

COCHISE COLLEGE
A Brave Beginning



JACK ZIEGLER



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by Jack Ziegler



Dr. Karen Nicodemus

Dear Reader:

Cochise College's 40th anniversary year – 2004-2005 – brought together faculty, staff, and administration from each era of the institution's existence. It has been a year of sharing our past with those who came before us and of reflecting on the present and future of the institution. So this anniversary year seems an appropriate time to record the College's rich, early history for posterity.

The history captured on the following pages was written by recently retired Cochise College faculty member Jack Ziegler. Over the years, I have enjoyed Jack's articles capturing the history of Cochise County and including his own insights on well-recorded historical events. What follows is Jack's research and observations of the early years of Cochise College. It is intended to be informative but entertaining, to capture not only recorded events but also the memories of those who were part of establishing this outstanding institution of higher education.

As we prepare for our 2005 graduation and close this year of celebration, I hope you will enjoy the words that follow and join me in thanking those pioneers who established Cochise College. Most importantly, I hope that as we celebrate the success of our more than 500 graduates in 2005, we affirm our commitment to continue the foundation laid out over the last four decades – providing accessible, affordable education to the citizens of Cochise County through Cochise College, a place where teaching and learning is the highest priority and where we are creating opportunities and changing lives.

Karen A. Nicodemus, Ph.D.
President
Cochise College



1962 . . .

THE YEAR OF COCHISE COLLEGE'S FOUNDING, WAS NOT SO LONG AGO,
REALLY . . . ONLY THE DAY BEFORE YESTERDAY.

In that other time, Cochise County residents shopped at A.J. Bayless ("Your Hometown Grocer"), Newberry's, and Phelps-Dodge Mercantile. Douglas residents could stroll along G Avenue, pausing to pick up a prescription at Douglas Drug, check out a new Buick at Southern Arizona Auto (established 1914), or step into the Saddle and Spur Lounge for a quick ginger ale. Most people banked at Valley National or the Arizona Bank, with its distinctive kachina logo. John F. Kennedy was the president of the United States. It was a turbulent time for the 45 year-old president as he struggled with the Cuban crisis abroad and civil rights issues at home.

Oddly enough, Kennedy himself had Cochise County connections. In the late spring of 1936, at age 18 and prior to his freshman year at Harvard, Jack Kennedy came west to repair his fragile health. Together with his fellow Choate classmate "Smokey Joe" Wilde, Kennedy worked on the J-Six ranch near Benson,



Doris Dees, Secretary
for the first eight presidents

BALL
DRUG
STORE





Red and White Ball



fashioning adobe brick, digging postholes, and herding cattle for a dollar a day and found (room and board). Though hard, life in the bunkhouse agreed with the future president. He even took to signing his letters to friends back East as "The Arizonan." He left the J-Six in June 1936 with a newfound vigor he attributed to riding and life on the Arizona range.

Now it was 26 years later, and Americans and Arizonans quickened to new economic and educational challenges. Since the early 1950s, Cochise County politicians of both parties had been advocating a local junior college only to have their efforts die off in an indifferent Arizona legislature. By April 1961, however, Cochise County's educational fortunes took a turn toward the sun, largely due to the efforts of State Senator A.R. Spikes and State Representative Charles Bloomquist, men with deep Cochise County roots. That spring, Bloomquist, along with Cochise County Superintendent Patricia Goren, set up a steering committee to explore the possibility of establishing a local community college.

Thereafter, events moved forward steadily, if not always smoothly. The City of Douglas took the lead, and by the end of July 1961, 3,191 names had been garnered on some 300 petitions to establish a junior college district. Enthusiasm ran particularly high in Douglas; a banner headline in *The Douglas Dispatch* for October 17, 1961, proclaimed "Tuesday Is JC Day In Cochise County – Vote For The Junior College." In the same edition, a lead *Dispatch* article, "Time Table Set On Junior College Plan," laid out the steps necessary to set up a new college. Mrs. D.W. Murray, Mrs. Vancil Stanford, and C.A. Sanchez announced their willingness to drive car-less voters to the polls as the first step toward making a Cochise County college a reality.

Mrs. Murray, Mrs. Stanford, and Mr. Sanchez needn't have worried as a Dispatch subheadline for October 18, 1961, summarized the previous day's election: "Vote Nearly 7 to 1 In Favor Of District." More precisely, about one-third of the county's 16,536 voters went to the polls, endorsing the establishment of a junior college district by an overwhelming 4,562-to-677 margin. Douglas again proved the sparkplug, passing the measure by a one-sided 1,735-101 score. Every district in the county voted for the college, with the vote narrowest in Willcox (104 to 97), where county supervisor William Moore had reservations about a future tax burden. Voters in Cochise County, and especially in Douglas, waxed enthusiastic over the results. Many felt that a local college would present an educational opportunity that up to this time had been denied. As Albert Saenz of 17th Street in Douglas put it: "... if we could have a junior college in Cochise County, so many more students would be able to attend and be able to further their education." N.L. Barnell of 19th Street, as typical of so many Americans in the early 1960's, saw even greater implications: "I think Cochise County should have a junior college district for the simple reason anything progressive is good for the whole country and having one would be a step toward that goal." Bill Rodman of Grace Street proved especially prophetic when he suggested a site for the as-yet conceptual college: "... an ideal location would be somewhere between Bisbee, Douglas, and Elfrida." Patricia Trammel of 14th Street voiced the opinion of many who, though intelligent, lacked the money to move to Tucson, Phoenix, or Flagstaff to attend college: "... students who are unable financially to live at a college or university would be offered an opportunity to further their education."



Penny Herbert, first yearbook editor



Your Friendly Cochise County
One-Stop Shopping Center



John Caldwell, first Board President

SUPERINTENDENT APPOINTS FIRST GOVERNING BOARD

With a junior college theoretically approved, the next steps were the appointment of a governing board and visits by a survey team from Arizona State University to select a college site and determine program needs. Patricia Goren, county school superintendent, moved speedily to accomplish the first goal. On November 17, Mrs. Goren announced her selection of the five college board members to serve until January 1963, with an election scheduled for November 1962. Their mission was to organize the college, to include its planning, construction and hiring of staff and faculty.

A tall order, perhaps, but Mrs. Goren showed astute judgment of choice. Her five appointees came from various parts of the county and brought different gifts to the governing process. Dr. George Spikes had lived in Douglas since 1958. Aside from a medical degree from the prestigious University of Chicago, Dr. Spikes arrived with a reputation for compassionate medical care and intense civic involvement. He was president of the Southern Arizona Heart Association, vice president of the Douglas Rotary Club, and chairman of the Douglas junior college



Home owned by
W. REED WALKER

committee. John Caldwell was a pharmacist and manager of Lowell Drug in Bisbee. Like Dr. Spikes, Caldwell played an active role in community affairs, having served as president of both the Bisbee Kiwanis and the Bisbee Chamber of Commerce. Tom Fleetham from Willcox was born in Pearce, hailing from that part of the county noted for such 19th century figures as Cowboy Billy Allen, Burt Alvord, and Billy Stiles. Fleetham co-owned Willcox Lumber and had served on the Willcox school board. Brainard Page of Tombstone represented ranching interests in the county. A native New Yorker, like Frank and Tom McLaury of OK Corral fame, Page had lived in Cochise County since 1927. Though he had a home in Tombstone, he also owned a ranch in the remote Canelo region near Fort Huachuca's west gate. Rounding out the first board was Don Wattles, a purchasing agent for Apache Powder in St. David. A great believer in education, Wattles had served on the Benson school board for eight years and held a degree from Alfred University in New York.

The first board did not remain idle, meeting for the first time on November 28, 1961. Their primary task was to select the future home of Cochise College. They no doubt would ponder the findings of the Junior College Survey of Cochise County published in December 1961 by the Arizona Educational Consultants from the College of Education at Arizona State University. This five-man survey team, directed by Dr. Raymond Wochner, whose report is on file at the College's Charles DiPeso Library, critically examined 10 potential sites in Bisbee, Tombstone, Double Adobe and Douglas.

The Junior College Survey is a snapshot of yesterday's Cochise County in a quieter, more conservative time. The team felt particularly concerned that the



Harlan Lewis, First Baseman



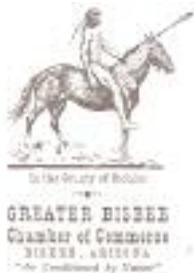


Dr. John Corkery,
first Dean of Students

future college site should offer easy access to church services and fretted over the size of the specially equipped homemaking classroom. At all costs, the survey urged that the future college not be located near "bars and other types of recreation or entertainment that are objectionable to the people of the county." Though the team eventually settled on a site near the Phelps-Dodge smelter, they expressed reservations about the effect the smoke might have on student health.

On December 11, 1961, the State Junior College Board meeting in Tucson announced its approval of the Bergmann site, the current location of the Douglas Campus of Cochise College donated by ranchers Mr. and Mrs. E. J. Bergmann. The board liked this site because of its large size (320 acres with a possible 160 acres to be added later), access to U.S. Route 80, and its location roughly midway between Douglas and Bisbee, the county's two major population centers. The board also noted the Hull site in the San Jose section of Bisbee and the Rogers site 2-1/2 miles east of G Avenue in Douglas as worthy of mention.

Cochise County showed a different face in 1961. The 1960 census recorded a population of 55,000, about half of today's population. Douglas (11,925) and Bisbee (9,914) weighed in as the two largest cities, with Sierra Vista (3,121) a distant third. The Junior College Survey also noted the large enrollments at Douglas High School (875 students) and Bisbee High School (807 students), who they thought would form the bulk of the future College's population. Locally conducted surveys indicated that half of Cochise County high school seniors wanted to go to college, with most of those enthused about attending a local junior college.



The Junior College Survey in many ways reflects the era in which it was

written, the heady "New Frontier" days of the early Kennedy administration. In his rhetoric of challenge, strength, self-sufficiency, and community involvement, John F. Kennedy, "The Arizonan" of 1936, seemed to catch the temper of the times. The Junior College Survey reflects these ideals, seeing junior colleges as not just building a better Arizona, but a better America. As the Junior College Survey remarks "... there is a need for basic study . . . in areas which will furnish general competence . . . and understanding for American citizens. This is a unifying educational experience which will assist in promoting human relationships in a complex society."

The Douglas Dispatch editorial page of December 12, 1961, heartily endorsed the State College Board's choice, remarking that the site "... appeals to most people in Cochise County as being the happiest and most practical choice of anything offered or available." For those who would prefer a more urban campus within the city limits of Bisbee or Douglas, the Dispatch provided sage counsel: "... compensating advantages should be recognized. All of these arise from the open country and fresh start, without traffic or zoning complications." This emphasis on Cochise College as a pioneering experience would eventually become a theme echoed by the institution's earliest staff members and students.

However, not everyone in Southern Arizona was enamored of what was dubbed the "Paul Spur site." While some Cochise County residents in Bisbee and Sierra Vista believed that theirs was the better location, a voice from Santa Cruz proved even more articulate. State Representative Robert Hathaway, the powerful chairman of the Arizona House Appropriations Committee, wanted the College site shifted to Sierra Vista so students from his district could easily attend. As



Cochise College under construction

CONGRATULATIONS

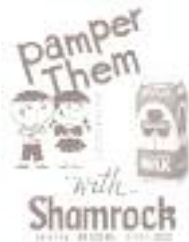
To the Faculty & Student Body
of Cochise College at the
Successful Completion of Your
First Year.



PREPS DODGE CORPORATION



Mrs. Alicya Malik, English and
Business Instructor



Hathaway stated at the time, "Our small county probably will never meet the qualifications necessary for a junior college. The Cochise College would provide a wonderful opportunity for many of our graduating high school students." In a way, Hathaway proved oddly prophetic, for Cochise College eventually came to Santa Cruz County, offering classes in Nogales, Patagonia, and other sites beginning in 2003.

Hathaway's voice was not the only one raised in objection. Arizona House Speaker Tay Cash favored a Sierra Vista location as well, because he thought a campus close to Fort Huachuca would be rewarded with federal aid. But all remonstrances proved in vain, and the Cochise College Governing Board moved on to the next step in the College building process.

Now that the College had a site of desert grassland bordered by the Mule and Swisshelm Mountains, the next two steps would be to hire an architectural firm to design a campus and to gain approval of county voters to fund a bond issue to cover construction costs. The first was easily taken care of when the governing board met in Tombstone on January 24, 1962. After reviewing five architectural companies' plans, the board selected Edward Varney and Associates of Phoenix. Varney proved a known quantity to the board, having designed the initial sections of Douglas High School in the 1940's. Other attendees at this historic meeting included Charles Bloomquist, a member of the state junior college board; Dr. John Prince, executive secretary of the state junior college board; and Charles Gibson, chief of the Bureau of School Planning, California Department of Education. Gibson was present in an advisory role, having had experience with designing junior college campuses in California.

The second step, securing county voter approval for \$1.6 million worth of college bonds, proved a bit more sticky. An added wrinkle was that, unlike the October 17, 1961, vote to create a junior college district, this election was not open to everyone. Only voters paying real estate taxes were eligible to cast a ballot, thus resulting in a smaller voter pool than in October 1961. Put in bald terms, the August 21, 1962, election found the Douglas metro area arrayed against the rest of the county. Opposition proved particularly strong in Bisbee, Sierra Vista, and Benson. Both Bisbee and Sierra Vista expressed disappointment that their sites had not been chosen. When the dust cleared, the bond proposal was approved 3,144 to 2,455 with the small communities of Apache, Double Adobe, Elfrida, McNeal, Portal, Paul Spur, and Rucker joining Douglas to produce an electoral victory. The hidden statistic in the total vote was the one-sided Douglas decision, which gave the bond issue a 1,849-93 approval.



Judy Phillips, Secretary,
Student Senate





Dr. John Eaton,
pioneering College administrator



FIRST ELECTED BOARD SELECTS PIONEERING PRESIDENT

Two months later in October 1962, another dramatic election occurred – the battle for the first elected Cochise College Governing Board. Eight candidates ran for the five positions. This time, unlike the August bond election, any registered voter could enter the polling station, regardless of property holdings. John Caldwell, an original Goren appointee from Bisbee, chose not to run. However, the other original four appointees – Dr. George Spikes of Douglas, Don Wattles of Benson, Brainard Page of Tombstone and Tom Fleetham of Willcox – ran as a team. Bisbee fielded two candidates, Martin Gentry, an attorney, and W.K. Pincock, a Phelps-Dodge mining engineer. Rounding out the field were Dr. Guy Atonna, Douglas physician, and Henry Bielecki, a technical writer at Fort Huachuca who felt that Sierra Vista should have a representative on the governing board. Voter interest proved keen, especially in Douglas, where 1,500 people voted at the Carlson school on A Avenue. When all the ballots were counted, the four appointed members were returned, along with newcomer Martin Gentry from Bisbee. In the shape of things to come, the same day the board elections were announced, the Dispatch ran a front-page photo of surveyors Dick Ridell, Jim Dutton, and Danny Pickens, all of Bisbee,

laying out topographical and boundary surveys at the Bergmann site. Interested observers in Cochise County felt like they could almost see the buildings.

The new governing board's next major decision was the hiring of a college president to oversee the construction of the school and to organize and hire an appropriate staff and faculty. They chose Dr. Thaddeus C. Johnston on January 2, 1963, to assume the position on February 1. Johnston had a rich and varied educational background. Originally a public school teacher, principal, and district superintendent in Kansas and Oklahoma, he had earned his doctorate in educational administration from the University of Oklahoma. At the time of his hiring, Johnston was an associate professor of educational administration at the University of Arizona. Aside from teaching, he had established himself as a scholar, publishing many articles on secondary and collegiate education.

One of the highlights of Dr. Johnston's all-too-brief administration had to be the groundbreaking ceremony at the College site on September 22, 1963. Just two months to the day before President Kennedy would be gunned down in Dallas, 75 people gathered at Cochise College's future location to watch governing board members Tom Fleetham, Brainard Page, and Dr. George Spikes break ground with copper shovels. Typical of Cochise County residents' taciturn nature, the ceremony proved brief, there being no speechmaking. Other luminaries pictured in the Dispatch photo attending this quick but historic event included Dr. John Prince, executive secretary of the state junior college board; John Caldwell, the first president of the College governing board; W.F. Conelly, president of the contracting company building the College; State Senator A.R. Spikes; Charles Bloomquist, now president of the state junior college board; and, of course, Dr. Johnston. The caption wryly notes that the



Dr. T.C. Johnston, first
Cochise College President





Gloria Mangum,
Apache Basketball Queen

sometimes tardy state representative "Jack Gilbert arrived too late to be included in this picture," thus missing a chance at Cochise College immortality.

The following day, Monday, September 23, 1963, engineers of W.F. Conelly Construction Co. of Tucson started work on the future Cochise College, to comprise 12 buildings at a cost of close to \$1.9 million. The target day for completion was a year and a day hence, when the College was scheduled to open (Originally, September 1963 had been the opening date, but disagreements over funding in the state legislature had pushed the timetable back.). Conelly Construction parked its distinctive white trailer near the entrance of the college just off U.S. 80. Don Bindenazez signed on as project manager while architect Varney Associates had Don Walser on site as their representative. By Thursday, September 26, the big machines started moving in to transform E. J. Bergmann's grazing land into the state's third community college.



As work proceeded, the campus steadily took shape. In sharp contrast to this positive growth was the unexpected death of Dr. T.C. Johnston in a plane crash in the Whetstone Mountains on January 23, 1964. Besides Dr. Johnston, only 44 years old at the time, the other victims included pilot Clayton Smith, publisher and editor of the Tombstone Epitaph, and Don Ensign, the superintendent of the Buena School District. The single engine Tri-pacer had left the dirt Tombstone airstrip about 8 a.m. bound for Phoenix, where the three had planned to take an Army plane to the Air Force Academy for an education conference. The flying weather was not good, as Smith, who had just received his pilot's license a month before, had to contend with low visibility, overcast skies and gusty wind and rain. The last contact with the party occurred about 8:30 a.m., when Smith radioed Libby Field at Fort Huachuca reporting that the rain was interfering with his flight plan. A call from

Luke AFB about 10:30 a.m. asking about the whereabouts of the party caused the Cochise County's Sheriff's Department to swing into action. About 10 a.m. on January 24 a search and rescue plane spotted the wrecked plane about eight miles southwest of Benson in the foothills of the Whetstone. The crash took place on J-Six ranch property, where the now deceased Jack Kennedy had once worked.

Dr. Johnston's death proved a shock to the Douglas community. As the Douglas Dispatch op-ed page put it on January 25, 1964, "Cochise County loses in Dr. Thaddeus C. Johnston an educational leader already demonstrating great capacity and unbounding energy in the short period as president of the new Cochise College." The editorial went on to praise Johnston as a key figure in this crucial stage of the college's development: "By the very force of his enthusiasm for high standards in education as well as in service, he has attracted support that meant so much in the organization and formative period." The editorial concluded somewhat darkly that, "It will be difficult to find a replacement with a good measure of his abilities and qualities."

The funeral of Dr. Johnston took place on January 27, 1964, at a crowded Grace Methodist Church in Douglas with the Rev. Raymond Moore officiating. Because of his dedication to the Douglas community, it is not surprising that Dr. Johnston's family chose Calvary Cemetery in Douglas as his burial place. Though Dr. Johnston had lived in Douglas only a little over a year, he was deeply involved with the community. Fittingly enough, Dr. Johnston's pallbearers were the then-governing board members – Dr. George Spikes, Brainard Page, Tom Fleetham, Martin Gentry, and Dr. Charles DiPeso – and Charles Bloomquist, member of the state junior college board.



Three Little Maids





Homer Koliba, Dean
of Business Services

DESPITE LOSS, COLLEGE PLANS MOVE FORWARD

Though shaken, the governing board quickly rallied and appointed Dr. Robert Crowell, assistant dean of the College of Education at the University of Arizona, to assist the small administrative staff until a new president could be hired. In a generous gesture, the University of Arizona offered any help required in this trying time. Despite the shock of Dr. Johnston's death, College officials assured the public that construction would continue and the College would open on schedule in September 1964. Homer Koliba, the college's business manager, oversaw purchasing and building, Carlotta Davis ran the office operation, and Doris Dees served as secretary in the College's temporary headquarters in the Gadsden Hotel.

Dr. Johnston's death at this key juncture of the College's development seemed a severe setback. But the Cochise College governing board worked quickly through their sense of loss. By February they were interviewing candidates, and in March they announced their choice as new college president, Dr. William Harwood.



On March 4, 1964, the Douglas Dispatch carried a page one story on the new president. Harwood, at 36, came to Cochise College from Foothills College in Los Altos Hills, Calif., where he served as director of evening college and summer sessions. For such a young man, Dr. Harwood brought a glittering array of credentials. With a background in history and politics, this World War II Navy veteran held a doctorate from Stanford University. The College governing board had interviewed seven candidates and quickly settled on Dr. Harwood, who was scheduled to begin his duties on March 16, just seven weeks after Dr. Johnston's death. Would the young Dr. Harwood be able to measure up to the high standard of leadership set by his predecessor?

Ironically, between the death of Dr. Johnston and the appointment of Dr. Harwood, Cochise College issued its first catalog from its headquarters in the Gadsden Hotel. Copies of the catalog are extremely rare and are prized among collectors of Cochise College memorabilia. The 5-by-9-inch booklet, of which only 4,000 were printed, contains more than 70 pages. The 1964-65 catalog clearly spells out courses and programs of study. It further includes admission and medical forms in the back to ease prospective students' entry into Cochise College.

Aside from its utilitarian values, the first catalog is notable for a number of other reasons. First, the title page describes Cochise College as a "public junior college," though in everyday reference "junior college" quickly disappeared, with people referring to it as "Cochise College" instead. Secondly, the catalog included a photo of Dr. Johnston on its first full page. Dead a little more than a month, Dr. Johnston was praised by the governing board for "... sound leadership, untiring devotion ... inspiring personality and friendliness." The board further noted



Dr. William B Harwood,
second College President

*"Integrity was what I was most
interested in. Everything else
flows from that."*

— William Harwood



Cochise College's first catalog.

that Dr. Johnston ". . . developed the college from an architect's dream and a county's vision into a solid reality . . . Cochise College will remain as his lasting memorial."

Finally, the catalog is notable for its cover: a color photograph of the mountains northeast of Douglas taken by Mrs. H.O. Hurley, president of the Douglas Camera Club. The desert grassland, pinkish brown mountains, and pale blue sky capture perfectly the essence of the lower Sulphur Springs Valley where Cochise College lies.

Under Dr. Harwood's direction, College planning moved along while Conelly construction worked hard to meet their September 24, 1964 opening deadline. By July 1964 College staff could move from their temporary quarters in the Gadsden Hotel to the administration building on campus. By mid-September 1964, the 12 campus buildings – administration, faculty office, fine arts, gymnasium, liberal arts, library, Little Theatre, two small residence halls, science-technology, Student Union and vocational – were largely completed, though there was little outside lighting and few shrubs or trees.

At this point, we might pause and consider the architectural beauty of the new College. A year hence, on August 7, 1965, in its "Homes" section, the Tucson Citizen ran a photo essay by Dan Pavillard, "Sparkling New Cochise College." In this well-researched, well-written, and stunningly photographed piece, Pavillard reminds the reader that the Cochise

College campus enjoys a beauty not usually associated with community col-



leges. Pavillard credits this aesthetic achievement to architect Reginald Syndor, a partner in the Phoenix firm of Varney, Sexton, and Syndor. Syndor, Pavillard notes, ". . . designed the original complex of buildings, using materials either native or sympathetic to the region." Pavillard especially praises the people-centered quality of the campus, with a new (1965) grass quad, academic buildings, and parking relegated to the edge of campus. Syndor described the overall design as "contemporary with Mexican influence," while writer Pavillard was struck by Syndor's overall sense of design: Cochise College is ". . . a complete junior college campus in a distinctive unified architectural style on a site as dramatic as that of any style in the country." Pavillard was particularly impressed by the many special touches that Syndor had lavished on his creation at very reasonable charges: solar plate glass that restricted the sun's effects by some 72 percent, bamboo and azaleas that grew in the shade of the College's "darkly handsome" buildings, and the impressively carved oak doors. Pavillard proved particularly sensitive to Syndor's overall visual achievement in which each component interacted with others: "More subtle are the perspectives formed by seemingly converging lines of long, protruding eaves and wide sidewalks, each visually framing a nearby building as its focal center."

Back in September 1964, however, contemplation of the campus's beauty may have been overshadowed by the excitement of welcoming Cochise College's inaugural class. Though classes didn't start until September 21, the campus proved busy the weekend before. On Friday, September 18, the Bisbee Kiwanis welcomed College officials and faculty members at an afternoon and evening fete at the Bisbee Country Club. Saturday afternoon saw student orientation, campus tours in student groups of 14, and a welcoming address by President Harwood.



Mr. Robert Sweeney, Accounting and Economics Instructor





Women's Athletic Association –
Marilyn Mike, Diane Gordon, and
Rosalie Pinedo.

Saturday night witnessed the College's first social event, a get-acquainted mixer from 8 p.m. to midnight, with music by the Larry Mattingly Combo.

On Saturday, September 19, 1964, the Douglas Dispatch published a three-section, 24-page Cochise College Edition as a supplement to its regular newspaper. This document, replete with numerous photos of board members, College staff and faculty, and perhaps most importantly, the College in various stages of construction from September 1963 to its opening a year later, is a historical gem. The special edition lavishes attention on every aspect of the College's development from political and financial background to photos of piles of steel rebar, surveyors laying out the site, and an extensive explanation of the College's ingenious sewage disposal system of "stabilization ponds."

The Cochise College Edition reads as a loving tribute from the people of Cochise County to their new College. "Congratulations, Cochise College, Best of Success" trumpeted Bledsoe Mauzy Motors, while Basset Lumber of Douglas offered "Congratulations and Best Wishes" in a quarter-page ad. Farmers Pump Company of Willcox, Ortega's Shoes, Fry Liquors, Eddie's Music Store, and Jack Cramer's Garage – all welcomed the new College warmly. Phelps-Dodge Mercantile and A.J. Bayless took full-page ads, with the Bayless ad winning the prize for the most aesthetically pleasing. The Bayless ad featured a meticulously drawn bouquet with a card saying "congratulations" arranged diagonally across the page. An aerial photo of the 12-building campus was inset to the right.



Another valuable aspect of its photographic record is the special edition's picturing of the College's staff and faculty. For example, one photo captioned

"Administrative Staff" includes Dr. Harwood; John Condon, assistant to the president; Dr. John Eaton, director of community services; John Corkey, dean of students; and Homer Koliba, dean of business services.

Faculty members present at the opening included June Lubker (nursing), Linda Skerritt (librarian), James Corbett (librarian), Allan Peterson (marketing), Robert Sweeney (business and economics), and John Whatcott (history). Science and math were represented by Don Campbell, J. B. Sutton, George Long, and George Huncovsky. Robert Beaty and Ed Van Winkle taught physical education while the Liberal Arts faculty included Richard Myers, Glenn McDonald, Alicya Malik, James Moore, Don Johnson, Barbara Seale, Thomas Minkler, Joe Gilliland, Keith Stuart, Cecil Orozco, and Thomas Cooper. In all cases, one is impressed by the youth, energy, and optimism reflected in the faces looking into the camera.

One of the most interesting articles in the special edition is "College Philosophy . . . Outlined By President" in which Dr. William Harwood defines a college education. Harwood's educational philosophy very much reflects the can-do optimism and determination prevalent in the America of the early 1960's. Dr. Harwood comes across as a high-minded communitarian who sounds his own educational summons of the trumpet. As Dr. Harwood remarks, "In a democratic society a junior college must assist individuals in the community to attain levels and types of leadership and responsibility commensurate with their potentials and with community needs." Dr. Harwood, along with many educators and civic leaders of this era, thought of education as a challenge, not an entitlement. On one hand, Dr. Harwood counsels that college is not for the misdirected or lackadaisical; on the other hand, he promises that the serious student will find a



Dr. John Condon,
Assistant to President





Dr. George Spikes,
clerk of the Governing Board

"friendly, fair . . . firm, helpful atmosphere at Cochise College." In Dr. Harwood's mind, Cochise College was a "College That Cares."

The Douglas Dispatch editorial page for the same day echoed Dr. Harwood's rhetoric. The Dispatch noted that the new College offered a highway to the future: "A large body of youth are being accommodated who would otherwise have to pass up a college education." Along with Dr. Harwood, the Dispatch op-ed page observes that college may not be for everyone, but "for all our youth who have the desire." Likewise, the Dispatch editorialist believes that a college education is not just about self-improvement. Rather, Cochise College will involve the student in a larger world: "This new College is designed to meet the responsibilities and opportunities for this new age." Dr. George A. Spikes, clerk of the governing board, wrote a note of thanks to the Douglas Dispatch's editorial page which acts a coda to the paper's special Cochise College Edition. After praising the paper's judgment in issuing such a document and the enthusiastic support by many advertisers and well-wishers, Dr. Spikes issued a challenge to the Dispatch's readers: "Let us not forget opening the doors marks the beginning and not the end." He further observed that much work still remained to be done and the prize would be worth the effort: "We have in our grasp the opportunity to develop a truly outstanding institution of higher learning that can benefit us by enriching our lives and educating our children . . ."



COLLEGE CHALLENGED BY UNEXPECTED ENROLLMENTS

The number of students attending Cochise College exceeded all expectations. The Junior College Survey published back in December 1961 forecast approximately 150 students attending when first the College opened. Enrollment figures issued by the College in October 1964 told a far more dramatic story: 1,015 enrollments county-wide with 441 day students at the main Douglas Campus. Students from Tucson, Benson, Willcox, and as far afield as Ohio, lined up to stay in the two small dormitories, housing 32 men or women each. Extra space had to be commandeered in Bisbee and Douglas. In Bisbee, 19 "boys" as they were termed in that less politically correct time, were housed on the second and third floors of the Bisbee YWCA. Bisbee artist Howard Hamm, sporting a dapper pencil moustache in period photos, served as "house father." The Douglas YMCA hosted 38 men with Robert McKenzie, a Douglas Junior High School teacher, acting as resident counselor. In a governing board meeting on October 10, 1964, Dr. Harwood confessed that the unexpected enrollment was an embarrassment of riches. Harwood noted that the College had 375 full-time students. He also remarked that the 64 dormitory spaces were proving woefully inadequate



Ruth Nichols, Susan Gillett, and Sarah Sundheimer – Cochise College's first cheerleaders





Brainard Page on Dedication Day

and recommended dorm rooms for an additional 202 students, as well as more faculty offices and an expanded cafeteria.

Perhaps the most important ceremony of 1964 took place on Sunday, November 8, when more than 2,000 people from all parts of Cochise County attended Dedication Day on the College campus. As photos in the Dispatch show, parking was at a premium as ordinary citizens and educational dignitaries alike turned out in force. Dr. Harwood served as master of ceremonies as 1,500 people crowded into the new gymnasium for the occasion. The festivities included a faculty and staff procession as well as appropriate speechmaking. The new 31-person Cochise College choir, under the direction of James Moore, professor of music, sang "Hallelujah" and the "Brother James Air." The religious element of the ceremony had an ecumenical flavor as the invocation was given by Assembly of God pastor Clarence Collins, the Prayer of Dedication by LDS Bishop Ronald Bateman, and the benediction by Monsignor Walter Rosenweig of St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Bisbee.



Numerous educational and civic luminaries turned out for the historic event. Major General Benjamin Pochyla represented Fort Huachuca, Marvin "Swede" Johnson the University of Arizona, and Dr. Lawrence Walkup Arizona State College, soon to become Northern Arizona University. Attendees more closely linked with the founding of the College included State Senator A.R. Spikes; Charles Bloomquist, now Cochise County representative on the state junior college board; John Caldwell, the first president of the College governing board, and Mrs. E.J. Bergmann, who together with her late husband, had donated the land the College stands on.

Dr. Joseph P. Cosand, president of the Junior College District of St. Louis, gave the dedicatory address. In rhetoric so familiar to students of the Kennedy era, Cosand pictured the community college as a cornerstone for a better America: "The community college provides an opportunity for youth and adults of a community and a state to better themselves economically, culturally and civically, to become more responsible citizens to themselves and to their fellows." Dr. John Prince, then the executive director of the state junior college board, and active in Cochise College affairs since the days of the Junior College Survey in December 1961, put it even more simply when reflecting on those earlier days: "Someone had to dream, spread the word and work." No doubt Dr. Prince was thinking here of A.R. Spikes, Charles Bloomquist, E. J. Bergmann, members of the first governing board and the county superintendent of schools Pat Goren, who had appointed them.

Brainard Page, chairman of the then-governing board, provided the welcoming remarks, paying special attention to the contributions of Dr. T.C. Johnston, who had died the previous January. Page also presented Dr. Harwood with a bronze plaque to be placed on the administration building (It's still there today). The plaque contained the names of past and present board members to include Page, Don Wattles, John Caldwell, Dr. George Spikes, Tom Fleetham, Martin Gentry, and Dr. Charles DiPeso of Dagoon, after whom the library is named. The plaque also listed the architect, Edward Varney, and the contractor, W.L. Conelly, both of whom attended.



Bonfires were a ritual of College life





Apaches in action

SCHOOL PRIDE EVIDENT IN EARLY PUBLICATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Though Dedication Day proved a benchmark in the College's history, there were other successes to come. Two excellent guides for life at Cochise College in 1964-65 remain the four issues of the College newspaper, *The Heliograph*, and the college annual, *El Recuerdo*. Tom Cooper served as faculty advisor to both publications, while Penny Herbert and Diane Oslich shared the editor's job at *El Recuerdo*. Today the reader looking through the College yearbook is struck by the professional quality of the photography and layout.

El Recuerdo opens strikingly with a photo of one of the heavy oak doors still seen on campus. The *Recuerdo* writer identifies the door as a metaphor for potential growth, urging the reader "to open the portals of your mind and . . . you may discern the worlds of knowledge." The writer further urges that the College's first-year students show gratitude to "the farsighted citizens of Cochise County" who "wished something better for their children." The editorialist further notes that such vision of ordinary county citizens reflects "the same spirit displayed by their pioneer ancestors who settled this country."



The two themes of pioneering and opening doors run like twin threads through the College's first year. John Pintek, president of the first Student Senate and later Cochise County sheriff, remarked that, "All of us who attended Cochise College this year were pioneers." The title over the student studio portraits in *El Recuerdo* echoes Pintek: "Young Pioneers – Cochise College's First Students." Both Pintek and the *El Recuerdo* editors have seized on an apt metaphor. As you page through early College publications, you can't help but marvel at the extraordinary accomplishments attained with such slender resources. These students indeed were the children of tough Bisbee and Tombstone miners, hardworking Douglas smeltermen, and resourceful Willcox and Benson ranchers.

It seems close to miraculous how well a new staff and faculty worked with willing students to produce an excellent student newspaper, a first-rate annual and even a slim literary magazine, *El Librito*. In the same pioneer spirit, the Cochise choir, under the direction of James Moore, put on five full-house performances of "*The Mikado*" to raise money to attend a music educator convention in Long Beach, California. Nor did the College neglect serious stagecraft, as under the direction of Keith Stuart, psychology professor, the drama club put on "*The Innocents*," an especially demanding adaptation of the Henry James novella, "*The Turn of the Screw*."

Aside from academic pursuits, students had a large variety of activities to choose from. The first choice of those with Slaughter or McLauray blood in their veins might be the Rodeo Club. The Rodeo Club did very well for itself, competing at Arizona State University, the University of Arizona, and the regional finals at Pierce Junior College in California. For those students, who unlike



John Pintek, President,
first Student Senate





Rudy's wild ride

rodeo team member Rudy Ramirez, did not relish riding Brahma bulls, there were other challenging activities like the Rifle Club. The Rifle Club placed seventh nationally in the Junior College Invitational Meet and featured six women as team members.

For the more indoor-minded, the College offered an array of things to do: numerous religious-based organizations, gymnastics, choir, and ensemble, the five-piece predecessor of the Cochise College band. The social highlight of the year was the Red and White Ball held at the Bisbee Country Club, with the women in formal gowns and the men in suits or tuxedos.

The athletic teams also did well, especially the Apache baseball team, which amassed an excellent 19-8 freshman record, a tribute to coach John Whatcott's managerial expertise. Coach Ed Van Winkle's basketball team turned in a respectable 11-11 record, inspired no doubt by the cheerleading enthusiasm of Ruth Nichols, Susan Gillett, and Sarah Sundheimer. The College also sponsored lively intramural leagues, with the Pirtleville Warriors dominating in flag football, volleyball, and basketball.

But foremost, Cochise College is an academic institution and that's where our commentary on the first College year should end. Two events stand out as educational milestones – the nurses capping ceremony and the College's first "graduation." On February 21, 1965, 18 nursing students participated in a capping ceremony at Appreciation Hall (the Little Theater nowadays). The ceremony featured remarks by Dr. Harwood, Dr. Spikes, and Dr. Eaton, with a vocal solo, *"How Lovely Are Thy Dwellings,"* performed by Doris Dees. June Lubker, the College's



progressive director of practical nursing, awarded the caps, while campus nurse Hazel Shown, R.N., lighted the candles. Later that spring, transfer students Freddie Nechoechea, Maretta Ramirez, and Norman Hill became the first Cochise College graduates and were honored with a luncheon hosted by Dr. Harwood. The three graduates returned the following year to be honored at Cochise College's first commencement, along with the Class of 1966.

The Cochise College dedication, the first Red and White Ball, the first three graduates in 1965 – it all seems so long ago. Many of those educational pioneers – A.R. Spikes, Charlie Bloomquist, Pat Goren, T.C. Johnston – have bid the world good night. Yet others remain and prosper. John Eaton, the first director of community services, now serves on the college governing board. Dr. George Spikes, an original board member from 1962, still plays an active role in community affairs. It is with such energetic pioneers in mind that Cochise College planned a special community reception for February 25, 2005. This luncheon would honor those College administrators and staff members who were there from the beginning, or, in Dr. Spikes's case, from before the beginning.



First three graduates





Dr. George Spikes in 2005

EARLY ADMINISTRATORS REUNITE IN 2005

The idea for this ceremony came from the luncheon held in December 2004 on the Douglas Campus to honor former Director of Learning Resources Ida Ojeda on her 90th birthday. There, in the West Reading Room of the DiPeso Library, Patricia Hotchkiss, director of college libraries; Dr. Joanna Michelich, vice president for instruction; and Dr. Karen Nicodemus, president of Cochise College, mutually agreed that retired administrators and staff should be honored in some special way. Dr. Nicodemus felt that a communal meal on February 25, Faculty/Staff Development Day, would be appropriate. "I thought it was really important that younger faculty members get to meet the College's pioneers," Nicodemus remarked. "Now that I know something about the challenges they faced in the early 1960's, I regard their leadership as inspirational."

All five of the top administrators from the College's first year were able to attend: Dr. William Harwood, president; Dr. John Condon, assistant to the president; Dr. John Eaton, director of community services; Homer Koliba, dean of business services; and John Corkery, dean of students. This was no reunion of golf-

playing retirees. All five men radiate energy and optimism. It was also noteworthy that the Cochise College years had left an impression on each man's character. Jack Corkery found it "refreshing to be back in the desert" after the congestion of California. He recalled the original staff as "wonderful people," a sentiment endorsed by Dr. John Condon. Dr. Condon noted that it was great to "meet old friends again" and admitted to enjoying himself at the luncheon and the dessert reception in the DiPeso Library afterward. Homer Koliba remembered how "well we all worked together. We were willing to put in 14-hour days to make the College successful."

At the dessert reception, the conversation eventually turned to why the College had flourished. Dr. Joe Gilliland, an original faculty member from 1964 who still teaches humanities on a part-time basis, provided an evaluation: "Dr. Harwood had gathered together a remarkable group of young, highly trained, broadly educated, extremely, dedicated people . . . That atmosphere persists today under the same spirit of cooperation." Dr. Harwood, when asked how he had chosen the first staff and faculty members, had an even briefer response: "Integrity was what I was most interested in. Everything else flows from that."

Two other key attendees were Albert Velasco and Doris Dees. Albert Velasco helped build the College with Conelly Construction, then stayed on to eventually become director of facilities. The campus's oft-remarked-upon beauty is as much a tribute to Albert Velasco's organizational skills as Reginald Syndor's design. Along with Dr. George Spikes, Doris Dees probably is the person who goes back the furthest with the College; she began working part time as a Cochise College secretary in the early 1960's. "In those days," said Dees, "you walked up the marble



Albert Velasco,
former Director of Facilities





2005 Reunion

steps from the Gadsden lobby to the mezzanine and turned right. The first five rooms were Cochise College. Charlie Bloomquist's office was right downstairs." Dees, who sang at the first nurses' capping ceremony in 1964, sang again 41 years later at the February 2005 community reception. Her moving rendition of "*The Way We Were*" felt most appropriate.

It's been a long time since 1964, when the Gulf of Tonkin and the civil rights movement claimed the headlines. Lots of things have changed. The Phelps-Dodge smelter has long been demolished. Many of the advertisers in the Cochise College Edition of the Douglas Dispatch have vanished into history. The population of Sierra Vista, once a small burg on the outskirts of Fort Huachuca, has become a dominant force in Cochise County and now outnumbers the combined population of Douglas and Bisbee.

Yet some things haven't changed. The sun still shines brightly most of the year on Douglas's broad avenues. Douglasites are as friendly and resilient as ever. The College campus looks as pretty today as when Dan Pavillard hymned its beauty in 1965. Perhaps the last and wisest words should go to Dr. George Spikes, a supporter of a Douglas community college since the 1950's. Looking back to the College's start, Dr. Spikes recalls, "Those were great times. It's hard to beat those first five years." What lies ahead for Cochise College? Dr. Spikes remains optimistic, as do all the college pioneers. "The future looks bright," he said.





JACK ZIEGLER

Like many Americans, Jack Ziegler came West with the Army. After mustering out at Fort Huachuca in 1972, Ziegler taught literature, philosophy, and film at Cochise College until 2004. Like Brainard Page, Ziegler owns a home in Tombstone.

Note: This history of Cochise College is based on personal interviews; College documents, publications and archives; the College memorabilia collection of Homer Koliba; and the invaluable back issues of The Douglas Dispatch (now The Daily Dispatch).