

Planning UNC's Bicentennial Observance

J. Brooke Tyson

Three weeks after, George Washington laid the cornerstone for the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., another cornerstone was laid in Chapel Hill, N.C.--that of public higher education in the United States. On Oct. 12, 1793, the cornerstone of Old East, the nation's first state university building, was laid on the campus of the University of North Carolina.

Now, in 1993, UNC-Chapel Hill celebrates 200 years of educational excellence and public service. The Bicentennial Observance begins on Oct. 12, 1993 (University Day), and concludes May 15, 1994 (Commencement). The official theme is "First in the Nation."

At the time of the Revolutionary War, only nine colleges existed in all 13 colonies. All were private institutions. The idea of a public university was radically new. But on Dec. 11, 1789, the University of North Carolina was chartered by an act of the North Carolina General Assembly. The bill to create the University was introduced by William Richardson Davie, a resident of Halifax and a statesman who earlier had helped frame the U.S. Constitution. Davie's vision was to open the doors of education to the common man, not just the privileged few.

In 1790, the Board of Trustees met for the first time, and in 1792 the site for the University was chosen on New Hope Chapel hill in Orange County. Legend says that Davie chose the Chapel Hill site for its inspiring beauty and for the towering majesty of a tulip poplar tree. (The beauty of campus still is inspiring, and the Davie Poplar still survives.) In 1793, the construction of Old East began.

Two years later, on Jan. 15, 1795, the University
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opened its doors to students. One month later (on Feb. 12, 1795) the first student, 18-year-old Hinton James, arrived at the University having traveled on foot (according to legend) from Wilmington to Chapel Hill.

The Rev. David Ker, the entire faculty at that time, greeted James as he entered the halls of public higher education. Two weeks later, James was joined by other students seeking instruction at America's first public university. James and six other men formed Carolina's first graduating class in 1798.

For James and his classmates of 1795, student life was much different than it is today. James' first year at the University cost \$30; students could rent feather beds for \$24 or sleep on boards. On Saturdays these well-rested students read essays in the presence of the student body and faculty. Examinations and Commencement took place in one day, and afterwards, students received a week of vacation.

Despite how different their lives may seem to us now, James and his classmates were forging what was to become a fundamental privilege in our society--publicly supported higher education.

The dirt paths of our early history have given way to the brick paths of today. Along the way the University has gone from buying its first piece of scientific equipment, a compass, in 1789 to creating a medical school in 1879; from passing an ordinance authorizing the admission of women to postgraduate work in 1897 to women outnumbering men on campus in 1979; from admitting its first black undergraduates in 1955 to appointing its first black full professor in 1969.

Currently, the University provides instruction in more than 100 fields of study and offers degrees in 67 baccalaureate, 88 master's and 61 doctoral programs, as well as professional degrees in business, dentistry, medicine, pharmacy, law and library science. It has a student body



The sesquicentennial celebration of University Day, October 12, 1943, included a Playmakers' reenactment of the laying of the cornerstone of Old East.

of 22,597 and an annual budget of \$738 million.

North Carolina Governor Jim Hunt spoke of the emergence of the University during a campaign trip in 1992. He said, "We are the people who, way back at the end of the 18th century, decided that if our new democracy was to survive and prosper, we needed to have a state university. A public university. You see, up until that time, we'd been sending our sons up to the wealthy north, to the private schools founded by the big churches ... Harvard, Yale, Princeton. But North Carolina--little, old, dirt poor North Carolina decided a public university was best. So do you know what we did? We built us a university on top of a hill, and we've been sending our sons and daughters to it ever since. That university is the University of North Carolina, and I would dare say that it's the best public university in America."

Planning Begins

Being the oldest public university, and arguably the best, the University family--faculty, students, alumni, friends and all North Carolina citizens--have a lot to celebrate and reflect upon during the Bicentennial. Former Chancellor Christopher C. Fordham II began preparation for the occasion as early as 1985. Fordham wrote Dean Richard C. Cole of the School of Journalism

and Mass Communication, asking him to chair an ad hoc faculty committee to assist in the planning of the forthcoming Bicentennial celebration. This ad hoc committee came to be called the Cole Commission.

The Cole Commission was charged to plan in "broad strokes" the observance of the University's Bicentennial, leaving the details to be worked out later. The group prepared a plan that set forth a series of initial goals and objectives for the Observance. These goals would later serve as the basis for the Bicentennial Observance Mission Statement.

The mission statement reads, "The Bicentennial Observance of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill commemorates the birth of public higher education, a uniquely American idea that first took root in North Carolina 200 years ago.

"The eight-month Observance begins on October 12, 1993, marking the 200th anniversary of the laying of the cornerstone of Old East, the nation's first state university building.

"During the Bicentennial, the University is hosting a variety of public events, scholarly programs and other activities designed to:

--strengthen the bonds between the people of North Carolina and their University;

BICENTENNIAL OBSERVANCE

OPENING CEREMONIES

MONDAY, OCTOBER 11

2:00 PM Opening Lecture A Tribute to Freedom

Speaker: Mr. Li Lu, Deputy Leader of the Tian-anmen Square Demonstrations

3:00 PM Faculty Alumni Exchanges, Round One

I. Care, Cure, Cost: The University and the Health of the Public

Moderator: Kerry Kilpatrick, Chair, Health Policy and Administration

II. Environment, Development and Democracy

Moderator: Richard N. Andrews, Professor, Environmental Science and Engineering

III. Media Made America?

Moderator: Jane Brown, Professor, Journalism and Mass Communication

IV. Freedom, Free Expression and Free Debate

Moderator: Chuck Stone, Walter Spearman

4:30 PM Performing and Cultural Arts Events

I. "A Salute to the American Musical Theatre"

Terry Rhodes and Stafford Wing

Professors of Music

II. "Carolina Songs"

Clef Hangers

Student a cappella Group

III. "Step Show"

Black Greek Council

Student Organization

8:00 PM Adler Concert

Memorial Hall

\$25.00 Concert Seating

\$50.00 Patron Seating

(includes post concert reception at Carolina Inn with Adler, Hardin, conductor, etc.)

10:00 PM Patron Reception Carolina Inn

BICENTENNIAL UNIVERSITY DAY

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 12

10:00 AM Old East Rededication

11:30 AM Speakers Bureau Debut

12:00 PM Picnic in Polk Place

1:00 PM Anniversary Lecture

"The University of North Carolina and the U.S. Presidency"

William E. Leuchtenburg

William Rand Kenan Professor

2:00 PM Davie Poplar Ceremony III Ceremony

4:00 PM Faculty Alumni Exchanges, Round Two

V. Growing Apart or Growing Together?

Moderator: Julia T. Wood, Professor, Speech Communication

VI. Science, Technology and Cultural Change

Moderator: Mary Sue Coleman, Vice-Chancellor, Graduate Studies and Research

VII. Faith, Reason, and American Values

Moderator: Warren Nord, Director, Program in Humanities and Human Values

VIII. Forging New Global Alliances: Competition, Cooperation, Survival

Moderator: John D. Kasarda, Director, Institute of Private Enterprise, Kenan-Flagler Business School

IX. Education: Preparing for the 21st Century

Moderator: Donald J. Stedman, Dean, School of Education

7:00 PM Kenan Stadium Convocation

Stadium opens at 5:30. Concessions served.

Programming begins at 6:00. Televised live on Public Television at 7:00.

Throughout October 12 and 13

Campus Tours

Morehead Planetarium

Shows and Times

AUGUST 1993 TO JULY 1994

AUGUST 1993

29- Nov 7 Ackland Art Museum exhibit: "George Nick, the Chapel Hill Paintings"

SEPTEMBER

10-11 "Russia: The Ongoing Revolution"

Bicentennial seminar (Greenville)

14 Bicentennial U.S. postal card issuance

15 Statewide postal card issuance: second day ceremonies

26 Association of Graduate Schools annual meeting

OCTOBER

1-Dec 31 Wilson Library exhibit: "200 Years of Student Life at UNC"

1-Nov 30 Davis Library exhibit: "The University Library"

1-2 "The American Soul" Seminar (Asheville)

8-9 School of Dentistry Bicentennial Fall Weekend

11-12 Bicentennial Opening Ceremonies-See above

14 "Healthy People 2000" School of Nursing Conf.

20 Continuing Education, Regional NUCEA Conf.

20-24 American Board of Thoracic Surgery meeting

22-23 "What Makes the South Southern?"

Bicentennial seminar (Charlotte)

22-24 The Chapel Hill Colloquium in Philosophy

29-30 "The American Soul" Seminar (Washington)

29-31 "Chapel of Ease" Chapel Hill H.S.

NOVEMBER "Art and Culture" postal cachet issuance ceremony with artist Maud Gatewood (Winston-Salem)

5-6 Tri-Annual Denny Society meeting

6-7 "Chapel of Ease"

12 "UNC-CH: A Catalyst for Positive Change"

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Campus Y conference

12-13 "What Makes the South Southern?"

Bicentennial seminar (New York)

30 UNC-CH School of Medicine AHEC Open House
(Greensboro)

DECEMBER

1- Feb 28 Davis Library exhibit: "Chapel Hill and the University"

15 UNC-CH AHEC Open House (Asheville)

JANUARY 1994 "Freedom of Expression" postal cachet issuance ceremony with artist Bart Forbes

1-Mar 30 "Paul Green: A Centenary Exhibit"

14 Intellectual and Academic Freedom of Expression Conf.

14-15 "The State of American Government" Bicentennial Seminar (Triad)

21 "African Americans at Carolina Project" video premiere

21-22 "The Big Three: Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin" Bicentennial Seminar (Fayetteville)

22 "Changing Faces of Leadership" Conf.

FEBRUARY "Science, Technology and Health" postal cachet ceremony with David Stone

"Germanic Influences in North Carolina" Conf.

3-4 "Improving the Health of North Carolinians"

4-5 Bicentennial musical by Bland Simpson and Jack Herrick

12 Bicentennial celebration concert, UNC Symphonic Band

25-26 "Russia: The Ongoing Revolution" Bicentennial seminar (Hickory)

MARCH "Teaching and Learning" postal cachet

issuance ceremony with artist Jeff MacNelly

1-Apr 30 Davis Library exhibit: "World War II and the University"

4 UNC-CH School of Medicine AHEC Open House (Raleigh)

8 UNC-CH School of Medicine AHEC Open House (Charlotte)

17 Paul Green Centennial concert

18-19 Paul Green Centennial seminar

18-19 "A Tribute to Paul Green" production

20 Cornelia Phillips Spencer Day

23-26 "A Tribute to Paul Green" production

30 UNC-CH School of Medicine AHEC Open House (Rocky Mount)

23-Apr 20 "From the Outer Banks to the Blue Ridge: A Celebration of North Carolina's Folk Traditions":
Mar 23 Secular Arts

Mar 30 Occupational Arts

Apr 9 Arts of the New Immigrants

Apr 13 Verbal Arts

Apr 20 Sacred Musical Arts

APRIL "Community" postal cachet ceremony with artist Allen Carter

1-2 Annual Medical School Weekend (Tentative)

1-June 30 Wilson Library exhibits: "They Live in Memory: Favorite UNC Faculty"

1 "The Estienne Family; and the Golden Age of Renaissance Printing"

8-10 Bicentennial PlayMakers performance of "Love Letters" by A.R. Gurney, Jr. with Eva Marie Saint and George Grizzard

8 Health Science Library Video History

9 Carolina Saturday: A Bicentennial Open House

15 Thomas Wolfe Society meeting

15-16 "The State of American Government" Bicentennial seminar (Atlanta)

16 Salute to North Carolina Dance

22-23 "The Big Three: Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin" Bicentennial seminar (Wilmington)

24 Chapel Hill Revisited: Town Celebration

MAY

8-July 15 Ackland Art Museum exhibit: "The Southern Part of Heaven: William Meade Prince Remembers"

11 UNC-CH School of Medicine AHEC Open House (Wilmington)

15 Commencement 1994: Bicentennial Finale

19-21 National Conference on State Historical Collections

JUNE

9-10 University and Society: International Perspectives on Public Policies and Institutional Reform Symposium, Vienna Austria (See Sporen, this volume)

ONGOING

Endeavors Bicentennial issue: UNC research history
Bicentennial Visitors Center: exhibit and video
"American Communities-A Photographic Approach" traveling exhibit

Bicentennial Speakers Forum

Arts 200: Teacher Education through Partnerships
Outreach to N.C. High Schools

On-Campus Archaeological Excavation: A Study of Early Campus Life

Oral History of UNC-CH

Bicentennial Time Capsule: Messages for the 21st Century

- “-reaffirm the University’s historical commitment to free inquiry in the pursuit of knowledge;
- “-lay the cornerstone for the University’s third century of service to the state, nation and world.”

In addition to outlining goals, the Cole report outlined the basic structure, organization and staff needed for the detailed planning of the Bicentennial Observance. The report recommended that a Bicentennial Observance Policy Committee, selected and chaired by the Chancellor, be in operation no later than 1987. The report also recommended that a Bicentennial Observance Planning Office be in place by no later than 1988 and that the office be fully staffed by the beginning of 1993.

From its formative planning the Bicentennial has been divided into two branches--the Bicentennial Observance and the Bicentennial Campaign for Carolina. The former’s concern is to properly observe a historic occasion. The latter’s concern is to seize upon the excitement of the Bicentennial to increase the resources of this institution.

Original plans called for a Bicentennial Observance of 16 months with a budget of \$5 million. Primarily due to the recent recession, the scope for the Bicentennial Observance was scaled back. Final plans include an eight-month Observance between University Day 1993 and Commencement 1994. The total operating budget is approximately \$2 million.

Under the direction of the new chancellor, Paul Hardin, ideas for Bicentennial projects were solicited from faculty, staff, students and alumni in 1988. Hardin said, “I was astounded at the response we received... More than 400 ideas were proposed.”

Dr. Richard Richardson, chairman of the Bicentennial Observance, said, “These ideas arrived from across the campus and around the state. Some were exciting, some outrageous and some much too ambitious to carry out.”

The Planning Office determined the feasibility of these ideas by evaluating the anniversary celebrations of other universities. A general opinion was formed about what would and would not successfully promote the mission of the Bicentennial Observance. The result is more than 100 academic, cultural and historical events planned on campus and throughout North Carolina. Three major events anchor the Bicentennial.

The signature event, which will kick off the Observance, is Opening Ceremonies on October 11-12. The ceremonies will have several highlights, including the rededication of Old East, a national historic landmark, and the Davie Poplar III Ceremony. During this latter ceremony, offsprings of the famous Poplar will be presented by Tar Heel basketball coach Dean Smith to a

child from each of North Carolina’s 100 counties. The presentation of the trees is symbolic of the University’s service and outreach to all of North Carolina.

The two-day kickoff will reach its pinnacle on University Day, October 12, with a convocation in Kenan Stadium. A crowd of 50,000 is expected for this spectacular event, which will feature a major national address on higher education. U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley will be on hand, as will North Carolina Governor Jim Hunt, CBS News’ Charles Kuralt and a procession of faculty, staff, students, alumni and representatives from universities around the world. A 15,000-member band and chorus from high schools throughout the state will perform. The event will be broadcast live on UNC Public Television.

The second major event of the Observance is “Carolina Saturday: A Bicentennial Open House.” On this day, the University will open its doors to the people of North Carolina. The public will be invited to discover firsthand the research projects, laboratories, technology, libraries, performance halls, sports facilities and, most importantly, the people that comprise UNC-Chapel Hill.

Every department on campus is planning a program to highlight its work, field of study or accomplishments. Entertainment, athletic events and an international lunch will accompany the day’s activities.

The Law School plans to demonstrate mock and famous trials, and the department of radiology will allow visitors to look inside the human body without conducting an operation.

The psychology department will have Sigmund Freud on hand to answer visitors’ questions, and the Morehead Planetarium will allow guests to gaze through a telescope and observe the sun and planets. An archaeological excavation of campus (a year-long project) is being planned by Research Labs of Anthropology. Visitors will be invited to dig up a piece of UNC’s past. The computer science department, with the aid of virtual

In the past the University of Georgia has claimed to be the first public institution of higher education. The school makes this claim based on its 1785 charter, written four years before UNC’s charter. However, Georgia did not open its doors to students until 1801, six years after the UNC-Chapel Hill. Carolina was the only public university to graduate students in the 18th century.



The seal of the Bicentennial is adapted from an 1814 paper cutting by Frances Jones Hooper. The original silhouette, on display in the Southern Historical Collection of Wilson Library, is one of the earliest depictions of the Chapel Hill campus.

reality pioneer technology, will fly visitors through a molecule and walk them through the walls of a simulated room.

Similar events at the University of Texas, the University of Georgia and Stanford University attracted crowds in excess of 50,000. The planning office expects approximately 50,000 people to attend Carolina's event.

The third major Bicentennial event, 1994 Commencement, will draw the Observance to a close on May 15. Plans for this event are still in the early stages as the Observance Office works with 1994 Senior Class Officers to select a speaker of international significance.

The Bicentennial Observance will be commemorated in other ways as well. For instance, members of the Bicentennial Speakers for North Carolina, a speakers bureau comprised of outstanding UNC-CH faculty members, will travel across the state to speak to civic and community groups. Topics will range from genetics to jazz, and from Homer's *Odyssey* to Thomas Wolfe.

Special publications, like a 1994 photographic calendar and a postal cachet series, have been produced as collectibles. And in honor of the Bicentennial Observance, the U.S. Postal Service will issue a postal card on September 14. Millions of the postal cards will be available nationally in the fall. Gracing the card will be a rendering of Playmakers Theater, by North Carolina artist and alumnus Bob Timberlake.

Student Participation in the Observance

Students have also taken an active role in planning for the Observance. A student bicentennial committee began meeting as early as 1990. In 1991, sophomore Kevin

Moran became chair of the committee, and his 70-member group has been working hard to insure a heavy emphasis on student participation.

The students decided their focus for the Observance would be "community." There were two reasons for this decision. First, part of the University's threefold mission is to serve community. Secondly, the group realized that some of the most current and pressing issues on campus are community-based, like the issues of campus safety and a free-standing Black Cultural Center.

Moran said, "The committee hopes our Bicentennial work will do something to help build a sense of community and bring diverse people together for a cause." Students have proposed many projects to help achieve this goal.

They are writing grant proposals in order to begin an annual practice of conducting a "Campus and Community" Workshop. This project would bring student leaders together at the beginning of the school year to address the concerns of the entire campus.

Another project would seek the help of faculty, staff, students and Chapel Hill residents in building a Bicentennial park located in Chapel Hill.

Whether it is a student service project, a breathtaking cultural event or a faculty member sharing his or her discoveries with a fascinated group of listeners, the Bicentennial will be a special time for the nation's first public university. During these exciting eight months, North Carolinians will be joined by all Americans in saluting the achievements of public higher education, as the cornerstone is laid for our University's third century of service to our state, nation and world.^{CP}



Old East, renovated for the Bicentennial, is the oldest building on the UNC campus.