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DMACC Boone Campus: Looking from the Past to the Present

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BOONE CAMPUS

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PREFACE

Dedication of the Boone Campus L. W. Courter Center is in grateful recognition of Lloyd's many years of devoted service to the City of Boone, the Boone Community School District, and Des Moines Area Community College.

Lloyd's unswerving commitment to public service will stand forever as an example to future generations of DMACC students who will pass through the L. W. Courter Center in the years to come. The excellence of the education they will receive is due in significant measure to Lloyd's vision and wisdom as an educational leader, DMACC Board Member and Board Vice President.

Lloyd's willingness to serve others on so many fronts demonstrates that leadership really does matter, and that leadership courageously undertaken and thoughtfully exercised can make a real difference in the quality of life enjoyed by all of us.

Doug Shull, Chair of the Board
Des Moines Area Community College

Dr. Joseph Borgen, President
Des Moines Area Community College
A LOOK AT THE PAST

During the 1920s several independent school districts in Iowa were showing interest in providing some post-high-school education for their graduates, namely junior colleges. Junior colleges were already in operation in Fort Dodge, Mason City, Red Oak, Burlington, and Webster City by 1927, when the Boone School Board named a committee to visit and study the programs and facilities of those junior colleges. Also, the committee was asked to study freshman course requirements at four-year colleges popular among Boone students. These included the University of Iowa, Iowa State College, Drake University, Simpson and Coe Colleges.

When the reports of the studies made by committee were completed and considered the Boone Independent School District Board of Education decided that important needs could be met by a local junior college. In March, 1927, the Board voted in favor of the establishment of the Boone Junior College. The college would offer only a freshman schedule and only courses which would receive full transfer-credit in a Liberal Arts curriculum at a four-year college.

In the fall of 1927, Boone Junior College was ready to begin. It was located on the third floor of Boone High School with J. R. Thorngren acting as dean, and Boone School District Superintendent George Wooten as chief administrator. This organizational union emphasized the relationship between the college and the kindergarten-through-twelve educational program.

The schedule of courses included English and speech, French, European history, mathematics (algebra, trigonometry, and/or analytical geometry), chemistry, and physical education. The faculty was made up of qualified persons (master's degree in the subject matter area to be taught) serving on a part-time basis with both college and high-school assignments. Policies were established regarding participation in such extracurricular activities as debate, athletics, or class offices. Tuition was set at $50.00 per semester.

The college had an opening enrollment of about sixty students. In April, 1928, the Board voted to set up a second year of junior college study for sophomore students. Enough of the original class returned that the first graduating class, for spring, 1929, numbered 17.
Emphasis at the end of the first two years was still on liberal arts offerings. Evidence of interest in expanding the curriculum offerings was found in 1928, when the Instruction Committee recommended that a two-year Primary Teacher's curriculum be offered if twelve students requested this program.

Progress was slow but sustained in the 1930s. The liberal arts emphasis continued; the faculty continued to be largely part-time, and the student body continued to be almost entirely local.

Those were the days of the Great Depression and the local college was, in the words of one of the early graduates, a "life-saver" providing two years of college for many who could not have achieved their education any other way.

The post war years presented new challenges and opportunities. Enrollment grew due in part to an influx of returning veterans. The college began attracting students from surrounding communities.

The arrangement to locate the college in the high school building served the needs of the institution until the fall of 1955 when the college was moved to Franklin Hall, formerly Franklin Elementary School, located on a 1 1/4 acre campus in the north part of the city. As the college expanded, additional facilities were used to accommodate a growing enrollment. The old National Guard armory was used for athletic and physical education activities, the Educational Building of the First Presbyterian Church for the Department of Music, the Boone High School for several science and art classes, and the Ryan High School gymnasium for intercollegiate basketball. This building made possible an expanded program of academic and extra curricular activities. The Boone Junior College held its first commencement apart from the high school in May, 1956.
In the late 1950s, there were 16 public junior colleges operating in the State of Iowa. They were located, for the most part, in small communities, which curtailed the tax base and the bonding capacity for the support of the colleges. According to a 1960 census, not one of these junior colleges was located in any of the seven most populous counties in the state.

The public junior colleges in Iowa were confronted with several problems. They were an expansion of a local school district curriculum and, as a result, many of their activities were entwined with those of the local school. Many, if not all, of the staff held dual teaching assignments in the local high school and in the junior college. Separate facilities for the public junior colleges were usually not available, and a local board of directors ordinarily gave the major part of its attention to the elementary and secondary education programs.

Even though public junior colleges offered some opportunities for college parallel programs, enrollment opportunities were limited for most Iowans. These limitations had long been recognized and in 1959, the 58th General Assembly appropriated $25,000.00 to the Iowa Legislative Research Bureau to make a policy study of the needs of higher education in Iowa.

The Legislative Research Bureau employed Raymond C. Gibson, Professor of Higher Education at Indiana University, to direct the project. Gibson submitted a four-volume report and summary to the 59th General Assembly. The volume on junior colleges recommended that the General Assembly authorize the establishment of regional community colleges where there would be 500 students. It also recommended that the state pay at least half the cost of building and operating the colleges.

The report did not provide recommended enabling legislation, but it did provide encouragement for the General Assembly to direct the Department of Public Instruction to conduct a two year study on a statewide plan for the development of public area community colleges. As a result of Gibson's study, the General Assembly directed the Department of Public Instruction to conduct a two year study on a statewide plan for the development of public area community colleges.
The Department of Public Instruction submitted its report, Education Beyond High School Age: The Community College, to the General Assembly in 1962. The report made recommendations and proposed enabling legislation. It recommended restructuring the county education system and forming 16 area education districts with boundaries of these districts drawn along existing school district lines. It was envisioned that the area districts would also serve as a legal structure through which a statewide system of area colleges could be developed.

Each of the proposed area education districts was identified and defined around minimum criteria intended to insure enough human and financial potential to adequately offer programs of both intermediate and community college education. These criteria are summarized as follows:

1. Recognition was taken of the cultural, social, and economic community characteristics existing in an area or region.

2. The area must have the capability of establishing a single administrative structure for its public area community college with an attendance center or centers located so as to be within one hour's driving time of the majority of the students to be served.

3. The area needed to possess a minimum assessed taxable valuation of $150,000,000.00.

4. A minimum area school enrollment of 5,000 public, private and parochial students in grades 9 through 12 was required.

The 60th General Assembly in 1963 took no action on the report. However, after receiving an interim committee's report in 1964, the 61st General Assembly in 1965 approved Senate File 550 permitting the development of a statewide system of two year, post-secondary educational institutions identified as merged area schools. Senate File 550 became Chapter 280A of the Iowa Code.

The Department of Public Instruction received the first plan for an area college on July 5, 1965, one day after the legislation was effective. Boone became a part of the district that was formed that was known as Area XI. Marvin Sturtz, who was then County Superintendent of Boone County, was a part of the committee that worked on developing the boundaries of Area XI. He was also instrumental in making certain that language was contained in the Area XI agreement to the effect that the Boone Junior College would be...
designated as an “attendance center” regardless of where the main college facilities would be located. This specific language would become very significant in later negotiations between the Board of Directors of the Boone Community School District and the Board of Directors of Area XI.

Shortly following the organization of the Area XI Community College District, there appeared for the first time in the recorded minutes of a Board Meeting of the Boone Community School District discussions about the possibility of a new facility to be constructed for the Boone Junior College. This meeting occurred on October 12, 1965, when a report was given to the Boone Board of a study that had been authorized to be completed by Dr. Norman Boyles at Iowa State University and the firm of Architects Associates in Des Moines. After reviewing the report, the Board instructed Superintendent Don Seaton to explore all possibilities to proceed with an application for grant of funds under Federal law which provided higher educational facilities monies and the possibility of a local bond issue, both of which would provide the funds for the construction of the new facility.

A special meeting of the Boone Board was then held on November 16, 1965. The Dean of the college, Clair Abbott, and members of the faculty were present. Superintendent Seaton reported that there was a possibility for federal funds if an application were made. In addition, there were discussions about the possible location of a new facility. No Board action was taken at that meeting.

At the next regular Board meeting held on December 14, 1965, Superintendent Seaton was authorized to notify the architect to assist in drawing up the application to secure a federal grant for the construction of a classroom auditorium building and a separate physical education building for the approximate cost of $1,585,000.00. Superintendent Seaton had an effective working relationship with the committee that would approve the application for the federal grant, and he reported that it was his feeling that if we were to complete the application and have it on file that the Boone Community would stand a very good chance of receiving the last application that would be approved for the State of Iowa.

The next question that presented itself to the Board was the location of such a new facility. Considerable effort was made to contact property owners of all of the homes located west of the high school over to Goeppinger Field. Tentative options were obtained on about seventy-five percent of the parcels
but it was reported that the remaining twenty-five percent wanted prices that exceeded the appraised valuation so it looked virtually impossible to proceed with that particular plan.

An alternate site was presented to the Board at its July 8, 1966, meeting, and there was unanimous decision to sign a contract to purchase twenty-two (22) acres of land from the Herman Trust which was located east of South Marshall Street and north of Hancock Drive for the sum of $43,000.00. The federal grant was approved subject to a bond election that had to be approved in the sum of $925,000.00. On July 25, 1966, at a special meeting of the Board, it was unanimously resolved that a bond issue for the new Junior College in the amount of $925,000.00 be submitted to the Boone voters at the time of the regular school election scheduled for September 12, 1966. The election results showed an overwhelming resounding victory with 2,758 "yes" votes cast out of a total of 2,879 ballots. This ninety-six percent approval was a tremendous showing of support by the Boone community for the continuation of a junior college program in the Boone community.

At this point, an onlooker viewing the history of the Boone Campus of DMACC would naturally feel that everything then following the very successful bond election fell right into place and everything proceeded beautifully from that point on. However, this was not the case.

The Board of Directors of the Boone Community School District at that time consisted of J. Boyd Pestotnik, Don F. Kruse, Joe C. Johnson, Dr. G. H., Sutton, and Lloyd W. Courter, who also served as President of the Board. The Board recognized the very strong importance of continuing a junior college program in the Boone community. It also recognized that even though the Board had been successful with the assistance of County Superintendent Marvin Sturtz of incorporating language in the merger document of Area XI designating the Boone Junior College as an attendance center, the chances of maintaining an attendance center for the college program in Boone would be virtually impossible to maintain in future years unless a new facility were in place. The Board was very fortunate in receiving the final grant of federal funds that was authorized for construction of junior college facilities in the State of Iowa, and of course, the Boone community gave its support by the overwhelming victory on the school bond election.
Even then, it was a calculated risk but the Board felt that it was a reasonable risk to take, and of course, the very worst scenario would be that the facility would be constructed, and it would not be accepted as an attendance center by Area XI; it could then be used for either a new junior high or with some additional expansion could be converted to use as a new high school for the community. It was determined to be an "all win - no lose" situation, but there was no question but that the principal commitment of the Boone Board of Education was to do everything that was humanly possible to insure the fact that the facility would, in fact be designated as an attendance center for Area XI Community College and that the entire program and operation of the facility would be assumed by Area XI.

The first joint meeting of the Boards of Area XI Community College District and the Boone Community School District was held in Boone on January 30, 1967. Prior to the opening of the meeting, members of both Boards toured the site of the new facilities to be constructed to house the Boone Junior College. The meeting was convened by L. W. Courter, President of the Boone Board, and the other Boone Board members were introduced, namely: Don F. Kruse, J. Boyd Pestotnik, Joe C. Johnson, and Dr. G. H. Sutton. The Area XI Board members present were Ross C. Cramlet, Roland E. Grief, Max W. Kreager, Robert H. Lounsberry, James R. Maggard, Dr. Dwight Mater, Harold F. Welin, and DeWitt Q. Williams.

The minutes of the meeting of January 30, 1967, reflect that a very complete discussion of the problems faced by both Districts involving the eventual transfer of ownership and operation of the Boone Junior College from the Boone community to the Area XI College District took place. Some of the solutions would have to await action by the Iowa General Assembly because at the time the Area XI District did not have any separate funds for building purchase of construction. This would not come about until the 1967 tax levy would be approved by the electorate of the Area XI District in September of 1967 and which would then be collected for the first time in 1968.

The Boone Board expressed willingness to continue the operation of the Boone Junior College for a reasonable time, and certainly, until the new facilities were completed but provided only if the Boone Junior College would be continuously designated as an Area Attendance Center, which designation had originally been made a matter of record by the Area Board in its meeting of August 1966.
The following decisions were arrived at January 30, 1967.

1. Boone Junior College should continue on the semester system for two years.

2. The name should remain Boone Junior College in the catalog being prepared for 1967-1969. The catalog fly leaf should reflect that Boone Junior College is an Attendance Center of Area XI Community College District.

3. That the superintendents of Boone Community Schools and Area XI Community College be authorized to prepare a memorandum of agreement for the operation of Boone Junior College for consideration and possibility of approval by both Boards.

The school program for the 1967-1968 school year still took place in the old Junior college facility at Eleventh and Greene Streets. The State funds for Junior College programs were sufficient to operate the Junior College program during that fiscal year.

On July 4, 1968, Superintendent Paul Lowry of the Area XI District, together with two of his Board members, Max W. Kreager of Newton and Harold Welin of Boone, met with the Boone Board of Education to discuss the method and time of the eventual transfer of ownership and operation of the Boone Junior College. At this meeting, the following points were formally agreed upon:

1. The target date for the transfer should be July 1, 1969, when all phases of the new college facilities construction would be completed.

2. That the two Boards investigate the legality of several possible contractual arrangements for purchasing the college facilities and paying for them over a period of years.

3. That the Boone Community School District should operate the College in 1968-1969.

At a special meeting of the Boone Board held on January 30, 1968, members of the Area XI Board were in attendance to have further discussions concerning the operation of the Boone Junior College for the 1968-1969 school year, and the contractual arrangements for the eventual takeover of ownership and operation of the Boone Junior College by Area XI on July 1, 1969.
The actual cost of operation of the College would include the bond retirement and interest on the bonds sold to build the new Junior College facilities which would be due during the 1968-1969 fiscal year. There was a deficiency in Iowa Law because the Area Boards did not have legal authority to purchase college facilities over an extended period of time. Therefore, Area XI was only willing to enter into a one-year lease agreement while the Boone Board was pushing for a longer term agreement. The matter needed to be resolved.

On February 13, 1968, an agreement was entered into specifically covering the school years 1967-1968 with a side letter statement from the Area XI Board reaffirming its intention to eventually take over the entire college operations when the new facilities were completed during the school year 1968-1969. This agreement was formally signed on March 27, 1968, by James R. Maggert, President of the Board of Directors of Area XI Community College, and L. W. Courter, President of the Board of Directors of Boone Community School District. The Boone Board and the Area XI Board signed a continuation of the operation agreement for the school year for the Boone Junior College for the 1968-1969 school year.

Then in November of 1968, serious discussions began between the Board of Education of the Boone School District and Area XI regarding the agreement for transfer of the operations effective July 1, 1969. Don Silver became a new member of the Boone Board replacing J. Boyd Pestotnik, and he was a part of the deliberations of the Boone Community School Board from that point on.

The recorded minutes of the special joint meeting held between the two Boards on November 6, 1968, reflect that the Boone Board, faced with a recognition of lack of statutory authority of the Area XI Board to enter into a purchase agreement of the Boone facilities, proposed a longer lease agreement with increased lease payments built into the lease in an amount sufficient to make the annual payments to retire the bonds that were voted upon to build the facilities. Up to this point, it seemed very clear to all of the members of the Boone School Board that there had been a complete understanding with the Area XI Board that they were committed to find a way to assume all of the financial responsibilities for the operation of the Boone Junior College, including the full amortization of the bonded indebtedness.

However, on January 14, 1969, Harold F. Welin, a member of the Area XI Board, who was elected from the Boone community, informed the Board that Area XI had been advised they could not enter into an agreement for a lease period longer than one year. At that point in time, there were some frank discussions as to whether or not Directors of the Area XI Board representing the other areas were really committed to having the Boone Campus as an
Attendance Center. There was some comment to the effect that there were some on this Area XI Board who might be quite happy that they did not have the statutory authority to enter into the long-term lease purchase agreement. The Boone Board became concerned.

A special joint meeting between the two Boards was called for January 24, 1969. Both Boards were present, together with their Superintendents. Also in attendance was H. Richard Smith, the attorney representing the Des Moines Area Board. The Area Board indicated that it could not sign any agreement that would be longer than one year. However, a commitment was again made by the Area Board that it was their intention to continue the operation of the facility after one year, and further, they had no intention of phasing out the College. The Boone Board requested a commitment from the Area XI Board for cooperation to obtain enabling legislation from the State Legislature to authorize a long-term lease purchase agreement, and both Boards agreed to combine efforts to obtain legislative action as soon as possible. The Area Board further agreed that if such legislative action was obtained, they would renegotiate a long-term lease purchase agreement whenever such legislative action was taken to permit them to do so.

At this point in time, the members of the Board of Education of the Boone Community School District felt that they now had a firm commitment from the Area XI Board to enter into the long-term lease purchase agreement as soon as enabling legislation had been adopted by the Iowa Legislature.

Superintendent Don F. Seaton and President Lloyd W. Courter had already had extensive discussions with members of the Iowa Legislature, and in February of 1969, a specific bill was adopted by the Iowa Legislature authorizing a long-term lease purchase agreement between the Boone Community School District and the Area XI Board of Directors for the transfer of the Boone Junior College facilities and program to Area XI, said lease to continue for a period of eighteen (18) years commencing July 1, 1969, and at the conclusion of the eighteen (18) year lease, the Boone School Board of Directors would transfer ownership of the Junior College facilities to Area XI. This enabling legislation became law of the State of Iowa upon its publication on February 21, 1969.

The final agreement was then executed in June of 1969 of the lease purchase agreement for eighteen (18) years commencing on the first day of July, 1969. Roland E. Grief and Irv Steinberg signed on behalf of the Area XI College District as President and Secretary, respectively, and L. W. Courter signed as President and C. T. Howard as Secretary of the Boone Community School District. Dedication of the facilities was formally concluded on April 27, 1969.
In September 1968 Boone Junior College moved to a new 23 acre campus located on the southeast corner of Boone. The college was in an excellent position to be recognized as an important part of the community college system developing in Area XI. Therefore, on July 1, 1969, Boone Junior College became the Boone Campus of Des Moines Area Community College.

In 1969 Clair E. Abbott served as the first dean of the Boone Campus with twenty-one full-time instructors and nine support staff serving 410 students. Nearly all of these students were recent high school graduates and attending college on a full-time status intending to transfer to Iowa State University or some other four year college in Iowa. Nearly all the students were from Boone County or surrounding counties.

In the 1970s the Boone Campus was directed by Dean Emil J. Stadel, 1970-1974, and Dean Byron K. Hamilton 1974-1981. During this era economic times dictated slow growth for the Boone Campus.

In 1981 Dr. Joseph A. Borgen was selected to serve as the second President of Des Moines Area Community College.
On February 9, 1982 Kriss W. Philips became Dean of the Boone Campus. By September 1990, Boone Campus enrolled 1,016 students — mostly from central Iowa, but over 100 from out of state and 50 from foreign countries.

By 1990, the average age of the student body had increased to nearly 30 years of age.

The Boone Campus offers a well rounded freshman and sophomore education in the Arts and Sciences that is fully transferable. The career and vocational programs offered include a Practical Nursing diploma program, Associate Degree Nursing program, Office and Secretarial programs, Computers, Accounting and Bookkeeping, Recreation Leadership and Leisure Studies.

The Boone Campus is accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Universities.

The Boone Campus will continue its tradition of quality academic programs coupled with a broad range of extracurricular activities designed to enrich the lives of our students. Completion of the $2 million expansion will enable the Boone Campus to serve upwards of 1,500 students every year, and to increase its involvement with the surrounding communities in economic development, senior citizen's activities, and quality collegiate programs.

On May 12, 1995, the $2,000,000 expansion of the Boone Campus was dedicated by the Board of Directors to Lloyd W. Courter for his dedicated service to and outstanding leadership of Des Moines Area Community College and the Boone community.
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