AN HISTORICAL STUDY OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF BILL J. PRIEST
TO THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE MOVEMENT

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of North Texas in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

by

Kathleen K. Whitson, B.A., M.L.A.
Denton, Texas
August, 1995
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This study chronicles the contributions of Bill J. Priest under the headings of Board of Trustees governance model, multi-college district, quality first: facilities and staff, curriculum, counseling, public relations, telecourses and the Bill J. Priest Institute for Economic Development. Data were gathered from personal interviews, primary sources and secondary sources. The study includes an overview of the emergence and evolution of the junior college with specific focus on the conceptual beginnings of the Dallas County Community College District and the selection of its founding president, Bill Priest. Professional and personal profiles of Priest are documented as background for the study.

Conclusions are that Bill Priest established the Dallas County Community College District as a national model of a multi-college district, was instrumental in affecting the change from junior college to comprehensive community college as the standard for two-year higher education institutions, played a significant role in setting the national agenda for the community college movement through
his long-term participation in a leadership capacity in the American Association of Junior and Community Colleges and through the establishment and selection of leadership of the League for Innovation, was instrumental in the creation of the Associate Degree of Nursing, was a national leader in the establishment and development of telecourses as an instructional delivery system, was the forerunner in utilizing public relations and establishing it as a credible tool for institutions of higher learning, and brought the concept of counseling and advising as a vital part of student success to the two-year colleges in Texas.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

When Bill Jason Priest began his pursuit of a higher education degree at Modesto Junior College in California in the mid-thirties there was no indication he would emerge as one of the foremost guiding forces in the community college movement. Even after earning his bachelor of arts degree at the University of California, his potential in academia was obscured by his talent for pitching, and he became a professional baseball player on the Philadelphia Athletics of the American League.

World War II interrupted Priest’s initial pursuits of a career in education after the quick demise of his efforts in professional baseball. During the war, he served his country as a naval intelligence officer in various locations, including the South Pacific and Japan. He was part of the advanced intelligence unit sent to Hiroshima in 1945 shortly after the atomic bombing. He continued in the Naval Reserve until 1980, retiring at the rank of captain.

After the war, Priest earned his Ed. D. at the University of California, in higher education administration. He then began his career in academics, a career that would bring him national recognition and earn him a place in higher education history.
This study explored the contributions of Priest to the community college movement with a specific focus on his chancellorship of the Dallas County Community College District. This was an historical study of Priest’s influence on the development of the Dallas County Community College District from its inception and growth to the largest undergraduate institution in the state of Texas, and his impact on the community college movement. Although the study primarily explored the period of Priest’s career from 1965 to 1980, the findings from those years necessitated the research of previous and subsequent years in order to understand fully the powerful effects of Priest’s leadership in shaping the Dallas County Community College District. The District has become a model, extending Priest’s influence across the country.

Priest’s renown in junior and community colleges began to direct the formation of the Dallas County District even before he was hired. It was his own article, "Selecting a College President," published in the Junior College Journal, in April of 1965 that guided the newly formed Dallas County Junior College Board in the process that ironically led to his being offered the job as the first president of the Dallas District.

Under the leadership of Priest, the Dallas County Community College District became one of the best known and most widely respected community colleges in the United
States. His influence on the national community college movement, however, was evident while he was superintendent in the American River Junior College District in Sacramento, California, which was among the first colleges in the country to offer instruction via television, a young and evolving medium. Also, prior to coming to Dallas, Priest was active in the nursing education field and was a pioneer in the creation of the associate degree in nursing, which now produces the majority of bedside registered nurses in the nation.

The philosophy and leadership of Priest have been guides in the direction of two-year higher education institutions for four decades, with his most noteworthy contributions emerging during his years as chancellor of the Dallas County Community College District. Those years, therefore, were the primary focus of this study.

Significance of the Study

The importance and impetus of the community college movement is reflected in such government studies as Workforce 2000, which predicts that the majority of jobs in the near future will require more than a high school education, but less than a bachelor's degree (Johnston, 1987). To understand better the present and prepare for the future, it is necessary to analyze the past (Best & Kahn, 1986). History is more than a chronological recording of
events in the past. "It is the way we think" (Barzun & Graff, 1985, p.50). "People read the newspaper to survey yesterday's history and to ponder its affects on today and tomorrow" (Barzun, et al, 1985, p.50).

The Dallas County Community College District is part of the rich history of junior and community colleges. As H. Eugene Gibbons stated in his 1975 research, "A review of history places the Dallas County Community College District in perspective as part of a national movement to provide low-cost, easy-access, comprehensive, open-entry, post secondary education for the public" (Gibbons, 1975, p.8).

By documenting the influence on community college education of Bill J. Priest, the man who laid the foundation of the Dallas County Community College District, this study provides information to current and future educators as they navigate through trends and fads while trying to discern true strategic directions for higher education. According to Best and Kahn, it is the history of education that assists those in the field to evaluate lasting contributions, and to distinguish them from momentary successes (Best, et al, 1986). The findings of this research are that Bill J. Priest made significant and lasting contributions to the development of community colleges nationally during his tenure as Chancellor of the Dallas County Community College District by implementing the elements that made each of the seven colleges a
comprehensive community college and through educational innovations.

Methodology

This research is an historical study on two levels of the contributions of Bill J. Priest to the community college movement. There are two meanings of history: "the story of what happened [and] ... the notable fact itself; not the story but the substance of what happened" (Barzun, et al, 1985, p.56). This research explored both types of history giving greater emphasis to the latter, "the substance of what happened" (Barzun, et al, 1985, p.56).

There is particular value of historical research in the field of education. It provides increased understanding on how the educational process has evolved to this point, which serves as a basis for further progress (Cohen & Lawrence, 1980). This enlightenment of forthcoming directions can be acquired, as Edson explains, "by qualitatively exploring 'communities of memory' we learn to understand ourselves in relation to the larger world; we learn that we are inexorably entwined with both the past and the present" (Edson, 1988, p.46).

The "communities of memory" (Edson, 1988, p.46) are both recorded in written documents and photographs, as well as the living memories of those who were there. Memory is qualitative because it is human, limited and interpretative;
and therefore, historical research is qualitative by its nature and method of recorded documents and interviews (Edson, 1988). The recorded documents fall into two categories of primary, produced within the historical time frame being studied, and secondary, reports of others usually based on primary sources (Anderson, 1990; Ary & Jacobs, 1985; Best, et al, 1986; Cohen, et al, 1980).

This diversity of sources for investigation is the factor that validates the data (Borg & Gail, 1989). Since validation is reached through diversity of sources, this study drew from all previously cited sources of the "communities of memory" (Edson, 1988, p.46). No scientific instruments were used because in historical research the data are not created through these devices nor through experimentation. The data already exist (Cohen, et al, 1980), and the research instrument is the researcher (Burgess, 1985).

Critics devalue historical research as subjective, anecdotal and non-scientific (Best, et al, 1986; Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). Cohen and Lawrence defend the credibility of historical research "as a scientific endeavor from the standpoint of its subscription to the same principles and the same general scholarship that characterize all scientific research" (Cohen, et al, 1980, p.71).

This study used all of the recommended sources of historical research which validate the data "by
triangulation, the collection of data by more than one method" (Borg, et al, 1989, p.803). Data were collected through secondary sources of dissertations and books on the history of two-year colleges, and the establishment of the Dallas County Community College District and its individual facilities. The preponderance of data was collected from primary sources: the archives and Public Information Office of the Dallas County Community College District, Priest's personal files, his published writings, newspaper archives of the student newspapers of the colleges in the Dallas County Community College District, and personal interviews with those who have first hand knowledge of Priest as a professional, and with Priest himself.

The somewhat biographical aspect of this study adds another dimension to this research. The researcher cannot approach the study of persons or any aspect of their lives as though they were inanimate objects or collections of separate variables. The study of persons and their influences in a profession is comprised of lived experiences discovered through autobiography, self-report, biography, and the knowledge of others (Campbell, 1988).

Through the interview process, these self-reports and knowledge of data (Campbell, 1988) "become oral histories, an incomparably rich source of data" (Anderson, 1990, p.63). Anderson defines the interview "as a specialized form of communication between people for a specific purpose,
associated with some agreed subject matter" (Anderson, 1990, p64).

To establish this specialized communication situation, each interviewee was contacted by letter, telephone or electronic mail well in advance of the interview. Each was apprised of the purpose of the interview and asked to contact the researcher to set a convenient time for the interview. Of the twenty-one people interviewed, sixteen were interviewed in person, four by telephone and one by electronic mail. All of the face-to-face interviews, except two, were recorded on audio cassettes. This ensured the accuracy of the information being collected and freed the researcher from taking copious notes in order to observe non-verbal cues (Anderson, 1990; Best, et al, 1986; Bogdan, et al, 1982).

The interviews were conducted with the assistance of an interview protocol, a pre-written outline formatted to allow for brief notes on answers and non-verbal cues and to write additional questions (Anderson, 1990). The response from one question often led to another question, but the structure of the protocol helped to validate the data and ensured the same question was asked to several interviewees (Best, et al, 1986). Reliability was established by asking the same question in a different format to test consistency of answers (Best, et al, 1986). Data received from the
interviews were corroborated with written primary data whenever possible.

Although the personal biases of the interviewer and the uniquely different variables brought to each interview by the interviewee can skew the data collected through this process (Cohen, et al, 1980), the strength of the interview as a data collection tool overrides all caveats (Best, et al, 1986). Its superiority to other tools lies in that people are often more willing to talk than write responses, and early establishment of rapport can solicit confidential or otherwise sensitive information (Best, et al, 1986). Every indication was that each of the interviewees in this research, spoke with complete candor.

In addition to Priest, who was interviewed on four separate occasions, twenty others were interviewed. Reba Blackshear, charter faculty member of El Centro College, the flagship college of the Dallas County Community College District; Patsy Fulton, former president of Brookhaven College; Terry O’Banion, president of the League for Innovation and Dale Parnell, former president of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges were interviewed by telephone. Don Creamer, first vice president of student services (then called dean) at El Centro College, currently lives in Virginia and was interviewed via Internet, the national electronic mail system. Of the sixteen interviewed in person, Don Rippey, the first
president of El Centro College, and Gwen Rippey, the director of counseling and associate dean of student services at El Centro College, in the seventies, were interviewed in their home in Austin, Texas. Deon Holt, the vice chancellor of planning and development from 1965 to 1978, and the first president of Brookhaven College, the last college to open in the Dallas County Community College District, was interviewed in a hotel lobby in Amarillo, Texas. Margaret McDermott, founding member of the Board of Trustees for the Dallas County Community College District, was interviewed in her home in Dallas. Jan LeCroy, vice chancellor of academic affairs and successor to Priest as chancellor, was interviewed at his office at the Dallas Citizens Council. Claudia Robinson, district director of public information from 1976 to present, was interviewed in a restaurant in Dallas. Steve Mittelstet, who served as assistant to Bill J. Priest and director of instructional television from 1978 to 1979, and is currently the president of Richland College, was interviewed twice in his office at Richland College. Pam Quinn, the current vice president of the LeCroy Center for Telecommunications was interviewed in her office at the LeCroy Center. Ray Campbell, district publication specialist and one of the first campus directors of public information was interviewed in his office at the R. L. Thornton DCCCD office building in downtown Dallas. A total of seven faculty members were interviewed, three of
whom have served as faculty association president. All but Blackshear, previously listed, were interviewed in their offices at their respective campuses. The faculty members interviewed were: Kay Eggleston, district coordinator of the nursing program, El Centro College; Juanita Flint, coordinating instructor in the BHC nursing program, Brookhaven College; Juanita Flint, coordinating instructor in the BHC nursing program, Brookhaven College; Gayle Weaver, professor of biology at Eastfield College, and charter faculty member of El Centro College; Stan Fulton, professor of electronics technology; charter faculty member of Mountain View College; Bettie Meachum, professor of psychology, charter faculty member of Cedar Valley College; and Clarice McCoy, professor of accounting, charter faculty member of Cedar Valley College but currently at Brookhaven College.

Once all of the data were collected through interviews and review of printed documentation, both primary and secondary, the greatest challenge was synthesizing "seemingly disparate pieces of information ... into a meaningful whole" (Best, et al, 1986, p.96). Like quantitative data, qualitative data must be evaluated. The qualitative data of historical research are "somewhere between the pressures of objective social facts and the vacuum of subjective interpretation" (Campbell, 1988, p.61). The triangulation of data from interviews with Priest and data from other interviews and printed primary and secondary sources has resulted in a report that is not "merely a list
of chronological events" (Best, et al, 1986, p.96), as Best warns against, but a documenting of the contributions of Bill J. Priest to the community college movement and their continuing effect on two-year education.
CHAPTER II

CONCEPTUAL BEGINNING OF THE DALLAS COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

There are few things in the United States that can be designated as exclusively the results of American ideology, not the Americanization of another culture's innovation, but purely North American. The community college is just such an institution. "The junior college is an American invention uniquely suited to help fill the needs of a democracy in a constantly changing world" (Ogilvie & Raines, 1971, p.85). The two-year educational institution emerged at the turn of the century under two diverse philosophies. The California Idea, as it was labeled, established the two years as an extension of high school, in essence the thirteenth and fourteenth grades (Ogilvie, et al, 1971; Tyler, 1966). The more prevalent philosophy was that the two years of junior college represented the first two years of a baccalaureate degree, and indeed the two year institution functioned like a junior version of the senior college with athletic programs, drill teams and dormitories (Diener, 1986; Rippey, 1987; Thornton, 1966).

Although the first junior college in the United States opened in Decatur, Texas in 1897 (Ogilvie, et al, 1971),
California progressed as the bellwether state in the two-year college movement with its state system boasting eighteen junior colleges by 1920 (Smith, 1966). Colleges established in Dallas in the late 1800's did not survive. The modest beginnings in other American cities evolved into "distinguished national institutions of higher learning" (Priest, 1976, p.192). Junior colleges were being established throughout the United States during the early part of the 1900's, but the growth and acceptance was slow until World War II (Diener, 1986; Rippey, 1987).

After World War II, colleges were struggling to take virtually all learners regardless of preparation and this "open door philosophy of admission to education attracted a wide range of human talent" (Diener, 1986, p.9). The fast changing junior college was best equipped to respond to this need. In 1947, the United States President's Commission on Higher Education published a report calling for an increase in the number of junior colleges, and for diversification of their offerings (Diener, 1986). This began the evolution of junior college to community college and spurred rapid growth in two-year higher education.

The formation of the American Association of Junior Colleges in 1920 personified the prognostication that the junior college was to play a prominent role in higher education in the United States. The purpose of the American
Association of Junior Colleges was for these educational pioneers to come together to define the junior college by creating standards for curriculum and determining the position of the junior college in relationship to other parts of the American education enterprise (Ogilvie, et al, 1971; Thornton, 1966). The junior college had its roots in rural America, but the rapid growth that occurred after World War II was filling the gap in urban areas and expanding services and course offerings to meet the needs of the surrounding community. In 1963, the State of Florida, while keeping the two-year colleges part of the public school system, began using the term "community junior college" (Ogilvie, et al, 1971, p.82).

The use of the term "community college" began to spread as the mission of the two year colleges expanded. Technological advances called for more technical and vocational courses. There was a demonstrated need for some of these courses to be offered in fast tracked non-credit modes. Undecided and underprepared students created the need for counseling and developmental courses. Being viewed as an integral part of the community brought a responsibility of providing entertainment and cultural events. Thus the junior college, with its single purpose of being a feeder school to four-year colleges and universities, expanded to become a comprehensive institution reflective of and responsive to the community it

The junior college movement did not reach fruition in Dallas until the mid-sixties when two-year colleges were being opened nationally on the average of one per week (Cohen, 1969; Thornton, 1966; Lynes, 1966). Efforts toward the establishment of a junior college for the Dallas area had been under way in one form or another since the mid-fifties (Gibbons, 1975; Randolph, 1974; Williams, 1968). The delays hinged on two main issues: should the college serve just the city or the entire county, and should it be associated with a public school district or be a separate entity.

The first aborted attempt to establish a junior college in Dallas began in 1956 when the Dallas Independent School District appointed a Junior College Committee. A feasibility study was done by C. C. Colvert, indicating an interest on the part of Dallas citizenry, but in July of 1958, Dallas Independent School District Superintendent, W. T. White withdrew plans for an election. There was concern that the establishment of a desegregated city college would have implications for public grades of kindergarten through twelfth (Williams, 1968).

Dallas was not without a college. Southern Methodist University opened in 1915, but it:

was not established to provide education beyond high school for large numbers of residents of the greater
Dallas area. Rather it was a regional sectarian institution, characterized by substantial tuition fees and a selective admissions policy; therefore, there continued to exist in Dallas a sizeable vacuum in education (Priest, 1976, p.195).

Dallas residents, therefore, relied on perimeter schools in Denton, Arlington and Commerce.

In 1960, the Dallas County Board of School Trustees and the County Superintendent, L. A. Roberts, became interested in a junior college to serve all of Dallas County (Williams, 1968). Colvert's earlier study supported a county-wide college district (Gibbons, 1975; Williams, 1968). The Dallas County Board of School Trustees appointed a committee to conduct a study on the need for a Dallas County junior college, and in March of 1962, Roberts wrote to the Educational Chair of the Dallas Chamber of Commerce, "We feel that in the interest necessary to bring into reality this higher educational facility should be generated as promptly as is feasible" (Williams, 1968, p.72). He further stated the Board's readiness "to cooperate with any conservative plan for the youth of junior college age in Dallas County" (Williams, 1968, p.72). This was a monumental statement in that it sparked the chain of events that resulted in the Dallas County Community College District, but quite myopic in his view of the educational needs of Dallas County being limited to recent high school graduates.
During the study that was commissioned by the Dallas County Board of School Trustees, both the Grand Prairie Independent School District and the Richardson Independent School District were planning for junior colleges in each of their cities (Williams, 1968). Richardson actually took legal steps toward establishing a junior college, but the move was defeated at the polls October 27, 1962, because Richardson voters were fearful of footing the bill for a facility that would serve an entire county, and there were already eight four-year colleges within a fifty-mile radius of Richardson (Williams, 1968).

In the spring of 1964, the still segregated Dallas Independent School District surveyed the parents of their students and found overwhelming support for a junior college (Randolph, 1974). Armed with these data, Board chair, Robert Gilmore announced intentions to move forward with the building of an integrated junior college that would offer a variety of educational courses, but again the issue of a city college versus a county college surfaced.

The Dallas Independent School District controversy continued while the Dallas Chamber of Commerce was busy gathering twenty-two of the most successful and influential business people in Dallas into a steering committee to form a plan of action to establish a Dallas County Junior College. The committee was headed by R. L. Thornton, who later became the first Chair of the Board of the Dallas
With the Dallas Chamber of Commerce firmly behind them, the steering committee wasted no time in accomplishing its assigned task. The development of an outstanding junior college system was formulated as goal number five in The Goals for Dallas established under the watch of Mayor Erik Jonsson (Randolph, 1974). In April of 1964, R. L. Thornton, Jr. addressed the State Board of Education requesting ratification of the proposal for establishing a junior college in Dallas County. Just one year and one month later, the voters of Dallas passed a $41.5 million bond issue with a two-to-one margin (Hoover, 1966; Gibbons, 1975; Randolph, 1974; Smith, 1966; Williams, 1968). That vote established the county-wide junior college system, with a mandate from the people of Dallas County. In that same election on May 25, 1965, the voters also approved a property tax base for the junior college system of sixteen cents per $100, and they elected seven unopposed trustees (Williams, 1968).

Although the voters of Dallas County had officially elected the founding Board of Trustees of this proposed junior college system, because they were unopposed on the ballot, they were actually "hand picked from among Dallas' most capable and dedicated civic leaders" (Gibbons, 1975, p.61). The selection came from a subcommittee of the
Steering Committee. The subcommittee was headed by Juvenile Court Judge Lewis Russell, who guided the subcommittee through the selection process from a list of seventy names provided by R. L. Thornton (Randolph, 1974). The original seven were Durwood Sutton, Carie Welch, Loncy Leake, Frank Altick, Margaret McDermott, Franklin Spafford, and R. L. Thornton, Jr. (Gibbons, 1975; McDermott, 1994).

After the successful election on May 25, the new board held its first meeting on May 31. Thornton handed out an outline of duties and they elected officers. Thornton was elected president, McDermott, vice-president, and Spafford, secretary (Gibbons, 1975). They were well aware of the expansive task before them, but were equally aware of the idealistic circumstances underlying that task. McDermott recalled:

"There we were; seven people with the money we needed and none of us truly expert in designing a college. We used consultants, but from the very first, we wanted the very best (McDermott, July 19, 1994)."

Thornton expressed those same ideals in an interview in 1975. He explained that the board decided not to set any policies or write any by-laws until after the hiring of a president, and after consulting with experts in the junior college field because they did not want a new president shackled to prescribed tools of management (Gibbons, 1975). In that first meeting, Thornton admonished the group, "Every act and thought in our capacity as trustees must be: Is it
in the best interest of the junior college?" (Gibbons, 1975, p.53).

Cognizant of their lack of experience in formulating a plan for an institution of higher education, the foremost item on the agenda of that first meeting was selecting a junior college president to guide them through the process of planning and building a junior college system for a metropolitan area (Gibbons, 1975; Randolph, 1974).

Selection of the Founding President

Step one for the newly elected Board of Trustees was enlisting the guidance of the top leaders in two-year education. They sought the advice of C. C. Colvert, of the University of Texas Higher Education Department, and the one who had conducted the original feasibility study for a junior college in Dallas, and Edmund J. Gleazer, the Executive Secretary of the American Association of Junior Colleges (Gibbons, 1975; Randolph, 1974). Gleazer recommended that the Board read a recently published article, Selecting A College President, written by the president of American River Junior College in California, Bill J. Priest (Gibbons, 1975; Randolph, 1974). The Dallas Board, not only read Priest’s article, but also followed the prescription it gave for "making the most important decision the Board will ever make ... for the institution’s future
will reflect the wisdom of the choice" (Priest, 1965, p.5).

The article warned:

With the rapid growth of the junior college movement, the importance of securing the best available talent for the key position of chief administrator cannot be overemphasized (Priest, 1965, p.5).

And it was the intent of this board "to employ the finest college administrator available" (Randolph, 1974, p.91).

Priest’s article called for identifying long-range goals for the institution through the process of developing pertinent questions related to what the board was looking for in a president. He cited the following examples:

1. What are the major objectives of the college?
2. Are there peculiar local factors which will affect the type of person being sought?
3. Is the board seeking a man who will make a career as a chief administrator of the college, or do they want a special job done (i.e. a building program) by a person who has great ability in this particular field, but who may not be a generalist?
4. What role does the board expect the president to play in the administration of the college? Is the objective to obtain a president who will supply strong educational leadership to the college, including recommendations on future plans, or is it to employ a person to implement plans which have already crystallized? (Priest, 1965, p.6).

The questions were insightful and somewhat prophetic in that the profile that emerged was well-fitted to Priest.

The article also recommended developing a formal criteria for the initial screening of candidates. The four general areas given were academic training and credentials, experience, personal characteristics, and educational philosophy (Priest, 1965). Also, the article suggested a good method for coming up with a credible list of potential
candidates would be the "establishment of a screening committee composed of junior college specialists from universities, and or leaders from state and national junior college associations who were well acquainted with top junior college professionals" (Priest, 1965, p.7).

Following the hiring model put forth by Priest, Thornton once again drew on the expertise of Gleazer and asked for a list of about twenty outstanding junior college leaders from whom they could glean criteria information and recommendations on possible candidates for the job (Gibbons, 1975; Randolph, 1974; McDermott, July 19, 1994). They invited this select group to Dallas, with offers to pay their expenses and a small stipend. Nearly all indicated they were happy to serve as a consultant, but they were not interested in the job (Gibbons, 1975; Randolph, 1974). By the third or fourth interview, the value of the process became obvious. The board members began to assess the philosophies and backgrounds of the consultants as well as the men they were recommending, and the list of final candidates, included some of the consultants (Gibbons, 1975; Randolph, 1974).

Priest had recommended that it was sometimes wise to invite top leaders to apply. He had served as one of the consultants in the initial establishment of criteria and selection of viable candidates for the job. During that information gathering process, the board members asked
Priest what he thought would be an appropriate salary for this new position. He indicated it would take $35,000 to bring someone to Dallas to take on this exciting challenge (Gibbons, 1975). This proved to be an example of Priest's unfaltering honesty, because some weeks later when he was offered the job and asked to name the amount it would take to lure him to Texas, according to Thornton, Priest simply replied, "I told you when I was here before that I thought it would take $35,000 and I still think that would be a fair deal" (Gibbons, 1975, p.60).

On August 4, 1965, less than three months after the bond election, Priest was offered a five-year contract at $35,000 a year, the highest salary paid any government official in the State of Texas, including the governor (Gibbons, 1975; Randolph, 1974). Priest came under the best conditions. He had been selected unanimously by the seven board members (Gibbons, 1975; McDermott, July 19, 1994). There was adequate financing, and he could build a college district from scratch, select his own staff, recommend policy to the board, and receive support from a friendly press.

Following the press release that indicated the $35,000 salary made Priest "one of the highest paid junior college executives in the nation" (Van Cronkhite & Maloy, 1965) The Dallas Morning News reported:

Because success breeds success, the newly elected Board of Trustees succeeded in obtaining the services of Dr.
Bill J. Priest, one of the top men in his field, who this year is first Vice President of the National Association of Junior Colleges ("Poised for Greatness," 1965, p.4D).

There was prevailing acceptance that the salary indicated a willingness on the part of the Board "to hire the very best" (McDermott, July 19, 1994) in its quest to build a paramount community college system. R. L. Thornton, Jr. spoke for the board when he said, "The salary and the man are commensurate with the institution of highest excellence being planned for Dallas County" (Minutes of the DCCCD Board, 1965). There was no evidence that the media or the citizens of Dallas ever disagreed with that philosophy.

The media support was evidenced in an article that ran the day after Priest's appointment. The Dallas Morning News, the major daily newspaper with the largest circulation in the Dallas area, quoted Thornton's words justifying the top dollar salary. The article took no issue with the Board's decision and implied support of Priest by introducing him to its readership as "a nationally recognized junior college authority" and "a superior administrator and educator deeply admired by those in the forefront of the community college movement" (Shepicka, 1965, p.3A). The article also stressed that Priest had been the Dallas County Junior College Board's first and only choice for the job.

This united support of the Board and the local news media was contrary to the environment in which Priest had
been working in Sacramento. The Los Rios Junior College District had been formed in 1963 by pulling two community colleges together, one urban and one rural. This created a four to three split vote on virtually everything, even, on occasion, approving the minutes from the last board meeting (Gibbons, 1975; Priest, July 5, 1994). Priest recalls:

It seemed like the only unanimous vote I ever got was when I asked to be released from my contract so I could accept the Dallas job. My friends were happy for me and my enemies were glad to see me go (Priest, July 5, 1994).

Priest was equally surprised and pleased to find the positive reporting of the local news media. In California, the norm seemed to be for the press to take an adversarial role with the administration of institutions of higher education. Even modest raises could create accusatory headlines. Priest told about a friend of his at Yuba College in California who was given a raise from $8,500 to $10,000, and was greeted the following day with a front page photo and headline asking, "Is this man worth $10,000?" (Priest, July 5, 1994). The article called for the ouster of the irresponsible board that made this decision. In sharp contrast, an editorial appeared in one of the major dailies in Dallas shortly after the announcement of Priest’s being hired at an annual salary of $14,000 above the President of the University of Texas, extolling the integrity of the Dallas County Junior College Board for being willing to spend the money to bring in the very best
leadership for the new junior college system (Priest, July 5, 1994). Priest recounted:

I sent a copy of the Dallas editorial to my friends in California and said 'You're working in the wrong place. There seems to be a little difference in outlook'. I kept those two articles beside each other for years (Priest, July 5, 1994).

Priest did not see the solidarity of the Board, the lucrative salary package, which also included a $3,600 annuity (Priest, July 5, 1994), and the overwhelming support of the press and the community as a comfortable situation where one could feel secure, but rather as a seemingly insurmountable challenge of expectations of greatness. He explained how he felt when he realized the total support generated by the anticipation of the wonders to come, and that he was the person for the job:

The thing that does to you, and I think this is obvious, is put you under incredible pressure! You want to perform miracles every hour on the hour if they put that kind of confidence in you. Your feeling is they deserve the best. We have got to deliver it some damn way. Whatever it is we have to figure it out because with this kind of support you ought to be able to be a paragon of virtue every minute. You can fight off critics by saying, 'oh, to hell with them,' and you get righteously indignant. But the only room in a deal like this is you feel terribly inadequate. You think I can't possibly do what is expected of me, but you can try like hell (Priest, July 5, 1994).
CHAPTER III

BILL JASON PRIEST

Professional Profile

Born in French Camp, California on September 23, 1917, by the age of seven, Priest knew he wanted a career in education, more specifically as a high school history teacher (Priest, July 5, 1994). His love of history was spawned by his love of reading and having available to him in his home the personal library of a former governor of California.

Immediately upon graduation from Stockton High School in 1934, Priest began the preparation for his teaching career by enrolling in Modesto Junior College. He completed his history major at the University of California at Berkeley, where he earned a bachelor's degree and star status as a varsity baseball player. His athletic talent had first revealed itself when he was a teenager and pitched the Karl Ross American Legion team to state and regional championships in the early thirties ("Priest Selected," 1976, p.12). His college baseball performance won him additional honors and awards including the Golden Bear Blanket Award for lettering in baseball three years, and being voted number one all-conference pitcher two seasons ("Priest Selected," 1976, p.12). His baseball ability
earned him positions as president of California’s Big C (Letterman) Society and an appointment to the University’s Athletic Council. His won-loss record, as a pitcher, drew the attention of the scouts for Connie Mack, manager of the Philadelphia Athletics of the American League ("Priest Selected," 1976, p.12). The glory days of high school and college were not duplicated on the professional fields of America’s game. Priest described his stint in baseball as:

starting at the top and working my way down. From college I went to the major leagues and couldn’t cut it. Then I went to the Pacific Coast League, which is Triple A, and I couldn’t cut it, which tells you something. I always laugh with a sting in it; a guy told me one time, Bill, you were a great college pitcher, but you forgot to bring your college hitters to hit against you (Priest, July 5, 1994).

Although his professional baseball career was short-lived and the one thing at which he "was so imminently unsuccessful" (Priest, July 5, 1994), it gave him leverage and brought him recognition throughout his higher education career. In October of 1976, he was honored for both careers with his induction into the Stockton (California) Athletic Hall of Fame, and he was selected as a recipient of the American College Coaches Award. The American College Coaches Award is for accomplished athletes who rise to national prominence in their chosen non-athletic professions ("Priest Selected," 1976; "Large Ovation," 1976; Priest, July 5, 1994).

His professional baseball career behind him, Priest was teaching history and coaching at the beginning of World War
II. He had been commissioned in Naval Intelligence and called to training duty for two weeks and already had his mobilization papers when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. As an ensign in the Naval Reserve, he reported to full-time duty the night of December 7, 1941 (Priest, July 5, 1994). During that tour of duty, Priest served with the advanced intelligence party that entered Hiroshima in 1945 shortly after the atomic bombing. After the war, Priest remained in the reserve retiring with the rank of captain ("Retiring Chancellor," 1980; Priest, July 5, 1994). His experience in World War II honed skills for decision making under pressure and doing difficult tasks without hesitation. The gravity and far-reaching effects of his wartime experience and the actions that followed changed his perspective on what was really important in life (Priest, October 24, 1994).

In addition to a profound impact on professional and personal development, military experience gave Priest added prestige on his resume and material for speeches. Down-playing his own role, Priest acknowledged the significant place Hiroshima holds in history, and the heroic aura it gave his persona as an educational professional:

When I am being introduced for a speech, that darn thing will get in there everytime. Hiroshima ... see, that’s a big deal in world history, that and the baseball, and they may get around to saying something about education. I long ago found that when you are talking to lay groups about education, be sure you digress frequently into other topics because they are a hell of a lot more interested in those than they are in education. But you can sell a little education by
currying their goodwill by talking about other things (Priest, July 5, 1994).

That philosophy is illustrative of the pragmatism which is pervasive throughout his career. It is public relations and politics in the best sense of the words, but this approach has sometimes been viewed as self-promotion. A reporter from the Sacramento Record found people in American River Junior College, during Priest’s tenure as Superintendent/President, who believed, "Priest wants what is best for Priest, and woe to anyone who gets in his way" ("Bill Priest of River," 1960, p.2C). Twenty years later a reporter for D Magazine found faculty in the Dallas County Community College District who concurred with that estimation of Priest’s ego. One observer described Priest as having an oppressive leadership style:

the faculty are kind of intimidated, they know their place ... if you’re good you get to go work in the big house. If not, you got to go to work in the field, and it’s hot out there (Bancroft, 1980, p.159).

Both reports are evidence that Priest did not enjoy ubiquitous admiration. Even those closest to him were aware of the sometimes negative inferences by others of Priest’s mix of his political adroitness and forthright bluntness as explained by Jerry Gilmore, Dallas County Community College Board Chairman, in 1980:

He is the kind of person that slips up on you. Sometimes he looks like he ought to be selling used cars. But if you listen to him, the man is incredibly intelligent, and he has a real grasp on the direction he feels he ought to go ("High Paid," 1980, p.160).
Priest's staunchest supporters never denied the prickly edge to his leadership style. A source from the Dallas area, who asked not to be identified, expressed contempt for Priest on a personal level and described him as controlling and brutally honest in expressing his opinions about people. Betie Meachum, two-time faculty association president, recalled an incident where a biased critical remark from Priest probably cost an instructor his sabbatical. She detailed the incident:

The faculty association presidents from each campus were gathered in Priest's office to review applications for sabbaticals. We were to recommend five with two alternates to the Board. Priest stayed out of the process, but because we were in his office he came in a couple of times to get something. The second time, he asked how it was falling out. We ran down the list of the final eight or ten still being discussed and at one instructor's name he said, 'You mean you'd give a sabbatical to that long haired hippy?' I thought the remark was unprofessional and although none of us discussed, I always felt it swayed the final decision. That instructor did not get a sabbatical (Meachum, March 21, 1995).

His severest critics, however, acquiesced to the evidence of his accomplishments. Meachum followed that description with the analysis that it was not fear of retribution from Priest that would have influenced the outcome of the vote, but the power of Priest's opinion because he was so deeply respected (Meachum, March 21, 1995). Even the undisclosed source respected Priest professionally and admired the things he had accomplished in and for higher education.

One newspaper account in California reported the range of feelings among his employees as from real dislike to near
hero worship ("Bill Priest of River College," 1960). By all accounts, that range persisted in Dallas as well. Like the instructor quoted in the 1980 D Magazine article and the interviewee for this study who requested anonymity, the people who expressed extremely negative opinions of Priest generally focused on his wielding power in order to control and his opinions bluntly presented as facts. Of those who could be categorized as "hero worshipers," Priest’s shortcomings seem to be dismissed or even viewed as positives. The first president of the first Faculty Association in the Dallas County Community College District, Gayle Weaver, said:

There was no question of who was captain of the ship, but he acknowledged the value of the faculty and always took suggestions. He was the best man for the job. I never saw any weaknesses. I never saw anything negative (Weaver, March 9, 1995).

Don Rippey, founding president of El Centro College, said unequivocally that Priest was an autocratic leader, but he qualified that label by adding:

That was reflective of the times. Virtually all chief administrators of any institution were autocratic, prescriptive, and directive. That's how one got to be a chief administrator, and as long as it was tempered somewhat with compassion of feelings, a chief administrator was expected to be those things. And what I found about Bill was, yes he was those things. He did temper it. He did care about people, although I'm sure some of the people in the organization didn't believe that. I found it to be true and can cite specific situations where it was true. And so my feeling was that he was, for the time in which he administered, not unusual, and simply very, very good at using those characteristics (D. Rippey, July 21, 1994).
Compliments contradicted by criticism led to differences of opinion about Priest’s approach to leading and managing. Some viewed his style as paternalistic. An example given, was Priest’s policy that a faculty member be allowed to teach only one semester in the summer. The reason he gave, remembered accounting instructor Clarice McCoy, was that every faculty member needed at least one summer semester off to rest because teaching was such a demanding job. Demonstrative of the duality of perceptions, she added:

It was such a condescending policy. He was so paternal, but he was the best [chancellor] we’ve ever had. Those were the glory days (McCoy, March 27, 1995).

Claudia Robinson, District Director of Public Information, equated his style with that of another and more famous controversial leader, President Harry Truman. She attributes to him the courage of his convictions, as well as confirming his confrontive nature:

He was a Truman type, realizing that the buck stops here because if it doesn’t stop somewhere there is resulting chaos of no accountability and no direction. You always knew where you stood with Dr. Priest, you might not like it but you were always sure (Robinson, August 26, 1994).

Like Robinson, Deon Holt who worked with Priest as a faculty member in California and as administrator in Dallas, also recognized the disdain with which some perceived him. Holt referred to a book on leadership, The Gamesman by Michael Maccoby, (1976), that he had read in the mid-seventies. He felt Priest fit the profile presented in the
book as "The Jungle Fighter". Maccoby described this leader as an entrepreneur, empire builder, pragmatically progressive with leanings toward being a social Darwinist (Maccoby, 1976). Maccoby further characterizes "The Jungle Fighter" as one who promotes new technology and keeps the tribe (organization) moving forward, but sometimes at the expense of people's feelings. "The Jungle Fighter" has the ability to sway people's opinions and dominates through superior ideas, courage, and strength. "The Jungle Fighter" rewards loyalty, and his followers both fear and revere him (Maccoby, 1976). The description of "The Jungle Fighter" depicts a leader who succeeds with forward moving accomplishments and engenders emotional extremes in those he leads, a description which closely parallels perceptions of Priest.

Priest was keenly aware of the perceptions that he was an autocratic leader. When asked about that perception by many of the employees of the Dallas County Community College District, without hesitation, he answered, "I cultivated that perception" (Priest, July 5, 1994). He further explained that by the nature of his job he was ultimately responsible for what transpired in the District and ethical controls were essential. Whatever prescriptive action was deemed necessary by the situation was easier to affect if everyone already had the impression of the chancellor as an authoritarian figure. Priest said, "No one is surprised if
I issue a directive if they believe me to be autocratic. They just say, 'What'd you expect,' and they do it" (Priest, July 5, 1994). Priest even added to the list of less than flattering adjectives about himself, calling himself blunt and vindictive, but adding he was always honest and fair and never capricious (Priest, July 5, 1994).

Even though they garnered critics and those who just plain disliked him, Priest's communication and leadership styles worked for him more than against him. After he left the military in 1946, he resumed his education, returning to the University of California where he earned a master's degree and an Ed. D. in educational administration. Commensurate with his educational preparation, his work experience was in line with the job that lay in his future. In two of the three top positions he had held in California, prior to coming to Dallas, Priest built the institutions, one from scratch and the other from merger (Van Cronkhite & Maloy, 1965; "High Paid", 1980; "Priest: Education", 1980). In 1956 he was selected to be the President of the American River Junior College District. He had the arduous task of not only beginning a new college, but also absorbing an old college, Grant Technical College ("Bill Priest of River College," 1960). In 1963, Priest was named as the superintendent of Los Rios Junior College District, a newly formed district from the merger of two colleges (Gibbons, 1974; "High Paid," 1980).
While superintendent at Los Rios in 1964, Priest was elected vice-president of the American Association of Junior Colleges. The indication of historical protocol was that the following year he would be elected president of that association. This is where he was in his career when he interviewed with the newly elected Dallas County Junior College Board of Directors. By this time, he had an earned doctorate in educational administration, had been a professional baseball player, a war hero, was married with one son, had been 1959 Man of the Year in San Juan, California, was about to become president-elect of the country’s top association for junior colleges, and had been author of the blueprint that led the DCJC Board through the selection process. Also he had successfully started two other junior colleges in the then bellwether state of California. Bob Thornton remembered:

Priest stood out head and shoulders above anyone we interviewed and when the decision was made, the trustees were convinced they had the best junior college administrator in the country (Barta, 1971, p.7).

In a response to his appointment delivered at a press conference following the board meeting where the Dallas County Junior College District Board formally approved the recommendation of the Committee of the Whole, Priest delivered all the appropriate amenities, extolled the junior college as a concept, made a promise of educational service to the people of Dallas County and proffered a prediction of
national prominence for the Dallas County Junior College District with these words:

I wish to express to the people of Dallas County and to the Board of Trustees of its Junior College District my appreciation for the very great honor of being invited to serve as first chief administrator of your junior college district.

Texas will be a new experience for me, and I anticipate that it will be a challenging and satisfying one. Your state is known for the high quality of performance that is demanded of its leaders and public servants. Your trustees have communicated to me this expectation of excellence. I concur completely with this quest for quality and shall concentrate on obtaining it.

Nowhere in the field of education is there more dynamism than in the junior college field. The relatively recent ascendancy of the junior college in American higher education may be attributed to its demonstrated capacity to solve or alleviate some of our most complex contemporary problems - political, social, and economic. Residents of the Dallas area may anticipate that a strong junior college program will provide a comprehensive array of vocational and professional opportunities for them and their successor generation.

With the public support for junior college education which is very evident in Dallas, I have every confidence that we will be able to build the Dallas County Junior College District into one of the finest in the nation (Priest, August 1965).

During the next fifteen years, the promise and the prediction reached fruition. By 1980, the Dallas County Community College District had grown "from a mere idea to the fourth largest district in the country" (Stutz, 1981, p.35A). Seven college campuses had been built placing every citizen in Dallas County within fifteen minutes driving time from a campus. Twenty minutes distance had been promised to the North Dallas Chamber of Commerce in 1965 and even that
was ten minutes shorter than the considered optimum of thirty minutes on the national scale ("Poised for Greatness," 1965). El Centro College initially offered thirteen technical/vocational programs and by the end of Priest's chancellorship there were over 121 technical/vocational certificate and degree programs offered among the seven colleges. Since well over half of the students in the district transferred to four-year colleges and universities, the roster of academic transfer courses had strengthened. The district also had grown in its support of workforce education through the less traditional non-credit mode of continuing education courses. Collectively they served almost 80,000 students, 42,398 of whom were in the credit programs. Priest had kept his promise, realized his prediction and proved his point "that community colleges are the most vital and valuable institution in a large city" (Stutz, 1981, p.35A).

During his tenure as Chancellor of the Dallas County Community College District, Priest accumulated many awards and honors of national scope, including his election in 1978 to the top educational post in the country as Chairman of the Board of the American Council of Education. ACE is the national coordinating body for all post secondary education, and the position of board chair is typically held by a university president or chancellor ("Chancellor of DCCCD," 1978). He published fourteen articles (appendix B), and
served in more than twenty-eight civic and professional organizations and boards (appendix A).

After he announced his retirement in 1980, there was a surge of awards and recognitions to honor and celebrate a lifetime of contributions and service to education. He was profiled repeatedly as a national leader in the community college movement. In a letter to the Association of Community College Trustees, Dallas County Community College District Board member, Pattie Powell said:

To his board, his colleagues, and his community, he epitomizes the best that a professional educator can be. Bill Priest is a straight-talking, clear thinking, forward looking man of action. His career in education spans forty years, with more than thirty years devoted to the advancement of the community college (Powell, 1980).

These words placed Bill Priest in nomination for the prestigious Marie Y. Martin Award for national impact on community college education. He won that award and was subsequently nominated by R. Jan LeCroy, Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs and Priest’s successor, for the Mirabeau B. Lamar Medal for having "played a major role in the healthy growth and development of the community college concept in Texas" (LeCroy, 1980). Again, Priest was the recipient of the honor.

In the civic arena, Jerry Gilmore, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Dallas County Community College District, nominated Priest for the Linz Award. This annual award is presented to the resident of Dallas County judged
to have conferred the greatest benefit on Dallas through volunteer work. Gilmore acknowledged that Priest's "good deeds" (Gilmore, 1981) were not limited to a year but explained that the "county has benefitted immeasurably from his vision, his leadership and his boundless energy" (Gilmore, 1981). Priest did not win the Linz Award, but continued to add to his roster of recognitions with "Headliner of the Year" from the Dallas Press Club.

All of these honors added to his already impressive professional vita, but none were as meaningful to Priest as being selected as Chancellor of the Dallas County Community College District. In his remarks at the district-wide lunch and program held in honor of his retirement, Priest posted at the top of the list of the things he was grateful for as the "opportunity to have been in the right place at the right time to have a piece of the action in putting together the greatest community/junior college project ever attempted" (Priest, January 16, 1981). Underlining the sincerity of that remark, when asked some thirteen years later what was his greatest contribution to education, his answer indicated the same honor of choice with credit being given to good timing. He described his greatest contribution as:

Being privileged to play a lead role in the development of the Dallas County Community College District at a crucial time in community college history and education in this area. And nationally, I was fortunate to be in the right place at the right time doing something I knew a good bit about, in a place where I had
tremendous positives going for me to do what needed to be done. This unquestionably was my Mona Lisa. This is the thing which I think is head and shoulders above other things I did. Of course, this broke down into many, many pieces, but to generalize, being permitted to lead the charge of the development of community colleges in this megalopolis was it and I got a lot of credit for things anyone could have done, but I did them and I did them well and so I got credit for them (Priest, July 5, 1994).

In discussions about past accomplishments or the successful growth of the Dallas County Community College District, Priest gave as much credit to circumstances as he did his own ability:

I worked my tail off. I did everything I could to make it happen, but the beauty is sometimes you do that and nothing happens. This time I did it and a lot of good things happened (Priest, July 5, 1994).

Indeed, "a lot of good things" did happen which was the reason why his pay never received public criticism. He was hired as the highest paid educator in Texas, and he retired with that same distinction having a salary of $90,000 his last year as chancellor, to which the press reported, "But few would dispute his unparalleled success in creating almost singlehandedly, in Dallas, one of the top community college systems in the country" (Stutz, 1981, p.37A).

The reasons for Priest choosing to retire when seemingly all was well with the city, the District, the Board and their constituents, were explained publically and privately. In his formal request for retirement which was submitted to the Board of Trustees, Priest listed three reasons: time for some personal goals, less energy than the
demand of the job warranted and the need for a change in leadership to meet the changing dynamics of the job (Priest, 1980).

In a public interview just days before his official retirement, Priest again talked about the demands of the job requiring the energy of a forty- or fifty-year-old (Newport, 1981). Priest was specific on this point in his request to the Board, saying, "I've watched 'old goats' in the field of education stay on way beyond their period of usefulness, and I have vowed never to join their ranks" (Priest, July 8, 1980). The remark showed a certain amount of ego, wanting to leave on top, but it also exemplifies a man with a realistic view of himself, his physical stamina, and the increasing stresses of the tasks ahead.

As for his third reason, Priest expounded in his request, "I am convinced the time for change is here for me and much more importantly, for the job" (Priest, July 8, 1980). In private, he had shared with colleagues, that he realized that new styles of leadership were moving into the mainstream of administration and at sixty-three he was not likely to change (Blackshear, June 25, 1994). It was time for a revitalization of the position from fresh perspectives (Priest, July 5, 1994).

Priest retired on January 15, 1981, with the title Chancellor Emeritus and remained as a consultant to the board ("Retiring Chancellor," 1980).
Personal Profile

Priest’s personal values and personality traits are as well defined as his professional values and leadership characteristics. They also sometimes elicited the same mixed responses. First on the list of adjectives used to describe him is honest or truthful (McDermott, July 19, 1994; Blackshear, June 28, 1994; Holt, July 28, 1994; Robinson, August 26, 1994), followed by such phrases as "You always knew where you stood" (Holt, July 28, 1994; D. Rippey, July 21, 1994; LeCroy, July 19, 1994: Mittelstet, September 29, 1994; Robinson, August 26, 1994; Meachum, March 21, 1995), "He rarely sends out false signals about where he stands" ("High Paid", 1980, p.160), or "He’s a straight shooter" (D. Rippey, July 21, 1994; Robinson, August 26, 1994).

The negative aspect of honesty is that it entails forthright presentation of criticisms, and direct enumeration of mistakes, which Priest did not always handle with tact or finesse ("Bill Priest of River College, 1960; "High Paid," 1980; D. Rippey, July 21, 1994). This bluntness was not well received by some people. In her first encounter with Priest, as the newly elected faculty association president of Cedar Valley College, Meachum recalled being humiliated in front of her peers:

The meeting included seven outgoing presidents, seven incoming presidents, the vice chancellor and Priest. We were having a discussion about the late notification of faculty members who had been selected to be awarded
a sabbatical. Often they would be congratulated by others before they had been officially notified. The discussion concluded with Priest telling his secretary to note that the first thing in the notification process, would be a 'rah rah letter' to each faculty member. I sort of laughed and said, 'I can see you really mean that.' The room fell deathly silent. He looked at me and said, 'I do mean it, and if you knew me better, you'd know that I mean it. I hope you get to know me well enough to know that I mean it.' I think he was insensitive about how his direct manner could hurt people (Meachum, March 21, 1995).

After a split vote of the Board won him an appointment as the first Superintendent of Los Rios Junior College District, a reporter with the Sacramento Union described personal integrity applied to leadership:

Any man offering positive leadership must necessarily take a firm stand, which might not elicit universal approval from all, but this frequently is the price of such leadership. Priest is highly regarded as an able administrator among other junior college executives in the state ("Bill Priest - man." 1964, p.2C).

Although his attitude was sometimes difficult to take, almost everyone indicated it was easier to do what was expected when one was clear on those expectations and did not have to be fearful of hidden agendas or attempts at manipulation. Reba Blackshear, President of the Faculty Association in 1980, expressed respect for Priest’s honesty and indicated that translated into fairness in negotiations with faculty, "I tell him exactly what I think ... I respect a person I disagree with, and he is fair every time" ("High Paid," 1980, p.160).

Priest described himself as blunt (Henderson, 1974; Priest, 1994). He said he decided long ago that
truthfulness was easier because it was all too complicated
to mislead and his memory was not that good (McDermott, July
19, 1994; Priest, August 2, 1994). This philosophy of
keeping information factually true was in line with his
belief that it was the job of the chief administrator to
protect the institution by remaining in "the line of fire,
if and when your college gets 'shot at'" (Priest, 1962,
p.270). To thinking it was the duty of the president or
chancellor to "step up front and meet the challenge"
(Priest, 1962, p.270). The lead role meant that "you are
obliged and privileged to be the prime target" (Priest,
1962, p.270). "Being armed with accurate information only
makes facing the challenge easier" (Priest, July 5, 1994).

Priest's personal values of honesty, monogamous
relationships, traditional lifestyles, and obedience to the
laws of the land influenced his professional decisions.
Although the values of others at times created disagreement
with Priest's decisions, the integrity of the district was
never brought into question. On three different occasions,
D Magazine sent reporters to scour the files and interview
employees "looking for dirt" (Robinson, August 26, 1994).
Only one such investigation resulted in an article, and it
quoted Board member Robert Powell describing his own in vain
search in light of years of unanimous passage of policies
and budgets. Powell said:

I was aware of the board's voting record when I was
elected. I spent many, many hours poring over past
budgets and past studies and past everything. I finally became convinced we had a very good college district (Bancroft, 1980, p.153).

Board Chair Jerry Gilmore said of Priest the year he retired, "He has undergone the most exacting scrutiny of media and assorted critics, and he has never been found wanting" (Gilmore, 1981).

Priest was confident and self assured but did not approach management with an unbending attitude (LeCroy, July 19, 1994; Weaver, March 9, 1995; Fulton, March 20, 1995), nor did he take himself too seriously (Robinson, August 26, 1994; Meachum, March 21, 1995). In an article written for newly appointed college presidents, Priest warned, "Don't pretend you know all the answers. Nobody does.... Don't let it be said of you, 'He may be wrong but he is never in doubt" (Priest, 1962, p.169). Priest further warned his new colleagues not to be a "stuffed shirt" (Priest, 1962, p.169). He indicated that the "presidency is a big job that carries with it a position of great dignity," but added the caveat that most attain that position "by the usual combination of luck, perseverance, and ability" (Priest, 1962, p.170). In a personal telephone conversation with this researcher, Priest said the worst thing anyone could call him would be a stuffed shirt. He said he considered it a compliment that employees in the district felt comfortable enough to "honor" him at his retirement luncheon with a t-shirt imprinted with "Bill Priest: A Legend in His Own Mind"
His response at the event to that and other presentations with varying degrees of levity was:

I know we've placed creativity high on the list of factors influencing our employment decision - but until today, I had no idea how successful we have been. ... I loathe stuffiness, so this effort has to be rated 4.0 (Priest, January 16, 1981).

Another token of honor with a touch of humor came from the staff at North Lake College on one of Priest's last visits to the campus in his capacity as chancellor. It was a "tongue-in-cheek, customized plaque" ("Bowing Out," 1981, p.10). Prominently placed at the top of the plaque was a butterfly bow tie, Priest's trademark. When asked why he always wore a bow tie, his answer again revealed a healthy ego tempered with his ever present sense of "just being another homo sapien" (Priest, 1962, p.170). He said he chose a bow tie because it was different from what other men were wearing, and it was a symbol of being set apart. He also used it as a marketing tool "to draw attention to myself. They may not remember my name, but they could always say, 'You know, that guy with the bow tie" (Priest, October 26, 1994). With a bit of a chuckle he confessed, "I never knew how to tie the thing" (Priest, October 26, 1994). Again, showing how he never took himself too seriously he explained, "My wife or my secretary always had to tie it. My staff used to say, although it would be politically incorrect now, that in my secretary's job description it
should say, "ability to tie a bow tie" (Priest, October 26, 1994). He said he learned to tie a bow tie after the untimely death of his wife, Marietta, in 1989.

Marietta had been "one his great strengths" (McDermott, July 19, 1994). Like Priest, she also was described as "absolutely honest" (McDermott, July 19, 1994). They did not use their honesty to berate each other on points of imperfection, but rather to settle differences, and to encourage and embolden each other. Priest explained the evolution of communication that transpired over years of marriage as a process in which, "You develop phrases, little expressions that mean 'we've been at this long enough. Let's end the debate and move on" (Priest, July 5, 1994).

In an interview with a Dallas Morning News reporter, he stressed the importance of a good marital relationship for a successful executive:

I don't see how a person can carry on effectively in a high pressure executive role if he has to go home and listen to a shrew everyday. My home situation has been as tranquil as any I know ... we communicate. We have mutual respect (Henderson, 1974, p.6).

Priest publicly gave credit to Marietta at his retirement luncheon hosted by Richland College. He praised her as "always a tower of strength when I needed support, which was often" (Priest, January 16, 1981).

While Marietta was a constant in his life for more than forty years, Priest did not unduly burden her as the sole source of his emotional support, nor did he use his home as
the dumping ground for frustrations from his professional life. He understood, appreciated and used many outlets for renewal and stress reduction. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, tennis and a rousing hand of poker. The easiest to access in a workweek full of problems was tennis. Tennis served as both a mental and physical catharsis for him. Priest explained:

*If something’s eating at me and I can’t find an answer, I find if I play an hour and a half of tennis and knock the hell out of that ball, I can come back and find a solution. I become more competent analytically if I just sweep everything away (Henderson, 1974, p.6).*

While Priest managed well at keeping balance between his personal life and his professional life, that one influenced the other cannot be denied. Even in selecting a home when the Priests moved to Texas, consideration was given to the entertaining and social demands of Priest’s new job. The Priests were given immediate social prominence by the caliber of the Board who had selected him. Sought by the social editors of both major daily newspapers, Marietta had the responsibility of explaining their lifestyle as it was to be reflected in the house that they would choose:

*We like a house which is not formal, as we live casually. I look for an open living area, like a living room-den combination, perhaps with a wood burning fireplace: sort of an indoor-outdoor feeling (Wilson, 1986, p.1B).*

The house they bought near White Rock Lake personified those words, and those sentiments of choice were repeated in Priest’s recounting some twenty-nine years later of their
house-hunting goals with the addition of practicality when it came to business related functions:

One of the nice things about the design is it keeps the group flowing as one comes in the door, the rest move right on into the next room. There's always an escape route so some guy can't get you cornered who is looking for a job for his nephew or somebody (Priest, August 2, 1994).

Indeed, the house meanders from space to space with partial walls and large walkthroughs rather than well defined doors. The den portion of the living space has an expanse of windows visually bringing inside the densely treed backyard. The decor is an eclectic collection of treasures from a lifetime of varied experiences and travels. Marietta had furnished the house with the philosophy that "Anything is compatible if you like it" (Wilson, 1965, p.1B).

Priest remarried several years ago and complimented his new wife, Ann, for gently placing her personal touch in the decor of the house without eradicating the life that had been shared before (Priest, August 2, 1994). This is another example of Priest's insight into the intricacies of relationships, both personal and professional.

His preference for a casual lifestyle never hindered his public associations, just as the loftiness of some of those associations and the high level demands of his position never inhibited his comfortable approach to living. Even his use of language intertwines the evidence of his level of education and years of voracious reading, with the
naturalness of slang and colloquialisms punctuated with the occasional expletive. His word choices were not just representative of a well developed vocabulary, although having a wealth of words to draw upon was helpful, these words and the way in which he strung them together gave freshness to restated thoughts, and clearly explained those ideas. He could take a complex concept and reduce it to a direct, concise statement. For example, in an interview with a newspaper reporter on dealing with stress, in two sentences Priest outlined what he labeled the "major dilemma of an executive career ladder":

At what point are you as high as you should go -- one step too high is tragic and yet you never know if you'll be good at the next level until you get there. But then it's almost impossible to turn back (Henderson, 1994, p.6).

Priest clearly stated in this succinct statement what it took Peter Hall, author of the Peter Principle, an entire book to explain.

Priest was acutely aware of the value of communication and used each medium effectively (Priest, 1962; Robinson, August 26, 1994). The cogency of his speech and writings lent respectability to his use of slang. In an interview with a reporter from The Dallas Morning News in 1955, while giving a salient description of Dallas, Priest used a word classified at that time as beatnik or hippy. The article quoted him as saying:

Another thing I find quite significant is the reputation of Dallas as an energetic, ambitious city
with a feeling of destiny. This is real salable. People don’t want to go to Dullsville, but to a place that aspires to be topnotch, that will be professionally stimulating and rewarding ("A Flying Start," 1955, p.8A).

Some executives, just hired into one of the top positions in their field in a metropolitan area, might have viewed such casual use of language in the mass media as risk taking, but it was characteristic of Priest to be direct, concise and casual.

Seemingly, just as natural to him was his comfortable use of humor, even at the most serious of moments. With that humor he was never slow to make himself the target. On one of the most austere of occasions, the formal request to the Board of Trustees for his retirement, Priest not only referred to administrators who remained at the helm longer than was appropriate as "old goats," he also said he was sure there were those who thought he had long since "joined their ranks" (Priest, July 8, 1980). In another public arena, a video taped interview, Priest explained the shortness of his pitching career for the major leagues because "the batters were very uncooperative and ruined my career" (Newport, 1981).

A sense of humor, laconic speech with a proclivity for analysis and his leadership positions in education brought Priest numerous speaking and writing requests (Robinson, August 26, 1994). His lack of formal training in public
address, something he felt was a negative (Priest, September 7, 1994), freed him to rely on his natural ability.

Like his speech, Priest's demeanor was a blend of appropriateness of etiquette and one fully comfortable with informality, unpropelled by some inner need to impress (Robinson, August 26, 1994). He has been depicted as "a big happy bear of a man" ("High Paid", 1980, p.160) on one extreme and "pugnacious... with a superficial resemblance to Heavyweight Champion Ingemar Johansson," ("Bill Priest of River College," 1960, p.34), on the other. Reality lies somewhere in between.
CHAPTER IV

CONTRIBUTIONS OF BILL J. PRIEST: DEVELOPMENT OF

A NATIONAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE MODEL

In a career that spanned six decades, the expectation might be for at least a mild impact on the professional field to have been made simply by longevity. Bill Priest, however, made a notable impact on the evolution of two-year higher education. His career in higher education began in 1939 at Modesto Junior College in California and concluded in 1981 at the Dallas County Community College District in Texas. He was influential in formulating new concepts and bolstering curriculums wherever he worked. In his jobs, through committees, and memberships on boards and associations his influence in higher education had national significance because he added the elements to the junior college that expanded its mission into a community college. Patty Powell, Dallas County Community College Board member, summed up Priest's forty-two-year career by saying, "The innovations in which Bill Priest has been a prime mover read today like a text of community college fundamentals" (Powell, 1981).

While career-long contributions are noted in primary source historical documentation and in interviews with those
who worked closely with Priest, most specify his time in the Dallas County Community College District as the pinnacle of his career during which he produced his most significant contributions. Powell qualified further, "The innovations of this era have rapidly passed into standard practice in community colleges across the country" (Powell, 1981).

Designating the years of 1964 to 1981 as the most prolific time in Priest's career carries more importance than just defining an era in his life. While there is variance in the minds of people as to the single innovation that could be called Priest's greatest accomplishment, there is concurrence among the people interviewed for this study that establishing the Dallas County Community College District and developing it into a national model had a profound effect on the community college movement. Dale Parnell, former president of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, evaluated the Dallas County Community College District from two perspectives: that as president of the national organization for all two-year institutions of higher learning and that as chancellor of a multi-college district. In the mid-seventies, as chancellor of San Diego Community College District, Parnell and the SDCCD Board of Trustees visited the Dallas County district to study the innovations in instruction and the creative approaches to effectively running a multi-college district (Parnell, March 28, 1995). From a national viewpoint,
Parnell said the Dallas County Community College District was a model and helped to set the direction for the growth and development of junior colleges to comprehensive community colleges. For the establishment of this model, Parnell gave credit to Priest:

Bill went to Texas with several years experience, some great ideas and built that [Dallas County] district from nothing. It quickly took the lead in innovations over older institutions and became a national model (Parnell, March 28, 1995).

Parnell specified Santa Fe Community College and San Juan College in Farmington, New Mexico as two colleges that looked to the DCCCD as a model.

Jan LeCroy, Priest's successor as chancellor, said:

By building this exemplary district, that's a huge contribution. To take all his experience and background, resources and build this district as a model, that's his primary contribution (LeCroy, July 19, 1994).

Steve Mittelstet, former assistant to Priest, underlined that contribution by extolling Priest as a visionary: "He had real vision in the way he set up this district, making it a national model" (Mittelstet, October 20, 1994). Gwen Rippey, the Associate Dean of Student Services in the early days of El Centro College, hailed the opening of seven campuses as a highly influential contribution to the evolution of all community colleges (G. Rippey, July 21, 1994). The press also gave recognition to the national leadership role held by the Dallas County Community College District ("Dallas County," no date). National recognition
also came from University of California at Los Angeles in 1967, when higher education professor B. Lamar Johnson invited a select group of junior and community college presidents to form an association that would encourage innovations in two-year higher education (O'Banion, March 24, 1995). This was the founding of the League for Innovation. The first and current League president, Terry O'Banion, said Priest was invited to that conference although the Dallas County Junior College was only a year old and had just one functioning college, El Centro. The invitation was predicated on the fact that Priest was already recognized as a national leader in two-year education and El Centro had already set a standard as a national model in the areas of counseling and developmental studies (O'Banion, March 24, 1995). O'Banion further explained:

As the [Dallas County] District grew, every new building, every new instructional program set a national standard (O'Banion, March 24, 1995).

Parnell added to O'Banion's list of standards set by the Dallas County Community College District. He cited the operations of a multi-college district, quality and functionality of the facilities and the governance model of the Board of Trustees (Parnell, March 27, 1995).

The valuable contributions that Priest made to other community colleges as chancellor is well documented, but
locally the impact was much broader (Gilmore, 1981; Priest, 1981; D. Rippey, July 21, 1994).

Don Rippey, founding president of El Centro College, believed Priest was revered by the business community and long-time residents of Dallas as intrically a part of the development and growth of the city as were the Thornton family, the Caruths, the Hunts, Earl Cabell and Stanley Marcus. He said of Priest, he was "one of the almost mythical people that built Dallas. Even today he has that image which is rare" (D. Rippey, 1994). Thirteen years earlier, Jerry Gilmore, Dallas County Community College District Board Chair, made the same observation that the DCCCD had "been of inestimable benefit to the citizens of Dallas County" (Gilmore, 1981). He further credited Priest by saying:

In no small way, it has been the hand of Bill Priest which has opened the door to higher education for thousands upon thousands of Dallas County citizens who would otherwise have been locked out by finances, distance or insurmountable entrance requirements. This opportunity has been significant not only to the many who have enrolled as students, but to all county residents who have enjoyed the by-products of an enhanced environment for business and industry, cultural centers within easy driving distance, and the countless intangible benefits that accrue to an educated citizenry (Gilmore, 1981).

Rippey and Priest both surmised that the economic and growth impact on the city and the county was the intent of the leaders of Dallas who initiated the building of a community college. Rippey said:
The Dallas power structure had the wisdom to realize you can't have a great city and only have benefits for the elite -- have to broaden the base. Bill Priest, through the college district, provided that (D. Rippey, July 21, 1994).

According to Priest, the leadership of Dallas County determined that a community college was the thing to do even though their knowledge of the concept was new and somewhat superficial (Priest, 1981). J. D. Williams, in his 1968 research on the Dallas County Junior College as a conceptual model, called the establishment of the district "a prophylactic innovation" which he defined as preventing stress by significant changes taking place for which an entity would otherwise not be prepared (Williams, 1968, p.31). The vision of the Dallas leadership, by recognizing a need, and the vision of Priest in bringing the components that established this national model of a comprehensive community college was in advance of the economic downturn and public turmoil that can result from an underprepared work force in a large city (Williams, 1968).

One who was part of that Dallas leadership and a founding board member of the Dallas County Community College District, Margaret McDermott, described Priest at the time of his selection as "an educator and administrator who plans and builds on a solid, far-reaching scale" (Van Cronkhite, et al, 1965). Twenty-nine years after the fact, she expressed verification of her expectations, "If it weren't
for Bill Priest, there wouldn't be a Dallas County Community College District. He is a hero" (McDermott, July 19, 1994).

McDermott, Thornton, Gilmore, and Powell represent the majority of opinions of the DCCCD Boards through the years, showering Priest with accolades and the credit for the success of the Dallas County Community College District. Priest, on the other hand, credits the Board for supplying the clout, the resources and the impetus in order for him to "just do his job" (Priest, January 16, 1981; Priest, July 5, 1994). Priest, however, was a visionary, supported not just by the evaluative observations of others, but by his own words and the time frame in which he said them.

In an interview in 1981, he recalled what prompted his change in career goals by seeking a teaching position in a junior college after teaching and coaching in a high school for just a few years:

I developed quite an interest in the community college. It seemed to me an educational mechanism that was going to fit the needs of the country for the next 20, 30 or 40 years. I was at that time about twenty-seven and turns out I was right. It did zoom into prominence and I identified with it, worked in it and got to participate in this boom period. I'm glad I did and would do it again -- easy to say when it's turned out well (Newport, 1981).

As early as February, 1959, Priest published an article applauding the inventiveness of community colleges and the zeal of the people who worked in two-year higher education (Priest, 1959). This article supports his remembrances of his early beliefs in the future of junior and community
colleges. In 1965, after accepting the position with the Dallas County Junior College District, Priest again confirmed his belief in the positive future of the junior college movement:

Nowhere in all of education is there more dynamism than in the junior college field. The relatively recent ascendancy of the junior college in American higher education may be attributed to its demonstrated capacity to solve or alleviate so many of our most complex contemporary problems (VanCronkhite, et al, 1965).

Although offered in hindsight, his formal statement requesting retirement predicated on changing management models and need for new perspectives reiterates the same description of foresight that inspired him to accept the DCJC job when it was offered to him. He remembered, "I accepted this offer with alacrity for it was obvious even then that the DCCCD had all the elements necessary to develop into a superior educational operation" (Priest, July 8, 1980).

Less than a year later, in a newspaper interview, he reconfirmed his early expectations for the Dallas County Junior College District and explained again his vision in his twenties of the whole momentous direction for junior colleges in this country by saying he "felt that junior colleges would be the wave of the future" (Priest, January 16, 1981), which was why he chose that career field.

For all Priest's sincere prognostication of the dynamism and growth of the community college as a concept
and the support of the Dallas power base, and more specifically the seven board members, the dream would not have become a reality without taking risks for the sake of innovation. Priest was a risk taker and sought creative solutions and more effective and efficient processes. He set a tone from the top that created an environment for inventiveness by those who worked in the District (Barta, 1971; Johnson, 1988; LeCroy, July 19, 1994; Holt, July 28, 1994; Robinson, August 26, 1994). He took risks as part of a committee in confronting the medical establishment for the development of a two-year nursing degree (Priest, July 5, 1994). Priest took a risk by investing in market research and advertising campaigns at a time when most of his peers across the country and most faculty members thought that marketing of academics was crass and too commercial (Robinson, August 26, 1994; Campbell, March 23, 1995). He risked failure in implementing preproduced telecourses as an instructional delivery system when his attempt at live instructional television in California had been a marginal success (Neal, 1990; LeCroy, July 19, 1994; Priest, August 2, 1994).

This attitude of always seeking new solutions and taking risks is one Priest developed early in his career. In 1959 he said, in reference to junior colleges still searching for a clear mission:

The absence of universally accepted 'ground rules' assures an experimental attitude in operational
situations, which is certain to produce a continuous flow of better answers to many problems being dealt with throughout the nation (Priest, 1959, p.306).

Priest's attitude led to acceptance and promotion of innovation with absolute intolerance for those who had become too comfortable with the status quo. He saw education as being in a state of transition and demanding more than sacred, time-tested routes to traditional ends. According to Priest, more pragmatic approaches were necessary for pragmatic results. He was aware that two-year colleges were not miniature universities filled with high school graduates headed toward a bachelor's degree. He chided administrators and faculty members who were resisting those demographic changes and "were kicking and screaming and being dragged into the world of reality" (Hoover, 1976, p.1AA).

The most nationally visible support for educational innovation came with Priest's involvement in the creation of the League for Innovation in 1968 (Johnson, 1969; LeCroy, July 19, 1994). The suggestion for innovative junior colleges to band together for cooperative work was made at a conference in 1967 (Johnson, 1969), but Priest had already written about the need for just such an association in 1966:

The junior college movement has reached a level of maturity which may warrant the creation of an 'Academy of Junior College Education' which parallels those organized by other homogenous academic groups. This organization would include fellows who have contributed significantly to the junior college movement. Within its framework, study of the national movement would be carried on (Priest, 1966, p.7).
The "Academy" was formed under the name The League for Innovation and the DCJDC was a founding member (Johnson, 1969; O’Banion, March 24, 1995). This gave impetus to the national movement.

**Board of Trustees Governance Model**

Priest’s speeches, writings and interviews are filled with laudation for the Dallas County Community College Board and are replete with points on the importance of the communication lines and positive working relationship any chief executive officer must maintain with the board of directors/trustees. Priest’s acumen on board relations put in place a governance model unique to most educational institutions and remains soundly in place today (Mittelstet, October 20, 1994). An affirmation of the culture established by Priest is the Carver Model of Governance currently being studied for implementation by the DCCCD Board of Trustees. That model, Mittelstet explained, is one where:

The Board sets policy. They deal with the chancellor and the chancellor handles the rest they’ve really kept that pretty much intact. Their concern now, all of our concern, is to preserve that legacy. That’s the way I see it; it’s really a direct legacy from Bill Priest (Mittelstet, October 20, 1994).

That governance model and delicately balanced relationship with the board not only became an established style of governing and leading for the DCCCD, but also influenced other college districts. When Dale Parnell, then
chancellor of San Diego Community College District brought the Board of Trustees to the DCCCD in 1974, one of the purposes of the trip was to study and implement the Dallas district's Board governance model (Parnell, March 28, 1995). Deon Holt, who had held the position of President at both Richland and Brookhaven Colleges, took Priest's example of "the care and feeding of the board" (Holt, July 28, 1994; Priest, August 2, 1994) with him to California when he took the job of chancellor of the Mira Costa multi-college system in Oceanside. Holt attributed success in his own career to following Priest's example and advice on how to work with the board. He called him "masterful" (Holt, July 28, 1994) in that working relationship.

When asked about his phrase, "the care and feeding of board members," Priest admitted he almost had the first board chairman, R. L. Thornton, Jr., convinced to co-author an article by that title. Priest said:

The meaning of the phrase is clear and this is probably very close to the top in importance of anything a chief administrator does. A leader must be able to see from the window of each board member and must address it. Admit to your sins. Be thoughtful. Be considerate. Make a simple telephone call before meetings to prepare them. There should be no surprises. Let them know if one of your recommendations is going to be in opposition to their view. Solicit their support. Is that political? Yes, but it's good politics. It's communication (Priest, August 2, 1994).

This was not a new philosophical stance, but one Priest brought with him to the Dallas County Community College District. In May of 1962, Priest admonished new college
presidents to "keep the gap between you and your board narrow" (Priest, 1962, p.267) and to always be well researched in matters to be presented to them. In his fifteen-year tenure with the DCCCD, not one of Priest’s recommendations was ever voted down, most passed unanimously (Bancroft, 1980).

In the early days of the District, there were more than courtesy telephone calls before the public board meetings; there were private pre-meeting meetings usually held over dinner at the Dallas Club (Bancroft, 1980). According to the first Board chair, R. L. Thornton, Jr., "When we went into the formal meeting we’d already had our bloodletting" (Bancroft, 1980, p.153). Even after the Texas Open Meetings Law put an end to those pre-meetings, the telephone calls continued and not just from Priest. Board member and chair in the early 1980’s, Jerry Gilmore explained that in order to head off "no" votes, "If any of us have any questions or real reservations, we call the chancellor privately and try to get the answers rather than do it in open forum" (Bancroft, 1980, p.153).

The efficient and successful, albeit somewhat guarded, form of doing business brought criticism from a local magazine the year Priest announced his retirement. The article in D Magazine referred to the governance of the Dallas County Community College District as "Old-style Dallas politics" (Bancroft, 1980). The article further
condemned the district by saying, "The community college district has escaped democracy. It is the last Dallas public institution to be dominated by the business community" (Bancroft, 1980, p.154).

In that same article, Priest defended the "placid relationship as one of the key ingredients in successfully building a quality community college system" (Bancroft, 1980, p.153). Priest further explained that if it were necessary "to make waves" (Bancroft, 1980, p.153), in order to get to an important target, that was what would be done. He stressed the positive effects of solidarity by explaining, "You shouldn't get negative brownie points if there is agreement" (Bancroft, 1980, p.153). Priest also took issue with the accusation of the District having escaped democracy in that non-involvement by the public was tantamount to a vote of confidence for the status quo. He said:

Why should people go out of their way to get involved in board elections? As long as the system is serving the people's needs and they know it, there's no reason to get involved (Bancroft, 1980, p.153).

The value of the excellent and peaceful working relationship between Priest and the Board and resulting accomplishments were not only unceremoniously recognized externally, but also internally. In a taped interview, Don Newport, founding president of North Lake College commented on the Board's enthusiastic support for the growth and development of the District. He also noted the constancy
with which this support was given, "The strength of that original board and many of us who've seen that board develop and change membership have seen that excitement continuing" (Newport, 1981).

It was that genuine enthusiasm for the task at hand of the original Board that was of prime importance in Priest's decision to accept the Dallas job. He remembered:

I thought, 'wouldn't it be great to work with people who wanted what you wanted,' and I was right as rain. They did everything to get it ... They were fantastic logistic providers. I never had to worry about if they would be there ... I didn’t have to spend sixty percent of my time feeding them information. They asked, 'What can we do to get it done?' and it was done (Newport, 1981).

That admiration of Priest for the Board was mutual and expressed often and publicly. R. L. Thornton, Jr. said, "When you have an administration you have great respect for, you don't have any thorny problems" (Barta, 1971, p.8), and the sentiment was echoed by Board member Robert Powers some ten years later. "From public experience, I never dealt with anybody like Bill Priest in terms of candor, ability and following his goal of making this the best district" ("High Paid," 1980, p.160).

No greater demonstration of respect and trust could be presented than the latitude given to Priest by the Board (LeCroy, July 19, 1994). From the onset, Thornton publicly stated the faith of authority the Board placed in Priest:

It is the unanimous desire of the Trustees that Dr. Priest be given direct responsibility to get the job done, and we are dedicated to the theory that he must
have the necessary authority (VanCronkhite, et al, 1965).

While each board affirmed complete confidence in the abilities of Priest, he at every point in his tenure with the DCCCD pointed to the Board as the success makers. Margaret McDermott summed up the success of the working relationships in a more personal way, "We supported each other, and all ended up friends," but she was quick to add, "not that there weren't disagreements" (McDermott, July 19, 1994). The element that kept those disagreements from erupting into public power plays was lack of egotism (Bancroft, 1980; Priest, August 2, 1994). Priest's lack of egotism was evidenced by his continually handing off credit for his success to the Board. As he explained in an interview just a few days before his retirement, "I was the beneficiary of some very nature, insightful successful people, who by some historical quirk were brought together at that time and place" (Newport, 1981). Priest explained that the Board members did not need to exhibit egos in their jobs as Trustees because they had earned their stature elsewhere and did not need to demonstrate power in the workings of the District (Priest, August 2, 1994). This was confirmed by 1980's Board chair Jerry Gilmore, "This has not been a place for political showboating or a platform for personal ambitions" (Bancroft, 1980, p.153).

Priest and the first Board of Trustees of the Dallas County Junior College District established a model of a
Board that established policy and worked through the chancellor. It never dissolved into micro management of daily operations (Mittelstet, October 20, 1994). This stability of the governance of the Board through all of the years and changes of membership was a reinforcing factor in Priest's decision to retire in 1981. In his formal announcement made in 1980, he said:

> These seven selfless citizens have the ability to function as a team, zeroing in on getting the job done at the highest possible level. All boards do not fit this description; in fact in this period of grand scale turbulence, very few do (Priest, July 8, 1980).

That descriptor would be applicable today as the governance model remains a positive factor in the Dallas County Community College District.

**Multi-College District**

There are many issues and concerns associated with being a multi-college district, like the recent debate with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools as whether to accredit each college separately or as a single district (Robinson, August 26, 1994), but the issues are fewer than those of a multi-campus college. When Priest and the Board made the decision to establish the Dallas system as a multi-college district in 1965, there were just under twenty in the country (Kintzer, Jenson, Henson, 1969). By 1968, there were forty multi-college districts. Most were established in or close to densely populated areas (Kintzer, et al,
1969) like Dallas. This growth was attributable to the shift of the population from rural to urban areas and the rapid change in technology calling for education to become more functional in order to answer the needs of the workforce (Kintzer, et al, 1969).

Setting up the Dallas system as a multi-college rather than a multi-campus district showed real insight, because it allowed each college to reflect the community it served and each community to feel ownership in its respective college (Mittelstet, October 29, 1994). There has been growth in the multi-college district nationally, but Dallas remains the only one in the South, with the exception of Alamo Community College which began as a multi-campus college, but then acquired Saint Phillips which was already "a free standing institution" (Mittelstet, September 20, 1994). Even nationally, most multi-college districts evolved from single colleges or small multi-campus colleges, but Dallas began with a specific plan and adequate financing to establish a multi-college district within a short time frame (Hoover, 1966). With most districts, growth required planning differently within an existing system, but the Dallas County Community College District began as a whole under "The Dallas System" (Holt, July 28, 1994). The more sites a system has and the more widespread those locations are, the greater the necessity for separate colleges. Priest’s experience in California gave him the base for
making what has proven to be a decision for Dallas and "part of [the District's] strength and success" (Mittelstet, September 29, 1994).

Because the separateness of the colleges was an organizational structure with less central control than the multi-campus college, it seemed in direct opposition to some perceptions of Priest's needing control. This perception, like that of being the autocrat, related to Priest's awareness of having the ultimate responsibility for all that happened within the college district during his watch. He concurred with those who said there was no autonomy of the colleges even though they were established as separate colleges. Priest was very clear in his definition of autonomy and its existence in any organization:

The original answer I gave several years ago to the two division deans that autonomy does not exist is still my answer. Why get into a philosophical discussion about how many angels can fit on a pin head. People who ask a question about autonomy are really asking, 'Will you leave us alone and let us do what we want without your interference?' Hell, no! As soon as I see you're doing it wrong, I'll make you stop. I'm obviously not going to be present in most cases because I am going to have competent people and they are not going to have autonomy because they have a letter that says they have autonomy. They're going to have autonomy because they are doing a damn good job, doing it right, and no intervention is necessary or desirable. It would reduce its effectiveness if you got involved. That is real autonomy. But the people who use the term are trying to bait you into some kind of an argument. I can come to the bottom line of the argument right now. I'm against autonomy. Next question (Priest, July 5, 1994).

Priest's definition of autonomy as a competent person doing an excellent job so that no central control was
necessary coincided with his belief in the true spirit of separate colleges that reflect their communities (Priest, 1962; Mittelstet, September 29, 1994; Priest, July 5, 1994). Ironically, the District Office had fewer employees and functions during Priest's chancellorship than it currently has (Mittelstet, September 29, 1994).

Priest felt at the time the District was established that each of the communities to be served by the colleges were substantially different and could not have their need met with "a cookie cutter answer of these are our campuses and here's what they do" (Priest, July 5, 1994). Operating on the premise of unity with diversity, he believed that the local community should know about the college that served it and that it was not important for them to know there was a chancellor and a downtown office (Mittelstet, September 29, 1994).

The philosophy that led Priest and the Board to establish a multi-college district was the same philosophy that motivated the name change in November, 1971, from Dallas County Junior College District to Dallas County Community College District (Gibbons, 1975). Priest established in Dallas all of the elements that distinguished the comprehensive community college from the junior college: technical/vocational courses, counseling, continuing adult education, and use of the facilities as a community center. He advised new presidents in 1962, "Remember that you are a
community college and operate accordingly" (Priest, 1962, p.267). For a community college the focus was on "providing legitimate educational services, rather than on conforming to the preconceived notions of what is or is not collegiate subject matter, or who is or is not college material" (Thornton, 1968, p.19). As well as the word community implying the reflection of a service area, Priest also believed the word "junior suggested a diminutive of the university" (Priest, July 5, 1994). That was in direct opposition to what Priest felt a community college should be. The emphasis, he believed, should have been to provide a multiplicity of services and supports for a student body diverse in ethnicity, age and preparedness to find success in an educational endeavor that would make them marketable in the workplace and thereby spur the economic growth of the area (Hoover, 1966; Priest, July 5, 1994).

Priest’s concept of the District office as a holding company overseeing the distribution of educational services allowed each college to be more responsive to the unique needs of each community. He also foresaw better and more valuable accrediting processes if each college were accountable for its own quality and if the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools had to write specific reports on each college rather than a sweeping overview of the District (Priest, July 5, 1994).
Under the multi-college structure, the District provides another service to the colleges, especially the presidents, and that is one of a buffer. At the top of a multi-college district, the chancellor has four distinct publics to whom he must respond: the colleges, the community, the Board, and the state. The chancellor absorbs the responsibility for interaction with the board and the state, freeing the presidents to concentrate on their specific communities and colleges (Holt, July 28, 1994). Priest was keenly aware of the importance of responding efficiently and appropriately to all four, never forsaking one to focus sole attention to another (Holt, 1994). He admitted that overseeing one campus was more enjoyable because it allowed for greater involvement with people (Newport, 1981), but when he came to Dallas there was "a major backlog of demand for the types of services a community college can render," so the decision was made to begin with a "massive attack on the problem" by establishing a seven college district to serve the great diversity of needs of Dallas County (Hoover, 1966, p.8A).

Quality First: Facilities and Staffing

Two major issues faced the newly elected Board of Trustees of the new Dallas County Junior College District at its first meeting, that of selecting a chief administrator and securing a site for the first campus. They chose to
involve whoever the president was to be in the land acquisition and planning process which moved hiring to the first agenda item. Once Priest had accepted the job, he became the "quarterback" (Newport, 1981) for the site selections and planning process for physically building the seven college district. He hired Deon Holt from the Los Rios College District in California as the Director of Research and Planning to spearhead the implementation of building plans.

Several factors in this twelve-year task set national standards which were replicated or used as measures for the successful development of other college districts. There was detailed planning of the entire district's layout before any construction was begun. Ironically, the first college opened, El Centro, was the last college planned (Holt, July 28, 1994). From the first planning phase, all seven colleges were named and a timetable established for construction, including the need for a second bond election in 1972 (Priest, 1976).

The District Master Plan was a comprehensive approach which allowed putting seven colleges into operation within a twelve-year time span. The achievement was noted in an article in The Bakersfield Californian newspaper, "This is a record unparalleled for a single district in the history of the community college movement regardless of the size of the district" (Clemmons, 1976, p.9). The celerity of the
process was only one of the benchmarks achieved by the Dallas County Community College District Board and Priest in building the District's physical plant. Others were location and size of the property, parking space philosophy, innovative use of form and overall aesthetics both in the interior and exterior designs.

A study by C. C. Colvert had recommended four campuses of 150 acres each for the Dallas System, but the Board of Trustees believed that Dallas never planned big enough and decided to build six campuses with at least 200 acres each (Holt, July 28, 1994). In October 1965, the Board indicated to Priest that they expected the first college of the District to be opened in September of 1966 (Newport, 1981). With only ten months to plan, build and open it, the Board decided that the renovation of an existing facility might be the most efficient route and that since there would be just one college initially, it should be located in a central area, accessible to students from all over Dallas County (Rippey, 1987, Priest, 1994). After considering six locations, the site search was narrowed to two: Union Depot and the former Sanger-Harris Department Store complex. The depot offered the advantage of an adjacent parking lot, but the purchase would have to be negotiated through several railroad corporations which could have been a lengthy process (Rippey, 1987). That swung the decision to the former Sanger-Harris complex. The District purchased the
site from O. L. Nelms for $2,150,000 (Rippey, 1987). The original structure and its extensions were built in the late 1800's by Philip, Elias, Alex, Lehman, Isaac, and Baum Sanger, merchants whose family had immigrated to America from Germany in the 1850's (Rosenbert, 1978). This background of the facility would later give rise to questions of historical value and cost the District time and money in its efforts to keep pace with the rapid enrollment increases.

Although the building schedule was an ambitious one, it did not keep pace with student numbers. El Centro College had been projected to open with 2,000 students, but 4,047 enrolled for that first fall semester in 1966 (Randolph, 1974). With the simultaneous openings of Eastfield College in Mesquite and Mountain View College in far west Oak Cliff in 1970, the enrollment soared to 13,573 students in credit classes, and an additional 6,000 in non-credit classes, also known as community service classes ("DCJC Milestones", 1971). By the time Richland College opened in 1972 in Richardson, television courses had been added to ease on campus enrollments and offer a format for students unable to travel. This brought the credit enrollment to 34,000 by 1975 (Priest & Pickleman, 1975). The following year, the District had projected and budgeted for a 5 percent increase in enrollment, but they received a 19 percent increase that would have been more except for a public service
announcement on the radio and in the newspapers that the campuses were full. Approximately 3,000 students were turned away (Clemmons, 1976).

Turning away 3,000 students underscored the need for building more space, which was on-hold while the district battled with the Dallas Historic Preservation League and the Texas Antiquities Commission over the historical value of the Sanger Brothers' buildings. Priest and the Board wanted to raze the structures and the Dallas Historic Preservation League and the Texas Antiquities Commission wanted to preserve them (Bloom, 1976). Architects lined up on both sides. Expert opinions were mixed on the feasibility of restoration to salvage the buildings versus razing and constructing new buildings (Bloom, 1976). The District had conducted a study that revealed the buildings, while externally representative of nineteenth century business architecture, had been quickly and cheaply constructed not for long term use (Priest, October 26, 1994). On personal inspection, Priest said there were parts of the building where the stone flaked off in one's hand (Priest, October 26, 1994). The eighteen-month brouhaha went all the way to the Texas Supreme Court and cost the District $1.9 million in unused construction contracts and litigation (Bloom, 1976).

The end result was the salvaging of the external shell of the nine-story structure built in 1884, an example of the
Richardsonian architectural influence and by all counts the most historically significant of the three separately constructed phases of the facility (Bloom, 1976). Although the District had ample resources, the loss of nearly $2 million was significant and in hindsight there was a question of whether or not partial victory was worth the loss in time and money. The answer seems to be not a clear yes or no, and is still one calling for subjective response (Mittelstet, October 20, 1994). Mittelstet, who is still part of the DCCCD, reflected, "While it is good to be part of preserving some of the history of downtown Dallas, because there is so little of that, the building has never been at the level it needed to be to serve the students of El Centro" (Mittelstet, October 20, 1994). Still a bit of a sore spot with Priest, his answer would have been for the District to have acted faster and had the building razed before the Dallas Historic Preservation League and the Texas Antiquities Commission could have intervened (Priest, October 26, 1994). The greatest financial loss to the District had not been in lawyer’s fees, but in the unused construction contracts that had to be renegotiated at the conclusion of the legal proceedings. During that time the cost of construction materials had escalated (Bloom, 1976; Priest, October 26, 1994). The two historic preservation groups had not been timely in their protests. It was only the recommendation of founding board member Margaret
McDermott that the Board should listen to their concerns that slowed the demolition plans enough to permit the two groups to seek stay orders and thus the battle lines were drawn (Priest, October 26, 1994).

Years of frustrated users proved Priest to be right, that the structure was inadequate for the growing needs of the college (Mittelstet, October 20, 1994) and was functionally inadequate. Aesthetically, whether a modern facility juxtaposed to an historic structure was an "aesthetic monstrosity," as Priest had predicted (Bloom, 1976, p.8C), was purely a matter of personal opinion.

For all of its local controversy, some nine years after its opening, El Centro served as a model for the Downtown Center in Bakersfield, California (Clemmons, 1976). El Centro College came as an afterthought answering the need for expediency and was set up in a recycled building. The selection of the downtown location had been driven by access and service issues, so were the selections of the other six campus sites.

The Campus Site Committee of the District was besieged with proposals from groups all over Dallas County ("Poised for Greatness," 1965). Several factors influenced choosing the land and locations for each campus, not the least of which was Priest’s promise to the North Dallas Chamber of Commerce that every citizen in Dallas County would be no farther away than twenty minutes from a Dallas County Junior
College campus ("Poised for Greatness," 1965). According to Priest, a rather simple but essential fact about site selection was "you have to get it right the first time" (Newport, 1981).

Getting it right the first time meant focusing on quality with an eye on the future. Although the college district was a response to immediate needs, Priest knew he was planning for future generations (Priest, 1965). Priest and the Campus Site Committee toured existing college campuses to get ideas (McDermott, July 19, 1994). All community and junior colleges were growing in the mid-sixties, but most had no land on which to expand (Lynes, 1966). Many of the colleges initially purchased more land than they needed, but subsequently sold it. The Dallas County Junior College Board made a commitment not to sell any of the land bought for the colleges and to stick with their initial decision to buy no less than 200 acres per campus (McDermott, July 19, 1994).

Scattered throughout Dallas County as they were to be, parking space was another incentive for large land purchases and with each additional building in the future would be a parallel need for additional parking. Community colleges were with rare exception commuter colleges, "education for the mobile nubile" (Lynes, 1966, p.20).

The more than adequate land purchases not only allowed for ample parking (Hoover, 1966), but also for free parking
with no specially reserved places for faculty and staff. Priest left a legacy of the democratization of parking facilities (Mittelstet, October 20, 1994). The only inequity on parking existed at El Centro College. There was no inequity between employees and students, but between those working and attending El Centro College compared to the other campuses. El Centro patrons and employees had and still have to pay for parking. Employees, however, in 1988 were given a monthly parking allowance (LeCroy, July 19, 1994). For the outlying colleges it was noted, "A new junior college can get along with almost no library and makeshift classrooms, but a parking lot is essential (Lynes, 1966, p.20).

The first three colleges, Eastfield, Mountain View and Richland College, were built with the parking lots encircling the buildings. Part of this inspiration came from Northpark Shopping Center, in northeast Dallas (Holt, July 21, 1994). The idea of using the Northpark model came from a consultant who had been brought in from the Educational Facilities Lab funded by the Ford Foundation (Holt, July 21, 1994). The Board and Priest wanted campuses that were distinctive and that did not look like replicas of a central office (Holt, July 21, 1994). With a generous budget for planning and development, Board members and staff traveled to campuses with state-of-the-art design, and consultants like Harold Gores were brought in to inspire
innovative thinking (Holt, July 21, 1994). Frank Schroder, another consultant who was a retired planning and development officer from California, was credited for seeing the college potential in Northpark design (Holt, July 21, 1994). It was Schroder's observation that a college could function more efficiently housed in a continuous structure that would give a sense of community to all the various departments and services and make them more accessible to students than the university model where each program was housed in a separate building (Holt, July 21, 1994).

Priest was a believer in innovative use of space. His values coupled with Margaret McDermott's stress on aesthetics, and the whole Board's desire for unique and excellent campuses, created a synergy of creativity and cutting edge designs (Holt, July 21, 1994).

Priest saw the value of aesthetics beyond that of being visually pleasing, which was the very subtle but powerful marketing tool of image. He noted:

It is not the most important, but it is a major force. Cosmetics influence the external public. It seduces them to come see what you have, but then you must have substance behind those pretty walls (Priest, July 5, 1994).

Priest also strongly believed that the structure should represent the community. It was his goal to have the designs inspire pride. In an interview shortly after coming to Dallas, Priest said, "People driving by the place will say, 'Here is an establishment that makes our community a
better place" (Hoover, 1966, p. 10A). Indeed, after the final campus had been opened, an editorial ran in The Dallas Morning News expressing just those sentiments:

The people of Dallas County have just finished building what may be considered the most enriching possession of all -- our community college system .... The community college system is life-enriching to Dallas County citizens for a number of reasons:
- Because it is available to all residents. The seven campuses were carefully placed so that every citizen is within a fifteen minute ride to one of them.
- Because it is aesthetically appealing, having an architecturally outstanding facility on each campus (Wright, 1978, p. 4D).

The planning climate set by Priest did not allow beauty bereft of educational purpose. Even the mall concept used at Mountain View College was intended to stimulate learning. The design "put what was going on there on display, so that part of the growth and learning will be being aware of what is going on in other subjects as you wander through looking into labs" (Holt, July 21, 1994). Even the decision for the wide use of carpeting in the campuses had educational value in the acoustical advantages and positive effect on student behavior (Hoover, 1966). There was a true focus on architectural solutions to educational concerns and a desire that form and structure represent the intended function.

Patty Powell, Board member, described how Priest represented his educational philosophy in the design of the campuses:

He wanted to be able to serve students in non-traditional ways, to reach people who had never had their lives touched by higher education. Thus he led the Dallas Colleges confidently in the new direction of self-paced, individualized instruction so that students could be freed of archaic time constraints. Two
campuses were designed to structurally facilitate this new methodology, demonstrating once again Priest’s willingness to give his all to an innovation in which he believed (Powell, 1980).

North Lake and Brookhaven Colleges were the two campuses built with open laboratories and spaces to facilitate self-paced learning. Priest rationalized innovation by saying that if one were not making any mistakes, he/she was not trying enough new things (Holt, July 21, 1994). Both of those elements seemed to exist in the last and greatest attempt at achieving practicality, art and image marketing. That attempt was the windmill planned for the seventh campus. In an interview announcing the plans for the megastructure, Priest said, "If we pull this thing off, it will certainly be an attraction" (Hast, 1976, p.1D). At that time Priest did not realize the size of that "if".

The windmill was a 120-foot-tall center pole suspended twelve feet from the ground by steel pipes and cables crisscrossed to give the illusion of suspension in space. It was to have eight blades and be fully operational. The primary reason for building a windmill on a college campus was to give Brookhaven College a "symbol of the future and the past" (Hast, 1976, p.1D). The past was the agrarian heritage of Farmers Branch (Priest, October 26, 1994; Fulton, November 3, 1994). The idea came from the architectural firm of Pratt, Box and Henderson (Priest, October 26, 1994). An afterthought was the practical
application of the windmill to provide hot water to the shower facilities serving the gym and to power the fountains in the courtyard, and with potential use by physics students for experimentation (Hast, 1976). The design was based on a smaller German model, (Priest, October 26, 1994; Mittelstet, October 20, 1994).

Priest recalled that the construction of the windmill was a bold move and at the time its size or artistic value were not questioned. The main risk was justification of the projected cost (Priest, October 26, 1994), of $170,000 which was three-quarters of 1 percent of the total construction cost of the campus (Hast, 1976). As problems began to arise in the construction of the windmill, so did the cost (Mittelstet, October 20, 1994). First, the engineers disagreed about the soundness of replicating a thirty-foot piece of art into a 120-foot functional windmill (Mittelstet, October 20, 1994). Then came the sequential calamities that befell the blades which had been made in Germany, shipped to the United States, and then trucked to the Dallas area. The first set was lost when the truck transporting them from Houston had a wreck (Priest, October 26, 1994; Mittelstet, October 20, 1994). Some months later, when the truck carrying the second set arrived safely and the doors were opened, it was found that the bands used to secure the blades during the long trip had cut into the resin-like material and left multiple gouges along the edges
of each blade. At that point everyone felt it was time to quit and find an alternative (Mittelstet, October 20, 1994).

Some quasi blades were put in place, but when they turned the vibration posed safety concerns; therefore, the blades were removed (Priest, October 26, 1994). Mittelstet indicated that since the windmill is still appropriately used as the Brookhaven College logo that the structure itself would probably still be there as a piece of Brookhaven College history, except for Patsy Fulton (Mittelstet, October 20, 1994).

Patsy Fulton came to Brookhaven College as president in 1984. The first thing waiting for her attention was a letter from the mayor of Farmers Branch explaining that special permission had been given to the District to erect the windmill because it exceeded the city’s height restrictions. That permission was predicated on the promise that the windmill would be a working generator. In essence, the main point of the letter was "Get it working or get it down" (Fulton, November 3, 1994). In researching the issue, Fulton could not find an engineering firm that would declare the windmill safe or capable of generating any significant amount of electricity. Fulton notified the chancellor, Jan LeCroy, who told her she was on her own on this issue.

Fulton then began the process for removal of the windmill. The campus community expressed mixed feelings. Some were glad to see the intimidating structure go, and
others protested the removal of a piece of art (Fulton, November 3, 1994). The engineering firm that disassembled it warned that it was spring-loaded and they were unsure of what might occur in taking it down. The removal was schedule for spring break of 1985 and took place without incident (Fulton, November 3, 1994).

The Brookhaven College windmill, in retrospect, was a boondoggle with an unknown total cost to the District. According to Mittelstet, no one ever added up all the actual expenditures associated with the windmill (Mittelstet, October 20, 1994). But in the planning stages, engineers and architects had advised it was an exciting and history making undertaking (Priest, October 26, 1994). Based on the recommendation of the architects, Priest secured the approval of the Board. The structure was still standing at the time of his retirement.

Not withstanding the unsuccessful windmill, above all the Board and Priest, with money and community support, put together a model district with state-of-the-art facilities. "The campuses are modern, roomy, and generally architecturally pleasing" (Bancroft, 1980, p.155). Each campus has won a variety of awards for design (Robinson, August 26, 1994) and the potential is firmly in place for continued growth.

For all of their awards, the impressive structures of the seven campuses of the Dallas County Community College
District would not have made a national mark on the community college movement without excellent staff and faculty to plan and run the educational system, and to teach. The stress on hiring the best possible staff and faculty was not a philosophy imposed on Priest by the Dallas Board, but a value by which he had always executed that part of his administrative duties. In an article about Priest, during his tenure as president of American River College, it was said that the Board gave Priest a free hand in hiring, and he was definite about his intentions to attempt to hire "teachers of the highest possible calibre" ("Priest of River College," 1960, p.3A). In instructions to new college presidents Priest wrote:

Pull out the stops in assembling a good faculty. Faculty is the lifeblood of your college. Unusually able people will attract other able people. Mediocre personnel will earmark your operation as mediocre, and it will be difficult or impossible to undo the initial faux pas (Priest, 1962, p.268).

The Board was in full support of this hiring ideology and demonstrated that support with financial approval (Gibbons, 1975, Priest, July 5, 1994). In an interview in 1975, R. L. Thornton, Jr. said:

And we told [Priest], 'Money is not the objective. We cannot ask you to come here and to create a brand new something and then tie your hands as to the tools you can use, and the tools gonna be your lieutenants .... Pay what it takes to get what you want' (Gibbons, 1975, p.61).

Just as in American River College, he tried to hire above average instructors and administrators for the Dallas County

Priest began his job as president of the Dallas Junior College District in October and immediately made his first three personnel recommendations: Alfred M. Phillips, vice president of instruction; Frank P. Schroeter, special assistant for planning and research, and Carol Zion, associate dean of instruction. All three were approved at the November Board meeting, (Dallas County Junior College Minutes, November 2, 1965). In the all-out effort to open El Centro College by August, 1966, personnel appointments were approved at virtually every Board meeting (Gibbons, 1975). While an incredibly short time line was a driving factor, the Board never questioned Priest’s recommendations. There was unified trust in his ability. The feeling was that Priest had "a real knack for selecting the right person" (McDermott, July 19, 1994).

Many people cited hiring and development of people as a strength of Priest (Robinson, August 26, 1994; Mittelstet, October 20, 1994; Holt, July 21, 1994). "He was a good observer of human nature. He recognized strengths and weaknesses and capitalized on the strengths" (Robinson, August 26, 1994). Deon Holt said he had found success in hiring by adhering to one of Priest’s adages that "first rate people hire first rate people" (Holt, July 21, 1994). This stress on quality which Priest primarily judged through
past accomplishments ("Priest of River College," 1960; Newport, 1981), did not mean he would not allow for weaknesses and mistakes. He did expect employees to compensate for weak areas and to learn from mistakes. "He always gave you a second chance, but not a third" (Robinson, August 26, 1994). According to Holt, another Priest axiom was that "the only dumb mistakes are those you make twice" (Holt, July 21, 1994). Allowing the first mistake was indicative of Priest's value for risk-taking and he looked for that quality when he was hiring. Claudia Robinson, District Director of Public Information, once said that her interview with Priest was the best and most thorough she had ever had (Robinson, August 26, 1994). Through intense interviews at the hiring stage and keen observations of work habits and accomplishments of potential hires, Priest has been attributed with having a better sense of career direction for people than they do for themselves (Mittelstet, October 20, 1994). Mittelstet cites himself as an example:

I always thought I'd be a Vice President of Instruction. That's what I was educated and experienced for, but Priest was right that the broad scope of duties in planning and development and instructional television was a better path for me, and better prepared me for the presidency. I learned to see things from a District perspective, as well as, a campus perspective, and I learned the complexities of a college's physical plant (Mittelstet, October 20, 1994).

Deon Holt echoes that same sentiment in that Priest offered him the job in planning and development straight
from a teaching and public relations background (Holt, July 21, 1994). According to Priest, "I knew that Deon was bright and trainable in whatever you needed him to do" (Priest, July 5, 1994).

Priest says of himself, "I fancy myself a pretty good people picker" (Newport, 1981). In that same interview, Priest gave a list of characteristics that he looked for in people: dedication, stability, loyalty, perseverance, insight, self starters, team players, those who can pull their own weight, and who have undeveloped leadership ability. But he was quick to point out it is not just a list of traits, but how they mixed (Newport, 1981). While Priest repeatedly represented accomplishments as a good indicator of an employee's abilities, he also pointed out the variables that skew the data if considered in isolation. A person could be quite productive at one level, but ineffectual at a single level higher because of a new set of demands. He also believed that the reverse could be true, in that a mediocre performer at a lower level might hit a higher level "where their particular attributes will gel and fit" (Newport, 1981).

Priest viewed hiring as the most critical administrative responsibility (Robinson, August 26, 1994), and he believed that "first rate people hire first rate people" (Holt, July 21, 1994). His quality checks went beyond recruiting, hiring and paying well for the best
administrators and master teachers (Hoover, 1966), into continuous quality controls from evaluations to involving faculty in the decision-making process (Priest, 1962; Parsons, 1966; Priest, August 21, 1994).

The structure established for faculty gave no rank. All faculty members were peers with one title of instructor rather than a hierarchy of titles (Mittelstet, October 20, 1994). The salary structure was based on the number of years of experience and degrees earned, but no college titles came with that variance (Priest, August 2, 1994). The issuance of a three-year contract was designed to be used for a quality control tool not anything comparable to tenure. Gayle Weaver, the first faculty association president said faculty preferred the three-year contract to the initial proposal of a five-year contract. It allowed and still does allow a division dean to deal with a poor performer by allowing the three-year contract to wind down without offer of another one (Priest, August 2, 1994; Mittelstet, October 20, 1994). Instructor performance is evaluated by students, classroom visits by the division dean and a set of criteria developed by the faculty association. Priest is emphatic about the quality of teaching being measurable:

Teaching is too important to be exempted from measurement. Any admission that we can't tell good teaching from bad teaching is an admission that we're hopelessly confused (Parsons, 1966, p.8).
Although he held faculty accountable for quality in the classroom, he believed that "neither faculty nor administrators can or should want to go it alone" (Priest, 1964, p.7). In 1962, he admonished presidents of newly established colleges to:

Clarify the area of internal administration over which you have policy responsibility delegated by the Board. Aided by your chief sub-administrators and faculty participants set up an organization which has clear-cut job specifications, unambiguous echelon relationships, and well-defined guiding principles and regulations (Priest, 1962, p.267).

When Priest came to Dallas, he established the first Faculty Association for a community college in the state of Texas (Rippey, 1987; LeCroy, July 19, 1994; Priest, August 2, 1994). Although there was not an official school of management called total quality management, Priest was a forerunner of that philosophy seeking input and decisions to be made at the lowest level (Mittelstet, October 20, 1994) "by the doer" (Priest, July 5, 1994). Predicated on that principle and that it was better to have an administrative request for faculty to form an association than to wait for an issue to rally the faculty into an association, Priest set forth the charge to the El Centro College faculty to form an association (Priest, August 2, 1994). Priest believed that faculty input was essential in all areas related to academics and believed all Faculty Association presidents should have direct access to him (Priest, August 2, 1994). Reflecting at the time of his retirement, Priest
said even those occasional association officers who were not
creative in their leadership approach kept the
organization "vital and moving" (Newport, 1981). Perhaps
sounding a bit Pollyannish, Priest called it "dependent
pragmatism" (Newport, 1981). He considered any complaint or
criticism from faculty association officers worthy of
investigation even if they were reported to be perpetual
complainers (Priest, August 2, 1994).

One of the first efforts on the part of the newly
formed Faculty Association was to present Priest with a
salary proposal to which he responded, "It's not high
enough," and sent them away to write another one (LeCroy,
July 19, 1994; Priest, August 2, 1994). Gayle Weaver was
the president of that group and he recalled:

Priest beat the hell out of our proposal asking for a
$400 a year raise. He said our data were out of date
and inaccurate. Then he reached in a file and pulled
out more current information, and handed it to us. He
charged us with writing a new proposal and encouraged
us to ask for $800 a year (Weaver, March 9, 1995).

The motivation behind the response was a desire to continue
to try to recruit the best teachers for the rapidly growing
district and in order to do that Priest wanted the salaries
to be more than competitive. He wanted them to be a draw
(LeCroy, July 19, 1994; Priest, August 2, 1994). Indeed,
the salaries and the quality of the District did attract
quality instructors. In 1980, the Dallas County Community
College District boasted well over one-third of its faculty
held Ph.Ds, compared to the national average of one-fifth
One faculty member cited a decision made by Priest that he believed diminished faculty voice in governance. Stan Fulton said that in 1976, Priest changed the division chair job from a nine-month faculty position to a twelve-month administrative position. Stan recalled:

As faculty, division chairs were able to support faculty and instruction without fear of offending their supervisors or losing their jobs. If a faculty division chair found they could no longer work with a certain administrator they would just return to teaching. Unfortunately the faculty in those division chair jobs became a little too greedy and kept demanding more money and extra service contracts and so like the consummate autocrat he was not satisfied simply telling them "no." He had to kick their collective ass with this solution (Fulton, March 20, 1995).

Fulton added that while he would not call Priest’s style "participatory management," he believed Priest could be reasoned with and would change his mind if the presenter had good sound data. Fulton explained that Priest was no liar and the faculty always knew the real reasons behind decisions (Fulton, March 20, 1995).

Quality of staff and faculty was never an issue, but the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools accreditation teams criticized the District for having too many faculty who had earned their degrees from Texas colleges (Bancroft, 1980). Texas colleges were represented by around 80 to 85 percent of the faculty in 1980 (Bancroft, 1980). In the beginning, the goal was to hire 60 to 75 percent of the faculty from Texas colleges to give the Dallas community, which was primarily native Texans at that
time, a sense of identity with the new college district (D. Rippey, July 21, 1994).

Another criticism launched against the District's composition of faculty and administrators concerned the racial issue (Bancroft, 1980). Priest thought it was an unwarranted assertion against the Dallas County Community College District because by 1980 there were several minorities in vice-president positions and there were two female presidents, one African-American (Bancroft, 1980). While both of these issues were noted in Priest's tenure as Chancellor of the District, neither escalated into an internal or external controversy; nor were they unique, but were issues common to a growing community college system in a metropolitan area.

**Curriculum**

Quality facilities staffed by experienced administrators and master teachers is essential to the excellence of an educational institution. The curriculum must be current in its content and appropriate for the needs of the students and the businesses and industries that will be the consumers of the skills of those students. Selecting the right curriculum for any college or university takes an understanding of pedagogy, facility form supporting function, the needs of the community, insights into
marketable skills and professions, and vision into ever changing future needs.

In the mid-sixties, the Texas two-year college system was primitive (LeCroy, July 19, 1994). All of the junior colleges were exactly that, a junior representation of the senior colleges with a transfer curriculum representing the freshman and sophomore years of a four-year degree and a full-blown athletic program with drill teams and cheerleaders (LeCroy, July 19, 1994).

Priest introduced the elements to Dallas that created a comprehensive community college even though the name did not initially reflect that concept. He influenced the board to reject the establishment of a scholarship sports program because it would drain the resources needed for instruction (LeCroy, July 19, 1994; Mittelstet, October 20, 1994). Priest also brought the concept of emphasizing technical and vocational programs in the curriculum in order to allow a student to complete a degree or certificate at the two-year college and graduate prepared to enter the work force (LeCroy, July 19, 1994; Staff, 1980). Priest also brought to Texas the concept of non-credit courses, then called community service courses (LeCroy, July 19, 1994), "for those citizens whose major occupation is something other than student" (Thornton, 1968, p.25).

The first curriculum decisions were made for El Centro College since it was to be the first campus to open. Just
as site selection had been driven by the economy of time and the accessibility to the entire county, the limits of the structure of the facility and the downtown location, as well as county-wide needs of industry determined curriculum selection (Rippey, 1987). Although a need existed for manufacturing related jobs, like welding, and mechanical jobs, like auto technician, the downtown high-rise building did not lend itself to the laboratory requirements for such programs (Rippey, 1987).

Priest and Al Phillips, vice president of instruction, met with area employers to research and identify the areas of greatest need for program development (Rippey, 1987). With all limitations of space and city ordinances taken into consideration, thirteen programs were designed to target four main industries: data processing, health, fashion and culinary (Rippey, 1987). Most of the vocational programs required related courses such as mathematics, reading and writing. Additionally these courses were part of the transfer curriculum for those students who would later pursue a bachelor’s degree. Priest was keenly aware of the educational foundation of the community college as "a people’s college," meaning that not every student would arrive fully prepared to tackle a college level curriculum and that course work to bridge this educational gap needed to be offered by the community college (Priest, 1966; "A Flying Start," 1966; D. Rippey, July 28, 1994). In 1980,
Pattie Powell, DCCCD Board member, accredited Priest with spearheading this movement, "Under his leadership, El Centro College blazed the trail for developmental studies in the mid-sixties" (Powell, 1980). Priest’s advocacy for the community college taking the role of remedial education was an indication of his understanding of the non-traditional student the community college would be serving. He explained:

A mature person who missed out on a high school diploma may have the capability of a college education. Through what we call our ‘guided studies program’ such students will be able to take remedial courses -- English and math for example -- to help fill their gaps ("A Flying Start," 1966, p.8A).

Even with all that had been accomplished within the realm of technical and occupational programs in the Dallas County Community College District, and a job placement rate of 90 percent of all technical/occupational graduates at the time of Priest’s retirement (Bancroft, 1980), Priest’s most significant contribution to vocational higher education began before he accepted the job in Dallas. This was the development of the Associate Degree in Nursing for R.N. Certification.

World War II made the nation acutely aware of the shortage of nurses. Twenty-three percent of hospitals in the United States were forced to close beds, wards, and/or operating rooms (Haase, 1990). By 1951, the idea of totally collegiate nursing education was growing (Haase, 1990). As early as 1949, the National League of Nursing Education was
meeting with the American Association of Junior Colleges to discuss a nursing technician program (Fondiller, 1983).

Physicians and hospital administrators opposed nurses taking control of planning the type of education appropriate for their profession. They called it self-serving (Haase, 1990). Prior to degree programs for nurses, about eighty diploma programs were offered in association with hospitals, but there were no separate college programs (Fondiller, 1983).

Ed Gleaser, the Director of the American Association of Junior Colleges, was the primary instigator of meetings with the National League for Nursing Education. He involved Priest through committees in California and on the national level in an effort to develop a two-year nursing degree that resulted in the Registered Nurse Professional Certification. Priest remembered the uphill battle with the medical profession:

They thought we were trying to kill people and contaminate hospitals with heavy handed nurses who didn’t know what they were doing. They’d sooner see people die for a shortage of BSN’s than to turn loose this horde of unwashed. I’d go to meetings, and I’d get so mad with their holier-than-thou attitudes. You could present statistics; here’s the staffing, here’s the supply that the natural science of Nursing is providing. ‘Look at this gap. How are you going to do it? Are you going to call people in off the street? That’s what you are doing now.’ And they’d reply, ‘Yes, but they are under the guidance of a BSN.’ We’d point out that there wouldn’t be a BSN within shouting distance, and they’d promise to close that gap if we wouldn’t contaminate the profession. Well, it got contaminated and now it is accepted and produces the majority of bedside registered nurses in the nation (Priest, July 5, 1994).
In the early 1950's under Priest's leadership, Orange Coast College District offered a pilot nursing program (Priest, July 5, 1994). "Slowly but surely all the pieces were being put in place. Professional nursing and higher education were in a state of full readiness for the first attempts to educate registered nurses in two-year programs based in junior and community colleges" (Haase, 1990, p.66).

Growth in associate degree in nursing programs was steady through the 1950's, but there was an explosion in the 1960's and by 1964, 130 associate degree nursing programs were being offered and represented 11 percent of all registered nursing programs (Fondiller, 1983; Haase, 1990).

In 1965, the National League for Nursing Education created a separate associate degree program component and called for separate accreditation (Haase, 1990). The following year, El Centro College became the first community college in Texas to offer an ADN program and continues to produce over two hundred qualified registered nurses every year, including those from the home-host ADN program at Brookhaven College (Eggleston, February 8, 1995).

Further success of the El Centro ADN program was noted in the Congressional Record in 1972 with the advent of the Med-Vet program. With a grant from the Division of Nursing of the U. S. Public Health Service, the ADN curriculum was tailored to meet the needs of veterans with medical training, but who lacked certification from state agencies.
The program granted credits based on competency tests and offered seminars in the differences in the practice of military and civilian medicine. Senator John Tower remarked:

I commend El Centro College and the very capable leadership of Dr. Bill J. Priest, Chancellor, and Dr. Robert Leo, Director of Social Projects for this exciting innovation in the education of veterans and allied health personnel, ("Educational Opportunity" 1972, S4503).

The movement of nursing education from privately controlled hospitals to the general education system and the establishment and acceptance of the associate degree in nursing was one of the most significant developments in the history of education in this country (Fondiller, 1983).

Priest was active in that movement, but his influence over curriculum did not end there. With the addition of each new campus, a review of possible technical programs occurred, and decisions were made on the responsiveness to the needs of the business community (LeCroy, July 19, 1994). In the initial interviews with business and industry leaders, needs for welding and automobile mechanics were revealed (Rippey, 1987). Since it was impossible to locate these in a downtown high-rise, as other colleges were built, these programs were put in place at Mountain View and Eastfield Colleges respectively. By the time Brookhaven College was being built, the number of working mothers had caused a surge in the child care business, which spawned the
Priest's belief in the economic value of technical/vocational education was well documented through credit offerings. Representing 50 to 60 percent of the head count enrollment at each of the seven campuses was non-credit courses. The non-credit divisions had an economic impact on the district budget. Priest brought the concept of non-credit courses from California as part of responsiveness to the community-at-large (LeCroy, July 19, 1994). A prime example of this responsiveness and how it could pay off occurred in California when a man came to Priest’s office and asked for a course in goat husbandry. Priest listened, albeit with great skepticism. He followed up and found others interested. The following semester he offered the course and sixty people enrolled. He discovered they were the only college offering the course for over fifty miles around. Intermediate and advanced goat husbandry were subsequently offered and met with equal success (Priest, September 7, 1994). Ever quick to make the service distinction between community college and universities, Priest noted to reporters that a university would have thrown the man out (Stutz, 1981).

This philosophy of risk-taking and service to the community allowed the non-credit courses, now called continuing education, to flourish in the Dallas County
Community College District. "Adult learning to Priest, and his on-going emphasis on life long learning is demonstrated in his outstanding extended day programs, both credit and non-credit, that he has initiated at each of the seven colleges" (Powell, 1980).

**Counseling**

In the mid-sixties, the junior colleges in Texas did not have established counseling centers or even formal faculty advising systems (D. Rippey, July 28, 1994; Creamer, November 4, 1994). Priest ensured that each of the seven colleges provided "counseling services of a greater scope than ever before" offered in a community college (Powell, 1980).

A desire for student success was the motivation for Priest's support of counseling. He wanted each student to leave the Dallas County Community College District with a clear direction for his or her life and the skills to achieve that goal. This was evidenced in two interviews with Priest concerning student outcomes. One interview occurred just prior to the opening of El Centro College and the other was conducted six years later, but each expressed concern that too many students enroll in the academic transfer program rather than in a highly needed technical program ("Flying Start," 1966; Gehret, 1972). In an earlier article, Priest blamed society's glorification of a select
few professions that set unrealistic standards of achievement for a vast majority of students:

It is easy to give lip service to the person who is not going to be a brain surgeon or nuclear physicist, but when all is said and done, the focal point attention all too often seems to be on those professions which are high in status (Priest, 1966, p.7).

The need is for about seven sub-professionals for every professional, but society begins early planting ideas in children that only professional jobs are appropriate goals (Hoover, 1976).

Herein lay the value in counseling according to Priest. Initially, counseling assists the student in finding an appropriate level of study through assessment of current skills ("A Flying Start," 1966), and then through career counseling a student can be directed to a course of study where there is viable employment (Gehret, 1972; Hoover, 1976) appropriate to his or her innate abilities and aptitude (Priest, 1959; "A Flying Start," 1966).

The first dean of students at El Centro College, Don Creamer, recalled Priest's strong support of the counseling function:

I remember his chastening faculty who had been rumored to complain about counselors and their work. He once said in a general faculty meeting, 'Any faculty member who bad mouths counseling is committing a sin worse than ax murder. If I ever learn that a faculty member is bad mouthing counseling, I personally will fire him.' This illustration shows a powerful advocacy of counseling, but it did not stop there. He also made funds available to me to hire necessary staff even though he personally did not understand why I needed all of them (Creamer, November 4, 1994).
El Centro College employed the largest number of certified counselors of any institution in Dallas County, and in general the student services area was staffed at a higher ratio with students than most colleges in the country (Rippey, 1987). According to the college’s first president, Don Rippey, "We believed that of all services the LRC and counseling were the highest priority" (Rippey, 1987, p.37). Funding was provided through the general budget, with additional funds from the state for technical vocational counselors, and Priest agreed that since students generated the revenue for food service and the bookstore that they should share in the profits. Both of those operations reported to the Dean of Students (Rippey, 1987).

In counseling, like all areas of the colleges, Priest set high standards and expected accountability for student outcomes that were reflected by retention and completion rates. These statistics theoretically demonstrated students had been advised into the appropriate levels of courses (Mittelstet, September 29, 1994). He also created an environment for innovation and expansion of student services to a broader concept of student development that would go beyond advisement to career counseling and teaching students study skills (D. Rippey, July 21, 1994; Creamer, November 4, 1994). Again Creamer remembered Priest’s above average support for student services:

My memory is that he demanded innovation ... I would wager, however, that he felt that we sometimes went too
far. We spent years experimenting or innovating. Some of our ideas really took hold; others were tried and eventually replaced (Creamer, November 4, 1994).

Just as Priest had outlined in his vision for the community colleges of Dallas County to take students "where they are" ("A Flying Start," 1966, p.8A) and to provide them with "individual intensive counseling" ("A Flying Start," 1966 p.8A), and guide them to the courses and careers where they would find success and satisfaction ("A Flying Start," 1966), the first team at El Centro College set about to accomplish those goals, bringing with them ideas from previous work experience and a desire for creative approaches to serve students (D. Rippey, July 21, 1994).

El Centro College’s founding administrators established a self-assessment laboratory for initial academic advising (Rippey, 1987; Creamer, November 4, 1994). The self-assessment model was also used in career advising (Creamer, November 4, 1994). The self-assessment was part of the initial intake process and assisted in directing students into appropriate levels of courses, which included developmental courses for those not yet at the college level (Rippey, 1987; D. Rippey, July 21, 1994; Creamer, November 4, 1994).

A unique approach to affecting positively student success and outcomes through counseling was the aligning of counseling concepts with academic content which formulated the first human development courses (D. Rippey, July 21,
1994; Creamer, November 4, 1994). Priest was supportive of this concept and kept up with its development and implementation (G. Rippey, July 21, 1994). The human development curriculum was created in "response to the multiple conditions people brought with them to college that handicapped their ability to make the most of their learning opportunities" (Creamer, November 4, 1994).

These human development courses embodied Priest’s educational philosophy of teaching the whole student and not just training a person in a few basic skills:

Our mission is to use our resources to help a person be better than they are and get as close as they can to where they want to go, and also to hold up aspirations so they have a better consciousness of what their options are... It is obvious that education does not mean learning work or learning intelligent living; rather learning an intelligent plan of life that includes work, fulfillment, and realization" ("Retiring Chancellor," 1980, p.2).

This philosophy reflected through the innovations in student services, as well as the overall organization and operation, brought national attention to El Centro College and the burgeoning Dallas County Community College District. "We had a steady stream of visitors from all over the U. S. to study our work" (Creamer, November 4, 1994). They came not only from two-year colleges, but also from the universities (Rippey, 1987). "They had heard about our downtown campus and that we were doing some exciting new and different things, so they had come to visit" (Rippey, 1987, p.55). The newly forming Dallas County Community College
District was setting national trends in student services, and those trends are found as established modes of practice today (Powell, 1980).

**Public Relations**

Public relations is still an unpalatable phrase in educational institutions because it has a connotation of selling a polished, although not always accurate, image to customers in order to make a profit or for other self-serving purposes. Colleges and universities, both private and public, are non-profit organizations with altruistic missions of serving students. The public relations function, however, now exists on most campuses under the name of public information or, more recently, enrollment management. Bill Priest was a leader in bringing public relations and marketing into acceptance in education (Robinson, August 26, 1994).

Priest's understanding of the value of public relations developed in his post-doctoral study at Columbia University, in the School of Community Relations (Priest, July 5, 1994). Although he credits his study there with teaching him "the value of getting your merchandise visible in the marketplace" (Priest, July 5, 1994), it was his own personal interest and early realization in the vital role of marketing in education that motivated him to pursue that avenue of study (Priest, July 5, 1994). Eager to apply his
newly learned craft, he stopped by Washington, D.C., to talk with the Director of the American Association of Junior Colleges about marketing methods that would help the organization to grow in membership and would increase the budget. His ideas fell on deaf ears, and the "national movement" remained stagnant until the leadership of AAJC was given to Ed Gleazer, a natural salesman who believed in the community college movement and its support through a national organization with "angelic fervor" (Priest, July 5, 1994). Gleazer "got people to give money and with money he was able to do good things, and when you do good things you can get people to give money" (Priest, July 5, 1994). This was Priest's theory in action, and the two worked closely together as Priest moved through the various stages of his career in community colleges. Priest recalled:

I was on the Board of Directors, and vice president, president, and I was past president, and then I was something which kept me there nearly all the time. Ed created a title for me, some kind of permanent committee which had no change in the chairman. It was a good example of mutual exploitation, and I don't mean that in a negative sense. I enjoyed every minute of it, and I was glad to be where the action was. I gave a lot of time and energy, and it paid off. It was personally and professionally rewarding (Priest, July 5, 1994).

Priest knew that public relations was a critical element of moving the community college movement forward, which meant he brought an extra dimension to the job of president or chancellor in each college and district he served. He saw public relations as a necessity for institutional success,
and he understood the fundamentals from internal marketing to target market research (Robinson, August 26, 1994).

This understanding of the multiple components of public relations was outlined in an article he wrote with the advice for newly appointed college presidents. He called for surveying the community for needs and expectations, developing good media relations, maintaining an accurate flow of information externally and internally and creating collateral marketing material to augment what was done by the media (Priest, 1962).

When Priest came to Dallas, he was delighted with the supportive media he found here both print and electronic (Priest, July 5, 1994), but, indeed, the media was also delighted with him because he valued them and kept them informed. He fully comprehended the power of the media. He knew how to use them and he knew what they should not be used for (Robinson, August 26, 1994). A thirty-year member of the electronic news media, John Whitson, explained that the way to use the news media for positive results is quite simple: keep them supplied with accurate information, and always allow the media access to whomever they want to interview. He emphasized "Nothing makes a reporter more suspicious and sometimes even angry than being told 'no comment' or that a particular person is unavailable for comment" (Whitson, March 10, 1995). Priest created a partnership with the news media. He was always honest and
quick to respond, and he appreciated the media calling him if they "uncovered something" (Robinson, August 26, 1994).

Priest not only valued the public relations function, but also the people who worked in that realm. He brought in Deon Holt, a journalism major, who had split responsibilities in the Los Rios Junior College District where he taught journalism and handled public relations duties for the district, as the vice-president of planning for the Dallas County Junior College District. The person in the role of public relations for the DCJCD was always "kept in the inner circle and made part of the information loop" (Priest, July 5, 1994). Public relations professionals were not viewed as feature writers, but as intelligent professionals who had a great deal to contribute to the organization. In his speech at his retirement luncheon, Priest specially thanked Claudia Robinson and the campus directors of public relations for improvements in spreading the word of the Dallas County Community College District’s "manpower development capabilities" (Priest, January 16, 1981).

In the late seventies, when "marketing" was still a dirty word in education, Priest approved and funded a marketing workshop for all the district’s administrators. It was organized by the District Public Information Office. Then national marketing expert, Phil Kotler and his colleagues Dennis Johnson and Ernie Leach, talked about
academic programs in terms of "cash cows" and "dead dogs." They explained that part of program evaluation needed to be profitability. Colleges needed to do statistical research to determine which academic programs were drawing students and which were not. The second part of the analysis would be a viability study of the program to judge whether increased marketing would help to increase enrollment or whether the program should be phased out (Robinson, August 26, 1994). District Public Information Director, Claudia Robinson, remembered, "My counterparts at colleges across the country could not believe we were taking such a bold step. They were still having trouble convincing their presidents to pay for advertising" (Robinson, August 26, 1994).

The Dallas County Community College District was the first in the country to have an insert in the prominent high school magazine Campus Voice (Robinson, August 26, 1994). Priest was reluctant at first but with additional facts and positive data, he gave his support for the advertisement, which proved to be profitable (Robinson, August 26, 1994).

Robinson described Priest as "masterful, intelligent, visionary, and sustaining" in his utilization of marketing (Robinson, August 26, 1994). Even his ever present bow tie was a subliminal marketing tool (Priest, October 26, 1994).

Robinson said that Priest was always ready to take the risk of being first. In 1978, he hired Peat, Marwick and
Mitchell to conduct a marketing audit of what the District was doing and should be doing. That audit recommended an image and awareness survey of the DCCCD's service area. Priest then hired MARC, a research company, to conduct that survey in 1979. Based on the results of that survey:

We created our 1980 advertising campaign 'Real colleges. Real careers. Really close to home.' because we had learned the prevailing public opinion was that we were not a college, but the step between high school and college (Robinson, August 26, 1994).

The DCCCD, in 1978, was the first community college to use a mixed media campaign that tied print advertising to radio commercials. At that time, other colleges were relying on public service announcements, and a few were running newspaper advertisements.

Ray Campbell, who was one of the first campus public information directors recalled the leadership role of the DCCCD in public relations:

In 1978, we hosted the regional National Council for Community Relations Conference at Brookhaven. There were less than fifty members then and only about twelve showed up. In 1981, we tried it again. By then we had earned recognition for our advertising campaigns and Claudia Robinson was heavily involved in the national organization. That year we had over fifty people come to our regional conference (Campbell, March 23, 1995).

Robinson then served as president-elect, president and past-president of the national organization 1986-1988 (Robinson, August 26, 1994).

One of his last official pieces of public relations came in his "for publication" announcement of his retirement in which he thanked the mass media "for more than fair
treatment they have provided in funneling accounts of Dallas County Community College District matters to the general public" (Priest, July 8, 1980).

**Telecourses**

The majority of employees in the Dallas County Community College District will attribute the advent of telecourses in the district to R. Jan LeCroy, but it was Priest, however, who "moved Dallas into the vanguard of 'distance learning" (Powell, 1980). Priest brought the idea of televised courses from a pilot project he had done at Los Rios Junior College in Sacramento, California (Priest, August 2, 1994).

The one history course offered via television in the early sixties in Sacramento was a live broadcast and purely experimental. The live format was froth with problems that greatly cut into the quality, but the response was good enough that Priest realized that with pre-produced quality presentations edited free of error and not dependent upon an instructor showing up on time, prepared, healthy and sober, problems Priest had experienced with the faculty member in California, television was a cost effective means of delivering educational services to a wide audience (Priest, August 2, 1994). He had fought the battles with the State of California, seeking reimbursement for students who never came to campus, but he thought Texas was fertile ground for
taking education to the airwaves and well worth any tussles with the educational governing bodies of the state (Priest, August 2, 1994). On September 11, 1972, the first Dallas County Community College District telecourse, Government 201, was broadcast over KERA, Channel 13, the public broadcast affiliate in the Dallas-Forth Worth area (Neal, 1991).

Far from the first college to use television as a vehicle for delivery of credit classes, the Dallas County Community College District did, however, quickly become one of the best (Neal, 1994; Priest, August 2, 1994). The first educational television program was presented in 1933 at the University of Iowa on an experimental station, W9XX, while television was still in its infancy (Neal, 1991). In the Dallas area, Southern Methodist University was the first to televise a credit course. It was offered on KRLD, the CBS affiliate in the early fifties (Neal, 1991). Among junior and community colleges, Miami Dade built a full production center in the early seventies, but by 1973 they had produced only one telecourse, "Man and Environment" (Neal, 1991). "Miami does a good P. R. job, but what we're doing in the District runs circles around them" (Priest, August 2, 1994).

When Priest first experimented with instructional television in Sacramento, one of the hindrances was lack of funding (Priest, August 2, 1994). Another motivator for venturing into electronic education in Dallas was the fact
that the Dallas County Community College District had the budget to support it (Priest, August 2, 1994; Mittelstet, October 20, 1994). Even with an adequate budget, seeding the telecourse project with one-half to one million dollars of risk capital took courage according to LeCroy, who then added, "But nothing extraordinary happens without responsible risk taking, and Priest was a risk taker" (LeCroy, July 19, 1994).

The first two directors of instructional television in the DCCCD, Travis Linn and Steve Mittelstet, each served in that capacity as part of their duties as assistants to Priest (Neal, 1991; Mittelstet, October 20, 1994). Placing such an important and innovative aspect of instruction under the supervision of someone other than the academic vice-chancellor, Jan LeCroy, seemed perhaps inappropriate, but Mittelstet said Priest was quite purposeful in the decision:

Bill kept it [telecourses] under his direct supervision because he wanted to protect it. Priest told me, 'As long as it is under me, it can’t suffer the pot shots from the critics who would kill it prematurely. At whatever point it seems clear that this is solid and on the mark, then I’ll be willing for it to move on to Jan, but not until that point.’ That gave me as Director of Instructional Television a lot. I conferred with Jan; I consulted with the Vice Presidents of Instruction, but there were things that Jan wanted to do to the program that might have stunted it or put it in another direction, and Priest wouldn’t hear of it (Mittelstet, October 20, 1994).

Indeed, telecourses had critics, most specifically faculty who were fearful of loss of academic integrity (Neal, 1991). Of two separate studies conducted on two
separate telecourses, one a business course and one a writing course, both indicated higher performance and achievement by telecourse students than by classroom students (Neal, 1991).

From that first course produced in the Learning Resource Center at Richland College in 1972, the telecourse division quickly grew to a staff of seven by 1974. In 1975, it moved to portable buildings, and by 1976, with eleven courses having been completed and others in production, the Dallas County Community College District’s Instructional Television Division (ITV) was one of the country’s two major producers of quality television courses (Neal, 1991).

Travis Linn, eleven-year veteran of network television news, explained that the first courses had good enrollment, so they made more (Neal, 1991). Priest, whose experience in Sacramento showed him real success needed more than enrollment, attributed the Dallas County Community College District growth to quality as he expressed in an interview in 1990:

They are quality courses. They are not nice tries. They are done by skilled people who do the writing and research and assembling of the substantive material, and they are delivered by people who know how to function in front of a camera, shored up by people who know how to use visuals. The big key to that, of course, is the use of visuals. The places that bombed thought they could get a good lecturer-professor and shove him in front of a camera, and everything would be hunky-dory—not so (Neal, 1991, p.143).

That attention to quality continued to pay off. In 1978, Roger Pool became the first telecourse supervisor to have
instructional television as his sole responsibility, and he reported to the vice-chancellor of academic affairs, who continued to champion telecourses even after he became chancellor in 1981, the same year the ITV was changed to the Center for Telecommunications (Neal, 1991).

By 1989, the Dallas County Community College District was touted as the community college leader in offering courses via television (O’Banion, 1989). Today, the LeCroy Center for Telecommunications, housed in a new state-of-the-art facility, offers twenty telecourses via KDNT and cable to an average enrollment of 10,500. Additionally, it sells their courses to over 1,800 clients in the United States and thirty foreign countries bringing in an annual gross income of $2.5 million (Quinn, October 4, 1994).

Bill J. Priest Institute for Economic Development

At first survey of the Dallas County Community College District today, the most significant legacy of Bill Priest would appear to be the Bill J. Priest Institute for Economic Development, but nothing could be farther from the truth. Although the facility carries his name and houses programs that were influenced by early activities in the Dallas County Community College District, the building was the brain child of Jan LeCroy’s administration in 1987. At the April board meeting of that year, Bob Bettis, Board chair, made the formal announcement of the Board’s decision to name
the new facility for Priest (Staff, "Intercom" 1987, p.1). This was seven years after Priest’s retirement as chancellor.

The BJPIED opened in 1989. It housed the Job Training Center, the Business and Professional Institute, the North Texas Small Business Development Center, The Center for Government Contracting, and a Business Incubator Program of which only one, the Business and Professional Institute, was not on grant money (Hughes, 1994). This was viewed by many in the District as beyond responsible risk taking, and indeed in recent years several of the programs have lost much of their funding. In 1992, even the one division funded by hard money, The Business and Professional Institute, was reorganized and all of the credit course marketing functions were returned 100 percent to the campuses. Most of the staff who had supported that function were absorbed into the campus operations (Hughes, 1994).

A major focus of the programs in the Bill J. Priest Institute for Economic Development is technical/occupational education, with a goal of greater interaction with business and industry, a concept Priest had been promoting most of his career. He believed "there shouldn’t be two arenas, the academic environment and the world of work. They should be brought together and be almost one ... a college without walls using business and industry as training labs" (Hoover, 1976, p.1AA). El Centro College was a pioneer in this area
being among the first to offer on-site, in-plant training for a hospital on basic management, work simplification, problem solving and goal setting (Ogilvie, et al, 1971).

When asked about the controversial views of the BJPIED's perceived lack of success because of the loss of a large percentage of its grant funding, Priest explained, "Anything on soft money during government downturn is going to take it on the nose" (Priest, October 26, 1994). The concepts of the program seem to be on target for future directions and the current District administration is hopeful the programs will reach their full potential (Priest, October 26, 1994; Hughes, 1994).
CHAPTER V

CONTINUING INFLUENCES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

From the most basic beginnings of purchasing land to later innovations like the establishment of telecourses as a delivery system, the decisions of Bill Priest still influence the Dallas County Community College District today and will into the future. Data indicate no decision was made without careful thought, with insight and far reaching plans. Translating that dream into reality began with land purchases and site selection.

Although a 1980 D Magazine article criticized the Dallas County Community College District for driving up per student costs by having two under used campuses, Cedar Valley College in Lancaster, and Northlake College in Irving (Bancroft, 1980), the land had been purchased and facilities built to take the colleges into the future (Priest, July 5, 1994; McDermott, July 19, 1994). Priest explained, "We knew Dallas would continue to grow and we wanted facilities that would hold up for a long time" (Priest, July 5, 1994). The Board and Priest noted the limitations of other community colleges who shortsightedly had sold off what seemed to be "extra" land (McDermott, July 19, 1994). It was foresighted to plan for "an entire District, full blown" (Mittelstet, September 29, 1994).
Thirty years hence, every campus is expanding its facilities due to growth in enrollments and plans for new programs, but none is stymied by inadequate land on which to grow.

The overriding, most significant of all those plans was the one to make the Dallas system one of comprehensive community colleges when all that the Board had sought was a junior college. At that time, California was the bellwether state in two-year higher education (Denier, 1986). Priest brought experience with him from that innovative environment to Texas as well as his own vision that "the comprehensive community college is the educational device best equipped to cope with contemporary technical/occupational training needs of both trainees and employers" (Priest, May, 1967). A study published twenty years later continued to support and project that vision outlining that with the complexities of technology even in the service industries "a majority of all new jobs will require post secondary education" but not to the bachelor level (Johnston, 1990, p.127). Higher education has left the age of the university and entered the age of the community college, (Diener, 1986). At the beginning of his career, Priest saw in the junior/community college what he believed to be the future of higher education for the workforce, and he saw Dallas as a place ready to support that innovative direction (Newport, 1981; Priest, July 5, 1994).
Planning for physical growth is an easier task than planning a curriculum that will take graduates productively into the future. Pivotal to that success is creating a dynamic curriculum with an environment which stimulates purposeful changes that keep pace with the times. From the beginning faculty were encouraged from the time of hire to develop new ideas in teaching and curriculum (Johnston, 1988). That environment exists today, as is exemplified by the continual addition of new teaching approaches like the Coordinated Studies Program at Brookhaven College, which brings together five core courses taught by a team of teachers to a block of students, under an umbrella theme that changes each semester (Brookhaven College Catalog, 1994). Of course, some of those early innovations still hold true today. Although the content has been continually improved and new topics added as needed the human development courses that incorporated counseling tools into an academic format are still taught (Creamer, November 4, 1994; DCCCD Catalog, 1994).

Another continuing influence is the partnership Priest formed with the media. That momentum still affects the District's relationship with both the electronic and print media (Robinson, August 26, 1994). Even in the light of trends toward investigative and often sensationalized news reporting, "the openness and honesty established by Priest still serves the District well" (Robinson, August 26, 1994).
The working relationship and governance format Priest established with the Board is another relationship still intact (Mittelstet, September 29, 1994). The current Board is actively learning and implementing "The Policy Governance Model" developed by John Carver (Mittelstet, October 26, 1994). This model embodies the philosophy under which Priest and the Board operated during his tenure (Mittelstet, October 26, 1994). At the heart of the model is that the board formulates policy and works exclusively through its sole employee, the top administrator of the organization (Carver, 1990).

This governance model does not exclude faculty, but as before allows them to speak through the chancellor and helps to ensure academic freedom by protecting the faculty from the micro management of Board members (Carver, 1990). There are many governance models that allow Board members to make decisions about daily operational items and to visit classrooms and make decisions about instruction (Mittelstet, October 25, 1994; Parnell, March 28, 1995). Also for faculty, there remains no rank. In 1992, however, the Board passed a policy giving an option to faculty members to call themselves either instructors or professors, (Faculty Council minutes, Sept. and Nov., 1992). Previously, the term "professor" had been disallowed because it had been viewed as a title attained through tenure track at the university level, but there is no distinction between a
professor or an instructor in the DCCCD. It is purely preference.

Faculty members have always had, and continue to have, a strong voice on issues in the District, especially those related to instruction, but Priest did not change course just because a coalition of faculty members questioned his direction. That is the charge of being a leader, to make decisions based on factual data and input from faculty and administrators and then to have the courage to stand by that decision (Newport, 1981). That was fortunate for the District in the area of instructional television. Beginning with one government course in 1972, the District had moved to the "vanguard of telecommunications evolution in higher education" (Powell, 1981) by the time Priest retired. Today, the Dallas County Community College District is the most successful telecourse producer in the country being self-supporting and netting $700,000 in academic year 1993-1994 (Quinn, October 4, 1994). In addition to canned telecourses, DC-NET, Dallas County Community College District Network, was established in 1991, which allows the broadcast of live interactive classes to all campuses simultaneously or to any receiver site. Any company, school or college can become a receiver site by purchasing the low cost specialized equipment (Neal, 1991). The District is well placed to become a leader in the growing trend of distance learning (Quinn, October 4, 1994).
The influence of Bill J. Priest is prevalent in the Dallas County Community College District, and will be for many years to come. His influence also is present in any community college that has an associate degree nursing program, or provides assessment, academic advisement, and career counseling to its students, or serves any portion of its students through televised courses. The influence of Bill Priest has permeated community colleges throughout the country directly or indirectly through his founding and development of the Dallas County Community College District, which has served as a model in two-year institutions of higher education.
CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

Bill J. Priest brought to the Dallas County Junior College planning table all of the elements that transformed it into the Dallas County Community College District and placed it in the forefront of the national community college movement. He drew from his past experiences, his vision of directions for the future and from his network of other talented, forward thinking, higher education professionals, who, in turn, brought their experiences and ideas.

In an article Priest wrote on education for a collective history of Dallas, he attributes the uniqueness of Dallas educational systems to people:

Whatever the future brings, public and private education at all levels does play and will continue to play an important role in the community life of Dallas. This is a city whose greatness has been influenced more by creative, imaginative, hard working people than by geographical or historical factors. The evolution of education to whatever position of eminence it enjoys here has been profoundly influenced by the same kind of force--creative, imaginative, hard working people (Priest, 1976, p.205).

The establishment, development and subsequent success of the Dallas County Community College District is predicated on that principle with Bill Priest being the primary driving force. When he met with the Board as a
consultant, when all they had was a dream and some money, he found a group of dynamic, successful business and civic leaders with whom he could forge ahead.

In a mutual quest for quality they purchased ample land, built beautiful, award winning as well as utilitarian facilities, and attempted to hire the best administrators and faculty they could find. Priest directed the development of a curriculum that would guide underprepared students through remedial courses, make students marketable and successful in business and industry through the technical/vocational programs, and give an excellent foundation to students who wanted to transfer to advanced studies. He philosophically and budgetarily supported a superior counseling unit to assist students in every way possible to ensure them a successful college experience from career selection to courses on how to study.

With the basics in place and all seven colleges in operation, creativity did not end. He knew for a stellar educational system it was imperative to try to respond to the needs of students and the community prior to a demand reaching a crisis. Priest realized that the outlying areas of Dallas County had unserved students and that the growing complexities of city life often precluded a person finding time to go to a campus to take a course. He therefore took the risk and launched the instructional television program, the most technologically advanced delivery system in higher
education today, and ever changing with the rapidity of advances in the industry.

Ever present in the planning, establishment, and development of the Dallas County Community College District was Priest's external and internal marketing expertise. He worked diligently to keep the media informed and a friend of the District. He melded the relationship of Chancellor and Board of Trustees into a partnership with the overall good of the District and its students at the core.

Dallas was an opportune situation for any two-year college administrator, but according to every person interviewed for this study, Priest was the right man for the job at that time in community college history. It is fortunate for the community college movement that all of those elements, a city leadership willing to work and support the development of a top quality educational system, a citizenry willing to pay well for that development and a visionary, came together at the onset of the growth surge of two-year colleges and found an experienced educational professional to lead them.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions are warranted:
1. Bill Priest established the Dallas County Community College District as a national model of a multi-college district.

2. Bill Priest was instrumental in affecting the change from junior college to comprehensive community college as the standard for two-year higher education institutions.

3. Bill Priest played a significant role in setting the national agenda for the community college movement through his long-term participation in a leadership capacity in the American Association of Junior and Community Colleges and through the establishment and selection of the leadership of the League for Innovation.

4. Bill Priest was instrumental in the creation of the Associate Degree in Nursing.

5. Bill Priest was a national leader in the establishment and development of telecourses as an instructional delivery system.

6. Bill Priest was the forerunner in using public relations and establishing it as a credible tool for institutions of higher learning.

7. Bill Priest brought the concept of counseling and advising as a vital part of student success to the two-year colleges in Texas.
APPENDIX A

RESUME OF BILL J. PRIEST
BILL JASON PRIEST

EDUCATION
A.B., M.A., Ed.D. — University of California
Post-Doctoral Study at Columbia University

EXPERIENCE
July, 1965 to 1981, Chancellor, Dallas County Community College District

1963-1965, Superintendent, Los Rios Junior College District, Sacramento, California

1955-1963, Superintendent/President, American River Junior College District, Sacramento

1948-1955, Assistant Superintendent, Orange Coast College District, Costa Mesa, California

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS
Chairman, Board of Directors, American Council on Education (1978-79)

Chairman, Board of Directors, North Park Savings Association

Board of Directors, Servicemen’s Opportunity College

Board of Directors and Past President, League for Innovation in the Community College

Member, Finance Center Advisory Committee, Education Commission of the States

Past President, American Association of Community and Junior Colleges

Past President, California Junior College Association

CIVIC ACTIVITIES
Board of Directors, United Way of Metropolitan Dallas

Board of Directors, YMCA of Dallas

Board of Directors, City Club of Dallas

Member, Salesmanship Club of Dallas
Member, Junior League Advisory Board

Higher Education Task Force of Goals for Dallas

Vice President, Dallas Council on World Affairs

Leadership Dallas Advisory Council

Advisory Board of the Board of Trustees, Dallas Symphony Orchestra (1973-74 season)

Board of Trustees, Dallas Symphony Association

Member, Southwestern Medical Foundation Development Council

HONORS & AWARDS

Who's Who in American College and University Administration

Who's Who in America, Thirty-Seventh Edition

Personalities of the South

Leaders in Education, Fifth Edition


Press Club "Headliner of the Year" 1978

North Dallas Chamber of Commerce "Award for Excellence" 1977

Athletic Hall of Fame, Stockton, California (Elected 1976)

Man of the Year, San Juan, California, 1959

File Copy
District Public Information Office
Dallas County Community College District
APPENDIX B

PUBLICATIONS OF BILL J. PRIEST
"Faculty-Administrator Relationships" -- American Association of Junior College Journal, March 1964, pg. 4

"Selecting a College President" -- American Association of Junior College Journal, April 1965, pg. 5

"On the Threshold of Greatness" -- American Association of Junior College Journal, September 1966, pg. 6

"The First Two Years" -- The Intercollegian, Orientation Issue 1966, pg. 5


"The Financing and Control of Community Colleges" -- Compact (Education Commission of the States), December 1968, pg. 20

"Community College Outlook for the 70's" -- Compact (Education Commission of the States), August 1970, p. 34 (co-author with H. Deon Holt)


"The Dollar Squeeze and the Community College" -- Compact, (Education Commission of the States), April 1972

"Vocations Day -- An Effective Group Counseling Device" -- American Association of Junior College Journal, (Issues during late 40's or early 50's)

"Junior College Public Relations" -- Nation's Schools, (issue during late 40's or early 50's)
"Administration of Philippine Education Under the Commonwealth Government" -- unpublished M.A. Thesis

"Philippine Education in Transition" -- unpublished Doctoral Dissertation
A Flying Start Near: quick development seen for county college (1966, May 28). The Dallas Morning News. 8A.


Bill Priest - man for the job. (1964, August 16). The Sacramento Union. p. 2C.

Bill Priest of River College - here's one man nobody ever forgets. (1960, May 15). - The Sacramento Union. p.30


Board of Trustees. (1965, August 4). Minutes of meeting, Dallas County Junior College District. District Offices, Dallas, Texas.

Board of Trustees. (1965, November 2). Minutes of meeting, Dallas County Junior College District, District Offices, Dallas, Texas.


Brookhaven College Catalog. (1994). Dallas: Dallas County Community College District.


Campbell, R. (March 23, 1995). District Publication Specialist, Dallas County Community College District. Personal interview with author, Dallas County Community College District Office, Dallas, Texas.


Chancellor of DCCCD heads education group, (1978, October 14). The Dallas Morning News. p.4A.


Creamer, D. (November 4, 1994). Dean of Educational and Student Services, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Personal electronic mail interview with the author. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blackburg, Virginia.

Dallas County Community College District. (no date) *The Dallas Times Herald*. In *News Clippings*. I.

Dallas County Community College District Catalog. (1980). Dallas: Dallas County Community College District.


Educational Opportunities for War Veterans. (1972, March 22). *Congressional Record-Senate*. S4503.

Eggleston, K. (February 8, 1995). District Coordinator of ADN Nursing Program, El Centro College. Personal interview with author, El Centro College, Dallas, Texas.

Faculty Council. (1992, October 2). Minutes of meeting, Dallas County Community College District. District Offices, Dallas, Texas.

Faculty Council. (1992, November 16). Minutes of meeting, Dallas County Community College District. District Offices, Dallas, Texas.

Flint, J. (December 6, 1994). Professor and coordinator, ADN Program Brookhaven College. Personal interview with the author. Brookhaven College, Farmers Branch, Texas.


Fulton, S. (March 20, 1995). Professor of Electronics Technology, Mountain View College. Personal interview with author, Mountain View College, Dallas, Texas.


McDermott, M. (July 19, 1994). Former Board member, Dallas County Community College District Board of Trustees. Personal interview with the author. McDermott's home, Dallas, Texas.


Mittelstet, S. (September 29, 1994). President of Richland College. Personal interview with the author. Richland College, Richardson, Texas.

Mittelstet, S. (October 20, 1994). President of Richland College. Personal interview with the author. Richland College, Richardson, Texas.


Poised for greatness. (1965, December 20). The Dallas Morning News. p.4D.


Priest, B.J. (1964, March). Faculty administrator relationships. Junior College Journal. 34. pp.4-8.


Priest, B. J. (1980, July 8). Request for retirement presented to Dallas County Community College Board of Trustees. (Available in Bill Priest’s private files).


Priest, B. J. (July 5, 1994). Chancellor Emeritus of the Dallas County Community College District. Personal interview with the author. Richland College, Richardson, Texas.
Priest, B. J. (August 2, 1994). Chancellor Emeritus of the Dallas County Community College District. Personal interview with the author. Priest’s home, Dallas, Texas.

Priest, B. J. (September 7, 1994). Chancellor Emeritus of the Dallas County Community College District. Personal interview with the author. Richland College, Richardson, Texas.

Priest, B. J. (October 26, 1994). Chancellor Emeritus of the Dallas County Community College District. Personal interview with the author. Priest’s home, Dallas, Texas.


Priest resigns from Los Rios. (1965, August 8). The Sacramento Union. p.2D.


Rippey, D. (July 21, 1994). Retired professor, Community College Leadership Program, University of Texas, Austin, Texas. Personal interview with the author. Rippey’s home, Austin, Texas.

Rippey, G. (July 21, 1994). Retired Dean of the Rio Grande Campus, Austin Community College, Austin, Texas. Personal interview with the author. Rippey’s home, Austin, Texas.
Robinson, C. (August 26, 1994). Director of Public Information, Dallas County Community College District. Personal interview with the author. Crockett's Restaurant, Dallas, Texas.


Shepicka, L. (1965, August 5). First President selected for junior college. The Dallas Morning News. p. 3A.


Weaver, G. (March 9, 1995). Professor of Biology, Eastfield College. Personal interview with author, Eastfield College, Mesquite, Texas.


Whitson, J. R. (March 10, 1995). Supervisor of Learning Resources Center and Media, School of Nursing, University of Texas at Arlington. Personal interview with author, his home, Keller, Texas.

Wright, J. (1978, April 21). Seventh campus. The Dallas Morning News. p.4D.