

A HISTORY OF ERIE COMMUNITY COLLEGE 1946 to 1974

by

President James E. Shenton

## CHAPTER I

My first contact with the community college movement really pre-dates our beginning here at Erie Community College in 1946. It came about as I was pursuing graduate studies at Cornell University and one of my courses involved the use of a committee report concerning the Regent's Post-War Plan for Higher Education. This is World War II post-war plan. In that plan, the Board of Regents had envisioned a community college, two-year technical college system in New York State that numbered 22 institutions. Eleven of these institutions were to be in New York City, 11 were to be upstate in New York. In this way, they always kept the balance between the New York City area and upstate New York. The Regent's post-war plan envisioned an elaborate spread of these schools across New York State. In 1946 when this plan was finally put into effect, the 22 schools had been reduced to simply five and these were five Institutes of Applied Arts and Sciences that were to be located in New York City, White Plains, Binghamton, Utica, and Buffalo. The enrollment was balanced out in this manner -- that the five schools would have a total of 4,500 students -- 2,250 in New York City, 500 in White Plains, 500 in Binghamton, 500 in Utica, and 750 at the Buffalo school. This plan was put into effect in

April, 1946 when the state legislature passed the empowering legislation. This was my first introduction to the two-year schools as they first came into being following World War II. I was fortunate to be in on the ground floor of what appeared to be a new movement. My professor at Cornell University, Dr. Emerson, had been secretary of the state committee, thus, we had access to the minutes of the very early planning of these two-year schools. I was fortunate in this respect in that it gave me a connection that finally lead to my being employed by the Institute in Buffalo in December of 1946. Our first director was Richard R. Dry who had been formerly principal of the Technical High School in Buffalo. Mr. Dry came on board in October, 1946 as the first employee of this new school known as the New York State Institute of Applied Arts and Sciences at Buffalo. At this time, we were under the control of the State Education Department because in 1946, the State University had not been created. Mr. Dry proceeded to hire a small staff of people which numbered about 12 by the time January 1, 1947 rolled around. It was our responsibility in those very early days to put together the curricula for eight new programs that were to be offered at the Buffalo Institute. We also had the responsibility of securing equipment, of planning the renovation of the building at 1685 Elmwood Avenue -- the former office building of the

Pierce-Arrow Motor Car Company. Buffalo was famous for the Pierce-Arrow motor car and we occupied what was the administrative office building located directly on Elmwood Avenue. At that time, the building did not have any walls inside -- it was an office building primarily and it was our responsibility to plan the renovation of the building so that it could be used as a school situation.

The eight programs I mentioned above consisted of Construction Technology, Dental Hygiene, Electrical Technology, Mechanical Technology, Food Service Administration, Chemical Technology, Metallurgical Technology, and Optical Technology which we now call Ophthalmic Dispensing. During the spring of 1947, additional people were hired -- many to head up these departments: Dr. Ernest Notar, who later became President of Niagara Community College, was the first department head in Construction Technology. Dr. George Skinner was the first department head in Dental Hygiene. Mr. Clarence Bensman was the Head in Electrical Technology. Mr. Otto Guenther was Head of the Mechanical and Metallurgical Departments. The Food Service Department was headed up by Mrs. Grace Hunt, the Chemical Technology Department by Mr. Rex Billings, and our Optical Department by Mr. Frank Brandstetter. These were the first eight department heads who came on board in the spring of 1947. During

the spring of 1947, our efforts, our energies, were all directed to getting the school ready to take in the first class in the fall of 1947. This required a great deal of work on the part of everyone that was on board at the time. At that time, we had also hired our head librarian, Mrs. Ruth Lake, or Mrs. MacDonald as she was later known. The staff at that time had the responsibility of putting together the courses of study for each curriculum. We also had the responsibility -- the two of us -- Mr. Panton, who headed the Mathematics Department at that time, and myself to do a lot of the layout work for dividing up the building into the various classroom and laboratory areas.

At this time, we were going through various war surplus warehouses looking for equipment that would fit into our eight programs at the Buffalo Institute. It is hard to believe that what we had in January of 1947 could ever be turned into an operating Institute by the fall of that year. The basement was entirely empty, there was nothing there. We had one or two lights -- it was a very dark basement -- and I recall on a number of occasions when people went down into the basement, they would pick up a block of wood or something handy and throw it out into the darkness to scare away the rats. You could hear them scurry around as we made our way across this dark basement. It didn't seem at that time that we could possibly put this

building into shape. The first floor had office spaces which were very easy to convert into departmental offices and laboratories. Our library was on this first floor and we did not have to do anything with that. But... when we got to the second and third floors, these were simply long, open rooms that had to be completely divided by block walls. This meant we had to sublet contracts. Contracts were let for heating. Contracts were let for lighting. Contracts were let for masons to construct the rooms, the classroom walls. We had to get contracts for putting up the lighting, the various aspects -- the wall boards, the chalk boards -- all that material had to be planned and put into process by a group of people who are essentially educators and faculty people. It presented a real problem, a real challenge for all of us.

During this springtime, we also had many truckloads of material come in and always the truck driver would come in and want to know who would unload this equipment. Well, there wasn't anybody there but us. So, the call would go out to put on our old clothes. We would go to the back door of the building and there would be a long semi-trailer loaded with chairs, tables, all manner of equipment that had been salvaged from warehouses across the state. It was our job to unload it because the truck

driver was not obligated to do so. We did it. There was more than one bruised hand or foot and a cut or two.

While this was going on, the contracts were let for putting up the block walls on the second and third floors. This took a lot longer than we expected and by the time September rolled around, we were still not ready for the students to come in. We had begun to staff the library -- the library books were coming in -- things were taking shape in that area. We also had to open the bookstore. Mr. Panton and myself were the first two persons to run the bookstore. We did this also as part of our job.

Finally, in September 1947, we thought we were ready. We had to open the school because time was running out on us even though we were not prepared for the students to come in. In the eight curricula, we accepted about 60 students in each program. We had somewhere in the vicinity of 450 students in that first class. The students were quite shocked, I am sure, when they came into the building to find that in many areas the block walls were not even up for the classrooms. In some places, there was simply a chalk line on the floor that indicated where the wall would go. In other areas, the block wall was up -- maybe five courses of block -- and we had the brick masons laying up blocks at the same time that the students were in the classroom.

We had a rather hilarious incident reported in the social studies class one day. They were talking about labor unions and the class was in the middle of the discussion when suddenly the brick mason up on the scaffolding overhead cut into the classroom discussion to talk about labor unions and how they affected the brick masons. This was a little extra that the students or the faculty members had not planned on. But, it just showed you the involvement of not only the faculty but also the brick masons that were working at that time.

Laying up the block walls also presented a real problem at times when the blocks had to be cut to make certain fits in the wall. The masons used a large emery wheel to cut the blocks. If anyone has been around construction work and knows the sound of a block being cut by an emery wheel, you can realize that the screeching that came about put an end... a complete stop... to all classroom instruction in that area while the blocks were being cut. This is just one idea of the kind of conditions we started with in the very beginning of the Institute in Buffalo.

At this time, we were not ready to serve students in the cafeteria. The cafeteria equipment had not been completely installed and that gives rise to a recollection of mine that took place in the spring of 1947 when Mrs. Grace Hunt and I were in New York City for a period of four weeks. It was our job to

go out to the Bethpage Navy Warehouse on Long Island and secure equipment not only for the Buffalo Institute but also for all the two-year schools in the state -- the four other Institutes of Applied Arts and Sciences as well as the six Agricultural and Technical Institutes which were already in operation. Mrs. Hunt and I spent the four weeks in New York and out at Bethpage tagging all kinds of equipment but mainly kitchen and cafeteria equipment in this huge installation which had been provided by the Navy. It was our job to see that the equipment was disconnected, that it was sorted, that it was assigned to the various schools, that it was loaded on trucks, and that it was dispatched to the various two-year colleges in New York State. This is an experience that I am sure Mrs. Hunt and I would never forget. We had to get up at 5:00 a.m. to catch the Long Island Railway in order to get out to Bethpage in time to go to work at 8:00 a.m.

Since the cafeteria equipment was coming in that late, it was not possible for us to have the food service area in operation by fall, 1947. Consequently, we did set up a temporary cafeteria in one of the physics labs for the students during the first few months. I guess while I am reminiscing I could also go back a little bit further and tell you that the story was that when Mr. Dry came on board in the fall of 1946, there was no

furniture for him and the only place he had to sit -- at least the story goes -- was on an old nail keg that he found there. We were also told that at that time there were pigeons flying around up on the third floor of the building. This may be true ... I don't know... but I never saw a pigeon when I came there.

Getting back to the fall term of 1947 when the students were actually enrolled in classes, it is of interest to note now that then there was no tuition. At that time we were under the State Education Department and higher education was tuition-free in New York State. Consequently, our students did not pay any tuition at that time. They did, however, pay for their books and a student activity fee which was to cover the newspaper, the yearbook, and the various student activity programs that we had. It is also interesting to note that in the very beginning, the programs in Construction, Electrical, Mechanical, Chemical and Metallurgical Technologies were all under what was known as the "Co-op Program." This is Cooperative Employment Program where students would spend part of the school year on a job and part back in school. Because of this, we had to divide our school year into four quarters. The student would spend over the two-year period, six quarters in school and alternate for two quarters in school or on the job. Thus, at the end of his two years, a student would have completed six quarters of

instruction and two quarters of a cooperative-type of employment. The jobs were found by the school. Students would be interviewed by industry and placed on a job. They would work for three months -- back in school for three months -- work for three months -- and back in school again. In this way, the student was given an excellent opportunity to find out whether they liked the type of work they had selected. It also was a great motivating factor for the student to do better in his school work when he came back having seen the application of some of the school work, some of the theory he was learning, seeing that applied actually in industry. We felt the Co-op Program was extremely successful. It provided the students with not only the experience but it also provided them with a little money which was also needed to buy books and things while they were at school.

I think the first year of school after the construction was completed and all equipment was hooked up, connected, etc. was completed in a rather good style and that we started in the spring of 1948 interviewing for the incoming class (our second year in operation). We were to take-in approximately 400 students again and with some attrition with our first-year students, meet our top enrollment figure mandated by the state of 750 students. With our incoming class, the Class of 1950

(because the first class in 1947 was known as the Class of 1949) we were really in full-gear, the school was operating, all the programs were going, our equipment was installed, our books were in, everything seemed to be going very well at that time. The Co-op Program had been initiated and was working successfully with many companies all across the Niagara Frontier.

Before leaving 1947, there were a couple of other items that had come to mind that I think should be recorded at this time. First was an oversight on my part. A very important person who was on-board in the fall of 1946 was our Assistant Director, Mr. Laurence E. Spring. He played a very big part in the initiation of the program into the Niagara Frontier. Mr. Spring was named Assistant Director and also Registrar and Director of the Evening Program. Later on, he became the second President of the college.

There are a couple of other incidents that took place in the spring of 1947 that I am sure that those of us involved will never forget. As you might expect, at this time we were sort of "distant cousins" as far as the state was concerned. We had just been put into operation. We were on special payrolls... we did not have regular pay periods like the rest of the state employees had. Consequently, our paychecks would come in at any time and sometimes there might be three or four weeks delay

before we got our paychecks. This was because we were on a special payroll in Albany and just had to get it when they were ready to give it to us.

There was also another incident that happened in the spring of 1947 concerning our purchasing. Recalling that all of our work had to go through Albany because we were fully state-funded at that time, it meant that our purchases all had to be processed through the central processing office in Albany, New York. This posed a real problem because, again, we were an extra burden on the purchasing department and as the end of the fiscal year came close, we were told by the purchasing department that they could not process any of our purchase orders. It meant that we could not encumber the money in the 1946 State Budget. However, we were told that we could send down some secretaries and some technical help and we could occupy the purchasing department on weekends and we would do the actual writing of the purchase orders. Consequently, one weekend in March, 1947 about eight of us from Buffalo, including a couple of secretaries, a group from Binghamton, from Utica, White Plains, and from Brooklyn, descended on Albany Friday night. Saturday morning we took over the purchasing department that was not working over the weekend. Under the supervision of two or three people from the Albany Purchasing Department, we took our requisition lists,

had the secretaries write purchase orders for all of the equipment for not only our school, but also the other four schools. In this way, it was possible for us to encumber the monies before the end of the fiscal year. This operation was carried out on two different weekends. We would work all day Saturday, all day Sunday. Late Sunday night, we would catch the train back to Buffalo ready to go to work again Monday morning. This kind of operation was carried on in order for us to expedite all of our purchase orders and get the money encumbered before April 1, 1947. We did this with no compensatory time: there was no extra pay. It was just part of the job that everybody felt had to be done at that time.

Another point of interest may be the layout of the building on Elmwood Avenue. Of particular interest... and what the students got a big kick out of ... was the large, arched room on the second floor. It was a huge, two-story room with an arched ceiling that had been the cafeteria for the Pierce-Arrow workers. They came from the factory through tunnels into the administration building and then went up to the second floor for their lunch. This became our auditorium. But... the arched roof had been declared unsafe so there had to be steel columns and beams put up to support the roof of this huge, vaulted, room. This room became affectionately known by all the students as

"Girder Hall." It not only provided us with an auditorium, but a place for dances, a place for exhibits, and many of the activities student-wise were carried on in old "Girder Hall."

One of the activities that I would like to mention at this time was the school newspaper. It was entitled in those days, the Buffalo Technical Institute News, the BTI News. It came out September 29, 1947 with the very first edition. By the way, we have copies of most of the student papers (in the Archives) dating back to that very first issue of the very first volume.

In connection with this, I think it would be well to explain something about the nickname the college had at the time. Miss Cornell, who was head of the Communication Skills (which later became the English Department), had suggested that down the street a few blocks was the teachers' college and they went under the name of Buffalo State Teachers' College, BSTC. Since we were a sister institution under the State Education Department, it was considered that we could trade on that and become BSTI, Buffalo State Technical Institute. Many people thought that this was the official name of the college. It was carried in our own newspaper; it was carried in a lot of memoranda that went out. In fact, one of the banners we have in the Archives Room today is Buffalo State Technical Institute. This was in essence a nickname and not the official name of the

school. The school was officially known as the New York State Institute of Applied Arts and Sciences at Buffalo. I think this clears up some misconceptions that a lot of people had concerning the name of the school.

## CHAPTER II

Nineteen forty-eight saw another major change in the organizational structure of all public higher education in New York State. Originally, the Board of Regents, the State Education Department as the administrative arm, controlled all public higher education in the State of New York. This meant that the teachers' colleges, the six Agricultural and Technical Institutes, our five Institutes of Applied Arts and Sciences, all of these schools were under the State Education Department and under the Board of Regents. In 1948, Governor Thomas E. Dewey created on paper the State University of New York. And why I say it was on paper is, because all that was done was to collect all of the public institutions of higher education in the state and simply say this is the State University of New York. All of the institutions I just mentioned became a part of that higher education system. The Institute of Buffalo was one of many that became now an integral and positive part of the State University. I might say that Governor Dewey actually forced this change through. The Board of Regents resisted it. When the new State University was created, there was a separate board of trustees established. There was competition, some antagonism, between the Board of Trustees of the State

University and the Board of Regents. The Board of Regents was still the supreme governing body of all education in the State of New York. There was a certain amount of feelings between the State Education Department and the State University and that feeling really existed for a great many years that the State University should not have been separated from the State Education Department. However, this was the plan I guess proved to be successful. It did provide New York State and the residents of New York State with eventually a very large and very notable system of higher education.

It might be mentioned, speaking about the residents of New York State, that at this time all of those units were tuition-free. There was no tuition paid by any student going to a public institution of higher education. They did have to pay activity fees and, of course, buy their book supplies and that type of thing; but there was no tuition until several years later.

It also should be mentioned that a person who was very instrumental in the establishment of the two-year school and was a great friend in Albany was Dr. Lawrence L. Jarvie. Under the State Education Department, he was an Assistant Commissioner for higher education in charge of the two-year schools. When the State University was formed, he moved over into the administrative area of the State University and became the

executive dean for two-year schools. Dr. Jarvie played a very, very important part in the establishment of two-year technical colleges in the State of New York.

Another event that was of great interest to us in Buffalo was the dedication of the Institute at 1685 Elmwood. This took place on January 27, 1949 --almost two years after the school had started. This was probably due to the fact of the change from the State Education Department of the State University. On that date in January, 1949, Dr. Alvin C. Eurich, who was then the first president of the State University of New York, came to Buffalo and presented the Institute with what is the closest thing we have to a charter. It is simply a document which excerpts the Education Law creating the State University and the two-year colleges. Attached to that is a pen that was used by Governor Dewey in signing this declaration. As I say, this is probably the closest thing we have to a charter and it hangs on the wall in our present Archives Room.

Also in 1949 after two years of operation, we saw the first commencement. The Class of 1949 was graduated on September 29, 1949. It seems an odd date but if you recall the Co-op Program using eleven out of the twelve months of the year, starting in September, 1947, it took us almost two years to complete the program. Consequently, our first graduation held September 29,

1949 in Kleinhans Music Hall. There were 323 graduates in the class. The first commencement speaker was Dr. Lewis Wilson who was with the State Education Department and then a strong advocate of technical education in the State of New York. Dr. Wilson was very instrumental in the Regents Post-War Plan in setting up the two-year institutes. It was very appropriate that Dr. Wilson was the first commencement speaker and he was introduced by Dr. Jarvie who was then with the State University system.

The year 1950 saw another law enacted in the State of New York which was to have a great impact on our Institute. I have reference to what is now known as the Community College Law. It is Article 126 of the State Education Law which defines community colleges within the State framework. It sets up the method of operation; the fact that there will be nine Trustees of the College. Five of these Trustees will be appointed by the local sponsor and four will be appointed by the state or the governor. It spells out the duties of the trustees. It spells out the financial arrangements for community colleges and briefly it is this, that the operating costs of the community colleges shall be split three ways: one-third by student tuition, one-third by sponsors' donations (mostly that is the counties) and one-third by the state. The capital costs which

had to do with equipment and buildings were to be split fifty-fifty: half by the sponsoring agency and half by the state. This Community College Law was going to pose somewhat of a problem for us and the fact that the five Institutes of Applied Arts and Sciences under the State University were completely state-supported. However, the problem lay in the fact that the community colleges were sponsored by the local governments and as I said in most cases, counties. One has to realize that we had been in operation for some three or four years prior to this and the local sponsor, the county, had not put one penny into the running of the school. In fact, we were not under the jurisdiction of the county, the local sponsor, in any way. So, it immediately created the problem of a local sponsor wanting to accept the obligation of the Institute. This led to a two or three-year period where we were hanging in limbo -- we were hanging by our thumb nails really because it took quite a lot of time for the local sponsors to accept the sponsorship of the Institutes of Applied Arts and Sciences. In our situation in County of Erie, Erie County was "not happy" to accept the sponsorship. They felt they had never been in the field of education and felt they did not want to get into it at this time. I think the other four Institutes of Applied Arts and Sciences were having some of the same problems. Broome County

resisted the implementation of the community college in that county. So we went through a period of two or three years in which we really did not know if the school would remain in existence or not. Each year it would be put off: The decision would be delayed as I guess political maneuverings went on at the state level and the county level. There had been a great deal of letter writing, lobbying by the five Institutes to Albany explaining why we should remain under the State University System, and frankly, at that time this is what we wished to do. We were familiar with the operation and of course, having a new sponsor with new financial arrangements did pose somewhat of a threat. During 1950-1953, we were in this state of limbo and people did not know what to expect. We had some people leave our faculty because they were not sure they were going to have a job next year. Finally it boiled down to almost a directive. Mr. Frank Moore, who was Lieutenant Governor and a very powerful figure (a native of Kenmore), finally came to the Board of Supervisors. (At that time Erie County was not under the charter system but had 54 Town Supervisors running the County government.) Mr. Moore came to Buffalo to Erie County in 1953 and told them that the alternative was either you take the school or the school will be closed. It became almost an ultimatum. The state had carried us for two to three years and

then they finally said... either get under the county sponsorship as a community college or the school will close. Mr. Moore came to Erie County with what I would call this ultimatum that the county must undertake the sponsorship of the Institute of Applied Arts and Sciences. This I am sure was done very reluctantly by Erie County. The County did not want any part of education. It was an extra financial burden for the County and they were not particularly happy about having to undertake it. But, they did. The faculty of the Institute was asked by Mr. Dry if they would like a representative at the first meeting of the County officers and new Board of Trustees of the Institute at Buffalo. I was fortunate to be elected as the faculty representative at this first meeting and I have a vivid recollection of this meeting with the County officials. Mr. Jacob Tick, County Comptroller was the chief fiscal officer and really spoke for Erie County at that time as the County Attorney and several others did. Dr. Jarvie was here at that time too. I recall very vividly Mr. Elmer Weil who was the County Attorney saying that he was there to officiate at the "shotgun wedding" between the College and the County. Of course, this was a completely different way of becoming a community college than some of the schools later. These counties actually petitioned the state to grant them the charters for community colleges in

their separate counties. The five Institutes were virtually forced under County sponsorship at that time. The only other alternative would have been to go out of existence. I think an understanding of this historical fact gives better understanding of the relationships that exist between the County and the College.

With the change of sponsorship of course came the change of name. The New York State Institute of Applied Arts and Sciences at Buffalo went out of existence and in its place the Erie County Technical Institute became the new name for the College. It should also be mentioned that Mr. Dry, the first director (this title was later changed to president) remained one year beyond the mandatory retirement age in order for him to facilitate the transfer of sponsorship from the State University to the local Erie County government. Following Mr. Dry's retirement in 1954, Mr. Spring, who had been the Assistant Director and Director of the Evening Division, became the second President of then Erie County Technical Institute.

During these years, there were two things that took place that had a direct bearing on our students. The first was the imposition of tuition. In September, 1953 for the first time, the students were charged tuition. This tuition at that time was \$250.00 per year. Also, the Classes of 1949 and 1950 did not

receive the Associate Degree. The Associate Degree was not awarded until the Class of 1951. There had been considerable talk in 1952 and 1953 about the fact that these students did not receive the Associate Degree. Therefore, through Albany it was decided that three or four special classes would be set up in the Evening Division allowing the graduates of these two classes to take two courses additional that would qualify them for the Associate Degree. This came under the operation of our Evening Division. Four evening classes were set up; notices were sent out to the graduates of 1949 and 1950 that the Associate Degree would be made retroactive to them upon successful completion of two of these four courses. I don't know how many graduates took advantage of it, but I am sure there was a considerable number who came back so they could qualify for the Associate Degree at that time.

Before leaving those very early years up until the presidency of Mr. Dry, There are a few other memories that come to mind. One was what might be called the faculty dining room. For several months, those of us in those early days (1947) used to "brown-bag it." We would bring our lunch and eat lunch around our desk. At that time, Mrs. Hunt who was head of the Food Service Department, rather appropriately suggested that we might better all throw in a little bit of money each week and she

would buy bread, the makings of sandwiches, tea, coffee and beverage; and she set up what was the first faculty dining room. It took place in what was eventually to become the student Health Clinic and the Receiving Room. They rigged up a little, old sink and we scrounged around and found an electric hot plate and a coffee maker and with this little bit of equipment, we started our first faculty dining area. It provided a source of relaxation, a little bit of comradery -- we could get together and joke a little bit -- and it was kind of like a family situation. Each week, one faculty member would be designated as the "preparer of the food" and another member would be designated as the "clean up person." This went on for a number of months providing us with a little bit of relaxation, a little bit of fun. It was kind of like a family get-together for us.

Also in those early days, we did have a number of student activities that I think should be mentioned. Even with the limited space we had, the students entered into the activities program with a great deal of enthusiasm. It should be recalled that at this time most of our male students were "older" -- they were mostly veterans returning from World War II -- and I guess even at that time you would call them activists because they did want to take part in student government and student council work. They were very active in helping formulate their own

programs. Some of the people in that time later became leaders in industry around Western New York. The yearbook that we have today at the North Campus, called the Arrow, started in 1949 and the name came partly from the fact that we were in the Pierce-Arrow Building, but also from the symbolism of an arrow -- something straight. I think that was the intention of what the Arrow was to be -- a straight, good annual book of the student work. The BTI News, which I mentioned earlier, later became The Institooter, then The Element, and most recently is now called Communique. These were all actively underwritten and engaged in by students at that time. There were a variety of clubs -- many of them attached to various curricula. There was a Chemical Technology Club, a Metallurgy Club, and a great many of the student activities centered around their vocational interest in their various departments. We also had a band at that time that directed by Mr. Lynn Claypool and Mr. Lloyd Olson. An Athletic Council was formed and even with the very -- really no -- athletic facilities, the Council did give direction to the starting of an athletic program. Mr. Norvin T. Whitmore, who later became Vice-President of the North Campus, was the first Athletic Director and did a great deal to bring varsity sports even in those first two or three years of the Institute. In basketball, Mr. Goliber who was in the Physics Department was

the coach and Mr. Fitzgibbons from the Electrical Department coached baseball. Tennis was coached by Mr. Davis of the Optical Department and golf was coached by Mr. Olson. Basketball was played in various gymnasiums that could be rented. Any of the local high school gyms would be used when they became available. One of our first rented facilities was the 174th Armory at Connecticut and Niagara Street. There was a game played there when the Varsity Basketball Team challenged the faculty to a game that first year. I think the game will be remembered by all who were there not by the quality of the basketball but by the very hilarious costumes that were worn by the faculty members -- such outfits as a hockey uniform, a football uniform, baby outfits -- all went to make up the faculty basketball team and a very pleasant evening. This took place before one of our regularly scheduled varsity basketball games. Speaking about athletics, our first real Athletic Director was Mr. Larry Katzman. He came on board in about 1951. I can still hear Mr. Dry talk about Katzman and his Kats and thus came the nickname for our athletic teams which still persists to this day -- The Erie Kats. Some years later, Mr. George Killian became the Athletic Director and our sports program really moved into high gear when he came on board. George later became the Executive

Director of the National Junior College Athletic Association, a position he still enjoys to this day.

Following Mr. Dry's retirement in 1954, Mr. Spring who had then become known as Dean, moved up to the Presidency. Mr. Spring was a very friendly and understanding type of person -- very popular and very easy to work for. At that same time, Dr. Ernest Notar was promoted from the Head of the Construction Department to Dean and Mr. Harry Panton was moved from the Mathematics Department to Head of the Construction Department. Shortly before that, Mr. Otto Guenther who was Head of the Mechanical and Metallurgical Department was asked to move to Troy, New York and supervise the start up of an Institute there. This eventually became known as the Hudson Valley Community College. With Mr. Guenther's promotion to the school in Troy, it left open the opportunity for promotion to the Head of the Mechanical Department and Metallurgical Department. I was fortunate enough to become Head of the Mechanical Department and Mr. Harry Cassidy became Head of the Metallurgical Department.

It would not be long before it became quite evident that our temporary buildings would not be sufficient to take care of the students that we had. More and more applicants were coming every year and we could accept only so many. The eight curricula were already filled and our Evening Division, which had proven

to be very popular, was also crowded. The Institute was really filling a vital need in the educational spectrum. Our goal had always been to train for the intermediate level of technical occupations -- that is, the large area between the professional person (an engineer, for example) and the skilled tradesman. Our graduates were to be very knowledgeable assistants for the professional practitioner. The fact was then, as now, that our graduates got the jobs.

Two new programs were started. The mechanical program had proven to be very popular and one phase of the mechanical program that we had stressed was the production planning area along with design and other areas of the mechanical program. We did have a big demand for work in planning, estimating, etc. in the mechanical field. Therefore, we did start a program known as Production Planning. Mr. Edward Fix became the Head of the Production Planning Program. Also, a program in Medical Office Assisting was started. Since this required a certain amount of chemistry as well as medical programs, Mr. Lloyd Olson from the Chemistry Department was the first Head of the Medical Office Assisting Program. These programs required a certain amount of new equipment, but could be started with a minimum outlay of capital.

It should also be mentioned that in 1957 the Institute staff did contemplate going after Middle States Regional Accreditation. Material had been supplied to the faculty concerning all of the work involved in such a visitation and it looked like a big undertaking since a new campus was also being planned. This required a lot of work on the part of many people -- planning of the new buildings, new offices, and new laboratories with all their equipment. So, it was decided that any application for Middle States approval would be postponed until we were in the new campus with new facilities and better surroundings. It so happened that almost fifteen years were to elapse before Middle States accreditation was finally achieved.

At this time, the Institute on Elmwood Avenue had had its ceiling-of- students-restriction removed and our enrollment gradually crept up. Until the time we left the Elmwood Campus, we had approximately 1,100 full-time students crowded into that one building. We also had a very significant evening program of probably 2,000 part-time students. So, the need for a new campus was very evident.

### CHAPTER III

It was not very long, certainly by 1956 or 1957, that thoughts were given to a new-building program. We needed our own permanent buildings, a new campus. A number of sites were looked at: One was the Grover Cleveland Golf Course at Main Street and Bailey Avenue next to the University of Buffalo Campus. (I am sure the golfers would have raised a fuss if this had ever been seriously proposed). Another site at the rear of Buffalo State College on Rees Street had been considered. The Goodyear property in the Town of Amherst was also looked at. Finally it was decided that the present site that we now use for the North Campus at Main Street and Youngs Road was the site to be used and 120 acres of land was purchased at that time. It developed that not many large parcels of land were available in the City of Buffalo. Consequently, the move was made to the suburbs. I can remember Dale Bossert, Director of Public Works for the County, saying, "In a few years nobody will know if they are at Bailey Avenue or Transit Road." I think this has pretty well been born out as the population has moved into the suburbs. In February 1957, the Board of Trustees passed the necessary resolution to purchase this land. It was approved by the County and State soon after that.

Ground-breaking ceremonies took place in September, 1958 although by that time construction had already started -- the Sigfried Company as the general contractors and the Duane Lyman Associates as the architects. The ground-breaking took place on a rainy, rainy day. People were all bemoaning the fact that the rain was spoiling the ceremonies, but I can still remember a gentleman from Utica who was on the Board of Trustees of State University and here for the ceremonies, Mr. Boyd Golder. Mr. Golder said, "This is a good day. It is simply the weather that is bad." I think this was really the way we all felt. It was a good day for Erie County Technical Institute. Certainly a person who deserved a great deal of credit getting the campus started and the construction finally completed was Mr. George Gleasner who was Chairman of the Board of Trustees. George spent many a Tuesday down at the County buildings talking to the then Board of Supervisors, getting their attention, getting their support for the new campus. I understand that it was said at the time that several capital projects were put aside so that the campus could be built. Certainly, it is very appropriate that our Administration Building be named Gleasner Hall in honor of George Gleasner, Chairman of the Board at that time.

July of 1960 saw the final sessions in the building on Elmwood Avenue with the closing of the school year, we had one

month -- the month of August -- to move from our rented facilities on Elmwood Avenue to our new campus in Amherst. Due to a building trades strike that summer, the new campus facilities did not get completed on time. The workmen were running about six weeks behind schedule. Consequently, our move was a hindrance to them. But we did have to move: we had no place to go. We had plans to start on the new campus in the fall of 1960, so the move had to be made. During the month of August, trucks were shuttled back and forth between the building on Elmwood Avenue and the new campus, new equipment was brought in and classes were getting underway in the fall of 1960 on the brand new campus in Amherst.

Also at that time in the move to the new campus while I had been Head of the Mechanical Department for a number of years and had taken a great part in the planning of the Mechanical Building -- its laboratories, its equipment -- I would not see the actual culmination of the work in the Mechanical Building on the new campus. In June of 1960, I had the good fortune to be promoted to a new position entitled, Associate Dean. (This position is now called Dean of Academic Affairs). It became my responsibility then to supervise all the academic programs of the ten curricula on campus at that time.

Another significant aspect was the naming of one of the buildings at the North Campus. I mentioned Gleasner Hall, the Administration Building, but that was named later. The first building to actually be designated in memory of someone was the library. It was known as the Richard R. Dry Memorial Library. Fortunately, Mr. Dry was alive at the time and did realize that the building was to be named in his memory. This was a great tribute to him and I know that Mr. Dry was very proud of the fact that the library was named for him.

However, the move to the new campus was not without its problems. As I mentioned before, the new campus was not really completed when we moved in. To those of us who had been with the Institute in 1946-47, it seemed like history was repeating itself. We were holding classes while the workmen were still going about the final phases of construction. They were laying linoleum in the classrooms, hanging light fixtures, and doing the final phases of construction. This provided quite a bit of interruption for us. It also made us lose a complete security system because all of our rooms had to be open so that the workmen could go in and out of the rooms as they needed. I am not sure how many of our supplies and pieces of equipment we did lose but I am sure we did lose security.

The inside of the buildings was not the only problem. We also had problems on the outside. Our parking lot was not finished and our sidewalks were not complete. This increased not only the problem for the students but it also increased our maintenance problems because there was the tracking in of mud and dirt into all the buildings. But throughout these times, both the faculty and students kept a real sense of humor. One of the most comical gags occurred during this time when we had a heavy rain and the area between the Construction Technology and Chemical Technology building was a huge puddle of water standing right where a sidewalk was supposed to be. Some student with a real sense of humor placed a shirt sleeve and a glove on a stick and then stuck it in the middle of this huge pool of water. It appeared very realistically that someone had completely disappeared out of sight and just an arm was sticking up. I also recall a young lady who was coming to register -- walking between the Library and the Student Center, she stepped off the end of the sidewalk and went almost up to her knees in mud. Mrs. White who was in the cafeteria during registration took pity on this young lady, got a hold of her, got her washed up and gave her slippers to wear while she completed her registration. And such were the kinds of things that happened to us during those first few weeks on our new campus.

One thing that did really surprise us was the feelings of some of the students, particularly the Class of 1961. They had spent one year on each campus (the old campus on Elmwood Avenue and the new campus here in Amherst) and they were not overly happy with this new, beautiful campus. It seems that they missed the close associations of the small building at Elmwood Avenue and where everybody saw everybody each day. I think some of the faculty had something of the same feelings too.

The years of 1961, 1962 and 1963 saw our enrollment increase very rapidly. In fact, in 1961 I think we were pretty close to 1,600 students on the Amherst Campus after only having about 1,100 on the Elmwood Campus. It seemed certain that the 2,000 full-time student capacity that this campus was supposed to accommodate would soon be realized. All of our programs flourished. Our athletic program with the new gymnasium -- this beautiful facility that we had -- gave a great impetus to all of our athletic programs: track, outdoor baseball diamond, tennis courts all gave us a strong incentive to have very good athletic programs which continued under Mr. George Killian.

Our student activities also prospered because we had a Student Center now. The second floor of the Student Center was given over entirely to student activities. The Element\* (which was then The Institooter) The Arrow, the yearbook, other

publications all had their own room, their own equipment, and the students felt that they could take advantage of these opportunities, also we had the lounges, the game rooms, etc., so everything prospered greatly when we moved to the campus in Amherst. (The Student Center later became Spring Student Center and was named after Laurence E. Spring, second president of Erie County Technical Institute).

The Evening Division also grew dramatically in these first few years under the leadership of Dr. Norvin T. Whitmore. We had several thousand students in the Evening Division at that time and it should be noted that the evening division was completely self-supporting and received no monies from either the County or the State. As time went on, this would have to change as it will be noted just a little later.

Not only did the number of students increase but also the number of curricula. The first new program to be offered at the new campus was a program in Medical Laboratory Technology. This program shared the instructional space with the Medical Assisting and Chemical Technology curriculums. Its goal was to supply technicians for the rapidly expanding health service field and it proved to be a very popular curriculum. The engineering-related technical curriculums were still operating on the, co-operative employment schedule. Consequently, the

academic calendar still was divided into four quarters. While the co-op program had many good points, it was beginning to cause some problems with faculty morale since some faculty members had four quarters of teaching instruction and others had only three. (Although, the total yearly teaching load remained the same for each group.)

Pressure was also building for a second campus. Citizens committee from the Southtowns had meetings with the administration and the board of trustees concerning starting a new campus somewhere south of the City of Buffalo. Mr. Paul Rohdanz was the leading spokesmen for this committee and it also included a number of the secondary school superintendents for the Southtowns as well as many other civic-minded people.

In 1963, the Institute experienced a rapid change in the administrative structure. Niagara County, I guess, was tired of sending its students and paying their county's share at Erie County Technical Institute. So, Niagara County decided that they wanted a community college of their own. In their search for a president for that new college, they selected Dr. Ernest Notar who was dean here at Erie at that time. Dr. Notar left our administrative staff in April of 1963. In May, it was my good fortune to be named Dean and succeed Dr. Notar in that position. Mr. Rexford Billings, Head of the Chemistry Department, was

promoted to Associate Dean, and Mr. Arden Pratt became Head of the Chemical Technology Department in Mr. Billings' place. Shortly after my promotion to Dean in that summer, President Spring became ill and died in the fall of 1963. As of November 1, 1963, I was named Acting President as well as holding the position of Dean. So, in the short period of about six months, it became my job to move from Associate Dean to Dean, to President all in that period of time with very little preparation for each position. As it turned out, I was to be Acting President for the next two years. A ruling by the State University Board of Trustees stated that no person could be named president of a unit of State University from within the staff of that institution. This ruling originally applied only to the fully supported State units of State University but subsequently, the Board of Trustees of State University extended this ruling to also include the community colleges. With this ruling on the books, it very effectively blocked any chance of my being promoted to President of the college on a permanent basis. However, our Board of Trustees immediately took up issue with this ruling and began a two-year fight to have it rescinded. Dr. Samuel Gould became Chancellor of the State University of New York in about 1965. He was sympathetic to our Trustees' position and prevailed upon the State University

Trustees to rescind this ruling. I might note that our Board of Trustees lead by Mr. Kittinger, Mr. Sylvester, Dr. Corsett, Mr. Wegman and others were given credit throughout the entire University system for having this unpopular ruling rescinded. In

January of 1966, I appeared before the State University Trustees and finally received the permanent presidential appointment. Thus culminated two years of difficult times not only for myself but for everyone at Erie County Technical Institute.

Immediately upon my permanent appointment, I wanted no one but Dr. Whitmore to become Dean. At that time he was the Director of the Evening Division and had done an outstanding job building up the Evening Division, giving it excellent leadership. Dr. Whitmore was very, very reluctant to leave that position and assume the position of Dean of the college. With a little bit of arm twisting however, he did finally see it my way and became the Dean. Mr. Robert Levy became Dean of the Evening Division.

The course offerings as well as the student population continued to grow throughout these years. Going back to 1964, we had almost our full complement of students -- 2,000 full-time students here on campus and approaching 4,000 part-time students in our evening and extended division programs. I believe that it

was in 1964 that we began to phase-out the Co-operative Program. There were a number of reasons for this. I have already stated one: the morale of the faculty posed a problem because of the varying teaching loads. We were also finding that in 1964 with the increasing number of students, the number of positions that we could obtain in industry did not keep pace with our growing enrollment. Therefore, percentage-wise a smaller and smaller number of students were having the advantage of the Co-operative Program. Also, the health programs (Dental Hygiene, Optical, etc.) were not part of the Co-op Program. Therefore, it seemed imperative to us as we looked down the road with expanding curriculums (we knew we were going to have them on campus), a growing student body, and the fact that we could not keep pace with the Co-operative jobs, that we terminate a program which had been very, very successful -- a program that helped us in our relationship with industry, helped us in placement of graduates, and had many good points. Consequently in 1964, the Co-op Program was phased out after carefully discussing the change with all of our advisory committees for the technical programs. Various advisory committees would meet about once or twice a year. Our first step in eliminating the Co-op Program was explaining to these advisory committees and the people from industry our problems and the reasons for our change. We met a

little opposition from industry but I think most of them could see our problems and could see the change was necessary.

Even with the elimination of the Co-op Program, we still maintained the trimester schedule for several years. It is very difficult to change course content subject matter and therefore, we felt it necessary to maintain the three terms until fall, 1969 when the college went on a more traditional two-semester basis.

About this same time, the Evening Division was having problems with its budget. As I have said, that program was entirely self-supporting. As the program grew and the expenses of the Evening Division went up, the number that had to be enrolled in each class had to increase in-order for that class to pay for itself. We were having problems with numbers and had to drop some classes where the numbers enrolled in the class were not sufficient to pay the charges. Therefore, Dr. Whitmore had come to me and asked what we should do. The answer I gave was that the Evening Division Budget should become a part of the total College Budget. In that way, the County and State -- as well as the students -- would all share in the expense of the evening program. After discussing this with County officials and our Board of Trustees, we did mesh the evening school budget in with our regular full-time budget. The results produced a rather

difficult time for us in that the sudden change in funding increased our student revenues considerably and we found ourselves in the position where we had more student monies than we required and could legally hold. The State University took a rather dim view of this and suggested that we reduce our tuition. So for one year in the Evening Division, we practically cut our tuition in half so that we could use up the excess student revenue that had been generated the year before when the Evening Division was put on the three-partnership sustaining budget. This did solve the problem of the Evening Division as far as the finances went and from then on we had no difficulty.

By 1965, new programs were put in place: Data Processing, Secretarial Science and Business Administration, Police Science was moved into a Day Division curriculum (previously open only to officers in the police force and offered only evenings). This was moved into the Day program and made available to people beginning in the police science work. These programs were also very popular and we found ourselves completely crowded for space. Our Business and Secretarial programs took over one of the rooms in the Student Union and this posed a real problem for us. We were using every space we could on the campus to take care of these new problems.

During this time we were also under constant pressure to begin offering the university parallel, or liberal arts program. This pressure came not only from the local groups I mentioned before, but also from the State University Office of the Vice Chancellor. At one of the meetings in Albany, the Vice Chancellor, Dr. Martorana, said publicly that there were only two community colleges in the State not offering the liberal arts or university parallel program. One of those was the Fashion Institute in New York City which was never supposed to offer liberal arts and the other school was Erie County Tech. I guess we were being held up as a rather poor example of what a community college should be. However, we had such a strong commitment from our historical background to the career-type of program; we felt that our first priority should be to this type of program. We also felt that there were a number of colleges in the Buffalo area all offering the liberal arts program that it seemed to us that our job was to offer as much of the technical and related programs that we could. At that particular time, we could not have offered the liberal arts program anyway simply because of the lack of space. We were well over the 2,000 student enrollment projected to this campus and every bit of available space was being used.

It was in 1965-66 that we began planning for the expansion of the Amherst Campus. It became very evident that the size of the campus was not enough to take care of the students that we knew were coming. So, the plan was to double the size of the North (Amherst) Campus to approximately 4,000 full-time students. In this expansion plan, we did provide space for a liberal arts program, a nursing program, an occupational therapy assisting program and a program in inhalation therapy. The architectural firm of Kideney, Smith and Fitzgerald was engaged to begin preliminary planning for expansion of this campus.

However, in 1966 a new element was introduced into our work. I was called to New York City in April of that year and was asked (told) that Erie County Tech would become the sponsor of a new type of education known as an Urban Center. This center was to be given in the City of Buffalo and was to offer a one-year program, tuition-free for educationally and financially disadvantaged people in the City of Buffalo. We were told at this meeting in New York that this program had to be in operation by the fall of 1966. When it is recalled that the fall of 1966 was an election year for governor, then you realize the political implications of this fact. I can well remember on my plane ride back from New York City the questions that came to mind. First, just what is an Urban Center? I knew very little

about it. Another question was where are we going to get a building for it in the City of Buffalo? Who would supervise it? Where would we get the staff? All these questions went through my mind as I was flying back to Buffalo. I must admit I was pretty much at sea as to where we were going with this program. I had to meet with our own Board of Trustees because they had to approve the Urban Center program too. I also had Dr. Martorana come to Buffalo to meet with County officials and our Board. There needed to be explanation given as to what the Urban Centers would do, how we were to be associated with them. Our Board did approve the acceptance of the Urban Center as a program that we would supervise. So, the year of 1966 became a very busy one for us all. I asked Mr. Montford Schrader of the Mechanical Department to be the Director of the Urban Center. He scoured the City of Buffalo looking for a temporary building that would house the Urban Center. We finally settled on the Jackson Building which is located at 220 Delaware Avenue at the corner of Chippewa. The entire third floor of the Jackson Building was renovated to provide the education programs for this new Urban Center. The programs included Dental Assisting, Typing, Keypunch Operation, Drafting and preparation for the GED, (Government Equivalency Diploma) exam for high school students. Later on other programs were added and the Urban

Center became a very successful operation helping many of the students from the inner-city. It lasted until 1972 when a similar type of program offered by the University of Buffalo appeared to be a duplication. So, the State -- which was funding both programs -- insisted that the two programs be merged and incorporated under one unit. The final decision was to close out the Urban Center, cease our sponsorship and let the University take over the entire operation. This became known as the EOC, (Equal Opportunity Center). We had been hopeful at the time that some of the technical programs, particularly Dental Assisting and Key punch Operation, could be incorporated in a new City Campus that was in our thinking at the time (and, of course, was in operation by 1972), but this proved to be financially impossible due to the fact that one operation was tuition free and the other one was not. It did not seem that we could reconcile this problem.

At the same time in 1966, we were also planning to expand the Amherst Campus, there was a lot of work that had to be done with the architect, the start up of the Urban Center, and the administration was also involved in looking for a possible site for a campus south of the City of Buffalo. As you remember, the Citizens Committee had been after us for several years to start a South Campus. We looked at ten sites in 1966 as a possible

location for a South Campus. We were also committed to a City Campus within the City limits. This proved to be a much more difficult task but it did finally come into being.

#### CHAPTER IV

Plans for the academic and architectural expansion of the North Campus moved steadily ahead. What was desperately needed at this time was a person to take care of the facilities, the planning of the facilities, and much of the work that would have fallen on my shoulders. (We just had too much work at that time). So, we did a little underhanded thing. We borrowed one of the faculty members from the Construction Department to help me with the planning and the details that were needed in all the construction that was coming up. We were able to finally secure an administrative position in the budget entitled, Supervisor of Facilities Planning. This position was a necessity as we faced so many construction projects. Mr. George Coughenour from the Construction Department who had helped us out before now moved into this position officially. His service during the expansion of North Campus, planning the construction of the South Campus and getting the City Campus operating in temporary facilities was simply outstanding. One must remember that on all of these construction projects we were dealing with both the County and the State agencies and there was much duplication concerning reports, drawings, etc. I and the college will always be

indebted to George Coughenour for the excellent job that he did for the several years that he occupied this position.

In planning the expansion of the North Campus, we learned from previous experience that it was good to have the buildings as close together as possible. Therefore, in this expansion, we did instruct the architect to keep the buildings within the geographic building boundaries of the present campus. We also started the rather tedious process of getting Middle States Accreditation in 1966 and 1967. This you may recall was deferred from the time we were on Elmwood Avenue and we had to wait to be housed in a new campus in 1960. However, with President Spring's death in 1963 and my situation as Acting President lasting almost two years, it was felt that we could not embark on a Middle States Accreditation procedure at that time. So it did wait until 1966-67. Dr. Whitmore headed the general faculty committee to begin the accreditation task. This proved to be a long and frustrating quest with the final Middle States Accreditation being granted in April, 1972. It should be noted that some curricula had received accreditation for several years by special agencies. For example, Electrical, Mechanical, Construction and Chemistry Technologies were all accredited by the Engineering Council for Professional Development; Dental Hygiene had been accredited by the American Dental Association,

and the Ophthalmic Dispensing Curriculum by the American Board of Opticianry. Of course, all the programs were registered and accredited by the State University of New York and the State Education Department.

Groundbreaking for the expansion of the North Campus took place in June, 1967. Present were the County officials headed by County Executive Rath, Dr. Kenneth Doran (who was the Assistant for the Vice-Chancellor for State University), our Trustees, Faculty and Students... all took part in this groundbreaking. The expansion of the North Campus from 1967 to 1969 proved to be a difficult time for all concerned. As I mentioned, we tried to tie all the buildings as closely together as possible so as to make outside travel as short as possible. With the exception of the gymnasium, every other building was invaded by the construction project. In the Student Center, the Book Store was expanded into what had been the Coffee Shop and a brand new Coffee Shop was added to the eastern end of the Student Center. The four technical buildings on the east side of the campus were linked together with classrooms and laboratories and large lecture halls. The entire complex carried the name of Bretschger Technical Laboratory in honor of Dr. Max E. Bretschger. Dr. Bretschger was one of the original Trustees in 1946 and served on the Board for 25 years. The Library had to be greatly

expanded. The entire east wall was removed and a large and beautiful section added. With the library expansion we wanted to create a library entrance facing the technical complex so that students would have easy and quick access to the Library. We did achieve this. Also, we added a large entrance to the Student Center so that students could come directly from the technical buildings into the Student Center for their luncheon and book needs. In the Gleasner Hall Administration Building, a great many internal changes took place. What had been classrooms were changed into office space, housing for the Division of Continuing Education and Computer Center. Also a large, two-story Classroom, laboratory and office building directly behind Gleasner Hall completed the expansion. This building was named Kittinger Hall in honor of Spencer C. Kittinger, Chairman of the Board of Trustees who was terminally ill at that time. The cornerstone setting for the new buildings took place in October, 1968. Mr. Kittinger and County Executive Edward Rath both took part in this ceremony. It was unfortunate that both were to die in the following two or three weeks. In addition to these two people, we also had representatives of our Trustees. Mr. Edward J. Wegman then succeeded Mr. Kittinger as Chairman of the Board. During the expansion of North Campus, plans were also going forward for the construction of the other two campuses: One in

the Southtowns; the other in the City of Buffalo. It had been agreed by our Board of Trustees, the County Executive and the County Legislature that both the southern and city campuses move ahead as quickly as possible, but not necessarily at the same pace. It was obvious that land acquisition for the South Campus would be much easier and cheaper than that for the City Campus. Ten sites in the Southtowns (in Hamburg and Orchard Park) were inspected by the Trustees and County officials. Interestingly enough, one of the sites was the DuPont Site at Abbott Road and Southwestern Boulevard where Rich Stadium is now situated. The two sites finally selected were known as the Big Tree Site and the Howard Road Site -- both in the Town of Hamburg. The Big Tree Site was the one recommended and that is the site where the South Campus is now located. Approximately 200 acres bounded by Southwestern Boulevard, Big Tree Road and Abbott Road were eventually purchased. Some 40 acres on Abbott Road were to be subsequently sold back to the County as parking for Rich Stadium. We desired direct access to Abbott Road from the South Campus, but the Commissioner of Public Works had tried to make access by a rather circuitous route around the newly acquired 40 acres parking and then through the woods to Abbott Road. This was a very unacceptable arrangement, and the administration and the Trustees held out for straight, direct access to Abbott Road

from the South Campus. That is what we have today. A college-owned, right-of way directly through the middle of the Rich Stadium parking lot to Abbott Road.

While this at South was going on, we were also involved in finding land for a City Campus. At this time, there was considerable talk about locating a new campus of State University of New York at Buffalo (which we call UB) on the waterfront in the City of Buffalo. In order to resolve this problem, a task force headed by Dr. Mason Gross of Rutgers University was to evaluate the waterfront site as a possible location. Dr. Gross's committee finally concluded in its report that the Waterfront Site was not suitable for a large university complex and seemed to have added as an afterthought that it would make an excellent site for an urban community college. For this reason, the first site within the City that was to be given serious consideration was the Waterfront Site. It included about 20 acres of urban renewal land located at the Southern end of LaSalle Park -- thus making a very acceptable 40-acre site for the City Campus. This location was given serious consideration even to the point that the architect for urban renewal drew-up tentative plans and made a three-dimensional model of the possible college to be located on the Waterfront. However, the question of access to the site proved to be a real problem. Not

only was the Thruway a boundary to the east, but the New York Central Railroad tracks also ran next to the Thruway. While a road to the campus was possible under the elevated section of the Thruway to the campus site, it meant crossing the Central tracks at grade. We were told that, "In all probability, New York Central would abandon these tracks and use the 'inner loop' in the City of Buffalo to move freight up the river." However, when this was broached to the New York Central, they refused to do it even though we found out later they did not own the right-of-way, did not pay for it, and did not pay taxes on it. Still, they would not abandon these railroad tracks. After some discussion with City officials concerning a bridge to give us access to the site, the project was dropped. The bridge proved too expensive and our Board of Trustees would not approve the site if it meant crossing tracks at grade with the possibility of accidents. This took place in the fall of 1969.

Next in the City came the so-called Crossroads Site. This was located at the foot of Main Street and South Park Avenue across from the DL & W Station. Since the new Rapid Transit was being planned and the southern terminus would be right there, that was indeed a plus for this site. Mayor Sedita of Buffalo also indicated that several streets could be closed and provide a very good and square site for the City Campus. Furthermore,

the Urban Renewal promised to give several acres of land immediately south of Memorial Auditorium for campus purposes. This site is now where the new Naval Park is housed. All necessary approval for the Crossroads Site was obtained from the Board of Trustees the County Executive, the County Legislature, and the State University of New York in 1971. There are official documents indicating that this approval had been given to build the City Campus at the Crossroads Site. However, as the cost projections came in, this site was also finally dropped as being too expensive. During all of this time, there were some people who questioned the need for a City Campus. In order to demonstrate the need, our Board of Trustees along with County Executive B. John Tutuska decided to look for temporary facilities in the City of Buffalo. I believe that at least 12 to 14 buildings were inspected by Mr. Coughenour, Dr. Whitmore, persons from the Department of Public Works and myself. In fact one of these buildings that we looked at was the old Post Office Building. At that time, the first floor was still being used by the Postal Service. Many were not just suitable buildings for a college program. When we learned that the Bishop O'Hern High school located at Main and Riley Streets was to be closed, Mr. Coughenour and I made an inspection and found it to be the best for our purposes of any that we had seen. Apparently, our visit

to this Catholic high school caused some concern and comments by the students and faculty because the nun who was the principal told us later that she had to make up a story and tried to tell the students that we were simply salesmen who were looking over the building. Later on it was announced that the school would close and we proceeded with plans to occupy the building and initiate the City Campus. This took place in 1971 with Dr. Oscar Smukler as the Vice-President in charge.

In order to get the program started at the City Campus as quickly as possible, we did move several curricula from the North Campus almost in total to the City Campus. Courses such as Business Administration, Secretarial Science, Liberal Arts that could begin quickly with a minimum amount of laboratories and space were started. In addition to these programs, a Child Care Program was started, a program which was needed in the City of Buffalo. A year later the Radiologic program was also started at City Campus. Dedication of this temporary facility took place in the fall of 1971. Our belief that a City Campus was necessary was soon justified as the enrollment increased each year. The lease was to be for five years. We had every expectation that a permanent campus would be built by that time. Unfortunately, as we all know now, those five years stretched out to be over

eleven years before the City Campus had its own building, its own campus in the Old Post Office Building.

Getting back to North Campus, the new facilities were ready for occupancy by September 1969. But, our problems were not over. Although the expansion had been completed we were not to be given the necessary funds to start new programs in Nursing, Liberal Arts, Engineering Science and Inhalation Therapy, the programs planned for the new facilities. Consequently, we began notifying many students who had already been accepted that we could not accept them for these programs simply because we did not have the funding to hire faculty. We had the buildings, we had the equipment, but we did not have the faculty. When this became known to the Press and to the public in general, soon monies became available and we were then able to send letters a second time to the students telling them we would admit them in the new programs. So, in September 1969, ECTI ceased to exist and we became ECC, or Erie Community College -- a comprehensive community college. The academic calendar was also changed from the trimester to the semester format. There were a number who feared that the Liberal Arts program would become the dominant curriculum and that our technical programs would suffer. This was grounded in the belief that at other community college where Liberal Arts curricula had been started first that it had become

the dominant curricula -- the technical programs had been added later and did not seem to have the same strength. However, we felt here that this was just the reverse. We had started as a strong technically committed program and institute, and I do not believe that the liberal arts program has overshadowed the technical programs to this day.

The change of name also proved to be somewhat of a thorny problem. Knowing that eventually there would be three campuses with one Board of Trustees and one President, the question of identifying each campus without getting into a long, unwieldy name became the subject of much discussion by the Trustees, the administration and the faculty. Names such as ERIE COMMUNITY COLLEGE-AMHERST, ERIE COMMUNITY COLLEGE-BUFFALO, and COMMUNITY COLLEGE-HAMBURG were discussed and finally discarded. It was felt that it was not fair to give the town names or the City to a County institution. So it was finally decided to simply name them with the rather non-descriptive names of ERIE COMMUNITY COLLEGE/NORTH, CITY, and SOUTH.

Dropping the word, *County*, from the name caused some problems with one or two of the County Legislators. Mr. Wegman had to write a letter to the Legislature explaining our reasons for so doing. The State University required in the naming of a community college two things: simply that the words, Community

College, be in the title and that some name designating the geographic area be in the title. Thus the name, ERIE COMMUNITY COLLEGE, satisfied the State University, but it did not satisfy some of the legislators. They felt the County was being slighted by not putting the word, *County*, in the college name. Mr. Wegman explained to them that the length of the name was one factor, the three campuses was another, and that it was thought best to keep the names as simple as possible and not get into long names such as we had been saddled with for many years. I was attending the County Legislature's Meeting at one time and had left the hall when I was called back by the Clerk of the Legislature and was publicly chided by one of the legislators because the word, *County*, had been dropped from the college name. Since I was not granted the privilege of the floor to explain the reasons, I could not reply and simply had to sit there and wait until the speaker had finished. Then, I just got up and left the legislative chambers.

During the year, 1968, the Middle States Accreditation Team visited the campus. We had high hopes of receiving full accreditation. As I said before, this was delayed. However, we were to find out that the main reason for the denial of our accreditation request was that the team felt we were not sufficiently prepared or capable of running a comprehensive

community college at that time. If you recall, we were just moving into the Liberal Arts program in 1969 and this was about the time that the visit was made -- just prior to that. The Liberal Arts program was just being initiated but had not been in operation. The Middle States Review Committee felt that they wanted to defer the accreditation until they had seen how we progressed with handling of Liberal Arts and other new programs then planned. All of us felt that this was a most unfair decision. For one thing, the team had been given a very comprehensive report of our plans before the campus visit. We knew that the close tie-up with the County and the fiscal arrangement whereby the County exercised fiscal control over the College would also prove a problem. We explained this to the Middle States Team and asked if this would be a major reason for denying accreditation. They said, "No. If this was the way the College had operated, it would be alright." Secondly, Middle States had always said their evaluation would be based on how well the institution carried out its announced objectives. Well, we had been in operation for over 20 years and with an excellent record for training semi-professional and technically trained individuals. Our placement record and acceptance of our graduates by industry and the professions had been outstanding. We felt this was indicative of the quality of our programs.

However, the deferment stood and full accreditation came two years later.

In 1969 academic plans for the South Campus moved ahead. Originally there was talk of making the South Campus large enough to house 4,000 full-time students. However, as the update of projections became available and at the hint of declining enrollment, the figure was then cut in half to 2,000 students. Thomas Imbs Associates was selected to do the architectural work on the new campus. His plans were approved by the Board of Trustees, State University Office Facilities and Erie County in November, 1969. Again, learning by experience at North Campus and knowing that the South Campus was located near the so-called, "snowbelt," Mr. Imbs was instructed to prepare plans that would somehow tie the buildings together. Also, we did not want one large building nor were the buildings to be connected by covered or enclosed walkways at ground level. With such restrictions, Mr. Imbs and his staff went to work. Their plans, later to be carried out, provided for bridges at the second floor to connect all of the buildings. It would thus be possible to move anywhere within the campus complex without going outside. Yet, if one wished to cut across the interior court at ground level, this was also possible. In 1971, a contract in the amount of 1.2 million dollars was awarded for site preparation

at the South Campus. This was the initial construction project. It involved all the rough grading, the roadways, the underground utilities, etc. Shortly after this work was being complete and we expected to advertise bids for building the main campus structures, the State put a freeze on all capital construction. Since the State was paying 50 percent of the construction cost (and this project amounted to about 15 million dollars) there was no way the building project could move forward with the State reneging on its share. After six months delay, there was found a way to get the project underway once again, it meant using the State Dormitory Authority to provide the State's share of the State's funds. The Dormitory Authority was originally created to provide funds for the construction of dormitories. However, its role was expanded to cover other State projects where capital funding was needed. While this change got the South Campus construction moving ahead again, it did create many more problems for us. Now the Dormitory Authority had to review all of the construction drawings. Changes had to be made to make the drawings conform to the Dormitory Authority Codes. This was a time consuming job for Mr. Imbs, our architect, and his staff. But the South Campus did get built. Instead of having it ready for occupancy in January, 1974 as originally planned, it was not opened until fall, 1974. (And, as usual, workmen were still

finishing up when the students arrived). The six-month State freeze had really hurt us in opening up the new South Campus.

Since the sponsorship of the Institute by Erie County in 1953, the College operated under a fiscal arrangement commonly called PLAN A. This designation comes about from the Community College Law, Article 126. In that law, three financial plans between the Sponsor and the College are spelled out. PLAN A places the College simply as another County department operating on a strict line-item budget. All monies are to be held by the County. The County Purchasing, Payroll, and Personnel Departments all serve the College with their usual restraints.

PLAN C gives the College fiscal independence with all monies -- State, County, and student tuition -- being held by the College. It is obvious that such a plan gives the College freedom to use its resources as it sees best. (PLAN B is really a combination of the above two plans).

In 1972, Erie Community College was successful in having the County Legislature pass a law modifying the college fiscal procedures. Power was granted to the College to make transfers and adjustments between accounts for all campuses where deemed necessary. This modification did help the College use its funds to best advantage. However, much of the procedures under PLAN A has remained in effect.

## CHAPTER V

### COLLEGE GOVERNANCE

As I have recounted, the years from 1966 to 1974 were very busy years and exciting times for the College. At least they were for me. The multi-campus dream did in fact become a reality. This involved certain changes in our administrative structure. A committee of faculty and administrators studied the administrative structure of a number of multi-campus community colleges: Pittsburgh, Kansas City, Cleveland, Seattle and others were just a few. We also were in touch with the National Junior College Association on this matter. They had a pamphlet indicating proper structure for multi-campus community colleges. We obtained a number of these pamphlets and distributed them not only to the faculty but to the Trustees and even to the County Executive and County Legislator's underlining those aspects of the structure we thought most important to us. In all instances, it was recommended that a single president oversee the entire system with a single board of trustees while separate administrators be designated to run the day-to-day operation of each campus. It was also felt that each campus should seek its own identity as far as possible and that each were to a certain

degree become autonomous This, of course, would not preclude such things as cross-registration of students, some faculty inter-change, central admissions, etc. However, all the financial matters, budget revenues and expenses had to pass through one central office and a central staff. At this time we were also undergoing the consolidation of our day and evening school programs to make the evening school more in line with our day school and thus able to grant degrees for evening school work. This gave rise to the name, the One-College Concept. We had only intended this term to mean one college, a day and evening division all combined into one operation. However, this word, One-College, was picked up by some of the County people and they insisted that the One-College Concept apply to all three campuses and that the North Campus become the main campus while the other campuses would merely be branches. This we did not feel was the proper way to operate and certainly all the things we have seen and read pointed in another direction. However, we did succeed in having the three vice-presidents assigned on each campus and we did have a central staff overseeing those three campuses. The ideal situation from all experience would have had the Central Staff removed from any single campus. This was so that that particular campus would not become the flagship of the whole system. We did try on one

occasion through budget presentation to have a Central Staff located entirely off any of the three campuses. However, due to budgetary reasons this was denied by the County.

These years also saw considerable change in the governance of the college. During the early years, Mr. Dry and Mr. Spring were President and when I was President, general faculty meetings were held with the president presiding. Various faculty committees were appointed to provide faculty input. Committees such as curriculum, library, admissions, athletics, student activities, etc., were very active and provided significant input for the administration. In addition, there were also meetings of what we called at that time Department Heads. This meeting not only included the Curriculum Heads but also the Head Librarian, Dean of Students, Business Manager, the Dean, the Associate Dean. These two bodies provided effective input for the operation of the Institute at that time. However, as the faculty grew, General Faculty Meetings became too large and somewhat unwieldy. They became, in fact, a place not much more than where announcements were being made and many times this could have been done better by memos. In order to have a more active faculty voice, I suggested that a Faculty Senate be created. These senators were apportioned from each department and elected by department members. The Senate met by itself,

appointed appropriate committees, and hopefully had a free discussion on campus matters. These discussions and their recommendations then were transmitted to the administration. For some reason, this plan of the Faculty Senate never did seem to take hold. The Senate did not seem, to me at least, to be too effective. As I recall, attendance at the meetings left something to be desired because of teaching schedules, etc.

After about a year of rather intensive study (I believe it was 1968 or 1969) a new form of governance was proposed. Professor Charles Ford of the English Department had worked very hard to assemble and then to present a plan that would eventually become known as the College Assembly. It did in effect do away with the Faculty Senate and the Department Heads meeting and merge them into one simple assembly. I was willing to try this new plan so the College Assembly did actually come into being. Professor Wayne Schlifke was, I believe, the first and only President of the College Assembly. In a sense we were back to the old general faculty meeting or what we at that time called a "town-meeting-type" of operation. Only this time a faculty member presided rather than the president of the college. The faculty members on that council drew up the agenda to be discussed at each of the College Assembly meetings. They did provide similar committees that we had before and they

worked very hard on college matters. The College Assembly also included for the first time a student representative on a number of committees. These committees were completely operated by faculty and I, as President, sat in the audience and held one vote just like any other member of the faculty. If the College Assembly had one fault, it was probably the fact that the Assembly as a whole would not accept committee reports without completely going over the committees' work, picking it apart, or making major changes. This was not only time consuming, but was also very frustrating for the committee that had put in many hours going over its report and presenting it. This finally led to some disenchantment with the College Assembly and finally about that time the coming of the Faculty Federation provided still a different format for faculty input. Consequently, after about three years of operation, the College Assembly was just allowed to die and disappear.

I mentioned the Faculty Federation. This organization came into being following the passage of the Taylor Law in the New York State Legislature. This law guaranteed the right of public employees to bargain collectively with their employer. This fact injected a whole new system of governance into all public institutions and agencies. The words collective bargaining rather implied something of an adversary relationship. It is

impossible for two sides to sit opposite each other at a bargaining table without having this type of relationship if both sides believe in its own position. Unless one side completely gives up its position and capitulates to the other (and this has happened) there will be something of an adversary air about the meetings. Thus, the former method of governance, call it collegiality if you will, no longer existed. Our first contract negotiations were carried out with Dr. Norvin T. Whitmore being the spokesman for the college administration and trustees. Since wages were a major topic of discussion, the County Executive and the County Legislature eventually had to come into the discussion. Dr. Whitmore did an excellent piece of work in his capacity as negotiator and spokesman. In fact, he became an expert and we loaned him to several other community colleges as they were making their first contract negotiations. Our first contract between the College and the Federation was signed in 1968. However, I do not want to leave the impression that the administration and faculty were always adversaries. Nothing could be further from the truth because on many issues we were in complete agreement. Items such as salaries, numbers in the various professional ranks, sabbatical leaves, etc., were just some of the items on which we had complete agreement.

I recall the situation concerning sabbatical leaves especially. Our Trustees and our administration had requested on several occasions that the principle of granting such leaves become a part of our college policy. Such a policy was enjoyed by almost all collegiate institutions. This request had been consistently rejected by one County official. However at a meeting of some of our Trustees, some of the County officials, Dr. Whitmore and myself, (by the way, the meeting took place in the back room of Chef's Restaurant on Seneca Street) the principle of granting sabbatical leaves was approved and became a part of our contract with the Faculty Federation. You may wonder about that one County official who opposed sabbaticals. Well, he happened to be sick that day and fortunately for us did not attend the meeting.

I also mentioned that the professional ranks were part of our discussions too. Just to digress for a moment and go back to the early days -- when we first started in 1946 and 1947, we did not have professional ranks. The Department Heads were in charge of each curriculum. The four service areas, English, Mathematics, Physics and Social Studies were all headed by what were known as senior instructors. The rest of the faculty were simply instructors. There were two or three junior instructors but for the most part we were all ranked as instructors. This

format lasted until approximately 1963 or 1964 when we did change to professorial rank and the department heads became full professors, the senior instructors in the service areas became associate professors, the teaching faculty -- all those who did 100 percent teaching -- were named assistant professors and instructors. A change finally came when we broke this system and we were able to promote an assistant professor to an associate professor -- a position which had been held only by the service area supervisors. I believe that it was George Benziger who was the first faculty member promoted from the assistant (or general faculty) to the associate professor rank. After that we did break through that barrier and had promotions all up and down the four areas of the professorial ranks.

Going back to the Taylor Law, I think it is safe to say that the Taylor Law did have a profound effect on all the community colleges in New York State and in turn with their relationship with their sponsoring counties. It of necessity sharpened the legal and fiscal responsibilities that existed between the colleges and their sponsors. In any event, collective bargaining has become an accepted fact in the public sector.

Student activism reached its peak during these years also. Erie Community College was not immune from some of this

activism. I still have a vivid recollection of one such incident when a peace group on campus wished to hold a rally on the Library steps and asked to have the flag put at half-mast for the entire day. When this fact became known to a group of war veterans, they vehemently opposed the lowering of the flag for any reason whatever. However, after meeting with both groups, we did reach a compromise and the flag was to fly at half-staff from 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon during the Vietnam peace rally which was to take place on the Library steps. There had been some talk that the veterans might oppose this. In order to see that the lowering of the flag at half-staff was carried out without interference, I had William Tranchell and Ray Jones stand at the base of the flagpole to make sure no one tampered with the flag. Anyone knowing these two men will know that no such tampering took place. At that time, we did not have a complete security system like the one we have on campus today. Consequently, we had to use some of our own staff to provide a little bit of protection. The two groups did get into a yelling match but they each kept their distance and promptly at 12:00 noon, Mr. Tranchell ran the flag up to full-staff. It is not surprising what the veterans did. They saluted the flag and gave the Pledge of Allegiance and thus ended a rather tense situation on our campus.

In 1971 we did celebrate a rather significant date in the life of the college's history, the 25th Anniversary of the College. Since our founding date was April 1946, April 1971 became our "Silver Anniversary" and we had a week-long celebration of that fact which culminated with a very large and important civic dinner held in the cafeteria, Spring Student Center/North Campus. Many of the notables from the County, the State and the persons who had really been responsible for the beginnings of our college, who worked on the Committee of Citizens, who brought the Institute to Buffalo in 1946. Several of those people were still with us and they were recognized at this very gala civic dinner. Dr. Marvin Rapp, who held a number of positions with State University and also had been President of Onondaga Community College, provided the principal address on that occasion. It was a good time and I am sure everyone enjoyed it.

## IN CONCLUSION

I would like to conclude this rather rambling account of Erie Community College as seen from my vantage point with just a few observations. (Some of them are very personal and I hope you will forgive me for that.) October 6, 1966 was a very special time for me personally. It was at that time that the Trustees wished that I should be formally inaugurated as President. I told them that I did not particularly care about going through such a ceremony but they told me that they were not inaugurating "Jim" Shenton: They were inaugurating the President of a college. So under those circumstances I agreed and on the 6th of October the inaugural ceremony took place in the gymnasium at the North Campus. Our faculty and our Trustees, many visiting college presidents (all in academic attire) attended the ceremony. Our Trustees insisted that Chancellor Samuel Gould of the State University of New York come to Buffalo and place the President's Medallion around my neck. I think the Trustees thought this was appropriate. It was through Chancellor Gould's good office that the requirement that a person could not move from the faculty to the top position of the college had been rescinded. They thought that Chancellor Gould would be the

proper person to do this honor for me. It certainly was a day that I will always remember.

My second day was August 30, 1974 when a large number of people, our faculty, friends, State and County officials gathered in the Statler Hotel to honor Mrs. Shenton and myself on my retirement. We were honored on that occasion too that the Chancellor at that time, Ernest Boyer, made the trip from Albany to be with us on that particular occasion. I was also touched and honored by the fact that the Administration Building at the South Campus was to be named in my honor. It is a thought and an honor I shall always treasure.

In conclusion, I would simply like to say that I feel that I was extremely fortunate to have been in the right place at the right time. To have had the opportunity to help start a college from the very beginning is a privilege that does not come to very many persons. To have been with the institution for 28 years and to help it grow from actually nothing into a three-campus community college serving 8,000 to 9,000 students is something in which I take some pride. Best of all was knowing and working with so many fine persons, trustees, state and county officials, many loyal and hard-working faculty members, colleagues in other institutions, last -- but certainly not least -- the thousands of fine students who passed through the

doors of the New York State Institute of Applied Arts and Sciences, Erie County Technical Institute, and Erie Community College.