

San José State College Becomes a University

In the fall of 1960, three new faculty members were provided primitive office space on campus in a temporary shack, designated B-11. It was a World War II Quonset hut, set down near where the statues of Tommie Smith and John Carlos are presently located. I was one of those new hires, along with my friend Ted Norton. The third was the sociologist Snell ("Mick") Putney, who was married to Gladys Putney, also a sociologist. When the Putneys published their first scholarly monograph, *The Adjusted American*, the publisher thought the book would have more appeal if Gladys' name were sexier. Therefore the book was published under the names of Snell and Gail Putney. Mick was eager to have his wife hired by the college, but an anti-nepotism policy prevented this from happening for several years. Eventually, the now-named Gail was hired as a full-time faculty member, and after divorcing Mick and marrying an artist named Stan Fullerton, Gail soon moved up the administrative ladder to become the first female, the 21st president of the university, serving from 1978-1991.

Over the course of the years since then, other scholarly couples were hired and many women appointed to the highest administrative posts on campus. A veritable revolution was taking place as San Jose State underwent a transformation from a state teachers college to a major university.

At the recent inauguration of Mohammad Qayoumi as the 28th president, I calculated that I have personally seen 40% of all the presidents of our now-called University. I remember well when John T. Wahlquist, the 17th president, decided to retire and was replaced by Robert D. Clark in 1964. It was a momentous occasion. Clark was the first president to be chosen under a new structure that had been created in 1960, namely, that of a State College system headed by a Chancellor. Clark lost little time in taking advantage of the winds of change that helped shape San Jose State as we know it today.

The period following the end of World War II saw the huge ballooning of college and university enrollments, the result of the G.I. Bill of Rights. Of the fifteen million armed forces, about eight million enrolled in institutions of higher education. San Jose State College experienced that enrollment growth, which necessitated the hiring of additional faculties. Most of the new hires, the product of prestigious doctoral-granting universities, were dissatisfied with the teachers college aspect of SJSC. This was one of the reasons that Wahlquist resigned—he was well suited for a teacher's college, but he saw the incoming waves, and thus made room for change, which Robert Clark immediately began initiating as chief executive.

On his first day, Clark addressed the faculty in Morris Dailey auditorium. His speech recalled C. P. Snow's description of the academic schism between two cultures, the liberal arts one on the one hand, and the sciences on the other. Clark hoped to bridge that gap by emphasizing interdisciplinary cooperation. But

Clark's proposal was enacted and is now the pattern throughout the California State University system.

Finally, in 1968, Clark had to confront a strike by

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