



Wharton County Junior College

Communications from the President BETTY McCROHAN

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Celebrating 70 Years

WCJC is Celebrating its 70th Birthday

In 1944, Wharton County Junior College began as the vision of a Post-War Planning Committee. Through the commitment and dedication of the Post-War Planning Committee and later the Wharton County Junior College Committee (Chaired by P.D. Gertson), a resolution was passed in 1945 to form a new college. The original referendum included the approval of a twenty-cent tax and a slate of seven nominees for trustees.



Post War Planning Committee

The 1944 Post-War Planning Committee seated left to right are: Louis Worthing, Julius Gensberg, Paul Wadler, John Roten, J.B. Damron and C.H. Rugeley. Standing, left to right: Carl Shannon, Sol Alpard, Alex Harrison, Clarence Nash, Dr. T.M. Neal, Jack Bond, W.T. Volding, Aaron Sharman, Frank Haines, Robert Wright and C.P. McElroy

The members of the first Board were J.R. Peace, Lottie N. Mullins, Harold Hansen, Donald Duson, Carl Reynolds, Richard E. Meek, and Chairman F.J.L. Blasingame.

During an interview with Dr. Blasingame he stated, "The members of that first Board felt obligated to act in the best interest of the college. Our focus was on the success of the college."

The first Board of Trustees selected a location for the college and then hired a college president. J.M. Hodges was named president in 1946. Mr. Hodges had previous junior college experience, serving as president of Tyler Junior College. Once the district was established and the first Board of Trustees formed, some 200 students began classes in the Wharton County Fair buildings.

Ora Roades was the first professor hired by J.M. Hodges. In the beginning, Mr. Roades recruited students and promoted community awareness of the college. Over the years Mr. Roades served as student recruiter, history professor, second in line to the president, and college promoter. After completing his doctoral degree and serving as Dean at two other community colleges, Dr. Roades returned in 1966 as Dean of Wharton County Junior College, serving until his retirement in 1980.

Stay tuned for additional editions with information on WCJC's 70 years of success.



