

THE FIRST 35

A Historical Review of College of the Canyons • 1969-2004



A 35-Year Tradition of Excellence

In gathering information to be included in this tribute to the college's history, I've had the privilege of meeting some of the people who helped build College of the Canyons into California's finest community college. They're an impressive group. I've heard their remarkable stories about the college's formative years, their innovation when faced with the many challenges of transforming a dream into a tangible place, and, most of all, their passionate, unrelenting commitment to this institution.

On the following pages you'll discover just how far we've come in 35 years. You'll get an idea of the never-ending pursuit of excellence in everything that we do, the countless opportunities that have been created for the more than 150,000 students who have passed through our doors, and the level of potential that resides here and throughout the Santa Clarita Valley. Very few of the people who were here 35 years ago remain, but they will be remembered because they poured so much of themselves into the very foundation of this college. They set the standard for all who followed, and I can tell you without reservation that the people who teach and work here today have carried on their predecessors' tireless spirit and tradition of excellence.



*Dr. Dianne G.
Van Hook*

From the vantage point of 2005, we can look back in awe and be proud of the accomplishments we have achieved. But, mark my words, the best is yet to come. These are exciting times at College of the Canyons, but you haven't seen anything yet!

To the future,

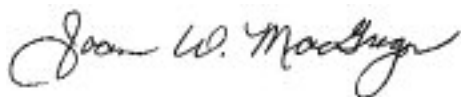
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dianne G. Van Hook". The signature is fluid and cursive.

DIANNE G. VAN HOOK
SUPERINTENDENT-PRESIDENT

A Gateway to Opportunity

Since opening 35 years ago, College of the Canyons has served as a gateway to higher education, professional training and, by extension, opportunity for the Santa Clarita Valley. It has cultivated a reputation for unequaled dedication, unparalleled service, and a passionate pursuit of excellence that is respected by our colleagues, appreciated by our partners, supported by our students, and energized and fueled by our staff. The college’s commitment to excellence is a tradition reflected by its innovative, results-oriented leadership.

As the next chapters of the college’s history are written, we know the outstanding foundation that has been laid will be further built upon and the institution will continue to uphold the ideals of education and contribute to the development of our vibrant, thriving community for generations to come.



JOAN W. MACGREGOR
PRESIDENT



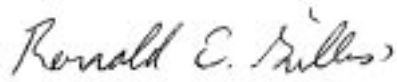
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SANTA CLARITA COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT



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▲ Above: An aerial view of the college looking west in early 2004. Photography by Marshall LaPlante.

The Taming of Rattlesnake Gulch



• The undeveloped
• land that would
• become the
• College of the
• Canyons campus
• can be seen in
• the center of this
• aerial photo,
• looking south
• across the Santa
• Clarita Valley in
• the late 1960s.
• Interstate 5 is on
• the right, with
• Valencia
• Boulevard cutting
• across the free-
• way in the fore-
• ground and
• McBean Parkway
• in the distance.

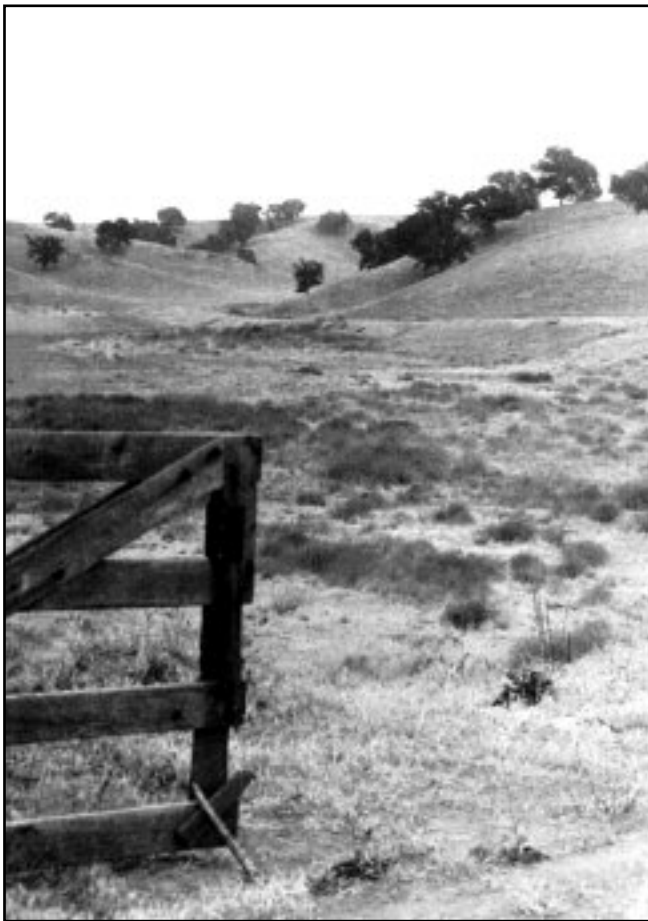
The History of College of the Canyons
1969-2004

By JOHN GREEN

The first classes at College of the Canyons began in 1969, but the story actually begins two years earlier. The residents of the Santa Clarita Valley wanted a college to call their own, and on November 21, 1967 they voted overwhelmingly to make it happen. Voters approved the creation of a junior college and elected a five-member board of trustees to shepherd its transformation from an idea into reality.

Optimism abounded for what lay ahead in this once-sleepy whistle-stop along Southern Pacific Railroad's Los Angeles-to-San Francisco line. With a population of fewer than 60,000, the community looked much different. In what we now call Saugus and Canyon Country, a growing assortment of tract homes was sprouting – although vast expanses of vacant or agricultural land still separated the valley's distinct communities. Downtown Newhall was the established commercial center, featuring car dealerships, a supermarket, a bank and many other merchants that have since relocated.

During the summer of that pivotal year of 1967, the master-planned community of Valencia was born, luring young families from over the hill with homes priced at about \$25,000. Valencia Town Center did not exist, of course. Neither did the Valencia Auto Mall. Magic Mountain, Henry Mayo Newhall Memorial Hospital and California Institute of the Arts were several years from appearing on the local landscape. There was no Stevenson Ranch, just a vast unadulterated plain accented by rugged foothills that have since been terraced and built upon. Old Orchard Shopping Center on Lyons Avenue and The Newhall Land & Farming Co.'s first golf course – known today as Valencia Country Club – were barely two years old. The Valencia Industrial Center was just beginning to be developed. The single-screen Plaza Theater in Newhall and the Mustang Drive-In off Soledad Canyon Road were the only local cinematic venues. The emergence of the Santa Clarita Valley as a viable place to live, work



Clockwise from top: The first Board of Trustees, composed of (from left) Dr. William Bonelli Jr., Richard Muhl, Bruce Fortine, John Hackney and Peter Huntsinger; a view of the land where College of the Canyons would rise; and the college's first superintendent-president, Dr. Robert C. Rockwell.

and play was precipitated by several key developments, chief among them the country's post-war westward migration and California's exploding growth. But the two greatest obstacles to the valley's growth – limited access and insufficient water supply – were in the process of being eliminated. The old Highway 99 was steadily being circumvented by a major north-south freeway, Interstate 5, that would cut a vital swath through the Santa Clarita Valley on its way to becoming California's most important roadway, connecting north with south, border to border. And, following California voters' approval seven years earlier to bring state water south, plans were moving forward for a major new State Water Project reservoir in Castaic. This project, part of what would become the biggest water-delivery system in the world, finally ensured a reliable source of water. All of these developments helped set the stage for the transformation of a dusty domain of cowboys and sodbusters to a rapidly growing suburbia, one that would need a public institution of higher learning. Thus was born the Santa Clarita Community College District and its campus, College of the Canyons, which would go on to become the fastest-growing community college in California.

Things moved quickly once voters gave the go-ahead. The Board of Trustees – President William Bonelli Jr., Vice President Edward Muhl, and members Peter Huntsinger, Sheila Dyer and Bruce Fortine – began functioning as an official body on December 5, 1967. They initiated a search for someone who could put the wheels in motion, eventually deciding upon Santa Barbara City College President Dr. Robert C. Rockwell. He became the first superintendent of the Santa Clarita Valley Junior College District, as it was then called, and the first president of its single campus, a college that would later adopt the familiar name College of the Canyons.

Other names were considered for this new junior college district. Among them were North Valley, Upper Santa Clarita Valley, Bouquet, Canyon and Vasquez.

Asked why he would even consider leaving such a plush coastal clime for a dusty semi-desert outpost, Rockwell replied: "A college president has very few opportunities to create an entirely new college, and I'm still young enough to do it – and I want very much to do it." The trustees liked his answer, as well as the fact he'd earlier overseen the construction of Cerritos Community College. Accompanying Rockwell from Santa Barbara was his loyal vice president, Gary Mouck, who would stay on at College of the Canyons long after his mentor retired. "College of the Canyons is what it is today because Bob

Rockwell was the right man at the right place at the right time,” Mouck said. “There is simply no question about that. He brought invaluable experience and an innate leadership quality to the project.”

The Newhall Land & Farming Co., from whom the land that would become College of the Canyons was later purchased, presented the fledgling college with a \$140,000 gift. A chief executive of the company said the principal reason for the gift was “because Dr. Rockwell was there.”

Rockwell, Mouck and the trustees soon began the crucial task of finding the people who would give life and character to the new college. First to be built was an administrative staff, composed of Charles Rheinschmidt, assistant superintendent-student personnel; Carl McConnell, dean of admissions and records, and Joleen Block, director of library services.

Rockwell often boasted that he had personally “hand-picked” the college’s instructors. But they first had to get past Mouck, who interviewed every one of them. During the months leading up to opening day in the fall of 1969, he and fellow administrators turned their attention to building the first faculty. They sifted through the resumes of some 4,000 applicants. Thirty-one would be chosen.

Recruited were William Baker, communications; James Boykin, biological sciences; Louis Brown, police science; Steven Cerra, history; Theodore Collier, political science and history; Robert Downs, music; Alice Freeman (Betty Spilker), English; Kurt Freeman, psychology; George Guernsey, technology; Mildred Guernsey, mathematics; Ann Heidt, art and English; Donald Heidt, English; Donald Hellrigel, foreign language; Elfi Hummel, foreign language and drama; Leonard Herendeen, police science; Iris Ingham, art; Jack Israel, physical education; Edward Jacoby, physical education; Jan Keller, librarian; Thomas Lawrence Jr., physics; Clifford Layton, business and mathematics; Betty Lid, English; J.J. O’Brien, police science; George



Gary Mouck, who worked with Superintendent-President Rockwell at Santa Barbara City College, followed his mentor to College of the Canyons. He was in charge of the fledgling college’s day-to-day operations.

Pederson, police science; Lynora Saunders, physical education; Lee Smelser, physical education; Dale Smith, sociology and anthropology; Gretchen Thomson, history; Gary Valentine, chemistry and biology; Frances Wakefield, counseling, and Stanley Weikert, business.

The composition of the original Board of Trustees elected in 1967 changed, as John Hackney replaced Sheila Dyer in 1969.

The challenges facing the young district were formidable. Even with the key

people in place, the college still existed in concept only. There was nothing yet tangible and very little money. By May 1969 the college’s first catalog was ready to go – minus an important detail. “There was no cover because the college didn’t have a name,” Mouck recalled years later. That issue would soon be resolved.

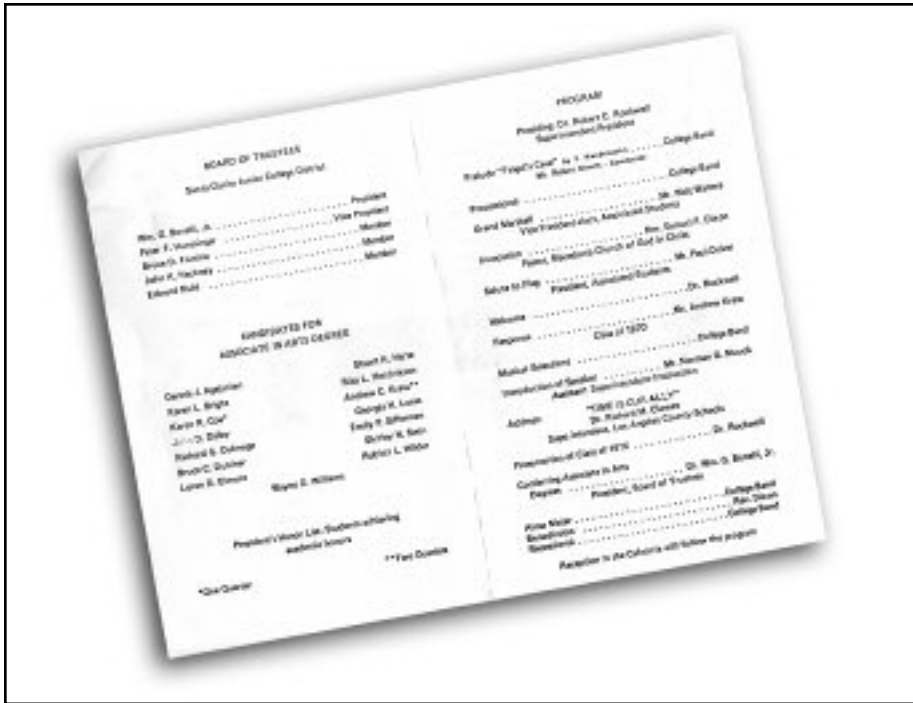


College of the Canyons opened in a bungalow at Hart High School (above) on Sept. 22, 1969. Hours were limited because classes started in the late afternoon, after high school students had left the campus.

Mouck was in his office one day in early 1969, examining topographic maps of the Santa Clarita Valley, when he noticed the large number of canyons. “I counted over 50. So I yelled out, ‘How about College of the Canyons?’” There already was a College of the Desert and a College of the Redwoods, so College of the Canyons made sense, he reasoned. On May 15, 1969, the Board of Trustees agreed. “College of the Canyons” won out over several other suggestions that included Santa Clarita College and Valencia College.

The rationale behind the selection of the cougar as the official mascot was far less complicated. “I came up with ‘cougar’ because I like cougars,” Mouck said matter-of-factly.

Attention soon turned to the reason Mouck was examining topographic maps in the first place. The college needed a permanent home. Although much vacant land existed in 1969, a significant portion of it was owned by one company, Newhall Land. The college identified some 45 possible properties on which to build, including land that Newhall Land and Sea World planned to



The program for the college's first graduation ceremony in June 1970 listed 15 of the 16 graduates. The ceremony was held at Hart High School, the new college's first but temporary home. A reception followed in the high school's cafeteria.

transform into a major theme park. That place would open on May 29, 1971 as Magic Mountain and quickly become a regional landmark, but only after Newhall Land made college leaders an offer they couldn't refuse.

Not wanting its land acquired through eminent-domain proceedings, Newhall Land made the college district a generous offer. The company would sell the district more than 150 acres along Interstate 5 near Valencia Boulevard for about \$10,000 an acre, then return 10 percent of the purchase price as a gift. Now, all the district needed was the money.

With hundreds of prospective students eagerly awaiting their new college, temporary quarters were arranged at Hart High School. It was there, in a Newhall Avenue bungalow, that College of the Canyons officially opened on September 22, 1969, welcoming its first class of students. Rockwell expected about 600 people to sign up for the fall quarter. But, in a precursor to the years that would follow, demand was under-estimated as 735 students showed up.



The first campus at the permanent site was composed of a collection of temporary modular buildings holding 99 classrooms. The buildings of the so-called "instant campus" sat roughly on the location of the present-day softball field.

Administrative offices were located several blocks away, at 24609 Arch Street, in a strip-mall storefront just over the railroad tracks at San Fernando Road. The college organized its first-year schedule around the quarter system, with the winter quarter starting January 7, 1970 and the spring quarter commencing April 8, 1970. There was no summer quarter.

Courses of instruction were comprehensive for such a new institution. More than 150 classes were offered in anthropology, art, astronomy, automotive technology, biological sciences, business, chemistry, communications, economics, engineering, English, French, geography, geology, German, health education, history, home economics, library technology, mathematics, meteorology, music, philosophy, physical education, physics, police science, political science, psychology, social science, sociology and Spanish.

The college fielded its first athletic teams in baseball, basketball, cross country and track under the auspices of the Desert Conference.

Student activities began immediately. The college's first student body president, Paul Driver, was elected. The first issue of the student newspaper,



introduced as "The College Sound," rolled off the press in November. A steady succession of events with names such as Sweethearts Dance and Annual Awards Banquet followed, as did theatrical productions such as "The World of Ferlinghetti" and "Our Town."

Before long, the college's first commencement day arrived. Assembled in the Hart High cafeteria that June day in 1970 were Dennis Agajanian – the first to be handed his diploma – Karen Bright, Karen Coe, Penny Curtis, John Dalby, Richard Dalmage, Loren Elmore, Stuart Harte, Rita Hendrixson, Gregory Jenkins, Andrew Kress, Georgia Lucas, Emily Sifferman, Shirley Stein, Robert Wilder and Wayne Williams. These 16 people hold the distinction of being the very first graduates of College of the Canyons.

"The first year of operation of any new college is never easy," Rockwell remarked during the ceremony. "The challenges are numerous. All of you have met these challenges and, in doing so, have achieved an enviable place in the history of this college."

The Hart High campus filled an urgent need, but it was ill-suited to accommodate a growing number of college students for very long. College hours were severely hampered because classes could begin only in the late afternoon, after

The view of the temporary modular campus looking west. The buildings were erected just south of the present day Cougar Stadium.



The college's first Associated Student Body was headed by Paul Driver (center).

high school students had left for the day. Sure enough, before the year was out, College of the Canyons would have a new home.

That January of 1970, voters gave their resounding approval to a \$4 million construction-bond issue so that College of the Canyons could create a permanent campus. Soon thereafter, the district took Newhall Land up on its earlier offer and purchased 153.4 acres of land bounded by Valencia Boulevard on the north and Interstate 5 on the west. "Ultimately we obtained the best site of all," Mouck said, referring to the gently rolling oak-studded hills along the east side of Interstate 5. Local pioneers had a more ominous

moniker for this parcel of land. They called it "Rattlesnake Gulch."

College of the Canyons moved out of the Hart High campus in July, setting up a temporary admissions office in a garage on Pine Street until the new campus was

ready.

Just 10 months after voters passed the bond issue, temporary buildings housing 99 classrooms were erected, although construction problems delayed the opening by two weeks. The college's first on-campus classes began on October 5, 1970 in an assemblage of prefabricated buildings that faculty, staff and students would alternately call the "Instant Campus" or "Stalag 13," the latter a reference to the stark prison camp featured in the TV sitcom "Hogan's Heroes."

Once the village of modular buildings was in place, work commenced on the adjacent football field and surrounding all-weather "Tartan track." The massive concrete stadium and lights would come later, after the visitors' stands were built.

At the start of the second academic year, more than 1,200 people were

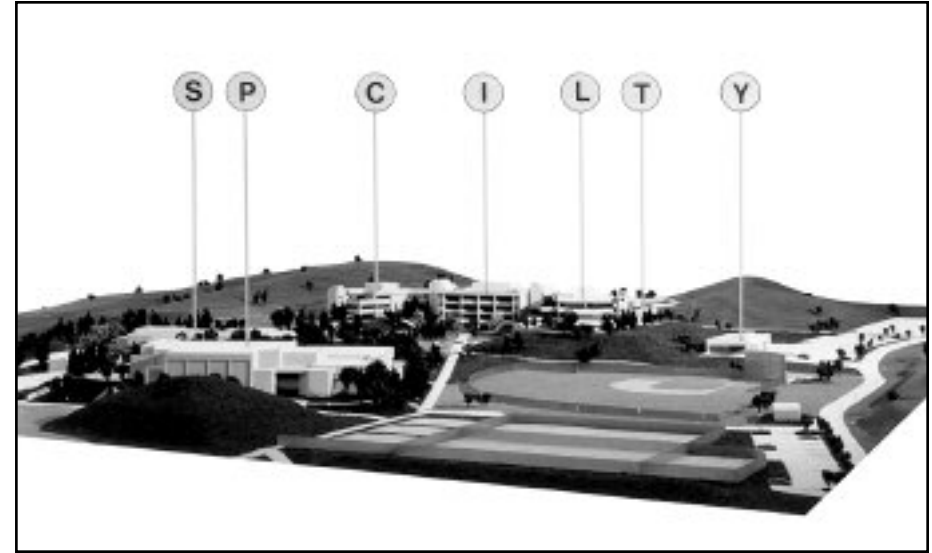


attending classes. It was a strong indicator of community need and the growth yet to come.

The growing student body was now offered more than 225 courses taught by an ever-growing faculty team. New instructors included Roger Basham, anthropology; Marcia Boehm; Carl Buckel, management; Janice Burbank, nursing education; Dorothy Burtch; Doris Coy, business and economics; Barbara Hamm; Willard Kiesner; Roseann Krane; Chris Mathison; Robert McNutt; Stanley Newcomb; Ken Palmer; Anton Remenih, communication services; Robert Seippel; Carl Seltzer; William Solberg, and Winston Wutkee, geology. And, although the name was new, the face was familiar, as Alice Freeman rejoined the faculty ranks under her new, married name, Betty Spilker. Joining the administrative team in 1970 were Robert Berson, assistant superintendent-business services, and Alduino Adelini, dean of student activities.

The name of the district was shortened slightly, with the removal of "Valley" from the Santa Clarita Valley Junior College District. (In fact, the official district name would metamorphose once again when California decided to rename its junior colleges "community colleges." The Santa Clarita

The campus shares some of the design features from this early 3-dimensional model of the proposed campus.



An early architectural drawing (top) shows the proposed placement of the college's first permanent buildings, which is much closer to the actual campus that was built. The cover of a 1970 publication (above) that described the new college's future plans.

Community College District became the district's official name in 1972.)

Putting the new football field to good use was the college's first gridiron squad, which announced its arrival by winning the season opener against the Cal Lutheran junior varsity team by a score of 49-6. The 1970 Cougars, coached by Don Kloppenburg, finished the season with a 7-2 record, second in the Desert Conference and fifth in the state. The first-year team also produced an All-American in tailback Clint McKinney, who gained the most yardage – 413 in 41 carries – in a single game in the history of American college football. By comparison, O.J. Simpson ran a record 304 yards at San Francisco City College in 1965. McKinney was named MVP of the Desert Conference and was presented with a special trophy from Sports Illustrated magazine.

The cross-country team, headed by coach Ed Jacoby, won the conference championship. The harriers' captain and star was Mike Martinez.

The college's Alma Mater, authored by music instructor Robert



Downs, appeared for the first time in the 1970-71 Cougars Handbook: "All hail to Thee with melody, our voices strong and clear. We pledge to Thee our loyalty in terms for all to hear. And when we go our way, we will say we have known you, Alma Mater, strong and true. Our College of the Canyons and a Cougars' victory! All hail to Thee."

Students held their first welcome dance of the new academic year at Hart High, whose multi-purpose room was still larger than anything at the new campus. Performing on stage was an oddly titled band called "Shmoogi,"

whose roster included a young Curtis Stone. Stone, son of the late music legend and Saugus resident Cliffie Stone, would later find stardom as a founding member of the band "Highway 101."

Meanwhile, the once-virgin hills of Rattlesnake Gulch were being remolded by dozens of clattering steel behemoths that kicked up an endless supply of dirt and dust in their quest to create a habitable college campus. The street address for this new college was 25000 Valencia Boulevard, as



The athletic field minus the stadium (top,) and the modular buildings (above) being erected to create the temporary campus.



The baseball field (top) was one of the first amenities to be built on the new campus. The hills behind it are being graded and prepared for construction. The Cougar cheer squad (above) strikes a pose.

Rockwell Canyon Road did not yet exist.

Unlike the present-day campus, the new college had a serious parking shortage. Consequently, during class hours hundreds of cars were parked bumper to bumper along both sides of Valencia Boulevard.

Improvisation was the order of the day. Students could occasionally be seen hosing down the inevitable layer of dust that accumulated on just about everything, while instructors often abandoned the confines of the pre-fabs to teach outdoors. Basketball coach Lee Smelser once conducted a class while perched atop the back of a truck, and English instructor Betty Lid transformed a trash can into a speaking lectern.

On October 26, 1970, during a twilight ceremony under a mammoth green-and-white tent, College of the Canyons was officially dedicated. More than 700 people showed up to witness the hourlong event in the center of the campus. Special guest speakers were comedian Bob Hope and U.S. Sen. George Murphy.



A couple gaze out over the temporary modular campus from a hill on the western edge of the campus. The buildings on the left sit at the location of the present-day Cougar Den picnic area.

“The pioneer spirit of the West is still here,” said Murphy, whose previous career as an actor featured roles on Broadway and in some 55 movies. “Nowhere have I witnessed a modern-day demonstration of our great pioneer spirit that surpasses the one taking place right here on this campus.”

When it was his turn to speak, Hope, the legend of standup comedy and the silver screen, took a serious swipe at campus radicals, reflecting the university unrest typical of the day. “I can’t understand how people can burn down college buildings,” he said. “For fine young students to be denied an education by a lousy fringe group is the biggest crime in our history.”

He also added his lighthearted take on the event. Referring to the tent in which everyone was assembled, Hope quipped: “I haven’t worked anything like this since Ringling Bros.” After taking in a deep breath, he added: “I’m in shock. This fresh air grabbed me. I’m not used to it. I’m from Burbank.”

Other distinguished guests that day were California Assemblyman Newton Russell, Sen. John Harmer, Los Angeles County Supervisor Warren Dorn and the Rev. Robert Bingham, who delivered the invocation and benediction.



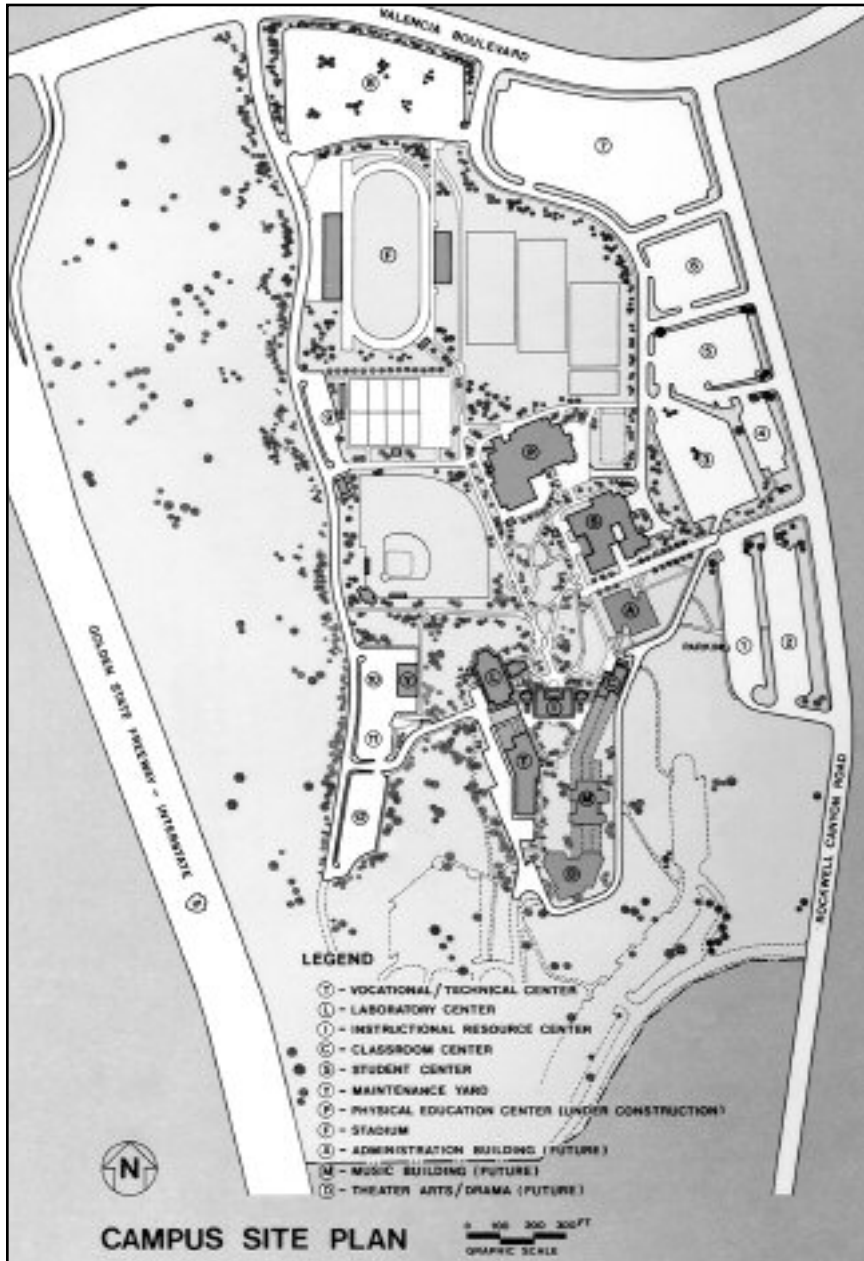
Two members of the Cougar cheer squad collect autographs from U.S. Sen. George Murphy (left) and comedian Bob Hope (right), who spoke during the campus dedication ceremony in 1970.

“Our goal is not to provide just a college for the community, but a college of quality, one that will be admired and used as a model throughout the state,” Rockwell said to the assembled guests and dignitaries. “With our staff and administration, this goal is within our grasp.”

The timing of the 6.4-magnitude Sylmar earthquake on February 9, 1971 was fortuitous for College of the Canyons. No permanent campus structures yet existed, but the architectural plans for the buildings on the drawing board were beefed up significantly to make the college’s first structures among the safest in California.

“The Student Center was supposed to be two stories, but everything changed the day of the Sylmar earthquake,” said Al Adelini, who served as dean of student activities. “That was a very fateful day for the college, and we became the most earthquake-ready facility in the whole valley.”

Hardest hit during the quake – which was strong enough to topple the lofty Interstate 5-Highway 14 connectors that were then under construction – was the Instructional Resource Center, where librarian Jan Keller estimated that some 10,000 volumes lay buried under displaced steel shelves. It took



College planners followed fairly closely the guidelines set forth by the architect's original site plan (above) over the years, except for the southernmost campus buildings.



The hills south of Valencia Boulevard are graded to prepare for the construction of permanent campus buildings. The clattering steel behemoths kicked up an endless supply of dirt and dust at the nearby temporary campus.

two days to sort through the mess and re-shelve the books.

Eighty-nine students graduated during the college's second commencement ceremony – the first to occur on the permanent campus – in 1971. The figure was more than five times greater than the 16 graduates a year earlier and a portent of things to come.

By the fall of 1971, enrollment continued to experience dramatic growth, reaching 1,700 students – more than twice the number of students enrolled in classes during the first year. The number of college personnel also continued to grow to meet the increased enrollment demands. Hired to serve as dean of vocational-technical education in 1971 was Robert Pollock, and new faculty members included Hazel Carter, nursing education; Henry Endler, transportation; Robert Freeman, music; Helen Lusk, nursing education, and Larry Reisbig, physical education.

The college's new vocational nursing program awarded 11 students with nursing caps in April 1971. The mid-year "capping" ceremony marked the halfway point for the students, who were enrolled in an intensive training program that included more than 1,000 hours of clinical training at Inter-Valley Community

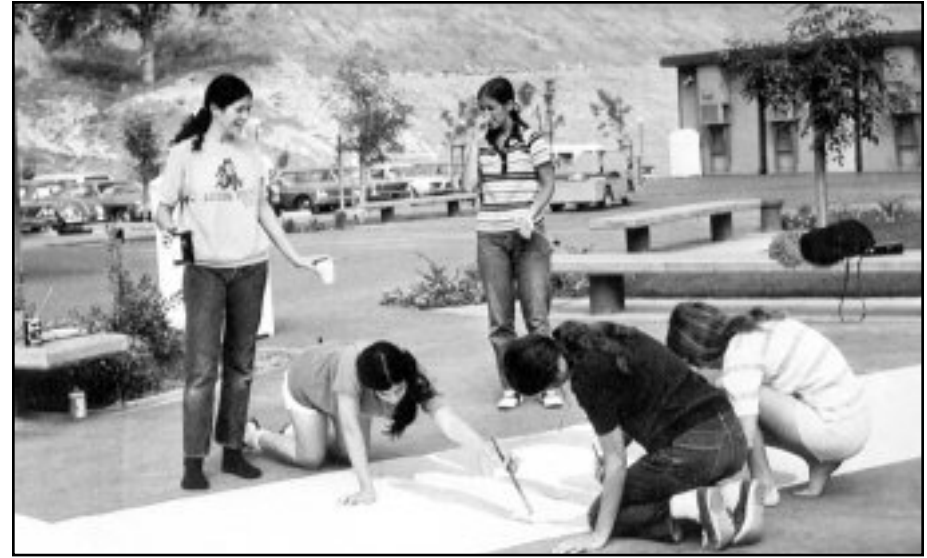


Hospital in Saugus and Golden State Memorial Hospital in Newhall. "You are preparing yourselves for a noble calling," Assistant Superintendent Mouck told the students. The class later graduated in August.

Meanwhile, a wayfaring pair of geology and anthropology instructors began conducting field trips that would become institutional traditions – and wildly popular among students. Geology instructor Winston Wutkee, a strong believer in hands-on rock hunting, led several field trips to places such as Acton, Tick Canyon, Death Valley and Gold Rush country, where students could find and inspect actual specimens on their own. Likewise, anthropology instructor Roger Basham led several expeditions in which students participated in archeological digs. Among the destinations was a site near the then-new Castaic Dam to unearth evidence of a Chumash tribe that once inhabited the area. Another focused on a dry lake bed near Taft, where students dug up arrowheads, beads and other artifacts left behind by the Yokuts, who occupied the San Joaquin Valley for some 7,000 years.

The community was apparently satisfied with the college's progress,

Some of the 89 students who graduated in 1971 line up near the modular buildings. It was the college's second graduation ceremony – and the first to be held on the permanent campus.



College life amid the temporary modular structures was typical, with students painting a promotional banner (top) and gathering around a table between classes to socialize (above).

deciding to maintain the status quo on the college's Board of Trustees. Three members – Peter Huntsinger, William Bonelli and Edward Muhl – won re-election in April.

And, events in Southeast Asia continued to polarize public opinion. The case of Army Lt. William Calley, accused of massacring innocent civilians at Mai Lai, was the subject

of a heated April 29 student forum organized by communications instructor William Baker.

The college debuted its new marching band and crowned its first homecoming queen – Vicki Sinclair – during half-time ceremonies in November. The mighty Cougar football squad dispensed the College of the Desert Roadrunners by the score of 49-0. The 25-piece band was assembled by music instructor Robert Downs.

As 1972 began, it was impossible to ignore the small mechanized army of bulldozers and graders that was reshaping the property south of the temporary campus. The \$1 million project was preparing the

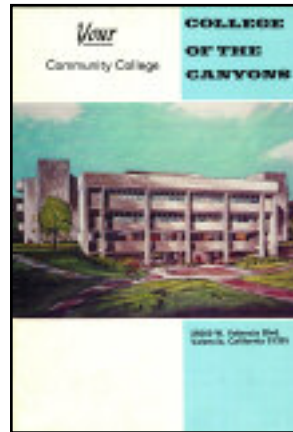


Geology instructor Winston Wutkee (left, in white jumpsuit) and anthropology instructor Roger Basham (to the right, waving) lead students on an early archaeological excavation.

land for the buildings that would eventually rise from the site, including the first permanent building, the Instructional Resource Center, as well as the Classroom Center, Laboratory Center, Student Center, Vocational-Technical Building and portions of the Physical Education Center.

Sadly, Dr. William Bonelli, the recently re-elected first president of the Board of Trustees, did not live to see the college's first permanent building. He died suddenly on February 22, 1972 at the age of 49. The college's first permanent structure, the Instructional Resource Center, would be renamed in his honor. Newhall's postmaster, Francis Claffey, was appointed to fill the vacant board seat.

The second commencement ceremony on the permanent campus produced 143 graduates – up from 89 the previous year. The college was experiencing solid growth, but even that was dwarfed by bigger news: Construction of the Dr. William G.



The cover of an early college marketing brochure depicts an artist's rendering of the planned Instructional Resource Center.



Better known as the Cougars winningest baseball coach, Mike Gillespie (above left) also pitched in as an assistant coach for the football team.

Bonelli Instructional Resource Center was authorized to move forward.

In November 1972, voters statewide authorized the \$160 million Community College Construction Act, which was worth about \$11.2 million for College of the Canyons – provided that local citizens came up with at least \$2.5 million in matching funds.

The challenge galvanized the community. Elisha Agajanian, board chairman of Santa Clarita National Bank, and Blake V. Blakey, manager of Anawalt Lumber & Materials Co. in Newhall, headed a group of some 40 community leaders who organized the Citizens' Committee to Complete College of the Canyons. The outcome was extraordinary. On Feb. 6, 1973, local voters threw their enthusiastic support behind an \$8 million bond issue to meet the matching-funds requirement of the earlier statewide measure. In fact, nearly 80 percent of the local electorate voted to support the measure, far surpassing the required two-thirds majority.

Construction of the Instructional Resource Center (IRC) and an auto shop building was already under way. With the funding now in place, the core campus – most of it, anyway – could now be completed. Buildings began opening



Construction workers build the forms that will encase the massive poured-concrete foundation of the Instructional Resource Center.



The foundation of the IRC begins to take shape on the College of the Canyons campus.

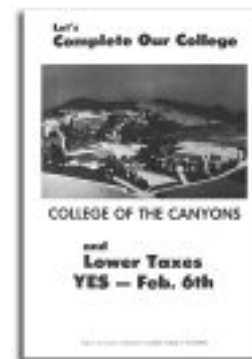
in rapid succession, with the monikers “Instant Campus,” “Rattlesnake Gulch” and “Stalag 13” fading into history.

The new bond funding paved the way for five major building projects: the Laboratory Center, Classroom Center, Student Center, Vocational-Technical Building and Physical Education Center. The college’s original master plan also called for a Theatre Arts Building, Music Building, Business Education Building and Classroom-Administration Building, all of which were scheduled to be built later in the decade.

Ultimately, the college envisioned under the first master plan would be able to accommodate 5,000 students – a capacity that would be met and surpassed far sooner than anyone realized.



The 1971 Cougar football squad is pictured on a trading card that featured the team’s schedule on the back.



A campaign sign for the 1973 bond measure that asked voters for \$8 million to help build the campus. Nearly 80 percent of voters responded positively.

The first permanent building to be completed was the IRC. More than half a million cubic yards of earth were moved to make way for this first building, which cost \$3.25 million to build and housed 26 classrooms and faculty offices. As the IRC was completed and its classroom space made available in early 1974, the modular structures that had served as the college campus were abandoned and removed. At the same time, five other buildings were in various stages of construction.

The IRC was officially dedicated by Governor Ronald Reagan on April 22, 1974. The dedication ceremony was a proud and lavish affair, with a large stage erected on the football field to accommodate the governor and other luminaries. Reagan arrived by limousine and met privately with college officials in the old board room, which was located inside a modular building behind where the present-day stadium scoreboard sits. Hundreds gathered in the field’s visitor’s stands as armed, mounted police officers patrolled the hillside above.

As the fall of 1974 approached, it was becoming abundantly clear that College of the Canyons had a vital purpose and an ever-expanding following. As the college entered its sixth academic year, enrollment rose to 2,542 students – an all-time high.

It was a time when many young people were returning from combat in Vietnam. The student population reflected this trend, with a full 30 percent of students being veterans. The conflict in Vietnam would officially cease the following year.

The 6,000-seat Cougar Stadium officially opened for the football team's first home game of the 1974 season on September 21 of that year. Unfortunately, the Cougars fell to Los Angeles Harbor Community College by a score of 26-21.

The Classroom Center and Laboratory Center, two separate structures that were built on either end of the IRC, opened in January 1975. To the casual observer, the combined structures appear to be one large building, but they are actually three separate structures. At the points at which the buildings appear to touch, they are in fact a few



The Instructional Resource Center begins to take shape, having risen two of its eventual four stories.

inches apart, the gaps along the outdoor walkways covered with steel expansion plates.

The scaled-back Student Center, now relegated to a single story in the interest of earthquake safety, opened in February 1975. The first on-campus dining facility opened here in September, offering a hamburger for 60 cents, a grilled-cheese sandwich for 40 cents and a large Coke for 35 cents. The



Governor Ronald Reagan speaks during the April 22, 1974 dedication ceremony for the college's first permanent building, the William G. Bonelli Instructional Resource Center. Superintendent-President Dr. Robert C. Rockwell is seated on the left.

Student Center was used for the first graduation ceremony of the Licensed Vocational Nurse Program. Sixteen students graduated.

The \$1.2 million Vocational-Technical Building, housing programs in welding, automotive repair and home economics, opened to some 500 students in the fall of 1975. And, the nearly \$5 million Physical Education Complex, housing an indoor swimming and diving pool, basketball court, gymnastics room and weight-training room, opened in March 1976. It signaled the end of construction of the original core campus. The Santa Clarita Valley now boasted a stunning college campus that was the envy of many a community.

"The modern architecture utilizes the natural landscape, reflecting in its design the spaciousness and simplicity of the terrain," noted a college brochure from 1975, explaining the design philosophy of the new campus. "While certain changes in the hillsides must be made to complete the program, every effort has been made to ensure ecological protection."

The sturdy, massive poured-concrete structures were designed to withstand 100-year earthquakes and went well beyond state safety laws. "I doubt



With most of the IRC completed, workers turn their attention to construction of the L Building. At right, Superintendent-President Rockwell stands in front of the IRC as it is being built.



that we could afford to build like that today," Rockwell commented some years later. "I guess what the founding Board of Trustees and I are proudest of is the fact that we planned well for the future. It's paying off handsomely now and will for decades to come."

Rockwell served College of the Canyons for more than a decade, retiring in late 1978 and accomplishing what the first Board of Trustees asked him to do: Build not just a college, but a foundation on which to build. "I am proud of College of the Canyons," he said. "I consider it the culmination of a career." Mouck was tapped to serve as interim superintendent-president, a position he held until midway through the following year.

The year 1978 was a transitional one for the college, if not the entire state. In November, California voters approved Proposition 13, a far-reaching measure that would have a profound impact on state finances and prompt cutbacks in educational programs. The dawn of this new era at College of the Canyons would be overseen by Dr. Leland B. Newcomer, the former president of La Verne College and superintendent of the Grossmont Union High School District, who was brought



The Student Center (top) and, beyond that, Cougar Stadium are under construction. Most of the Instructional Resource Center (above) has been completed. This view is from the south. Just beyond the trailer is the present-day Bonelli Amphitheater.

on board to replace the retiring Rockwell. Newcomer began his new job on July 1, 1979.

The financial challenges of the new decade would require innovative solutions. Faced with a 10 percent increase in enrollment and a \$500,000 deficit at the start of the 1980-81 academic year, the college embarked on a new

course of action. It created the College of the Canyons Foundation, a private, non-profit corporation that would generate new funding from within the community to help fund educational programs and provide scholarships, fellowships and grants for students.

A welcome diversion would come from the sports world. Cougar pitching standout Bob Walk broke into the big leagues and began playing for the Philadelphia Phillies on May 26, 1980. Although not the first Cougar to make it to the pros, Walk was the first to make a significant impact in professional sports. The fierce competitor's 1980 rookie season at Philadelphia included 11 regular-season wins and a victory in Game One of the World Series. His phenomenal Major League Baseball career would stretch through



The Student Center (S Building) is under construction in this view looking north.

the '80s, coming to a close on September 29, 1993 with the Pittsburgh Pirates.

Despite a poor economic climate, construction began in January 1981 on a new Child Development Center and Administration Building, financed through the sale of bonds that were approved years earlier. Elsewhere on campus, college officials were struggling with the economic realities of the post-Proposition 13 climate.

A second-straight deficit, this one in the \$600,000 range, resulted in a variety of cutbacks in the 1981-82 academic year. Scaled back or eliminated were music and theater programs, counseling services and speech classes. Although the situation appeared dire, Newcomer remained optimistic, commenting: "This college will survive. We can and will grow."

The College Services Building, housing the Child Development Center (CDC) and administrative offices, opened its doors in February 1982. The CDC served the dual role of training students and providing preschool services to the community. The exceptional quality of care quickly became evident to local families, with lengthy waiting lists becoming the norm.

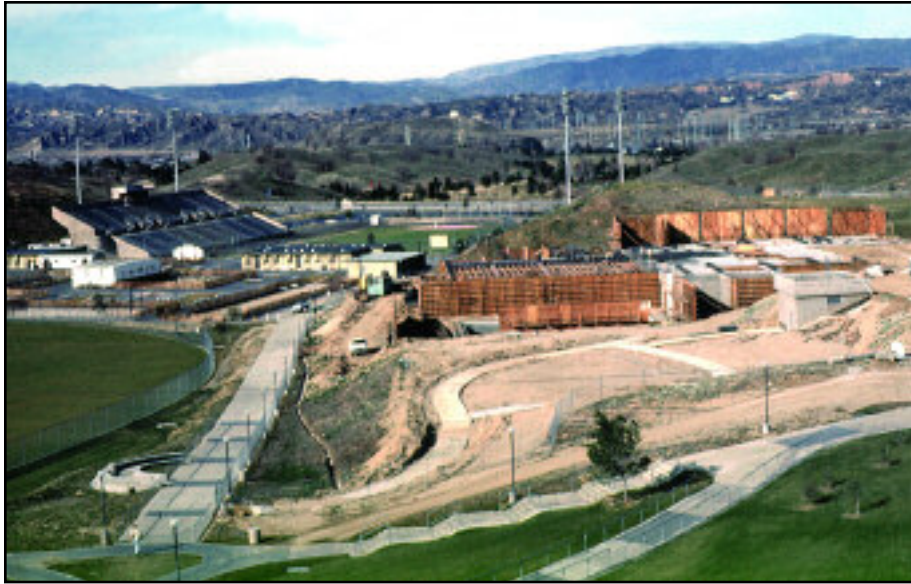
The year 1982 was a pivotal one for college athletics. Although the football program was successful on the field, it failed to capture the hearts and minds of the community. Mired in controversy over its recruitment of out-of-state players, the football program was dismantled at the order of the Board of Trustees, which rationalized its decision by pointing to the program's high costs and



A crane hoists a bank of lights into place at Cougar Stadium, which itself is under construction (top). An earlier photo (above) shows the field, running track and a mound of dirt that was used as the foundation for the stadium.

the community's apparent lack of interest. Lest anyone think it singled out football, the board cut additional costs by eliminating one-third of the physical education classes and a host of academic programs.

Mouck recounted how Rockwell Canyon Road came into existence. For years, there was a small road that extended from Valencia Boulevard to the college's staff parking lots. Newhall Land had plans to punch through the hills and extend the road to McBean Parkway, making it a natural extension of the existing Tournament Road near CalArts. College leaders, however, wanted a name that would honor the college's recently retired first superintendent-president, Dr. Robert C. Rockwell.



“The county would not dedicate it as Rockwell Road because he was still living,” Mouck recalled. He eventually convinced Newhall Land and Los Angeles County planners that the road should be called Rockwell Canyon Road – despite the glaring absence of a canyon named Rockwell. Mouck had found a way to honor his old boss – with a road that not only utilized the Rockwell name, but shared the same initials: RCR.



The Physical Education Center (top) is under construction in this view looking north. Already built and visible in the background is Cougar Stadium. Lee Smelser (above) was the college's first men's basketball coach.

By June of 1982, Mouck found himself once again filling in as the interim superintendent, following the resignation of Dr. Newcomer. He soon announced that his retirement was not long off. The one administrator who had been with the college since its inception set a departure date of Dec. 15, describing his 14 years at the college as a “labor of love.”

Economic difficulties persisted at the start of the fall 1982 semester, with the college cutting 50 classes and experiencing an enrollment dip from 4,000 to 3,600 students.

Major League Baseball had its sights on the college's baseball program, which captured its first



The Cougars baseball team (top) plays on its field at the college's permanent campus, and the women's basketball team (above) competes in the new Physical Education Center.

state title in 1981. This time, a trio of players was called up to the big leagues. Pitcher Jeff Perry was summoned by the St. Louis Cardinals, and shortstop Jeff Hughes and outfielder Bill Gordon suited up as San Francisco Giants. Cougar baseball coach Mike Gillespie led the team to its second state title in May 1983 and was named coach of the year in both the state and nation.

On May 1, 1983, Dr. Ramon F. LaGrandeur became the third person to step into the role of superintendent-president of College of the Canyons. The former Spokane Community College president faced a daunting budget deficit of more than \$473,000.

The deficit was more than a local problem. With California bleeding red ink, the state's grand concept of providing a free college education to all citizens came to an end after 73 years. The state introduced a new requirement in 1984 that community college students pay enrollment fees of \$5 per unit, up to a maximum of \$50 per semester.



Within a year, finances improved and the college began to return to normal. In 1985, work was completed on the college's long-awaited Physical Sciences Lab, and the chorus and jazz band regrouped after an absence of four years.

The year closed on a somber note, however, with the Nov. 9 death of biology professor Jim Boykin at the age of 59. A member of the college's first faculty, he taught at the college for 16 years. The science building was later renamed the James D. Boykin Lab Center in his honor.

Some 70 recruits enrolled in the new Los Angeles County Sheriff's Training Academy at the college in March 1986.

In May, baseball coach Mike Gillespie wrapped up his 16th and final season, but not before the Cougars won their third state championship in six years with a remarkable 41-6 record – the most wins ever



Gary Mouck (top, left) speaks with instructor Cheri Choate (second from left) as Tom Lawrence (far right) looks on at the temporary campus. A nearly completed IRC can be seen in the background. Members of one of the college's first cheerleading squads (above).



One of the first vocational programs on the new campus was automotive repair and technology.

for a California community college.

Enrollment began to climb once again – if ever so slightly. Fall 1986 classes began with an increase of 50 students, indicating that perhaps the economy was improving, growth was at hand and better days were ahead.

Like the previous year, however, the college lost another beloved faculty member. Political science professor Dr. Ted Collier, one of the original team of instructors hired 17 years earlier, died Sept. 21 at the age of 58.

The year 1987 was an important one for both the college and the community. Enrollment grew again, with some 3,700 students signing up for spring classes. The on-campus Sheriff's Department Training Academy graduated its first class of recruits – 57 men and six women – during a commencement ceremony attended by Sheriff Sherman Block and California Senator Ed Davis, the former chief of the Los Angeles Police Department. And, the college's first Women's Conference, featuring KNBC News anchorwoman Kelly Lange as its keynote speaker, debuted to a sell-out crowd.

Perhaps most importantly for the burgeoning Santa Clarita Valley, 1987 was the year that signaled independence. When they went to the polls on November 3, 69 percent of local voters supported the idea of creating the City



Students participate in an experiment in one of the college's new science labs.

of Santa Clarita, wresting control of much of the populated areas of the valley from Los Angeles County. The new city was the largest area to be incorporated in California history, and it became the second-largest city in size and the sixth-largest in population (130,000) within the county. Among the fledgling city's first City Council was Carl Boyer, a former member of the Santa Clarita Community College District Board of Trustees, the elected governing body of College of the Canyons.

Coinciding with the birth of this new city was a changing of the guard at the community's only public institution of higher learning. With five years under his belt as the college's top administrator, Dr. LaGrandeur retired in 1988, setting off a search for his successor.

Stepping into the college's top spot was a new leader for a new era, a 37-year-old college administrator from the Lake Tahoe Community College District who was chosen from a field of 23 finalists. When Dr. Dianne Gracia Van Hook accepted the position, she became one of California's youngest superintendent-presidents.

The progress that followed at College of the Canyons was nothing short of remarkable. Van Hook, herself a community college graduate from Long Beach, initiated the longest period of forward momentum in the college's history, extracting dollars from Sacramento and overseeing an expansion of educational facilities and programs that would stretch well into the next century.



Biology instructor James Boykin (top) passed away Nov. 9, 1985, after teaching at the college for 16 years. Political science instructor Ted Collier (right), also one of the college's original instructors, died Sept. 21, 1986.



Within a year, College of the Canyons held the distinction of being the fastest-growing community college in California, and Van Hook initiated an ambitious facilities master plan that would reshape the campus. By 1990, with some 6,500 students attending classes on a campus designed for 5,000, the college was beginning to experience the effects of overcrowding. It would be up to Van Hook to meet the challenge of accommodating the needs of a student population that was growing faster than anyone had imagined.

As the new decade began, College of the Canyons entered a period of its most significant growth and advancement since the original campus was built. Van Hook was given the mandate to take the college to the next level, with the ultimate goal of meeting the demands of a projected 20,000 students by the year 2010.

Dozens of new instructional and training programs were introduced. New instructors and staff members were brought on board. A helping, cooperative hand was extended to local government, business and industry. The college's master plan was updated to meet the current and



Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook (second from left) is announced as the new superintendent-president in 1988, replacing the retiring Dr. Ramon F. LaGrandeur (second from right). Van Hook's husband Roger is seated at the far left, and Board of Trustees member Michelle Jenkins is at the far right.

projected demands of a community ranked as one of the nation's fastest growing.

Under a new brand of leadership characterized by optimism, persistence and flexibility, the atmosphere on campus was transformed into one of innovation, positive change and passionate willingness to blaze new trails – to pursue the dream of a community college that knows no boundaries or limitations or obstacles that couldn't be overcome.

But there were obstacles, the most significant being the state funding formula for fast-growing community colleges like College of the Canyons. The college's lifeblood was coming in at a comparative trickle considering the high rate of enrollment growth. In fact, the state's funding system penalized all of California's fast-growing community colleges. It was a state issue, and any changes to correct the funding system would have to be argued to legislators in Sacramento. It was with these realizations in mind that Van Hook and fellow college leaders crafted their strategy and, ultimately, the college's destiny.

What followed was a frantic lobbying schedule that put Van Hook, trustees and other college officials in Santa Clarita, Sacramento and points in between – often all in the same day to lobby for the cause. Valuable relationships were forged. Trust was developed. Skeptics and foes became allies.



The college's 1988 leadership team included, from left, Jan Keller, Ken Stevens, Burdett "Bud" Shearer, Kathleen Maloney, Sue Bozman, Dianne Van Hook, James Walker, Gary Olmstead, Helen Lusk, Nancy Mattice and Cal Alsop.

Eventually, with the help of state Sen. Ed Davis, legislation to correct the funding formula and boost revenue was enacted. State officials were persuaded to award millions of construction dollars the college needed to embark on a long-delayed expansion of facilities.

New facilities helped clear the way to boost the number of instructional and training courses by more than 50 percent – from 46 to 75 in a decade's time. The events that followed are best summed up as the biggest facilities expansion at College of the Canyons in a quarter century. Following the success of Proposition 153, a statewide school construction bond issue that earmarked \$15 million to the college in 1992, the college embarked on a much-needed and long-overdue \$56-million construction effort that produced a string of new buildings and expanded facilities.

First out of the gate was the new 5,960-square-foot Family Studies & Early Childhood Education Center, whose groundbreaking was held in late 1993. Previously housed in the A Building, the working preschool and child development program had moved temporarily to Bowman High School in Canyon Country to make way for the relocation of the Admissions & Records Office.

Nineteen-ninety-three also was the year that the college began offering classes in Canyon Country, reflecting the emerging fact that most students



A mid-1980s graduation ceremony in Cougar Stadium.

resided in the eastern portion of the Santa Clarita Valley.

Mother Nature interrupted everyone's plans in the early morning hours of January 17, 1994. At 4:31 a.m., the 6.7-magnitude Northridge Earthquake hit, striking with such force that many of the college's classrooms were rendered uninhabitable. It was the first earthquake to strike directly under a major urban area of the United States since the 1933 Long Beach quake, and it rudely awakened most residents of the greater Los Angeles area. Damage was widespread, and 51 people across the region lost their lives. Sections of steel-reinforced concrete freeways and parking garages collapsed. Numerous office and apartment buildings suffered irreparable damage. Many homes were damaged beyond repair, with jittery, aftershock-weary residents camped out in their driveways and front yards for days after the calamity.

At College of the Canyons, local emergency-response teams gathered. The City of Santa Clarita had designated the college as an emergency operating and command center just a few years earlier. Although the college suffered major damage and was occupied by a veritable army of emergency services personnel, the start of the spring semester was delayed only one week. Many quake-damaged classrooms and buildings were not usable, so Van Hook enlisted Steve Myers, a foundation board member, to call President Bill Clinton's press secretary, his daughter DeeDee Myers (a gradu-

ate of Hart High School), for help with FEMA. Within days, a village of tent classrooms was hastily erected on some of the athletic fields. In all, the college suffered some \$3.4 million in damage.

Although the initial earthquake lasted just 15 seconds, its impact endured throughout the year. The California Conservation Corps sent a contingent of workers to the campus that summer to paint, plaster and secure furnishings as part of the overall quake cleanup. Students returning to the campus that fall found most of the repairs and reconstruction completed.



The college's leadership team visits one of famed artist Christo's "Umbrella Project" sites near Tejon Pass in October 1991.

Cougar Stadium and its running track reopened in September.

The campus was almost back to pre-earthquake condition when, on September 22, the college kicked off its 25th anniversary with an academic

convocation, complete with a procession of faculty, staff, administrators and invited dignitaries such as California Community Colleges Chancellor David Mertes, former Signal Editor Ruth Newhall and Santa Clarita Mayor George Pederson, who cut the birthday cake following the program.

The following year was one of remarkably quick recovery and institutional advancement. While earthquake repairs continued throughout the year, the college's focus was clearly on the future and moving the college forward. Evidence of this optimistic spirit could be seen during the groundbreaking ceremony for two new facilities: the Library and Media & Fine Arts Building. It was no accident that the ceremony was held on January 17, the one-year anniversary of the devastating Northridge Earthquake. Even if only psychological in nature, holding the event on this date sent a reassuring



Tents (above) were hastily erected and used as classrooms following the Northridge earthquake, which damaged much of the campus on January 17, 1994.

message that nothing – Mother Nature included – would stand in the college’s way.

Even more tangible was the brand-new Family Studies & Early Childhood Education Center, built on a secluded southwest portion of the campus. The April opening ceremony was held in conjunction with the community-wide “Day of the Child” celebration on campus.

With enrollment beginning to climb again, attention turned to expanding student services. Among the new offerings were walk-in advisement in the Counseling Department, a crisis team and psychologist in the Student Health Center, and beefed-up occupational search services in the Career Center. Plans also were put in motion to develop the STAR telephone-registration system that would be operational the following year.

In July of 1995, the college made its presence known on the World Wide Web by launching its first website. By year’s end, 90 percent of the earthquake-recovery projects were completed.

The college continued its forward momentum in 1996. State funding – while still not commensurate with the college’s growth – began to stabilize, allowing the college to expand its programs and open its doors to more students. The most visible sign of progress and new opportunity was construction activity on the new Library and the Media & Fine Arts Building, both of which were nearing completion.

In the L Building, the Lecture Hall was renovated and transformed into a state-of-the-art teaching station, thanks to approximately \$50,000 in donations to the College of the Canyons

Foundation. Behind the rising Media & Fine Arts Building, an energy-efficient Central Plant went online, providing heating and air conditioning to both the Library and the Media & Fine Arts Building.

With campus recovery complete just two years after the Northridge quake, attention turned toward mitigating quake hazards in the future. More

than \$1.5 million in projects were identified to minimize future dangers, and the first \$73,576 project began in December after being approved by FEMA and the Office of Emergency Services.

The college’s gains were due in large part to long-range planning. With that in mind, a number of planning efforts culminated with new visions for the future. Among them were an updated Strategic Master Plan, a new Educational Master Plan, Foundation Master Plan, Technology Plan and Three-Year Staffing Plan – areas of emphasis the board had asked Van Hook to put into place.

Nineteen-ninety-seven began triumphantly in terms of college



This expansion joint where the IRC and C Building meet was widened from the force of the 1994 quake.

progress, as two important new buildings were nearing completion, but it also was a time of sorrow for the campus community. Longtime employee John Drislane, who successfully transcended the college’s faculty and administrative realms, died in January. He wore many hats, including those of English instructor, dean of personnel and, more informally, a technology tutor when it came to anything related to computers. With that in mind, the Technology Center was renamed the John Drislane Technology Center in



October 2001.

The college gained more than 50,000 square feet of educational space when the Library and Media & Fine Arts Building opened. The ribbons for both buildings were cut simultaneously on the symbolic date of January 17, exactly three years after the Northridge quake. After eight years of tireless planning and persuasive lobbying, the two new buildings that represented a revitalized campus were unveiled.

Covering 27,222 square feet on two levels, the architecturally stunning Library – its curved walls of glass revealing a commanding view of the Santa Clarita Valley – opened its doors. The first floor held shelving for nearly 70,000 books, as well as reference material, casual seating and study space. The second floor contained audio-visual materials and listening stations, group-study rooms, a public gallery, an acquisitions/cataloging mall, periodicals, office space and more student seating. The



The Family Studies and Early Childhood Education Center (top) opened in April 1995. Dean of Personnel John Drislane (front, center), surrounded by the college's leadership team during a retreat in the redwoods, died in early 1997.



The Central Plant (above) was built to provide heating and air conditioning to two new buildings: the Media & Fine Arts Building and the Library. Its efficiency resulted in a 25 percent savings in energy costs.

building also boasted computer access to not just the library's holdings, but national and international databases.

Connected to the Library by a pedestrian bridge was the new Media & Fine Arts Building, designed to blend in with the architectural style of the original structures. Spanning 26,255 square feet on three floors, the building consolidated media and fine arts programs, including all visual arts, computer-assisted drafting, journalism and photography, and radio, television and cinema. The structure featured labs and support spaces, production and editing studios, a screening room, a lecture hall and an art gallery for public displays. Each level connected with the three main floors of the Instructional Resource Center. The buildings officially opened for business three months later.

"If you build it, they will come," a popular line from the film "Field of Dreams" suggested. Come they did. Student enrollment climbed once again, and the new buildings did more than alleviate campus crowding; they and a corresponding expansion of programs and classes beckoned even more to attend the college in 1997.



A greater infusion of long-sought growth funds translated into 139 new classes and a doubling of courses offered during the summer session. More than 2,700 students took summer classes, making it the highest-attended summer session at the time.



Most of the steel framework (top) has been erected for the new library (above).

Campus expansion continued throughout 1997. Plans moved forward to remodel portions of the I, T and L buildings, and the Technology Center underwent a redesign to accommodate additional faculty and staff. In fact, enrollment growth and curriculum expansion throughout the college led to the hiring of more than 30 new employees. It was the largest number of people hired at the college in a single year.

Expansion of other services occurred in unique ways. The college and neighboring California Institute of the Arts agreed to split the cost of an online library



The steel framework (top) is pieced together to create the Media & Fine Arts Building (above).

automation system, and the Employee Training Institute opened its Valencia Learning Center to augment its educational contracts with local businesses.

It was a year of high performance, too. A comparison with California's 107 other community colleges revealed that College of the Canyons ranked fourth highest in associate degrees awarded, fourth highest in occupational certificates awarded and 12th highest in terms of the number of students who transferred to Cal State University or University of California campuses.

Students were sticking around longer, as well. The college's student-retention rate improved from 74.8 percent in the fall of 1989 to 81.4 percent in the fall of 1996.

With two of the most extensive facilities expansion projects – the Library and Media & Fine Arts Building – completed, one might think construction would have abated by 1998. Not so. In fact, construction activity continued throughout the decade in an effort to meet the demands of ever more students and the new faculty and staff members who were needed to serve them.

Construction was under way on six laboratories, 13 new classrooms, 18 offices, a conference room and an audio-video-computer technology area in 1998 alone. A state-of-the-art fitness center overlooking the basketball court was added inside the Physical Education Building.

Expansion was occurring outside the classroom, as well. A new soccer field and practice fields were completed – and for good reason. This was the year athletic expansion arrived. The COC Foundation played a key role in this expansion, having financed the initial costs of operation at the request of Van Hook and Board of Trustees Member John Hoskinson. The football program was revived after an absence of 17 years, and women’s golf and soccer were introduced. The teams – football under the guidance of coach Chuck Lyon, soccer under Phil Marcellin and golf under Gary Peterson – enjoyed phenomenal success. Also created and filled was the position of strength and conditioning coach, making College of the Canyons the only community college in the state to have one at the time.

Significant strides were made in expanding educational offerings, too. Multimedia and fire-technology programs were introduced to the curriculum – in accordance with the college’s Education Master Plan – and the college won approval to expand the curriculum in the areas of theater, physical education, library, media, photography and radio-television.

High school students, meanwhile, recognized a good deal when they saw one. The college’s waiver of enrollment fees for concurrently enrolled William S. Hart Union High



The hilltop Library’s two-story curved wall of glass provides visitors with a dramatic panoramic view of the Santa Clarita Valley.

School District students generated a dramatic 217 percent increase in numbers over fall 1997. The number of students rose from 173 to 549.

The Summer Institute for Technical Advancement was implemented, and the new PACE (Program for Accelerated College Education) program proved so popular among busy working adults that two new tracks were created.

Perhaps one of the most significant accomplishments of the ‘90s was the positive shift in state funding for FTES (Full-Time Equivalent Students). A crucial factor in the financial woes of the 1980s and much of the 1990s was the state’s withholding of FTES funding when it rose above a preset cap. By the 1997-98 year, the issue was largely moot, as unfunded FTES fell to zero.

“The upcoming years present an opportunity to do things at College of the Canyons that many



A state-of-the-art fitness center was built on the second level of the Physical Education Center, behind a wall of glass overlooking the basketball court.

colleges just dream about,” Van Hook said at the start of the fall 1998 semester. “Will it be easy? Probably not. But to maximize our legacy to the future, meet the demands of our students and return value to our community, we must face challenges with optimism and action. And, we must all be accountable for what we do.”

With Van Hook now having served College of the Canyons for 10 years, she had emerged as a powerful, results-oriented advocate for every community college in the state. Recognizing the inequities of a state funding system that penalized all of California’s rapidly growing community colleges, Van Hook was instrumental in persuading lawmakers to change the funding criteria in the colleges’ favor. Her success in altering College of the Canyons’ annual growth factor translated into a nearly \$31 million net gain for the district over 10 years. From 1988 to 1998 she generated \$56 million in additional revenue – money that College of the Canyons would not have received if not for her lobbying efforts. She secured a \$75 million commitment from the

Chancellor's Office for campus expansion over a 10-year period. And, in the 1992-93 state budget she won reinstatement of construction projects valued at \$70 million for 13 community college districts across California.

Van Hook's accomplishments at College of the Canyons were already numerous. She boosted grant revenue to \$1.75 million a year, representing a 96 percent success rate in grant submissions. She restructured the college's fund-raising foundation, increasing its annual income by 600 percent. She initiated the college's Employee Training Institute, which provides contract training programs for business and industry, and formed the Business Advisory Council. She began the High School-College Articulation Council, a host of cooperative vocational programs, and an at-risk youth program with the local Boys & Girls Club, among others.

The college reached a milestone in 1999 that came sooner than the state predicted. It came as no surprise to anyone at College of the Canyons. This was the year that student enrollment crested the 10,000 mark – 10,260, to be precise. It was the second consecutive year of quadruple-digit growth, with both years representing the greatest single-year increases in the number of enrolled students. Although it was unlikely that all 10,260 students would be on campus at any one time, elbow room was definitely at a premium. The signs of growth were everywhere – more students, crowded classrooms and even more crowded parking lots, piles of earth and equipment to mark various construction sites on campus. Despite all of the impressive new facilities that had opened, the campus was literally bursting at the seams. To meet this increase of 1,231 more students – not to mention the 1,599 who were added to the rolls in 1998 – 50 new full-time faculty members were hired. Also brought on board were 26 new classified staff members and six new members of the management team.

Facilities expansion continued unabated in 1999. The most visible was the activity at the Student Center, one of the college's original buildings. Work continued throughout the year to remodel 15,000 square feet of classroom and office space, as well as add an extra 9,000 square feet to create



Football returned to the college in 1998 after a 17-year absence. The team's head coach was Chuck Lyon (above), a former Cougar who played in the college's very first game.



The football program returned with a vengeance, making up for its lost years by consistently fielding winning teams and collecting scholarships for the team's student-athletes.

an enclosed lounge area, increase the size of the student dining room and bookstore, and build additional classroom space and offices.

Another 10,000 square feet of new classroom space arrived in the form of seven modular buildings – collectively called the Modular Classroom Village and located at the southern end of the existing campus. This complex housed 14 much-needed new classrooms for college instruction, as well as the first bachelor's degree programs offered on campus, made possible through an innovative partnership with Cal State Bakersfield and the University of La Verne. It was, in fact, the precursor to an even more ambitious project known as the University Center, for which planning had begun. The idea behind this privately funded center on College of the Canyons property was for other colleges and universities to offer upper-division programs here, eliminating the need for Santa Clarita Valley residents to travel elsewhere to earn degrees. The vast distances to four-year universities – as well as the excessive driving time it took to get there and back – had been identified as major obstacles to higher education. The University Center would change that for the better. Its popularity grew to the point where an interim facility to



An expansion of the Student Center (S Building) that began in 1999 produced a new glass-enclosed student lounge area where the former courtyard-like entrance once stood.

house University Center programs opened in early 2002 to meet the community's demands.

Enlisted to head the \$10-million fundraising campaign to build a permanent facility for this major endeavor were Tom Lee, who had recently retired from his position as CEO of The Newhall Land & Farming Co., and Lou Garasi, chairman and CEO of Gruber Systems.

The University Center wasn't the only educational partnership on campus. The college and the William S. Hart Union High School District together took a bold step forward as Van Hook pursued state funding to add a high school campus on college property. To be called Academy of the Canyons, this "middle college" concept would allow high-potential high school students to attend both high school and college courses concurrently, giving them a significant jump on their future academic or work careers.

Also opening in 1999 was the Cougar Den, a lush, tree-shaded spot with picnic tables, barbecues and room to roam. Located next door to Cougar Stadium, the project was conceived by football coach Chuck Lyon, COC Foundation board member and alumnus B.J. Atkins, and contractor Jim Keltner. The facility was built entirely with private donations. In all, some 200 people contributed money or services to build it.

Grant money surpassed the million-dollar mark, coming in at just more than \$1.2 million. The



The Modular Classroom Village provided about 10,000 additional square feet of much-needed classroom space for the crowded campus.

money would be used to help establish Academy of the Canyons; launch the MESA (Math Engineering Science Advancement) program to encourage more students to consider majors and careers in science, engineering and other math-based fields; and to continue developing programs in manufacturing, engineering and computer networking.

The Performing Arts Center also moved forward. Identified in the college's original master plan in 1969, the Performing Arts Center was supposed to have been built toward the end of the college's first full decade, but funding failed to materialize because the state insisted that such facilities were neither necessary nor essential. Nevertheless, the college kept the dream alive by identifying a performing arts center as an essential part of the campus, and Van Hook continued to lobby the state for funding. The college was poised for any opportunity that might arise to build the center. Such an opportunity presented itself in 1999, when state officials called to say that if the college could separate plans for the theater from the music-dance instruction areas, the performing arts center could indeed be built. But this window of opportunity would close in just 36 hours. The state agreed to fund the center after Facilities Director Jim Schrage, college staff mem-



The Cougar Den, located adjacent to Cougar Stadium, opened in 1999. The lushly landscaped, tree-shaded picnic area was built entirely with donated supplies and labor.

bers and the center's architects feverishly completed the redesign by the deadline.

Finally, construction of the center was just around the corner – and it would be even more grand than originally envisioned. The state disbursed money to begin the planning process, and the City of Santa Clarita committed \$2.4 million in March 2000 to dramatically expand the center's capacity – from 400 to about 900 seats. The partnership with the city would transform the center into one that could be enjoyed by the entire community.

Also introduced were many new or expanded course offerings that reflected the needs and demands of a growing community. Indeed, enrollment nearly doubled during the 1990s, rising to 10,260 in 1999. Among the subject areas added were biotechnology, fire technology, laser and orbital welding, advanced manufacturing, hotel & restaurant management, graphic arts, multimedia technology, broadcast technology, cinema, radio-television-film, electronic music and computer networking.

As the new millennium dawned, College of the Canyons experienced some pivotal events. Indeed, the pace of progress actually quickened and gained added significance through the first half of the new decade.

The Modular Classroom Village of seven buildings opened for its first classes in 2000, relieving

some of the pressure caused by crowding more than 10,000 students into a campus originally designed for half that number. The first Summer Intensive Spanish Institute was held, developing a loyal following. The remodeled and expanded Student Center opened that summer, featuring a dramatic new

entry, a larger dining room and more space for programs such as health services and student development. The very first classes began at Academy of the Canyons, a collection of modular buildings on the south side of the campus that represented an ambitious partnership between College of the Canyons and the Hart District. The academy opened with 138 students who opted to attend both high school and college classes concurrently. And, the men's golf team captured its second state championship, the first being seven years earlier.

The college had now existed for some 30 years, so it was inevitable that some of its original or longtime faculty members would retire. Such was the case in May, when the college community bid farewell to 11 retiring faculty members – six of them part of the original faculty – during a celebration in their honor at the Cougar Den. Heading off into retirement were Al Adelini, Carl Buckel, Don Heidt, Mary Heidt, Don Hellrigel, Betty Lid, Lee Smelser, Dale Smith, Sylvia Sullivan,

Marilyn Van Aken and Stan Weikert.

On a more somber note, Helen Lusk, the retired longtime head of the college's nursing program, died June 6 at the age of 72. The college's nursing lab would later be renamed in her honor. And, Dr. Robert Rockwell, the col-



Superintendent-President Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook shovels the first symbolic dirt during the official groundbreaking ceremony for the highly anticipated Performing Arts Center. Surrounding her are members of the Santa Clarita City Council.



lege's visionary first superintendent-president, the man who is credited with building the Santa Clarita Valley's first public institution of higher learning, died October 5 at the age of 87.

As enrollment soared, the student parking lots revealed their limitations. The decision was made to build the South Parking Lot, a project outlined



in the college's first master plan but deemed unnecessary until this point. Construction began in early 2001, with most of the \$8 million project completed in time for the start of the fall semester. Students found 1,000 additional parking spaces, most of them closer to the buildings that housed their classes; another 600 were made available later in the year.

The year also began with a mixture of melancholy and sadness, as colleagues continued to retire and others left us. Anton "Tony" Remenih, the college's first journalism instructor and creator of the student-run campus newspaper, died at the age of 87. Burdett "Bud" Shearer, the college's former dean of student services, passed away. And, Gary Olmstead, the col-

Helen Lusk (top), who became synonymous with nursing at College of the Canyons, died in 2000. Academy of the Canyons' first principal, Dave Lebaron (above), speaks to one of the first classes at the new Hart District school on the College of the Canyons campus.



Some of those who retired in 2000 (top) gather for a photo with Superintendent-President Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook (center, in hat). From left: Lee Smelser, Carl Buckel, Mary Heidt, Don Heidt, Stan Weikert, Sylvia Sullivan, Al Adelini, Marilyn Van Aken and Don Hellrigel. Six were original faculty members. Anton "Tony" Remenih (above), the college's first journalism instructor, died in early 2001.

lege's dean of business services, retired after 16 years of service.

A historic day arrived at Academy of the Canyons on June 10, 2001, when the very first class of 55 students graduated. History was made in the college's board room as well, when the trustees supported Van Hook's request to present an \$82.1 million bond measure to voters that would address the college's limitations in the face of unprecedented enrollment growth. The bond measure, to be called Measure C on that November's ballot, would help finance a variety of new buildings, expansion projects and facility improvements.

During the traditional opening-day luncheon in August, geology instructor Winston Wutkee was honored for his 30 years of teaching. The college's first and only geology instructor, Wutkee was the lead faculty member in geology and geography sciences, having been hired in 1970. He not only built the college's first geology and geography departments, he instilled a vigor and excitement that made them popular and highly attended pro-

grams.

Student enrollment that fall of 2001 grew yet again, rising 18 percent over the previous year, as 12,851 students registered for classes.

Excitement continued to build for the planned University Center, which would need a permanent facility to house the university degree programs. College faculty and staff, as well as community leaders, came together in late August to launch the project's capital campaign. Not surprisingly, 99 percent of the college's personnel pledged financial contributions to get the campaign rolling.

The college also created a more significant presence in the eastern Santa Clarita Valley, opening its ACCESS learning center – featuring several classrooms and a computer lab – inside the new Jo Anne Darcy Canyon Country Library complex. The move was one of the first tangible inroads into an area of the valley that was home to some 32 percent of the college's students. College leaders understood that this area would require even more attention in the future. It was here that the college was laying the groundwork to acquire property and build a full-service educational center.

September 11, 2001 was an ominous and shocking day for the nation. The terrorist attacks of that morning stunned the world. Hundreds of students, faculty and staff members converged around a half-risen American flag during a September 14 vigil to honor the victims. Many in the hushed, somber crowd wept openly.



Hundreds of people gather around the flag on September 14, 2001 to honor the victims of the 911 terrorist attacks.



Measure C campaign volunteers pose for a photo at campaign headquarters with Superintendent-President Diannne G. Van Hook (bottom, center).

With the pall of 9-11 still very much a part of the public psyche, local voters decided that College of the Canyons should move forward in a bold and dramatic way. On November 6, an overwhelming 68 percent of local voters approved Measure C, the \$82.1 million general-obligation bond measure to renovate facilities and build new ones. As if that resounding message from the populace wasn't optimistic enough, the year came to a close with the December groundbreaking ceremony for a most-anticipated and high-profile building designed for both the college and the community: the Performing Arts Center.

Continuing the practice of meeting the community's needs in a quick, responsive manner, the college built the Interim University Center on the south side of campus. When it opened on January 22, 2002, seven educational institutions were already signed up to offer a variety of programs leading to bachelor's and master's degrees.

A week later, The Signal newspaper honored Van Hook as Newsmaker of the Year for 2001. The award recognized her efforts to move the college forward in significant and dramatic ways, culminating with the community's



When the Interim University Center opened on campus in early 2002, seven educational institutions were already signed up to offer a variety of bachelor's and master's degree programs.

overwhelming approval of the \$82.1 million bond measure in November 2001 that would allow that momentum to continue.

Facilities expansion continued in 2002. Work began in the fall on the Vocational Technology Center to add 3,500 square feet of space to accommodate new manufacturing technology classes and nearly \$200,000 worth of new equipment.

In a state experiencing an acute shortage of nurses, College of the Canyons also was emerging as an educational leader in nursing education. In September, the Henry Mayo Newhall Memorial Hospital / College of the Canyons Clinical Education Center opened its doors on the hospital campus. The center represented a unique cooperative effort between the college and the hospital to help alleviate the nurse shortage. Then, in early 2003, the college took the lead with the new Associate Degree Nursing Regional Collaborative, an innovative partnership among the region's hospitals and community colleges to produce even more qualified nurses.

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges was so impressed with College of the Canyons that it granted unconditional reaccreditation for the maximum-allowable six-year term in early 2003. The University Center capital campaign made strides as well, reaching a pledge total of \$4.1 million in February. The contributions put the campaign nearly halfway to its goal of \$10 million to build a

permanent home on the southern edge of the campus.

Longtime faculty and staff members were honored during the opening-day luncheon in August. Recognized for their 30 years of service were Cherie Choate, Lee Corbin and Joan Jacobson.

Athletic accomplishments figured prominently in 2003. In May, the men's golf team won its third state championship. In June, a \$1 million renovation of Cougar Stadium was unveiled to the public, revealing a state-of-the-art synthetic-grass playing field, a new running track and remodeled restrooms. Also that summer, men's soccer was added to the college's roster of

intercollegiate sports. Perhaps most impressive of all, the football team recorded its first perfect regular season with 10 straight victories, as well as a victory in the WSC Bowl.

For most students, it just wouldn't be College of the Canyons without the constant clatter of construction activity. Sure enough, 2004 was punctuated by more of it. A lot



The Clinical Education Center, a joint operation between the college and Henry Mayo Newhall Memorial Hospital, opened in 2002 to provide training for nurses and help alleviate the nursing shortage.

more. Construction began on the 20,000-square-foot Music-Dance Building, a \$7 million Measure C-funded project adjacent to the Performing Arts Center, which itself was under construction. The college warehouse was expanded from 10,000 square feet to 18,500 square feet. The road that serves as the main entrance off Rockwell Canyon Road was reconfigured to incorporate a circular pattern for pick-ups and drop-offs. Three lighted map kiosks were erected at strategic locations to help people find their way on the 153-acre campus. Three lighted electronic message boards were installed along Rockwell and Valencia Boulevard. In a portent to the inevitable construction to come, the University Center capital campaign hit the \$7 million fundraising mark, and the state gave the college the green light to move forward with plans to acquire land in Canyon Country on which to build a permanent, full-service educational center.



Nearly 1,000 students graduated in 2004, a 27 percent increase over the previous year's figures.

The big news of 2004 was the opening of the magnificent \$18.3 million Performing Arts Center, representing many years of persistent effort by college officials. The community welcomed the long-awaited center, which would now fulfill the dual role of serving as both a performance venue for the college's arts programs and the valley's independent arts groups. The gleaming, glass-encircled lobby bustled with activity as a grand-opening ceremony marked the occasion on October 15. Patrons packed the two-level 926-seat proscenium theater to experience a sold-out production of "Big River," which showcased the combined talents of the college's theatre, music and dance departments. The inaugural season at the center, which also houses the smaller and more intimate Black Box Theatre, featured a variety of college, community and professional productions, including Paul Anka, Melissa Manchester and the Vienna Boys Choir.

Just days before its debut, the center was renamed the Vital Express Center for the Performing Arts, taking the name of the Valencia shipping company that donated \$2 million to the center and an accompanying endowment.

The commencement ceremony on May 21, 2004 was notable not just for the nearly 1,000 students – 997, to be precise – who graduated, but because the number of graduates rose a whopping 27 percent over 2003.

Shortly thereafter, retirement arrived for Betty Spilker, one of the college's last original faculty members. She retired after 35 years of service. Also retiring were Lee Corbin (31 years), Pam Beauer (25 years), Susan Comner (24 years), Erik Eriksson (24 years) and Dean Leao (13 years). Executive Vice President and Assistant Superintendent Phil Hartley left in early August to become president of West Valley College in Saratoga.

A series of fierce, devastating wildfires struck the region in the summer of 2004. Although the college was not directly threatened by the out-of-control



The Music Dance Building begins to rise next door to the Vital Express Center for the Performing Arts in mid-2004.

blazes, it played a crucial role. Los Angeles County set up its Emergency Command Center at the college in mid-July. Buildings, parking lots and playing fields were inundated with firefighting vehicles and equipment, as well as tents and facilities for firefighting personnel, from throughout California and several western states. The American Red Cross also utilized the campus,

housing and feeding those who were evacuated.

The college took a major step forward in 2004 with ambitious plans to expand its presence in the eastern Santa Clarita Valley. Most significantly, the California Community Colleges Board of Governors and California Postsecondary Education Commission gave the go-ahead to build the Canyon Country Education Center, a 50,000-square-foot facility that eventually would accommodate 7,000 to 10,000 students. And, Michele R. Jenkins, a College of the Canyons graduate and member of its Board of Trustees, was elected president of the California Community College Trustees Board of Directors. The statewide organization reviews and takes action on education policy issues before the California Community Colleges Board of Governors



and the Legislature.

The year was notable for other events as well. Music instructor Daniel Catan's newest opera, "Salsapuedes," premiered to rave reviews at the Houston Grand Opera. U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige, chief architect of the "No Child Left Behind Act," took to the stage at the Vital Express Center for the Performing Arts to speak about the federal legislation to about 350 local educators. And, 30 students from the nursing program partnership between College of the Canyons and Henry Mayo Newhall Memorial Hospital graduated during an afternoon ceremony in the Vital Express Center for the Performing Arts.

Once again, the college's athletic achievements were impressive. The college's fledgling club hockey team won the state title during the 2004 Pacific Collegiate Hockey Association State Championship, beating teams from big universities such as UC Davis, Fresno State, San Diego State, UC San Diego and UC Irvine. Three Cougar pitchers were chosen in the 2004 Major League Baseball Draft to play for the Kansas City Royals, Pittsburgh Pirates and San Francisco Giants. Baltimore Ravens quarterback Kyle Boller, a graduate of Hart High, served as assistant coach during the College



Los Angeles County's emergency command center at College of the Canyons dealt with a series of fierce wildfires in the summer of 2004. A smoke plume from one of those fires can be seen rising in the distance (above).



College officials and community dignitaries (top) are on hand to witness the official opening of the Vital Express Center for the Performing Arts (above).

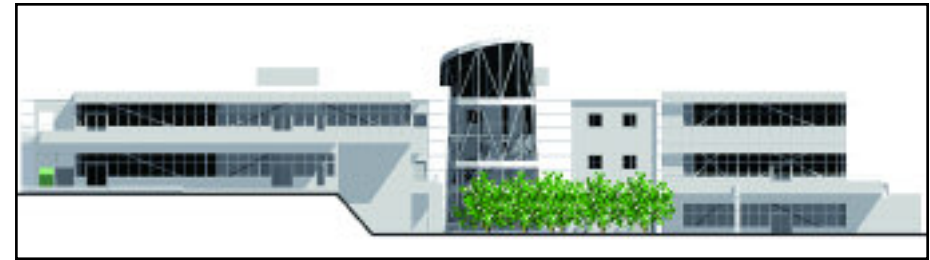
of the Canyons Quarterback & Wide Receiver Summer Camp. The NFL came calling for three former Cougars, signing them to play for the San Francisco 49ers, Jacksonville Jaguars and Cincinnati Bengals. In October, the Carolina Panthers signed former Cougar wide receiver Jamall Broussard. And, the football team eclipsed its astounding 2003 season by racking up a perfect 14-0 season and beating top-rated City College of San Francisco to capture the state championship. The team also was named the top community college football team in the nation.

The college and its leadership continued blazing new trails in 2005. The year began on a promising note, as the first class of 103 nursing students began instruction January 4 under the auspices of the Southern California Associate Degree Nursing Regional Collaborative, a college-hospital partnership designed to help alleviate the nursing shortage.

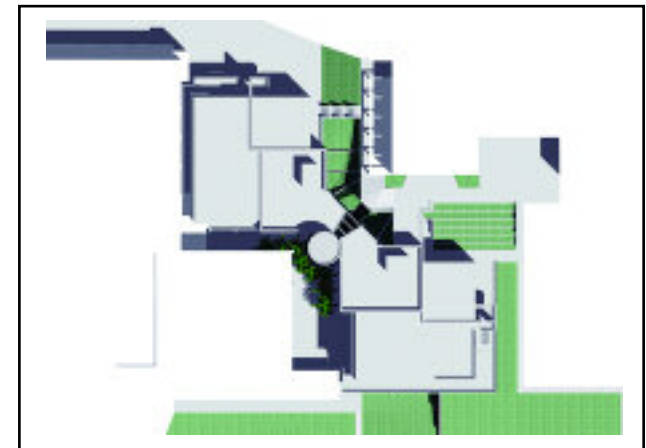
The college community was saddened once again, however, by the passing of several beloved colleagues. Lee Corbin, who had retired only months earlier after 31 years of teaching and athletic coaching, died in



The 2002 Facilities Master Plan depicts planned structures (in brown) with existing campus buildings (in gray).



The High-Tech Classroom Building, depicted in these artist's renderings, will be built between the Student Center and the Physical Education Center.



January at the age of 62. And, Carter Doran, the college's executive vice president and assistant superintendent from 1992 until his 1998 retirement, died on March 31.

Construction continued its hectic pace. Ground was broken May 5 for the new High Technology Building, a 34,000-square-foot complex of classrooms, labs and offices that would be nestled between the Student Center and Physical Education Center. And, site-preparation work began on the Science Building expansion project.

The college graduated its largest-ever class – 1,153 students – during the commencement ceremony on May 20, 2005. The size of the graduating class was nearly 16 percent larger than the previous year.

College of the Canyons has come a long way since its formative years. It has become an important part of the community it serves, educating, training and enlightening tens of thousands of its residents. The numbers merely hint at this institution's growing significance and relevance, but they are revealing. Enrollment increased 20-fold from the 735 students of 1969 to the more than 14,000 in 2004. The first commencement ceremony in



An artist's rendering of the permanent University Center, which will be located atop a hill at the southern edge of the campus, visible from Interstate 5.

1970 saw 16 students graduate. That figure rose to more than 1,100 graduates in 2005.

The original core of 32 faculty members grew to 172 full-time faculty members and hundreds of part-time adjunct instructors in 2005. The fall 2004 semester boasted some 1,500 class sections in 58 academic disciplines and 39 certificate training programs.

Under Van Hook's leadership and the Board of Trustees' stewardship, the college developed key partnerships that train hundreds of nurses, firefighters and law enforcement personnel, as well as skilled workers in a variety of specialized fields such as biotechnology and digital manufacturing. If there is a specific educational or training need in the community, it's a good bet that the college has addressed it. The college has consistently placed within the three fastest-growing community college districts in the state since 1989. The college's 2004-05 budget was \$55.6 million. By comparison, the budget of 1988-89 was just \$8 million, revealing the profound momentum the college experienced in only 17 years.

The campus of early 2005 spanned nearly 340,000 square feet. Adding substantially to that total are even more planned facilities, including the Canyon Country Education Center, slated to open in 2006.

Peripheral entities that benefit the college while forging strong ties and beneficial relationships



The science building expansion will augment the existing L Building. Plans call for state-of-the-art laboratory facilities and a planetarium.

with the community and local industry also have thrived. The COC Foundation, for example, has provided crucial funding by advocating and practicing a philosophy that public educational institutions and private industry must work together to provide an affordable and accessible college education to all who have the desire to succeed. Similarly, the award-winning Center for Applied Competitive Technology and Employee Training Institute at the college have helped local businesses become more efficient and train employees in the latest emerging fields.

College of the Canyons is well on its way to meeting the future demands of a dynamic, diverse and fast-growing community. The continuing expansion of facilities and programs has done more than meet current educational needs. It has laid the groundwork for the future. Indeed, projections based on the college's historical growth indicate that it must be ready to accommodate 20,000 students by 2010. If history is any indication, College of the Canyons will undoubtedly be prepared to meet the challenge, offering hope, encouragement and promise to those 20,000 students – and the countless others who will follow.

1967-69

College of the Canyons is Born

Nineteen-sixty-seven marks the beginning of time for College of the Canyons, which was conceived when Santa Clarita Valley voters went to the polls on November 21. They also elected a five member board of trustees to govern the newly created "junior college." Elected were **Dr. William G. Bonelli Jr., Bruce Fortine, Sheila Dyer, Peter Huntsinger and Edward Muhl.** Several weeks later, on December 15, the newly elected governing body met and chose **Santa Clarita Valley Junior College District** as the college district's official name. The label won out over such others as **North Valley, Upper Santa Clarita Valley, Bouquet, Canyon and Vasquez** (after the bandit Tiburcio Vasquez who hid out in the rugged badlands bearing his name).

A President is Chosen

Dr. Robert C. Rockwell, a graduate of **Harvard University** who received his master's and doctoral degrees from **USC**, became superintendent of the new college district and president of newly named **College of the Canyons** in July 1968. Prior to this, he was president of **Santa Barbara City College** for six years.

He also served as an **Air Force** captain during **World War II**.

Student Government Formed

The college's first **Associated Student Body (ASB)** constitution was ratified on October 15, 1969. The first ASB president was **Paul Driver**; the first vice president was **Liz Swanson**.

Student Newspaper Published

The first issue of the **College Sound**, the college's first student newspaper, was published in September 1969. The publication's name was later changed to the **Canyon Call**.

First Basketball Game

The college's first **basketball** game was played in the fall of 1969, with the **Cougars** hosting **Cuesta Junior College**.

Peace Officer Training

One of the largest programs on campus in the fall of 1969 was **Administration of Justice**, providing training to 150 employed peace officers.

First Student Council

The first **College of the Canyons Student Council** meeting was held on November 18, 1969.



MAY 21, 1968

The campus adopted the name **College of the Canyons**. Rejected were **Santa Clarita College** and **Valencia College**.

SEPT. 22, 1969

Instruction began in temporary quarters at **Hart High School**. Classes started at 4 p.m., after high school students left the campus.

DEC. 2, 1969

The college held its first student dance, at **Hart High School**. The band was paid \$40 for its services.

68-69

An artist's aerial rendering of the planned campus. The first classes are held at Hart High in 1969. Elizabeth Hummel becomes the first faculty member. First Superintendent-President Dr. Robert Rockwell.

The College Gets a New Home

College of the Canyons moved out of Hart High School in July 1970. The new campus at Valencia Boulevard and Interstate 5 was not yet ready for occupancy, so a temporary admissions office was set up in a garage on Pine Street. Preparation of the newly purchased and otherwise barren 153.4-acre campus property began the previous month. By mid-August, workers began erecting temporary structures on the permanent campus, whose address was 25000 Valencia Blvd. (Rockwell Canyon Road, which would later become the college's address, had not yet been built.) The first day and evening classes began October 5, 1970 in temporary structures on present campus grounds (where the college's athletic fields are now located). The college's temporary "instant campus" was so called because instruction began only 10 months after voters passed a \$4 million construction bond issue. Classes started two weeks late on the new campus because of construction problems. Nevertheless, in 14 days 99 portable classrooms were erected for the 1,200 students enrolled. It didn't take long for students to begin referring to the encampment's motif as "early Stalag 13."

First Awards Banquet

The college's first Awards Banquet was held in the Hart High School cafeteria on June 12, 1970. Meals sold for \$3.

Football Dominance

The Cougars, under coach Don Kloppenburg, in their first game trounced California Lutheran College's junior varsity team 49-6 on October 17, 1970. The team became Desert Conference champions in 1971.

Star-Studded Dedication

Comedian Bob Hope and Sen. George Murphy spoke during the October 26, 1970 dedication ceremony for the new permanent campus.

Quake Shakes Campus

There were no permanent buildings for the 6.4-magnitude Sylmar earthquake to damage on February 9, 1971, but all library books ended up on the floor. The football team re-shelved them.

ASB Observations

The first black student union club was formed; to stop illegal motorcycle parking, security officers removed their gas caps; draft counseling, a.k.a. how to stay out of the draft, began on campus.

JAN. 20, 1970

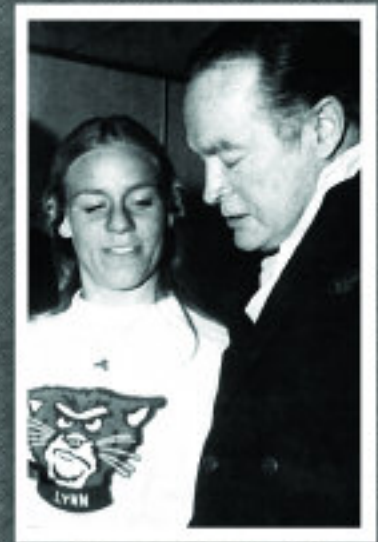
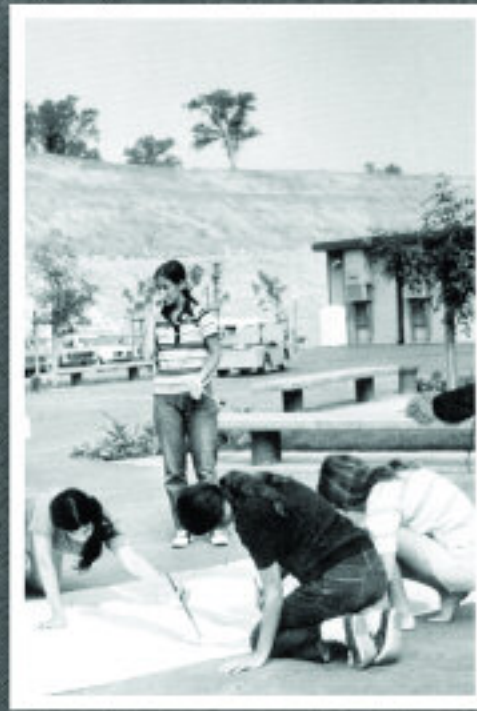
Seventy-five percent of local voters voted yes for a \$4 million construction bond issue to construct the college's first buildings.

JUNE 26, 1970

Sixteen students graduated during the first commencement ceremony, which was held in the Hart High School cafeteria.

JUNE 24, 1971

Eighty-nine students graduated during the first commencement to be held at the college's new, permanent campus.



70-71

89 students graduate at first ceremony on campus. Campus life amid the temporary structures. Comedian Bob Hope visits for campus dedication. Students paint a poster in the campus quad area.

Campus Construction Begins

After delays caused by budget constraints, the state announced in February 1972 that College of the Canyons' first building, the **Instructional Resource Center (IRC)**, would be funded. Soon thereafter, a half-million yards of earth were moved to make a pad for the IRC and other facilities.

Faculty & Student Lounges

More temporary buildings housing classrooms, a faculty lounge and a student lounge were erected in early 1972.

Board President Passes Away

Dr. William G. Bonelli Jr., a member of the COC Board of Trustees and its first president, died at the age of 49 on February 22, 1972. Newhall's postmaster, **Francis Claffey**, was appointed to fill the vacant seat.

Construction Begins

Construction began in June 1972 on the IRC, which was renamed the **Dr. William G. Bonelli Instructional Resources Center** to honor the former trustee.

Statewide Infusion of Funds

In November 1972, voters statewide authorized the **Community College**

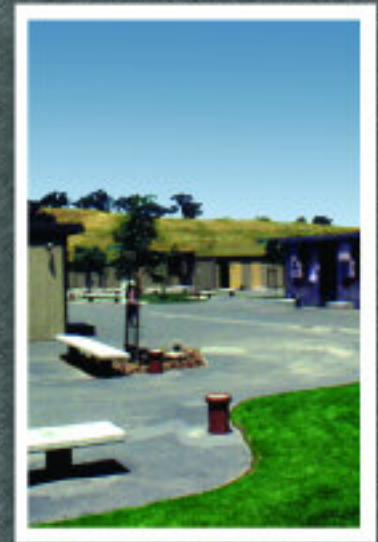
Construction Act of \$160 million, including \$11.2 million for COC if the district could match \$2.5 million in funds. The **Board of Trustees** authorized an \$8 million bond issue to meet the matching funds and pay for other construction not funded by the state. Said Superintendent-President **Dr. Robert C. Rockwell**: "It's a tremendous bargain."

SCV Voters Respond

On February 6, 1973, local voters exceeded the required two-thirds threshold and overwhelmingly approved COC's \$8 million bond measure. In fact, 80 percent of the electorate voted "yes." The final tally: 3,618 to 922, with all 28 precincts reporting. "It represented community endorsement of our college program," President **Dr. Robert C. Rockwell** said. "The election was a community achievement."

First Building Completed

The college's first permanent building, the **William G. Bonelli Instructional Resource Center (I Building)**, was completed in December 1973. The \$2.56 million building featured 13 classrooms, several seminar and testing rooms, and faculty offices in four levels.



72-73 The Instructional Resource Center nears completion. A campus sign announces the 1973 building program. Temporary buildings house all campus functions. Geology professor Win Wulke leads a 1972 field trip.

FEBRUARY 1972
The Western Association of Schools and Colleges granted full accreditation after examining the college's academic and training programs.

JUNE 1972
Commencement figures revealed the college's early growth, jumping to 143 graduates (up from 89 in 1971), then rising again to 175 in June 1973.

FALL 1973
The Cougar football team, under the direction of head coach Larry Reisbig, became the Western State Conference champion.

Campus Starts Taking Shape

College of the Canyons finally started to resemble a real college, as an assortment of permanent buildings was completed in 1974 and '75. On January 2, 1974, the \$2.56 million **William G. Bonelli Instructional Resources Center** officially opened its doors. Later that year, on September 21, the \$1 million, 6,000-seat **Cougar Stadium** officially opened, with the Cougar football team playing its first home game in the facility before a crowd of 3,000. The Cougars lost to **Harbor College** 26-21. Then, in January 1975, two more buildings, the **Classroom Center (C Building)** and **Laboratory Center (L Building)**, opened. They adjoined the William G. Bonelli Instructional Resource Center, appearing as extensions of that building but built entirely separately. The next month, February, saw the opening of the **Student Center (S Building)**, housing the **book store, cafeteria, music department, student activities and student lounge**. And, in the fall of 1975, the \$1.16 million **Vocational Technical Building**, housing programs in **electronics, drafting, home economics and auto mechanics**, opened for classes.

Swallows Begin a Ritual

The first **Argentine cliff swallows** arrived to nest in the gray concrete "cliffs" of College of the Canyons in early 1974. The visit turned into an annual ritual – and a hazard for students or staff who dared to walk below the high nests. Over the years there were abundant unscheduled shampoos and cleaning bills for clothing.

Reagan Dedicates the IRC

California Governor **Ronald Reagan** visited College of the Canyons to dedicate the **William G. Bonelli Instructional Resources Center** on April 22, 1974. Also on hand were Judge **Adrian Adams**, who delivered a tribute to **Dr. William G. Bonelli**, and **Ray Ziegler**, architect of the building.

Vocational Courses Added

Drafting and electronics were introduced as vocational courses in the fall of 1974.

Literary Magazine Debuts

Canyon Carvings, the college's annual literary magazine, debuted in May 1975.

Food Service Arrives

The first on-campus **food facility** opened in September 1975.

JANUARY 1974

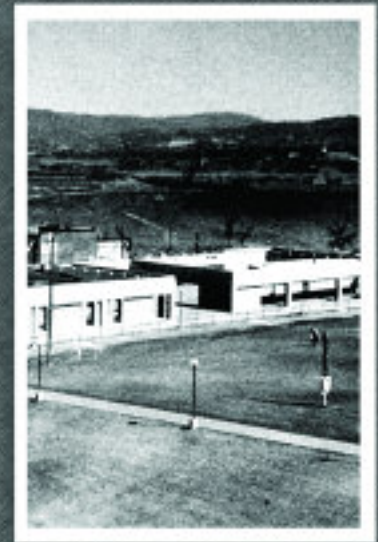
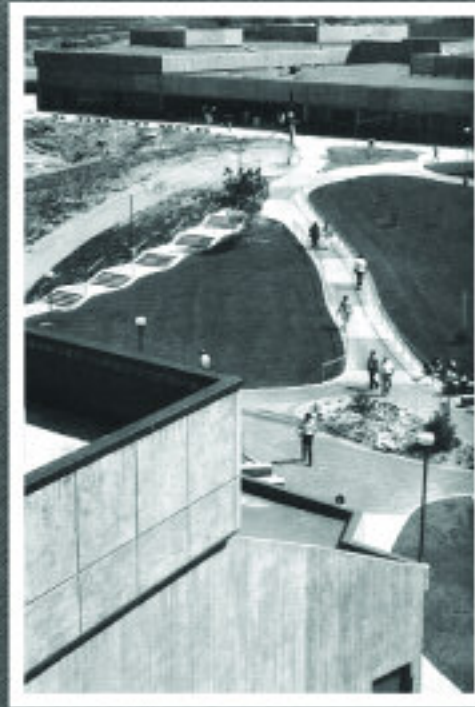
The biggest snowfall in 25 years hit the Santa Clarita Valley. The campus was coated in white, and virtually all activity came to a standstill for several days.

SPRING 1975

Non-credit Community Services (now known as Community Extension) classes were introduced. The offerings totaled 11 courses.

FALL 1975

The football team captured the WSC championship, and the cross-country team won its first California State Championship.



74-75

Gov. Ronald Reagan dedicates the IRC building. The first home game in the new Cougar Stadium. The Student Center under construction in 1974. Students stroll between the new L and S buildings.

Physical Ed. Complex Opens

The Physical Education Complex, housing a swimming and diving pool, basketball court, gymnastics room and weight-training room, opened its doors in March 1976, completing the college's first set of instructional buildings. The \$4.97 million tri-level center provided facilities for swimming, water sports, basketball, gymnastics, volleyball and dance classes.

A Bicentennial Campus

College of the Canyons was declared an official Bicentennial Campus by the American Revolutionary Bicentennial Committee of California in April 1976. Bicentennial Week was celebrated the weekend of April 19.

Campus Access Enhanced

Rockwell Canyon Road was extended to McBean Parkway. The one-third-mile road on the college's east flank provided a new southern entrance to the college and required the movement of more than 100,000 yards of earth.

Computer Center Opens

A \$160,000 computer center opened in the C Building, providing practical experience for students taking classes in computer science.

Gong Show Takeoff

Students performed more than 20 different acts during a parody of television's Gong Show to a near-capacity audience.

Nursing Program Graduates 29

Twenty-eight women and one man completed the vocational nursing program.

Football Acclaim & Controversy

Quarterback Reggie Ogburn led the Cougars to a first-place standing in the Western State Conference in 1977. But the WSC player of the year led 16 players off the field during a game, complaining about profane language by coaches, racial discrimination and housing problems for out-of-state players. Coach Larry Reisbig countered that Ogburn was angered by his coaching philosophy and length of practice sessions. Ogburn never returned.

Track & Field Victorious

The track and field team won the Western State Conference Relays for the first time in its history in March 1977.

Theatre Stages Outdoor Drama

The theatre department's first outdoor drama, Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream," was staged in the Bonelli Amphitheater before a crowd of 240.



76-77 An aerial view of the dynamic new campus. Students stage a play in the Bonelli Amphitheater. Actor Cliff Robertson filming a movie on campus. The cover of the 1977-78 college catalog.

OCTOBER 1976

The women's basketball team played its very first game, losing 55-36.

FALL 1976

Enrollment fell from approximately 3,500 students to 2,800.

FALL 1977

The college converted from the quarter to semester system.

Proposition 13 Fuels Cutbacks

The statewide passage of Proposition 13 was a victory for voters, but its effect on California's finances was far-reaching. The measure resulted in significant program cutbacks at the state's community colleges, including College of the Canyons.

Cougars Head for the Pros

The first College of the Canyons football player was picked by the pros. Aaron Mitchell, an all-league performer at cornerback for the Cougars during the 1976-77 season, was drafted by the Dallas Cowboys. In baseball, Mark Nocciolo, a catcher during the 1977-78 season, was drafted by the California Angels.

Baseball Champs Again

The Cougar baseball team was led to another league championship (five of the last six years) by coach Mike Gillespie in May 1978. The Cougars were ranked No. 1 among Southern California's community colleges.

Rockwell Heads into Sunset

Dr. Robert C. Rockwell retired as the college's first superintendent-president in late 1978. Gary Mouck served as interim superintendent-president through June 30, 1979.

Newcomer Takes Over

Dr. Leland B. Newcomer took over as College of the Canyons' new superintendent-president on July 1, 1979, assuming the job vacated by the retired Robert Rockwell. Newcomer previously served as president of La Verne College.

Major Administrative Changes

Superintendent-President Dr. Leland Newcomer made major changes to the college's administrative ranks. The position of vice president and assistant superintendent, held by Gary Mouck since the college's inception, was eliminated. Mouck began teaching mathematics. The position of assistant superintendent, student personnel, held by Dr. Charles Rheinschmidt since the college's inception, also was eliminated. Rheinschmidt became dean of personnel and director of athletics.

New Deans Appointed

The Board of Trustees approved the appointment of two new deans. English instructor John Drislane became assistant dean of career programs and services, and history instructor Robert Rockwell became assistant dean of academic programs and services.

FALL 1978

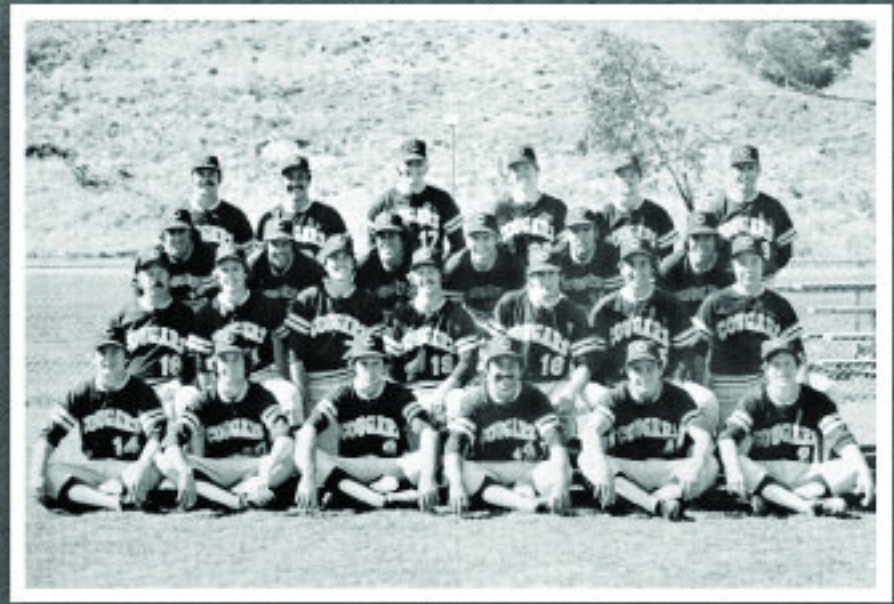
The Cougars won the Homecoming Game against West Los Angeles 63-0. At the time, it was the largest margin of victory in the college's history.

JAN. 23, 1979

The first high school student to attend the college was Kathleen Rasmussen, 15, who enrolled in a conversational French class.

OCT. 2, 1979

The Canyon Call student newspaper transformed to a tabloid size, accepting advertisements for the first time in its 10-year history.



78-79

The No. 1-rated Cougar baseball team. Football Coach Larry Residig gives direction. Biology Professor James Boykin at work. A sailing class utilizes the college's indoor pool.

Progress Despite Tough Times

The 1980s began ominously for College of the Canyons. Nineteen-eighty began with a \$500,000 deficit and a 10 percent increase in enrollment. The 1981-82 academic year experienced the second straight deficit, this one \$600,000, resulting in a variety of cut-backs that affected music and theater programs, counseling services and speech classes. California Governor **Jerry Brown's** post-**Proposition 13** budget axe was not kind at all to community college funding. Superintendent-President **Leland Newcomer** remained optimistic through it all. "This college will survive," he said. "We can and will grow." The Board of Trustees authorized a program to solicit and receive funds for the financially strapped college. The **College of the Canyons Foundation** was created as a private, non-profit corporation to generate new funding.

Media Scrutiny of Football

News reports questioned whether the college violated **Western State Conference** athletic recruiting regulations. Director of Athletics **Charles Rheinschmidt** and head football coach **Larry Reisbig** defended the college's recruiting policy.

Standout Breaks into Big Leagues

Former Cougar pitching standout **Bob Walk** broke into the big leagues, beginning play for the **Philadelphia Phillies** on May 26, 1980. Walk's phenomenal MLB career stretched through the '80s, coming to a close on September 29, 1993 as a **Pittsburgh Pirate**.

New Vocational Programs

Two new programs were introduced in the fall of 1980: the **Vocational to Registered Nurse** career training program and **Mechanical Technology**.

HITE Makes its Debut

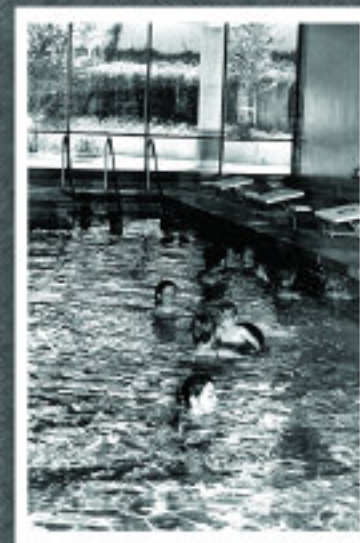
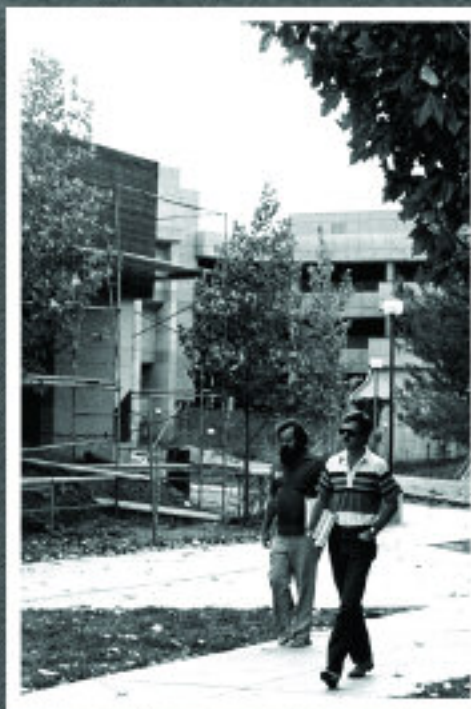
The **High Intensity Transfer & Enrichment (HITE)** program debuted, strengthening transfers to **UCLA**.

CDC Construction Begins

Construction of the **Child Development Center** began in January 1981.

Baseball Takes State Crown

The **Cougar baseball team** won its first state championship in May 1981 under the guidance of coach **Mike Gillespie** (who would later accept a coaching position at **USC**), ending the season with a 32-13 record.



80-81

An L.A. Dodger gives pointers to area youth. View from the Instructional Resource Center. A Community Services aquatics program. Students stroll by the A Building, under construction.

MARCH 1980

Elfi Hummel's first annual World Culture Festival took place on campus.

APRIL 1980

Admissions & Records introduced its registration-by-mail program for the fall semester.

FALL 1981

ASB President Joseph Heath was the first COC student to be awarded the prestigious \$20,000 Harry S. Truman scholarship.

Child Development Center Opens

The College Services Building (A Building), dedicated to Peter Huntsinger, opened its doors in February 1982. Housed within its walls were administrative offices and, more importantly, the new **Child Development Center**, which served 49 families during its first year. The pre-school program became so popular that a lengthy waiting list was formed.

Football is Sacked

Despite a storm of protest, Cougar football was sacked when the **Board of Trustees** cut its funding in March 1982. The board cited as its reasons the program's high number of out-of-district players, the resignation of the head coach, a savings of about \$75,000 annually and lack of community interest.

Other Programs Cut

The board made additional cuts as well: a third of **physical education** classes, the **Economy 150** class, **cooperative work experience**, **continuing education** – fire control, **consumer homemaking**, **ornamental horticulture** and **real estate**.

Newcomer Resigns

Dr. Leland B. Newcomer resigned in

June 1982 from his post as superintendent-president. **Gary Mouck**, with the college since its inception, once again took over until a replacement could be found. Mouck set a retirement date of Dec. 15, 1982, describing his years at the college as a "labor of love."

Financial Problems Persist

Financial problems continued to plague the district. **Fifty classes** were canceled in August 1982, and enrollment dipped from 4,000 to 3,600 students.

Baseball Players Called Up

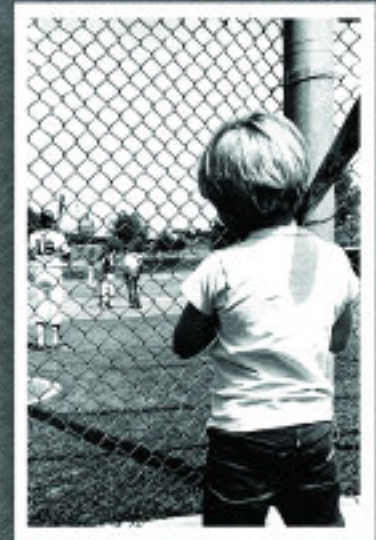
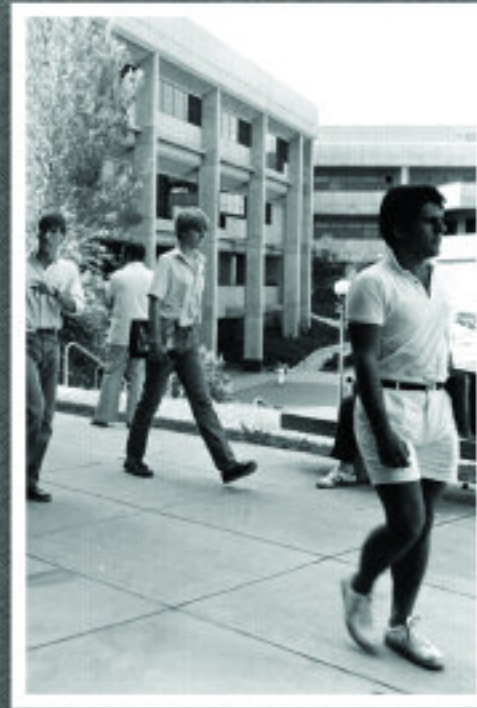
A trio of college baseball players was called up by the majors. Pitcher **Jeff Perry** went to the **St. Louis Cardinals**, and shortstop **Jeff Hughes** and outfielder **Bill Gordon** joined the **San Francisco Giants**.

Baseball Snares 2nd Championship

The Cougar baseball team captured its second state title with a 30-10 record in May 1983, also winning the newly formed **Mountain Valley Conference**.

A New Leader Takes Office

Dr. Ramon F. LaGrandeur took office as the third superintendent-president on May 1, 1983, facing a budget deficit of more than \$473,000.



82-83

Campus clubs recruit students. Dr. Leland Newcomer, the college's second president, resigns. A young boy watches a Cougar baseball game. Students stroll outside the C. Building.

JUNE 1982

Dr. Leland B. Newcomer resigned as superintendent-president of College of the Canyons.

1983

Baseball coach Mike Gillespie was named California State and National Coach of the Year.

FALL 1983

Dr. Marijane Axtell-Paulsen was hired as the college's dean of instruction.

Swallow Controversy Takes Flight

Controversy arrived at the college from a most unlikely source: the sky. For several years the college had been dealing with the mess and headaches associated with the annual migration of Argentine cliff swallows and their ritual of constructing mud nests on campus buildings – to the peril of anyone walking below. In the spring of 1985, 12 of the birds died and 35 others were crippled when a substance meant to repel them from the north side of the IRC stuck to their feathers and prevented them from flying. The birds were protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service investigated and issued the college a \$500 citation.

FLEX Calendar Adopted

The college was one of the first in the state to try, in January 1984, a FLEX calendar. It was later adopted, with fall classes starting earlier in August and ending in December – leaving January free for staff-development programs.

Student Journalists Awarded

The Canyon Call staff collected two first-place prizes for general excellence and front-page layout from the Journalism Association of Community Colleges.

Sheriff's Dept. Selects COC

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department selected College of the Canyons as the site of its future Training Academy. Within weeks, 70 recruits enrolled in the program.

MLB Drafts Four Cougars

Four Cougars were picked by Major League Baseball's amateur draft: Frank Halcovich to the Kansas City Royals, Orlando Cepeda to the Montreal Expos, and Chris Cota and Pete Kuld to the Chicago White Sox.

Hoopsters Snag Championship

In a 1-plus-1 free throw with 7 seconds remaining on the clock, the Cougar basketball team won a 72-71 contest over L.A. Valley College on February 21, 1985, earning the squad a first-ever league championship – much to the elation of long-time coach Lee Smelser.

Jim Boykin Passes Away

Popular biology teacher Jim Boykin died after a brief illness on November 9, 1985 at the age of 59. He taught at the college for 16 years. The science building was later renamed the James D. Boykin Lab Center in his honor.

SEPTEMBER 1984

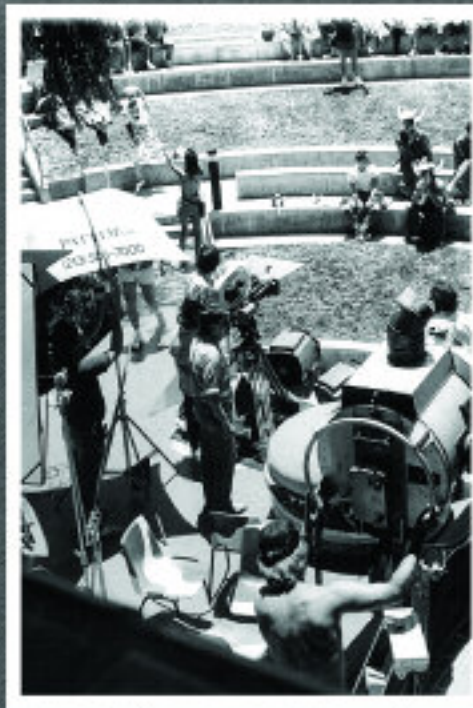
California's free higher education, begun in 1911, ended when a \$5-per-unit (\$50 maximum) enrollment fee for full-time college students was instituted.

JULY 1985

The 2.0 GPA ruling went into effect, requiring students to maintain a minimum 2.0 grade-point average to participate in athletic or student activities.

SEPTEMBER 1985

After a 16-year wait, the \$50,000 Physical Sciences Lab opened its doors at the college.



84-85

An event in the college's outdoor Amphitheater. Dr. Plamton LaGrandeur, the college's third president. Participants of the college's popular health fair. The campus continues to be a favored filming locale.

Sheriff's Training Academy Opens

College of the Canyons became the northern training site for the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department on March 24, 1986. Seventy students enrolled in the new Training Academy for the first 18-week program.

Swallows Get a Reprieve

The Board of Trustees ended a longtime squabble by voting on April 23, 1986 to allow the Argentine cliff swallows to forever nest in peace on the campus.

A Third Baseball Championship

In baseball coach Mike Gillespie's 16th and final season, the Cougars won their third state championship in six years in May 1986. With a remarkable 41-6 record, the team posted the most wins ever for a California community college.

Ted Collier Passes Away

Political science professor Dr. Ted Collier, one of the college's original instructors, died at the age of 58 on September 21, 1986.

Enrollment Growth Returns

Although modest, enrollment growth returned in the fall of 1986. Enrollment hit 3,550, an increase of 50. The spring 1987 enrollment rose to 3,700 students.

First Cadet Class Graduates

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Academy at the college graduated its first class of cadets, composed of 57 men and six women, on February 27, 1987. On hand for the commencement ceremony were Sheriff Sherman Block and state Sen. Ed Davis, a Valencia resident and former chief of the Los Angeles Police Department.

Sold-Out Women's Conference

KNBC anchorwoman Kelly Lange was the keynote speaker at the college's first Women's Conference on March 7, 1987. Some 350 women attended the sold-out event co-sponsored by the American Association of University Women.

World Culture Festival

The first event of the annual World Culture Festival was held on March 16, 1987. The popular festival ran through March 27.

A City is Born

Sixty-nine percent of local voters made it official in November 1987: the City of Santa Clarita was born, forever changing the nature of the valley and everything in it – including College of the Canyons, its only public institution of higher learning.



JUNE 4, 1986

The James D. Boykin Laboratory Center was dedicated in memory of the late biology professor.

SPRING 1987

Susan Cornner was named Outstanding Journalism Teacher of the Year by the California Newspaper Publishers Association.

FALL 1987

The HITE (High Intensity Transfer and Enrichment) Honors Program debuted, along with the Phi Theta Kappa honor society.

86-87

Students stroll past the C-Building. Dr. Ted Collier, one of the first instructors, dies. The college's first Women's Conference is held. The college's first Sheriff's Academy class graduates.

A New Era of Leadership Dawns

It's fair to say that no one fully comprehended the scope of changes that were in store for College of the Canyons beginning midway through 1988. No one, that is, except **Dr. Dianne Gracia Van Hook**, who was chosen over 22 other candidates to replace the retiring **Dr. Ramon F. LaGrandeur** as superintendent-president. The 37-year-old Van Hook became the college's fourth superintendent-president on July 1, 1988. College of the Canyons has never been the same, undergoing a period of its most significant growth and advancement since being built. It became the **fastest-growing community college** in California under her leadership, and the atmosphere on campus was transformed into one of innovation, positive change and passionate willingness to blaze new trails.

Baseball Wins Conference Crown

The Cougars baseball team captured the Western State Conference crown in May 1988, following a home-game streak of 35 wins.

Enrollment Hits Capacity

Enrollment surpassed 5,000, a 9 percent increase and an all-time high for the college, in August 1988.

Snow Blankets Campus

One of the coldest winter storms in 40 years dumped nearly **six inches of snow** on February 8, 1989, forcing the college to close for the day.

Expansion Untethered

The state revised the college's **growth projections** in August 1989, allowing new building construction to proceed to accommodate enrollment growth.

Fastest-Growing Community College

Enrollment continued to rise at the **fastest-growing community college in California**. Fall 1989 enrollment hit 5,668 – 20 percent above capacity.

Employee Training Institute Debuts

The **Employee Training Institute** began at the college in November 1989, providing contract education to area businesses.

First Silver Spur Celebration

The COC Foundation sponsored the first **Silver Spur celebration** at the **Gene Autry Museum** in November 1989.

New Stadium Track

Work began on a new **synthetic all-weather running track** at **Cougar Stadium** in December 1989.



SEPTEMBER 1988
The COC Foundation topped the half-million-dollar mark – \$522,828 – in funds raised for college development.

APRIL 1989
Cliffie Stone was named the recipient of the college's Silver Spur Community Service Award.

MAY 1989
Local business and industry leaders formed an advisory council in partnership with the college.

88-89

College administrators meet. Dr. Dianne Van Hook is named superintendent-president. A rare snowstorm blankets the campus. Students stroll near the C Building.

Major Expansion Plan Unveiled

As growth projections were revised, so was the college's **five-year construction plan**, paving the way for significant expansion projects. The **Master Plan** was revised in March 1990 to accommodate a projected 20,000 students, and the college announced a **\$47-million building program** to renovate and expand facilities, including **classrooms, a computer center, fine arts building, performing arts center, administration building, library and small gymnasium.**

Youth Orchestra Moves to COC
The **Santa Clarita Valley Youth Orchestra** began its first year of residency at College of the Canyons in January 1990, having moved from neighboring CalArts.

First Cinco de Mayo Celebration
Hundreds celebrated Mexican culture at the college's first **Cinco de Mayo Festival** in May 1990. The **Mexican Consulate** sent five artists and a distinguished filmmaker to participate in the event.

Graduation Records
The May 1990 commencement ceremony saw **441 students** graduate. The following year, the largest class yet – **489 students** – graduated.

Basketball Team Wins Division
The men's basketball team won the **Western State Conference Southern Division** in February 1991.

Summer School Cuts
More than half of the **summer school classes** were canceled in a move designed to prevent the college from cutting its fall semester schedule. Only 19 of the original 42 classes were offered.

Day of the Child Celebrated
A special combined "**Day of Celebration/Day of the Child**" took place on campus in April 1991, including a swallow-welcoming festival and bird-banding, pancake breakfast, and more than 30 activities for children and their families.

Small Business Center Created
College of the Canyons and five organizations announced the creation of the **Small Business Center** in April 1991.

Schwarzenegger Visits Campus
Bodybuilder-turned-actor **Arnold Schwarzenegger** visited **Cougar Stadium** in October 1991 to lead 7,000 fourth-through sixth-grade students in exercises to encourage them to be physically fit.



90-91

A jubilant graduate during commencement. Sheriff's Academy trainees on campus. Associated Students try to get out the vote. An aerial view of the college's Honor Grove.

MARCH 13, 1990
Elisha "Aggie" Agajanian was named the recipient of the college's Silver Spur Community Service Award.

APRIL 1991
Scott and Ruth Newhall were named the recipients of the college's Silver Spur Community Service Award.

JANUARY 1991
The Chancellor's Office recommended a second site for the college district in its long-range capital outlay growth plan.

Voters Pave Way for Expansion

Voter approval in June 1992 of **Proposition 152**, a state school construction bond, gave the college \$15 million to build a new **library, fine arts building and child development center**. The new buildings were welcomed on a campus hard-pressed to accommodate growing enrollment.

Black History Celebrated

Black History Month was celebrated at the college for the first time in February 1992 with a series of art, entertainment, films, lectures and displays.

President's Circle Launched

The **COC Foundation** in April 1992 kicked off another annual tradition, the **President's Circle** giving program.

Record Graduation Numbers

The number of graduates continued to grow; **531 students** graduated on May 22, 1992. The following year, **590 students** graduated.

Plans for New CDC Under Way

The **Child Development Center (CDC)** moved out of its home in the A Building in November 1992 to make way for a relocating **Admissions & Records Office**. In November 1993, ground was broken

for a brand-new child development center on campus. The ceremony was held on the southwest corner of the campus. The new 5,960-square-foot center was expected to be completed by late 1994.

Transfer Center Opens

The **Transfer Center**, helping students transfer to four-year schools, opened.

Golfers Win Championship

The **men's golf team** captured its second straight **Western State Conference** title in April 1993. Then, in May, the team captured its first **state championship**, winning by one stroke.

Vision 2000 Business Conference

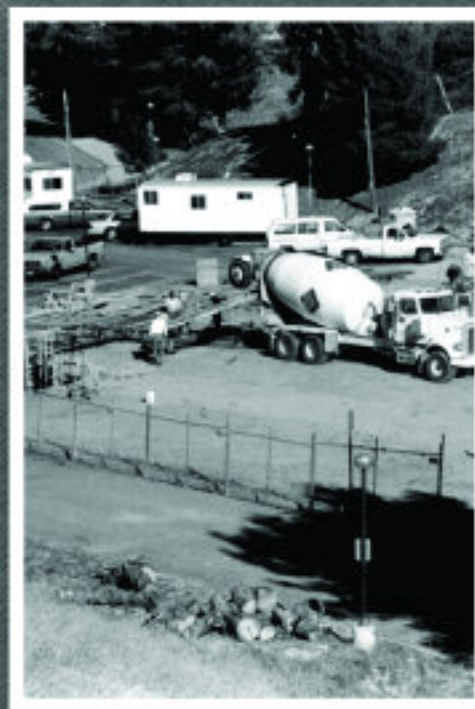
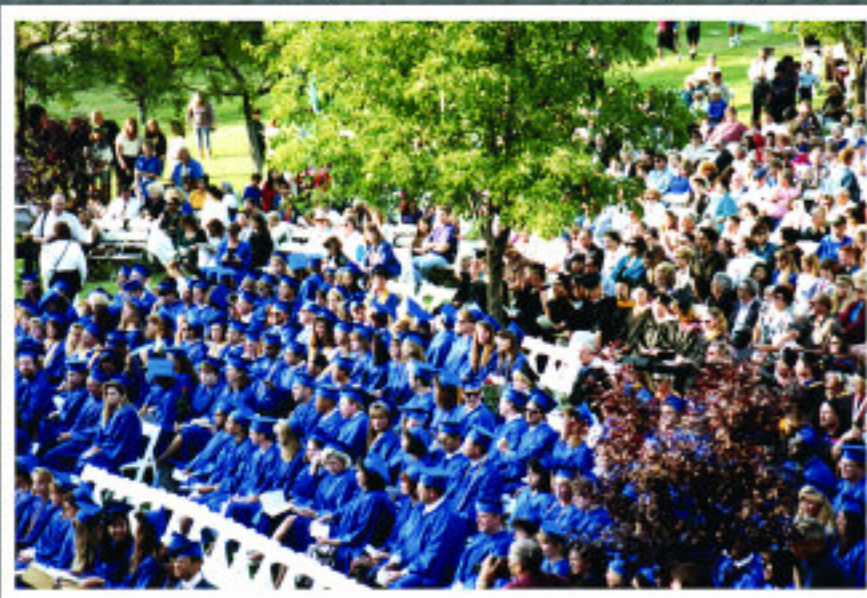
The **Vision 2000 Business Conference** in May 1993 featured State Treasurer **Kathleen Brown** and Lockheed Skunk Works President **Sherman Mullin**.

Farmers Market Arrives

The first **Farmers Market** was held on campus in July 1993 and became an every-Sunday event.

IRC, TLC Undergo Remodeling

The **I Building** and **TLC (Tutoring, Learning & Computing) Lab** underwent extensive remodeling in November 1993.



JANUARY 1992
Superintendent-President Dr. Dianne Van Hook was appointed to chair the statewide facilities task force, part of the Commission on Innovation.

MAY 1992
The Employee Training Institute partnered with the Santa Clarita Valley Chamber of Commerce to sponsor the first Leadership Training Program.

MAY 1993
Tom Dierckman of The Newhall Land & Farming Co. was named the recipient of the college's Silver Spur Community Service Award.

92-93

Graduation day.
The men's baseball team.
The TLC Lab undergoes a major expansion.
Construction begins on the child development center.

Quake Causes Major Damage

The 6.7-magnitude **Northridge Earthquake** jolted the community early on January 17, 1994, striking with such force that many of the college's classrooms were rendered uninhabitable. All told, the college suffered an estimated **\$3.2 million in damage**. The start of the college's spring semester was delayed by one week as **tent classrooms** were erected and other preparations were made to accommodate students. Thanks to plans put in place several years earlier, the college became an **emergency command post** for the greater Santa Clarita Valley area. After the recovery effort, Superintendent-President **Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook** testified at state hearings regarding the quake response. In February, the **Small Business Center** received a \$30,000 grant from the **Chancellor's Office** to expand its services to help businesses recover from the quake. An additional \$25,000 in grant funding in July extended the earthquake-recovery program through December.

Most Graduates Continue Studies

A total of **560** students petitioned to graduate in May 1994, with 78 percent indicating they planned to transfer to four-year institutions.

Conservation Corps Helps Out

A crew of 10 workers from the **California Conservation Corps** visited the campus in the summer of 1994 to paint, plaster and secure furnishings as final earthquake cleanup work continued.

New Horizons Debuts

New Horizons was launched in August 1994, targeting single parents, pregnant teens, displaced homemakers and students entering non-traditional careers.

Miraculous Quake Recovery

Students returning to the college for the start of the **fall semester** on August 18, 1994 found it in pre-earthquake condition after about **\$2 million** in repairs.

Stadium and Track Reopen

Cougar Stadium and its running track, which were damaged in the earthquake, reopened on September 15, 1994.

25th Anniversary Convocation

The college kicked off a celebration of its **25th anniversary** with an **academic convocation** on September 22, 1994, complete with a procession that included **Chancellor David Mertes**. **Ruth Newhall** was guest speaker, and **Mayor George Pederson** cut the birthday cake.

JANUARY 1994

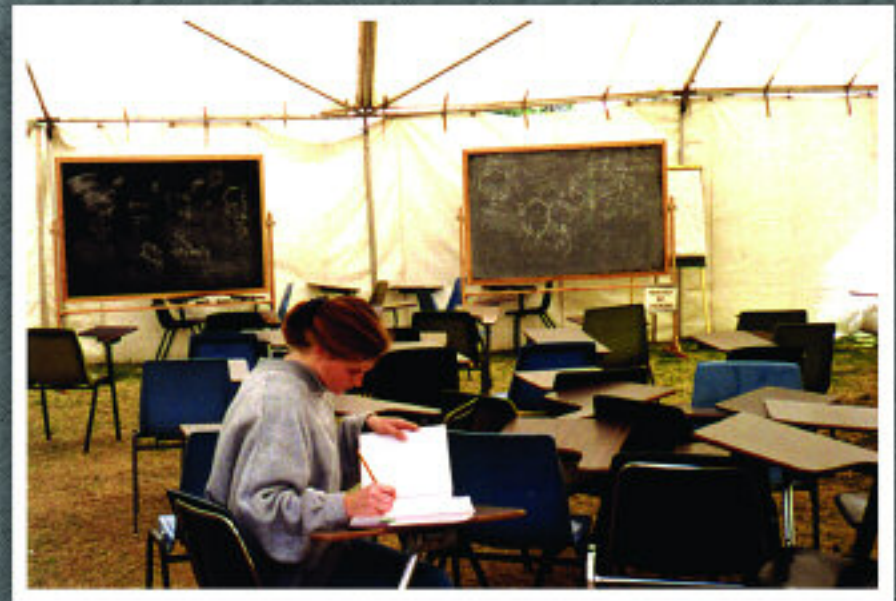
A Chicano studies course was offered at the college for the first time.

APRIL 1994

The Board of Trustees passed a policy prohibiting smoking in all indoor and outdoor facilities.

MAY 1994

John Hoskinson was named the recipient of the college's Silver Spur Community Service Award.



1994

A student studies in a tent following the Jan. 17 quake. The quake caused \$3.2 million damage campuswide. Many spring classes were held in tents such as these. The weekly Farmers Market arrives on campus.

New Buildings Reflect Progress

In a symbolic gesture aimed at overcoming the destruction of the **Northridge Earthquake** a year earlier, ground was broken January 17, 1995 and construction began on two exciting new buildings: the **Library** and the **Media & Fine Arts Building**. Three months later, the new and equally impressive **Family Studies & Early Childhood Education Center** opened (see below).

A Library of Innovation

The **Library** was designed to replace the original library in the **IRC**, which had become obsolete as the college grew. The Library was designed to be noticed, featuring a two-story curved wall of glass and perched atop a hillside with a sweeping view of the Santa Clarita Valley. It was designed to cover 27,222 square feet and include an online computer-base catalog, multimedia stations, group-study rooms and a community gallery.

Media & Fine Arts

The **Media & Fine Arts Building** was designed to house a wide variety of art and media programs, as well as a **Fine Art Gallery**. The building also was to incorporate extensive computer and photogra-

phy labs, and house the operations of the student newspaper, the **Canyon Call**.

Community Colleges Popular

Statewide enrollment data revealed that fewer local high school students were enrolling at **California State University** schools, opting instead to attend **community colleges** like College of the Canyons.

Family Studies Center Unveiled

Dignitaries and children cut the ribbon signaling completion of the college's new **Family Studies & Early Childhood Education Center** on April 22, 1995. The opening ceremony was held in conjunction with the community-wide "**Day of the Child**" celebration.

Most Quake Repairs Completed

By the end of the year, 90 percent of the **Northridge earthquake**-recovery projects – representing about \$3 million in **FEMA** funds – was completed.

Registration Plans Under Way

In an effort to bring some efficiency and convenience to the class-registration process, a **telephone-registration system** was being planned and expected to be operational the following year.



1995

Jan Keller and colleagues survey the library site. Library construction progresses later in the year. A kitchen becomes the classroom. Family Studies & Childhood Education Center opens.

1995

Retired Superintendent-President Dr. Ramon F. LaGrandeur passed away at 68. He spent more than 30 years in education.

SUMMER 1995

British music students attended the first International Summer Music Institute at the college.

NOV. 14 1995

The college's first annual Business & Industry Breakfast was held at HR Textron in the Valencia Industrial Center.

Efficient Central Plant Finished

The college's energy-efficient **Central Plant**, which was designed to provide heating and air conditioning to both the new **Library** and **Media & Fine Arts Building**, became operational. The centralized plant resulted in a 25-percent savings in energy costs.

College Enters Cyberspace

The college created and launched its first **Web site**.

Construction on Schedule

Construction continued on the **Library** and the **Media & Fine Arts Building**. On December 4, 1996, the **Library** opened for a preview.

Youth Orchestra Travels Abroad

The **SCV Youth Orchestra** traveled to **England** to participate in the **1996 International Summer Music Institute**.

Women's Conference Milestone

The community celebrated the **10th anniversary** of the college's annual **Women's Conference** on March 2, 1996.

Phone Registration Introduced

The college introduced its telephone-based **STAR registration system**.

First Job Fair Held

The first **job fair** hosted by the college's **Career Center** was held on October 24, 1996, attracting 35 employers.

12th Highest in Transfers

The college ranked 12th highest among California's 71 community college districts in terms of the number of students who transferred to the **California State University** or **University of California** systems.

Student-Retention Rate Improves

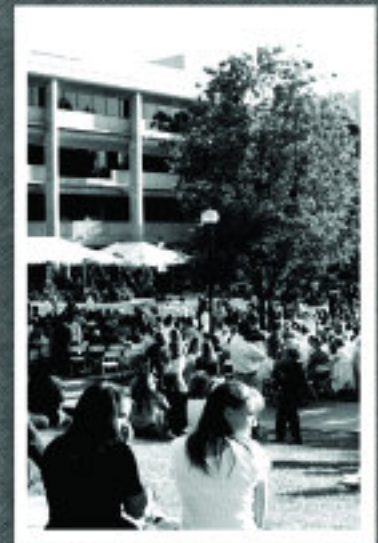
The college's student-retention rate improved from 74.8 percent in the fall of 1989 to 81.4 percent in the fall of 1996.

Foundation Revenue Grows

The **College of the Canyons Foundation** increased its revenue by 348 percent over 1989 levels.

Grant Revenue Up Significantly

Revenue from grants made impressive gains, rising 700 percent, from \$70,203 in 1989 to \$496,805 in 1996.



SPRING 1996

Weekend College was introduced for busy working adults.

SPRING 1996

The college hosted the first Santa Clarita forum on the future of education.

MAY 1996

LaVerne Harris was named the recipient of the college's Silver Spur Community Service Award.

1996 Staff members check on the progress of the Library. The new Library begins to take shape. Graduation day. The Media & Fine Arts Building under construction.

Two Grand Facilities Completed

The ribbons were cut simultaneously, signaling the completion of the college's new **Library and Media & Fine Arts Building**. Once again, the date – January 17, 1997 – was chosen for symbolic reasons. The grand-opening events for the new buildings occurred three months later.

Valencia Learning Center Opens

The college's **Employee Training Institute** opened its **Valencia Learning Center**, a training facility for local businesses located in the **Valencia Industrial Center**.

Growth Funds Get a Boost

An infusion of **growth funds** translated into **139 new classes**, as well as a doubling of **summer school** offerings.

Library System Shared with CalArts

In a novel cost-saving measure, **College of the Canyons** and its neighbor, **California Institute of the Arts**, partnered and split the cost of an online library automation system that both institutions were able to utilize.

Van Hook Enters Hall of Fame

Superintendent-President **Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook** was inducted into the **Long**

Beach City College Hall of Fame. **Van Hook** had graduated from the community college.

John Drislane Passes Away

Longtime college employee **John Drislane**, who served as dean of personnel and taught English courses, died.

Technology Center Expands

The **Technology Center** was expanded to accommodate more faculty and staff.

Summer Session Well Attended

The 1997 **summer session** served **2,705 students**, making it the largest single summer session to date.

Accreditation Reaffirmed

The **Accrediting Commission** gave the college a "full unqualified reaffirmation" of accreditation. And, the **Nursing Program** received accreditation from the **National League of Nursing**, adding well-deserved stature and credibility to the program.

Degrees and Certificates

The college ranked fourth highest in the state for **associate degrees** and **occupational certificates** awarded.



1997

A music class in progress. John Drislane, instructor and dean of personnel, dies. The new Art Gallery in the Media & Fine Arts Building. The new 30,000-square-foot Library opens.

MAY 1997

Robert Ormsby was named the recipient of the college's Silver Spur Community Service Award.

MARCH 28, 1997

The college's new Art Gallery holds its first exhibit, a showing entitled "Against the Wall."

FALL 1997

The college introduced its International Students Program.

1998

Academic & Athletic Expansion

It was clear in 1998 that **enrollment growth** would continue, and that the college would need to implement innovative ideas to meet the educational and training demands of the community – not to mention physically accommodate more and more students. College leaders found new ways to use existing space, carving out **new classrooms and laboratories** where none existed before, and redesigning instructional space to be more efficient. New technology was embraced. New academic and training programs were introduced. And **new athletic programs** found a home at the college. Leading the list of expanded athletic programs was **football**, the victim of dwindling public and financial support 17 years earlier, but which now made a comeback due to renewed public interest and support. The vast banks of lights would once again illuminate **Cougar Stadium**, the Santa Clarita Valley's largest athletic venue.

Football Returns

The first **football** game in 17 years was played on September 26, a result of athletic expansion. The football team was resurrected following a groundswell of

public support. Coached by former Cougar **Chuck Lyon**, the football program would develop into a powerhouse.

New Instructional Space

As enrollment continued its frenzied growth, construction was under way on **six new laboratories, 13 new classrooms, 18 new offices, a conference room and an audio/video/computer technology area.**

Busy Adults Embrace PACE

The college introduced its **PACE** (Progressive Adult College Education) program, which proved so popular that two additional tracks were created. The program was tailored to the schedules of busy working adults, allowing them to achieve their educational goals during non-traditional instructional hours.

New Programs Added

Multimedia and fire technology programs were added to the curriculum. The college also won approval to expand class offerings in the areas of **theater, physical education, library, media, photography, radio and television.**



1998

An aerial view of the campus, looking west. Men's football returns after a 17-year hiatus. The annual Job & Career Fair draws hundreds. A happy graduate flashes a V for victory.

MAY 1998

Dick Luechtefeld was named the recipient of the college's Silver Spur Community Service Award.

SUMMER 1998

The college introduced its state-of-the-art fitness center overlooking the basketball court.

SEPT. 11, 1998

The first women's soccer game was held, a result of the college's athletic expansion program.

1999

College Celebrates 30th Year

Nineteen-ninety-nine was the year that college enrollment surpassed **10,000 students**, a noteworthy achievement considering the fact that the college was designed to accommodate no more than **5,000 students**. College leaders addressed the overcrowding issue as best they could during the institution's **30th anniversary year**. Fourteen much-needed new classrooms were being prepared, an exciting new program that would offer bachelor degree programs on campus was in the works, and plans were afoot to build a **middle college** on campus for high school students.

Classroom Village Built

Fourteen new classrooms covering 10,000 square feet were unveiled as the **Modular Classroom Village** opened. The complex of modular buildings also housed bachelor degree programs offered in joint ventures with **Cal State Bakersfield** and **University of La Verne** – a precursor to the **University Center** concept.

Student Center Remodel

Expansion of the **Student Center** began. Plans for the building called for a larger dining area and an enclosed lounge in the former courtyard-like entrance.

Cougar Den Completed

The privately funded **Cougar Den** was completed adjacent to **Cougar Stadium**.

Women's Athletics Expanded

Women's golf and **water polo** programs were added.

Athletic Achievement

Lisa Mosier led the **women's volleyball team** to a championship and was named coach of the year, and **Phil Marcellin** led **women's soccer** to the regional finals. He also was named coach of the year.

MESA Program Debuts

The **MESA** (Math, Engineering and Science Achievement) program debuted.

Middle College Consensus

The **Hart High School District** agreed to build a high school at the college. **Academy of the Canyons** would allow high-potential students to attend high school and college simultaneously.

PAC Plan Moves Forward

The long-awaited **Performing Arts Center** moved forward, with the state disbursing money to begin the planning process and the **City of Santa Clarita** committing \$2.4 million to expand its capacity.

MAY 22, 1999

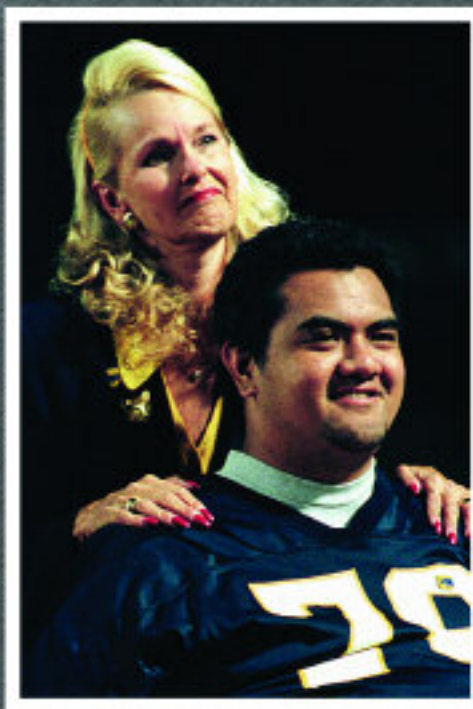
Roberta Veloz, chairwoman of Aquafine Corp., received the college's Silver Spur Award for community service.

SUMMER 1999

The summer program grew to some 6,000 students, the program's highest enrollment yet.

FALL 1999

Sharon Davis, wife of California Governor Gray Davis, visited and toured the campus.



1999

Looking west toward the Media & Fine Arts Building 30th anniversary congratulations from City Hall. Student performers from "Holiday Voices." Superintendent Van Hook with football player Mal Te.

Campus Grapples with Growth

The college hit a milestone in 1999 that carried over into the new year, enrolling more than **10,000 students** in the spring semester. The enrollment figure was especially noteworthy because the campus was designed for no more than half that number. By the fall, that figure approached 11,000. College leaders had been implementing a series of solutions to ease the overcrowding. One of those was the **Modular Classroom Village**, seven temporary instructional buildings that opened for classes in January. The year saw the completion of the remodeled **Student Center**, which received an expansive new entry, a larger dining room and more office space. And, classes began August 24 for 138 students at **Academy of the Canyons**, a middle college formed under a partnership between the college and the **William S. Hart Union High School District**.

Women's Volleyball Champs

The women's volleyball team won the Western State Conference title, ending the season with a 17-5 record.

Golf Team Captures Championship

The men's golf team won its second state championship in May, defeating defending champ Long Beach City College.

11 Faculty Members Retire

The college bid farewell in May to 11 retiring faculty members – six of them part of the college's original faculty – during a celebration in the **Cougar Den**.

Nursing Leader Dies

Helen Lusk, longtime head of the college's nursing program, died June 6 at the age of 72. She had retired from the college in 1995.

A New Basketball Coach

Assistant Men's Basketball Coach **Howard Fisher** was named head coach, assuming the post of longtime coach **Lee Smelser**, who retired earlier in the year.

Spanish Institute Debuts

The first **Summer Intensive Spanish Institute** was launched August 7, attracting more than 200 participants.

First Aerospace Conference

The Center for Applied Competitive Technologies hosted the **Santa Clarita Aerospace Conference 2000** at the Hyatt Valencia on August 10.

Rockwell Passes Away

Dr. Robert C. Rockwell, the college's first superintendent-president, died October 5 at the age of 87.

APRIL 2000

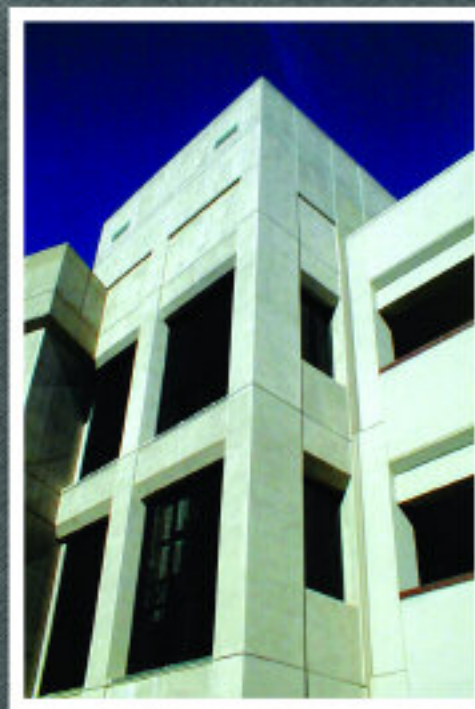
The college presented its Silver Spur Award for community service to longtime college supporter Michael Berger.

MAY 26, 2000

The commencement ceremony saw 719 students graduate, a nearly 15 percent increase compared to 1999 figures.

OCT. 4-7, 2000

The Women's International Symposium, a revamped and expanded offshoot of the annual women's conference, was held.



2000

The Student Center undergoes a dramatic expansion. Members of the college's first faculty and staff gather. The privately funded Cougar Den is completed. An angular view of portions of the C and I buildings.

Voters Support COC Expansion

Santa Clarita Valley voters approved **Measure C** by a 67.65 percent majority on **Election Day** November 6, paving the way for \$82.1 million in much-needed new facilities, facility improvements and renovations, and new educational and training programs. The overwhelming majority of voters agreed the college must be able to raise funds to offset erratic, unpredictable state construction funding. The campus as envisioned by the original master plan more than 30 years earlier was designed for a maximum of 5,000 students. The college surpassed that mark many years earlier and had an enrollment of nearly 13,000 in late 2001. **Rita Garasi** and **John Hoskinson** headed the **Measure C Campaign Committee**, which was composed of numerous community volunteers.

Academy Graduates First Class

The very first class of 55 students graduated **Academy of the Canyons** on June 10.

Enrollment Growth Continues

The **fall semester** began August 20 with 12,851 students, an 18 percent increase.

Parking Woes Solved

Most of the new \$8 million **South Parking Lot** opened in time for the start

of the fall semester, providing an additional 1,000 student parking spaces. Another 600 spaces opened later.

Campus Supports University Center

College personnel, as well as community leaders, came together to launch the **capital fundraising campaign** for the **University Center** on August 24. Ninety-nine percent of the college community pledged financial support.

ACCESS for Canyon Country

The **ACCESS** learning center opened in August in the **Canyon Country Library** complex, providing needed classroom space in the eastern Santa Clarita Valley.

A Silent Vigil

Hundreds of students and college personnel gathered around a half-risen American flag on September 14 to conduct a silent vigil to honor the victims of the **9/11 terrorist attacks**.

Technology Center Renamed

The **Technology Center** was renamed and dedicated as the **John Drislane Technology Center** on October 25.

Women Golfers Win Championship

The **women's golf team** won the state championship in November.



2001

The ACCESS Center opens in Canyon Country. An emotional flag vigil following the 9/11 attacks. Ground is broken for the Performing Arts Center. Another record year for graduates.

APRIL 28, 2001

The college presented its Silver Spur Award for community service to Lou Garasi, chief executive officer for Gruber Systems.

MAY 15, 2001

The Helen C. Lusk Nursing / Allied Health Lab was dedicated in memory of one of the college's original pioneers.

DEC. 10, 2001

The official groundbreaking was held for the much-anticipated Performing Arts Center.

Construction of PAC Begins

Actual construction began in early 2002 on one of College of the Canyons' most ambitious structures, the long-awaited **Performing Arts Center**. The site of the project was a student parking lot, which was bulldozed and graded during the spring of 2002. Excavation was completed in May, and the very first concrete and steel appeared in June. By the end of the year, much of the building's steel frame was erected, including its signature curved front.

Interim University Center

The **Interim University Center** opened to meet strong community demand on January 22, with seven educational institutions already signed up to provide advanced degrees.

Newsmaker of the Year

Superintendent-President **Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook** was named **Newsmaker of the Year** at *The Signal's* annual **Newsmaker Awards Dinner** on February 1.

Fashion Designer Visits

Internationally acclaimed fashion designer **Sue Wong** held a special preview of her "Nocturne" line in the college's **Art Gallery** on February 23.

Grad Numbers Grow

The May 24 **commencement** saw 757 graduates, a 15.9 percent from 2001.

Public Input Sought

The college hosted an **education forum** on June 27 to solicit input on the state's **Master Plan for Education**.

Vocational Expansion

The **Vocational Technology Center** added 3,500 square feet of space to accommodate new manufacturing technology classes and \$200,000 worth of new equipment.

9/11 Victims Remembered

The campus community participated in a flag vigil to honor the victims of the 9/11 terrorist attacks one year earlier.

Nursing Education Center Opens

The ribbon was cut for the **Clinical Education Center**, a nurse-training facility at **Henry Mayo Newhall Memorial Hospital**, on September 19.

Education Reform Hearing

Assistant Secretary of Education **Carol D'Amico** joined U.S. Rep. **Howard P. "Buck" McKeon** for a hearing on education reform at the college on October 25.



MAY 13, 2002

The men's golf team, headed by coach Gary Peterson, won the California state championship.

OCTOBER 2002

U.S. Rep Howard P. "Buck" McKeon appeared at a college press conference to announce that University Center had been awarded an \$800,000 federal grant.

NOV. 5, 2002

Voters approved Proposition 47, which earmarked about \$22 million in construction funds to the college.

2002

Construction begins on the Performing Arts Center.
The Clinical Education Center opens at HMNHM.
A nursing student trains in the center's lab.
The Interim University Center opens.

Stadium Undergoes Renovation

Measure C funds were utilized to help renovate **Cougar Stadium**, a college landmark along Valencia Boulevard and home to numerous athletic and community events. The improvements were unveiled during a ribbon-cutting ceremony held in conjunction with the **Santa Clarita Valley Chamber of Commerce** on June 12. The most noteworthy improvement was the installation of **FieldTurf synthetic grass**, featuring a virtually maintenance-free playing surface. Other improvements included a resurfaced running track and remodeled restrooms. The project cost approximately \$1 million.

Nurse Training Leadership

College of the Canyons took the lead in the new **Associate Degree Nursing Regional Collaborative**, a partnership among the region's hospitals and community colleges to help overcome a critical statewide nursing shortage.

University Center Progress

The **University Center Capital Campaign** reported commitments totaling \$4.1 million to build a permanent home for the center, putting it nearly halfway to its \$10 million goal. The University Center

allows residents to earn advanced degrees from a collection of public and private universities without having to commute to distant campuses outside the area.

Athletic Excellence

The **women's softball team** won the conference championship on April 22, and the **men's basketball team** won its first conference title in 10 years in December.

Grad Numbers Rise

Seven-hundred-eighty-five students graduated during the **commencement ceremony** on May 23, representing a 4 percent increase over 2002.

Athletic Expansion Continues

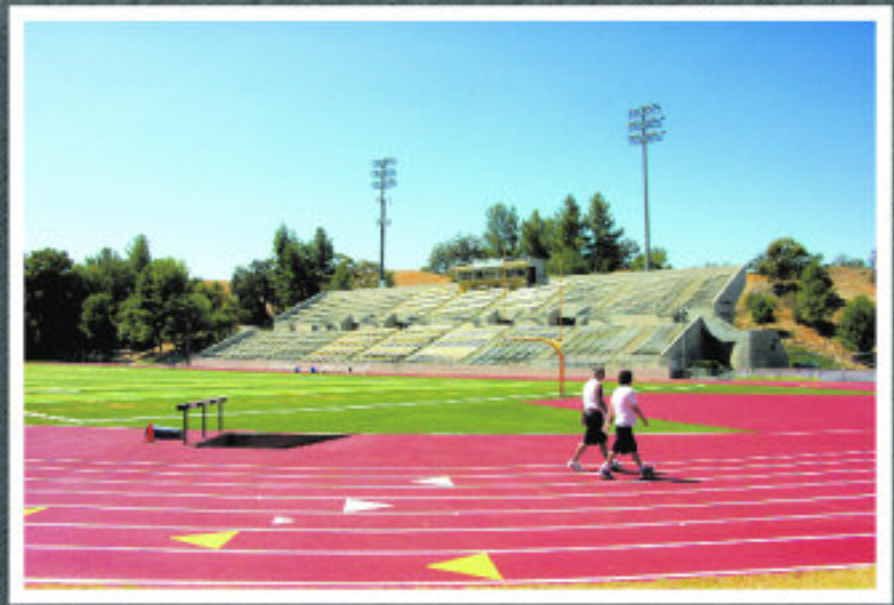
The college added **men's soccer** to its roster of intercollegiate sports in August.

Longtime Employees Honored

The college honored **Cherie Choate**, **Lee Corbin** and **Joan Jacobson** for 30 years of service during opening-day festivities on August 15.

College Hosts Business Expo

The college played host to the **SCV Chamber of Commerce Business Expo**, which lost its previous location to a new retail center.



JANUARY 2003

The college was granted unconditional reaccreditation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges for the maximum allowable six-year term.

APRIL 26, 2003

Longtime college supporters Jay and Joyce Rodgers were honored for their community service during the annual Silver Spur Awards Dinner.

DECEMBER 2003

The football team recorded its first perfect season (10-0) and its fourth consecutive victory in the Western State Conference Bowl.

2003

Cougar Stadium is renovated and upgraded. University Center capital campaign makes progress. Theatre production of 'Jesus Christ Superstar'. The Performing Arts Center takes shape.

Performing Arts Center Debuts

The crowning achievement for 2004 was the completion of the **Vital Express Center for the Performing Arts**, a spectacular two-venue complex that opened October 15. Built in partnership with the City of Santa Clarita, the \$18.3 million center opened with a sold-out performance of "Big River," which combined the talents of the theatre, music and dance departments. Although visually one structure, the center was built as two separate buildings – one housing the 926-seat main performance hall, the other housing the 125-seat **Black Box Theater**. The center, named for the Valencia transportation company that donated \$2 million toward an endowment campaign to support the center and students, hosted such acts as **Paul Anka** and **Melissa Manchester**, as well as a variety of community performance groups.

University Center

A luncheon was held at the Hyatt Valencia January 6 to announce a \$250,000 pledge from **Lennar Corp.** to the capital campaign to build a permanent **University Center**. This and other donations brought the total pledged to more than \$7 million.

Retirements

Betty Spilker, one of the college's original faculty members, retired in June after 35 years. Also retiring were **Lee Corbin** (31 years), **Pam Beauer** (25 years), **Susan Cornner** (24 years), **Erik Eriksson** (24 years) and **Dean Leao** (13 years).

State Champions

The **football team** beat top-rated **City College of San Francisco** to win the state championship, and it was named the national champion.

Command Center

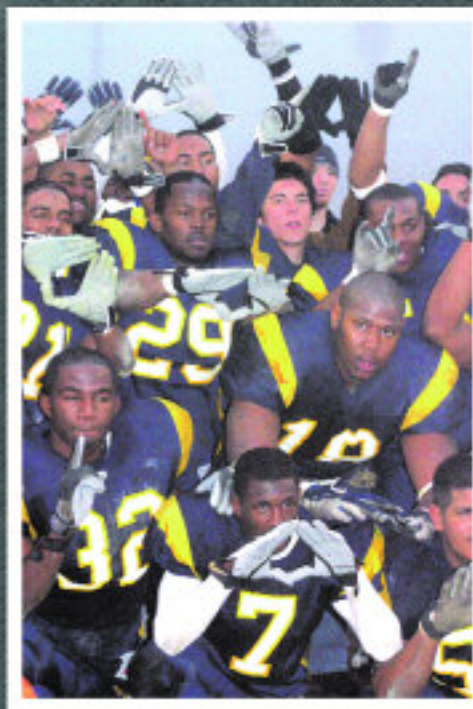
Los Angeles County set up its **Emergency Command Center** at the college to battle a series of fierce July wild-fires, and the **American Red Cross** utilized the campus as its evacuation center.

Music-Dance Building

The 20,000-square-foot **Music-Dance Building**, a **Measure C**-funded expansion project, neared completion adjacent to the Vital Express Center in December.

Expansion Approved

The state on December 14 approved the college's plan to build the **Canyon Country Education Center** to serve residents of the eastern Santa Clarita Valley.



2004

The Performing Arts Center opening, October 15. Construction begins on the Music-Dance Building. The campus is transformed into a fair command post. The football team wins the state championship.

MARCH 13

Gary Cusumano, chief executive officer of The Newhall Land & Farming Co., was named recipient of the college's Silver Spur Community Service Award.

MARCH 26-28

The college's club hockey team won the state title, beating teams from Fresno State, San Diego State, UC San Diego and UC Irvine along the way.

MAY 21

The college graduated 997 students, a 27 percent increase over 2003. The commencement ceremony was held in the central-campus Honor Grove.

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