

Paul Holt's speech at the Sept. 5 Dedication Ceremony:

I've heard that the older you get the more sentimental and emotional you become. If that's true and based on those two factors, I'm an old, old man.

When we started in 1964, no one dreamed that this college would be what it is today.

No one dreamed that it would have facilities on the Cherokee reservation,

nor a school building in Swain county that has been completely re-furbished for use by SCC;

or a class room building at the industrial complex in Macon County;

or a live burn building in Macon County for fire fighters from all of Western North Carolina to receive training;

or a skilled driving course in Macon County for law enforcement officers from Western North Carolina to take their required training;

or a brand new classroom building on the new campus in Franklin next to the new library;

or a firing range facility here in Jackson County where all law enforcement people, including the highway patrol, can take their semi-annual training and park service people from all over the country come for training;

or all the buildings on this campus, one of which includes a modern 1000 seat auditorium;

or a library and especially one with the name HOLT on it.

Plans are being prepared now for construction of a new building here to provide additional needed space.

When we were trying to get monies to buy lumber, bricks, masonry blocks and plumbing materials for the first trade classes, who would have thought that we would have a \$60,000 computerized mannequin that can be programmed for heart attacks, other illnesses and injuries for use by the nursing program and the emergency medical program?

I bring this up to show there has been numerous people involved in the college's development.

In the early years, board meetings would last long and real late. Despite the long hours, my late wife, Pat, encouraged me to remain on the board because she knew what a positive impact the development of this college would have on the community.

She believed that if a person couldn't read they would never be able to reach their full potential and she pushed hard for SCC to get involved with giving people who dropped out of school their GEDs.

Fortunately, the board of trustees has always been a close group. Many people have served.

The board has been split on many issues, especially in the early years when many things had to be decided. But once a decision was made, it was endorsed by the whole board.

When the next issue would come up, there could be a complete re-alignment of the members on that issue from previous ones.

The college has been fortunate to have Presidents who had visions of things that needed to be done, of programs that needed to be taught.

As an example, Dr. Groves saw the need for broad band internet for this area.

Through his efforts Southwestern partnered with two other groups to bring it to this area. Drake Enterprises and the Cherokee Nation, with private money and donations.

This means that any business, no matter how big, would have sufficient internet and telecommunications capacity to locate in this area.

Bring the businesses in and the college will train the employees.

Southwestern has had the financial support of the county commissioners from the three counties thru the years, support from Region A and from legislators, particularly our late Representative and Speaker of the North Carolina House of Representatives, LISTON RAMSEY.

Wayne Hooper was a close personal friend of Liston's and also being president of the N. C. Association of County Commissioners didn't hurt matters.

We now have NEW CENTURY scholars. Students are chosen in 5th and 6th grades.

If they do good thru high school and then they have scholarships here for two years.

Do good here and can then go on to Western Carolina University.

There is a new program called JACKSON COUNTY EARLY COLLEGE. Starts with 9th and 10th graders. Classes are held here for five years and students receive their high school diploma, plus two years college credit transferable to a four year college.

There are 58 students in that school.

Each spring the foundation sponsors a dinner theater. They are good. I invite you to come next year.

This year a young lady gave a testimonial about being a young girl with a younger brother, no father, an alcoholic mother. How she had to see they were both fed, got to bed, had clean clothes, were up in the morning for school. She was responsible for everything. She told how a teacher encouraged her to finish school and to continue her education. She finished high school, then married and it was a physical and mentally abusive

marriage. After the marriage ended, she decided to follow the teacher's advice when she was around 30 years old and came to Southwestern. She is now well on her way to becoming a teacher. That's what it's all about.

That's what has made it all worth while.

At the last board meeting it was reported that an independent study showed that this library would serve the needs of the school and public for 30 years. It's going to be completely re-furbished.

In 30 years we will dedicate a new one. I invite you back for that and I intend to be here.

A philosopher once said that no matter what language you use or how many adjectives you use, no words express thanks, appreciation and gratitude more than THANK YOU.

I feel very humble, appreciative and honored by this occasion.

To all those responsible, to those that have helped SCC grow and develop and to those responsible for this honor—THANK YOU.