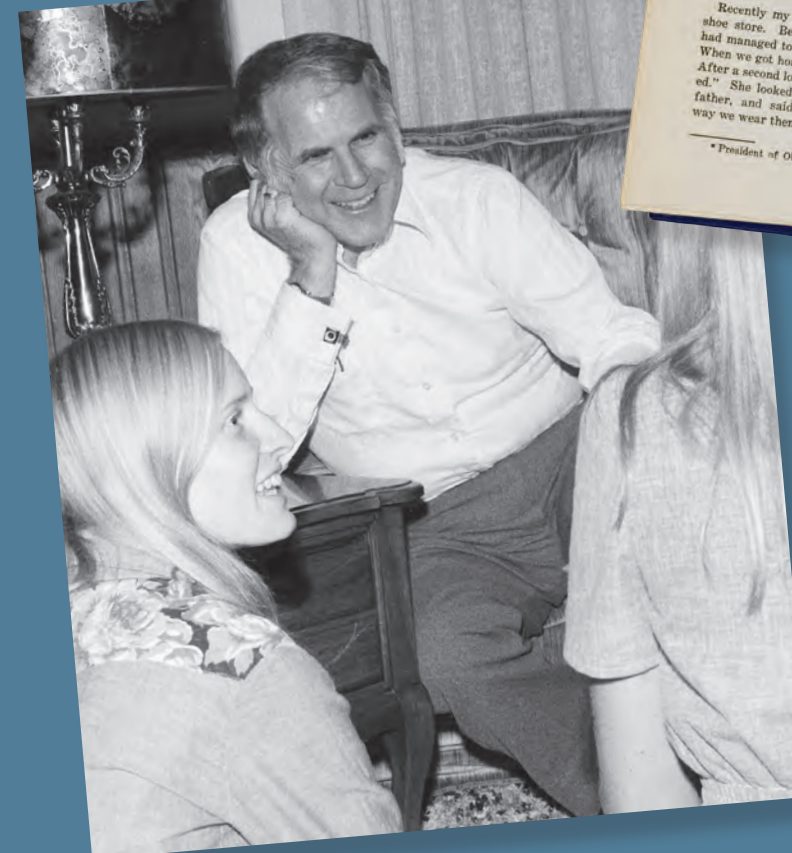
Don Gardner gave Rochester College a golden era, eight years of "Yes" that echo three decades later. The classes of the 1970s remain an active and loyal generation of Warriors and their traditions still animate school spirit. Gardner built on Lucien Palmer's foundation to develop a four-year degree that erased "Junior" from the college's name. The progress of future presidents is the dream-come-true of Don Gardner, the "Yes" man of Rochester College.



Royce and Betty Dickinson enjoyed a board luncheon with Dolan and Mildred Ledford at the Gardner home in 1973.

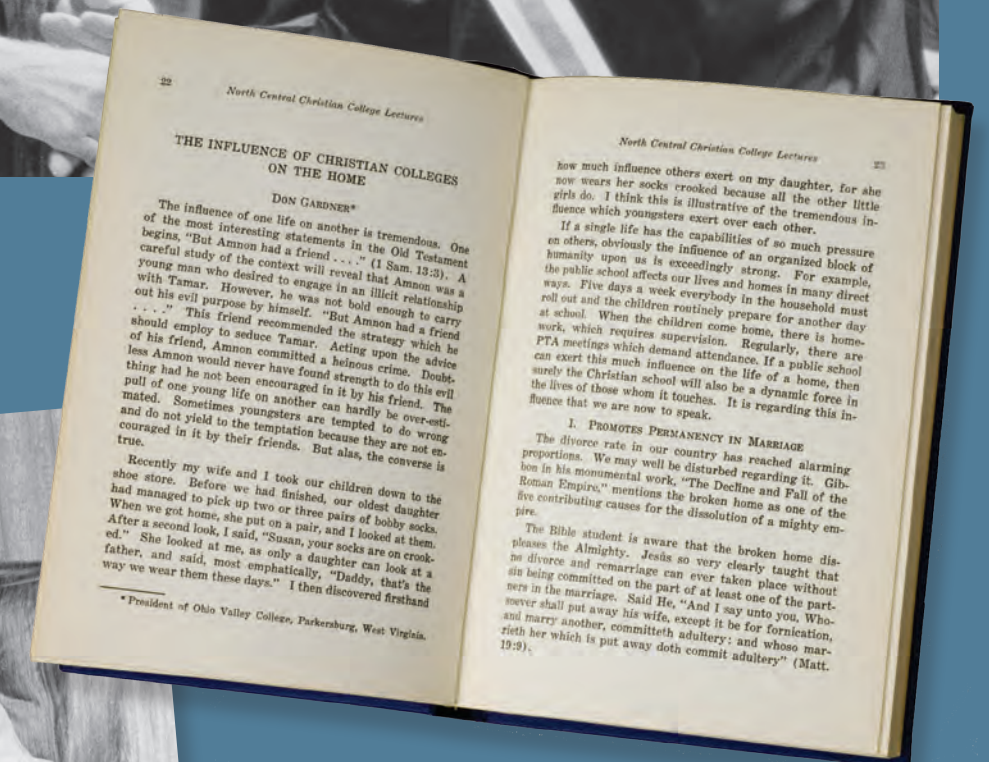


Graduation regalia appealed to Don Gardner so much that he often wished the faculty would wear it to chapel every day! He presented an associate degree to Jeff Schafsnitz in 1974.



While serving as president of Ohio Valley College, Don Gardner spoke at the second annual North Central Christian College Lectureship in October 1959. His message, recorded in a book entitled "Christian Education: A Series of Bible Lectures by Outstanding Educators" centered on "The Influence of Christian Colleges on the Home."

Faculty Firesides, one of many traditions started by Don Gardner in the 1970s, provided an opportunity for students to visit in the homes of college employees at the beginning of the academic year. Don Gardner enjoyed a visit with Debbie Vinsant and Becky Sims in the fall of 1974.





Over 1,000 attendees of the Stark County Youth Meeting in Canton, Ohio, enjoyed a 1975 production of "You're a Good Man Charlie Brown" with Sue Seavers as Snoopy and Jennifer Allmond as Patty.



STUDENT RECRUITMENT

Attempts to reverse the college's serious financial condition resulted in very few new initiatives and minimal staffing during the early 1970s. Realizing an increase in student enrollment could help turn the tide, the college invested as much funding as possible into student recruitment efforts.

During the 1972-73 academic year, the admissions office experimented with several new recruitment methods. Share groups represented the college in 17 churches, admissions personnel began scheduling choral groups to maximize contact with prospective students, and the drama department completed its first recruitment tour by taking a presentation of *The Fantasticks* to Great Lakes Christian College in Beamsville, Ontario. Student representatives of the college also began working at several Christian camps that summer.

Realizing the need for more one-on-one contact with prospective students, the college increased its recruitment staff from two to four individuals during the 1973-74 academic year. The new admissions team immediately mounted an intensive drive for students in the states of Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. Simultaneously, Audrey Gardner began serving as the college's first financial aid director, providing invaluable support for the admissions team.

Before classes began in the fall of 1973, Audrey Gardner persuaded Randy Gill to return for his sophomore year to form a singing group that would represent the college at various youth functions. Since the concept of a small traveling ensemble with a repertoire of non-religious music was just beginning to develop among affiliated colleges, individuals had to be recruited to sing in the group. Those chosen selected "Autumn" for the ensemble's name to reflect the easy-listening style of their music and to honor the beautiful season that each member enjoyed on campus. After a few local performances, the group traveled to Ontario and New York in February 1974 for its debut tour. By the time summer ended, Autumn performed on 84 occasions throughout the region.

The drama department took a second production on the road in March 1974, performing *Star Spangled Girl* for an audience of 1,100 at the Stark County Youth Meeting in Canton, Ohio. Other production teams returned to the Canton Rally and to Great Lakes Christian College in subsequent years.

The efforts of many individuals allowed the college to experience a significant enrollment increase for the fall semester of 1974. A record number of 236 students registered for classes, representing a 30 percent increase over the previous year. Ongoing efforts helped the enrollment surge to 400 by the fall of 1977, necessitating triple occupancy in several dorm rooms. While staffing turnover in the admissions office and a reaction to overcrowding resulted in smaller enrollments during the last two years of the 1970s, the student count rebounded at the beginning of the next decade.



Autumn performed at the 1974 Partnership Dinner before logging over 12,000 miles during the group's first summer tour. Randy Gill, Lynne Yoakum, Holly Wiser, Kathryn Boggs, and Mark Smith normally performed while sitting on stools. Randy Gill's Ovation guitar provided accompaniment for such songs as "You Can Close Your Eyes," "We're Gonna Sing," and "Going Out of My Head."

Audrey Gardner began serving as the college's first full-time financial aid director in 1973. During her five-year tenure, funding for financial aid programs increased from \$12,000 to \$120,000. She worked closely with admissions personnel to increase student enrollment.



Admissions team members Dean Oliver, Larry Stewart, Kent Hoggatt, and Don Robinson made over 8,000 phone calls and visited in the homes of over 1,000 prospective students between 1973 and 1975. The record number of students enrolling from Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois remains unbroken. Only on two occasions has the number of new students been slightly higher.

ACCREDITATION

Having received candidate membership from the North Central Association in March 1969, the college submitted a status study to the association on May 1, 1972. Based upon the recommendation of NCA, the college decided to continue the study process for an additional year. Consequently, the executive board of NCA extended the college's candidate status.

In November 1973, the college sent to the North Central Association a supplement to the 1972 study. The document, entitled *Spirit of Success*, highlighted several financial and academic improvements that had occurred since the previous study. In April 1974, a five-member inspection team from NCA visited the campus. The team, chaired by Dr. Donald King of St. Norbert College,

the purchase of an 11,000 volume microbook collection for the library. An \$11,739 Title VI grant from the federal government in 1975 funded improvements in the chemistry laboratory and the purchase of equipment for biology, physical science, chemistry, and secretarial courses. A 1976 Title VI grant of \$11,774 provided funding for video and drama equipment.

Since the founding of the institution, the college had offered associate degrees for students planning to transfer to a senior college and certificates for those desiring a limited collegiate background. In 1976, the faculty developed a two-year program in secretarial science, but had to offer it as an Associate in Science degree. The following fall, the college received approval to offer the Associate in Applied Science, specifically designed for two-year occupational degree programs. During the next decade, the faculty added several majors under the new degree designation, providing important foundations for future four-year programs.

Founding board members clearly expressed their desire for the college to offer the bachelor's degree as soon as growth would permit. In October 1976, the board authorized implementation of a three-year Bible program as the first step toward that goal. Throughout the remainder of the year, the faculty designed coursework and gathered resources to support a bachelor's degree. Students began enrolling in the three-year Bible program in the fall of 1977.

The college had to obtain approvals from both the state of Michigan and the North Central Association before adding a fourth year of coursework to the new Bible program. As the college made final preparations for a state visit, Don Peden of Louisville, Kentucky, donated \$25,000 to the library for development of the religious book section. On March 28, 1978, an inspection team from the state visited campus and recommended to the State Board of Education that the college be allowed to offer the Bachelor of Religious Education degree.

Unfortunately, the state board received the college's request when an influential member who opposed any expansion among private colleges controlled the majority vote. That board member managed to keep the college's request off the agenda for months until an election changed the composition of the board. In December 1978, the Michigan State Board of Education accepted the inspection team's recommendation and authorized the college to offer the Bachelor of Religious Education degree. In response, the board of the college changed the Articles of Incorporation to include the new bachelor's degree program and to officially drop "Junior" from the institution's legal name.

In the final year of the decade, the college initiated the steps required for approval of the proposed bachelor's degree by the North Central Association. The accrediting body sent Dr. Robert Watson of Hiram College to campus on several occasions to assist with program development and the self-study process. While preparing for an accreditation visit, the faculty continued to strengthen the three-year Bible program.



Members of the 1974 NCA accreditation team visited with several students about their educational experience, including Fidelis Melifonwu and Audrey Bone.

recommended that Michigan Christian Junior College be accredited. The long-awaited accreditation became effective on July 25, 1974.

On December 1, 1976, the college submitted *Growing in Service* to the North Central Association. The self-study, which noted dramatic improvements in enrollment, gift income, and campus facilities, requested reaffirmation of the college's accreditation. An inspection team visited campus the following March. Their recommendation resulted in continued accreditation.

ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

Various grant programs enhanced the college's academic program during the mid-1970s. Just before the 1974 accreditation visit, the Besser Foundation of Alpena, Michigan, awarded \$16,000 to the college for



Many of the students enrolled in a 1978 typing course later completed the new Associate in Applied Science degree.

Over three decades of physical science students have learned about rocks and minerals from kits purchased by a 1975 Title VI grant.



Bible majors unloaded books purchased for the Muirhead Library in 1978 after faculty members scoured the shelves of religious book publishers in Grand Rapids, Michigan.





◀ Outdoor graduation remained a tradition until 1990, when the ceremony moved indoors to avoid weather problems. The class of 1978 listened attentively to comments by Coach Shinsky.

Soon after the student body collected relief aid for Vietnamese Christians in 1975, Maurice Hall arranged for 13 refugees to enroll as students. Bang Nguyen and Ngoc Tran enrolled in an art class taught by Gale Edwards.



▲ Students enjoyed feeding the wildlife during annual visits to the Stratford Festival. Tim Harris befriended a hungry swan in 1974.

▶ Homecoming guests shared several anxious moments at the 1979 game. The traditional event continued to draw large crowds.



NEW CAMPUS TRADITIONS

President Gardner opened the fall semester of 1973 by introducing the college's first theme scripture. As the year progressed, chapel audiences often recited Psalm 118:24, "This is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." Throughout the remainder of his presidency, Dr. Gardner introduced a new theme scripture every year. In a 1975 interview with the *North Star*, he stated, "These scriptures give us a biblical basis for what we're doing, and I look upon this as God's work rooted in scripture. I would like to leave at least one dynamic principle for life with each student."

In 1973, the English department sponsored its first excursion to the Stratford Festival in Ontario. Within a short period of time, the trip became one of the decade's most popular annual events. As the number of students from states other than Michigan began to grow, college-sponsored outings to local attractions also grew in popularity. Student groups often visited such sites as the Detroit Zoo, Greenfield Village, the Detroit Ethnic Festivals, and the Fisher Theatre. On campus, students enjoyed their first Midnight Breakfast in 1976, as employees prepared a meal for the student body at the beginning of exam week.

"Shouts of exuberance rang from the cafetorium on April 22 and 23," noted a writer for the 1977 yearbook while chronicling the birth of Celebration in Song. The

first annual Celebration showcased the best music and drama talent on campus in a series of mini-plays and excerpts from popular musicals. In an effort to broaden student involvement in the activity, planners added social club competition to programming for the next year as the extravaganza moved to the new Westside Central Chapel. Within a short period of time, Celebration developed into one of the most prominent events on the calendar by involving large numbers of students and drawing hundreds of guests to the campus.

As new campus traditions developed, a long-time tradition of care and concern for others continued to demonstrate itself in meaningful new ways. Members of the Circle K club received an award from the Oakland County Board of Retardation in 1971 for their outstanding work with mentally handicapped Boy Scouts. Soon after the fall of Saigon in 1975, the student body responded quickly to a telegram requesting emergency aid for Christians in Vietnam. By chapel the next day, students gathered \$2,130 for the relief effort. The W Club conducted an annual Rock-a-Thon during the latter half of the decade, spending hours in rocking chairs to fund a scholarship program for needy students. Sue Hammond noted in the 1976 *Totem Pole*, "With an atmosphere of friendship, warmth, and Christian love, MCC afforded us a unique opportunity that allowed this love to become engraved in our lives."



Delta Phi captured honors for "A Tribute to Disney" in the first year of social club competition at the 1978 Celebration in Song.



Opting for simplicity, the A Cappella Chorus adopted robes in the fall of 1979. Only the stole design has been modified since that time.



Following a trend established by the six previous groups, the chorus wore suits and dresses in 1978-79.

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

While continuing to engage students in activities similar to those of the preceding decade, student organizations developed new avenues for service and student involvement as the 1970s unfolded. Many of those activities allowed student groups to interact with prospective students, churches, and the community. Athletes also enjoyed additional opportunities for participation in both intercollegiate and intramural sporting activities.

The Student Council sponsored several Miss-a-Meal programs early in the decade, diverting funds from occasional Friday evening meals to such worthy projects as camp scholarships for underprivileged children and relief aid for Pakistani refugees. Under the leadership of student body president Dean Oliver, the council organized a major fund-raising project in the fall of 1972. Student leaders set a goal of \$10,000 for the purchase of a new bus and raised over \$12,000. The successful student effort resulted in the purchase of both a bus and a station wagon.

Prior to the fall semester of 1974, the student center traded locations with the bookstore. The store relocated to the east end of the Muirhead Library and the student center to the structure adjoining the Gold Conference Room. That fall, the Student Council formed a committee to develop plans for improvements in the student center. As the year progressed, the council used funds raised by the student body and student volunteer labor to accomplish \$7,000 worth of improvements to the student center for only \$1,153. Soon after an October 1975 dedication of the newly-remodeled facility, Bob Utley announced that his family and the Associates planned to provide funds for an addition to the student center in honor of his parents, L.C. and Elizabeth Utley.

During the summer of 1970, several members of the A Cappella Chorus traveled to Europe with director Ed Ritchie to conduct the first of two consecutive French Campaigns for Christ. In 1971, the chorus hosted performing groups from seven affiliated colleges at the fifth annual Christian College Choral Festival. In February 1978, the college hosted the first of many choral festivals with the Metropolitan Detroit Youth Chorus. Once the Dayton Youth Chorus joined the popular event in 1979, the festival annually featured a combined chorus of over 200 singers. A successful Sing-a-thon in the fall of 1979 allowed the chorus to fly to the Christian College Choral Festival in Lubbock, Texas, the following January.

Mission Emphasis launched an aggressive outreach program in 1974. A college news bulletin reported, "In four campaigns, over half of the MCC student body banned together to share their faith in Christ." According to the report, the campaigners contacted over 30,000 people. One observer commented that the group's "behavior, spirit, and manner of living did more than one thousand sermons could have done." During the next academic year, the organization conducted 19 campaigns in five states and Canada.

Mission Emphasis members Royce Dickinson Jr. and Nancy Replogle participated in door-knocking campaigns in 1975.



Ron Hadfield, student body president, and Royce Dickinson, vice president of the college, led opening ceremonies for the newly renovated student center in 1975.

Student Council officers Linda Doughty and Ronda Allen admired the bus and station wagon purchased by the 1972-73 student body.



Members of the A Cappella Chorus and Metropolitan Detroit Youth Chorus combined talents in 1978 for the first of many choral festivals directed by Randy Gill.

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Drama activities flourished during the 1970s under the leadership of Larry Jurney. From 1973-1976, the MCC Players delighted home audiences with productions before taking them on the road for youth functions. The decade featured a string of major musicals, including *Oliver*, *Sound of Music*, *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*, and *Brigadoon*. The department also presented such classics as *Harvey*, *Arsenic and Old Lace*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Macbeth*. The introduction of *Celebration in Song* in 1977 gave drama enthusiasts an additional venue for stagecraft experience and performance. The department moved all productions from the cafetorium to the new Westside Central Chapel in 1978.

After a two-year absence, the *North Star* again rolled off the press in October 1974. The paper appeared in a smaller format and operated as a self-supporting entity for two additional years. An October 1976 issue noted, "Financial difficulty put a stop to last year's paper. An advertiser did not pay his large bill and the *North Star* came out in the red." Unfortunately, publication again ceased after the October issue and a student newspaper did not reappear until 1994. The newspaper's sister publication, the *Totem Pole*, earned an "A" rating from the National Yearbook Association in 1975, as well as second place honors in statewide competition.

The Warriors ended their 1970-71 basketball season as co-champions of the new North Central Christian Athletic Conference with an overall 21-10 record. One year later, the team won the national scoring championship in the National Christian College Athletic Association with an incredible average of 100.1 points per game. The team's outstanding 27-5 season record included conference and tournament titles, as well as a championship at the Harding Invitational Tournament. The Warriors earned additional NCCAC titles in both 1977 and 1978.

Completion of athletic fields on the former Gierok farm permitted the 1970 addition of baseball to the intercollegiate sports program. In 1973, the team began traveling to Florida for spring training. The baseball team won its first league championship in 1974 with an 8-2 record in league play.

Tennis reappeared on the intercollegiate sports roster in 1974 and continued until its popularity decreased in the early 1980s. The college introduced cross country in 1975 and women's basketball in 1976. Both teams competed through the remainder of the decade, but were temporarily discontinued during the 1980s.

Campus social clubs formed in the fall of 1967, but did not become active immediately. Changing from Native American to Greek names in 1969, new coed clubs met regularly and began competing for points through intramural sports, scholastic achievement, and speech competition. Intramural sports developed early in the 1970s, capturing eight pages of coverage in the 1972 *Totem Pole*. In 1978, the clubs reorganized into eight brother and sister clubs and added *Celebration* competition to their venue of activities.

Co-captain David Rider ► helped the men's basketball team achieve its second consecutive league championship in the spring of 1978. The Warriors competed in the NCCAC as the only junior college in a senior college league.



Witches, played by Kathy Wilkins, Sondra Berlin, Lori Crampton, and Theresa Threlkeld, provided an eerie atmosphere at a 1977 production of Shakespeare's "Macbeth."



Stadium authorities ► hosted several benefit games at the Silverdome in 1979. Jacquie Arbaugh led the crowd in cheers as the Warriors posted a victory in their game.



◄ Winning a four-foot colossus for their 1972 league championship, the Warriors also achieved their first national honor that season. They earned the National Christian College Athletic Association scoring championship with an average of 100.1 points per game.



▲ Freshman David Matheny contributed to a winning baseball season in 1974.

◄ Capturing the 1974 NCCAC league championship allowed the Warriors to earn their first trophy for baseball.



◀ Walt Gilfilen painted a beautiful representation of Totem Pole Island as the 1982 Century Club Artist of the Year.

Gallaher Center provided an appropriate background for a 1978 portrait of Walt Gilfilen and his wife Benny Ann.



Completion of a new campus master plan in 1979 provided an opportunity for Walt Gilfilen to share dreams of the college with Jim and Bessie Gallaher.



Walter Gilfilen

President 1978-1980

Walter Gilfilen documented a lot of history at one Christian college before he made history of his own at another. As a student at Harding College in Searcy, Arkansas, Gilfilen served as the institution's official photographer. In the 1950s, he took thousands of images that captured important events in Harding's history.

Gilfilen traveled west in 1958 to help establish Magic Valley Christian College in Albion, Idaho. He taught business and served as dean of students until Brevard Community College in Cocoa, Florida, offered him a job in 1961. Gilfilen served as business manager until his acumen for writing grants led to a promotion as the president's personal assistant.

In May 1978, Don Gardner, the charismatic president of Michigan Christian Junior College, suddenly resigned and the institution began the search for his successor. In his final year, Gardner built a new chapel and student center, entered the home stretch for state and NCA approval of the college's first four-year degree, and set an enrollment record. Michigan Christian's board wanted a man who could continue the momentum.

Gilfilen's twenty years of administrative experience and his flair for fund-raising made him a desirable candidate for the presidential role. He also served as an elder for the Church of Christ in Cocoa, an important fact since the college's first three presidents had been ministers.

Four months after Gilfilen arrived in Rochester, the state of Michigan approved Michigan Christian's four-year Bachelor of Religious Education degree. The new president celebrated the event by retiring "Junior" from the college's name. Gilfilen picked up where Gardner left off, managing the final phase of the process required for approval of the four-year degree program by the North Central Association.

The college's board expected the growth of the Gardner era to gain momentum into the 1980s. About the time Gilfilen arrived, the board commissioned the development of a new campus master plan. Gilfilen accepted a leading role in the year-long project. The study analyzed campus facilities and topography in light of growth forecasts. In the fall of 1979, Gilfilen unveiled a new campus master plan by Ann Arbor architect Abraham Kadushin.

The plan called for construction of a large academic building that would stand parallel to the Associates

Campus Center, Utley Student Center, and Westside Central Chapel. The arrangement would create an outdoor mall in the center of campus. A collection of residence halls would stand at the east end of the mall. The main campus entrance on Avon Road would connect to a new road that would wrap around the athletic complex, pass the president's home on the far east side of campus, and end again at Avon Road. Baseball and soccer fields would fit inside the "horseshoe road."

Gilfilen applied his skills as a grant writer to secure a federal Title III grant that paid for the development of a career center. He also cultivated the first major gift toward an endowment fund when he persuaded the Fairview Church of Christ to donate a land contract from the sale of its building.

The student body quickly warmed to Gilfilen. In contrast to the more serious personalities of the presidents before him, Gilfilen did not mind getting involved in the lighter side of campus life. He found creative ways to announce Beautiful Day and even showed up at one or two water fights between the residence halls. One of the social clubs affectionately named the cafeteria Walt's Hamburger Palace at a Sadie Hawkins Day event.

Gardner's legacy, however, left a vacuum that Gilfilen found difficult to fill. Maintaining the momentum generated during the Gardner years

proved almost impossible for any successor. After the 1979-80 academic year, Gilfilen resigned from his role as president of Michigan Christian College and returned to Brevard Community College, where he served as an associate vice president until his retirement.

Don Gardner's presidency created great expectations for Michigan Christian College, expectations that no man could meet under normal circumstances. Walter Gilfilen succeeded on many points. He continued the work of Lucien Palmer and Gardner to gain North Central approval for the college's first four-year degree. The college received that approval a few weeks after Gilfilen resigned. Gilfilen's endowment fund proved crucial to the two presidents who followed him. Milton Fletcher would build it during the 1980s and Ken Johnson would use it to transform the college in the 1990s. When Johnson began constructing facilities in 1996, he built according to the concepts of Gilfilen's campus master plan. Gilfilen's administration lasted only two years, but the effect of his work continues to be felt three decades later.



Walt Gilfilen visited with alumni during the annual Phone-a-Visit campaign in 1978.

CAMPUS IMPROVEMENTS

With limited financial resources, college leaders addressed most basic facility needs during the 1960s. Construction of the Alma Gatewood Residence Hall enhanced residential life, but President Gardner soon recognized a need to improve the college's "curb appeal" for prospective students and their families. Consequently, the college completed a number of renovation projects during the mid-1970s while planning construction of an auditorium for chapel, dramatic productions, and special programs.

Several facility changes became possible as the Alma Gatewood Residence Hall neared completion during the summer of 1970. Workers converted the west wing of the Multi-Purpose Building back into classrooms, the first floor of the Multi-Purpose Building into offices, and the one-story dorm into staff housing. The library gained additional space in the Student Center Building, while the music and art rooms became a rehearsal hall.

Final touches on the new dorm required a one-week delay in the opening of the fall semester. A long-awaited day arrived on September 25, as several gathered to formally dedicate the Alma Gatewood Residence Hall. Otis Gatewood served as guest speaker for the occasion, and Mildred Freeland presented the last installment of a \$50,000 dorm pledge from the Associates. On the next day, 96 girls moved into the beautiful new facility.

The queen's vote project of the 1971 Fall Festival raised a record \$6,072. The Associates earmarked those proceeds for the remodeling and refurbishing of lobby areas in the men's residence halls. Old couches made way for contemporary chair and end table units that lasted over two decades.

Gifts of over \$12,000 from the Associates and the Muirheads resulted in major enhancements to the library during the spring of 1974. Student volunteers painted every room in the facility as workers removed a wall and installed carpet. New furniture added a finishing touch to the project just before an accreditation team from the North Central Association arrived on campus. A few months later, donations from the Rochester community funded improvements in the gymnasium, including a newly-surfaced floor and glass backboards.

During the summer of 1975, workers completed major renovations in the chemistry laboratory, funded largely by the Associates. A gift from the Gallaher family allowed for extensive updating of Gallaher Center, including exterior paint and repairs, interior carpeting and drapes, and new classroom furniture for the former recreation room, known during that time period as the Bible room.

Shortly after the opening of the 1975-76 academic year, new tables and chairs arrived for the cafeteria, replacing the original folding tables and chairs purchased for the room when the college opened in 1959. Students subsequently decorated the area with a dramatic wall mural to match the contemporary yellow, brown, and orange chairs. Within weeks, a newly-remodeled student center opened, complete with new



▲ Shortly after chapel moved to the new facility in the spring of 1978, Jim Woodroof spoke to the student body.



▲ Chairs purchased for the chapel served the student body for over 20 years.



▲ Work on the chapel resumed after the end of a 1977 strike by the manufacturer of the fireproof roof decking.

▼ Students enjoyed improved surroundings in the cafeteria after the arrival of new furnishings in the fall of 1975.



carpeting, partial paneling, new furniture, recreational equipment, and a colorful wall mural.

A record number of projects highlighted the summer of 1976. All trees and shrubs surrounding the campus lakes received their first trim in many years. Two modular units placed behind the west wing of the Multi-Purpose Building provided additional space for faculty offices, while major equipment purchases enhanced the kitchen. The music room received new paint and permanent risers. Construction workers totally renovated Dorm One by rebuilding the interior with suites and by adding brick to the exterior. New lighting, closets, and desks improved Barbier Residence Hall. Carpet layers and volunteers worked throughout the night to complete finishing touches on dorm projects before students began arriving the next morning for the fall semester.

For several years, college officials considered options for providing a new home for chapel. As enrollment grew, the cafetorium required daily furniture adjustments to accommodate both the cafeteria and chapel. During final exam week in 1977, students and staff gathered on a bare hill by the student center for chapel. Those assembled thanked God for the chapel facility that would soon stand on the same site. Three days later, construction workers began digging foundations for the Westside Central Chapel and Utley Student Center.

The builder of the chapel and student center originally projected a fall completion date but faced several delays. Early in the construction process, the building required deeper footings than anticipated. A summer strike by the only supplier of fire-treated roof decking resulted in weeks of inactivity. Once students arrived on campus for the fall semester, they had to adapt to campus life without a student center during a year when enrollment required triple occupancy in several dorm rooms. Frustrations dissipated, however, on April 4, 1978, as the chapel assembly gathered song books from the cafetorium and moved to the new Westside Central Chapel for the first gathering in the new facility. The cafeteria immediately gained the space formerly used for chapel.

Before completion of the gymnasium in 1963, college officials projected the addition of locker rooms and a lobby to the facility. As classes ended in the spring of 1979, workers removed the old estate guest cottage that served for many years as an entrance to the gymnasium, and began construction on an annex to the building. Gifts from Jim and Bessie Gallaher, Del and Zelma Reminder of Bay City, Michigan, and the Men's Club funded the construction.

As the decade closed, the board unveiled a new campus master plan at the fall lectureship of 1979. Guests admired a model of the projected campus, which resulted from a year-long study of existing facilities and future needs by architect Abraham Kadushin of Ann Arbor, Michigan. While preserving the beautiful areas surrounding the campus lakes in their natural setting, the plan featured clusters of buildings for academic, residential, and athletic activities.

MILLION DOLLAR LADIES

The Associates continued to play a major role in the college's development during the 1970s. In October 1972, the organization presented a check for \$2,531.38 to Chancellor Palmer, completing the group's first \$500,000 in gifts to the college. Members of both the 1974 and 1977 accreditation teams marveled at the success of the Associates. In a news bulletin article, Mary Etta Stowe, president of the Associates in 1977, stated, "The team was very interested in learning about the Associates and how they managed to raise so much money. They were particularly impressed with the enthusiasm generated by the group."

Responding to a unique opportunity to raise funds for the college, the Associates began providing a workforce for the Silverdome when the facility opened as the Pontiac Stadium in 1975. The Associates contracted with the Big Boy Stadium Division of Elias Brothers to provide about 50 workers per football game in exchange for a commission on sales in stands operated by the group. Under the leadership of Terry (Potter) Hines, a member of the class of 1971, volunteers raised nearly \$20,000 during their first football season at the stadium. Proceeds from that year catapulted the annual income of the Associates over the \$100,000 mark for the first time in the organization's history.

The 1977 Partnership Dinner honored the Associates as the "million dollar ladies" and featured a presentation of the group's millionth dollar to the college. Members reached the second half of that milestone in less than half of the time required to raise the first \$500,000. The Associates assisted with almost every facet of campus life as the institution's primary donor during this critical era.

Soon after the Detroit Pistons moved to the Pontiac Silverdome in 1978, stadium authorities introduced a program designed to assist non-profit organizations while building game attendance. The program allowed fund-raising organizations to sell tickets for benefit games. The Associates decided to participate and

sold approximately 700 tickets to a special evening of basketball on January 11, 1979. The MCC Warriors pleased spectators with a comfortable 80-67 win over Great Lakes Bible College of Lansing before the Pistons took the court and defeated the Portland Trailblazers. Once again, the Associates seized an opportunity to support the college through community involvement.

TWO GENERATIONS

Early in the 1970s, the college experienced a major administrative change that ushered the institution into a new era under a second generation of leaders. As the decade closed, the college celebrated a significant milestone. In the fall of 1979, Mary Blake, daughter of Leonard and Dona Mai (Bruce) Blake, traveled from Littleton, Colorado, to be a part of the college's twenty-first year. Mary's father and mother

met at North Central Christian College and graduated with the first class in 1961, making Mary the first second-generation student whose parents both attended the college. Seven of Mary's aunts and uncles attended Michigan Christian College as well.

While still facing many challenges, the college ended the decade in a much stronger position than ten years earlier. Most of the

original campus buildings had been renovated and the college community enjoyed a beautiful new chapel and student center. State approval of the institution's first bachelor's degree poised the college to seek final approval of the program from the North Central Association. New traditions enhanced campus life and attracted greater numbers of guests to college-sponsored functions on an annual basis. To the surprise of many, however, another change of leadership was about to occur as the college entered its next decade of service.

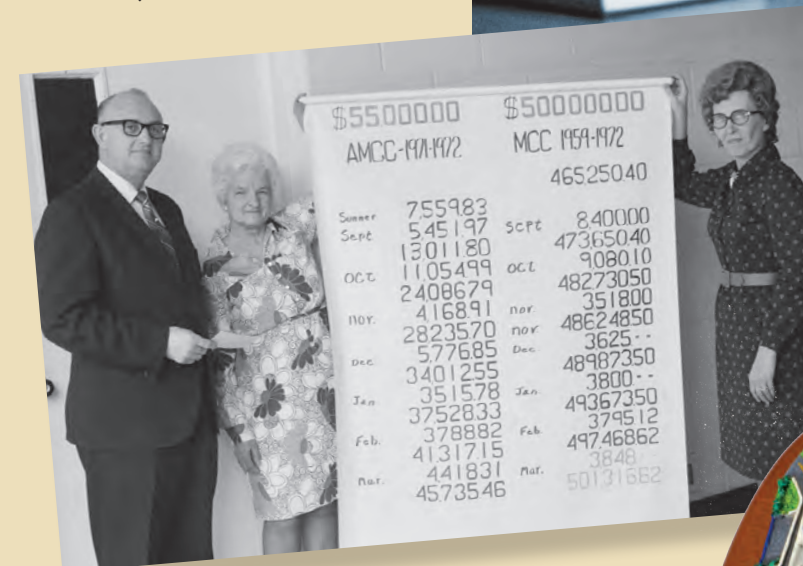


Student volunteers like Larry Ice assisted in a 1974 renovation of the library, funded by the Associates and the Muirheads.



Second generation student Mary Blake represented a new phase of maturity for the college when she enrolled as a student in the fall of 1979.

Chancellor Palmer accepted a check from the Associates in 1972, completing the organization's first \$500,000 in gifts to the college. Mary Monroe served as treasurer of the Associates from 1966 to 1982. Catherine Sadurski served as assistant treasurer from 1976 until 1982, and as treasurer since that time.



Opening of the Pontiac Silverdome in 1975 provided the Associates with an opportunity to staff the souvenir booths for a percentage of the sales. Volunteer Ann Luchsinger obtained a collectible of the stadium.



Appearing in the Pontiac Silverdome for a benefit game hosted by the Associates in 1979, the MCC Warriors posted a victory before the Detroit Pistons faced the Portland Trailblazers.

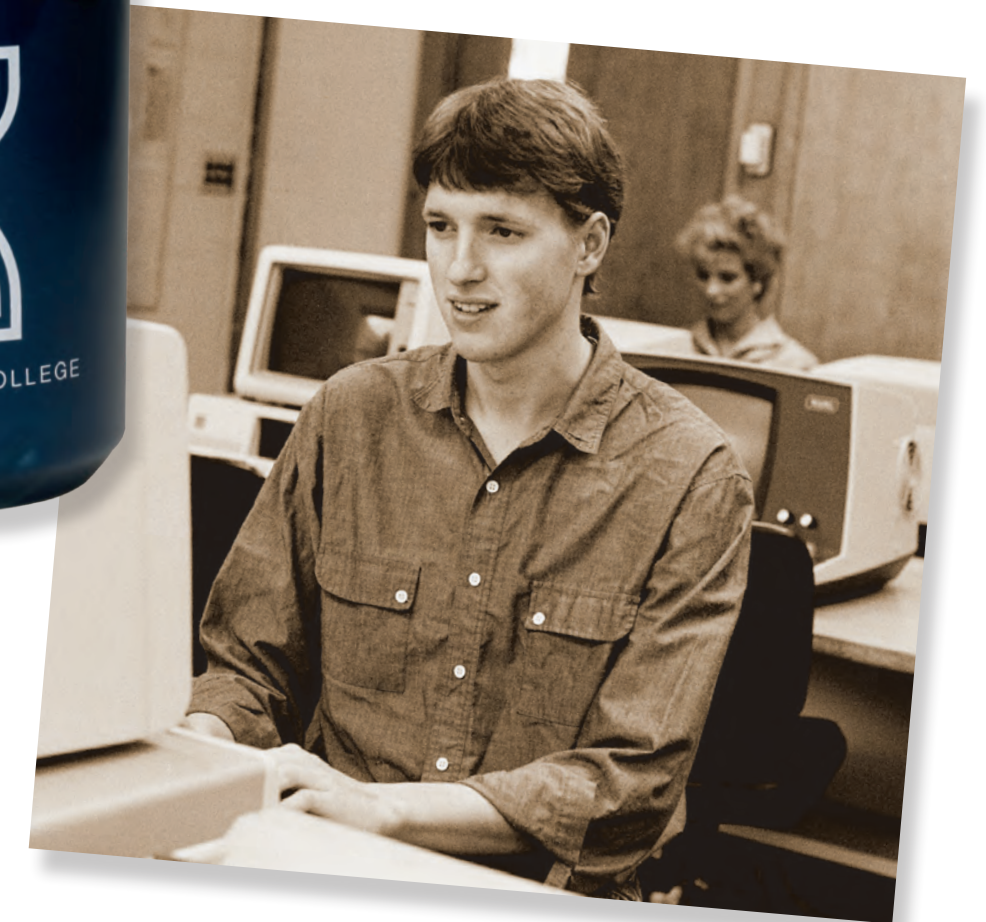
Constructed near the end of the previous decade, the Westside Central Chapel emerged as a campus focal point during the 1980s. The facility's functional design accommodated chapel, classes, dramatic productions, Celebration, workshops, and several weddings. Visitors often commented on the beauty of the facility. By 1997, the building became commonly known as the auditorium.



1980-1989



Freshman Mark Brackney utilized the computer lab in 1986 for supplemental coursework while considering a business major. He later decided to pursue a bachelor's degree in ministry.



Marking an institutional milestone, the college celebrated its 25th anniversary during the 1983-84 academic year. The anniversary logo, designed by LaJuana Gill, combined the top of the totem pole with the numeral 25. College officials introduced a multi-media presentation and launched the Silver Anniversary Campaign at the 1984 Partnership Dinner.

Milestones of the 1980s

- 1980 • Milton Fletcher named sixth president of the college
- Bachelor of Religious Education approved by North Central Association
- 1981 • Women's softball team organized
- Autumn restructured to perform contemporary Christian music
- 1982 • Wang VS-80 computer system purchased for campus-wide use
- 1983 • Gatehouse renovated for use as the Homemaking House
- Computer and Office Systems labs opened in Campus Center
- Silver Anniversary celebration launched during the fall semester
- Business programs added at the associate degree level
- 1984 • Company formed to assist student recruitment efforts
- City charter approved and college's hometown becomes Rochester Hills
- 1986 • Women's volleyball added to the intercollegiate sports program
- 1987 • Third year of course work added to the business program
- Women's basketball team organized
- Men's soccer team organized
- Second millionth dollar donated to the college by the Associates
- 1989 • First national championship captured by the men's basketball team
- First online database added to resources available in the Muirhead Library
- Counseling major added to Bachelor of Religious Education program
- First national title earned by the cross country team



Celebration attracted enthusiastic crowds in the 1980s. Dane Tate and Dawn Beck performed with the Celebration Singers in 1988.

Ronald Reagan entered the White House just weeks after Milton Fletcher assumed duties as president of Michigan Christian College. Both leaders implemented conservative fiscal policies, and both fostered a sense of continuity, stability, and pride during the 1980s.

Six graduates received the college's first bachelor's degrees in the spring of 1981. As technology began to reshape the educational community, the faculty introduced an array of new business and computer courses in 1983. Computer and word processing labs opened the same fall,

only two years after IBM introduced its first personal computers.

A decline in the number of high school graduates resulted in challenging years for the college during the latter half of the decade. A 1986 expansion of the sports program broadened the institution's appeal, but college leaders realized sustained growth would require the addition of several bachelor's degree programs. The introduction of a three-year business program in 1987 ushered the college into a ten-year process that eventually would achieve that goal.

Board chairman Bob Utley hooded the college's first bachelor's degree graduate, Doug Allen, in the spring of 1981. During the previous fall semester, Bob served as interim president of the college until the arrival of Milton Fletcher in December.



ADMINISTRATIVE TRANSITION

Two years after accepting the presidency of Michigan Christian College, Walter Gilflen decided to return to Brevard Community College in Florida as dean of development. During the summer of 1980, the board began a search process for the fifth president of the institution. That process eventually led the committee to Milton Fletcher, an individual known to the board, alumni, and friends of the college. Dr. Fletcher previously served the institution from 1961 until 1972.

Approval of the bachelor's degree in Bible by the North Central Association could have been delayed by an administrative change, but Dr. Fletcher's experience at Michigan Christian College and Abilene Christian University brought strength to the college's pending request for approval. The right man arrived on campus at the right time, so the approval process proceeded on schedule.

Since Milton Fletcher could not officially begin his presidential duties until December 1, the board selected Bob Utley to serve as interim president. Bob Utley's long-term association with the college and personal relationship with Dr. Fletcher made him an appropriate choice to serve in that special role. At an October meeting of the board, members also elected Bob Utley to succeed Howard Hagerman as board chairman.

Early in his presidency, Dr. Fletcher made a commitment to do everything possible to minimize the administrative turnover that often occurs when a new president assumes duties. When changes occurred, he appointed capable individuals from within the college community to fill administrative roles. In 1985, Dr. Leonard Knight, who had served as dean of students since 1978, followed Dr. Larry Jurney as academic dean, and Kent Hoggatt left his role as director of financial aid to serve as director of church relations. The following year, Garth Pleasant began filling a dual role as dean of students and head basketball coach, while Mark Briggs, former computer services manager, assumed duties as business manager. Larry Stewart returned to the admissions office in 1980 and served as director of admissions throughout the decade.

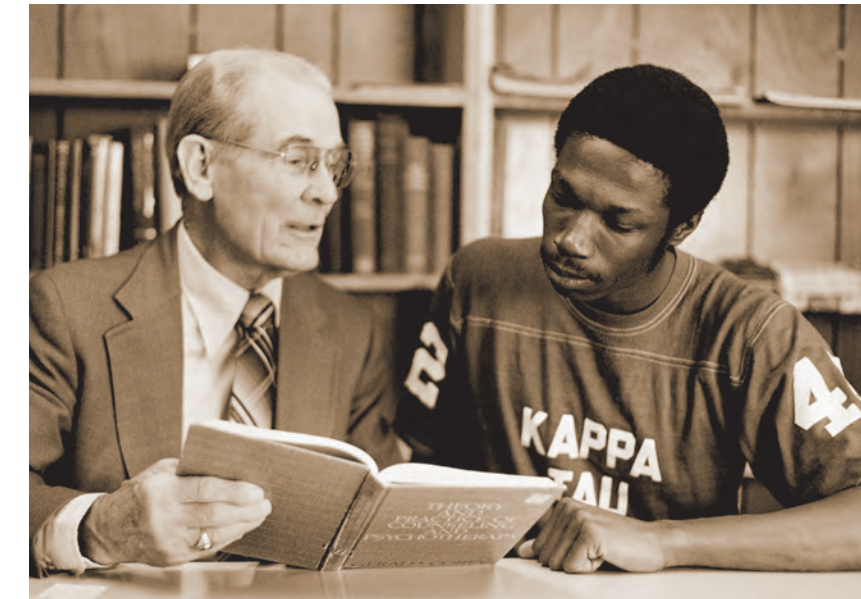
In contrast to the vast change in personnel experienced during the previous ten years, the 1980s ended with a leadership team that bridged all three decades. The entire college community benefited from a sense of tradition and devotion to the institution that permeated the campus.

FIRST BACHELOR'S DEGREE

After the introduction of a three-year Bible program in 1977, students and campus personnel alike waited patiently for approval of the college's first bachelor's degree. In February 1980, the college submitted a document entitled *To Serve Better* to the North Central Association, requesting a substantive change in accreditation before the next regularly scheduled visit. Based on the recommendation of an inspection team, the North Central Association classified Michigan Christian

College as a bachelor's degree-granting institution on November 4, 1980. That decision resulted in immediate implementation of senior-level Bible classes and allowed six graduates to receive their bachelor's degree the following spring.

For several years prior to implementation of the Bible program, the college attempted to locate a religion instructor with a doctoral degree. In the fall of 1980, the college announced that Dr. Paul Southern, retired chairman of the Bible department at Abilene Christian



Dr. Paul Southern assisted Anthony Jackson with coursework in 1981. Known for his wit and humor, the 80-year-old professor once entered a classroom and exclaimed to his students, "Don't laugh at my tie. It's been in style three times!"

University, had agreed to assist the college for one year. Dr. Southern and his wife Margaret taught for a stipend that covered only their living expenses. They enjoyed their experience so much they extended their stay to five years. As the Southern family retired from Michigan Christian College at the close of 1985, Dr. Steve Eckstein joined the religion faculty. Dr. Eckstein previously taught for the Bible Chair of Eastern New Mexico University, where he helped develop the first master's program in religion among Churches of Christ.

Even though a relatively small number of students completed the new Bible degree from year to year, the program's presence fostered positive changes on the campus. Most Bible majors enrolled to pursue a career in ministry, but some used the degree as a stepping stone to graduate programs in counseling and education. Students frequently returned for an extra year and completed hours beyond the associate degree before transferring to complete a bachelor's degree in other fields of study. Campus organizations and athletic teams benefited from experienced leaders, while faculty members enjoyed additional opportunities to teach upper-division courses. As a result, the campus community began to long for additional four-year programs.



Dr. Leonard Knight assisted Laura Day with her class schedule in the fall of 1989. After serving as dean of students for eight years, he accepted a new role as academic dean in 1985.

Like many students in the 1980s, Burt Rutledge decided to pursue a Bible degree after enrolling as a freshman in 1987.



Physical science students benefited from the 1981 acquisition of a reflecting telescope. David Cole demonstrated the equipment's features to Rod Waltz.

Barb Cole provided instruction for Anne McGuigan in 1980. More students completed the secretarial program than any other applied science major.



Third-year business students Billy Blake and Veronica Cobb studied with Kathryn Wilkins in the Muirhead Library's new business resource center in 1988.

Michael Davis transferred from the Bristol Road School of Biblical Studies in 1989. He eventually completed a bachelor's degree as valedictorian of his class.



Students began using new Riccar sewing machines when the Homemaking House opened in 1983. Previously, clothing construction classes met in a local sewing store. Like many other institutions, the college discontinued the home economics program once student interest shifted to other academic disciplines.

ACADEMIC EXPANSION

Occupational degree majors offered under the Associate in Applied Science degree provided an additional set of academic opportunities for the student body during the 1980s. While nearly 70 percent of the students who eventually earned the applied science degree completed either a secretarial or legal assistant major, the college developed a variety of applied science programs to serve a broad range of interests.

Dr. John Todd introduced the legal assistant program in the fall of 1981. The following year, Barbara Cole restructured the existing secretarial science program into specialized executive, legal, and general secretarial majors. During the summer of 1983, workers transformed the gatehouse of the former estate into lab facilities for sewing and food preparation courses. Known as the Homemaking House, the facility supported a new applied science degree in homemaking and foundational courses for home economics majors.

In response to student interest, the college introduced additional applied science majors in computer information systems, word processing, accounting, and

general business in the fall of 1983. At the same time, fully-equipped computer and office systems labs opened in the west wing of the Associates Campus Center. In 1986, the college added a child care major for those students desiring employment in daycare centers, preschools, or home settings.

Even though interest in the applied science majors diminished as societal expectations for the bachelor's degree increased, those programs produced a steady flow of graduates throughout the decade. The addition of coursework, faculty, and labs for the applied science majors also provided several of the critical foundations required to support four-year degree programs.

With the Bible program firmly in place, college leaders decided to move forward with plans for an additional four-year program, the Bachelor of Business Administration degree. In the fall of 1987, the faculty expanded the business curriculum and initiated a three-year business program. Through cooperative agreements with affiliated colleges, students could pursue their junior year on the campus of Michigan Christian College and complete a bachelor's degree in business with one

additional year at those participating institutions.

While preparing for the new business degree, the Muirhead Library retained Dr. Michael Kerestesi, professor emeritus of library science at Wayne State University, to serve as a consultant. Dr. Kerestesi developed a plan that included the establishment of a special room for the business library, a cataloging change of business materials to the Library of Congress classification system, and the acquisition of a core collection of business-related resources. The following spring, volunteers moved massive amounts of books and shelving, allowing the library to open a business resource center. Within a year, the library had implemented all of Dr. Kerestesi's recommendations.

The college submitted a self-study to the state of Michigan in December 1988, requesting permission to offer the Bachelor of Business Administration degree. Two months later, another self-study was submitted to the North Central Association as part of the college's normal reevaluation process. State and NCA teams visited in March 1989. The state team submitted a positive report, but requested action on some additional

items. The NCA team recommended continued accreditation, but could not act upon the new degree proposal until the college received state approval. That process took an additional four years.

During the summer of 1989, the Bristol Road Church of Christ in Flint, Michigan, decided to move their School of Biblical Studies to the campus of Michigan Christian College. As a result, the college developed a two-year program of ministerial training for those desiring to change careers and enter the ministry. While all six remaining students from the Flint program transferred to the college, student interest in the two-year program did not materialize. Once entering the college, most of the new students interested in ministry simply preferred to pursue the bachelor's degree.

The faculty implemented a counseling major under the Bachelor of Religious Education degree in the fall of 1989. Over the previous nine years, most graduates of the Bible program had completed a minor in counseling along with a major in either biblical studies or Christian ministry. The new counseling major emerged as a popular option in the years ahead.

Milton B. Fletcher

President 1980-1991

Milton Fletcher was not the first Texan to lead Michigan Christian College, but no other friend from the Lone Star State ever did so much to ensure the college's future growth and stability.

Fletcher graduated from Abilene Christian College in 1947 and went to work at an oil company in Dallas where he worked his way up to vice president. Meanwhile, church leaders in the Detroit area established a junior college in 1959. The new college had a president and a dean, but needed a business manager to oversee its finances and day-to-day business operations.

In January 1961, Fletcher left his corporate potential in Dallas to follow his faith to Michigan Christian Junior College. He quickly became a significant player on campus as he managed the institution's finances, advised students about their financial obligations, and taught in the business department.

Lucien Palmer became president in 1964 and named Fletcher vice president the next year. The two men developed a strong working relationship and became close friends. Fletcher continued to assume additional duties in his role as vice president. In 1968, he accepted



Guests of a Christian Ministries Workshop in Ontario visited with Milton Fletcher and Kent Hoggatt in 1990.

responsibility for the college's development and long-range planning activities.

Palmer became chancellor in 1971 and the board chose Don Gardner to fill the vacant president's office. Gardner bore little resemblance to his predecessor and managed the institution with a very different style of leadership. The administrative change made it less difficult for Fletcher to return to Texas to become vice president of public relations and development at Abilene Christian.

Over the next decade, private two-year colleges began to fall from favor in the American marketplace. As the 1970s ended, Michigan Christian found itself without

a president to navigate the dangers ahead. The college needed a familiar figure with a steady hand. The board called Milton Fletcher.

In December 1980, Fletcher returned to Michigan Christian as president and introduced an era of financial stability. He worked diligently to increase gift income and control expenses. He established a detailed budgeting process and included employees in the development of budgets. Employees learned to do more with less. Fletcher regularly called for the establishment of an endowment to secure the college's future.

The lights often stayed on in the president's office late into the night. Fletcher spent countless hours on the phone soliciting funds and enlisting volunteers. He organized successful annual fund dinners in cities throughout the United States, orchestrated a stronger lectureship program, and established programs to recognize faithful donors. On most weekends, Fletcher visited churches around the Great Lakes region to foster greater interest in the college.

In 1984, first lady Gene Fletcher died from cancer. The experience softened Fletcher to his employees' quality of life. Although he continued to control costs, he improved health insurance benefits for employees. People who worked for Fletcher in the 1980s recall how he encouraged them to spend time with their families and to take care of themselves. A year after Gene's death, Fletcher married longtime family friend Evelyn Templeton, who graciously served as first lady throughout the remainder of his presidency.

After a combined 23 years of building assets for Michigan Christian College, Fletcher retired in 1991 and made way for new president Ken Johnson. Fletcher strengthened Michigan Christian through the 1980s, but Johnson would face new challenges in the emerging marketplace of the 1990s.

Retirement did not last. In 1993, Fletcher became founding executive director of the ACU Foundation, an organization that manages planned giving programs to benefit Abilene Christian University. Although he retired again in 1998, Fletcher remains active as an advocate for the foundation and university.

Milton Fletcher's presidency marked a significant transition in the college's history. A founding father from the early 1960s became president when Fletcher took office in 1980. His financial management preserved the college when other private two-year institutions failed. His retirement in 1991 resulted in a notable changing of the guard. Fletcher passed Michigan Christian College's past to Ken Johnson, the man who would carry Rochester College into the future. Seventeen years later, Fletcher continues to live as a link between the dreams of the college's founders and the fulfillment of those dreams over the past 50 years.



Milton Fletcher planned formal opening chapel ceremonies each year during his presidency. Jerry Tallman served as the speaker in 1984.

Planners of the Fletcher-Shinsky Golf Classic presented a gold putter to Milton Fletcher at the 2007 annual event.



Gene Fletcher observed as ACU President John Stevens presented an honorary doctorate to Milton Fletcher in 1980.

Milton Fletcher recognized spring graduates at the 1991 commencement program.

TECHNOLOGY ENHANCEMENT

Announcing the addition of new applied science majors in a 1983 news bulletin, President Fletcher stated, "Time magazine declared the computer as the '1982 Man of the Year.' Without a doubt, the computer age is upon us!" The introduction of new technologies not only altered the daily operational procedures of the college during the 1980s, but initiated a major transformation of the entire educational process.

In 1976, Royce Dickinson leased the college's first administrative computer, an IBM Systems/32. At first, only the business office used the computer. In time, the admissions office adapted the system to maintain its prospect list. Even though only two administrative offices benefited from computer technology, the faculty added computer courses to the curriculum in 1981.

Proceeds from the 1982 Fall Festival assisted in the purchase of a Wang VS-80 computer, which arrived in December. "The VS-80 is as extensive and modern as anything on the market," stated Bill Fowler, vice president of finance, in a news bulletin article. "Not only will we have access to more information, but we can have it much more quickly." The initial package included a main system with a 256k memory and a 99 megabyte disc, a word processing unit, a laser printer, and three terminals for administrative use.

During the summer of 1983, the college renovated two classrooms in the Associates Campus Center for use as computer and office systems labs. The \$126,000 project included the purchase of five Apple microcomputers, eight Wang terminals, two CPT word processors, and four printers. Students used the microcomputers for introductory computer and keyboarding courses, and the Wang terminals for word processing and computer science courses. The CPT word processing units,



◀ Maureen Foglesong provided instruction for a computer science course in 1985. In that year's edition of the yearbook, she stated, "As important as computers are in the world today, MCC students should be computer literate, no matter what field they pursue."

which cost \$13,000 each, allowed students to train on some of the finest equipment available at the time.

AT&T installed the college's first phone system in 1961. That system operated with rotary-dial phones, four trunk lines, and 20 phone extensions. By the early 1980s, the need for additional extensions required the installation of several private lines. In 1986, the Associates and Men's Club funded the purchase of a new phone system. While installing that system, the college added its first toll-free line for incoming calls.

In support of the college's developing business program, the Muirhead Library added its first online resource in 1989. *Knowledge Index* offered access to over 70 of the major databases available from Dialog Information Systems, the world's leading online information service. The dial-up service included millions of references in over 30,000 journals.

By the close of the decade, improvements in technology enhanced every phase of campus life. A presentation delivered during the late 1980s at a conference of affiliated colleges revealed only Pepperdine University had integrated the computer into the daily routine of its admissions office as extensively as Michigan Christian College. Every employee and student benefited from the new technologies.

◀ Accessible to the entire college community in less than one year from its purchase, a Wang VS-80 served employees and students for 10 years.



▲ New software packages provided additional learning resources for business students in 1988 as the college expanded its business curriculum to support a proposed Bachelor of Business Administration degree.

◀ Soon after the opening of the computer and office systems labs in 1983, Patty Foster trained on state-of-the-art CPT word processors as part of her requirements for the legal assistant degree.

ENROLLMENT CHALLENGES

Facing national trends that projected a steady decrease in the number of high school graduates, college officials worked diligently throughout the 1980s to broaden the institution's appeal to prospective students. While those efforts helped sustain a strong enrollment during the first half of the decade, it became evident that an expansion of the academic program would be necessary to attract larger numbers of students.

As the 1980s began, the college initiated an aggressive plan to reverse a two-year decrease in enrollment. Throughout the year, admissions personnel shared a new narrated slide show in countless homes and churches. College friends provided Partnership Dinner tickets to over 100 high school seniors, many of whom traveled from other states to spend the weekend on campus. Students served as college representatives in 14 Christian camps, while Autumn completed a summer tour that included the same camps and 36 additional teen gatherings. As a result, the college registered 353 students for the fall semester of 1980, representing a 26 percent increase over the previous year.

Prior to 1981, Autumn performed at various youth functions with a program of popular, non-religious music. As contemporary Christian music began to emerge, Brighter Days formed and adopted the new

style of music. In the fall of 1981, Randy Gill combined both groups into a 12-member Autumn that performed contemporary Christian music. Occasionally, the group would divide into two smaller groups to accommodate multiple requests for the same date.

The admissions office partnered with the drama department in 1984 to introduce Company, a traveling drama troupe. Under the direction of Gale Edwards, the initial 12-member group debuted at a November Junior-Senior Day. Company prepared three one-act plays, and throughout the remainder of the year presented those productions at youth functions and schools.

In the spring of 1985, college officials announced the establishment of a new scholarship program. By that time, nearly one-third of the student body entered the institution with a scholarship based upon high school grades or ACT scores. The new program included larger scholarships for those students and the introduction of the college's first full-tuition award, the Presidential Academic Scholarship.

In an effort to attract a greater number of students with an interest in athletics, the college added five teams to the intercollegiate sports roster in 1986. The list included soccer and track for men, and basketball, volleyball, and track for women. The athletic department also revived cross country for both men and women the

same fall. In order to maximize the recruitment potential of each sport, the admissions office employed Kent Wieb as the college's first full-time sports recruiter and established a modest scholarship program for each team.

A survey conducted at the 1986 Partnership Dinner resulted in efforts to increase the college's non-traditional enrollment. Representatives visited a highly successful program for working adults at Nazareth College and attended a College Board seminar on marketing to adult students. Based upon the concepts gained from those occasions, the college began offering more evening courses and developed options for college credit or continuing education units. The admissions office created a mailing list for non-traditional students, established a special response system, and established regular mailings to prospects. Those efforts opened the door to a new pool of prospective students, but did not flourish for another decade.

In the fall of 1988, a professional company produced the college's first video for use in student recruitment. Admissions personnel used the video while visiting the homes of prospective students. Based on the positive response to the video, the admissions office began sending copies to students as soon as they were identified as good prospects.

Despite the continuation of proven recruitment

methods and efforts to broaden the college's appeal, enrollment declined in 1987 and remained static through the end of the decade. Admissions personnel faced greater resistance from prospective students who did not want to transfer in order to complete their academic work. The college's need for additional four-year programs became painfully evident.

In a 1989 self-study for the North Central Association, the research committee wrote, "The long-term success of the college requires the development of additional four-year programs. The two-year, independent, liberal arts college is finding it more difficult to define a unique market which it can serve. The future of Michigan Christian College can only be assured if it recognizes and develops programs which fulfill the aspirations of the clientele. To do otherwise will ultimately result in institutional failure."

President Fletcher expressed a similar sentiment in a 1989 *North Star* letter to friends and alumni of the college. He stated, "It is becoming more apparent every day how vital it is for Michigan Christian College to add additional four-year degree programs. This action must be accomplished without emotion but with adequate research and dispatch." Such statements by college leaders paved the way for an amazing transformation of the institution in the decade ahead.

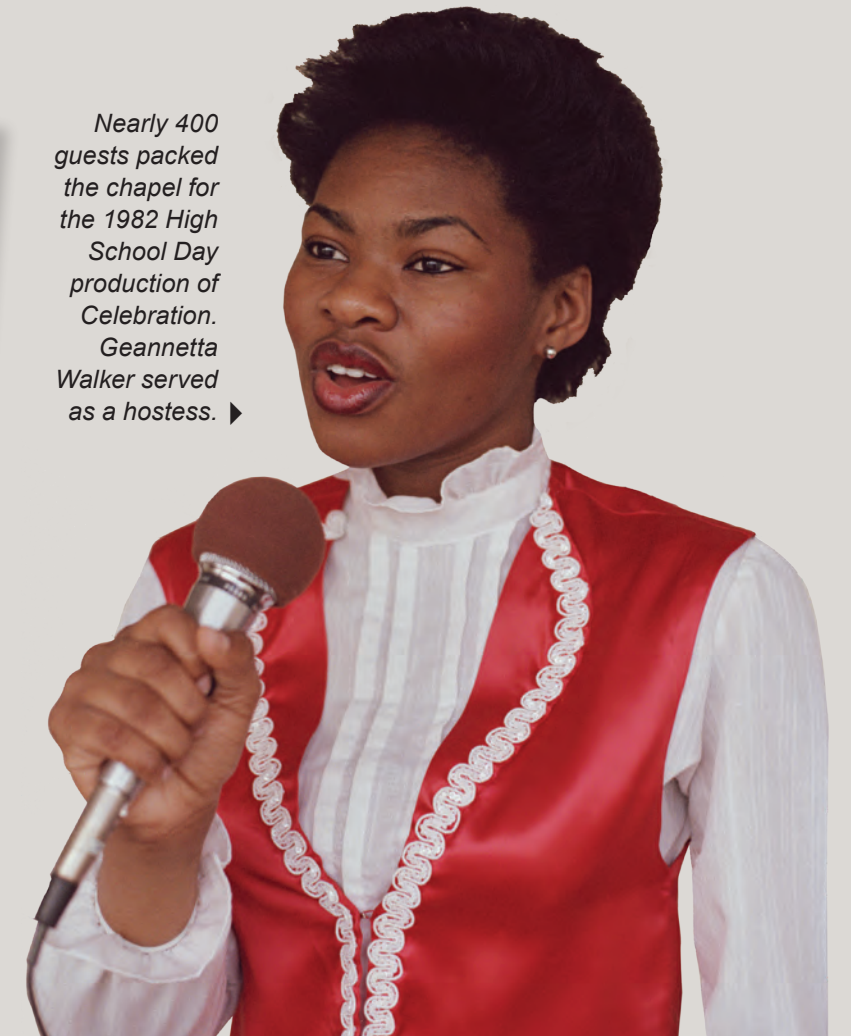


Five teams joined the intercollegiate sports roster in 1986 as college officials sought additional ways to attract new students. Joey Tilton played for the first soccer team in 1987. ▶

Musical ensembles switched from vinyl records to cassette tapes in 1981. ▼



Nearly 400 guests packed the chapel for the 1982 High School Day production of Celebration. Geannetta Walker served as a hostess. ▶

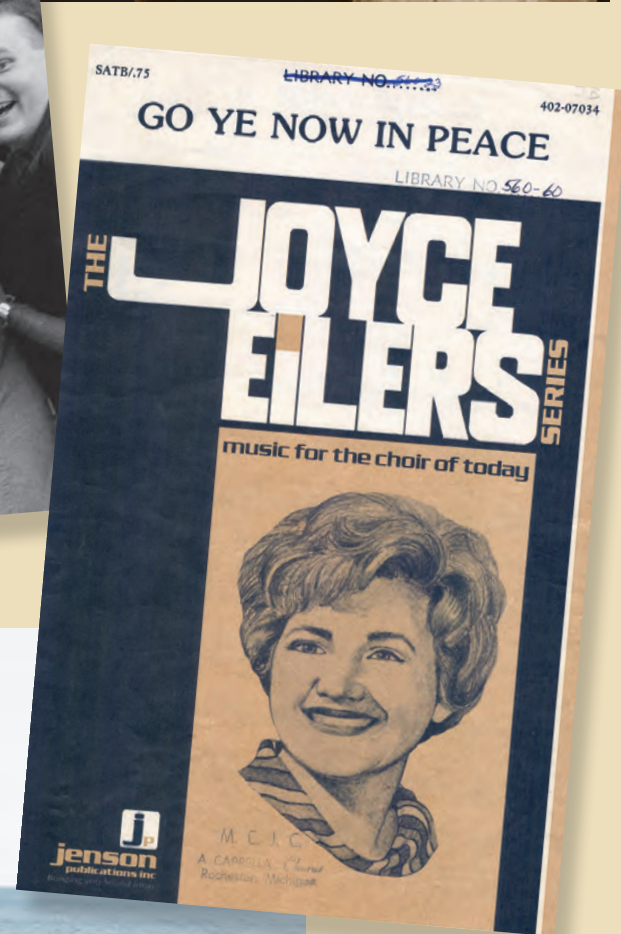


Autumn reorganized in the fall of 1981 with a larger membership and began presenting a program of contemporary Christian music. ▲

President Fletcher accepted a first-place trophy from the business team in 1983. Sponsor Bill Fowler and team members Rob Loshner and Susan Ward participated in the competition.



Members of the chorus and director Joe Bentley met the legendary Sparky Anderson after singing the national anthem at a 1989 Detroit Tigers game.



“Go Ye Now in Peace” became the traditional closing song for chorus concerts beginning in 1980.

Marblehead’s scenic coast provided a fitting setting for a devotional during a 1982 chorus visit to Massachusetts and the Northeastern United States.



Company formed in 1984 to represent the college at various youth functions. Initially, the group offered a series of humorous one-act plays, including “That Was No Lady, That Was a Private Eye.” The group began producing spiritually-oriented skits in 1995.



STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Campus life remained active throughout the 1980s as students continued to participate in established annual events and various campus organizations. Benefiting from two decades of tradition, student groups began to receive recognition for outstanding achievement as the decade progressed.

Interest in restoring a campus landmark from the original Maxon estate surfaced in 1980, when the Student Association sponsored a project to restore the Chinese Gardens. The students provided about \$800 in materials and a volunteer labor force that planted shrubs and installed a new water system for the reflecting pools. Later in the decade, the 1988 Student Association contributed \$2,200 for the purchase of library resources to support the proposed business degree.

The A Cappella Chorus, the college’s oldest student organization, expanded its annual travel schedule in 1982. By moving spring tour from March to the end of the semester, the chorus was able to lengthen its traditional tour to two weeks. The addition of a winter tour allowed the chorus to begin attending the Christian College Choral Festival on an annual basis. The chorus received an enthusiastic standing ovation at the 1982 festival in Oklahoma City. A similar response at

subsequent festivals established the Michigan Christian College A Cappella Chorus as a festival favorite.

Following eight weeks of competition, a team from Michigan Christian College placed first in the college division of the 1983 Harding University Invitational Business Games. The computer-simulated games included eight sets of decisions, representing a two-year period of time for a business firm. Team members participating in the 1987 games competed in individual testing and captured the top three spots for economics knowledge. Third-year business students Billy Blake and Jim Craig participated in the 1989 AT&T Collegiate Investment Challenge with 11,000 other college students. Both participants increased fictitious brokerage accounts by about a half-million dollars.

As the decade opened, the drama department presented such plays as *The Mousetrap* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. The establishment of Company, the college’s new traveling drama troupe, added an innovative dimension to the theatre program in 1984, but caused the production of major plays to cease while Company established its new routine. Major plays returned in 1989, when Company presented *Star Spangled Girl* for campus audiences and for a Liberty Christian Academy benefit dinner.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

In 1981, the Warriors joined the National Little College Athletic Association. The men's basketball team ended its first year in the NLCAA with a national ranking, the North Central Division title, and a spot in the national finals. After winning the NLCAA district title in 1984, the team earned second place at the national tournament in Marion, Ohio. On their seventh trip to the national tournament in a period of eight years, the Warriors finally captured their first national championship in 1989. Responding to a news reporter after winning the title, Coach Garth Pleasant stated, "Whoever wins the NCAA title in March won't be any more excited than we are right now. We know we're not

academic year, Cherri walked for the first time after being confined to a wheelchair her entire life.

The amount of blood donated during campus bloodmobile visits increased dramatically in 1980, when Coach Shinsky began sponsoring a blood drive each semester. In the spring of 1983, the college community donated a record 109 pints of blood. Coach Shinsky often used creative ways to promote the drives. Recalling one of Coach's poems, the 1985 *Totem Pole* quoted, "Fe, Fi, Fo, Fum. I want the blood of everyone. Be ye white or be ye black, don't worry – it will come back!"

About 100 guests joined members of the W Club in 1981 as the organization hosted its first of many lectureships for women. Throughout the 1980s, the club



Mission Emphasis members Jenny Carter and Carolyn Norris participated in a 1984 outreach effort to children.

the NCAA, but this is ours." The Warriors ended their championship season with an impressive 25-3 record.

In its third year of intercollegiate competition, the women's volleyball team won second place at the Cincinnati Bible Tournament in 1988, bringing home the college's first trophy for a women's sport. Despite harsh Minnesota weather conditions that same fall, the cross country team captured second place in its first trip to an NLCAA National Meet. The following year, the cross country team captured its first national championship.

While music, business, and athletic groups achieved recognition for their successes, other student groups made an impact on individuals and the surrounding community. Those activities resulted in a unique form of achievement that characterized the institution.

In 1980, students hosted a benefit concert to raise funds for Cherri Eitel, a fellow student who needed surgery. Student attentiveness to Cherri's needs so impressed her doctor that he personally brought her from the hospital to the concert. Before the end of that

featured employees, spouses of employees, students, and off-campus guests as speakers for the annual event.

Mission Emphasis reorganized in 1984, offering a special outreach program to area congregations. The effort involved two student teams on subsequent weekends. The first team knocked on doors and invited visitors from the community, and the second conducted a special one-day Bible class program for children entitled "Saturday with a Friend." After one of the campaigns, a high school student commented, "I would like to thank the students. By watching them, I have realized that true happiness and contentment of heart is through Christ."

In 1989, Phi Beta Lambda, a business club, collected food items in a neighboring condominium complex for distribution to the needy, while other student groups raised funds for a young boy who needed surgery. As new nursing homes opened in the community, student groups began visiting residents on a regular basis. As in earlier decades, the students of Michigan Christian College demonstrated a willingness to serve others.



Women's coach Barry Wheeler assisted with an awards ceremony at the 1989 NLCAA Cross Country National Finals. Olaf Meier won first place and helped the team earn its first national championship.

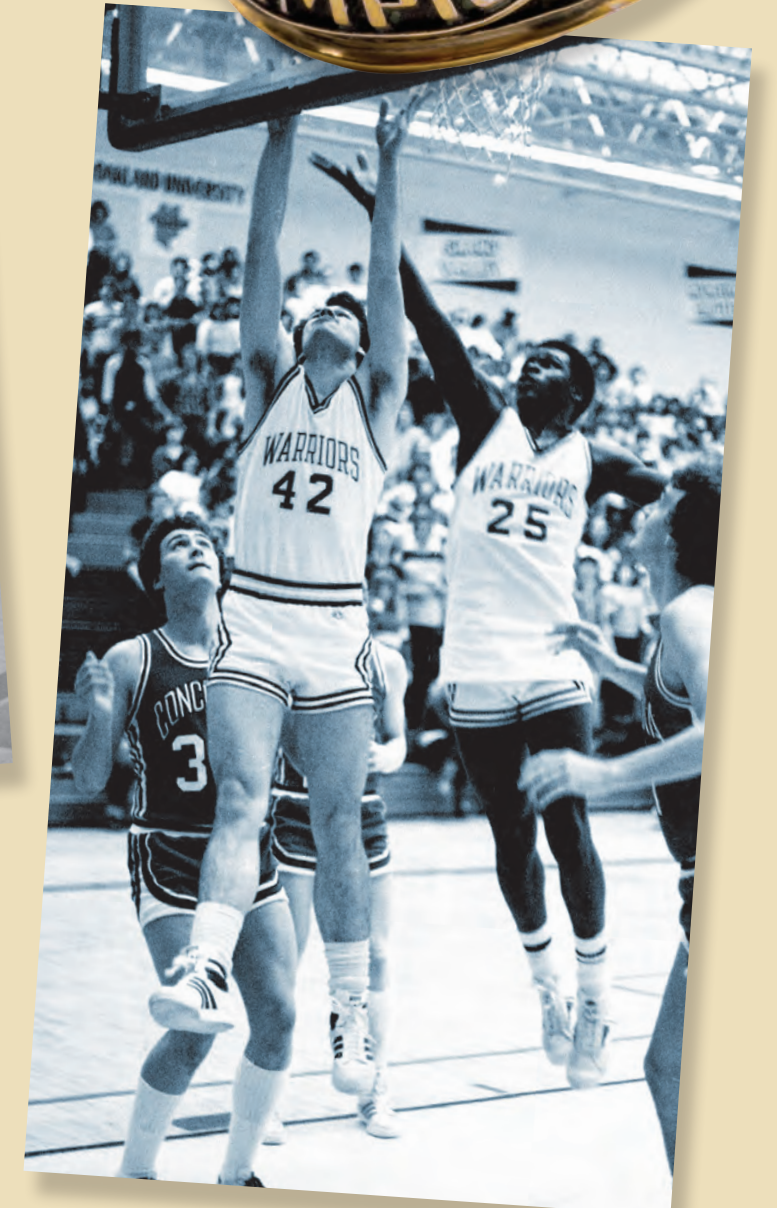
Capturing its first national title in 1989, the men's basketball team obtained championship rings to commemorate the occasion.



Laurie Brandt led the 1987 and 1988 volleyball teams in serves.

Winning the college's first trophy for a women's sport in 1988, the volleyball team placed second in the Cincinnati Bible Tournament.

Tom Johnson and Ricky Brown helped the Warriors earn their first national ranking in 1982.



Lake Norcentra

A Campus Symbol

Lake Norcentra charmed the founders of North Central Christian College and quickly became a symbol of the newly-formed institution. Before the college opened, early leaders derived a name for the lake from the first institutional name. Photographs of Lake Norcentra appeared on the earliest promotional materials and the pioneer student body readily embraced



Pranksters Rodney Grantham and Pete Cox teased Fred Alexander with a dip in Lake Norcentra in 1961. Workers later removed the dock as it began to deteriorate.

the symbol. Since that time, Lake Norcentra has provided countless memories for the college community and sparked numerous campus legends.

A writer for the 1965 yearbook stated, "To the students of Michigan Christian College, the lake is one of the most beautiful in the world. In its center is the enchanted totem pole island. Moonlight walks in the spring, skating under the stars in the winter, or a peaceful walk around Lake Norcentra in autumn are unforgettable and treasured memories of every student." The author continued, "A glistening ocean of snow and ice in the winter or the lake's cold, rippling water in the spring greet every person who chooses to idle away minutes or hours at its side."

Stories connecting Lake Norcentra to marriage proposals began to surface as early as 1965. That year, the student newspaper reported a rumor that couples who crossed a small bridge by the lake "would make marriage their goal." In time, the rumor evolved into an assertion that couples daring to walk around the lake three times would end up engaged. Many students have tested those

traditions. Many others have been thrown in the lake after announcing engagements.

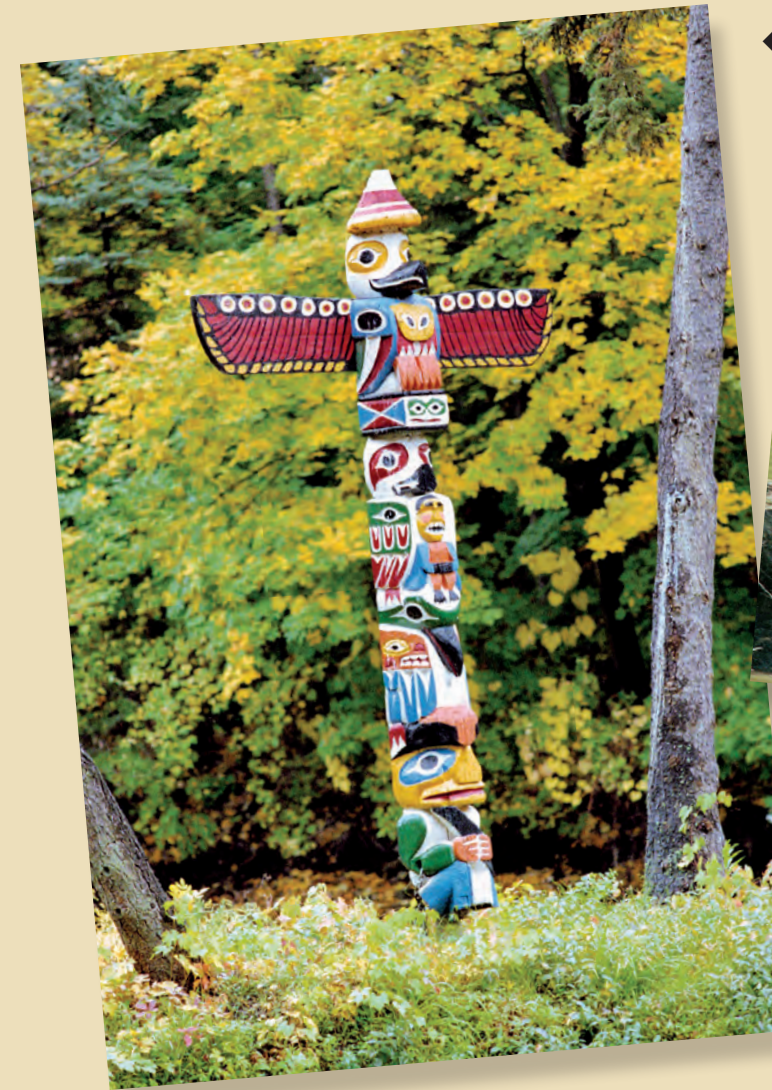
A 1975 article in the student newspaper referred to rumors about Lake Norcentra, including stories of a railroad car on the bottom of the lake, a child that drowned, a teacher's missing car being driven into the water, and the existence of giant turtles. A few years earlier, a skin diving club obtained permission to survey Lake Norcentra. The divers did not find any vehicles but did spot a giant turtle approximately three feet in width, proving at least one of the rumors true. The divers also charted the lake's greatest depth at 30 feet in the area between Gallaher Center and the island.

As community leaders assembled for a campus meeting in 1984, Red Knapp shared a personal story about an incident that occurred in Lake Norcentra during his childhood. The 72-year-old businessman related how he and his friends often swam in the lake when they were young. He vividly recalled an afternoon when one of his friends drowned after getting stuck in an abandoned train car left on the bottom of the lake by owners of the former gravel pit. He unknowingly confirmed two rumors that day.

Duckweed covered the lake during the late 1960s at a time when the water level also began to fall. In 1974, Royce Dickinson discovered a water line installed by the original owner to bring water from the Clinton River into the lake. The inlet for the water line had lost its water supply during the construction of a city sewer system behind the campus. Once workers repaired the inlet and the lines, the lake level rose ten inches within hours and the duckweed disappeared.

The Clinton River altered its course during the 1990s and again stopped the regular flow of water into the lake. The water level began fluctuating according to the amount of rainfall. The inlet's location on neighboring property and the curvature of the land near the inlet made reconnection of the old water line impractical. In 1997, college officials received permission from the city to divert runoff water from new parking lots into the lake. A few years later, maintenance personnel supplemented the runoff with fresh water from the wells that once served the campus facilities.

Along with a few Greek books, a prankster's bowling ball, and various other items, eroded soil and leaves have accumulated on the bottom of Lake Norcentra for many years, decreasing the water's depth. No doubt the old train car is buried beneath the debris of man and nature. Someday, when the college dredges the lake, other mysteries may be solved as well. In the meantime, the legends undoubtedly will persist and the college community will continue to enjoy an incredible display of God's seasonal handiwork in the beautiful area surrounding Lake Norcentra.



◀ *Photographed in 1986, the Totem Pole stood majestically on Lake Norcentra's island for nearly 40 years. The pioneer college community selected a warrior mascot and named the yearbook in honor of the colorful campus symbol.*



▲ *Residents of Hoggatt Hall appeared in chapel during the spring of 2000 with "Hoggatt Swim Team" shirts. They announced their intention to conduct a race to the island during the lunch hour. Scores of enthusiastic supporters lined the banks of Lake Norcentra to cheer on those willing to face the cold water.*

▼ *Surrounded by the beauty of nature, Daisy Crews relaxed with a friend by Lake Norcentra in the fall of 1993.*





▲ Guests experienced the last lectureship program in the gym in 1989. The *North Star* commented, "The uncomfortable folding chairs will be replaced by padded pews. However, it will be difficult to improve on the lively ring of the gymnasium that has enhanced the lectureship singing for years."

Great Lakes Christian College hosted an MCC Christian Ministries Workshop in 1988. The response resulted in a subsequent event that included instructor Lynne Stewart.



◀ Suzanne Scott and Tom Twigg participated in singing during a 1985 chapel session.

Dr. Leonard Knight ended chapel on a winter day in 1981 with the traditional announcements. The daily program moved to the Westside Central Chapel in 1978.



CHURCH RELATIONS

Interaction between college personnel and church members increased dramatically during the 1980s as the college expanded its role in serving churches. Traditional events like the annual lectureship provided opportunities for fellowship and spiritual growth. Special events focused on equipping church members for better service in their local communities.

Under the direction of Jesse Clayton, director of church relations, the college began hosting the Church Leaders Workshop on a regular basis in 1980. Within two years, the program attracted to the campus 248 participants from 75 congregations. In 1985, the college partnered with the Center for Church Growth to present the annual program, and in 1986 named the event for Jim Wood, a former elder of the Royal Oak Church of Christ.

The first Youth Leaders Workshop occurred on campus in 1980. The following year, the program featured Don Williams and Wally Wilkerson, and attracted over 100 youth leaders from across the Midwest. The annual program continued through 1988.

The college formally introduced Christian Education Sundays during the summer of 1981. President Fletcher wrote in a news bulletin, "In an effort to sustain and improve relationships and to promote the cause of Christian education, the college would like to reach as many congregations each year as possible." By the end of the decade, the program took speakers from the college into various congregations on over 500 occasions.

Planners of the 1981 lectureship introduced a new series of special luncheons and dinners that enhanced the annual event throughout the decade. The first Parent's Day Luncheon honored Lester and Dorothy Allen, and E.R. and Mary Bruce, who had each sent six

children to Michigan Christian College. A new Friends Luncheon provided an opportunity to unveil the first in a series of paintings by an Artist of the Year. Lectureship attendance peaked in 1982 as over 2,000 individuals visited during the week to hear lessons on *The Christian Family*. An era ended for the lectureship in 1989 as guests participated in a final session in the gymnasium before the event moved to the new auditorium of the Rochester Church of Christ.

Building upon a program conducted by college

personnel at the Cardinal Drive Church of Christ in 1979, the college began a popular series of Bible School Workshops during the fall of 1981. College employees traveled to various cities throughout the Midwest to help congregations train Bible class teachers. Kent Hoggatt expanded the workshop curriculum in 1987, when the training programs became known as Christian Ministries Workshops. During the 1980s, nearly 6,000 people participated in one of 66 workshops conducted by the college.

Providing further opportunities for fellowship among church members and friends of the college, President Fletcher introduced the annual Golf Classic in 1981. The second golf classic featured Byron Nelson,

four-time winner of the national open. By 1989, the college hosted golf classics in Detroit, Chicago, and the Dayton-Cincinnati area.

Fulfilling its mission in a unique way during the 1980s, the college provided educational experiences for the church community as well as the student body. Thousands of individuals benefited from the training and experience of campus personnel and guest speakers. As a result, Michigan Christian College became known as a primary resource for churches in the entire region.

Memories from the 1980s by Kathy Norton

Along with big-hair styles and Jordache jeans with combs sticking out back pockets, we experienced a sense of community at Michigan Christian College during the 1980s that none of my friends at other colleges experienced. People said "hello" to me everywhere I went on campus. MCC exemplified the theme song of one of my favorite 80s television shows, "Cheers," entitled "Where Everybody Knows Your Name." Surely everyone did know my name, not that my name was more important than others we all knew like cafeteria worker Linda Horton, bookstore clerk Jo Meixner, or even the ice cream man Kevin.

Pivotal events in our nation, and in my life, took place during the 1980s. Nationally, we cried tears of grief as we watched the space shuttle Challenger explode and cried tears of joy as we watched the Berlin Wall come down and the Iron Curtain fall. As far as I am concerned, the only wedding bigger than Charles and Diana's royal wedding was mine to Bob Norton. August 13, 1983, changed my life forever. At the time, Dr. Leonard Knight offered six weeks of free pre-marital counseling to all couples considering marriage. What a blessing to work out the details of married life, children, and budgeting from a biblical perspective before walking down the aisle and becoming parents. This year, Bob and I celebrate 25 years of marriage and we deeply appreciate Dr. Knight for helping us avoid common marital pitfalls for all of those years.

In a decade where advertisements were telling us to "Be a Pepper," MCC taught us how to be "salt" to our world. Being salt also meant being a servant in the community. Bob and I have served our community in many ways since graduation. We owe those skills, in part, to professors like Dr. John Todd, Dr. Jeanine Varner, and Coach Bill Shinsky, all of whom were great examples of how to lead using Christian principles.

Kathy (Butterfield) Norton completed her associate degree in 1983. The student body selected her as homecoming queen and the faculty named her to Who's Who. Her husband, Bob, is a 1982 graduate and is employed as senior staff counsel for the Chrysler Corporation. Bob also serves on the college Board of Trustees.

FISCAL STABILITY

Since Milton Fletcher once served the college as a business manager and as a vice president, he considered fiscal matters a high priority during his presidency. In order to achieve institutional goals, he promoted existing fund-raising programs, created giving clubs to honor donors, and developed a series of annual dinners. His efforts resulted in a balanced budget, reduction of debt, and growth of the endowment fund.

The college established three donor clubs in the spring of 1981. The Century Club honored those giving \$100 to \$999 on an annual basis, the President's Circle those giving over \$1,000 per year, and the Heritage Club those who remembered Michigan Christian College in their estate planning. Throughout the decade, members of all three clubs received reproductions of campus scenes painted by an Artist of the Year. Participants of the President's Circle and Heritage Club also enjoyed an annual banquet on the campus.

In a 1982 news bulletin, President Fletcher declared, "The budget is balanced, and we intend to operate the institution on the basis of a balanced budget. If we do not take in the projected revenue, we will adjust the budget accordingly and do our very best to live within its limits. If we don't have the money, we won't spend it!" President Fletcher lived up to his promise and operated the college with a balanced budget throughout his administration.

Friends of the college gathered in Abilene, Texas, in June 1982 for the first of many dinners designed to support the annual fund of Michigan Christian College. The first Abilene dinner resulted in gifts of \$16,600. In the years that followed, the college hosted similar events in Cincinnati, Nashville, Dayton, Rockford, Chicago, Phoenix, and Tucson. Many of the dinners were conducted on an annual basis.

In an effort to build the endowment fund, President Fletcher often spoke about the need for estate planning. In a 1983 news bulletin he stated, "The longevity of any private educational institution hangs heavily on the adequacy of permanent endowment funds. A permanent endowment fund is the only assurance of long range financial security for a non-profit educational institution." In the years that followed, college officials placed the proceeds from most estate gifts into the endowment fund.

In 1984, the college launched the Silver Anniversary Campaign at the annual Partnership Dinner. The \$8.2 million campaign included funds for operational expenses, endowment, and physical facilities. Campaign brochures featured plans for a new building containing a library and science laboratories. As the campaign unfolded, however, a downturn in the economy and enrollment shortfalls increased the need for operational funding and placed the facility goals on hold.

Along with Phone-a-Visit, the Partnership Dinner continued to anchor the annual giving programs once the college retired the Alma Gatewood Residence Hall debt in 1984. From year to year, dinner participants enjoyed such speakers as Jim Bill McInteer, a well-

Joanne Shinsky assisted the Associates with the sale of dinners at the 1989 Rochester Art & Apples Festival.

Members of the Associates marked the college's 25th anniversary in 1984 with their second souvenir plate.



1989 Fall Festival guests witnessed the crowning of Mildred Freeland after the queen contest raised a record \$40,606.



Sponsorship of three Jog-o-Thons allowed the Men's Club to raise over \$70,000 for the college.

College officials surprised the student body in 1980 with the delivery of a diesel bus. Purchased with donations from Elmer and Rita Burgett, William Mitzelfeld, and the Associates, the bus served student groups for ten years.

known minister and popular after-dinner speaker; John Stevens, president of Abilene Christian University; and Gene Stallings, head football coach of the St. Louis Cardinals. In 1987, the college introduced Partnership Dinner West in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Within two years, the Western Michigan dinner began attracting over 350 friends of the college.

While the institutional budget increased from \$1.8 million to \$2.9 million during the decade of the 1980s, an increase in gift income and conservative spending allowed the college to operate in the black each fiscal year. Long term debt decreased from \$618,000 in 1980 to \$119,041 at the close of 1989. The endowment fund grew from \$38,770 in 1980 to \$963,308 at close of the decade. The financial stability of the 1980s positioned the college for a new phase of growth and development.

ASSOCIATES AND MEN'S CLUB

Associates chapters continued to make a major impact on the college community during the 1980s. By the end of the decade, the group contributed its second millionth dollar to the college. The Men's Club also enjoyed an additional season of accomplishment after several years of limited activity.

The Associates, Men's Club, and Luckett Ladies joined forces in January 1982 to provide volunteer workers for Super Bowl XVI at the Silverdome. The three organizations provided 278 workers for 55 souvenir booths and split the commission from over \$400,000 in sales. The one-day event helped the Associates increase their annual income from \$126,968 to \$167,422 during the 1981-82 academic year.

While sponsoring traditional events like the Fall Festival, Gift-a-Rama, and Spring Fashion Show, the Associates continued to seek additional venues to raise funds for the college. In 1983, the group sponsored Musical 83 in the Allen Park Civic Auditorium. Nearly 600 people attended the event, emceed by Fritz Petrich, former director of the A Cappella Chorus. Based upon the success of the event, the Associates hosted a similar program the next year.

The Men's Club co-sponsored its first Jog-o-Thon with Luckett Christian Academy in 1983. Over 500 walkers and runners participated in the event, held at the Macomb Community College Fieldhouse. Participants raised over \$20,000 for the college's new computer science program by obtaining pledges for quarter-mile laps. An article in the news bulletin noted, "Paul Southern, who celebrated his 82nd birthday that day, was worth \$64 per lap. He completed four miles in one hour." The Men's Club sponsored Jog-o-Thons again in 1985 and 1988, raising an additional \$52,000.

In the spring of 1985, the Associates joined the Bill Knapp's Community Support Program. Patrons received one point for each dollar spent at the restaurant and passed those points on to their favorite charity. The Associates participated and purchased numerous items for the college through the program until the restaurant chain closed in 2002.



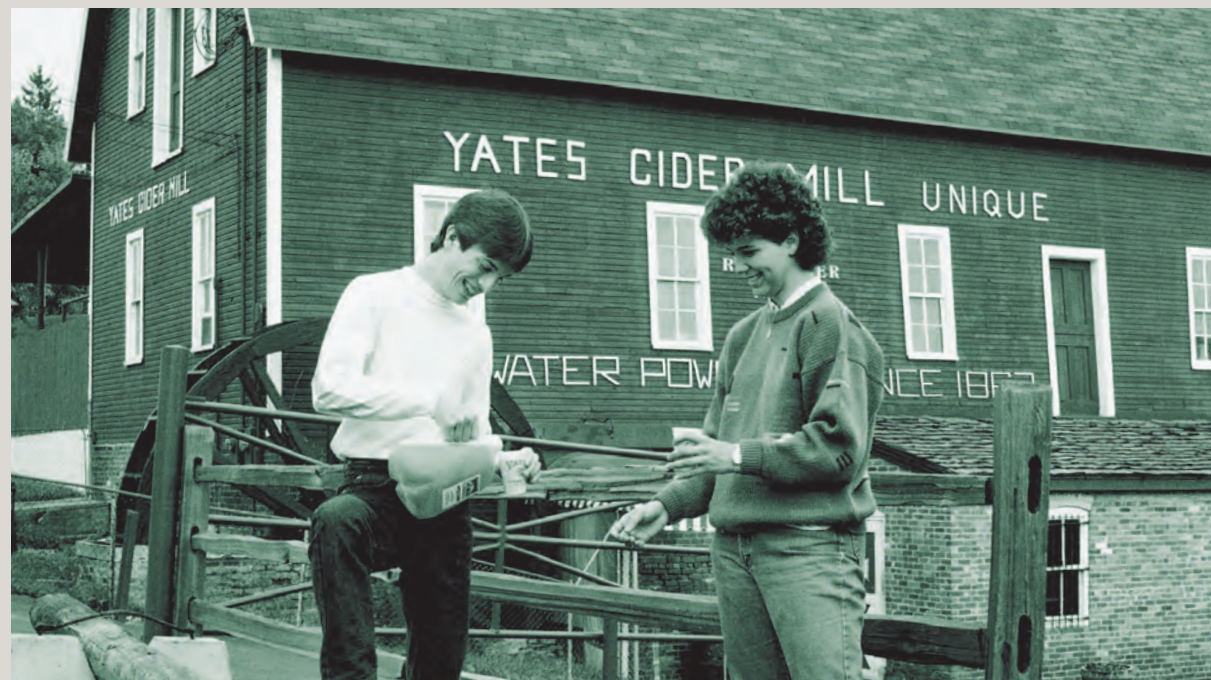
◀ Local restaurant options multiplied to over 60 choices during the 1980s. Veronica Cobb, Shane Cox, and Lisa King took a break from classes at a new A&W in 1988.

Downtown Rochester ▶ remained vibrant during the decade, even with the opening of several shopping centers. Lori Truex and Lisa Barnett visited the downtown shops in 1986.



▲ Since opening to the public, Meadow Brook Hall has hosted a variety of events for the college. Lisa and Toni DiMarzio visited the historic home in 1986.

Barry Wilhelm and Susan Price enjoyed Yates cider on a fall afternoon in 1986.



▲ "MCC Night at Meadow Brook Hall" attracted over 200 members of the college community soon after the opening of the fall semester in 1982. While students and staff explored the 110-room Tudor mansion, Bernard Leshley, instructor of piano, provided background music on the hall's massive pipe organ. Participants ended the evening with a devotional in the ballroom. Oakland University reopened the historic home in 1971 as a center for cultural and educational activities.

HOMETOWN GROWTH

Completing the transition from a rural community to an affluent suburban city, the college's hometown experienced phenomenal growth during the 1980s. That change impacted campus life as students suddenly found themselves in the center of one of the nation's most popular communities.

North Central Christian College opened in 1959 on a tree-lined, dirt road in a quiet rural community. Even though the college maintained a Rochester mailing address, the campus technically was located in the former farming community of Avon Township. The township surrounded the city of Rochester on three sides. By 1980, Avon Township emerged as the fastest growing community in southeast Michigan.

For many years, township leaders discussed the possibilities of incorporating as a city or consolidating with the city of Rochester. Eventually, voters elected a nine-member commission to draft a city charter. That commission included Dr. John Todd, a member of the college faculty. On November 20, 1984, township residents approved the proposed city charter and Avon Township became the city of Rochester Hills. That same year, one out of every 100 homes constructed in the United States was built in the newly-formed city. From 1980 to 1990, the population of Rochester Hills increased 51 percent from 40,704 to 61,523, making it the fastest growing city in the state during the 1980s.

Discussion of consolidation continued until 1987, when voters in both cities soundly rejected a proposal to merge. The two cities complemented one another so well, however, they became commonly known as the Rochester community. Rochester maintained the atmosphere of a small town, complete with a variety of shops and a beautiful city park. Rochester Hills evolved as an affluent residential community with all of the privileges of suburban living. By the end of the decade, Rochester Hills served as home to three enclosed shopping malls, nine shopping centers, over 60 restaurants, and three movie complexes.

While taking advantage of limitless new opportunities for shopping, entertainment, and part-time employment, students continued to enjoy the cultural events that helped shape the community's reputation. Student groups occasionally visited Meadow Brook Theatre, one of the nation's leading professional venues, on the campus of Oakland University. Members of the college community joined thousands of visitors at the annual Art & Apples Festival in downtown Rochester. Others explored Meadow Brook Hall, the mansion built by Matilda Dodge Wilson, widow of auto genius John Dodge.

The Rochester community developed into an ideal college community during the 1980s. Growth of the community positioned the college well for the decade ahead. As the faculty began to develop four-year programs in business, human services, and education, they found exceptional opportunities for internships in some of the finest businesses, agencies, and schools in the state of Michigan.

Completion of a new residence hall complex in 1997 helped launch the college into an era of growth and expansion. As the first major construction in nearly two decades, the facility gave the campus a fresh appearance. In addition to Ferndale Hall, Hoggatt Hall, and the Dearborn Commons, the project included a new entrance and major improvements in roadways, sidewalks, and parking areas.

1990-1999



Announcement of a campaign to fund phase one of the campus master plan attracted the attention of the campus community in 1994. Freshmen Moses Velasco, Noel Young, and Melanie Cramp viewed a model of the residence hall project that fall.



Members of the President's Circle received a medallion of the college's new seal soon after the institutional name change in 1997. Ken Stewart, a member of the class of 1982, designed the seal and torch symbol.

Milestones of the 1990s

- 1990 • Preschool opened by the college in new church facility next to campus
• Second national title earned by men's cross country team
- 1991 • Ken Johnson named sixth president of the college
- 1992 • Music Center renovated by alumni volunteers
- 1993 • Bachelor of Business Administration degree approved by NCA
• Third millionth dollar raised by the Associates
- 1994 • Warrior Cafe opened in lower level of former Utley Student Center
• Second national title captured by men's basketball team
- 1995 • Campus connected to the Internet
- 1996 • Bachelor of Science degree approved by the state and NCA
• First national title earned by men's soccer team
- 1997 • Institutional name changed to Rochester College
• Weekend College introduced for working adults
• Ferndale Hall, Hoggatt Hall, and Dearborn Commons completed
• College web site launched
- 1998 • First national title earned by women's volleyball team
- 1999 • Satellite campus established at the Macomb University Center
• Over 500 students enrolled for the first time
• Second national title earned by women's volleyball team



Joan Golden first registered for classes in 1961, the same year the institution changed its name to Michigan Christian Junior College. She returned for the adult program in 1997 during the transition to Rochester College.

Unprecedented change reshaped the college during the decade of the 1990s. Within a relatively short period of time, friends and alumni witnessed the most significant transformation of the institution in its history.

During the decade, the college met a goal of the founding board and completed the transition to senior college status by adding an array of bachelor's degree programs. The adoption of a new college name in 1997 more clearly positioned the institution in the educational community as a "liberal arts college in a Christian

setting." Subsequent growth fueled major campus improvements.

Significant changes in the world also affected life on the campus. Collapse of the Soviet Union and proliferation of the Internet contributed to the emergence of a global community. Students responded with a renewed interest in foreign missions and international studies.

By the end of the decade, the college emerged as a stronger institution. That strength provided the college with new opportunities to fulfill its mission in the community as well as the church.

LEADERSHIP CHANGE

Similar to the beginning of previous decades, the college experienced a change in leadership early in the 1990s. In keeping with his original commitment to serve as president for 10 years, Milton Fletcher announced his retirement in the spring of 1991.

Immediately, the board began a search process and eventually selected Ken Johnson as the sixth president of Michigan Christian College.

At an opening meeting for employees in August 1991, Dr. Johnson stated, "Change is the dynamic of every organization." He then shared his goals and dreams for the immediate future, and introduced Candace Cain as the new dean of students. Dean Cain served in that role throughout the decade.

In addition to the employment of Dean Cain, change typified the composition of the administrative team as President Johnson led the institution through a time of rapid transition.

Reminiscent of the 1970s, Dr. Johnson built a new team of administrators to assist in the accomplishment of his goals. Within two years of the presidential change, new individuals managed every administrative division on campus.

President Johnson named two new administrators in 1993, the first individuals to serve in vice presidential roles since the

Larry Norman visited with student worker Laure Mathis soon after assuming duties as vice president for enrollment services in 1999. After serving in other campus roles for two years, he returned to the admissions office in 2007.

appointment of Bill Fowler in 1977. Mark Davis began duties as vice president for capital development, and Joe Reddick filled a role as vice president of operations. Mark Davis later transitioned to other vice presidential duties as Dr. Johnson refined his administrative team.

During the summer of 1993, President Johnson announced the transition of Dr. Leonard Knight to a role as chairman of the human services department and director of a new counseling center. Dr. Larry Leslie, a member of the pioneer class, assumed Dr. Knight's duties as dean of academic services. Dr. Leslie served in that position until the arrival of Dr. Michael Westerfield in 1995.

More than any administrative division, the admissions office experienced frequent changes in leadership. Seven individuals directed the college's recruitment efforts between 1990 and the end of the decade. In spite of staffing turnover in the admissions office, the college set a number of enrollment records as a result of momentum created by the addition of bachelor's degree programs.

Memories from the 1990s by Jim Larsen

My relationship with Michigan Christian College began at a Sunday morning worship service in Traverse City, Michigan. Dr. Ken Johnson came to speak about the college, and he was an answer to my prayers. As a new Christian, I had asked God to help prepare me for the ministry. Dr. Johnson paved the way for me, my wife Pam, son James, and dog Panama, to come to Michigan Christian College, where I would study and we would serve in Gatewood Hall as house parents.

The following three years were some of the very best in our lives. I studied at the feet of Dr. Stephen Eckstein, Dr. David Fleer, and Dr. Mel Storm. Dr. Eckstein covered so much material the first day of a church history class that I was overwhelmed and ready to quit. I explained to him that unlike the other more experienced Christians in class I was not getting it. He assured me the others were overwhelmed too, and that I would be just fine. Of course he was right.

Some of my fondest memories are dinners with the Ecksteins, feeding the homeless in Detroit, daily chapel, and singing with the students at a nursing home. I will never forget the first time we heard David Carnes' powerful voice lead singing at an evening devotional. The students' voices were angelic and we instantly knew we were experiencing something very special. We hoped it would never end.

As dorm parents, our little apartment was home to the students who visited for dinner, Bible studies, and Pam's famous heath bars. We still enjoy many of those relationships.

Our son, James, returned to Rochester to attend the college in 2002. He played on the baseball team, and earned the Bachelor of Business Administration degree with honors in 2006.

Rochester College has had a huge impact on our entire family, and we thank God for her. We feel very blessed to have been there.

Jim Larsen earned the Bachelor of Religious Education degree in 1999 with a major in Christian ministry. While a student, he was selected by the faculty to represent the college in Who's Who Among American Colleges and Universities. He now serves as minister for the Marquette Church of Christ.



▲ All of the former presidents gathered for the 20th annual Partnership Dinner in 1991. Those attending included Otis and Irene Gatewood, Lucien and Ida Palmer, Don and Audrey Gardner, Walt Gilfilen, Milton and Evelyn Fletcher, and Ken and Mary Johnson.

◀ Harold and Helen Slater studied artifacts from the church history collection at the 1992 fall lectureship.

Board members Rick Watson and Duane Harrison, along with Pat Harrison, viewed the new master plan in 1994.



▲ Minister Vernon Boyd donated a silver communion pitcher to the college in 1992 along with a collection of items relating to the history of Churches of Christ in Michigan. The pitcher originally was given to the Cameron Avenue Church of Christ in 1905.



SENIOR COLLEGE STATUS

Early in the decade, the college continued to face resistance from prospective students who did not want to transfer to other institutions to complete their academic programs. While awaiting approval of the four-year business program, the college offered a limited number of majors at the bachelor's degree level.

During the spring of 1992, college officials designed numerous 2+2 degree plans to ease concerns about the transfer process. Even though the plans provided admissions personnel with strong visuals, enrollment figures did not begin to increase substantially until the implementation of an array of four-year programs.

In the fall of 1992, the faculty introduced a major in youth and family ministry and another in missions. Based upon the historically strong interest of Michigan Christian College students in service-oriented careers, the college added majors in psychology, sociology, and social work the following fall. Each new major broadened the options offered by the college, but still focused on careers in ministry and human services.

A pivotal step toward final approval of the Bachelor

of Business Administration degree occurred in February 1993, when a committee from the State Board of Education made its final visit to campus and recommended the college be authorized to offer the BBA. The North Central Association granted their approval of the program later that summer. The faculty immediately implemented BBA majors in management, marketing, business administration, and human resource management.

By the fall of 1993, the college advertised 13 bachelor's degree majors under the headings of business, human services, and Christian services. Within a year, 411 students enrolled for classes, breaking the previous record of 400 set in 1977. That figure included the largest number of juniors and seniors in the institution's history.

Following a 1996 site visit, the college received authorization from both the state of Michigan and the North Central Association to offer the Bachelor of Science degree. Approval allowed the college to reposition the human services majors under a more appropriate degree title than the Bachelor of Religious Education. Since the state granted approval with no limitations, the college no

longer had to seek permission for additional majors under either the BRE or BS degree.

During the summer of 1996, the college finalized arrangements for a cooperative program in elementary and secondary education. The program allowed students to complete three years of academic work toward an education degree at Michigan Christian College and the remainder of coursework and certification recommendation through Madonna University of Livonia, Michigan. The initial agreement included a provision that allowed the college to begin teaching additional courses in the program as resources permitted.

By spring 1997, the *North Star* declared, "Times are changing! With the addition of several programs at the bachelor's degree level, Michigan Christian College is a four-year college!" The article explained, "Prior to 1993, most students at MCC received an associate degree before transferring to another college. Now, 84 percent of the students with declared majors are enrolled in four-year programs offered by the college."

As the number of students enrolled in the teacher education program began to increase, the faculty

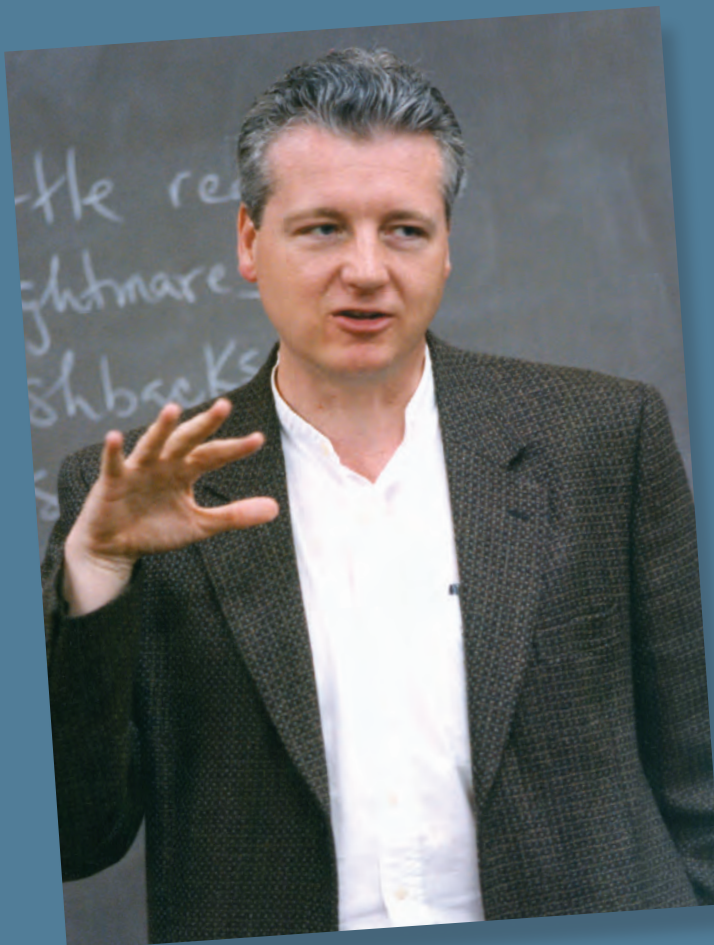
developed majors in English and music in 1998, and a history major in 1999. By offering teaching majors in each of those areas, the college narrowed the number of courses taken through Madonna University to six education courses and the student teaching practicum. The addition of those majors also allowed the college to introduce an interdisciplinary studies major in 1999.

Reporting in a 1999 *North Star* on the number of faculty supporting new four-year programs, President Johnson stated, "We have added 28 new positions in the last eight years. We now have 18 faculty members with a doctoral degree, six who are doctoral candidates, and several who are enrolled in doctoral coursework. Our faculty, including full-time and part-time personnel, now numbers 65."

The college reached a significant milestone in the spring of 1999 by granting more bachelor's degrees than associate degrees for the first time in its history. Enrollment also set a record that fall, when 580 students registered for classes. By the end of the decade, the institution had successfully completed the transition to full senior college status.

Chloe Lloyd shared a favorite book with her classmates during a 1999 presentation for a children's literature class.

Numerous talented professors joined the faculty during the 1990s, including Dr. Brian Stogner. Dr. Stogner began serving as vice president for academic affairs in 2005.



Luckett Christian Academy donated its library to the college after deciding to cease operations in 1999. The collection included a complete set of Newbery and Caldecott Medal books, and all of the Coretta Scott King Award winners. The donation provided important resources for the developing education program.



Construction of a neighboring facility by the Rochester Church of Christ enabled the college to open a preschool in 1990. Like scores of students since that time, Lisa Grandstaff worked at the preschool while pursuing her degree at the college. Located on an eight-acre parcel of land purchased from the college, the church building also provided a new home for the lectureship, graduation, and other large programs hosted by the college.



Most of the degree programs introduced during the 1990s included an internship requirement. Natalie Atkinson completed a marketing internship with General Motors in 1995. Based upon her performance as an intern, General Motors offered her full-time employment upon graduation from Rochester College.





Completion of the ► new residence hall complex in 1997 transformed the appearance of the entire campus.

◀ Opening in 1994 on the lower level of the student center, the Warrior Cafe provided an attractive new gathering place for the campus community. The cafe later moved to the Isom Atrium.



CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT

Most facilities underwent renovation during the 1970s, but once again needed major attention by the 1990s. Early in his presidency, Dr. Johnson unveiled plans to refurbish the entire campus within a two-year period. Campus personnel immediately redecorated and refurnished the residence hall lobbies, and then used the first available semester break to make improvements in the library, business labs, and cafeteria.

During the summer of 1992, the Alumni Association accepted a challenge to renovate the music facilities located in the lower level of Gallaher Center. Rob Clarke, an architect and president of the Alumni Association, provided guidance for a group of 22 volunteers who donated over 600 hours of labor to completely transform both the main rehearsal room and the smaller practice rooms. Concurrently, maintenance personnel renovated the circulation center in the Muirhead Library and converted a portion of the suites in Palmer Residence Hall to married student housing. Student workers applied 370 gallons of paint to the exterior and interior of various campus buildings, while contractors replaced four roofs and completed other specialized tasks.

In the second year of the refurbishing plan, workers used the holiday period to subdivide the former recreation room of the Maxon estate for use as administrative offices. Summer projects included exterior painting of Gallaher Center and a campus-wide change in building trim color from brown to a contemporary green. Workers also renovated classrooms in the science building, converted the area above the lobby of Gallaher Center for a counseling center, and constructed offices in the gym lobby.

Months of planning culminated in 1994 when college officials presented a revised campus master plan to the Board of Trustees. With the assistance of TMP Associates, an architectural firm, a committee prepared a revised plan that addressed future institutional needs, environmental issues, and new city regulations. The design featured an outdoor pedestrian mall between existing and future buildings, a cluster area for residence halls and boarding student services, and a physical education complex near the existing athletic fields.

Students and employees gathered in January 1994 for

a grand opening of the Warrior Cafe in the lower level of the Utley Student Center. The newly renovated facility included a large service counter, booths, tables, and an area with satellite television. Using the same color scheme and design features, workers transformed the upper level of the student center later in the semester for use as a gathering area and game room.

During the summer of 1995, college personnel renovated a large portion of the Associates Campus Center west wing to provide additional space for the academic and student services offices. Additionally, the maintenance staff carved a room out of the Gold Conference Room for use by the Career Center and refurbished the Gold Room with a new ceiling, lighting, wall coverings, and carpeting.

Contractors began work on the college's first major construction in nearly 20 years during the spring of 1996. The \$4.2 million project included Ferndale Hall, Hoggatt Hall, the Dearborn Commons, a new campus entrance, and the replacement of all campus roads and parking areas. During the construction process, the *North Star* exclaimed, "Dramatic, exciting, and phenomenal are just a few of the words chosen by observers to describe the transformation that is taking place on the campus." Friends of the college gathered on August 2, 1997, to officially dedicate the new complex.

The summer of 1999 witnessed major improvements in Shinsky Field and the cafeteria. Workers rotated the baseball diamond to master plan specifications, rebuilt the infield with an irrigation system, sod, and new baseline dirt, and built two dugouts. College personnel completely renovated the cafeteria and refurnished the area with new tables and chairs. The college then named the facility in honor of Milton Fletcher.

As early as 1998, when the college first enrolled nearly 500 students, President Johnson noted in the *North Star*, "We have hit a critical plateau with our enrollment. We are now at the point where we will need additional facilities to accommodate major enrollment growth." The fall 1999 *North Star* announced plans for a new athletic center, but those plans had to be placed on hold as the need for additional classroom space became more critical. Enrollment trends reshaped institutional priorities as the college entered the new century.

Faculty offices occupied the second floor of the Associates ► Campus Center once the residence hall complex opened. Andrew Kronenwetter visited with Rachel MacRiner in his new office that fall.

Designed as social space for the entire student body, the Dearborn Commons quickly became a hub of campus activity. ▼



Kenneth Johnson

President 1991-2003

Ken Johnson taught business at Harding University, but he missed *doing* business. He left the academic world to establish one of the largest accounting firms in Arkansas, but missed mentoring and teaching young people.

Johnson thought he found a way to do both when he applied to be president of Freed-Hardeman University in 1990. He impressed the search committee, but came in a close second to eventual president Milton R. Sewell.

Meanwhile, Michigan Christian College began to look for a successor to longtime president Milton Fletcher, who retired in 1991, and decided to contact Freed-Hardeman's presidential runner-up. Johnson visited Michigan Christian for the first time that spring and immediately accepted the job.

Fletcher left the college in good financial health, but Johnson observed marketplace trends that spelled trouble. Johnson's predecessors could depend on the college's traditional base of support to feed the institution a steady stream of funding and students. One of those streams began to dry up in the 1990s, as the number of high school graduates diminished. A new generation of teenagers also believed the ability to obtain a four-year degree in one location to be more important than supporting the local Christian college.

The new president believed Michigan Christian could best serve its constituency and its mission through growth. He developed a simple strategy: deepen and widen the college's base of support by attracting new donors and students. Johnson's plan rested on three objectives: transform the campus, transform academics, and diversify the college's stakeholders.

In his first year, Johnson made the controversial decision to invest a portion of the college's modest endowment in a campus facelift. First lady Mary Johnson took on the makeover of public spaces. Meanwhile, her husband announced a surprising plan to build a new residence hall as soon as possible. Michigan Christian's enrollment did not fill the existing buildings on campus, but Johnson believed new construction would attract new students.

The president next launched an aggressive expansion of the college's academic program. In less than two years, he finalized the Bachelor of Business Administration degree with the college's first majors in fields of study

other than ministry and human services. In 1995, Johnson introduced Michael Westerfield as the college's first provost. An expert in accreditation, Westerfield managed the transformation of York College from a two-year school into a four-year college. He quickly added a Bachelor of Science degree at Michigan Christian in 1996 and multiplied the number of four-year majors available to students. For the first time, the college could market itself as a four-year institution.

Enrollment grew, but not enough. A market study revealed the name Michigan Christian College confused prospective students because they associated it with unaccredited training schools for preachers. Johnson made the difficult case for renaming the college. The board agreed and voted to change the institution's name. Michigan Christian College became Rochester College during the summer of 1997.

Enrollment grew by leaps and bounds. The new name and new majors allowed Johnson and Westerfield to establish night and weekend programs for working adults. The College of Extended Learning sparked major growth for the college, expanding to three satellite locations that drew hundreds of new students.

The inflow of new resources gave Johnson the means to break ground on the most dramatic campus expansion in the college's history. Johnson dedicated his new residence hall in the summer of 1997 and added an atrium for the Solid Rock Cafe in 2000. Next, he launched a \$4.4 million capital campaign that paid for construction of a library facility in

2002. Meanwhile, every square foot of campus underwent renovation to accommodate the growing faculty and student body.

Johnson believed diversity would enrich campus culture and make Rochester a place where scholars could pursue truth without bounds. Johnson's reforms enriched Rochester College, but controversy began to wear on the president. After eleven years as the lightning rod for sometimes harsh criticism, Johnson resigned in August 2003. The Johnsons moved to Springfield, Missouri, to enjoy their children and grandchildren and to refocus on other academic pursuits.

Rochester College enjoyed an era of historic growth under Johnson. He applied business savvy, courage, and a scholar's mind to the work of the president. He changed a small junior college into a comprehensive four-year institution. His legacy will continue for decades.



Consumed by his presidential duties, Ken Johnson normally worked long hours and ate his favorite cereal, Raisin Nut Bran, on the run.



◀ *During his first year as president of the college, Ken Johnson focused on building relationships with the campus community. He learned names quickly and remembered them with amazing success. On most Fridays, he used a portion of the chapel program to share "fatherly advice" with the student body.*



▶ *Eager students watched patiently as Howard Hagerman, chairman of the board, and Ken Johnson prepared to break ground for the Ennis and Nancy Ham Library in the fall of 2002. One of two major construction projects completed during Dr. Johnson's presidency, the beautiful new facility set a standard for future construction.*

▶ *Presiding over a 1997 dedication ceremony for the new residence hall complex, Ken Johnson highlighted several projects completed during the construction process. Early in his presidency, Dr. Johnson identified campus improvements among his top priorities.*



Gary and Rosemary Carson, Gerald and Lucille Isom, and Sharon Whitlatch (representing the Associates) broke ground for the Isom Atrium in 1999.

Mary Utley enjoyed a 1990 luncheon for members of the President's Circle.



Professional ministry students Jim Dillinger, Colin Beharie, and Roland Mohsen visited during a class break in 1998. Jim first attended the college in 1961-62.

Representing the Dearborn Church of Christ, Don McKenzie, Jack Allen, and Lawrence Watson presented a \$250,000 check to President Johnson in 1997.

MAJOR GIFTS

Grass roots support sustained the college for nearly 40 years. During that time, a 1984 estate gift in the amount of \$276,082 from former board chairman Jack Hoover held the record as the institution's largest donation, and only three other gifts surpassed the \$100,000 mark. The funding of campus renovations, construction, new programs, and technology during the 1990s required additional sources of income. A series of major gifts allowed the college to move forward with those initiatives.

While the college pursued the steps required to add the Bachelor of Business Administration degree, an anonymous foundation from the Southwest donated \$40,000 to assist with development of the program. In a 1990 letter from the foundation, a representative stated, "We truly hope this can serve as motivation to others to make contributions that will enable this program to become a reality."

At the 1994 Partnership Dinner, President Johnson launched a \$2.9 million capital gifts campaign to fund phase one of the campus master plan. The first phase included construction of two residence halls, a commons area, and a new campus entrance. Entitled *Foundation for the Future*, the three-year campaign opened with commitments from the board, employees, and a few other individuals totaling \$800,000, including lead gifts of \$100,000 from Bob and Mary Utley and \$100,000 from Ken and Mary Johnson. Over the next few months, the college continued to seek additional lead gifts while conducting a phone campaign among alumni.

The campaign received its next major donation in November 1995, when the college received a gift of \$250,000 from the Ferndale Church of Christ. After ceasing operations as a local congregation, the church made the donation from the sale of their building. The

college responded by naming one of the residence halls in their honor. As the scheduled date for construction neared, college officials struggled with the decision of whether to proceed as planned or delay construction until completion of the campaign. They decided to proceed as planned with a commitment to bring the campaign to a successful conclusion.

For the first time in its history, during the 1995-96 fiscal year, the college surpassed the million dollar mark in donations. Receipts from annual giving programs along with those from the residence hall campaign totaled \$1,347,705. To maintain that momentum, the college employed Doug Edwards as vice president for development in October 1996.

In the spring of 1997, the college received a \$256,000 donation from the Hoggatt family and named the second residence hall in their honor. Dean Hoggatt, a member of the board, arranged a gift that included a personal donation and contributions from each of his siblings, James Hoggatt, Jeri Cardwell, and Julia Gould. A few months later, the Dearborn Church of Christ ceased operations and allocated \$250,000 toward the campaign. The college named the commons area of the new facility in their honor.

Donors set another record during the summer of 1998, when friends bestowed upon the college an estimated \$1.3 million in special gifts. One of those gifts came from an anonymous donor in the form of stock valued at nearly \$300,000 and the remaining four came through estates. That fall, Gerald and Lucille Isom, a couple introduced to the college by Doug Edwards, pledged \$150,000 for construction of an atrium on the front of the Westside Central Chapel.

Prior to the close of the decade, college officials decided to reformat the Partnership Dinner in an effort to improve attendance and increase revenue from the

annual event. Planners selected speakers with national recognition and organized a new sponsorship program. Barbara Bush, wife of former president George Bush, spoke at the 28th annual dinner in 1999. The dinner attendance increased and income from the campaign doubled within the first year.

The emergence of major donors represented a new phase of maturity for the college as it completed its fourth decade of service. Most of those donors gave based upon a long history with the college. They acknowledged their appreciation for accomplishments of the past and their dreams for the future.

ADULT EDUCATION

During the late 1980s, the college began offering a limited number of evening courses and certificate programs to serve adult learners. For many years, college officials acknowledged the potential of such programs in a suburban community like Rochester Hills, but the institution's lack of four-year degree programs hindered its ability to develop such plans.

In 1993, the Bible faculty introduced a degree completion program for individuals engaged in full-time ministry. Through an innovative combination of credit for previous coursework, experiential credit, summer seminars, and research projects, ministers with at least five years of experience could complete the Bachelor of Religious Education degree with a major in professional ministry within a short period of time. The fall *North Star* reported, "Initial response to the college's new professional ministry program exceeded expectations as ministers throughout the Great Lakes region responded to announcements."

A second major cohort of students entered the professional ministry program in 1996 after the college advertised among graduates of the Sunset International

Bible Institute. That group included several individuals from outside the Great Lakes region. The college eventually phased out the professional ministry major as the number of eligible prospects diminished. The last graduate of the program completed his degree in 2003.

Weekend College, an accelerated program for working adults, debuted on campus in July 1997. Students who enrolled in the initial class pursued the Bachelor of Business Administration degree with a major in management. Courses met on Friday evenings and Saturdays. The program required a minimum age of 23 and acceptable work experience. Former students of the college made up over one-third of the first class.

Within a year, Weekend College became known as the College of Extended Learning, or more commonly CEL. The new academic division added its first online courses during that same year. As popularity of the management program grew, the College of Extended Learning introduced a second major during the summer of 1998. The new program led to a Bachelor of Science degree in behavioral science.

The College of Extended Learning opened its first satellite campus in the fall of 1999 at the University Center of Macomb Community College in Clinton Township, Michigan. The new partnership allowed the college to offer the Bachelor of Science degree with a major in general studies in one of the nation's premiere university centers. The college hired Tracey Hebert to coordinate the new site. Hebert eventually served as vice president of the College of Extended Learning.

Within three years of its inception, the College of Extended Learning grew from 24 to 144 students. The program's immediate success foreshadowed substantial growth during the next decade, allowing the college to expand its mission into an entirely new arena of the educational world.

TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENTS

Responding to rapid changes in technology, college officials consistently invested significant resources in state-of-the-art computer equipment and software throughout the 1990s. The entire college community benefited from technology provided for the classroom environment and academic training for life in the next century.

During the summer of 1992, the college updated the student computer lab in the Associates Campus Center to support a computer literacy requirement introduced that fall in every degree plan. IBM compatible 386-33 computers and laser printers replaced the Wang VS computer system that had serviced the campus community for ten years.

In order to provide phone service to the individual rooms in each residence hall, the college installed a new phone system during the same summer. A Premier ESPSX phone system connected the entire campus with a single system for the first time, introducing voice mail service for both employees and students. While installing phone lines in the residence halls, workers also placed the wiring required for future connection of student computers to the lab system.

"Imagine being linked to over four million computers in over 146 countries," stated an article in a 1995 edition of the *North Star*. "By fall, the students of Michigan Christian College will have such resources available to them through the Internet, the most popular vehicle of the information revolution." Shane Godmere, director of computer support, led an effort to network the computer lab with a Unix operating system, allowing the college to establish a connection to the Internet. Additional terminals in the Muirhead Library enabled Internet access to specialized library resources.

With the assistance of the Associates, the college invested over \$100,000 in computer equipment during the summer of 1997. The newly equipped lab featured Pentium 200mmx computers running NT4 workstation. In addition to specialized educational software, each unit included Microsoft Office Professional 97, with word processing, spreadsheet, presentation software, e-mail, and Internet. Installation of an overhead multimedia projection system in the lab allowed students to view the instructor's computer screen for the first time. A subsequent upgrade in the college's Internet connection improved lab access to the web and allowed students to dial up a network connection from their rooms the residence halls.

During the summer of 1998, campus personnel completed the installation of a computer network in all of the faculty offices and all of the student rooms in the residence halls. A fiber optic backbone with ethernet jacks in each room replaced the previous modem connection and provided direct access to the Internet, e-mail, and web directories. While installing the computer network, campus technicians also ran 40,000 feet of cable to the student rooms for future installation of a broadband network. Completion of that network



◀ Creativity continued to characterize Celebration in Song during the 1990s. Favorite characters from the "Wizard of Oz" appeared in the 1999 production.

Reviving a traditional musical for the first time in 13 years, the drama and music departments combined talents in 1992 to produce the classic "South Pacific."



◀ Autumn produced both cassette tapes and compact discs in 1997. Based upon sales, the performing groups produced only compact discs within one year.

Students often filled the computer lab in 1998. The lab provided access to the Internet and e-mail before most students owned computers.



during the next summer provided better television reception for residential students.

The campus community adapted quickly to the availability of new technological resources. Instructors began requesting use of the computer lab for such classes as English composition and mathematics. Some obtained supplemental computer resources for use in their classrooms, while others transitioned to electronic submission of homework. Students enjoyed use of the resources both in and out of the classroom. By the close of the decade, computers, e-mail, and the Internet became commonplace in the daily routine of campus life.

STUDENT ACTIVITY

Traditional activities and student organizations continued to draw talented leaders, musicians, drama enthusiasts, and athletes during the 1990s. Organizations and teams flourished with the availability of experienced juniors and seniors. At the same time, a growing passion to assist those in need and a renewed interest in international missions fueled outreach efforts around the world.

Over 600 residents of the Rochester community attended the 1992 spring concert of the Rochester Community Chorus, which for the first time also featured the Michigan Christian College A Cappella Chorus. Joe Bentley, director of the college chorus, began conducting the community group that year. The following fall, the two choral groups joined the Rochester Symphony Orchestra to perform a classical work by Vivaldi. A review in the *Rochester Eccentric* stated, "Another highlight was the presence of the chorus of Michigan Christian College. The chorus commanded a richness in tone quality and a well-blended sound that was consistent throughout the work."

In the fall of 1994, the A Cappella Chorus received an invitation to perform with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. An estimated 7,500 individuals attended the four-day series. Both symphony organizers and the guest conductor, the world renowned Eric Kunzel, specifically requested that the chorus return for the only pops concert scheduled during the symphony's next season. In a *North Star* article, Joe Bentley stated, "Being invited to sing with a world-class ensemble like the Detroit Symphony Orchestra represents a strong validation of the skills our students have developed, and speaks to the excellent reputation the A Cappella Chorus has gained in the arts community."

Pied Pipers, a children's theatre troupe, debuted in 1991. After performing for a graduate class at Oakland University, the group began receiving invitations to perform for local elementary schools. After a seven-year absence, regular drama productions also resumed in the fall of 1991. The following spring, the drama and music departments combined talents to present *South Pacific*, the first musical produced by the college since 1979. The department later presented such plays as *The Miracle Worker*, *Arsenic and Old Lace*, *Shadowlands*, and *The Diary of Anne Frank*.



▲ Freshman Jenny Jolly participated in the NSCAA Track and Field National Championship in 1993. The men's team captured first place and the women's team placed second. Jenny also earned All-American honors as a cross country runner and played basketball during her athletic career.

► Members of the 1996 soccer team received medals from the NSCAA for their role in winning the college's first national championship in soccer. The National Soccer Hall of Fame later featured the team in a year-long exhibit in Oneonta, New York.



◀ IMAGE hosted a Missions Fair in the fall of 1999 to promote additional interest in international missions. The fair featured displays prepared by students who had participated in mission trips and additional exhibits by visiting missionaries. Student involvement in summer mission efforts became commonplace during the 1990s and the decade that followed.

STUDENT ACTIVITY

Student Association leaders presented checks to the college in 1990 for the purchase of student center furnishings and in 1991 for athletic field bleachers. The association focused efforts in 1992 on raising \$7,000 to assist a Hillsdale family with the purchase of a chair-lift van. In 1993, social club leaders organized a fund-raising drive for a four-year-old cancer victim. Student leaders organized mission trips to Zimbabwe, Switzerland, Honduras, and the northwestern United States during the summer of 1994. Such efforts set a precedent for similar activities as the decade continued.

IMAGE formed in the fall of 1997 to promote interest in international mission efforts. The group broadened its purpose a year later to include local service projects aimed at needs of the suffering. Their efforts included work with the homeless in the Cass Corridor district of Detroit and projects at the Ronald McDonald House of Children's Hospital in Detroit. The group also sponsored trips to the World Mission Workshop and hosted a Missions Fair on campus.

The production of student publications varied from year to year depending upon student interest. The 1990 and 1991 editions of the *Totem Pole* appeared as basic portrait books with blank pages for use as scrapbooks. The yearbook reappeared in a regular format for two more years before being discontinued. A growing interest in a student newspaper resulted in one issue of the *Tomahawk*



in 1994, and several issues of the *Warrior Warpath* between 1995 and 1997. *The Point*, a publication featuring news items and creative writing, emerged in March 1997 and continued until the end of the decade.

Defending a 1989 title in the renamed National Small College Athletic Association, the men's cross country team captured its second consecutive national championship in November 1990. Runners completed the five-mile race in adverse Minnesota weather conditions that included four inches of snow. The Warriors earned first place at a cross country invitational hosted by the NSCAA in 1999.

Michigan Christian College hosted the NSCAA Track and Field National Championship in the spring of 1993. The men's team

◀ Men's basketball continued to attract news coverage during the 1990s. A 1992-93 conference championship typified the team's success.

from MCC captured first place in its division, and the women's team placed second.

In 1996, the men's soccer team entered the NSCAA national tournament with a sixth-place ranking. After defeating the top-ranked team, the Warriors captured their first national championship in soccer. The National Soccer Hall of Fame in Oneonta, New York, later featured the Michigan Christian College team in a year-long exhibit celebrating soccer in the United States.

After winning its second national championship in 1994, the men's basketball team stepped up competition



► Capturing the college's first national honors for a women's sport, the volleyball team won the NSCAA Invitational in 1998.

in the fall by scheduling games with several NCAA and NAIA universities. In 1997, the *Oakland Press* published such headlines as "Michigan Christian shocks Tartars" and "MCC pushes OU into overtime." On February 1, the Warriors defeated Wayne State University. In a *North Star* article, Coach Pleasant stated, "This was a pretty big win for us. With an enrollment of nearly 20,000, Wayne State is the largest school we have ever beaten." Two weeks later, the Warriors played Oakland University. The *Oakland Press* wrote, "MCC shocked Wayne State earlier this month and nearly pulled off an even bigger upset Monday. The Warriors took OU to overtime before succumbing 81-77. MCC nearly ruined the Pioneers' season with a stellar defensive effort."

The Lady Warriors captured their first national honors in the fall of 1998. The volleyball team entered the NSCAA Volleyball Invitational with a 21-8 season record and captured the tournament title. The team repeated its performance at the 1999 tournament by winning the title for the second consecutive year.

Near the close of the decade, members of Autumn participated in a 25th anniversary reunion with former members of the ensemble. Nearly two-thirds of the group's membership from its entire 25-year history gathered in February 1999 for the event. A capacity crowd attended the concert, which included the original Autumn, seven additional groups, and a moving finale. The finale featured 70 singers, representing some of the finest musical talent in the college's history.

NAME CHANGE

Prior to the college opening, a sign displayed the institution's future name and presented its mission as a "liberal arts college with Christian ideals." By the 1990s, college officials regularly dealt with misconceptions about the nature of the college. Many individuals and academic institutions assumed Michigan Christian College offered only religious training and operated without accreditation. Those misconceptions often hindered recruitment and fund-raising efforts, and at times prevented the transfer of credits.

College officials conducted a detailed study on institutional naming in 1996. The report revealed that 70 percent of the institutions with "Christian College" in their names aligned themselves with Bible colleges or operated without accreditation. Enrollment in those institutions averaged less than 300, close to the size of Michigan Christian College. The study also identified many liberal arts institutions that no longer used "Christian College" in their names and noted a trend among Bible colleges to adopt the use of "Christian College" in their name changes. The study clarified why the educational world and general public held misconceptions about Michigan Christian College.

In January 1997, after careful review of the study, the Board of Trustees authorized a process to formally review the college name. Bob Utley, chairman of the board, immediately met with key groups of employees, alumni, Associates, and students to share the board's findings and concerns. President Johnson later wrote, "After dealing with the emotion of such a change, most expressed their desire for the board to take the steps necessary for the college to achieve its mission in the most effective way possible." The board then released a statement to friends and alumni of the college, explaining reasons for the review process and requesting input from those individuals.

President Johnson spoke at a March meeting of ministers from the metropolitan Detroit area. On that occasion he stated, "We are in a time and place where we have two choices: become a liberal arts college larger in size, or die a slow death. The trustees do not want the latter. They have gathered sufficient evidence to be overwhelmingly convinced that a name change would improve the opportunity for the former." In a May letter to the Associates, Dr. Johnson stated, "The trustees and I continue to be pleased, and sometimes just plain

amazed, at the great way you and other friends have responded to the emotional challenge of selecting a new name for our beloved college."

As support for a name change grew, a committee of board, employee, alumni, Associates, and student representatives narrowed a list of 61 potential names to five choices. On April 19, the board voted unanimously to change the name of the college and further shortened the list of possible names to four. In the months that followed, college officials sought public response to the four names. In many settings, including the Partnership Dinner, Rochester College surfaced as the name of choice for the majority of participants.

On July 12, 1997, the board finalized the name change process and selected Rochester College as the new institutional name. In a formal statement announcing the change, Bob Utley affirmed, "Throughout this process, we have repeatedly assured everyone that our commitment to the Christ-centered ideals of the college will remain unchanged."

President Johnson further stated, "There has never been a moment's thought of abandoning our Christian commitment. Friends who may remain apprehensive about a new name will be pleased to see the many ways we shall continue our Christian emphasis."

During the study process, some colleges noted they experienced a two-year loss of students and donations after a name change, followed by years of explosive growth. Less than one year after the name change, the *North Star* reported, "Rochester College continues to experience major increases in enrollment and funding. Enrollment soared to a record level during the fall semester, representing an increase of 24 percent. For the third consecutive year, gift income also set a record." Fortunately, Rochester College experienced immediate growth without a period of decline.

A second review process, led by Dr. Michael Westerfield, provost of the college, resulted in board approval of a new mission statement in the spring of 1999. Reminiscent of the sign posted on campus before the college opened, the new statement declared, "The mission of Rochester College is to engage students in a vigorous liberal arts education within a Christian community for a life of study and service." The new statement reaffirmed the nature of the college envisioned by the founders of the institution, who planned for a "liberal arts college with Christian ideals."



Registration lines formed in the lobby of the Associates Campus Center during the fall of 1997. A bold wall graphic painted by Dean Candace Cain welcomed the students back to campus during a time of unparalleled transition.

Students proudly embraced the college's new name as they posed for a photograph at the new campus entrance in the fall of 1997. The sign affirmed the college's distinctive nature as a "liberal arts college in a Christian setting."

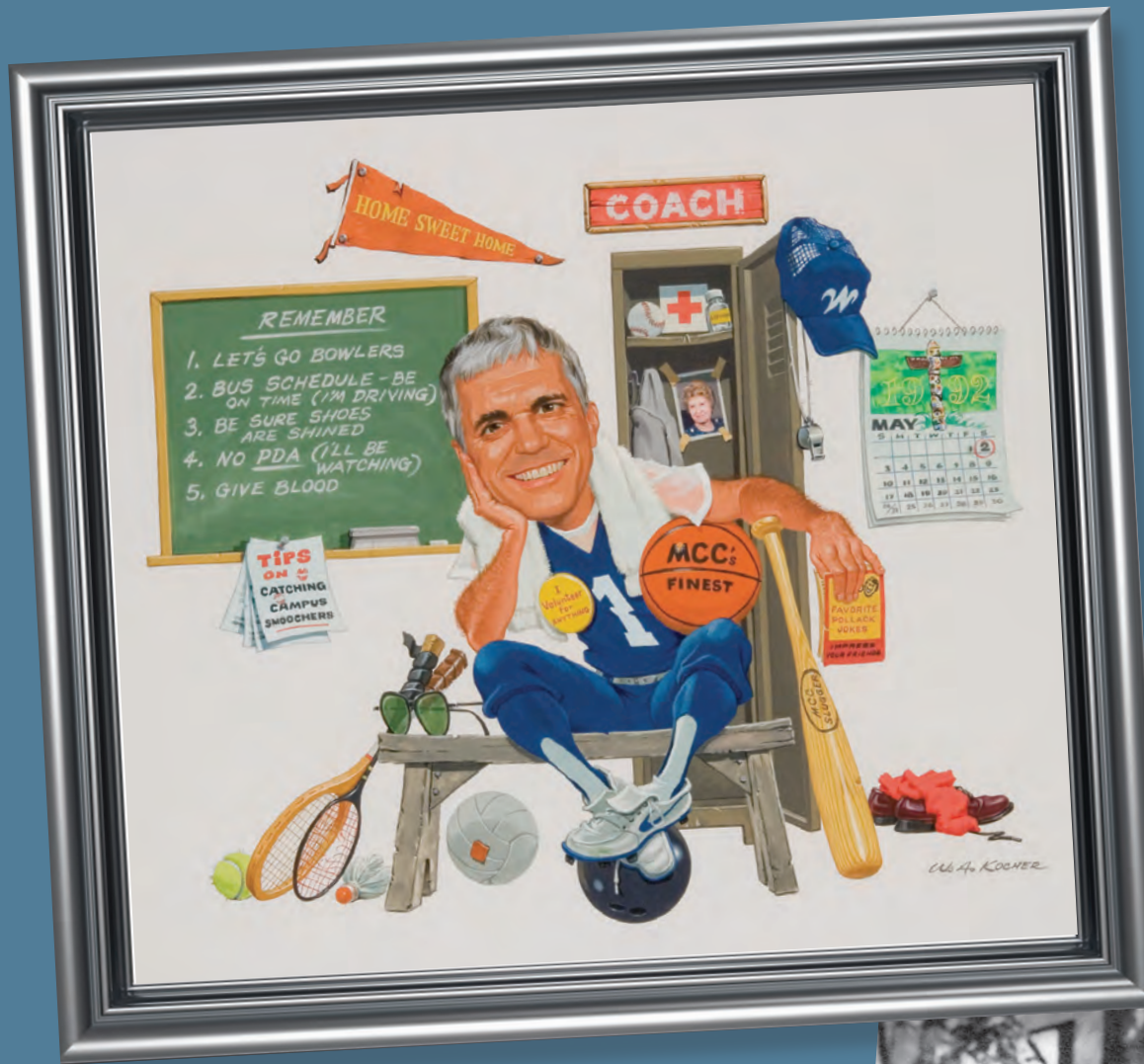


Summer 1997 completion of the residence hall project included major improvements in campus sidewalks, driveways, and parking areas. The addition of a broad sidewalk provided an appropriate location for the placement of colorful banners displaying the college's new name. While appearing exceptionally wide at first, the new sidewalk quickly filled with activity.



Bill Shinsky

Coach 1960-1992



Leaders of the Alumni Association commissioned a drawing of Coach Shinsky in 1992. Bill Kocher, a commercial artist and the father of five alumni, created a colorful portrayal of a colorful individual. The drawing carefully depicted many of Shinsky's personality traits and areas of service. The Association presented the drawing to Coach Shinsky at a summer event for alumni hosted to honor Shinsky for his 32-year career with the college.

Sitting outside the gymnasium in 1972, Coach Shinsky displayed his normal playful mood that charmed the campus community.

Actively involved with the college after his 1992 retirement, Coach Shinsky assisted with the collection of prizes for the Golf Classic. Planners named the annual event in honor of Coach Shinsky and Milton Fletcher in 1996. The classic raises funds for scholarships.



The son of an autoworker at Ford's River Rouge plant, William Shinsky was born September 26, 1930, in Detroit. He excelled in sports from an early age and grew up to be a baseball and football star at Fordson High School in Dearborn.

After graduation, Bill got a job at the Rouge. He also joined a church basketball league that required him to attend a minimum of two Sunday services a month. Bill chose the local Church of Christ in Dearborn. A prerequisite to playing basketball turned into something more: Bill dedicated his life to Jesus Christ. He also married Joanne McKeel, a young woman he met at the church.

Bill wanted to play big league baseball, but joined the U.S. Navy in 1951 to preempt the draft. As a barber aboard the *USS Greenwich*, he sailed around the world for the next four years.

Upon his discharge from the Navy, Bill wanted to be a coach. In 1955, he moved his family to Texas, where he enrolled at Abilene Christian College. Bill majored in physical education and starred on the college's baseball team, setting institutional records that stood for 33 years. In 1959, he graduated and began looking for a coaching job.

North Central Christian College opened about the time Bill graduated. In 1960, Dean Lucien Palmer hired Shinsky to coach the men's basketball team and to teach physical education.

The new coach found a campus that resembled a summer camp more than a college. North Central Christian had no athletic facilities and no money to build them. Coach Shinsky resorted to marching his physical education students up and down the road to pick up litter. His first classroom was a ping pong table in the maintenance shed.

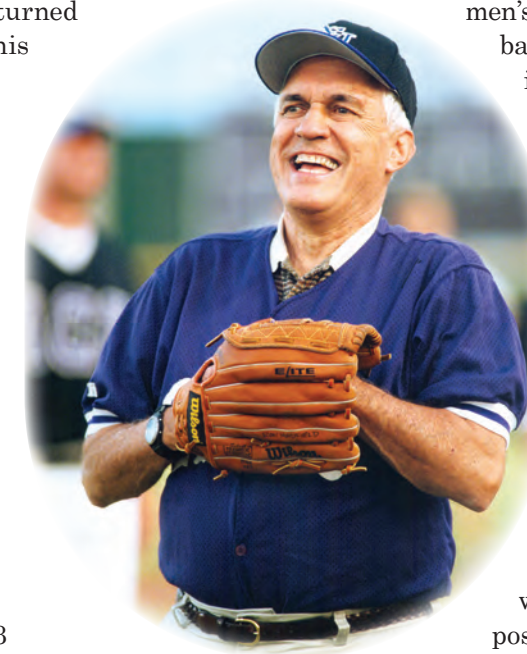
The college had only one team, men's basketball, and that team played in a Detroit church league. In his first season, Coach Shinsky led the Warriors to a 16-5 record and introduced intercollegiate competition.

President Lucien Palmer promoted the coach to athletic director in 1967. That year, Shinsky added three new sports: women's basketball, women's softball, and track. He also recruited a basketball star named Garth Pleasant, who led the Warriors to their first conference title in 1969. A year later, Shinsky returned to his first love when he formed and managed the college's first baseball team.

Shinsky was a busy man on campus in the early

1970s. He served as director of student life, athletic director, coach for several intercollegiate sports, and professor of physical education. In 1971, Shinsky made the most important hire of his career when he brought his protégé, Garth Pleasant, back to Michigan Christian as men's basketball coach.

Over the next eighteen years, Shinsky established several more intercollegiate sports at Michigan Christian, including women's basketball and men's soccer. He continued to coach the baseball team until he suffered a stroke in 1990. Shinsky retired as athletic director two years later and handed off the athletic department to Pleasant.



The old coach barely took a rest after his retirement. Bill Shinsky was not the kind of man to sit on the bench. He volunteered several days a week at the Rochester Older Persons Commission and played on the OPC softball team. He increased his involvement at the Rochester Church of Christ from "run" to "sprint." He rarely missed a Warriors home game and even traveled with the basketball team whenever possible. Nothing about Bill Shinsky was "retired." In November 2001, he became the inaugural inductee into the Rochester College Sports Hall of Fame.

On the last day of February 2004, Pleasant and the Warriors departed for the United States Collegiate Athletics Association national tournament in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Coach Shinsky was ill and could not travel, so Pleasant called him each day to deliver the latest news on the team. As the Warriors gained strength in Oklahoma, Coach Shinsky became weaker in Rochester and checked into the hospital.

On March 3, Coach Shinsky finally rested.

Three days later, the Warriors won the national championship.

In his 44 years as a Warrior, Bill Shinsky did more than establish seven men's and women's intercollegiate sports programs - coaching every one of them at one time or another; more than transform a ping pong table in a tool shed into the college's department of physical education; and more than mentor one of America's all-time great college basketball coaches.

Bill Shinsky is Rochester College's coach - then, now, and forever. His muscular faith, hope, and love built up the sinews of Rochester College. His spirit lives on in generations of Warriors who learn how to win with grace, honor, integrity, sacrifice, and love.

ASSOCIATES MILESTONES

Building upon years of tradition and experience, the Associates continued to sponsor customary fund-raising events while reaching significant milestones during the 1990s. A new project bolstered the organization's revenue toward the end of the decade and allowed the Associates to once again impact campus life in a significant way.

The Associates surpassed their budgeted goal during the 1991-92 fiscal year and donated a total of \$120,000 to the college. The group raised \$137,030 that year, the second largest amount in its 33-year history.

Marking another milestone in 1992, the Associates selected a former student of the college to serve as their president. Ginny (Fidler) May, a 1978 graduate, became a Christian while attending the college and later worked on campus as secretary to the dean of students and then as secretary to the president. She joined the Associates in 1987, and served as the first president of the Lake Orion chapter. For four years, she served as co-chairman of the Silverdome project before assuming duties as vice president and then president of the Associates.

Friends of the college gathered on campus in October 1993 to honor the Associates for reaching the \$3 million mark in funds raised for the college. During a special program, Otis Gatewood, founding president of the college, recalled the early developmental stages of the Associates. The college appropriately declared 1993-94 as the "Year of the Associates."

In an attempt to add a new dimension to the Fall Festival, the Associates hosted an auction at the close of the 1995 event. While the activity netted an additional \$1,200 for the day, most of the income resulted from the sale of several donated hand-carved wooden statues. Consequently, the Associates decided to focus their efforts on the traditional components of the festival in subsequent years.

At the 1996 Chicagoland Partnership Dinner, Bea Oberholzer introduced a fund-raising concept to Mary Johnson, wife of the college president. The concept involved the assembly and sale of angel pins. After returning home, Bea sent samples and \$100 worth of parts to help launch the project. Within one year, Mary and several helpers from the Associates produced and sold over 6,000 pins. Eventually, the project completely funded a 1999 renovation of the cafeteria, which cost nearly \$100,000.

In a 1998 *North Star*, the Associates announced plans to construct a memorial plaza on campus. Designed by Rob Clarke, an architect and member of the class of 1982, the plaza included several options for honoring individuals and families. Donors quickly funded such large items as the flag poles and benches, and in time purchased hundreds of engraved bricks.

The college hosted its first Founders Day in August of 1999. Many long-time Associates participated in the event. During the day, the college honored Mary Johnson and Jeannette Schiele for their leadership in the angel pin project. Later in the day, the Associates broke ground for the Associates Memorial Plaza.



▲ Adopted by the Associates in 1997, a tree logo first served as the official logo of the college. David Fields, a member of the class of 1965, designed the logo in 1993.



◀ Angel pin production often took place at the home of Ken and Mary Johnson. Margie Zurlinden, Mary Johnson, and Jeannette Schiele assembled pins in 1998.



▶ Volunteers from the Associates produced thousands of angel pins during the latter half of the 1990s. Those assembling the popular pins created hundreds of unique variations and designs.



▲ Former President Otis Gatewood reminisced about the founding of the Associates at a 1993 event honoring the organization for reaching the \$3 million mark in their fund-raising efforts. He recalled the words of his wife Alma, founder of the group, "Otis, let's get these women together. I think we might be able to raise \$2,000."

▶ Melissa Panzica listened attentively to Santa (Patrick Smith) during the 1991 Santa Luncheon. For many years, the Associates planned the special event as part of the annual Gift-a-Rama. Melissa enrolled as a student at Rochester College in 2006.



▲ Former festival queen Karen Watson crowned Marge Christman as Fall Festival Queen in 1991. The queen candidates raised \$22,390 that year.

Richard Maddeaux and Allison Knutson visited with one of the residents of a local nursing home in the spring of 1999.



Chapel provided an opportunity for Nathan Oliver and Julie Noon to worship in 1997.



Administrators of the Village of Hope in Ghana, West Africa, presented a woodcut of an African village to the college after a 1999 visit by a student mission team.

Children surrounded Mark Johnson during the 1999 mission effort in Ghana. Led by professor Michael Light, the student group assisted with evangelistic efforts, water drilling projects, and the construction of a home and school for orphaned children.



Jeff Wohlfeil, Edwin Cahill, and David Brown assisted Terry Pitts with preparation of a meal for the homeless of Detroit in 1998.



RELIGIOUS POSITIONING

College leaders faced new challenges during the late 1990s as Churches of Christ became increasingly more diverse. While desiring to serve the broader spectrum within those congregations, the institution often faced pressure from individuals and groups who wanted the college to operate within very conservative limits. As the board and administration attempted to chart a course for the future, they experienced a broad array of reactions ranging from praise to harsh criticism.

During the summer of 1997, President Johnson approached the board with a situation that typified the difficulty of satisfying the college's diverse constituency. The college had scheduled Lynn Anderson, a prominent minister and author, to speak at the fall lectureship. Prior to the event, Dr. Johnson received a few complaints and sought board counsel on how to handle the situation. The board recommended that Dr. Anderson's invitation be delayed until completion of the institutional name change process because of the sensitive nature of both issues. Dr. Anderson later served as the keynote speaker for a Jim Wood Leadership Seminar and drew one of the largest workshop audiences on record.

With input from board members, administrators, faculty, and local church leaders, President Johnson spent two years preparing a document to assist the board with discussions about institutional direction. He released the document, entitled *Rochester College, Churches of Christ, and Non-Denominational Christianity*, in December of 1998. The document called for continued commitment to biblical authority and for a more open atmosphere within the college community.

While prepared primarily for board discussion, copies of the document circulated quickly across the nation. Several individuals sent messages of encouragement and

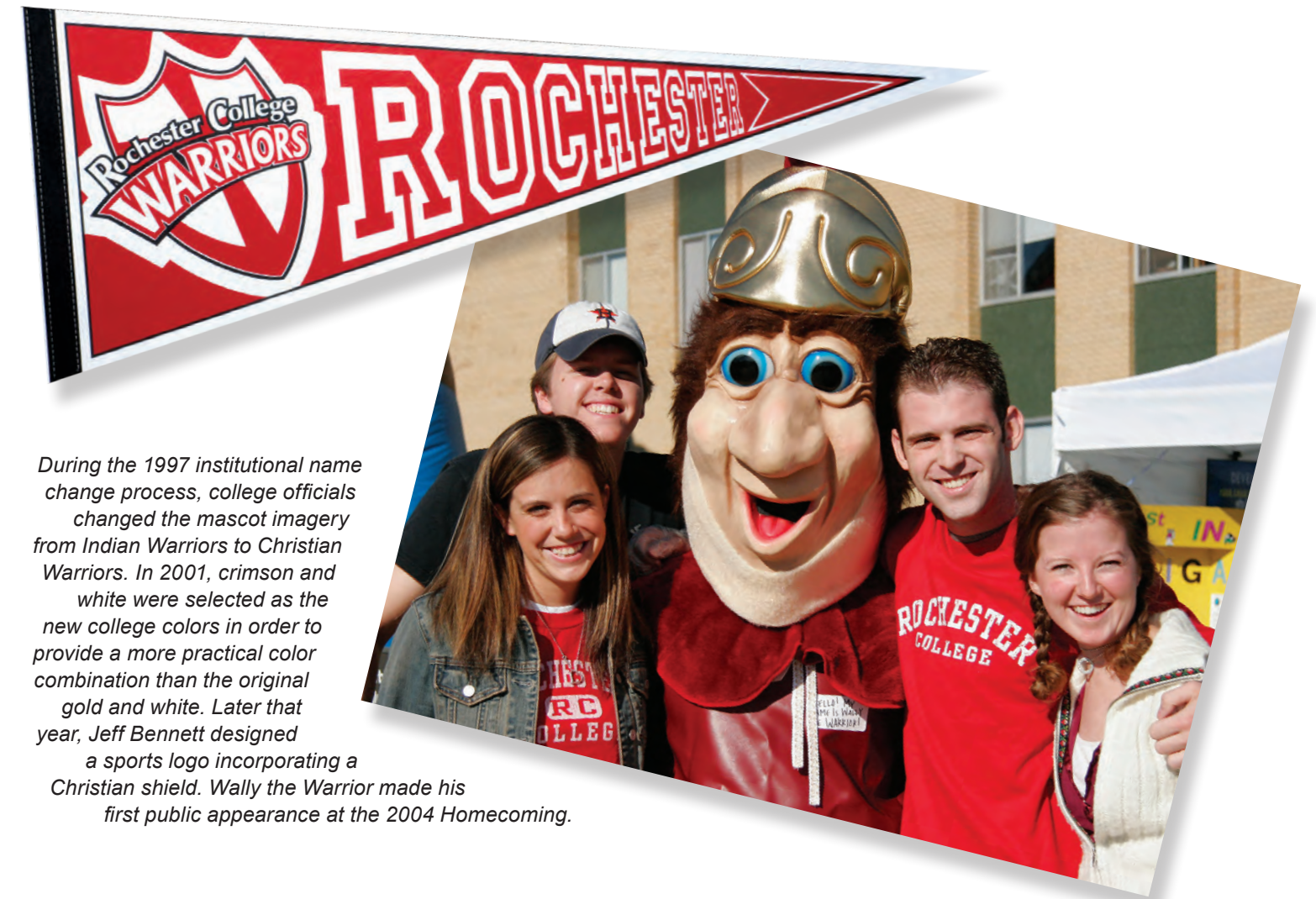
approval. A faculty member from an affiliated institution stated that his administration was considering adoption of certain concepts from the document. Others reacted with strong disapproval. Some wrote harsh letters. A large area congregation immediately withdrew support of the college and refused to meet with college leaders about their decision. At the encouragement of a local minister, one Associates chapter disbanded.

The spring 1999 issue of the *North Star* featured a follow-up article about the college's commitment to its heritage. In the article, President Johnson appealed to the historical roots of Churches of Christ and stated, "Early restorationists created an atmosphere where inquiring minds could use the biblical text to freely challenge entrenched philosophies and doctrines that existed in the American frontier. If a Christian liberal arts college is to develop and preserve its reputation as an institution of academic integrity, it must defend this freedom of open dialog." He concluded, "As we encourage the biblical text to be openly discussed in the nondenominational atmosphere of our forefathers, Churches of Christ in the region will benefit because the same open spirit that builds strong Christian liberal arts colleges also builds strong congregations of Christians."

Reflecting the typical mindset of its generation, the student body often found the controversy surrounding the college baffling. Rather than engage in debatable issues, the students continued to set their priorities on matters of greater concern to their generation. They sought opportunities to build strong relationships with one another and with God. They worshipped with enthusiasm. They focused their energy on projects to help those in need and participated in mission efforts around the world. Like generations before them, the student body continued to grow in faith and character.

Setting a standard of excellence for future campus construction, the Ham Library opened in the fall of 2002 with classrooms and a computer lab on the first floor and the library on the second level. Completion of the adjoining Richardson Center in 2004 provided additional space for a theatre, student center, science laboratories, classrooms, a learning laboratory, and administrative offices.

2000-2008



During the 1997 institutional name change process, college officials changed the mascot imagery from Indian Warriors to Christian Warriors. In 2001, crimson and white were selected as the new college colors in order to provide a more practical color combination than the original gold and white. Later that year, Jeff Bennett designed a sports logo incorporating a Christian shield. Wally the Warrior made his first public appearance at the 2004 Homecoming.

Milestones of the 2000s

- 2000 • Barbier Hall renovated and equipped with modular furniture
• Satellite campus established at the Mott University Center
- 2001 • Isom Atrium and Associates Plaza completed
• GEO international studies program launched with a study tour in Scotland
- 2002 • Bachelor of Arts degree approved by state and North Central Association
• Ham Library completed
• Bookstore moved to a new location in the Utley Center
- 2003 • Satellite campus established at Specs Howard School of Broadcast Arts
• Michael Westerfield named interim president of the college
• Over 1,000 students enrolled for the first time
- 2004 • Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) opened
• Former library building renovated and rededicated as Muirhead Center
• Third national championship captured by men's basketball team
• Richardson Center completed
- 2005 • Fourth national championship captured by men's basketball team
• Planned unit development agreement signed with city of Rochester Hills
• Master of Religious Education approved by North Central Association
- 2006 • College authorized by state to recommend teachers for certification
• Second national title earned by men's soccer team
- 2007 • Men's and women's golf added to intercollegiate sports roster



Representatives from over 40 Michigan Churches of Christ joined hands with the college community in 2005 to provide over \$115,000 in relief aid to victims of Hurricane Katrina.

September 11, 2001, changed the world. As the college community gathered for prayer on a regular basis in the days that followed the terrorist attacks, uncertainty filled the minds of many individuals. Consequently, several chapel sessions focused on the relationship between faith and suffering.

Life on the campus gradually returned to a sense of normalcy. College officials proceeded with major expansion of campus facilities to meet the needs of a growing student body. Students resumed their educational pursuits, but with a

greater awareness of the world around them. Interest in mission efforts and international studies flourished.

Interaction with the Rochester community occurred more frequently as the decade progressed. College officials formed creative partnerships with city organizations, enhancing the future of both the college and community.

Planning for the institution's 50th anniversary celebration began in 2006. That process fostered positive reflection upon the college's rich heritage and promising future.

LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

Ending the longest tenure of any of the college's presidents, Dr. Ken Johnson resigned from his duties on August 5, 2003. His legacy included the successful transition to senior college status, renovation of most campus facilities, construction of a residence hall complex and library facility, introduction of a degree completion program for working adults, and the formation of a larger student body.

For a one-month period, former board chairman Bob Utey served as interim president of the college. On September 1, Dr. Michael Westerfield assumed duties as interim president while the board conducted a search process for the next president. Concurrently, the college appointed Alan Waites as executive vice president of the institution. Dr. John Barton, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and Dr. Jeff Simmons, dean of the College of Business and Professional Studies, assumed Dr. Westerfield's former academic duties. The following spring, Dr. Barton returned to the classroom on a full-time basis, and Dr. Jennifer Hamilton began serving as dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

On April 28, 2004, the board voted unanimously to name Dr. Westerfield as the seventh president of the college. "Our search committee started with a dozen nominees, narrowed the list to six, then to three, and then to one candidate who stood head and shoulders above the rest," stated Pat Kirby, chairman of the board, in a summer issue of the *North Star*. "A four-month coast-to-coast screening process eventually led committee members back to Rochester, where their man had been working all along."

In October 2007, the trustees elected Jim Randolph as chairman of the board. Randolph began serving on the board in 1998 and assumed duties as chairman of

the finance committee in 2004. Having recently retired from an executive position with the Delphi Corporation, he quickly dedicated a substantial portion of his time to the college and announced a commitment to help the institution raise \$10 million for the endowment fund.

On May 3, 2008, President Westerfield formally resigned from the presidency. In response, the board named Dr. Rubel Shelly as interim president and selected a committee to conduct a national search for the college's next president. Dr. Shelly's proven ability as an effective communicator and his national network of friends made him an ideal person to inspire others with the college's mission and vision during the search process.

At the time of President Westerfield's resignation, the administrative team included Dr. Brian Stogner, vice president for academic affairs; Klint Pleasant, vice president for development; and Larry Norman, vice president for enrollment services. Dr. Shelly immediately affirmed his confidence in those individuals to conduct the daily affairs of the college while he helped set the tone for the next academic year and continued to work with the institution's donors and friends.

ENROLLMENT GROWTH

Fueled by the availability of new academic programs for both traditional students and working adults, the college experienced substantial enrollment growth during the 2000s. While the number of traditional students increased at a slower rate, both the traditional program and the College of Extended Learning continued to set enrollment records year after year until the college eventually registered over 1,000 students for the first time in its history.

Responding to a need identified by the Oakland-Livingston Human Services Agency, the College of

Extended Learning introduced a bachelor's degree in early childhood studies in January 2000. In the fall, the college opened its second satellite campus at the Mott University Center in Flint, Michigan, and began offering the early childhood major at that location as well.

Classroom space surfaced as a critical need on the main campus by the fall of 2000, requiring a delay in plans to move the bookstore to the former student center. Workers instead converted the space to classrooms during the summer months. The enrollment skyrocketed to 828 that fall, resulting in an unexpected shortage of parking spaces. Maintenance personnel marked areas of the front lawn for temporary parking until alternate solutions could be arranged.

In order to reach the greatest number of prospective students possible, the college launched a new web site near the close of 2000. "In many ways, we restructured our new site with prospective students in mind," stated Larry Norman in a *North Star* article. In addition to information about academic programs, social life, and financial aid, the new site provided options allowing students to apply for admission, contact admissions advisors, and schedule campus visits online.

Enrollment trends played a significant role in a 2001 revision of the college's strategic plan. While an earlier plan identified an athletic center as the college's greatest facility need, the revised plan placed the need for classroom space at the top of the list. In a *North Star* article about the new strategic plan, President Johnson commented, "We are at the point where we must limit our enrollment or build."

Until additional classroom space could be provided on the main campus, the college continued to expand degree offerings at off-campus sites. The College of Extended Learning added a business communication major at the

Mott Center in 2001, and the early childhood major at the Macomb Center in 2003. The college also opened its fourth satellite campus at the Specs Howard School of Broadcast Arts in Southfield, Michigan, in January 2003. Within a year, the College of Extended Learning offered nine majors on four campuses.

As a result of continued growth on the main campus and all three satellite locations, the college experienced its first four-digit enrollment in the fall of 2003 when 1,001 students registered for classes. By that time, Rochester College became the fourth-largest partner at the Macomb University Center, surpassing the enrollment of such institutions as Ferris State University, Lawrence Technological University, and the University of Michigan.

The college's rapid increase in enrollment also affected the number of graduates receiving degrees from Rochester College. The institution designed a modest graduation program in December 1998 to accommodate the first 17 graduates of the College of Extended Learning. Within three years, the winter ceremony accommodated 110 graduates. Another 98 students completed degrees by the end of the spring semester, thrusting the number of graduates for the academic year past the 200 mark for the first time. By 2003, the number of graduates for the year reached 383, necessitating an ongoing practice of issuing guest tickets for the limited amount of available seating.

Enrollment figures stabilized in the 1,000 range as the decade continued. College officials addressed the need for classrooms and parking with the construction of two academic facilities and two parking areas. While those improvements addressed immediate needs, college officials recognized the fact that additional classroom space would be required for further growth.



▲ Summer Jam campers prayed for the campus community in 2000. Renamed "Elevate" three years later, the teen program has introduced hundreds of students to the college.

▶ Supplementing his administrative duties, Dr. Jeff Simmons assisted Miranda Berry in a 2007 business class.



▲ Depicting residential life on campus, Sara Bodine, Amy Boris, and Cassie Mainero posed for a web site photo in 2006.

◀ Development of the education program boosted enrollment during the decade. Kim Burgess completed her classroom observation requirements in the Rochester school system.

CAMPUS TRANSFORMATION

Continuing a progression of campus improvements initiated during the previous decade, the college moved forward with additional renovation and construction projects during the 2000s. Those projects transformed the campus and enhanced the college's ability to serve a growing student body.

During the summer of 2000, maintenance workers completely renovated the interior of Barbier Hall. Realizing the facility would need to be replaced at some point, college officials decided to extend the building's life by making several major improvements. Funded primarily by gifts from the board, the project included renovation of the restrooms, new lighting and floor coverings, and the replacement of existing furnishings and built-ins with contemporary modular furniture.

Workers began construction on the Isom Atrium at the beginning of the fall 2000 semester. Completed

Once temporary classrooms moved from the former student center to the new library building, workers immediately began renovation of the facility for the bookstore. The upper level of the store opened in October 2002, and the lower level the following January. The new location provided dedicated space for the sale of textbooks and allowed the store to expand its inventory of college-related merchandise. Simultaneously, a construction firm completed a \$225,000 repair on the foundations of the former student center and adjoining auditorium.

A year-long renovation of the former library and bookstore building ended in March 2004 with a formal rededication of the facility as Muirhead Center. During the previous months, workers completely rebuilt the interior with 21 faculty offices and suites for the academic services office and marketing department.

On September 19, 2003, college and local officials broke ground for the largest construction project in the



◀ Fully-equipped theatre facilities in Richardson Center enhanced the college's ability to prepare a continuous slate of productions.

Many new items, including a complete line of college memorabilia, appeared in the bookstore once it relocated to a larger facility in 2002.



▲ Relocating to the Isom Atrium in 2001, the Solid Rock Cafe developed into a popular gathering place for students. In addition to food and beverages, the cafe offered several ports for direct connection to the Internet.

► Supplementing the social space available in the Isom Atrium, the Utlely-McCauley Student Center opened in 2004.



Richardson Center opened in the fall of 2004.

before the end of the next term, the new facility housed the Solid Rock Cafe and provided additional social space for the student body. Internet ports, televisions, and great views of campus activity made the facility an immediate hit with the campus community.

In the spring of 2001, President Johnson wrote, "Every square foot of space on the campus that can be redesigned for maximum use has been captured and renovated. So far we have been able to accommodate growth through that process, but we have exhausted our options." That fall, the college addressed the need for additional academic space by starting construction on the Ennis and Nancy Ham Library. Dedicated on September 27, 2002, the 17,500 square foot facility included classrooms and a 30-terminal computer lab on the first floor and the library on the second level. Plans called for eventual conversion of the first floor to library space.

history of the college. Completed four months ahead of schedule, the 25,000 square foot Richardson Center opened for the fall semester of 2004. The \$5 million facility included a 200-seat performing arts theatre, the Utlely-McCauley Student Center, the Don and Audrey Gardner Science Center, classrooms, and a suite of executive offices named in honor of Royce Dickinson.

During a Founders Day event in the fall of 2004, Audrey Gardner, widow of the college's third president, visited the campus for the first time in several years. Standing before an appreciative audience with Ida Palmer, widow of the college's second president, she stated, "As I walked around campus yesterday, I thought of all those who worked and prayed so hard to create Rochester College. I wish they all could see it. Well, Ida and I decided they are looking down right now and smiling at Rochester College."



◀ Initially funded by a \$1.6 million Title III grant, the ACE Lab began providing student academic support in the spring of 2004. The lab moved to Richardson Center that fall. In a news bulletin interview, ACE director Paula Bonbrisco stated, "ACE has a strong effect on students' lives. I have seen students jump out of their seats and hug their tutors."



Senior Matt ▶ Lamb presented his final project for a business course at the 2007 Academic Symposium. The event has developed as a highlight of the spring semester.



▲ Students benefited from new science facilities after the opening of Richardson Center in 2004. Calvin Marshall used a biology lab microscope in 2007.

▶ Relocating to its new facility in 2002, the Ham Library offered students an attractive setting for research and study.



ACADEMIC GROWTH

Following a decade of academic expansion, the institution entered the 2000s with a commitment to strengthen existing majors and the academic support services offered to the student body. Additionally, college officials actively pursued development of the institution's own teacher education program, a master's degree in religion, and a nursing program.

Officially launching the process required by the state for approval of an education program, the college entered into a mentoring agreement with Madonna University early in 2000. The experience of working with Madonna in a cooperative program over the previous four years provided an ideal foundation for the official mentorship. In May 2001, the state granted Rochester College preliminary approval to develop an education program. Faculty members immediately began forming the program's conceptual framework.

The Muirhead Library joined the Detroit Area Library Network (DALNET) in 2001. Membership in the consortium allowed the students of Rochester College to access the vast resources found in many of Southeast Michigan's academic and public libraries. In order to participate in the consortium, the library completed reclassification of its collection to the Library of Congress system and converted its catalog to an online database. The library moved to its newly-constructed location during the summer of 2002 and became known as the Ham Library.

After receiving authorization from the state of Michigan, the college began offering the Bachelor of Arts degree in the fall of 2002. The faculty initially approved BA majors in communication, English, history, and music. A foreign language requirement distinguished the new BA majors from similar majors offered by the college under the Bachelor of Science degree.

In September 2003, the United States Department of Education awarded a \$1.6 million Title III grant to the college for development of an academic support center.

With funds from the program, the college opened the Academic Center for Excellence, more commonly known as the ACE Lab, at the beginning of the next semester. Originally housed in the lower level of Gatewood Hall, the ACE Lab moved to a new location in Richardson Center upon completion of that facility. Within five years of its inception, the center served almost 300 students per semester.

The college introduced its first Academic Symposium

in the spring of 2004. The initial program featured a keynote address by alumna Joyce Todd and a series of presentations, recitals, and capstone projects prepared by graduating seniors. Within a year, the program featured 59 presenters from a variety of academic departments and became an annual showcase of student achievement.

Following state approval of a college proposal to offer the Master of Religious Education degree, a committee of scholars from the North Central Association visited the campus in the spring of 2005 to assess the college's ability to award the degree. The committee recommended approval and the college began offering its first graduate courses that fall.

Based upon information submitted in hundreds of pages of documentation, the Michigan Department of Education began pre-approving the college's teaching majors during the fall of 2003. In April 2005, a committee of scholars visited the campus and recommended the next level of program approval to the state board. Changes in board philosophy delayed the process, but approval eventually was granted on January 10, 2006. The decision allowed the college to begin recommending students for state certification, pending final program approval.

Since its inception, the College of Extended Learning operated primarily as a separate division within the institution. In 2006, college officials initiated a process to consolidate as many CEL functions as possible with the traditional program. Under the leadership of Associate Dean Debi Hoggatt, the division assumed a new identity as the Center for Extended Learning. CEL allowed traditional students to enroll in some of the center's summer courses for the first time in 2007.

The formation of a partnership with Crittenton Hospital during the summer of 2007 launched planning efforts for a bachelor's degree in nursing. The following spring, the college received permission from the Michigan Board of Nursing to begin the self-study process. College officials

subsequently announced that students could enroll in the freshman year of a pre-nursing program by fall 2008.

While the institution completed the transition to senior college status during the previous decade, academic programs matured during the 2000s. The use of technology, the implementation of innovative support programs, the availability of new facilities, and the approval of key programs enhanced the college's ability to offer an exceptional educational experience.



Laptop computers changed learning methodology. Jamie Rajter accessed the campus wireless network while sitting outside in the spring of 2006. Freshmen began receiving Apple MacBooks in 2008.

Michael Westerfield

President 2003-2008

Michael Westerfield grew up in a family that traced its lineage in Churches of Christ to the horseback preachers of the 1800s. As a boy, young Mike imagined he would grow up to stand behind a pulpit.

Westerfield's exposure to higher education, however, recast his vision of ministry. As an undergraduate English major at two Christian colleges in the early 1970s, Westerfield discerned a call to be a Christian educator. In 1974, he joined the English faculty at York College in York, Nebraska. An academic vice president saw potential in the young instructor and asked him to be his personal assistant.

In the 1980s, York's leadership decided to transform the two-year institution into a four-year college and appointed Don Gardner president. A decade earlier, Gardner was president at Michigan Christian College

year programs. As a consultant and evaluator for the North Central Association, he interacted with hundreds of administrators, professors, and students at dozens of colleges and universities. The experience taught Westerfield the difference between a good college and a great college.

Over the next seven years, Westerfield established two new bachelor's degrees and several four-year majors in fields like English, history, and music. He also took the first steps in a ten-year process that led to a teacher certification program. Westerfield responded to the need for more professors by persuading some of the brightest scholars in the country to join the faculty.

In 1997, the board voted to change the college's name in order to more clearly portray the institution as a liberal arts college within a Christian setting. The same year, the college introduced a degree completion program for working adults. The combination of the college's new name, the availability of additional four-year degree programs, and the introduction of a program for working adults ignited the most dramatic enrollment growth in the college's history.

Johnson resigned in August 2003 and Westerfield filled in as interim president while the board launched a national search for a new chief executive. After a few months, the board recognized the best candidate already occupied the president's office. On April 28, 2004, Westerfield formally became the college's seventh president.

Twenty college and university presidents from across the nation, along with city and state dignitaries, joined the campus community on August 26, 2004, for the formal inauguration of President Westerfield. The inaugural day included an outdoor barbecue picnic and an evening concert in Riverside Park, an area developed near the Clinton River during the construction of Ferndale and Hoggatt Halls.

Once becoming president, Westerfield presided over some of the most significant events in Rochester's five decades. In 2005, on the strength of its religion faculty, the college launched its first graduate program. The same year, Westerfield cut the ribbon on a new complex of classrooms, science labs, student center, theatre, and administrative offices. In 2006, the state authorized the college to recommend teachers for certification. As the college's 50th anniversary approached, Westerfield announced a joint venture with Crittenton Hospital to establish a nursing program at Rochester College.

In the spring of 2008, Westerfield resigned from the presidency to return to full-time teaching. As an English professor, Westerfield brings enthusiasm for learning and a love for students to the classroom. His leadership will continue to be felt in the academic programs he was instrumental in strengthening.



Luncheon guests honored Mike and Sharon Westerfield after his formal inauguration as president in the fall of 2004.

when it developed its first four-year program. In order for York to confer a bachelor's degree, the college needed approval from the North Central Association. Westerfield cultivated a close relationship with the association and became York's resident expert on accreditation. A few years later, Westerfield himself became a North Central Association evaluator.

By the early 1990s, Ken Johnson, president of Michigan Christian College, was on a mission to transform his college into a comprehensive four-year institution. Westerfield agreed to become the architect of Johnson's academic vision in 1995. That fall, he left York to become Michigan Christian's vice president for academic affairs.

While Johnson directed his energy to generating resources for the college's growth, Westerfield applied his academic acumen to building Michigan Christian's four-



Addressing the campus community at the 2005 Convocation, Mike Westerfield affirmed the college's commitment to excellence.

Alumni Nadine Taylor, Stephanie Britten, and Darren McCullough visited with Mike Westerfield at the 2007 Fall Festival.



Known for his fondness of ceremony, Mike Westerfield obtained a college mace for use at formal academic occasions.



Mike Westerfield accepted a gift for the Health and Life Science Center from recent graduate Kevin Stewart in 2006.

Standing near the entrance of Richardson Center, Mike Westerfield paused for a photograph in the fall of 2005.





▲ Uganda interns Mike Upshur and Patrick Nulty assisted with the creation of mud walls for a new church building during their 2006 visit to Africa.

► GEO hosted its second semester-long program in Vienna during the fall of 2007. While visiting Italy on one of many European excursions, Matt Dion recreated a favorite pose with the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Students participating in the program completed a full semester of coursework while visiting many of the places discussed in their classes.



◀ Following the 2007 GEO excursion to Israel, the "Oakland Press" reported on the work accomplished by the Rochester College group. The feature pictured participants Nora Nasser, Jared Malone, and Adam Southerland with Dr. Craig Bowman. In the article, Adam Southerland described the trip as "surreal." He stated, "I was getting a visual of what I read in the Bible."

► Katy Allison experienced her first camel ride during the 2006 archeological expedition to Israel. In addition to assisting with excavation efforts at the ruins of Tamar, the study group explored such ancient cities as Jerusalem, Caesarea, Nazareth, Jericho, Petra, and Megiddo.



◀ Students rested after a hike in Colorado's Rocky Mountain National Park during the 2006 earth science field study. Participant Jamie Nelson stated, "One day we were reading about metamorphic, igneous, and sedimentary rock, and then we were hiking up mountains formed by the different rocks. It is very difficult to visit places like the Rocky Mountains and not see the majesty and power of God."

EDUCATIONAL TRAVEL

During the early 1990s, Dr. Leonard Knight and Dr. Fawn Knight hosted international study tours to the United Kingdom, Germany, and Austria. Among the new academic opportunities offered during the 2000s, educational travel surfaced as a popular option for a large number of students.

College officials established a formal international studies program in the fall of 2000. Known as Global Educational Opportunities or GEO, the new program resulted in two study tours the following summer. Dr. Jennifer Hamilton and Dr. Andrew Kronenwetter hosted a six-week excursion to Scotland, and Dr. David Greer led a group to Vienna, Austria. The Scotland trip continued for two additional years.

During the summer of 2002, David Brackney led his first annual earth science field study to the Badlands of South Dakota. Successive groups returned to the same location, while others camped and studied geological formations in some of the nation's most scenic areas in Colorado and Utah.

Adding a new dimension to the options offered by GEO, Dr. Craig Bowman led his first annual archeological expedition to Israel in the spring of 2004. On that trip and in subsequent journeys, students participated in archeological digs near Tamar, an ancient fortress associated with the reign of Solomon.

In May 2004, the education department introduced a multicultural field experience as a required component of the teacher education program. Under the leadership of Jim Dawson, student groups began traveling annually to Muskogee, Oklahoma, to work with the Murrow Indian Children's Home. Participants worked with the children during the day in the public school system, and stayed at the home during the evening.

Veteran missionaries Dr. John Barton and Sara Barton hosted their first mission internship to Uganda during the summer of 2004. Students shadowed resident missionaries as they visited village preaching points, worked with well-digging projects, and connected with Ugandans at an Internet cafe. Additional groups participated in the program in 2006 and 2008.

GEO sponsored its first full-semester international program in the German state of Bavaria during the fall of 2004. Two years later, the college partnered with Oklahoma Christian University for an annual program based in Vienna, Austria. Amid the normal routine of academic work and excursions to surrounding European countries, members of the 2007 group assisted with food distribution to shelters for refugees and orphans.

In May 2008, Jeff Cohu hosted a unique GEO trip to China, the last major economic frontier in an era of globalization. Geared for business majors, the study tour explored China's emerging economy and business environment while visiting various industrial sites.

Within a decade, GEO established itself as an important component of the college's academic program. Students readily seized opportunities to learn from the diverse cultures of the nation and the world.

STUDENT ACTIVITY

Service activities and volunteer work captured the hearts of a large portion of the student body early in the 2000s. IMAGE, an organization originally designed to promote interest in international mission efforts, affirmed an equal commitment to local service in a spring 2000 issue of the *North Star*. Dr. Jeff Simmons, sponsor of the organization, stated, "We are encouraging this approach since a person must learn to serve at home before serving in a mission field." The following fall, students assumed primary leadership of the organization as it continued to grow in popularity. At the same time, the *North Star* published survey results revealing half the student body participated in volunteer work on a monthly basis.

Efforts on behalf of the homeless thrived each academic year. Ranging from the distribution of sack lunches in 2000 to the serving of full meals in 2008, volunteers traveled to Detroit on a regular basis with food, clothing, and encouraging words. Under the leadership of Amy Napier, student leaders introduced a Shack-a-Thon in 2005. Participants built and lived in temporary shelters over a weekend. In its first year, the effort attracted network news coverage and raised over \$3,000 for the Oakland County Habitat for Humanity. The third annual Shack-a-Thon in 2007 provided funding for the Coalition of Temporary Shelters in Detroit. Josh Graves, a member of the class of 2002 and young adult minister of the Rochester Church of Christ, organized a 2008 spring break campaign that allowed students to live and work in the shelters of Detroit's Cass Park.

International mission groups traveled to Honduras, Brazil, and Kenya during the summer of 2001. Additional groups returned to Kenya in subsequent years to assist Made in the Streets, a ministry designed

to rescue orphans from the streets of Nairobi by helping them learn a trade. During the summer of 2004, students participated in summer mission efforts in Australia, Brazil, Honduras, Kenya, South Africa, Thailand, and Uganda. The fall 2006 *North Star* reported student efforts on four continents.

While far removed from the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, a team of student and employee volunteers quickly organized in September 2005 and traveled by bus to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, to assist with relief efforts. Financing most of the trip with personal funds, group members delivered supplies and donations for storm victims. The following March, another bus full of students and college employees traveled to New Orleans during spring break to assist with cleanup efforts.

The introduction of three student publications enhanced the college's roster of available campus activities during the decade. After a six-year absence, a college yearbook reappeared in 2000 under the title *Aerios* and continued through 2006, when student interest in a yearbook no longer justified the production cost. Under the sponsorship of Lora Isenberg, a newspaper

staff released the first issue of *The Shield* on October 5, 2000. With a masthead bearing the shield of a Christian warrior, the paper stated its mission of providing accurate coverage of campus news and "a forum for opinion and debate about pertinent college, national, international, and spiritual issues." Ex Libris, a writing community sponsored by Dr. Jennifer Hamilton, formed in the spring of 2004. Before the end of the academic year, the group published its first edition of *Blackberry Winter*, a compilation of poetry and creative writing by students and faculty.

Memories from the 2000s by Beth Bowers

Rochester College has always been an important part of my life. While I have fond memories of "growing up" at the college among the students and faculty, nothing will compare to my time spent as a student.

I entered college in the fall of 1998. I was blessed to be a part of the performance group Autumn. I was also involved in the A Cappella Chorus, where I quickly met my best friends. I will always remember the fun and laughter experienced on weekend Autumn trips and chorus tours, as well as the deep experiences of community and spiritual growth.

During the last two years of my undergraduate work at Rochester, I co-led the group IMAGE with my two best friends, Stephanie Britten and Nadine Taylor. We were able to coordinate opportunities for students to step out of the campus comfort zone and truly be a part of kingdom work. Those experiences will continue to have a lasting impact on my life.

I entered college as an elementary education major, but after a few semesters decided to change to interdisciplinary studies. I absolutely loved my Bible and communication classes, and decided to follow my passion in those areas. I attribute that passion to the wonderful professors who had such a positive influence on me.

After a three-year ministry in Petoskey, Michigan, my husband Brian and I moved back to Rochester in 2005 so Brian could pursue the college's new master's degree. I joined him in the program in the fall of 2006. I fully believe that the religion faculty at Rochester is as good as it gets within institutions affiliated with restoration churches, and feel privileged to learn at the feet of teachers like Rubel Shelly and Greg Stevenson.

Rochester College will always be important to me and my family. I am blessed to be a part of her continuing story.

Beth (Stewart) Bowers received her bachelor's degree from Rochester College in 2002, and plans to complete her master's degree in 2009. Her husband, Brian, will finish his master's degree at Rochester College with the first graduate class in 2008. The couple currently works with the Greater Lansing Church of Christ.



◀ Celebration moved to the auditorium of the Rochester Church of Christ in 2000. The following year, Sigma Phi and Delta Nu swept the awards with their presentation of "Stranded in Paradise."

Celebration returned to campus in 2005 after the opening of the theatre. An animated song from "Westside Story" helped portray a Broadway theme in 2008.



▲ Justin Robinson reviewed the campus news in a 2001 issue of "The Shield." The student newspaper debuted the previous fall semester.

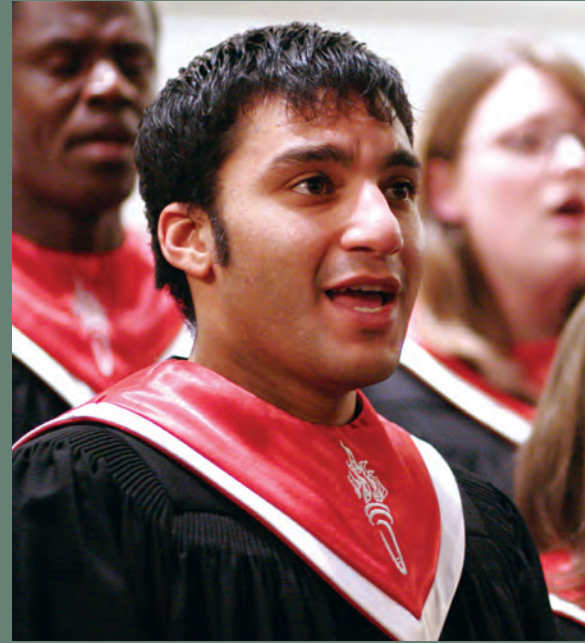


▶ Drawing attention to the needs of the homeless, students built and lived in temporary shelters during a spring 2005 weekend. The first annual Shack-a-Thon attracted media coverage and raised over \$3,000 for the Oakland County Habitat for Humanity.



Freshman Jon Rokowski helped the 2007 soccer team qualify for the USCAA national invitational. The team won the championship the previous year.

Wearing the college's colors, Fady Jan sang with the A Cappella Chorus in 2005. Throughout the decade, the chorus continued to visit churches and perform with local choral groups and symphonies.



▲ Dwayne Dalton portrayed Wilbur the pig in a 2006 production of "Charlotte's Web."

◀ Members of the Concert Band performed for local guests in the fall of 2005.



STUDENT ACTIVITY

Nearly 300 singers from six affiliated institutions participated in the 33rd Christian College Choral Festival in January 2001. The Rochester College A Cappella Chorus hosted the event for the first time in 30 years. The following January, the chorus performed at the Midwestern Conference on School Vocal and Instrumental Music. The Michigan Music Educators Conference selected the Rochester College A Cappella Chorus to represent the state's colleges and universities at the annual event.

The music department introduced the Concert Band in the fall of 2004. The new ensemble replaced the Jazz Band, which had provided instrumentalists with performance opportunities over the previous seven years. Open to students, employees, and residents of the Rochester community, the Concert Band grew to over seventy members by the spring of 2008.

The opening of a theatre facility in Richardson Center launched a new era for the music and theatre departments. Beginning with a fall 2004 presentation of *Barefoot in the Park*, the two departments produced a continuous chain of such works as *The Miracle Worker*, *Little Women*, *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*, and *Godspell*. In the spring of 2006, the theatre department scheduled matinee performances of *Charlotte's Web* for local elementary schools. Fall matinees of *Number the Stars* included presentations by holocaust survivors and played for capacity school group audiences.

In the fall of 2000, the college hosted national cross country, soccer, and volleyball invitationals for the NSCAA. Defending a championship from the previous year, the women's volleyball team again prevailed in their

tournament. The men's cross country team won its competition with institutional record-breaker Caden Ruohomaki taking first place in the race.

The United States Collegiate Athletics Association formed in 2001 from remnants of the former NSCAA. In March 2004, the men's basketball team captured the national title in a 73-70 overtime win. Coach Pleasant dedicated the USCAA title to Coach Bill Shinsky, who died three days before the championship game. The following year, the Warriors completed their fourth consecutive season of 20 wins, and won their first back-to-back national title at the USCAA national tournament.

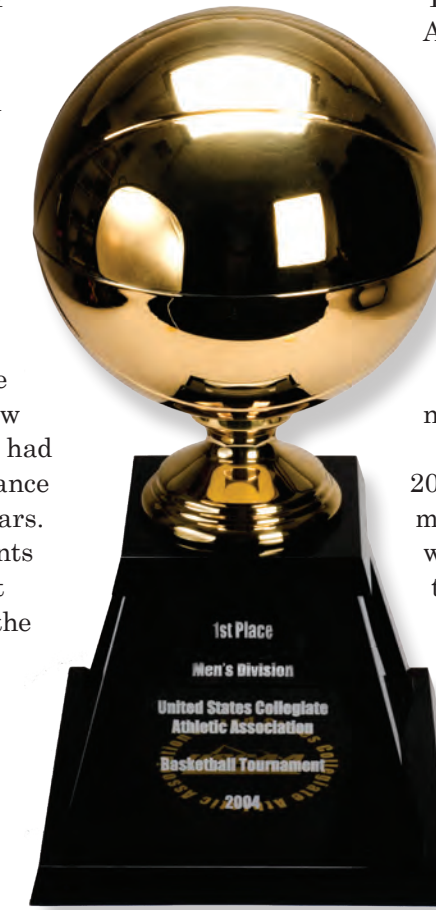
After defeating Oakland University in 2004 for the second consecutive year, the men's baseball team ended its regular season with a 28-11 record. The team then traveled to St. Petersburg, Florida, for the USCAA national tournament, and earned second place at the annual spring event. The baseball team finished its 2005 season with an outstanding winning streak of 39 home games.

The college hosted USCAA national soccer invitationals for both men and women in the fall of 2006. The men's team entered the tournament as the

number four seed and triumphed in the championship game after a 1-0 shootout. The women's team, completing its fifth year of intercollegiate competition, finished in second place.

With nearly 50 years of tradition, intercollegiate teams, singers, and actors continued to share their talents with others during the 2000s. Other students established important new traditions by working with the homeless and

various mission teams. Both the local region and the global community benefited from the servant hearts of Rochester College students.



Team members celebrated the college's third national championship in 2004 after an overtime win in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The Warriors returned to the USCAA nationals the following year to win their first back-to-back championship.



Garth Pleasant

Coach 1972-73, 1978-present

A few college basketball coaches boast more career wins than Garth Pleasant's 639, but only Pleasant can make this remarkable claim: He has not coached a home game in over 30 years.

Soon after men's basketball tipped off at Michigan Christian Junior College in the early 1960s, the college began construction of a home court. Financial constraints resulted in a building without bleachers that stands to this day. The Warriors have yet to play a home game on campus.

Incomplete facilities did not stop Coach Bill Shinsky from building Michigan Christian's men's basketball program in the 1960s. When the former U.S. Navy barber arrived in 1960, the Warriors played in a Detroit church league. Seven years under Shinsky built the team into a contender for the conference championship.

Shinsky recruited Garth Pleasant, a high school basketball star from Flint, Michigan, to carry the Warriors to the next level. During the 1967-68 season, Pleasant averaged 19 points per game as a freshman and made the All-MCCAC second team. As team captain in 1968-69, Pleasant won the league scoring title and led Michigan Christian to its first conference championship. He finished his playing career at David Lipscomb College in 1971, and married Pat Palmer, daughter of the college's second president, that same year.

Three years after Pleasant led Michigan Christian to its first conference title as a player, he accepted the role of head coach. The 23-year-old guided the Warriors through a tumultuous season to finish 17-8. After only one year in his coaching position, Pleasant left Michigan Christian to coach at Georgia Christian School.

In 1978, Pleasant began looking for an opportunity to return to Michigan Christian. Bill Shinsky, now the college's athletic director, gave his former team captain a second chance to coach the Warriors.

Pleasant's teams played good ball, but not good enough to win conference titles. The program made a leap, however, when Michigan Christian joined the National Little College Athletics Association in 1981. The Warriors competed on a national level for the first time and made their first appearance in a national tournament in 1982. Two years later, Pleasant coached the Warriors all the way to the NLCAA title game.

On the 20th anniversary of Michigan Christian's first conference title in 1969, Pleasant won NLCAA "Coach of

the Year" for leading the Warriors to their first national championship. The momentum from the first national title launched Pleasant's program into two decades of unparalleled excellence. The Warriors won a second national championship in 1994. Pleasant earned "Coach of the Year" honors again in 1997 and 2004. In 2004 and 2005, the Warriors claimed two more national titles.

At the beginning of Rochester's golden anniversary in 2008, Pleasant's 639 career wins put him in the company of college basketball's all-time coaching greats. Fifteen small college All-Americans came through Pleasant's program. In 30 seasons, only two of Pleasant's teams suffered records below .500. Pleasant has more national titles and national title appearances than any other active men's college basketball coach in America.

Championships, however, are shiny things that sooner or later gather dust in some closet of the memory. Pleasant measures his program in the character of the surrogate sons who play for him. Wins on the basketball court are just a way to condition winning spirits that endure long after the body ages and the glory fades.

Coaches in the cutthroat world of college basketball often reach for the next rung of the career ladder and build their programs on brute athleticism and winning at any cost. Pleasant passed up bigger schools and more money because he recognized Rochester College as a place where investing in young men's lives meant more than winning games.

Many men who played for Pleasant describe him as a father. He brings together an amazing mix of students from the inner city and the suburbs, devout Christians and those without faith, gifted athletes and those whose hearts are bigger than their talent. He coaches each of these young men in the fundamentals of basketball, but also in the fundamentals of learning, faith, and life. Somehow, this unlikely bunch has become an extended family with Pleasant at the head, and the family continues to grow. At least 16 of Pleasant's former players became

coaches themselves, including his sons Klint and Johnny, and many more are community leaders, educators, and ministers.

Pleasant's 639 career wins make him one of the greatest basketball coaches of all time, but each of those wins reflects something far more valuable: a Warrior alumnus whose life is a victory in the arena of the world. That kind of program makes any court a home court.

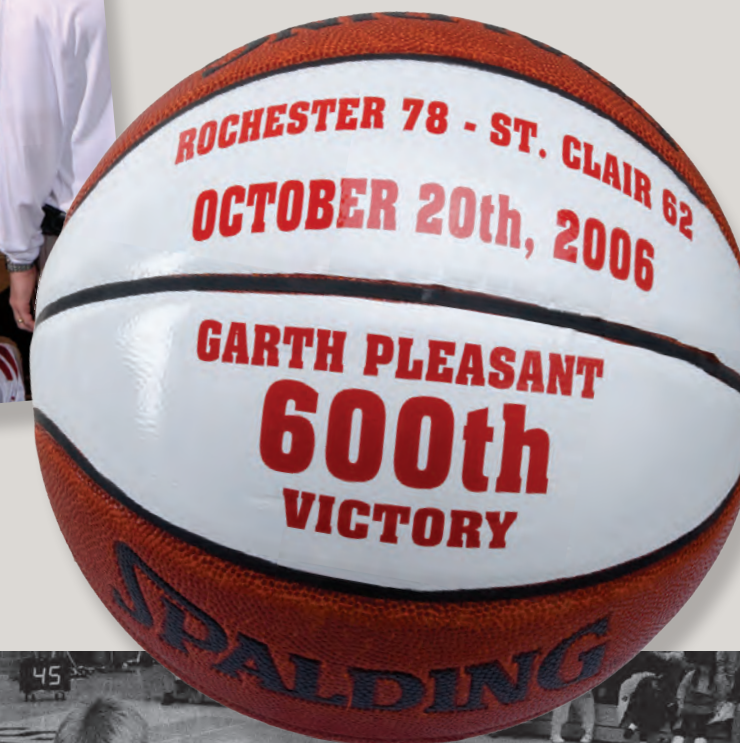


Two years after the college affiliated with the NLCAA, Coach Pleasant led the men's team to back-to-back district championships in 1982 and 1983.



Team members listened intently to Coach Pleasant during a 2007 tournament game. That year marked the Warriors' 24th appearance at the national finals.

Achieving his 600th career victory in 2006, Coach Pleasant earned a unique place in Michigan sports history as the coach with the state's third highest number of collegiate wins.



Coach Pleasant had to compensate for frequent turnover until the college began enrolling juniors and seniors regularly. The 1990-91 team included 11 freshman and one sophomore.





Donors like Ennis and Nancy Ham helped transform the campus during the 2000s.

FUND-RAISING EFFORTS

Similar to the previous decade, major donors played a critical role in the college's continuing progress. For the first time in the institution's history, friends donated \$1 million gifts for special projects and sparked two significant construction projects.

Providing the catalyst for a campaign to raise funds for a library facility, Gerald and Lucille Isom issued a \$1 million challenge grant in the fall of 2000. Within 60 days of the Isom challenge, Ennis and Nancy Ham of Lansing, Michigan, stepped forward with a second \$1 million gift toward the new facility.

In spring 2001, the Teagle Foundation approved a \$246,000 grant to the college. Designed to enhance the institution's fund-raising efforts, the award funded two additional staff positions in the development office and the services of a campaign consultant.

College officials launched the public phase of a \$4.4 million campaign at the 2001 Partnership Dinner.

Entitled *Catch the Vision*, the campaign included funding goals for the construction of a new academic facility and renovation of the existing library building. That fall, the Kresge Foundation awarded a \$400,000 challenge grant for the two projects. By November 2002, college officials announced completion of the campaign, just weeks after the formal dedication of the Ham Library.

In order to highlight the importance of endowment funding, the development office unveiled the Tree of Life Living Endowment Campaign in 2002. Barbara Clark of Jeffersonville, Indiana, donated a six-foot bronze tree to display the names of contributors to the program. In contrast to endowment funds that normally receive gifts from wills and estates, the campaign targeted donations from current donors.

Prior to the 2004 completion of Richardson Center, Bob and Mary Utley made a \$100,000 gift toward the new facility. Given in memory of Loree (Utley) McCauley, daughter of the Utleys and a member of the class of

1979, the donation resulted in the naming of the Utley-McCauley Student Center.

In the fall of 2005, the college launched *Connect to the Vision*, a comprehensive \$31 million campaign designed to provide both current and future needs of the institution. The campaign goals included \$4.8 million for the annual operating fund, \$3 million for restricted projects, \$10 million for endowment, and \$13.2 million for an athletic center. Prior to the campaign announcement, college employees committed over \$400,000 toward the athletic center. One year later, Gerald and Lucille Isom again issued a challenge to college donors by making a \$1.2 million commitment to the campaign.

College officials faced financial challenges during the second half of the 2000s. Donations diverted to disaster relief, Michigan's slow economy, and delayed payments of pledges resulted in cash flow issues. In response, several friends provided gifts to assist with operational expenses. Phil and Annette Herrington of Little Rock, Arkansas,

led the way by providing \$100,000 during the summer of 2006, and another \$250,000 the following summer.

May 2007 marked the end of an era for the annual Partnership Dinner. After a long history at Cobo Center in Detroit, the dinner moved to the Royal Park Hotel in downtown Rochester. The new location provided an elegant setting for the annual event in a location close to the college campus.

Targeting a *Connect to the Vision* campaign goal in 2008, the development office announced new initiatives designed to increase the endowment. Bob Norton, a 1982 graduate and member of the board, established the John Todd Honor Scholarship. Friends from the Chicago area accepted a challenge to raise \$50,000 for the establishment of a Chicagoland Endowed Scholarship. In honor of the college's 50th anniversary, alumni began making pledges to the Decades Endowment Program. Each program focused on the importance of securing the college's future with endowed funds.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Interaction between the college and community became commonplace during the 2000s. College leaders encouraged participation in community projects and often hosted groups on campus. Resulting partnerships opened new doors of opportunity for both entities.

In the fall of 2001, the city of Rochester Hills announced plans to develop the Clinton River Trail. The projected pedestrian walkway reclaimed 15 miles of abandoned railroad bed, including a half-mile section along the college's northern property line. The project required construction of a new bridge over the Clinton River in place of the railroad bridge often pictured in campus photographs. Once workers completed the bridge in 2005, the trail opened and hundreds of residents began walking and riding bikes along a section of the campus formerly unseen by most of the community.

Completion of the Ham Library in 2002 provided an opportunity for the college to open campus facilities for community meetings. About 60 business and community leaders gathered on campus for a January 2003 public forum with United States Congressman Joe Knollenberg, State Senator Mike Bishop, and State Representative John Garfield. That fall, the college co-hosted a business forum with the Rochester Regional Chamber of Commerce featuring speakers from Automation Alley, DaimlerChrysler, Michigan Minority Business Development Council, and the Detroit Pistons. Dr. Joe Bentley moved weekly rehearsals of the Rochester Community Chorus to the new theatre in 2004.

During the college's financial crisis of the 1970s, the board sold seven acres of property to the Rochester Hills Racquet Club. Lifetime Fitness later purchased the club and opened a fitness center on the site in 2002. The college partnered with Lifetime Fitness in 2005 to offer swimming and rock climbing classes, and to provide memberships for all boarding students.

College officials appeared before the Rochester Hills City Council in June 2003 to request the delisting of 46 acres of college property from the city's historic districts registry. Nearly 30 years earlier, the city registered the barn from the former Gierok farm. In time, the listing included the entire parcel, limiting college use of the property. In a landmark compromise agreement, the city approved a planned unit development agreement with the college in June 2005. The college agreed to preserve the farm buildings and to create an environmental zone on campus property adjoining the Clinton River. In exchange, the city reduced the historic district to 1.15 acres, endorsed a revised campus master plan, eased campus building height restrictions, and reduced wetland setback requirements for future construction projects.

In keeping with the city agreement, the college donated an 8.9 acre easement along the Clinton River to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality in September 2007. The arrangement, to be managed by the Oakland Land Conservancy, insured protection of the scenic area. The conservancy hailed the easement as a "jewel in the crown of the beautiful Clinton River



Symbolizing a changing relationship with the Rochester community, the barn from the Gierok farm became the focal point of negotiations between the college and the city for over two years. In an attempt to preserve the barn and address college needs, city officials reduced the size of the historic district in 2005, and approved a planned unit development agreement for the college. The landmark agreement addressed everyone's interests and fostered a stronger working relationship between college and city officials.



Fall Festival resumed in 2005 and attracted former students like Jody Fleischhut to the campus for the day. For 41 years, the Associates hosted the annual event, but discontinued it in 2002 as construction began on the Ham Library. Prior to the festival's return, Birgie Niemann stated in a news bulletin, "Thousands attended the festival for over 40 years. The silence during the next three autumns became deafening. A growing symphony of voices chanted the refrain, 'Bring back the festival.'"



Enhancing an annual Elevate tradition, the Rochester Hills Fire Department visited campus during the summer of 2007 for the week's popular "crud wars." Firefighters provided a huge shower for the teen campers after they doused one another with shaving cream, water, flour, and horse feed. The department also began regular participation in the Fall Festival once it resumed in 2005. Fire safety displays and viewing of the department's trucks became a festival favorite.

Student leaders Lindy Emerson, Leah Bosch, and Tim Parker proudly represented the college in the 2004 Rochester Hometown Christmas Parade. Billed as the state's largest Christmas parade, the televised event marked its 53rd year in 2004.



corridor and trail." Rochester Hills Mayor Bryan Barnett referred to the arrangement as a model for future agreements across the state.

During construction of the Ham Library, the Associates discontinued their annual Fall Festival. In October 2005, the public relations office revived the festival in order to provide long-time college friends and community residents an opportunity to visit the campus. As the festival developed in subsequent years, the Rochester Avon Recreation Authority, Rochester Hills Fire Department, and other community groups participated in the event.

Lynn Orfgen, president and CEO of Crittenton Hospital, approached President Westerfield in 2007 with a proposal for a partnership. Based upon the college's reputation for training service-oriented graduates, Crittenton selected Rochester College as its preferred partner for the development of a school of nursing. With the consultation of Dr. Kathleen VanWagoner, Crittenton's chief nursing officer, the faculty immediately began development of a curriculum, and administrators met with the state coordinator of nursing. In April 2008, the Crittenton Foundation awarded a \$250,000 grant to the college to assist with program startup expenses. Concurrently, architects began modifying existing building plans to incorporate athletic facilities in a larger Health and Life Science Center construction project.

A decade of interaction with local leaders and organizations allowed the college to experience a new level of respect in the community. While presenting the 2007 Sunrise Pinnacle Award to the college for outstanding community service, Sheri Heiney, executive director of the Rochester Regional Chamber of Commerce stated, "The people of Rochester College are an excellent example of hard working, concerned, and generous citizens devoted to making a difference in our area."

THE FUTURE

Rochester College stands upon a firm foundation laid by hundreds of individuals over more than 50 years. From the formation of a board in 1957 to the anniversary celebration, the college community has demonstrated its "commitment to faith and learning."

In the spring of 2008, President Westerfield announced the implementation of a strategic planning process designed to carry the institution into the future. Some initiatives will be planned well in advance. Others, like the nursing program, will develop in response to God's unique blessings.

The campus will continue to change with the addition of such facilities as a Health and Life Science Center. New academic programs will surface to meet the needs of a growing student body and a changing world. Additional employees will join a talented faculty and staff.

A rich heritage provides momentum for an exciting future. The Rochester College community proudly celebrates its past and looks forward to a future filled with untold opportunities to prepare students for a life of study and service.

Board of Trustees

Facts and Figures



▲ Serving as chairman of the Board of Trustees during a time of rapid transition, Bob Utley worked closely with President Johnson on several major initiatives. In 1997, the two leaders reviewed construction drawings while workers completed the new campus entrance. Bob Utley served as interim president in 1978 and 2003.

▼ Members of the Board of Trustees gathered on campus in 1985 for a group photograph after one of their quarterly meetings. Those seated include Bob Seccombe, Mary Ellen Adams, Bob Utley, Annette Riley, Rosemary Brown, Lawrence Watson, and Royce Dickinson. Those standing include Cal Seccombe, Everette Alexander, Al Oz, Bob Benham, Marvin Whitledge, Norm Christman, Jim Bruce, George Ford, Cy Addams, Jesse Yoakum, James Gatewood, Howard Hagerman, and E.L. Freeland.

Longest Term Board Members

Jim Thomas	40 years	1954-1994
George Ford	35 years	1954-1989
Howard Hagerman	34 years	1974-present
Wheeler Utley	34 years	1954-1988
Paul Lutz	31 years	1954-1985
Bob Utley	29 years	1976-2005
Mary Ellen Adams	24 years	1976-2000
Oscar Glover	24 years	1975-1999
Lucien Palmer	24 years	1971-1995
Bob Benham	23 years	1973-1996
Don Whetstone	23 years	1976-1999
Robert Seccombe	22 years	1975-1997
Joe Lloyd	21 years	1960-1981
Gerald Montgomery	21 years	1964-1985
Everette Alexander	20 years	1975-1995
Faye Dilgard	20 years	1974-1994
Lawrence Watson	20 years	1978-1998
James Gatewood	19 years	1976-1995
Annette Riley	19 years	1981-2000
Jesse Yoakum	19 years	1981-2000
Alberta Muirhead	18 years	1974-1992
R.L. Rummel	18 years	1969-1987
Art Pope	17 years	1991-present
Jim Bruce	16 years	1976-1992
Royce Dickinson	16 years	1978-1994
E.L. Freeland	16 years	1983-1999
Duane Harrison	16 years	1992-present
O.A. Johnson	16 years	1959-1975
Dolan Ledford	16 years	1960-1976
Al Oz	16 years	1974-1990
Norm Christman	15 years	1984-1999
Marvin Sims	15 years	1976-1991
Rick Watson	15 years	1992-2007



Employees

Facts and Figures

Longest Term Employees

Larry Stewart	36 years	1972-present
Gale Edwards*	35 years	1973-present
Garth Pleasant	32 years	1971-1973 1978-present
Bill Shinsky	32 years	1960-1992
Michael Light	30 years	1978-present
Lynne Stewart*	30 years	1976-1986 1988-present
John Todd	29 years	1979-present
Kent Hoggatt	28 years	1973-1977 1978-1993 1999-present
Cathy Ries	28 years	1973-1977 1978-1982 1988-present
Bernard Leshley*	27 years	1964-1971 1973-1993
Lucille Green	25 years	1979-2004
Leo Hindsley	25 years	1968-1993
Marsha Bills	23 years	1974-1997
Milton Fletcher	23 years	1960-1972 1980-1991
Joe Bentley	22 years	1986-present
Vikki Bentley	22 years	1986-present
Mearl Ryan	22 years	1970-1992
Mel Storm	22 years	1986-present
Marcel Bertholet	21 years	1968-1989
Jan Coe	21 years	1985-2006
Kathy Anspach	20 years	1988-present
Edie Wallace	19 years	1973-1992
Andy Kronenwetter	18 years	1990-present
Jeanne Bertholet	17 years	1968-1985
Carol Halsey	17 years	1991-present
Fawn Knight	17 years	1978-1995
Leonard Knight	17 years	1978-1995
Gary Turner	17 years	1991-present
Vivian Turner	17 years	1991-present
Karen Allen	16 years	1976-1992
David Brackney	16 years	1992-present
Candace Cain	16 years	1991-2007
Steve Eckstein	16 years	1985-2001
Joe Reddick	16 years	1992-present
Mildred Eckstein*	15 years	1985-2000
Larry Journey	15 years	1970-1985
Jo Meixner	15 years	1973-1988
Gary Palmer	15 years	1979-1994
Lucien Palmer	15 years	1959-1974
Sarah Reddick	15 years	1993-present

* Employees of the college who completed some or all of their total years of employment at the institution on a part-time basis.



◀ Belgian Marcel Bertholet became a United States citizen in 1976 and cared for the campus flag with great pride. Known for his expression, "Me fix," Marcel and his wife, Jeanne, both served in the college maintenance department. By word and example, Marcel taught a marvelous work ethic to his student workers. He often reminded them that they all "worked for God," regardless of their assigned task.

▼ Sharing his knowledge of history with hundreds of students, Dr. Leo Hindsley preferred teaching in a classroom full of pull-down maps. He retired in 1993 after completing a 25-year career with the college.





▲ Members of the class of 1977 visited campus for a 30-year reunion in the fall of 2007. Prior to that event, many of the participants pooled resources to provide over \$10,000 toward a Class of 1977 Legacy Scholarship. In conjunction with the 50th anniversary celebration, the development office launched the Decades Endowment Program the same fall. Seeking alumni gifts totaling \$50,000 from each decade, the endowment will provide student scholarships.

Based upon their service to other individuals, Dean Moore, Dean Oliver, and Nola Cucheran received alumni awards at the 1998 Partnership Dinner.



Alumni Statistics

Total Number of Alumni	7,159
Alumni of Michigan Christian College	4,191
Alumni of Rochester College	2,864
Alumni of Michigan Christian and Rochester	104
Associate Degree Graduates	2,193
Bachelor's Degree Graduates	2,311
Bachelor's Graduates with Business Majors	980
Bachelor's Graduates with Education Majors	55
Bachelor's Graduates with Human Services Majors	499
Bachelor's Graduates with Ministry Majors	197
Bachelor's Graduates with Other Majors	595
Alumni of Traditional Program	5,623
Alumni of CEL Program	1,454
Alumni of Both Traditional and CEL Programs	82
Participants in A Cappella Chorus	1,064
Participants in Intercollegiate Sports	1,406
Participants in Theatre Activities	751

Totals on some categories of information vary since not all alumni graduated and since some students completed more than one major.

Associates Presidents

1959-60	El Meta Ford
1960-61	Vodie Kerr
1961-62	Bell Parsons
1962-63	Betty Huckaby
1963-65	Wilma McKeel
1965-67	Mildred Freeland
1967-68	Betty Huckaby
1968-69	Marie Carter
1969-70	Wilma Lutz
1970-72	Catherine Sadurski
1972-75	Helen Slater
1975-77	Mary Etta Stowe
1977-79	Mary Utley
1979-81	Maxine Foster
1981-83	Gwen Orr
1983-85	Pat Harrison
1985-87	Benita Ward
1987-90	Margaret Hadfield
1990-92	Beth Fisher
1992-94	Ginny May
1994-96	Margaret Feltner
1996-98	Barbara O'Rourke
1998-01	Sharon Whitlatch
2001-03	Julie Harper
2003-05	Tammy Conner
2005-07	Linda Jones
2007-present	Jeannette Schiele



▲ Ann Luchsinger assisted with souvenir sales at a 1990 football game. Between 1975 and 1994, volunteers from the Associates raised \$438,760 by staffing souvenir booths at the Silverdome. Only the Fall Festival, with a total income of \$1,089,967 between 1960 and 2007, has raised more funds for the Associates.

Several former presidents of the Associates participated in a 1993 program honoring the group for raising \$3 million dollars. Those seated include Mildred Freeland, Wilma McKeel, Betty Huckaby, and Wilma Lutz. Those standing include Benita Ward, Mary Utley, Beth Fisher, Pat Harrison, Mary Etta Whitelaw, Helen Slater, Margaret Hadfield, Gwen Orr, Ginny May, and Catherine Sadurski.



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January 2007*

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Her banner we'll hold before us, Its colors of crimson and white.
We'll ever go forward with courage, Press onward with all of our might.
To our Alma Mater give honor, We'll cherish her though we must part.
Our dear Christian college forever, Your mem'ry will live in our heart.

Alma Mater - Written by Fred Alexander in 1959