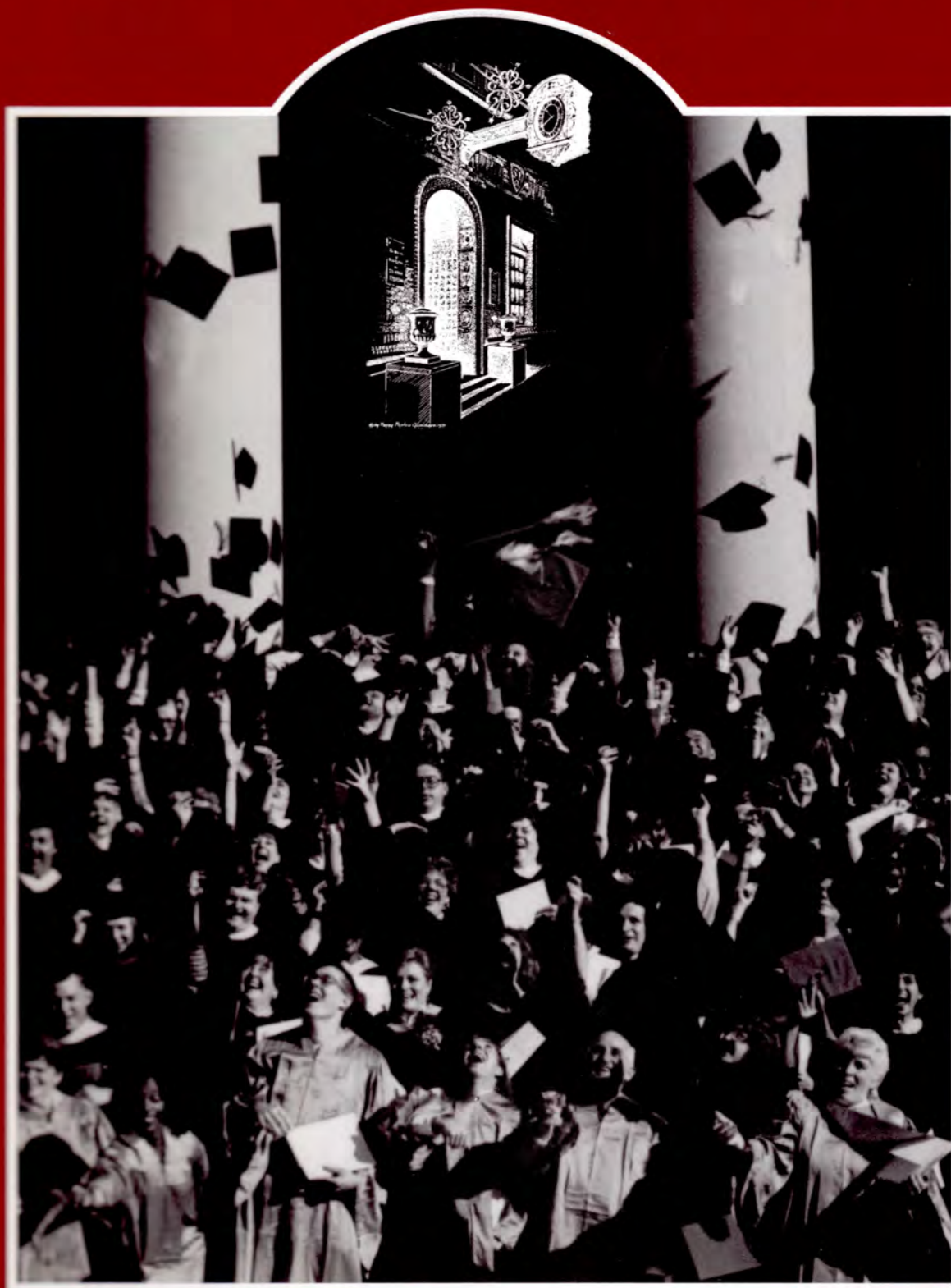


THOMAS EDISON STATE COLLEGE

A "NEW TRADITION" IN HIGHER EDUCATION



THE FIRST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS
by Gerri Collins

THOMAS EDISON STATE COLLEGE A "New Tradition" in Higher Education

Gerri
Collins



Thomas Edison State College

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Published September 1997



About the author ...

Writer, composer, and playwright **Gerri Collins** joined the staff at Thomas Edison in 1977 as an academic counselor. She quickly moved into management and worked directly under two of the three Presidents.

"I began a file on the College's history in 1982 when Dr. Matusak made me her assistant," says Gerri. "I knew *someone* would be writing the story one day, and Dr. Pruitt gave me that opportunity in 1995. The College has been my life for twenty years. This book is my gift back to my true *alma mater*."

Gerri attended Bethany College in W. Virginia in the '50s, and like Thomas Edison students, returned to college much later at Purdue University where she earned her B.A. and M.S. degrees.

Mother of three and grandmother of six, Gerri's children's stories strongly reflect the midwestern experience and value she exhibits in her own life. Her musical *We're Movin' On*, co-authored by sister Nancy Whitmore, had a successful run in the mid-west, and she is currently working on two other musicals, a children's hour series, essays on women's issues, and an article for the *Star Press* in Muncie, IN, where she now makes her home since retiring in 1997.

HERE'S TO OUR COLLEGE

SLOW MARCH TEMPO

WORDS AND MUSIC BY
ROY MERIWETHER

VOCAL SOUNDS 8^{VA} LOWER THAN WRITTEN

The musical score is written for a vocal soloist and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The piano accompaniment consists of two staves, treble and bass, with a grand staff bracket. The time signature is 12/8. The score is divided into three systems. The first system shows the vocal line with a whole note rest, followed by piano chords. The second system contains the first line of lyrics. The third system contains the second line of lyrics. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line and chords in the right hand.

HER-

COL-LEGE, OUR ALMA MA-TER. YOU MET THE CHAL-LENGE OF

NEEDS. AGE DID-N'T MAT-TER, ON-LY OUR KNOW-LEDGE. WE

THOMAS EDISON STATE COLLEGE

A "NEW TRADITION" IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The First
Twenty-Five Years
1972 - 1997

by Gerri Collins

Dedication

This book is dedicated to the memory of Dr. James Douglas Brown II, the first president of Thomas Edison State College. Dr. Brown died December 3, 1996, in New Haven, Connecticut, at the age of 63.

"It is because of Dr. Brown's original vision and leadership that Thomas Edison has achieved its current status as a leader in higher education for adults," says Dr. George A. Pruitt, President of Thomas Edison since 1982. "Jim Brown envisioned the tremendous possibilities of a college that would enable adults to complete academic degrees of the highest quality beyond the barriers of time and place. He translated this vision into action strategies that set the stage for the phenomenal growth the College has experienced in the past decade. At the same time, his great passion for education and his caring concern for the individual student set the tone for student-centered learning which is the hallmark of Thomas Edison State College. Jim Brown was a true original, and he will be greatly missed."

In Memory of Other Staff Who Have Passed On

Natale Caliendo

James Colaizzo

Thomas Donlon

Thomas Eklund

Leon Genciana

James Humphrey

Shirley Nichols

John Smith

Thomas Streckewald



Dr. James Douglas Brown, Jr.

Thomas Edison State College is one of a kind, and this story of its origins and transformation is one of a kind as well.

Regarding the College's niche in higher education, there are several surviving institutions of higher education that were born in the late 1960s and early 1970s, a number of which were intended to serve adult learners primarily. They share some key features, but no two are exactly alike. Readers of this history will find Thomas Edison's distinctiveness, even uniqueness, emphasized more than its similarities to other institutions.

Regarding this history's uniqueness, there are many, many college and university histories, but I know of none that draws as playfully as does this one on metaphors from the worlds of popular music and botany. Few histories are as unabashedly filled with plaudits and yet poke fun at the key players so boldly. While the achievements are richly documented (this college's culture treasures documentation), the upbeat style is tempered with an unabashed exposure of the earthy details of the College's rocky road to success.

For many among the College's closest constituencies— employees, students, trustees, and financial supporters—these features may appeal most to their interests. Others among them and many outsiders will also find here an unusual number of clues to a deeper understanding of American higher education and of the field of adult learning.

One discerns here how a college needs different kinds of leadership at different times and how a governing body may be able to match the times and the leaders creatively.

One also learns that governing boards need to play different roles at different times, needing to change their roles to serve those situations best. A corollary is that the textbooks on how to govern do not always tell the whole story.

This chronicle discloses an excruciating sequence of trials and tribulations as the presidents and their teams of employees and friends struggled to cope with barriers presented by the state, accreditors, institutional clients, the home city, and others. Some of these obstacles were created by inaction or a sense of powerlessness on the part of the gatekeepers, others purposely if not with malice aforethought. Whatever the causes, the coping provides not only a fascinating tale, but even the makings of a handbook for future practitioners.

In telling her story, the author also names a rich array of bright ideas and innovative services that other institutions of post-secondary education would do well to adapt to their own distinctive situations.

There are many heroes and heroines in this account—many presented as unsung hitherto, but no longer so. One sees that they were all needed.

Finally, for all of the love showered upon these heroic figures, especially the presidents, so many witnesses are called to testify in their own words that the reader is left with a feeling that this record "tells it as it was and is."

So, dear reader, read on!



Dr. Morris Keeton (Senior Scholar and Co-Director, Institute for research on Adults in Higher Education, University of Maryland, University College and former President of the Council for Adults and Experiential Learning) congratulates Dr. George A. Pruitt at his inauguration, July, 1983.

Morris Keeton
Senior Scholar and Co-Director
Institute for Research on Adults in Higher Education
University of Maryland University College

Acknowledgements

In the spring of 1995, Dr. George A. Pruitt, president of Thomas Edison State College, commissioned the research and writing of the twenty-five year history of the College. He assigned the project to me and literally turned me loose to find the appropriate way to tell the story so that it would be enjoyable as well as informative. Since I had been with the College for twenty of its twenty-five years, much of the history was already known to me, and the months of research confirmed what I knew.

What emerged, however, was a story that had many voices and many perspectives based on ninety-three personal interviews with former and current employees, trustees, foundation directors, faculty, and friends of the College. In addition, thousands of pages of historical records and documents were read and reread: letters and memos, minutes, annual reports, presidents' reports, accreditation reports, financial records, *Invention* issues, staff newsletters, newspaper articles, and various other notes and mementos offered for consideration.

There were over 2,000 pages of transcripts from the taped interviews, which had to be analyzed and catalogued by chapter topics, and everyone who was interviewed or who offered an anecdote for the book was referenced at least once in the story.

The musical titles for most of the chapters are natural to my thinking, for I have been a musician longer than any other avocation attempted, although I refrained from using any of my original compositions for lack of general familiarity. My goal for the final product, however, was inspired by William Least Heat-Moon's book, *Prairie Earth*. He wrote about the people of the central Kansas grasslands and of the history and hoped-for future of sparsely populated Chase County, Kansas. I vowed that if I could make the history of Thomas Edison State College come alive as Heat-Moon did Chase County, I would have successfully honored the trust Dr. Pruitt placed in me for this project.

I am most grateful to my friend and colleague Associate Vice President Linda Holt for advising me against my tendency toward metaphorical illustrations. Both Linda and Penny Brouwer, executive assistant to the president, wisely advised against using some of the more "colorful" stories that make a history interesting, even shocking, but no one can ever tell the whole story. The book would be too long.

With Dr. Pruitt's encouragement, however, many anecdotes were included to help the reader see the College as the exciting, unique place it truly is, and if all the players come out standing tall, it's because from my perspective they really did and still do.

No work is completed without the assistance of many people. I wish to acknowledge the dedication, time, and wisdom shared by those who conducted interviews for this project: Ms. Linda Holt, associate vice president, Communications and College Relations; Dr. Ruth McKeefery, dean emeritus; and Ms. Rita Novitt, former trustee and now foundation director.

Many thanks go to Dr. Morris T. Keeton, former president of the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), and now senior scholar and co-director of the Institute for Research on Adults in Higher Education, the University of Maryland University College, who so graciously wrote the foreword to this book.

Thanks go to Ms. Sally Lane, director of the Trenton Convention & Visitors Bureau and long-time friend of the College, whose expertise in historical writing and editing was so valuable to this project.

Thanks go also to Vanessa Holt for her work in the tedious job of transcribing interview tapes; to Linda Eckel and Anne Tither for their office and technical support; to Lynn Salapka for editing assistance; to Emily Carone who searched the files to find the best photos to illustrate the story; to Linda Soltis for her photographic skills and technical assistance; to Nina Malone for her publications know-how and moral support; to Gregg Dye for his patience and speed in verifying student names and graduation data; to Marjorie Carnevale for her encouragement; and to Nancy Whitmore who literally moved in for two weeks to help with additional transcriptions, photo captions, and other technical and moral support.

Special thanks go to Iris Saltiel, Sharon Smith, Dottie Sconyers, Pat Jackson, Ann Bielawski, and Debbi Dagavarian for the marathon, proof-reading session of the completed book.

To the ninety-three people who were interviewed for this project and who took considerable time to pull together remembrances and mementos, you made this book. To the staff who responded when the offer was made to contribute a story or anecdote, my deepest thanks.

Great appreciation goes to Foundation Director Richard Gillespie and to art director/designer Loretta Coyle at the Gillespie Organization for donating their time and expertise to the layout and design of this book.

Many thanks go to the Thomas A. Edison State College Foundation, Inc., which granted \$10,000 for research, interviews, and clerical support.

Much appreciation goes to Anthony Bruno who provided the final professional editing advise and good counsel. With few exceptions, we followed the University of Chicago Manual of Style.

Finally, a very special thanks go to Ms. Rita Novitt who volunteered countless hours to the reading, editing, and rereading of these chapters during the months of writing. Her encouragement and periodic pep talks helped me to stay focused.

Gerri Collins
Special Assistant to the President
Thomas Edison State College

Biography

THOMAS ALVA EDISON, *The Man* 1847-1931

Born February 11, 1847, in Milan, Ohio, Thomas Alva Edison was the seventh and youngest child of Samuel and Nancy (Elliott) Edison. When he was seven years old, his family moved to Point Huron, Michigan, and there Edison went to school for three months. He was slow in school, although he was an avid reader at home. He was at the bottom of his class, and his teachers called him "addled" and "inadaptable."

As a prodigy, Edison was among those whose minds grew slowly and unevenly in boyhood. He found the schooling he received in the one-room school of the Reverend G. B. Engle in Port Huron to be utterly repulsive; everything was forced on him. It was impossible to learn the processes of nature by description, or the alphabet and arithmetic by rote. For him it was always necessary to observe with his own eyes — to do things or to make things himself. He said that testing things for one minute was better than studying them for two hours.

Edison had a wide and varied range of interests. He was incessantly engaged in the invention process and was awarded 1,093 patents. His major inventions were the phonograph (1877) and an incandescent electric lamp (1879). He also made the telephone a practical instrument through his invention of the carbon button transmitter.

He started the first organized research laboratory in Menlo Park, New Jersey, in 1876. There he gathered a group of assistants who formed the nucleus of the Edison pioneers. His workshops were always a kind of experimental school. On Thanksgiving Day, 1887, he opened his newest laboratory and manufacturing complex in West Orange, New Jersey. The forty-year-old Edison would spend the rest of his life working in West Orange, developing several major new inventions, including an improved phonograph, an alkaline storage battery, and motion pictures. His home, Glenmont, nestled in Llewellyn Park, was only a short walk from the laboratory. The National Park Service has preserved both Edison's home and his laboratory complex as the Edison National Historic Site in West Orange, New Jersey.

Mr. Albert Merck, former member and chair of the New Jersey State Board of Higher Education, has recollections of Thomas Edison. He said: "When I was a little boy, both my grandparents

lived in Llewellyn Park, and the most illustrious inhabitant of Llewellyn Park was Thomas Alva Edison. Upon reaching the age of eighty he was presented by my grandfather, who liked harmless practical jokes and who owned the Hobbies Mart, with 80 eggs. Mr. Edison was not amused. Also, my brother and I set up a lemonade stand across the street from my grandmother's, which happened to be on Mr. Edison's land. After we had succeeded in business without really trying, Edison's gardener came down with instructions for us to get off the land.

"I never met him, but I saw him, oddly enough, in the back of a limousine with Herbert Hoover. Hoover came when I was a little boy; the limousine went by on its way up to Anna Edison's place — Edison's daughter. Anna worked for Merck's, my family's pharmaceutical company, as a research biologist."

Edison collapsed in Dearborn Michigan in 1929 during the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the electric lamp. Henry Ford had reconstructed the Menlo Park laboratories in the Dearborn setting. Edison recovered but was suffering from Bright's disease and gastric ulcers. He died on October 18, 1931, in his eighty-fifth year. He is buried in West Orange, New Jersey.

Those attending the Twentieth Anniversary Commencement at Thomas Edison State College bore witness to history when an *earned* Bachelor of Science in Applied Science and Technology degree, specialization in Electrical Technology, was awarded to Mr. Edison sixty-one years after his death. He was one of 799 graduates in the Class of '92. His degree was accepted by his great-grandson, Barry Sloane, of Woodbury, New Jersey.

Staff at the College collaborated with researchers at the Edison Papers project at Rutgers, The State University, to assess the college-level learning that the legendary inventor acquired during his lifetime. Edison Papers scholars, under the direction of Dr. Reese V. Jenkins, assembled portfolios that were submitted for review and evaluation by Thomas Edison State College faculty. Their approval of this documentation confirmed Edison's knowledge and led to the awarding of the degree.



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I. I Saw A Bird Flying Sideways



Talking with Dr. James Douglas Brown II, first president of Thomas Edison State College, and reading what has been saved of his correspondence, documents, articles, interviews, and publications, I felt as if I were aimlessly driving down a beautiful country lane, enjoying a day of sunshine, flowers, and beautiful birds all around. Suddenly I spot the fleeting image of a large bird flying sideways. The image is so compelling I almost lose my driving concentration. In a quiet moment later in the day when I realize that the bird was most likely coping with air currents and updrafts, at that one precious moment the bird really did seem to be going against the natural order.

In a unique parallel of experiences, both Dr. Brown and the College are like that bird flying sideways. Thwarted by certain constituencies that also "supported" the college, President Brown had to contend with insufficient funding, with state bureaucracies, with subjugators, with traditionalists, with the hazards and the challenge of experimentation, with colleagues who feared competition, and with many other conflicts and conditions. On the one hand, there was support for the new college concept. On the other hand, the College was being labeled the "lunatic fringe" by some members of the higher education community. Like the leader of a flock of Canadian geese flying in V formation, Dr. Brown took the full impact of the doubt and criticism that he or the College encountered in those early days. Indeed, he *had* to be like a bird flying sideways in order to endure.

One marvels that neither the president nor the College veered off course. James Douglas Brown persevered, and throughout his tenure flying sideways on course became a common experience.

The founding of Thomas Edison State College was one of the responses to a major educational reform movement that had been developing since the mid-1960s. Stemming from recommendations that came out of the Carnegie Commission Report, Empire State College, Minnesota Metropolitan College, and Thomas Edison emerged around the same time.

In New Jersey, growth of the higher education system began near the end of Governor Hughes' administration and went through the Cahill administration with the expansion of the state college system. Some of the colleges, like Ramapo and Stockton state colleges, were new. Others grew out of existing colleges such as Newark Teacher's College which became Kean College of New Jersey. Montclair State College (now Montclair State University) and Trenton State College (now The College of New Jersey) were others in this category. All of the community colleges were created during this era.

New Jersey was suffering from its own underfunding of higher education; it had facilities for only about 7,000 students in all of the existing institutions. Thomas Edison Trustee Thomas O'Neill recalls that the situation was so bad, the state became known as the "cowbird state" because cowbirds lay their eggs in the nests of other species and leave them to be raised by other parents. Thousands of New Jerseyans were going out-of-state for their college experience. Creation of the Department of Higher Education and its accompanying Board of Higher Education in 1967 provided the environment and stimulus for rectifying that situation. The people and the state leadership took great pride in moving the state into the modern age of adequate and appropriate higher educational opportunities. This also meant addressing the emerging question of what to do about adults who wanted to return to college, a social development stimulated by the GI Bill following World War II.

New York State Education Commissioner Dr. Ewald B. Nyquist first advanced the idea of an external degree program for New York at his inauguration in September 1970. The Carnegie Corporation and the Ford Foundation provided grants to fund the program known as the Regents External Degree Program. This funding source was critical to its development but was sadly missing in the New Jersey program that was announced December 17, 1971, when Commissioner Nyquist and New Jersey Chancellor Ralph Dungan issued a joint press release detailing the interstate cooperative arrangements. Both the New York and New Jersey programs would be designed to serve mature adults, both would emphasize testing as a means to earn credits, and both expected the new programs to be cost effective for each state.

In the 1970s, Dr. T. Edward Hollander (now a professor at Rutgers, the State University) was working with the Regents Program for the New York State Department of Education. (In March 1977 he became chancellor of Higher Education in New Jersey.) In a recent interview he expressed his earlier concern for the legitimacy of distance learning programs, then called "external degree" programs. He said: "I was a little skeptical at first. The problem with any external degree program is credibility. That was solved in New York by having the University of the State of New York issue degrees. The program was called the Regents External Degree Program because it was under the jurisdiction of the New York Board of Regents, and they further tried to establish credibility by setting up a statewide faculty drawn from colleges and universities from the state. At the same time, the State University of New York (SUNY) created a college comparable to Thomas Edison, called Empire State College.

"We tried to connect New York and New Jersey in a joint effort to follow the Regents plan, but in fact, as Thomas Edison developed, it seemed to follow the Empire State College model, or some variation thereof. New Jersey dealt with the credibility problem by establishing a separate college with its own board and its own statewide faculty. Both Regents and Edison adopted very traditional degree models, thereby assuring even more credibility."

TAKING FLIGHT

The earliest known written record regarding the formation of an "open university" for New Jersey was penned in July 1971, by then Chancellor Ralph A. Dungan. Writing to State Treasurer Walter Wechsler, Dungan stated that the creation of such a university would enable the state to educate more New Jersey students with a proportionally smaller investment in faculty and facilities. The expected starting date was to be sometime in 1973 with a projected cost of between \$200,000 and \$500,000.²

Chancellor Dungan indicated as well that two new colleges (Ramapo and Stockton State College) would be created to serve north and south New Jersey respectively, the city of Newark would become a major university center, Cook College at Rutgers would open its doors as a separate institution in 1973, and The College of Medicine and Dentistry in New Jersey would expand its operations both in academic and patient care programs.

At that point in July, the New Jersey "open university," inspired by the British Open University concept, did not yet have a name. Discussions about an interstate agreement were begun in September 1971 between New Jersey Department of Higher Education staff, Donald Nolan, and T. Edward Hollander from New York. Chancellor Dungan tentatively referred to the New Jersey program as Garden State College. The cooperative agreement would build on the strengths of both states and would provide the most comprehensive services possible. Both programs would have joint membership in advisory councils and degree committees and would share any examinations developed in either state on a reasonable-fee basis.

The budget request for Fiscal Year 1973 was set at \$270,000, and Chancellor Dungan hoped that the cooperative agreement between the two states would be beneficial to New Jersey in seeking outside financial support from foundations and the federal government. He stated clearly, however, that New Jersey was prepared to move ahead with its plan to create the "external degree program" whether or not the cooperative arrangement between the two states was completed. He concluded in a letter to Commissioner Nyquist, "If this program is implemented, it will be to my knowledge one of the first instances of substantive interstate cooperation in the field of higher education."

Educational organizations around the country were eagerly watching these new experiments in higher education. The American Council on Education, all of the regional accrediting bodies, Educational Testing Service and its affiliate the College Board, and many other groups were well aware of changes in educational opportunities. Richard Pearson, a charter member of the Thomas Edison Board of Trustees, served on the New York committee that developed the examination

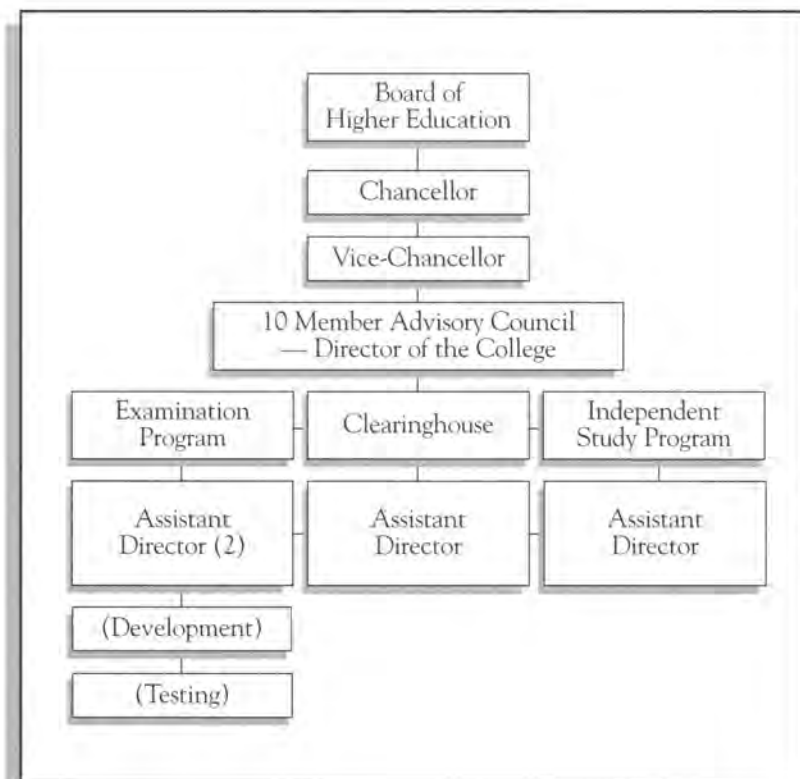
program used by New York and others, but particularly by the Regents program. He was asked to serve on the Thomas Edison Board because of his familiarity with the external degree approach.

Discussions about this new kind of college dominated many meetings, coffee-break conversations, and water-fountain stops at the Department of Higher Education as the primary players began to assume their roles. Vice-chancellor Robert Birnbaum championed the cause and led most of the research and development work that preceded the first Board of Higher Education action. John McGarraghy, a staff person at the Department, later became a staff member for the program, and letters and memos on file suggest that he was led to believe that he would become the first director.

By mid-November 1971, Dr. Birnbaum had developed the *Proposal for an External Degree Program in the State of New Jersey*, a document that would subsequently go to the Board of Higher Education for approval. In that document the college name had been changed from the Garden State College to Thomas Edison College. Apparently the name Garden State College bore too much similarity to the newly created Empire State College in New York, and New Jersey elected to name the College after one of its own, Thomas Alva Edison, whose home and laboratories were in New Jersey. Edison's lack of a formal education became the inspiration for the new "college for adults."

There were just three goals for the program: 1) to provide examinations (sans classroom requirements) as a means for obtaining college credit; 2) to offer information about other independent study opportunities through a *Clearinghouse of Educational Resources*; and 3) to provide undergraduate degrees for those persons who have previous college credit, have credible learning experiences that can be documented, and/or have passed proficiency examinations — all within the context of an established degree program. This last goal was identified as the *Independent Study Program*. The overall intent stated was to make New Jersey's educational system more flexible and more "humanistic."

The organizational chart was not like the traditional structure of a college. It was as follows:



Under this plan both the advisory council and the director of the program would report to Vice-Chancellor Birnbaum. The examinations to be used were some thirty general and subject-area examinations already developed by the College Proficiency Examination Program of the New York State Department of Education. Thomas Edison would be responsible for developing new examinations that would enhance but not duplicate both state programs.

To assure credit acceptance by other New Jersey colleges, a state-wide training program was proposed to inform the higher education community regarding the validity of the testing method. The Department of Higher Education worked with Bloomfield and Ramapo Colleges in the development of a leadership training program for faculty and administrators. The focus would be on various aspects of independent study, including credit by examination and the evaluation of noncampus learning experiences. Funded by the U. S. Office of Education, it was scheduled to start during the summer of 1972. Under this same program, the alternate route to teacher certification was to be explored, wherein a teacher might satisfy certification requirements through testing options based on work experience as opposed to requiring in-class instruction regardless of experience.

Dr. Charles Nanry, professor at University College, Rutgers, and longtime faculty consultant for Thomas Edison, stated that although acceptance of this new concept for higher education was amassing excellent support in general, he, for one, was totally opposed to it in the beginning — not the concept, but the placement of the program. He clarified: "My interest, and, in fact, my whole academic career, has been focused on adult students and teaching adults, and one of the things that had attracted me to University College was that it was an opportunity to teach adult students in a degree-granting context. I first felt that Rutgers would have been the appropriate place to develop the nontraditional programs that eventually became the hallmark of Edison. So I started out as a sworn enemy of developing an independent college when I felt we could use Rutgers as a platform to do that. But I was a lonely voice at Rutgers. I'm glad it turned out the way it did because of the terrific job that Edison has done, and it has not been 'fettered' by institutional connections that Rutgers would have happily provided to any college trying to do the things that Edison does."

As for the Clearinghouse of Educational Resources, the focus was to amass and make available information about high school, college, and occupational-level independent study options that might stimulate adults who could not attend classes at a conventional campus. This information would be for all New Jersey adults whether or not they enrolled at Thomas Edison.

The third aspect of the College was the independent study degree development section. The college would start by offering the same Associate in Arts degree under development by the Regents and would follow that with the Bachelor of Arts, the Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration, and the Associate of Science in the Nursing Sciences, not yet under development. According to the verbal agreement, Thomas Edison's responsibility would be to develop other degree programs to be used reciprocally by the Regents.

New Jersey clearly did not expect Thomas Edison to develop as fast as it ultimately did. The examination program was supposed to be slowly developed and field-tested over a two-year period with gradual development of new examinations. The proposal, still to go before the Board of Higher Education, suggested that the new examinations, meaning the new degree programs, might be ready as early as the fall of 1974. For clarification, the first examinations developed by New York and those expected to be developed by New Jersey were examinations that carried no credit assignment. They were block-examinations, testing wide areas of knowledge such as business topics. Successfully passing each examination would determine levels of completion within the degree program. This block-examination concept was to become the source of significant conflict between the two states as time progressed.

As for public and faculty involvement, three kinds of personnel would be needed: consulting faculty with expertise in subject areas related to the block-examinations and for the special assess-



Ed Booher, Chair of the New Jersey State Board of Higher Education when Thomas Edison was founded.

ment of prior learning; advising consultants to serve on the proposed advisory council (drawn from education, business, unions, the legislature, and the general public); and consultants skilled in cost analysis to assist in establishing appropriate fee schedules.

The proposal concluded with a request for 1,645 square feet of space to accommodate ten staff members.

The proposal was approved by Mrs. Hugh Auchincloss, Rabbi Martin Freedman, and Major General W. Preston Corderman, who formed a subcommittee of the Board of Higher Education. The proposal still bore the name Garden State College, but the resolution that was presented to the full Board recommended the name Edison College in honor of Thomas Alva Edison. It also recommended that presidents of both public and independent institutions of higher education in New Jersey be represented on the Advisory Council. Instead of a ten-member council, it became a twenty-four-member Council. That portion of the resolution would prove unwieldy in operation but would eventually lead to the creation of two separate bodies: the Board of Trustees and the Academic Council.

At its December 17, 1971 meeting, the New Jersey Board of Higher Education was being showered with lengthy proposals, support documents that verified the need, and personal urgings from Department of Higher Education staff to approve the proposed external degree concept for New Jersey. Impressed, excited, and eager to be a part of this "new tradition" in higher education, the Board voted unanimously to establish Edison College, with implementation date set for July 1, 1972. Mr. Edward E. Booher, President of McGraw Hill Publishing Company, was Board of Higher Education Chair. Much later Mr. Booher became one of the charter members of the Thomas A. Edison State College Foundation, Inc.

An interesting attachment accompanying the resolution announced that the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools had incorporated the idea of nontraditional study into its official standards manual for colleges and universities. The Southern Association was the first regional accrediting body to take this action; the other regions would soon follow suit.

At each of the next few Board of Higher Education meetings, progress in the development and launching of the new college was discussed, or specific actions were taken. The proper name for the College became a routine matter for discussion with the latest version being Thomas A. Edison College. As indicated, the original ten-member Advisory Council became a twenty-four-member Council with eleven public college representatives (seven presidents, two vice presidents, and two deans), an AFL/CIO Union president, eleven public members, one public education member, and one New York representative. Eleanor Spiegel and Jonathan Thiesmeyer, who later served on the first board of trustees, were appointed to that Advisory Council.⁴ Dr. Donald J. Nolan from the Regents External Degree Program was the New York State Department of Education representative.

The six months from January to July 1972 were filled with preliminary planning activities. One very important activity was the series of statewide conferences to prepare the New Jersey higher education community for the acceptance of the basic concepts of independent study and credit by examination. In addition, proposals went out for funding support for various aspects of the program.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The organizational structure became an important consideration as the College developed and applied for candidacy for accreditation. Candidacy was denied at first; the Middle States Association advised that candidacy status would be granted when an acceptable organizational structure was in place. Therefore, one of the first assignments for the Advisory Council was to approve an administrative structure for the College. In his April 1972 memo to the Council, Vice-Chancellor Robert Birnbaum made three recommendations. His language throughout the

eight-page memo suggests that he favored the third model for Thomas Edison.

The first model was based on the New York model wherein the College would operate as a department within the Department of Higher Education. The director of the College would report to the vice-chancellor. Dr. Birnbaum suggested that this model would provide a streamlined, unencumbered decision-making process.

The second model resembled a traditional college model with an autonomous board of trustees and a president. The rationale suggested that this model would facilitate the accreditation process, but that the consulting faculty would tend to assume more influence in setting policy, thus slowing down the decision-making process. Dr. Birnbaum noted that attaching the word "college" to the name had already caused some misunderstanding among other colleges. He appeared not to favor this option.

The last model combined aspects of the other two by establishing a board and a president but still within the structure of the Department and the Board of Higher Education. The chancellor or the vice-chancellor would be the "president," and the senior administrator would be more like a dean. This model included a board of trustees, but they would be nine public members already serving on the Board of Higher Education.

In the third model, Chancellor Dungan or Dr. Birnbaum would have been "president," and Dr. Brown, when appointed, would have been called an executive dean. Contrary to Dr. Birnbaum's recommendation, the structure chosen by the Advisory Council was the first model patterned after the Regents program. Effective September 1, 1972, Dr. James Douglas Brown II was appointed director.

FLYING SIDEWAYS FROM THE START

Almost from day one, Director Brown found himself flying sideways. He was not invited to participate in the planning stages. He had not been there in December 1971 when the Board of Higher Education resolved to create the College. He was not there when the Advisory Council was appointed. He was not there July 1, 1972, when the College was officially started. Although a native of Princeton, Dr. Brown spent all of his professional career outside New Jersey. Perhaps to some, his appointment seemed inappropriate, regardless of his qualifications.

College staff who were employed during those formative years clearly recall that Dr. Brown was not given full cooperation in his day-to-day routine. All of the higher level Department of Higher Education staff were 100% supportive, but several staff appointments were made before Dr. Brown arrived. That staff, small as it was, often clashed with those hired directly by Brown. According to several staff members who were there at the beginning, Dr. Brown would not always be given his telephone messages, depending on whether or not the receiver favored his appointment as director. Meetings and appointments were not set up, or if they were, Dr. Brown was not advised. Fortunately, this undermining ended as new staff were hired or as early staff transferred out of the College.

Brown was a visionary. From the start he understood the challenges and perceived that the College could only thrive if it provided strong support systems such as the counseling services and a strong assessment program, neither of which were part of the Regents model. Within the limitations given him regarding staff, he gradually surrounded himself with other visionaries: Thomas McCarthy as registrar and Jean Titterington for the Clearinghouse. It would be another year before Dr. Arnold Fletcher was hired as vice president for Academic Affairs.

Supposedly modeled after the Regents, the truth is that there was no model. Metropolitan State University (Minnesota) and Empire State College (New York) were closer models, but no peer institutions were, then or now, doing exactly what Thomas Edison does in the exact way that it does it. These four brilliant, dedicated visionaries — Brown,



The first Director of the Statewide Counseling Network, Jean Titterington pauses at her desk in the 1780 North Olden Avenue "store front" office in Trenton.

McCarthy, Titterington, and (later) Fletcher — unknowingly formed a “quadrumvirate” to mold the new tradition, often going against the model, but never losing sight of the mission.

Within the first six months of operation, it became obvious that the Regents model would not serve well over time, and movement toward model number two was begun. By December 1972, the College was developing its own mission statement, had enrolled over fifty students, had certified fourteen students for the Associate in Arts degree, and anticipated its first commencement ceremony.

Also six months into the first year, the agreement between New Jersey and New York had still not been finalized. Dr. Brown and Vice-Chancellor Birnbaum were still discussing language for the Memorandum of Understanding. Dr. Brown tried to preserve for the College many of the administrative practices that he believed should not require joint negotiation. Vice-Chancellor Birnbaum seemed to favor negotiating everything to coordinate perfectly with the Regents program. Although Dr. Birnbaum truly championed the external degree program for New Jersey, and indeed was the force behind the pre-Brown development stages, available memos and letters suggest a widening gap between what appeared logical and workable on paper and what the administrators of the program were experiencing as they put it into operation on a day-to-day basis. These differences became dissatisfactions, particularly on the Regents’ part, as the days and months went by.

Dr. Brown and his staff proceeded with an eye toward accreditation. He pleaded with the Department of Higher Education to reconsider the organizational model. “It is essential that we establish a legal structure for Edison College by June,” he wrote. “At the present time, we do not have the legal authority to grant degrees.”

Initially it was the Board of Higher Education that was expected to grant the degrees once a student had been certified for graduation. However, under the terms of the Higher Education Act of 1966, the Board of Higher Education did not have the authority to grant degrees; yet the college was not a “college” per se, so it could not grant degrees.

A member of the Advisory Council and later a board member and chair, Eleanor Spiegel recalled that she gave Dr. Brown a difficult time at first. To her, he seemed to overemphasize the importance of the acceptance of the degree by other institutions. She strongly favored the experimental aspects of the program, the assessment of college-level learning regardless of how the learning took place, and other aspects of the new tradition. In a recent interview, she said, “I believe that in hindsight, it was right for the president of the College and the Board to be so concerned that this degree was acceptable and not be as experimental in the initial stages as I had hoped it would be.”

Finally, in March 1973, Chancellor Dungan initiated discussions with the Board to consider establishing Thomas Edison as an independent state college. Two months later, on May 18, 1973, the “agency” within the Department of Higher Education became a state college with its own board of trustees and “Statement of Mission and Purpose.” However, the agreement between the Board of Higher Education in New Jersey and the New York State Board of Regents was to be upheld. By that same resolution, the College was also authorized to offer two degrees: the Associate in Arts Degree and the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration. It was a surprising and dynamic way to resolve the question of how to grant degrees, but it also fueled the flames that would shortly end the agreement between the two states.

By this time the College had an enrollment of over 350 students. Even while still verbalizing the early promotional language that the College “did not have a faculty, did not offer instruction, and did not (and would not) have classrooms,” Dr. Brown wrote: “Thomas Edison is a college, and I will defend that. I may be the only director or head of a college in the country that will never have its own faculty.”



Mrs. Madison Edison Sloan, granddaughter of Thomas Alva Edison, wearing academic regalia for the 1976 Commencement held at the Edison National Historic Site in West Orange, NJ.

At its May 1973 meeting, the Board of Higher Education established a nine-member board of trustees for the College. Only two people from the original Advisory Council were appointed to the new board: Eleanor Spiegel and Jonathan Thiesmeyer. Appropriately so, gone from this board were the college presidents, vice presidents, or deans; the Union representative; the New Jersey state agency representatives; the members representing educational organizations such as Educational Testing Service or the College Board; and the New York State Education Department delegate.

The first meeting of the new board was held June 7, 1973, at the Nassau Inn in Princeton. Jonathan Thiesmeyer served as acting chair until his official election in September. The first order of business was to appoint Director Brown as president at an annual salary of \$28,782, effective June 13. The second action was the adoption of the official college name, changed slightly once again to Thomas A. Edison College of New Jersey.

An interesting sidebar comes in a memo from Dr. Brown to Chancellor Dungan regarding the name of the College. He wrote, "The adoption of the name of the College should be voted on at the first board meeting. I think officially it should be Thomas A. Edison College of New Jersey. We certainly don't want Thomas A. Edison State College!!!" Little did he know then that in 1980 the name would once again change to that exact wording.

The third action taken at the first meeting was the resolution approving candidates for the Associate in Arts degree. Visiting from the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, the regional accrediting body, Dr. John Theobald, chairman of the visiting team that would recommend for or against accreditation, spoke briefly about the need for counseling and advising, about the assessment process and quality assurance, and about the potential nursing degree clinical performance assessment aspect of that proposed degree. A short meeting, it was adjourned with plans in place for both the Advisory Council and the Board of Trustees to meet in July to discuss the transition process since the Council had been the operative body prior to the establishment of the Board. The first commencement was set for June 15, 1973, at the New Jersey State Museum auditorium in Trenton.

Speaking about that first board of trustees meeting and of his tremendous admiration for President Brown, former board member Richard Pearson commented on the visionary who dared to fly sideways, if need be, to enable the College to fulfill its mission. He raised his voice as in proclamation, "Jim Brown had a broader vision for this college than Dungan or Thiesmeyer or anyone on the Board at that point!"

Jonathan Thiesmeyer echoed Mr. Pearson's confidence in Dr. Brown, as did the full board. Their first mandate to President Brown was presented in a one-page memorandum that said in part that the College could now move forward into the second stage of its development. The trustees expected Dr. Brown to shift attention and priorities to include more focus on the image of the College for the general public and on long-range planning. They concluded: "In summary, Dr. Brown is a very confident professional, a dynamic and energetic person deeply dedicated to his work with very strong leadership abilities who has done a fine job in setting up Edison College." Without hesitation, the Board recommended Dr. Brown's continuance as president and recommended a double increment in recognition of his outstanding work.

LIKE A TEMPEST TOSSED

The president was not flying alone during this year of brewing storms and growing frustrations between the higher educational staffs of the two states. Each of the four in the "quadrumvirate" was receiving criticism from Regents staff for deviating from the original agreement as understood by the New York team. Neither state was wrong. Both states were right — for their state. The dissension grew because they could not yet agree to disagree.

Creation of the College as an independent entity within the state college system further polarized the two states as criticism of Thomas Edison staff and methods escalated from Regents' staff.

Dr. Donald Nolan, Academic Programs Coordinator for the New York State Education Department, wrote to President Brown in August, indicating that he was fearful about the integrity of the program and the extent to which both states were contributing to its development. Through the cooperative agreement, joint committees had been established to make all academic decisions for both institutions. Dr. Nolan was stressing that this was an absolute; these joint committees *must* make the decisions, and in his opinion, Thomas Edison was violating that position by making some decisions without going through the committee.

In particular, he claimed that Registrar Tom McCarthy was not submitting transcripts for review by the appropriate committees. These committee meetings were held, as a rule, in Albany, New York; the time and distance involved in using that particular locale for reviewing and transcribing transfer credits certainly seemed unwieldy. Some student records were taking over three months to evaluate. Further, Dr. Nolan was concerned that Thomas Edison was not developing new proficiency examinations or new degrees that both states could use. And seemingly most important was his concern that the College was enrolling out-of-state students when the Regents' presumption was that Thomas Edison would only enroll New Jersey students. He concluded that if these and other problems could not be worked out, he would recommend that the relationship be terminated.

President Brown prepared a lengthy reply, in draft form only, explaining in detail that the New York program had not lacked for funding to develop examinations and degrees; however, New Jersey state appropriations along with some small private grants were barely sustaining the day-to-day operation. Even so, he added, new examinations were under way, and a new associate degree in management had already been developed, although New York had chosen not to participate in it. He reminded Dr. Nolan that at no time, and certainly not in the agreement, had any reference been made to limiting enrollment to in-state students.

This draft was sent to Chancellor Dungan for review and response, and Dr. Brown indicated that he wanted the Board of Trustees to review the whole matter before sending the response to Dr. Nolan. Perhaps not knowing this, Vice-Chancellor Birnbaum sent the draft on to Dr. T. Edward Hollander, then Deputy Commissioner for Higher Education in New York. Dr. Birnbaum's cover letter stated: "I believe, as I always have, that it is possible to resolve each of the issues to meet the needs of both programs. While our meetings reflect our good intentions, there appears to be some slippage somewhere in the system. Let's lock the door at our next meeting and not let anyone out until we have a firm agreement!"

"I am enclosing for your information a draft of Jim's reply to Don's letter of August 17th. Jim plans to discuss it with his board on September 12th, so please consider this an informal copy for your information and comments. If you would have any reaction to it, which you would like informally to be communicated to the Edison Board, give me a call."⁴

This letter was copied to President Brown, so it would not appear that the intent of his action was anything but informational. It would appear, however, that Vice-Chancellor Birnbaum and President Brown did not see eye-to-eye on some of these issues, and Dr. Birnbaum seemed at that point not only to favor the New York approach, but was willing to work with the New York staff to inform the Thomas Edison Board of Trustees as to the unresolved problems.

Responding to Dr. Birnbaum's letter, Dr. Brown sent a confidential memo to the vice-chancellor stating: "I think part of our problem in defining the issues during the past year with New York has been that I have not been able to convince Don Nolan that you and I are in full agreement, and therefore, he has felt, I believe mistakenly, that he can divide and conquer."⁵

Meanwhile, a flurry of correspondence was issued between the Regents registrar, Robert Anstett, and Thomas Edison's registrar, Thomas McCarthy. Based on telephone conversations he had with a student who did *not* enroll with Thomas Edison, Mr. Anstett incorrectly assumed that the College was arbitrarily reinterpreting the guidelines and degree requirements at will

for individual students. This was definitely not the case, but it added to the perceived distrust growing between the two institutions. Thomas Edison saw the need to establish its own Academic Policy Committee made up of New Jersey faculty from representative institutions across the state. This also was perceived as a breach of faith in the joint policy committee concept.

The growing pains were timely, appropriate, and should have been expected, especially for a bird flying sideways. Both states seemed to take the position best summarized by Israeli foreign minister Moshe Dayan to U. S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance: "When you accept our views, we shall be in full agreement with you."⁶

From the New Jersey perspective, it seemed that Dr. Brown and his staff were more like poet and playwright Archibald MacLeish's concept of the dissenter — a person who at certain moments in his or her life resigns momentarily from the herd and thinks for himself.⁷ Called upon to think and defend what was best for the College, Dr. Brown and his quadrumvirate were constrained to be dissenters in the highest sense of the word.

On October 10, 1973, President Brown and Dr. Nolan talked by telephone regarding the problems the recent letters stimulated. Dr. Nolan and the New York staff believed the problems to be insurmountable. "We have reached an impasse," he is quoted as saying in Dr. Brown's records of this telephone conversation. There was nothing to talk about. Nolan suggested that perhaps the solution was to dissolve the agreement.

Dr. Brown was stunned. "That doesn't make sense," he said.

"From your end it might not make sense," Dr. Nolan responded.

The nursing program was still pending, and Dr. Brown was fearful that all the work would be for nothing if the agreement were dissolved. He stated, "We have to get approval of the nursing program."

Nolan responded, "As far as I am concerned, you have opted to do it yourself."

At this point, the president seemed to be very much in the middle of the controversy. He was being advised by his staff and by the Middle States Association accrediting commission staff that the College must make changes if it were to qualify for accreditation, that is, establish its own Academic Policy and Standards Advisory Committee, make the improvements in the assessment program, continue the expansion of the counseling network, and complete all of the other proposed enhancements to the program. Yet some members of the Department of Higher Education and the Board of Trustees were urging Brown to stay rigidly with the agreement guidelines. New York was not willing to compromise, nor perhaps should they have, for their motivation had been to successfully develop a workable interstate agreement, a one-of-a-kind agreement.

Legal counsel suggested seeking an injunction forbidding New York from certain actions and from withdrawing from the agreement. Letters and telephone conversations flew across the state lines. On behalf of the New York staff, Dr. Hollander wrote to the Thomas Edison board chair, to the chancellor and vice-chancellor, and to others. He made two observations:

- "1) Unfortunately, your state's interests seem to be best served by developing your own system and approaches to the external degree. We believe you are moving in the wrong direction, but we understand that the responsibility is clearly yours.



Dr. Brown addressing the audience at the 1973 Commencement held at the New Jersey State Museum in Trenton.

"2) Since your current development is so at variance from the original intent of our joint effort, we cannot continue the relationship as it presently exists."

Finally, on November 20, 1973, New York Deputy Commissioner Hollander wrote that as of that date the interstate agreement was terminated indefinitely.

Dr. Brown was forced to defend the College's position with executives from the Commission on Higher Education, Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, and he vowed to prove within the year that the development path the College was taking was appropriate and justified and that the accreditation of the College would not be hindered in any way by the dissolution of the interstate agreement with Regents.

Boldly going up a tree, out on a limb, and still flying sideways, President James Douglas Brown II continued to move the College toward its rightful place in higher education.

¹ Ninety-three interviews were conducted as part of the history project. These included all three presidents of the College. Footnotes will not be given for any of those interviews when direct quotations are cited in the text. It will be assumed that a staff person, trustee, faculty member, foundation director, or other person cited will have been in that interviewed group. All other citations will be footnoted as appropriate. Texts of the transcribed interviews are available in the library at the college's Academic Center.

² Letter to State Treasurer Walter Wechsler from Chancellor Ralph Dungan (July 30, 1971).

³ Thomas A. Edison State College Board of Trustees minutes (June 7, 1973).

⁴ Letter to Dr. T. Edward Hollander, deputy commissioner for Higher Education, Department of Education, New York, from Dr. Robert Birnbaum, vice-chancellor New Jersey Department of Higher Education (September 4, 1973).

⁵ Confidential memo to Dr. Robert Birnbaum from Dr. Brown regarding "Relations with New York" (September 5, 1973).

⁶ David Wallechinsky, *The 20th Century*, New York: Little Brown and Company, 1995, p. 3.

⁷ David Wallechinsky, *Ibid.* p. 4. (taken from Archibald MacLeish, *The Nation*, December 4, 1937).

II. Takin' It To The Streets

This song title from the 1976 Michael McDonald hit first made popular by the Doobie Brothers describes perfectly the early stages of development at the College. Many people affiliated with Thomas Edison in those days, and many who are still with the College, speak of the missionary zeal that enveloped staff. They were deputized to disseminate the word. With various backgrounds in higher education — from college professors, counselors, and administrators to business advisors, publicists, and writers — they became preachers, evangelists, and apostles because no matter what profession brought them to employment at the College, they became missionary spokespersons for the new tradition. They were literally “takin’ it to the streets.”

For months President Brown was a one-man dog-and-pony show, traveling all over the state to meet with other college and university administrators to educate them about the new college and gain support for the days ahead. Later on he was joined by Dr. Laura Adams (now Dunham), Dr. Arnold Fletcher, and other administrators who continued to spread the word via workshops, seminars, lunches, casual conversations, and meetings.

In one of his many progress reports, Dr. Brown stated that during the first eighteen months a “concept” was transformed into an “institution.” Highly experimental in character, the institution was affecting hundreds of individuals; this prompted the Department of Higher Education and the education community to reassess many of the underlying assumptions regarding the structure and traditions of the entire higher education system in the state. Many more adults were taking an interest in this educational option than had been predicted.

In that first year, Dr. Brown, Vice-Chancellor Birnbaum, Dr. John McGarraghy, and others were gaining support for the concept. The college presidents, vice presidents, and the dean who served on the original Advisory Council facilitated in that process by leading workshops and training seminars throughout the state. When Dr. Fletcher was appointed in October 1973, replacing John McGarraghy who served in an assistant director capacity, the position was elevated to a vice-presidency, giving Dr. Fletcher equal standing with his counterparts at the other colleges. He observed that a critical element was missing in academic oversight at Thomas Edison. The Advisory Council and subsequent Board of Trustees were governing oversight bodies; what was needed was an academic oversight body similar to a faculty senate. What he recommended was an academic council with accompanying subcommittees that were to be staffed by faculty consultants from two- and four-year public and private colleges in the state. Critically needed to ensure academic integrity for the rapidly growing institution, authorization was given to create the Academic Council, and appointment of the twenty-two-member body was completed by January 1974.

Proselytizing is very effective when families or groups are the focus; for example, if a church brings one member of a family into the membership, that first convert often influences the rest of the family to join. Bringing in twenty-two well-educated, well-qualified, professional adults from twenty-two different institutions, and bringing them into the fold of an experimental college that was not yet accredited was a major accomplishment; however, there was no guarantee that the institutions affiliated with each of those faculty members would be influenced at all. That first Academic Council of twenty-two members represented ten four-year colleges and universities (including Princeton), eight two-year colleges, and four members from independent sources.

Thomas Edison faculty consultant Dr. Thomas Grites, assistant to the vice president for Academic Affairs at Stockton State College, recalled that he was very suspicious at first. “Is this a matchbook diploma-granting place?” he inquired. However, he soon became a champion of the “Edison way,” as he refers to it now. He added, “There is no question in my mind as to the quality, the integrity, the standards that Edison has for its students.”

Another Thomas Edison faculty consultant Dr. Robert Fishco, professor of business technologies at Middlesex County College, commented that he, too, was cautious of Thomas Edison at first, but once he thoroughly understood the College’s methods, he promoted it wherever he traveled. In an interview he stated proudly, “Thomas Edison has really brought professionalism





Academic Counseling Retreat - front row (l to r): Annette Singer, Jim Ratigan, Jerry Middlemiss, Jules Kahn, Leon Genciana (deceased). Second row: Gerri Collins, Louise Perkins, Janice Palmer, Lazaro Alvarez, Janice White Tolliver. Third row: Ralph Viviano, Marci Toni Friedman, Angela Fontan, Selma Gitterman, Jean Titterington, and Mike Klebanoff.

and quality to nontraditional education. The quality control is above and beyond what is expected, and in some cases I must confess, surpasses what you might find in the traditional setting."

Although very much against the college at first, Dr. Charles Nanry was soon converted when he learned that it was possible to be affiliated simultaneously with his own college (Rutgers) as well as with Thomas Edison, and he promoted relationships between the two institutions. He stated: "One of the reasons we were really successful in recruiting at University College, Newark, was because of Thomas Edison. Students could go there, challenge credits, start taking courses to build their confidence, and either stay with Edison or transfer to Rutgers. A lot of students who were Edison students were literally taking majors in our programs. Some of our administrators were not very happy about that, but I welcomed it. It was the beginning of the total acceptance that was a long time coming to Edison, especially from Rutgers, but one by one over the years, that acceptance grew. I was proud to be part of that promotional effort."

Former staff member Dr. Laura Adams was one of the team that took the message to the streets. Recalling those years, she reflected: "We always

had a feeling that we were on the cutting edge, almost like missionaries, that we were really breaking new ground and trying to bring other institutions along with us and to offer them our expertise — not trying to keep things for ourselves but to really share it with the rest of the higher education community, if they wanted it."

She recalled that there were the usual turf problems, particularly from the other state colleges. Their fear was that if testing or assessment of learning without classroom teaching really caught on, what would be the standards for the degree granting institution. Through the Academic Council and the degree committees, the faculty consultants who became assessors of learning, and later the faculty who became mentors in the Guided Study program, set that fear to rest. It was the combined efforts of the professor who taught the course and the assessor who evaluated the learning that made the new process work.

For one thing, the College gradually attracted and hired only the very best faculty from its sister institutions. To some extent the success of Thomas Edison was in direct correlation to the strengths and zeal those early faculty brought to the College.

Dr. Richard Hansen, executive vice president at Norwich University in Vermont and former vice president for public affairs at Thomas Edison, shed light on how the national higher education community looked at the College in those early days before he came on staff. Included in his doctoral program in Colorado was the study of nontraditional trends for adults. Looking from a case study perspective, one class studied Evergreen State College in Washington State, Empire State College in New York, and Thomas Edison in New Jersey. Many other nontraditional efforts were being launched in the late 1960s and early 1970s, but apparently these three institutions were considered the ones that would survive. Each had state support, and each sought to complement the existing institutions rather than to compete with them. It is interesting that what the College was doing by instinct, and sometimes without a clear plan up front, was exactly what it needed to do to survive.

Part of Thomas Edison's indoctrination process was to recruit faculty for the College, but an equally important aspect was to go out to colleges to talk with faculty and administrators about how to develop and implement testing and assessment resources on their own campuses. One of Dr. Brown's earlier thoughts was that the College would self-destruct in a few years because all of the other institutions would create their own alternative programs for adults, making Thomas Edison obsolete. Fortunately for the other colleges as well as for Thomas Edison, that did not happen. Some institutions did start assessment programs, but most opted to use the Statewide Testing

and Assessment Center (now called Serving The Adult Collegian), STAC, sponsored by the College.

Although reaching the higher education community was the primary focus, a secondary emphasis was to seek funding from foundations and corporations. As Dr. Brown brought on new, qualified staff to focus on academic issues and the counseling program, his own efforts shifted back to external fund-raising and the state budgeting process. Negotiations for state appropriations had many tiers, and the College's budget recommendation to the governor seldom looked like the one Dr. Brown prepared. More often than not, the budget was cut before it left the Department of Higher Education.

MEANWHILE . . .

If the administrators felt like missionaries as they traveled over the state, staff in the Counseling Network must have felt like tub-thumpers, a term relegated to street preachers. Of course, their style was not like that at all, but their zeal for their work and for the College bordered on that kind of effervescence.

In a November 1972 memo, Brown informed the Advisory Council that the Counseling Network was well underway. Interestingly, the state's departments of Community Affairs and Civil Service jointly funded the full-time director of counseling position that was filled by the appointment of Ms. Jean Titterington. She had a staff of two part-time counselor-interns who were graduate students in counseling at Montclair State University.

Jean's long experience as an educational and vocational counselor for Army and Air Force personnel, dependents, and retirees gave her tremendous insight into the services needed in the adult arena and gave her immediate entrée to a very large market potential. In addition, she had experience with the adult school concept, a multifaceted continuing education program that serves tens of thousands of adult students per year. Her immediate assignment by Dr. Brown was to travel throughout the state to provide information to government agencies and counseling services at state, county, and local government facilities. Her many "other duties as assigned" included organizing and implementing a full-scale counseling program to service adult schools, community groups, and libraries; developing an in-service training program for counseling staff; and establishing the Clearinghouse of Informational Resources.

Over twenty years later in 1996, the New Jersey State Library and Thomas Edison State College signed a "Memorandum of Understanding" wherein the library would come under the jurisdiction of the College while maintaining its own unique function and identity in the state. But in 1972, working through Henry Michniewski, coordinator of library planning and development for the New Jersey State Library, Jean Titterington developed the first of many agreements to use library facilities to reach adults throughout the state. Five libraries were selected for the first year's demonstration project: Newark, Teaneck, Mercer County, Ocean City, and Vineland.

Library staff were oriented to college programs and services. College materials were kept at each library for distribution, an "Edison Corner" was maintained, and meeting rooms were provided. The libraries became testing sites as well, and college counselors held regular group information sessions and individual counseling appointments on site.

Also, the college, the state library, and the department for the Office of Library Independent Study and Guidance Projects of the College Entrance Examination Board established a cooperative effort to set up a national project to make all libraries "peoples' universities" to provide information, guidance, and materials for people who wanted to pursue college-level study through independent means. The Woodbridge Public Library was selected for that pilot project. Because of the interest and affiliation of the two counselor-interns, Montclair Public Library soon became a major counseling site.

Space was very limited at the Montclair Public Library. The college "office" was a very small cubicle between book shelves. There was a small desk and room enough for two small chairs.

Like traveling sales people, counselors carried their sales valises filled with policy books, college catalogs, enrollment forms, and other assorted pieces of literature. When necessary, a pair of pajamas and a toothbrush could be packed inside, and sometimes there was room for a sack lunch, time permitting, of course. They traveled alone most of the time, but it was never lonely, for the convert became the friend, even if only for one hour.

Although having left the College some eight years ago, one of the early counselor "missionaries," Angela Fontan, still lends support to former Thomas Edison students. Speaking from her home in Miami, Florida, Angela talked of the very early counseling days in north Jersey. "Each appointment was a new life, a new concept, a new situation, and I would do whatever it took to get an answer for a student or find a way to help them. Each day I learned something new, and I grew a little with each student." It did not matter if the job required working extra evenings or working an entire weekend. In those first five-to-ten years of the College's history, staff were creating an institution, a one-of-a-kind new tradition.

Various student anecdotes emerge as those early days are recalled — for example, the father who came into the Montclair site to enroll his nine-year-old daughter. He did not think he could get a degree for himself, but he wanted one for his daughter. He apparently expected it to be given on the spot.

Counselor Jules Kahn went regularly to the Philadelphia Naval Yard to meet with potential students. Sometimes as he made his presentations on board ship he would hear loud sirens go off, and he would become very alarmed. He learned that those sirens signaled a damage control drill, a practice drill simulating what would happen if the ship were torpedoed. All compartments would be closed and sealed, and the warning siren would sound, "Whoop, whoop, whoop!" Although he knew the ship was docked, the thought of being sealed in was quite frightening.

The south Jersey territory was spread out and much less populated than the north Jersey area, so the south Jersey staff drove from small town to small town distributing literature to fire stations, police departments, and even supermarkets in addition to the adult schools, libraries, community service organizations, and state agencies. Jules remembers coding the literature he left at supermarkets and was astounded to see how many people would mail in the form requesting information about the College.

Jules was asked why he thought to go to supermarkets. Didn't he feel it beneath him to hand out literature as people walked by? He responded that he went into the military at age eighteen, and like many service personnel, he took courses everywhere he could, both military training and college courses, including examinations offered by the College Level Examination Program (CLEP). An air traffic controller, he accumulated American Council on Education (ACE) credit recommendations for that as well. This was in the 1950s. When he left the military, he had the potential for some sixty-to-seventy credits, but no college would take them. He tried New York University, Columbia University, and other possibilities to no avail, so he started all over again, taking courses he had already passed by examination. Years later when he learned about Thomas Edison from Arnold Fletcher, he joined the staff and vowed to tell the world about this incredible institution. Distributing literature at supermarkets was not demeaning. It was exciting; it was important.

Sometimes the message about the College got lost in the translation, and interesting but misguided people would appear on the scene. At the 1750 North Olden Avenue site in Trenton, where the first college offices were located, all staff were doubled up in small cubicles with partitions that went up only a little higher than a seated person's head. All conversations could be overheard. One day a gentleman came in with a suitcase filled with plaques that identified various honors he had apparently received over the years. He took out all of the plaques, not even dusted, as Annette Singer (retired director of alumni affairs) recalled, and after a rather long harangue asked, "And what will my degree read? I want it to say 'Harvard.' Most everything here represents my own efforts, my own experiences, and I want my degree to say 'Harvard.'"

Everyone in the office was listening to the conversation by that time, and bets were on as to how it would be resolved. Frustrated at first and afraid to be assertive because of the low partitions, Annette finally sat up straight in her chair, brought her hand down hard on the desk, and said, "Mr. V., if you want a degree from Harvard, you have to go to Harvard." Oddly enough, Mr. V. eventually enrolled with the college and did complete his degree through Thomas Edison.

The north Jersey staff had an unexpected "student" arrive on the scene one rainy afternoon. A man knocked at the door of the East Orange office, and following an invitation to "Come in," he entered wearing a raincoat and nothing else. He was a flasher. The East Orange office was staffed with women. They forced him out the door, locked it, and called the police. "It goes with the territory," a staff member recalled. "We were preaching and reaching out to the world, and we were bound to get a flasher now and then."

Fortunately, only a small number of stories are of abnormal incidents, but for every staff person there are a thousand stories. Dr. Ruth McKeefery particularly remembered a student named McKeef because of the name similarity, a security officer and detective who had his own private company in New York City. She also remembered the police officer who came in full uniform with a gun in his belt, which was against the rules and regulations because he was off duty. Another student, a pilot from Chicago, flew his own airplane to Princeton, landing on a small airstrip on the Forrestal campus of Princeton University where the college was located for three years.

Another student who responded to the "call" to Thomas Edison had accumulated over 300 credits through the years. In due time, he earned three baccalaureate degrees and several associate degrees and, at last check, was still taking courses or exams because he just loved learning.

Exceptional events where counselors went out to reach particular groups include giving presentations in hospitals for hospital staff interested in a degree in radiation technology. Several counselors went to nursing homes and even to private homes, and on many occasions presentations were made at the Newark Airport in the air traffic control tower. The counselors liked to believe that these presentations did not interfere with the air traffic controller on duty. Later on, regular information sessions were held at several Atlantic City casinos. Those sessions were designed for casino personnel interested in pursuing degrees for job advancement. Other corporations or industries were added to the list of regular sites, including AT&T, Nabisco, PSE&G, and many others.

Although every staff person, from President Brown to the mail clerk, seemed willing and able to talk up Thomas Edison in their sleep, the person who deserves the humanitarian award for missionary work has to go to Angela Fontan. Angela's personal story is a book in itself, but for the purposes of this history, it is worth summarizing to explain her extraordinary dedication to helping others.

One of the first hundred or so people to emigrate from Cuba when Castro came to power, Angela had already completed a doctoral program in Havana, was married, and had two children. When she came to the United States, however, she came with the two children and about two changes of clothing. At that time no one would honor her degrees, and eventually she completely redid her baccalaureate, masters, and Ed.D programs. First "paroled" in Hudson County (parole being a term used to confine emigrants to a county jurisdiction until relocated), Angela and the children lived on the streets by day and someone's porch by night, covering themselves with newspapers to stay warm. Relocated several times, first to California and finally back to New Jersey, she took any work she could get including cleaning bathrooms and posing as a male driver so she



1995 celebrating over 17 years (each) in service at the College (l to r): (kneeling) Emily Carone. First row: Anne Bielawski, Ron Sukovich, Ruth McKeefery, Gerri Collins, and Mary Haggerty. Second row: Carol Kuykendall, Drew Hopkins, Bob Herbstler, and Jim Ratigan. Not shown: Evette Jackson, Jules Kahn, and Rosemary Breining.



Former Academic Counselor Angela Fontan with alumna Aida Mejias, BA '85, at Angela's home in Miami, Florida

could drive cars for Avis and Hertz. She fed the children on pigeons she caught in Liberty Park in Jersey City. After many years of struggle, she became a project transition counselor at an adult learning center in north Jersey where she met Annette Singer who urged her to apply for a counseling position at Thomas Edison.

Perhaps it was her own struggle and survival that made her such a dedicated counselor for the college; perhaps it was the college, itself. Certainly the combination sent Angela on a missionary tear, literally "Takin' It To The Streets." Her office was the trunk of her car. In addition to her regular counseling sites at adult schools and libraries, she voluntarily went on radio and television shows, especially the Spanish stations, to talk about college programs. She proselytized in the emergency room at the hospital where she had gone when her father was taken ill; she enrolled an under-

paid hospital social worker who did not have a degree. She conducted information sessions for anyone who wanted to better their lot, even if that meant giving up her weekends, holidays, or evenings.

Many of her counselees became friends, or at least stayed in touch with her over the years, long after she had left the college. Aida Mejias, the brilliant artist who exhibited in the only student art show held by Thomas Edison, now lives next door to Angela. Leyla Gomez, a social worker, completed her degree at the college. She and Angela remain friends. A man she helped to get a degree is now an x-ray technician. In fact, he was Angela's x-ray technician when she had unexpected surgery some years later. Her CPA did not have a degree. Now he does because of Angela. He writes to her every Christmas. Every new friend became a convert — the sixty-eight-year-old Russian teacher; Felix Cruz, the journalist who later became a staff member under Governor Florio; the ex-con who served time for embezzlement and whom she worked with on a personal basis to see him through his rehabilitation process. She was once stranded in a snow storm because she took time to counsel him and missed getting home before the roads closed.

Of course, she had her share of "crazies," as she refers to them. One man sold socks and stockings out of the trunk of his car. Not bad, except that they were dirty socks. He insisted on giving her a pair.

The numbers served by the College continued to increase as the word was spread, but not all, by any means, were solely interested in Thomas Edison. As one counselor recalled, many of the other colleges in the state were sending adults to the Thomas Edison counselors because those colleges did not have the staff or the information for reviewing credentials and planning educational strategy for distance learners. Many times these same adults received the full complement of services from Thomas Edison and then were directed to go back to the referring institution. Some did enroll with the College, but this was never a major concern.

As staff increased and counselors were added to support the program, the number of sites increased as well. Staff worked out of the north, central, and south Jersey offices instead of a few people working the entire state. Regular weekly counseling sites were set up in high schools and other colleges, such as Bergen, Brookdale, Gloucester, and Middlesex County Colleges; Glassboro and Kean State Colleges; Atlantic City, Cape May, Willingboro, Camden, and Cherry Hill Libraries; Hackensack and Parsippany Troy Hills Adult Schools; and Flemington, South Plainfield, and North Hunterdon County High Schools. These were in addition to all of the other sites. Truly the "streets" of New Jersey reaped the benefits of the educational resources made known to them by Thomas Edison State College.

In 1974-75, the counseling network expanded as a result of a \$100,000 grant from the Eli Lilly Endowment, Inc. Three counselors were added that year. The following year, the state continued the funding to maintain the sites already established. Only in 1976 was Jean Titterington able to focus on administering the network. Up until that time, she continued to travel the state

doing hands-on counseling and information sessions. In 1977, three additional counselors were added, bringing the total to eleven full-time counselors and two administrators. Four counselors covered north Jersey, five covered central New Jersey, and two served the south Jersey sites. This outreach approach did not change significantly until about six years later when the College began to focus inward on its own enrollments and growth instead of blanketing the state with educational information.

The missionary zeal was infectious with each new employee, from clerical staff to administrator, but new directions were inevitable. Although the College has never lost its determination to take the message to the streets, it gradually changed the focus on what was to be accomplished by it.



Assistant Dean Tom Eklund (deceased), Dr. Samone Jolly, Associate Dean (center), and Program Advisor Dottie Sconyers enjoy a break from their advising responsibilities.

III. I Did It My Way



Never has a song title more aptly fit the subject than the famous song *My Way*,¹ which describes the leadership and management styles of all three presidents of Thomas Edison. What makes it especially apropos is that each of the three presidents had a unique management style, and each was needed for that specific style at the time of their tenure as president. Just as the song states, for each president, there were times when the challenges were almost more than could be handled, but each stood tall. They laughed and cried; they won, they lost; and certainly the record shows that they took the blows — they did it their way.

As I reviewed Thomas Edison's history during the tenure of each of the three presidents, it was clear that each was a visionary, but their individual talents and "way" might be likened to a bellwether, a dreamwalker, and a sociable weaverbird. They did it "their way." This chapter focuses on the unique leadership, management style, and personalities of the three presidents: Dr. James D. Brown II, Dr. Lorraine R. Matusak, and Dr. George A. Pruitt.

THE VISIONARY BELLWETHER

Many of those who were interviewed for this history spoke of Dr. James Douglas Brown II as a visionary, one who has the dream, who interprets and personalizes it, and who accepts the challenge to make the dream a reality. In his "Eighteen-Month Report" to the Board of Trustees, Dr. Brown stated that, "We were given a dream, a concept, and we created an institution." Who is this man who took the dream and created an institution, who dared to stretch the boundaries and expand the dream, even when advised not to do so?

In her book *Dreamwalker*, Mary Summer Rain wrote that a true visionary is not the leader but rather the follower, one who humbly follows the truth, who refuses to walk ahead of his people but rather cherishes walking beside them, among them.²

This was Dr. Brown's way, but like a bellwether who leads his flock while walking among them, Dr. Brown maintained a delicate balance in his management style. He could see beyond immediate needs, win others to the vision, the mission, and guide his staff by allowing them a strong voice. Yet he was very much the ram, or to use a more colorful term, the bellwether. He could appear passive, restrained, and playful, or he could appear aggressive, domineering, temperamental, even angry. James Douglas Brown, as described by those who worked with him, had *all* of those qualities.

Hindered to some extent, for one year, by being called a director in a department within a department, Dr. Brown frequently had to appease, to consult with, and to subjugate his own plans because the concept and its challenges were given to him, not developed by or with him. Within that first year he and his two closest staff, Thomas McCarthy and Jean Titterington (later joined in October 1973 by Dr. Arnold Fletcher), developed the management pattern that prevailed until July 1979. Dr. Brown worked in and among this "quadrumvirate." A few criticize him, suggesting that he allowed too much input from his senior staff.

Dr. Paul Jacobs, former director of Testing and Assessment, recalled that the first staff of six to ten people were improvising constantly as they worked with each new challenge. Others recalled that everyone sat around the table and designed programs and procedures on the spot. No one had experience in creating an external degree college. Even the chancellor and vice-chancellor of the Department of Higher Education were modeling the Thomas Edison experiment after the New York Regents degree program. Dr. Brown had administrative experience, Tom McCarthy had been a registrar before, Dr. Fletcher's background was in music education, Jean Titterington had been in educational counseling with the military and the YWCA, and Dr. Paul Jacobs's expertise was in test development and research. Each was well qualified to do what he or she was hired to do, except that they were also asked to create something that had not existed before. This became even more critical when they realized early on that the New Jersey model for an external degree would have to be different from the New York model.

As they sought external funding, struggling with the bureaucracy to get needed budget increases,

new staff positions approved, or proper facilities, each day must have seemed like sitting through a Barmecide feast: empty platter after empty platter is served with all the pretense of an enormous banquet. If the guests pretend long enough to enjoy and appreciate the imaginary "food," the host or benefactor (or the legislature, or the governor, or the department, or the foundation) would eventually be won over and would serve a real meal. It is a ghastly picture, but one for which there are many examples.

For fourteen of its twenty-five years, the College's physical, fiscal, and human resources were subject either to direct control or at least close scrutiny by various departments within state government. The Department of Higher Education, the Board of Higher Education, and the Office of Management and Budget each had a voice in determining the College's budget request before it was forwarded to the legislature and the governor. The state treasurer had to be courted, for she/he could influence the budget or the physical plant whether or not it was under that department's purview. The impact was global, yet it was specific.

To illustrate, the first commencement ceremony was held without using academic regalia and lacked some of the pomp and ceremony that is traditional with commencements. For the second commencement, Dr. Brown initiated the use of full academic regalia, and a bill for \$2,800 to cover all commencement expenses was submitted to the treasury for payment. Payment of this bill was denied. In a July 1974 memo to Maurice N. Rosenberg, Division of Budget and Accounting, Dr. Brown diplomatically requested that the budgeted expense be paid. A series of memos resulted as he was forced to negotiate — almost plead — with the nonacademics who wrote the checks for the College and who, in effect, passed judgement on expenses that they found unnecessary for a college they did not understand. The files do not indicate who subsequently funded the ceremonial regalia, but the money did come through, finally. The point is that under that system, Dr. Brown could not use his own budget to plan and implement programs he and his staff deemed appropriate.

For fourteen years, each new college position had to be approved by the Department of Personnel. In Fiscal Year 1974, Dr. Brown had to appear before the Civil Service Commission in an almost court-like situation to argue for an academic vice president position. All colleges have them, but Thomas Edison had to justify having one.

Early secretarial staff remember buying groceries and creating lunch trays for board of trustee meetings because the budget process did not allow a discretionary fund for such important occasions. Until autonomy in 1986, nothing — from college catalogs to advertising, business travel reimbursements to consultant fees, office supplies to toilet tissue — nothing escaped the discerning eye of the staff in the treasury who could not only deny payment but could also hold up an appointment or a new position for months at a time.

In February 1973 Dr. Brown received a letter from Chancellor Dungan suggesting that the staff, small as it was, seemed to be going in too many directions at once. This speaks to Paul Jacobs's reflection that they were improvising on a day to day basis. How could they know for certain what program or activity would work best when no programs or activities had ever been tried before — at least not in the context of an external degree program for adults? The criticism was appropriate from the chancellor's perspective, but Dr. Brown's reply reveals the extraordinary number of priorities that needed immediate attention.

He identified twenty priorities, any one of which required more staff, round the clock attention, or more funding. Time was the biggest factor. Everything had to be done yesterday. There is no doubt that the frustration was often equal to the missionary zeal those few people experienced daily. Dr. Brown, the visionary bellwether, walked his staff through episode after episode.

He recalled some of the techniques they used to work around the state system. "We would finally get authorization to budget, for example, three new positions in counseling, and



Dr. James Brown in serious thought.

the budget would include salary funds for the positions. But we would delay hiring the people until mid-year so that we would only use half or part of the amount set aside. Then in early spring we would hire maybe two or three 'temporaries' in the same field, using the saved funds from the budgeted positions to pay them. The temporary staff was desperately needed, so we would justify the need for additional positions in the budget process. Once staff were on board, it was easier — although no guarantee — to get them approved for the next fiscal year than if we just played it straight and asked for more positions. It was a bureaucratic game we had to play, or we'd still be back at the staff level we were in '74 or '75."

In reflecting upon his acceptance of the appointment as director, he remembered specifically being approached by Chancellor Ralph Dungan at the Middle States Association annual meeting in early 1971. Dungan explained that he wanted to create for New Jersey an alternate educational path similar to what the New York Regents were creating for adults. He told Dr. Brown that he planned to start this "college" on about \$200,000 and asked him if he would be interested in directing the project. Dr. Brown had been dean of the School of Business Administration at Adelphi University and was director of Executive Programs at the Graduate School of Business at prestigious Columbia University, but the call to create something new was just too enticing.

The start up money was reduced from \$200,000 to \$150,000 through the state budgeting process, but Dr. Brown was not discouraged. "It was the most thrilling opportunity anyone could ever get. Looking back, though, I don't know why they waited until all the plans were laid before bringing me on board. I guess it was the same salary game we learned to play later on. However, I was hired effective September 1, 1972, and within less than a year, I was made a college president, with pay comparable to that of the other state college presidents, and the College was already firmly established. What I agreed to help create was well on its way, never to look back."

Dr. Brown was in a constant battle for adequate funding. He would submit a budget request for \$350,000, but by the time it went through the various levels of approval, the final amount recommended by Governor Byrne would be \$250,000. That was a very significant deficit for such a small budget, so Dr. Brown constantly sought outside funding. That year, grants from the Eli Lilly Foundation, Inc. and the Charles Edison Fund saved the counseling network and the degree development programs from folding.

Finally in May 1974, a new budgeting method was worked out with the Department of Higher Education. At last the College would have a one line budget in the department's budget, just like the other state colleges, and it would be allowed to handle its own financial affairs. His ranting and raving coupled with his incredible diplomacy at other moments began to see results.

However, in the spring of 1975 the state faced another round of budget cuts and imposed layoff demands. The College was told to layoff two staff people and submit the names chosen. Dr. Brown gave the names of two people who had already been terminated. This caused considerable trouble for the college until the Board of Trustees exercised its authority and passed a resolution which told the state that the authority to hire and fire was the Board's and not the state's or the Department's. The Board's action supported Dr. Brown's position to save its people and to make budget cuts in other ways. Under his leadership, the College imposed its own five percent budget reduction and set the pattern for future "imposed" layoff demands by the state, none of which have ever been accepted by succeeding presidents.

Similarly, in the Fiscal Year 1977 budget process, the request was for \$563,000, and the final amount approved by the governor was \$501,000. That significant difference always meant considerable restraint and stress for the bellwether and his staff. It meant going to the legislature, specifically the Appropriations Committee, to plead for restitution. (Fortunately for me, the funds were restored that year, and five new positions were authorized, one of which was mine.)

Although the Board was usually very supportive of Dr. Brown, at the same time it took a much

more hands-on role in college operations. Taking their cue from other college boards in the state, some of the members wanted to participate in reappointment evaluations and decisions and in various program decisions. This is understandable considering that the original Advisory Council and the succeeding board of trustees developed personnel policies, were active in the budget process, and exerted influence in the relationship with the New York Regents, well outside the bounds of their authority. Everyone was growing up together. Dr. Brown did convince the Board that it was inappropriate for them to participate in evaluations of already employed personnel, but the Board continued to request participation in hiring decisions of senior level positions before offers of employment were to be made. This issue was later resolved under President Matusak's administration.

Another part of the Board's hands on role was its insistence that board materials be more organized. Many of the board members had experience on other boards, so they had preconceived expectations. In this instance their hands on directions were beneficial, but always being short-staffed and having monthly meetings was particularly time consuming for the president and his staff. Board Chair Jonathan Theismeyer wrote to Dr. Brown several times in late 1973 and early 1974 to give instructions for preparing the materials. He requested that the Board receive the materials at least three days in advance, that time be allotted for discussion but limited to keep it moving, and that there be no handouts at the meeting so that the members would take responsibility for bringing their packet with them.

In a later letter to Dr. Brown, the Chair again wrote: "The material in the folder should be fastened and separated by tabs, so that we will all have the same material right at our finger tips. Will you please date each sheet for reference. We frequently get two or three editions of an item, and it is confusing as to which is the latest. I think it is clear that this Board of Trustees has no intention of being a rubber stamp, and wishes to be deeply involved. I hope you appreciate that this is a real plus and, in fact, gives you a lot more support than if they were a flabby, inactive group. This is especially important during the formative years of an institution. It also means that any item of real significance in the administration of the College (budget, physical facilities, professional personnel, new programs, etc.) should be discussed with some members of the Board prior to the meetings. This will help to avoid some of the lengthy debates we have experienced in the past."

These requests were not unreasonable, but in view of the demands placed on the small staff to develop programs, seek external funding, win the state to the legitimacy of the "new tradition," and do one-hundred other things all at the same time, little time was left for refining board materials. It was all part of the growing pains of a new institution. As the College matured, the need for monthly board meetings decreased; they were reduced to five per year under Dr. Matusak and four per year under Dr. Pruitt. Other refinements gradually occurred as well, as will be discussed in other sections of this book.

For those who worked with Dr. Brown in the programmatic aspects of the College, especially the ones who "took the message to the streets," he was seen as occasionally eccentric but very affable with a delightful sense of humor. He was viewed as hard working and extremely dedicated. Others who had to witness his battle-station posture saw the stressed side, the signs of strain, the occasional tirade that came from always having to fight to get equal treatment for Thomas Edison. At this time Thomas Edison's president was the only state college president who was not given housing or a housing allowance, and Dr. Brown was driving an old police car assigned him by the state motor pool — other presidents had new cars or chauffeured cars. These were personal affronts to the president in addition to the programmatic, fiscal, and human resource issues Dr. Brown constantly faced.

Dr. Israel Rubin, Professor Emeritus at Jersey City State College and longtime faculty consultant with Thomas Edison, summed up his recollection of Dr. Brown's personality this way: "I remember Brown presiding over the Academic Council meetings. He had a very strong

personality. Great charm. I always thought he would make a wonderful diplomat. He had the ability to maintain order and not let things get heated in discussions. He would always interject humor and tend to bring us back to a more amicable, relaxed level in discussions."

Many others suggested that Dr. Brown's leadership style made staff feel as if they were working in a family-owned business. Family pride, success, and loyalty were evident in the daily operation.

Dr. Brown himself said, "It was fun. It was one of the few jobs I ever had where you go in through the front door with a smile on your face. You always knew it was going to be another interesting day of questions to ask and exciting things to do."

Reflecting on his management of other people, he smiled with that boyish grin he never lost and said: "We all made a lot of mistakes. It was daily on the job learning because everything was so new, but I never minded when the staff made mistakes. We made the necessary corrections and went on. I told them never to hide the mistakes because if you keep trying to cover yourself and keep covering up the mistakes, you get nowhere. You make all of us lose, and then the College loses. Our goal was really to make the state of New Jersey one large campus. To do that we had to allow ourselves the inevitable mistake as long as we corrected it and learned from it."

Dr. Brown recalled an incident that took place when the College moved from Olden Avenue in Trenton to the Forrestal campus in Princeton. In preparation for the move, which had one delay after another, many files and records, especially financial records, were put in storage for safe keeping. When the move finally took place, Jim Humphrey, then director of administrative services, was notified that the warehouse was destroyed by fire, and all the records were lost. Dr. Brown commented, "When Jim Humphrey told me about the records, we both just sat down and cried. Jim was a good man, and we shared a lot of hard times together."

When asked for anecdotes or stories about his tenure as president, Dr. Brown spoke animatedly about the time he brought home the bust of Thomas Alva Edison: "I got that when I was at the Edison Foundation offices in north Jersey. I was visiting the directors there, hoping to get some money from the foundation to support the College. There were these three older gentlemen who were responsible for administering the assets of the Edison family. I didn't get any money on that trip, but as I looked around, I saw a bronze bust of Edison. I said, 'Maybe we could have the bust,' and the one gentleman said, 'Yes, this is a beautiful sculpture. We have two of them: one down in a college in the south and this one. They're identical, so why don't you take this one. We'll throw it in the trunk, and you can take it with you.' Well, I just put that trunk lid down and got out of there before they changed their minds. It's a beautiful piece of sculpture, and it's displayed so nicely at the College."

Whenever that story is told, the image of Dr. Brown making a fast getaway with a bust of Edison in the trunk of his car comes to mind, but at least he had something to show for that particular fund raising effort. Interestingly the Edison Foundation later gave \$1,500 to provide special lighting and furnishings for the placement of the bust that now sits in the reception area of the Kelsey Building.

Dr. Brown saw the College through the successful completion of its first accreditation process, coming finally in the spring of 1977. He negotiated the move to the Kelsey Building in Trenton, and he saw the fulfillment of the dream to establish a Statewide Testing and Assessment Center that would unite the colleges in their efforts to serve adult students through that unique method of evaluating credentials.

However, perhaps stressed from the growing demands of fund raising, constant struggles with underfunding from the state bureaucracy, battles for appropriate facilities, and increased staffing needs, Dr. Brown began to reassess what else he might want to do with his future. Still a young man, he opted to take a leave of absence to do scholarly research and writing in the area of nontraditional study. The June 6, 1978, minutes of the Board of Trustees meeting show a resolution accepting, with regret, his decision to do this. In part, the resolution states: "[The Board

hereby accepts] his resignation as of June 30, 1978, with deep appreciation for his fine leadership in bringing the College into being, fostering its growth, and developing it to the status of a fully accredited state institution."

As was his style, Dr. James Douglas Brown stood tall and did it his way. He led and inspired his staff by walking with them like the visionary bellwether that he was until it was time to move on.

The board authorized a one year leave of absence with pay so that this dynamic man could rest, revitalize, and hopefully return. That was not to be.

THE VISIONARY DREAMWALKER

The 1933 song titled "Did You Ever See a Dream Walking", popularized by Eddie Duchin and his orchestra and later recorded by Bing Crosby, identifies the "I Did It My Way" style of Dr. Lorraine R. Matusak. Although the illusion intended in the song is romantic, the phrase calls to mind the term "dreamwalker." Also a visionary, like her predecessor, Dr. Matusak saw the vision — the dream walking — and said, "Let's just see how far we can take it." That was, and is, the spirit of the second president of Thomas Edison, Dr. Lorraine R. Matusak, the dreamwalker: one who without a personal agenda travels the path of knowledge and goes where the spirit of truth leads.

As one looks at her personality and at her presidency, it is clear that Dr. Matusak knew how to systematically create and mold the College into its next stage of development. In so doing, she lifted the organization to new heights; she changed an institution into a college. This was the dreamwalker, and this was her way.

It is interesting that President Brown was instrumental in bringing President Matusak to the College. Sometime during the year of his leave of absence, he told board member Eleanor Spiegel, "I have just the person for you. You should contact Lorraine Matusak and get her to apply for the position. She's exactly what the College needs at this time."

Dr. Matusak had significant experience in developing adult programs at the University of Evansville in Evansville, Indiana, and it was in that capacity that she met Dr. Brown, for whom she had high regard and affection. She commented: "I had always been on the cutting edge in higher education. In 1974, I was with the team that started the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) and met Jim Brown. We were on the same committee, and Jim talked endlessly about Thomas Edison. I was fascinated even back then. Later, when Jim and

I were on a plane together, we talked more about the College, what had been happening with it, and some of the challenges it faced. Then early in 1979, Jim called me about his resignation and what he hoped would happen when new leadership was brought in. He encouraged me to apply for the presidency. Shortly thereafter, Ellie Spiegel called to invite me to apply. It seemed like an extraordinary opportunity to pursue something I could really believe in."

The story of her interview and, later, her first few days at the College shed new light on the college image as outsiders might perceive it. Arriving at the Forrestal campus for her meeting with the search committee, she was met by trustees George Hanford, Eleanor Spiegel, and Robert Taylor, along with Jean Titterington from the staff. George Hanford was the search committee chair.

Dr. Matusak is an energetic, fiery redhead who plans every event to the nth degree, so she was astounded to see that nothing was prepared in advance, not even the coffee. She laughed as she recalled that first meeting: "It could have been so awkward, and I really was tempted to laugh. Here was a college that was interviewing candidates for the presidency, and nothing was ready. There were no materials prepared in advance. Chairs had to be pulled together to make room for the five of us. I could see that the trustees were embarrassed. George Hanford with his droll sense of humor tried to help. Bob Taylor chatted away, I think to keep me occupied while they prepared. Ellie Spiegel was particularly embarrassed that there was no coffee prepared. I learned later that almost everyone was a coffee drinker, so maybe the first pot had already been consumed. But I remained unflappable. I remember saying that I knew how to make coffee and proceeded to make it."



Second President Dr. Lorraine R. Matusak

It went quite smoothly after that. She continued with her reflection: "Everyone was so pleasant. I can see them sitting around the table. George was on my left, Jean on my right, Bob Taylor always so upbeat, and dear Ellie — so warm and encouraging. I remember at one point George Hanford said, 'Now tell me. You're giving me all of this professional stuff, and we have all of these credentials. But tell me about you. What do you do for yourself? Who are you?' And I liked that because it gave me a chance to talk about myself, about my dogs — my German shepherds Jolly Good and Ziggy, and my poodle Impy — about my interest in canoeing, my joy in entertaining. I talked about my own concerns. Could I be the professional, creative, visionary president, an organizer and leader, and still lead a life of my own? It turned out to be an excellent interview for all of us. I also remember that when I got back to Evansville, the first thing I said was, 'Guess what I did today. I made coffee,' and my vice president told me that I would make a good president because I knew how to stay down to earth."

Feeling more relaxed after George Hanford urged her to talk about herself, she then talked about her vision for Thomas Edison, her role as leader, and what she thought her challenges might be.

At the University of Evansville, she had created a new college within the system, one designed for alternative education opportunities for the greater Evansville community. In many ways it was a mini Thomas Edison. Prior to Evansville, she had designed an alternative baccalaureate program at the University of Minnesota, and her national associations and committee work all focused on new pathways for adults in higher education. In fact, her own doctorate had been earned at the Fielding Institute in California, one of the few alternative postgraduate programs in the country. Her interests and experience had been preparing her for the presidency at Thomas Edison as if she had planned it that way.

Reflecting on her interview she remembered that she saw in Thomas Edison an organization that had been started by an extraordinarily creative genius who had sown the seeds of his vision to the extent of his abilities, and the time had come for a leader who could organize the scattered seeds, bring direction to the growth, and manage the harvest of ideas, products, and services. By the time she sorted through her own interests and those she perceived for the college, Lorraine Matusak concluded, "I want that job. I'm the right person for Thomas Edison College."

Dr. Matusak returned to the College to meet with the chancellor of Higher Education, Dr. T. Edward Hollander and members of his cabinet. This was not customary, since the Board of Trustees was the hiring authority, and at best, a meeting with the chancellor should have been after the fact, a courtesy interview. She recalled that the search committee had enthusiastically recommended her appointment but that there seemed to be "some sort of problem," and they asked her to return to meet with the chancellor.

The chancellor's only reservation was that Fielding Institute, where she earned her doctoral degree, had not yet received its full accreditation. He was concerned that this might present problems for the College. Again, her recollection of events is tinged with humor as she spoke of that interview: "One of the first things he said to me was, 'Well, I gave you a hard time didn't I?' And I said, 'Yes, you did. Why?' He said, 'Well, nobody I know, knows you.' My response was, 'Isn't that interesting. Nobody I know, knows you.' We both grinned as he said, 'Touché.'" There being no further complications, the presidency was offered to Dr. Matusak. She accepted, and her starting date was set for July 1, 1979.

Dr. Matusak knew Acting President Arnold Fletcher through her association with CAEL, and she knew that he had been a candidate for the presidency. When he received word that she had been offered and had accepted the position, Dr. Fletcher called her in Evansville, Indiana, to wish her well. She remembered the conversation. "He said to me, 'Congratulations. I believe they have accepted the best person for the job — of course, other than me.' He told me that he was looking forward to working with me and would give me full support. I had some apprehensions because he would be my academic vice president, and I wondered if he would put roadblocks in my way. But I would have stumbled many more times along the way if it weren't for that man.

He was my main support.”

Dr. Matusak's first day at the College was memorable. When she arrived in town, she learned that her house would not be available for several days, and she had no place to stay. She recalled: “I was driving a van packed with odds and ends not sent with the movers, and I only had one change of clothes because I expected to be in my house. I pulled into the parking lot at Forrestal and changed clothes right there in the van.

“I am by nature a very early riser, and wherever I've worked, I've insisted that people at least arrive on time, even if they can't be there as early as I might be. Well, my first day at Edison was true to form. The building was locked, and I couldn't get in. I finally found a security guard who let me in, but the only people inside were Jean Titterington, who had an hour's drive from north Jersey; Tom McCarthy, who was an early bird like me; and Arnold Fletcher, who drove in every day from south of Philadelphia. The receptionist wasn't there. No one else was there, and yet they were expecting me. I can laugh about it now, but it wasn't funny that day. We straightened that out in a hurry.”

Rosemary Breining, currently a project specialist in the Development Office, was then secretary to Jean Titterington. Shortly before Dr. Matusak's arrival, Jean broke her ankle and was out on a short sick leave until she got used to her crutches. Rosemary was a very organized, efficient secretary, and she remembered those first days with the new president very well. For various reasons, including preplanned vacations and meetings off campus, none of the other senior officers besides Jean Titterington were there, and the secretary to the president was ill. The preliminary budget for the next fiscal year was due that very day at the Department of Higher Education. Rosemary rose to the challenge, briefed Dr. Matusak on what had been submitted the previous year based on file records, typed the new recommendations for her, and drove the final papers to Trenton, hand-delivering them to the chancellor. The frustrations of that day and the seemingly haphazard organizational approach to running the College became a first order of business challenge for the energetic and very well organized new president.

Several days later she received a very warm reception from Jim Humphrey, whom Dr. Matusak recalled with much affection. He immediately brought catalogs for her to pick new office furniture. He told her, “This furniture looks too much like a man, and you're very much a woman.” Jim was a real charmer, and he was very caring and protective of Dr. Matusak during her tenure.

The next immediate challenge was the impending move to the Kelsey Building in Trenton scheduled for September. Once again it seemed like the Thomas Edison president would end up “a day late and a dollar short” because the planning, design, room placement, and restrooms had already been finalized. Just as Dr. Brown had no role in the concept development of the College and had to build on someone else's design, so Dr. Matusak had no role in the design of the newly remodeled historic facilities and had to adapt her dream weaver pattern to a design already in progress.

One somewhat humorous illustration of that is remembered by many staff members who worked on the third floor of the Kelsey Building where the president's offices were located, along with the Counseling Network offices. Each floor had only one restroom; the architect alternated restroom designations by floor — that is, the second floor featured a women's room, the third floor a men's room, and so on. Outside the president's office was a men's room. From the first day in the building until she left the College, Dr. Matusak did not go to another floor to use the ladies restroom. Instead, she would tape a “Woman Inside” sign on the men's room door whenever she went in.

EARLY CHALLENGES

In an interview with Dr. Matusak, she reminisced about the challenges facing her when she arrived in 1979. She was pleased to learn that the entire staff of the College was dedicated, bright,

and very capable. They each welcomed and were eager for new direction. As a team, they were not conflicted by the change in presidential style. To this day, these same people still talk about the incredible good fortune the College enjoyed in having the right president at the right time in its history.

Evidence of Dr. Matusak's organizational abilities was apparent from the start as she quickly outlined the College's most critical needs: 1) to create stronger ties with and get support from the higher education community, especially the other state colleges, 2) to create a stronger financial position with the state and with outside sources as well as taking more responsibility for fiscal stability internally, and 3) to turn the institution into a college.

Until her arrival, the Council of State College Presidents was an all-male group. She soon brought not only her unique feminine perspective to discussions, for they were utterly charmed by her sense of humor and her *joie de vivre*, but she also brought a wealth of experience and knowledge of the expanding adult education market. Verbiage was the first order of business. "They would talk about the eight state colleges and Edison," she recalled. "It was quite an accomplishment when I got them to say the nine state colleges because in their minds at that point, Edison was not one of them." Not only was she successful in educating her colleagues to a better understanding of the College, but as a council, they became a more cohesive group that could speak to the general public or the political community as a united front. Perhaps it was the broader fellowship and socialization that brought unity, but the effect was to bring a clearer acceptance of Thomas Edison by the other state colleges.

One of the critical issues she addressed was how to finance a college that some people looked at with suspicion. It was difficult for any institution to receive full support for a good budget, but it was especially so for an external degree program. Who could identify with it? Where were the classrooms? Where were the dormitories, the football stadium, the library, the student union? Financing programs and methods for earning degrees was too much like financing just another state office.

Each day seemed to bring state-imposed fiscal dilemmas. In her monthly newsletter to the Board of Trustees, Dr. Matusak reported that the budget had been cut by \$5,000, taken directly out of the telephone account. This was further indication that the Joint Appropriations Committee did not understand the importance of telephone communication with the students who were not on campus. On other occasions, postage was cut, or advertising dollars were held up. Like Dr. Brown before her, the new president devoted much of her time to educating the legislature, but Dr. Matusak brought a new framework to the picture, and it did get modest results. She reflected: "It required innovative techniques to inform the legislature and the governor."

Chancellor Hollander recalled: "Through Lorraine Matusak's leadership, the College made the case that Thomas Edison was the most cost effective college in the state, perhaps in the nation. Supporting its minimum requirements were to the state's advantage as well as the College's."

The solution was for the College to become as self-supporting as it could be through outside funding where possible, but primarily through student revenues, that portion of the total budget that could be carried forward if it exceeded budgetary needs. At that time in the state, even if the College prudently managed its resources, none of the state appropriation monies could be carried forward into the next fiscal year. The state system certainly did not encourage or reward good fiscal management. Chancellor Hollander recalled that, "We were able to persuade the budget director to finance the infrastructure for the College with the understanding that the College would be aggressively entrepreneurial in seeking external funding and would expand its student enrollment to increase student revenues."

Excellent in theory, but nothing in state government was that simple nor was it necessarily honored. Where funding might be restored for the telephone or postage budget, facilities might be taken away because a lower level budget officer thought the college was not really a



Dr. Lorraine Matusak settling into her new office in the Kelsey Building, September 1979

"college" (see Chapter Four).

Although both the chancellor and Dr. Matusak look back with fond memories of what they were able to accomplish for Thomas Edison, they clashed on many issues throughout the three years of her presidency. Two personal issues topped the list. All other state college presidents had either a limousine with a driver or at least a "presidential-looking" car, and all other state college presidents had their housing provided. Dr. Matusak's car continued to be the old police car assigned to Dr. Brown. As for housing, it was denied her. The chancellor placed the responsibility on "state government," which in turn placed the responsibility on the chancellor. Dr. Hollander reported that, "She didn't negotiate for housing when she came here, and a year later when she found out that the other presidents had housing, it was too late to renegotiate. I couldn't move it, although she believed that I could have if I wanted to. It remained a sore point between us." Disparate treatment of the College continued on many levels throughout the years, especially as each new administration came into power and would have to be oriented to the special needs of the institution.

Looking internally, the first order of business for Dr. Matusak was to redirect the energies of the Board of Trustees from an operating group to a policy making board. This challenge was extraordinarily delicate and required the ultimate in management skills. A board of trustees is more than a governing body; it is a group of people who volunteer their time for an institution they come to love. To change the behavior of a board and keep that board intact and still dedicated meant bringing about change without damaging egos, moving forward without critiquing the past.

Because the Board had been so intimately involved in the operation of the College from the beginning, it would have been disastrous to try to redirect it by telling the members that their pattern of operation was wrong. Dr. Matusak's approach was brilliant. She brought in Mary Louise Peterson from the National Association of Governing Boards. A professional trainer and developer of boards of trustees, Mary Louise Peterson knew how to work with every conceivable personality any one board might present. In a retreat/workshop setting, she reoriented the Board to what its purpose should be and how to get there. She was masterful as she reviewed the stages in the Board's own evolution, and she helped them to understand that their next important work was to become a policy board. The workshop was a major success. Hearing the analysis from an outsider and understanding it to be valid, the Board accepted its role and rapidly became the most effective dynamic board in the state.

The second focus internally required the patience and long-term vision of a true dreamwalker, for what she might set about to change in a few weeks had to come from within — from the staff — and that was to begin the reorganization of the institution and to respond to the recommendations in the Middle States Accreditation Team Report. The College achieved its first unqualified accreditation in 1977, two years before Dr. Matusak's arrival, but there

were several recommendations that would have to be addressed before the College would undergo its next accreditation review in 1982. The academic aspects of that 1977 accreditation will be discussed in a separate chapter, but one important administrative concern was the lack of staff input in long-range planning. Dr. Brown's leadership grew out of a "department within a department" concept, and as it grew into an institution, the senior staff along with the president continued to process plans and goals via that foursome: the president, the one existing vice president, the registrar, and the director of counseling.

Dr. Matusak's plan was to restructure, and she did it by getting everyone involved. American Council on Education representative Dr. Robert Garnett was hired to train the entire professional staff in how to conduct its own self study. What followed was the first all college review led by a small committee of mid-level professionals with staff from all



Dr. Matusak and Registrar Tom McCarthy review the 1981 Commencement script

levels serving on subcommittees. Their charge was twofold: 1) to describe all administrative procedures currently used in the operations of the College, and 2) to recommend changes for streamlining or improving procedures. The entire process was to have taken seven months; the actual process, begun in March 1980, took almost two years as each of the recommendations for change was addressed.

This was one of the most significant turning points in the College's history, at least prior to autonomy, because it set in place the organizational structure and responsibility that moved the College forward in its development as an institution. It was the first long-range planning strategy to unite staff in the overall mission as opposed to individual departmental goals, and the timing was right for strengthening the organizational structure in preparation for the 1982 Middle States accreditation site visit.

Also within this same time frame, Dr. Matusak succeeded in getting two new vice-presidencies approved: a vice president for public affairs and a vice president for administration and finance. Dr. Richard Hansen was hired for the former, and Fred Gruel for the latter. The institution was looking and sounding more like a college every day.

Some of the recommendations from the Implementation Committee, as it was called, included new reporting structures. This caused some consternation from those who had been considered senior-level managers up to that point, but everyone tried to get behind the changes. When the Reaccreditation Team site visit time came in March 1982, the college had completely studied and restructured itself, refined its processes, and united its staff. Now staff not only believed in the mission, but each staff person accepted ownership of the organization and its mission.

Dr. Jerry Middlemiss, now associate dean for Life Long Learning, Evening College, Drexel University, was one of the Implementation Committee team chairs. He recalled some of the excitement and the cynicism staff members experienced as they worked through desk audits, program analyses, promotional materials, counseling and advising techniques, budget analysis, external relations, and every other aspect of college operations and services. "We were doing TQM [Total Quality Management] before TQM became the buzzword," he said. "Some people wondered if their voice would be heard, and would it make a difference, but the president listened, and she made recommendations that 'empowered' staff and opened the lines of communication. Dr. Brown took a state agency and made it a state institution, but it still was under the state thumb. Dr. Matusak took the institution and in the eyes of the staff as well as the public, she made us a college. The Implementation Committee process, while it may not have been textbook by some expert's standards, solidified and strengthened the organization."

Director of Testing and Assessment at the time, Dr. Paul Jacobs remembered the reorganization and restructuring as critical to the accreditation process. The Middle States Association was being asked to accredit a college that seemed to have no construct. To that somewhat conservative body, the model as it was presented during the 1977 review seemed skewed against academic matters. The emphasis was on counseling for the nonenrolled potential student — that "serving-the-state" mindset. Dr. Matusak understood their concerns, and her response via the new long-range planning approach satisfied all of those concerns, refocusing the College on its academic integrity.

Dr. Jacobs also remembered a short-term slogan attributed to Dr. Matusak. "Do it, delegate it, or dump it." That was her philosophy," he said. "She'd say, 'Let's do this; let's not endlessly shuffle the papers.' That was another contribution she made in the day to day management. She was very tuned in to modern organizational and business processes."

Jerry Middlemiss's colorful comments bring closure to reviewing this aspect of Dr. Matusak's leadership. "It was like a fraternity. We were young, vibrant, and there were all those struggles, like in a family. You scream and holler at each other, but you don't let the morons



Second President Dr. Lorraine Matusak chats with current President Dr. George Pruitt at the College's 20th Anniversary celebration

out there scream and holler at you. When we walked outside into the world, we were unified. We were the wave of the future. It was as if we were weaving some humongous tapestry that would be admired and emulated by the entire world."

Quoting Dr. Matusak directly supports this concept. She said, "In my mind, leadership is the ability to create a vision for what *could* be as opposed to what is. The staff at Edison were energetic, capable, talented people. They worked long hours, and their dedication was extraordinary, but they also seemed to be working through a maze, not seeing the big picture. If I had come in and told them what was wrong and what needed to be done, I would have had rebellion on my hands, my own *Mutiny on the Bounty*. That's why I went with the Implementation Committee. Everyone had a voice. And the outcome was that we charted a new course; we wove a new pattern that was, and still is, distinctive in all of higher education."

OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Another issue that faced the second president was the lack of state and national attention. Sports teams, a traveling choir, a Phi Beta Kappa Club, a powerful alumni association, a huge campus, or even a rioting student body can attract press attention, but the College had none of these. Recognizing this, Dr. Matusak literally took to the road, making public appearances, speaking at national association meetings, working with the state legislature, holding breakfast meetings, and generally promoting goodwill and acceptance for the College.

Dr. Alan Oster, then president of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, encouraged Dr. Matusak in her promotional campaign. He would introduce her at national meetings as the president who brought respect to alternative education and brought credibility to Thomas Edison State College. (Incidentally, the word "state" was officially added to the college name in 1980 during Dr. Matusak's administration.) In 1982, under her leadership, the College received its unqualified ten-year reaccreditation.

Another milestone was the gradual development of computerization at the College. When Dr. Matusak was hired, all data collection and storage was done off campus through the Educational Computer Network (ECN), a consortium venture with the other state colleges. The only computerized data Thomas Edison processed through ECN was student enrollments. All other records were still kept by hand and stored in hard copy files. Dr. Matusak took a proactive role with ECN, soon becoming the chairman of its board. Over time, she succeeded in getting several computers donated to the College, and eventually established full word-processing capabilities through other donations. This equipment was shared floor by floor in the Kelsey Building at first. It was much later that the College became fully computerized.

Within the newly restructured Division of Community Affairs, Dr. Matusak hired Dr. Richard Hansen as its first vice president. Under his management, she created the Office of Development, appointing Laura Adams (Dunham) as the first director, and created the Public Relations Office, hiring Barbara Waters (Eklund) as the first director. Her reorganization now complete, the College more closely resembled its colleague institutions in the state and nation. Less an anomaly by structure, the dream, the "new tradition," remained unique without appearing so. Staff members remember Dr. Matusak saying, "This is no longer a mom and pop shop. We are a college. Let's look like one while daring to be different."

The one reference made by many of those interviewed was the progress Dr. Matusak made in developing understanding and relationships with members of the legislature. She began what Dr. Pruitt later perfected, an intensive one on one dialogue with the state legislature as well as with the senators and congresspeople representing New Jersey in Washington, D.C. Dr. Matusak met over breakfast with district representatives, talked endlessly by telephone, befriended those who

seemed to express their own needs to her, and directed letter campaigns when all else seemed lost. She was tireless in her ability and willingness to talk about the College.

When she left Thomas Edison in the summer of 1982, the New Jersey Legislature passed a resolution honoring her work in the state and declared a Lorraine R. Matusak Day, June 30, 1982.

Dr. Harold Eickhoff, President of Trenton State College (now The College of New Jersey), published the article, "A President Salutes a President," in the *Trenton Times*, June 27, 1982, in which he praised Dr. Matusak and expressed his regret that she was leaving. Dr. Eickhoff's remarks are poignant and pointed and make a fitting closing to this focus on the visionary dreamwalker. He said in part: "It was during 1979, the year Dr. Matusak became president, that I first interviewed for the presidency at Trenton State. In many ways, our careers have had striking parallels as we addressed the challenge of our presidencies in a state that is not known nationally for its commitment to high quality, public higher education. Both of us have felt keenly that the key to public acceptance of state supported higher education was delivery of high quality offerings at a reasonable cost . . .

"As the only woman president of a public college in New Jersey, Dr. Matusak has served as a strong role model to other women administrators. Her professionalism has earned national reputation for herself, Edison College, and New Jersey. She has served as an exceptional ambassador of education representing what is right in New Jersey . . .

"I shall miss her lively wit, the ready smile, the disarming common sense of this quietly powerful individual. She is living proof that women's work is indeed in the house — and the Senate — as well as in the highest ranks of academic life."



Second President Dr. Lorraine Matusak returns to celebrate the College's 20th anniversary at the 1992 Commencement. Acting Vice President for Administration and Finance James Humphrey received a Distinguished Service Award from the College and a special proclamation from the City of Trenton.

THE VISIONARY WEAVERBIRD

Admirers and supporters of the three presidents consistently refer to each of them as visionary, but the distinctions among them, the style that says "I Did It My Way," is what excites the historian.

Like the first president, Dr. George A. Pruitt could and did walk among his people, but that was not his forte. Like the second president, he followed the path of knowledge and truth without thought of personal gain, but that was not his forte either. No, his expertise was in his ability to live the dream, to orchestrate elaborate, complex plans that can produce a symphony, which broadly interpreted means a harmony or an agreeable blending. But he was more than a composer. He was a master builder much like the sociable weaver,⁵ a variety of weaverbird that builds the most elaborate communal nests in the world. They are architectural masterpieces. The nesting chambers are accessed by long, upward sloping entrance tunnels. Up to 300 birds can live together in this apartment complex, and the nest may remain in use for more than one-hundred years. Through his weaverbird talents, Dr. Pruitt was able to take the "straw and twigs" around him and weave a strong, long-lasting "home" from which he launched programs and services. Motivated only by the greater good and what was best for the College, his constructs will endure for generations to come.

Dr. George A. Pruitt was the perfect selection to follow the first two presidents. As one looks at his personality, his leadership style, and his accomplishments, the evidence of his weaverbird way will illustrate what he has built and how he is known.

Just as Dr. Brown knew Dr. Matusak and encouraged her to apply during the presidential search process, so Dr. Matusak knew of Dr. Pruitt and encouraged the search committee to invite his candidacy, although he knew about the College from its beginnings.



Dr. George A. Pruitt

When the presidency became available, Dr. Pruitt was the executive vice president of the Council for Adult Experiential Learning (CAEL) in Columbia, Maryland. Thomas Edison was one of ten institutions that were part of an educational movement to look at whether or not it was possible to award college credit for the assessment of experiential learning. Foundation funded, the ten institutions along with Educational Testing Service created the council, and the first major result of their study was the establishment of the portfolio assessment process for evaluating college level learning. Thomas Edison's leadership role in the exploration of that process and the perfection and implementation of it is well known in higher education (More on CAEL's beginnings will be presented in Chapter 6).

Dr. Pruitt explained: "There are certain prototypical institutions in American education. Among the private institutions, the Ivy League schools and a few smaller ones surrounding them stand as prototypes. When you think of the large state research university, most people think of the Big Ten schools. When you think of the prototype among community colleges, you think of Miami Dade in Florida. In each case, the institution has pioneered and set the standards for that particular system. When you think about the prototype for adult education, there are only Thomas Edison and Empire State College, each still being unique in the variety of services and methods for degree completion it provides."

Yes, Dr. Pruitt was familiar with Thomas Edison right from the start, and the timing could not have been better. He was nominated for the presidency, and when approached to submit his letter of candidacy, he responded affirmatively. He told an interesting story about that.

A friend of his, Dr. George Ayers, was also a candidate at Thomas Edison, and both of them had applied at Chicago State University as well. Dr. Pruitt grew up in Chicago, and he'd had a sentimental interest in returning there. As it turned out, Dr. Ayers was appointed president at Chicago State, and Dr. Pruitt was selected for Thomas Edison. Both institutions fared well by their choices.

Excited about the outcome, Dr. Pruitt commented that Chicago State University was a very old institution; the nature of the presidency would have been very traditional there. At Thomas Edison, however, he had the opportunity to create something. In his words, "It's easier to create anew than to change the old. I was eager to be a part of that creation, and it has not ceased to be exciting even after fifteen years."

Trustee Alan Ferguson chaired the search committee. Rita Novitt, George Hanford, and Robert Taylor served on the committee along with Board Chair Eleanor Spiegel. Bob Taylor reported: "The presidential search is the most important thing a board of trustees does. We had to reassess who we were, where we were in our growth, and what kind of leadership we needed to take us where we believed our institution needed to be going."

All the members agreed that as selectors of college presidents, the Thomas Edison Board picked only winners; in fact, they were nontraditional in their selection, picking first a woman and then an African American. In their thinking, it was a significant breakthrough for New Jersey and for higher education, an area of society that they believed tended to be conservative. George Hanford observed: "Whether or not the choice turns out to be the best choice depends upon the Board's understanding of the significance of succession. That means identifying what the resigning president leaves behind — the stability or lack of it, the vision or lack of it, the current problems as well as the accomplishments. When the Board looks for and finds the healthy succession, the institution remains strong and prospers. That was what was needed at Edison, and the trustees were very wise in choosing George Pruitt to be that successor. We didn't have a crystal ball. Perhaps we were just lucky, but I'd like to think that we were very very smart."

For Thomas Edison, the consistency of the Board in its dedication to the mission enabled the College to endure change. Under Dr. Brown's leadership, the basic programmatic elements started to take shape, but there was no real systemic, organizational infrastructure on which the College could expand and build. Dr. Matusak brought that organization to the institution. She created the structural context that the institution did not have, and she began to organize some of the programs into operational units that had responsibility and delivery systems' support to do the important work.

Dr. Pruitt recalled that the College had a clear sense of itself. It had a small core of very talented people — a great nucleus to build on. What it did not have were resources, influence, and an identity external to itself. He summarized the 1983 picture extraordinarily well: "We had about 3,000 students. We were basically tenants in our own facility, having only three of the five floors all to ourselves to do the work of the College. We had some use of the fifth floor, but significant space there had been given to another agency, and the first floor was just the Board Room and Prudence Hall. We had no place to grow or to expand.

"We were rather invisible in the legislature and the public arena. We had almost no alumni association at all, other than about twelve people who met occasionally with no sense of coordination with the College. The advancement program was still in the design stage, and there were no experienced fund-raising staff or foundation. There was minimal technology in house, although Lorraine worked hard toward that end."

These were not criticisms of Thomas Edison or its previous leadership. After all, the College was only ten years old. Dr. Matusak had several projects in progress that would have resolved some of these issues, but she was not able to complete them before she left. The College was drowning in a sea of paper that was being processed manually. Every office, every program was labor intensive.



The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Local 4277 presented Dr. George Pruitt with a proclamation in recognition of his 10 years as President of the College. Pictured from left: Louis Martini, AFT member; Dr. Susan Friedman, AFT Vice President; Dr. Pruitt; Dan Negroni, AFT President; and Julie Atwood, AFT secretary in 1993-1994

Dr. Pruitt elaborated further: "Finally, I had two vice-presidencies to fill almost immediately. Arnold Fletcher was retiring, and John Bernard, the second of two finance vice presidents in less than three years, resigned shortly after I arrived. Bringing in the right people would be critical for the College, and, of course, we did that with Mike Scheiring and Jerry Ice. Rich Hansen agreed to stay as the third vice president, and the four of us together created a strong leadership team to launch our strategy for student growth, financial survival, academic excellence, and state and national recognition."

REENGINEERING IN THE NEW TRADITION

Who can really say what the first order of business was for Dr. Pruitt, since everything seemed to always happen at once, but one of the restructuring aspects started by Dr. Matusak was the

realignment of staff in the student services area. The staff was committed to the mission of the College; few, if any, looked at their employment as just a good paying job. Therefore, it was an easy transition to make if the job a person was hired to do became obsolete, or if another job description became more important for the total health of the institution; existing staff were reassigned accordingly and given training and time to adjust. Continuing on with that restructuring, Dr. Pruitt determined that if Thomas Edison were to survive the inevitable budget cuts imposed by the state, the College would have to "grow itself," a phrase used consistently over the next fifteen years. It was necessary to assign existing staff to new responsibilities for which they had no training, no background, and perhaps no inclination. Normally, when institutions or corporations are faced with this situation, they "reengineer," which often means either firing everyone and hiring people with the qualifications needed, or retraining everyone to do what is needed. Dr. Pruitt believed that staff loyalty should be rewarded by providing the latter.

Academic counselors became admissions representatives or were reassigned to develop corporate programs. Program advisors specializing in academic content areas became either generalists or were reassigned to become portfolio advisors. The assistant to the academic vice president was asked to become a specialist in the new technologies. A program advisor had already been appointed director of development. Another vice presidential assistant became the executive assistant to the president. People hired to work on the statewide Educational Hotline, a telephone service to all New Jersey residents, were made Transcript Evaluators. Whatever was needed was staffed with existing personnel.

The roles of Jim Ratigan, now director of the Program on Noncollegiate Sponsored Instruction (PONSI), changed more often during his twenty-three years with the College than that of any other employee. Hired as an academic counselor, he soon became the assistant to the director of counseling, a mid-level management position. When the director resigned in 1980, Jim became director, moving into upper management. By this time, the AFL/CIO state union had organized a local within the College; being management, Jim was not a member of the local. However, following Dr. Pruitt's restructuring, especially within the Division of Community Affairs, Jim was reassigned to work with the PONSI Program. His new title did not qualify for management exemption by state personnel descriptions, so he became a union member by definition. During his two years in that title, he served as the local union secretary and then the union president. After several years, he was made director of the PONSI Program, moving back into mid-level management and out of the union. Jim viewed it all as an "opportunity" that he just had to ride with.

Dr. Pruitt summarized the "new tradition" in staff reassignment this way: "The message corporate America often gives today is to use each other up. Employees are useful for as long as they serve some purpose; after that, they are expendable. Both the company and the employees feel this way

about each other. Any sense of loyalty is gone. What Thomas Edison did was to capitalize on the loyalty. We reengineered this place before reengineering was a word that anybody knew, but we did it the right way."

Not all employees went along with their new assignments. One case in point eventually led to the only known case in history where the statewide union leadership filed an unfair labor practice suit jointly against a local union president and a college president.

A program advisor was reassigned to advise in the portfolio assessment office. He did not like his reassignment and made little effort to perform satisfactorily. When he came up for contract renewal, he was not renewed. All procedures were followed to the letter, with counsel given by the State Office of Employee Relations and the Attorney General's Office, but the employee was the local union president. All hell broke loose.

Firing or "nonrenewal" of a union president was not taken lightly by the statewide union leadership which quickly declared war on the College and on Dr. Pruitt personally. In fact, the state leader called Dr. Pruitt to tell him that the state union could not allow the president to "take down one of my soldiers," that he would have to make an example of Dr. Pruitt and the new local union president so that no one else would ever attempt anything like that again.

Their positions set, the process began: first, the three stages of grievances, followed by the arbitration hearing, and finally a court hearing before the State Office of Employee Relations. The process took eighteen months during which time an additional nineteen grievances were filed and processed, a twenty-two count unfair labor practice suit was filed, the College was picketed, and the president's background was investigated.

It was a challenge to "find the high ground," as Dr. Pruitt remembered it. The College had to maintain its integrity at all times; none of its spokespersons, certainly not the president, could give in to the temptation to "get into the mud and throw some." But stay on the high ground it did. The College won at every step, not only the nonrenewal issue, but all of the other grievances and the unfair labor practice suits as well. Many times well meaning people urged Dr. Pruitt to reconsider the nonrenewal just to make peace and bring it to closure, but once committed, and believing he was in the right, he rode it to its successful conclusion.

"It was worth doing," Dr. Pruitt concluded. "As an outcome, I think we now have the best employee relationships in a college in the state, and I think we have a respect for our local union that is second to none in the state. It was the right thing to do.

"However, just being right doesn't mean that all will turn out well. I knew that I was putting my presidency on the line. Had the conflict been so divisive as to polarize the college community, I would have won the battle but lost the war. There are times when you have to be prepared to fight, and you have to put the institutional welfare above your personal circumstance. I was clear about that, and I hope I never lose sight of that."

WORKING WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

As mentioned earlier, the Board of Trustees was aware that from its beginnings there was some tension between the College and the Department of Higher Education. Dr. Matusak resolved some of the issues during her three years at the College, but Dr. Pruitt had to bring it to closure. The most volatile issue was the disparate treatment regarding housing and transportation. The old surplus police car was still the president's designated car even after ten years. Fortunately, the age and condition of the car played to his advantage. When Administration and Finance Director Jim Humphrey requisitioned a replacement, an appropriate new car was provided. Later, with board approval, the College began leasing its own car for the president and no longer had to go through the state's Central Motor Pool. The housing issue took a little longer, but Dr. Pruitt finally received approvals for a housing allowance.

The third initiative Dr. Pruitt undertook brought outstanding results but not without some

criticism from the Department of Higher Education. When the College severed its ties to the New York Regents model and the accompanying cooperative agreement, it was forced to stop plans for the nursing degree under development by the Regents. During Dr. Matusak's administration, the dream for a nursing program was rekindled, but for a baccalaureate degree rather than an associate degree. The program had been through all of the approval stages by the Board of Trustees, by the Department of Higher Education, and by the Board of Higher Education, but it could not be implemented until funding had been approved for it.

At that time, the Department of Higher Education lobbied collectively for all state colleges and universities. This sometimes meant that one college's program might be put on hold in favor of another program, depending on what the chancellor and his staff believed the legislature would likely approve. The Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) for Thomas Edison was one of those programs that continually stayed "on hold."

For an individual college president to bypass the collective process and lobby independently was unthinkable — until Dr. Pruitt came to New Jersey. He explained: "I didn't know I was doing anything unusual. We needed funding to get this program going, so Rich Hansen and I launched our own lobbying campaign. There were two people who understood the College and who saw the benefits of a nursing program that could serve so many people at relatively low costs to the state. Assemblyman John Watson, an influential Democrat in the legislature was one, and Cary Edwards, Republican Counsel to the governor, was the other."

In support of the BSN program, Assemblyman John Watson introduced legislation that would provide the initial funding to launch the program. Through his influence and the months of lobbying efforts made by Dr. Pruitt and Vice President Hansen, the legislation was finally passed by both houses. However, any governor, and certainly Governor Tom Kean, was concerned with protecting the integrity of his budget; he did not like the legislature tampering with budget recommendations. Like others before him, he was prone to use the veto to exercise some discipline in the budget process. Had Attorney General Cary Edwards not been supportive of the BSN program, and had he not expressed that support strongly to the governor, the legislation would have been vetoed.

These independent lobbying/fund-seeking end runs, however, brought rebuke from the Department of Higher Education, particularly from the chancellor. Dr. Pruitt recalled a meeting with his colleagues in the Council of State College Presidents. Shortly after his arrival in the state, Dr. Pruitt learned that Governor Kean had announced huge budget cuts, proposed layoffs, and general fiscal cutbacks in all state agencies. Dr. Pruitt's colleagues said, "Welcome to New Jersey," and cautioned him about what he would not be able to do. However, by the time Dr. Pruitt finished his lobbying campaign for the nursing program, the legislature had appropriated \$245,000 above the governor's recommendations, and the governor supported and signed it. Chancellor Hollander, however, was not happy. According to Dr. Pruitt, the chancellor's view was that there should be only one voice speaking out for higher education, and it should be the chancellor's. Dr. Pruitt spoke eloquently as he reflected back: "I've never supported the one voice view. I don't see how a president can voluntarily, or even in face of coercion, subordinate his or her obligation to the people of the state to another officer who has a similar obligation to the people of the state. A choir is a much stronger voice than a solo. I made that point with the chancellor. I absolutely was not going to stop having dialogue with legislators, cabinet officers, the governor, the president of the United States, the pope — anybody in the world who could help advance this college."

"I offered to work with the chancellor in terms of what the message was. I thought that the College had a vested interest in the success of the Board of Higher Education, and that board should have a vested interest in the success of Thomas Edison State College as well."

As he confirmed in an interview, Chancellor Hollander soon learned to trust in the integrity of Dr. Pruitt's position on various issues. He realized that Dr. Pruitt had no personal agenda; he was

motivated by what was right for the College. Once the chancellor could trust that Dr. Pruitt was not trying to undercut his authority, he was able to tolerate, even appreciate, this new and dynamic president. In fact, in that same interview, former Chancellor Hollander revealed the extent of that appreciation: "I think George Pruitt is one of the great college presidents in this country. He has certainly been a leader among the state college presidents and probably is close to being the dean of the state college presidents. His intellectual contribution to higher education is extraordinary. He has contributed to conventional and nonconventional areas of higher education, and New Jersey should be grateful to still have him among their presidents."



Dr. George Pruitt, Dr. Arnold Fletcher, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Thomas Edison; and Dr. James Fisher, President, Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, at Dr. Pruitt's Inauguration, 1983

TAKING A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN CHANGE

Two major initiatives in higher education occurred during the 1980s. The impact on state colleges and universities was unprecedented, and both came to fruition in 1986. One was Governor Tom Kean's "Challenge Grant" initiative, and the other was the state college autonomy legislation.

The Challenge Grant Initiative: Governor Tom Kean is given full credit for this initiative and rightfully so given that it was accomplished during his administration. Nevertheless, it was the combined work of members of the Council of State College Presidents and the governor's commitment to education that brought it to completion. Dr. Pruitt was one of those few presidents who advised the governor as to what would really help the colleges. Rather than saying, "Here's all the money you're going to get. Streamline your programs accordingly," a position often taken when revenues are down, Kean challenged each state college to define itself and its future according to what it *could* be if money were provided.

Governor Kean's approach is minimized by his critics even today because they do not understand where he got the money to fund the resulting projects. Dr. Pruitt explained it this way: "What Kean did was so extraordinary. He tied funding to rewarding initiatives. The actual dollars that went into higher education weren't any more, maybe less, than in the Byrne administration, which is not a criticism of Byrne. He handled the funding of higher education as every governor before and since has done, and that is to fund only the incremental cost requirement of the status quo. Tom Kean took the money that would have been given out in those incremental costs and put them in this Challenge Grant pot to be given out only to those institutions that qualified under the grant guidelines."

Thomas Edison's proposal did not deviate from its original mission to serve students where *they* are instead of where the College is. The future for the College was to do this through the emerging technologies. With the ongoing state fiscal crisis and the unlikelihood of the College independently accumulating enough capital to purchase the equipment necessary to move forward on its own, the Challenge Grant opportunity opened that door to the future. Thomas Edison was awarded \$1.8 million through the Challenge Grant initiative, and the electronic era was launched.

The significance of the Challenge Grant initiative goes far beyond what each of the nine state colleges, and later the community colleges, were able to achieve with the amount of money each eventually received. What happened during those years under Governor Kean was really not about money, as Dr. Pruitt analyzed it. It was about predictability. Each college applied for the amount of money deemed necessary to achieve excellence for itself. The money was awarded; it was not dangled out there like a carrot and then withdrawn. It was not promised, negotiated, or contracted and then withheld because of some other fiscal crisis. What had been happening, and what continues to happen in state government is the unpredictability. Dr. Pruitt stated that,

"You can manage with bad news, but you can't manage with no news or news that changes every week." He added that the political environment of the past eight years has made it almost impossible to plan, but the kind of reform that took place in 1986 under Governor Kean was the biggest improvement in public higher education in New Jersey since the 1966 reform that created the community colleges.

The dramatic success of the initiative was because it was not defined by the government or the higher education system. It was not defined by the Board of Higher Education or by the chancellor's office. It was defined by the individual institution, although the chancellor and the Board of Higher Education moved to support this educational reform, which may have seemed minor in view of the second major initiative.

State College Autonomy: The State College Autonomy legislation was many years in the making, starting primarily with the Commission on the Future of State Colleges' Blue Ribbon Panel that, among other things, considered creating a state university system similar to Pennsylvania and other states. Dr. Pruitt's first testimony before that panel was just two months into his starting date at the College, but his experience told him that such systems are seldom liberating. In fact, red tape and bureaucratic trappings only increase. Had the state gone that direction, it is unlikely that the governor's Challenge Grant initiative would have been a viable option for the state colleges.

Dr. Pruitt, vice-chair of the State College Presidents Council; Dr. Harold Eickhoff, president of Trenton State College (now The College of New Jersey) and chair of the Presidents Council; and Dr. William Maxwell, president of Jersey City State College, represented the state college presidents in pursuing the autonomy legislation, which would free the colleges from bureaucratic entanglements. Negotiating, informing, educating, persuading — their goal was to get legislation enacted that would allow the colleges to govern their own institutions, manage their own budgets, pay their own bills, approve their own hirings and firings, and do all of those things that the state or the Department of Higher Education had heretofore handled or monitored for them.

The legislation should never have been a partisan initiative. However, the autonomy legislation did have its partisan aspects. For example, making their rounds to win support for the bills, Dr. Pruitt called upon a state senator who was a Democrat. The original sponsors of the bills were two Democrats. Governor Kean, who favored the legislation, was a Republican governor, but because the partisan aspect was just emerging, Dr. Pruitt did not anticipate the unusual encounter.



First Row (l to r): Chancellor T. Edward Hollander; Dr. George Pruitt, President of Thomas Edison; Dr. James Fisher, President, Council for the Advancement and Support of Education; and Dr. Frederick S. Humphries, President, Florida A&M University; Second row: Trustees Robert Taylor, Tom Seessel, and Patricia Danielson during the Inauguration ceremonies for Dr. Pruitt, 1983

The senator stated clearly and up front that he favored the autonomy legislation in principle but that he would vote against it because the constituents who contributed most to his election and reelection campaigns were against the legislation. No amount of logic or information could change that. Since the state colleges could not offer major campaign contributions, the senator would not even consider the issue. Dr. Pruitt summarized his encounter as follows:

"He was not ashamed of his stance. This time it was one particular interest group being favored. Another time it might be the doctors or the store clerks, the corporations or the unions. It's what scares people the most about politics. The issue is seldom the issue."

This example regarding the New Jersey legislator is important for understanding Dr. Pruitt and a leadership style that constrains him as president of a public college to engage in the regulatory process that controls college resources, and to understand the process sufficiently to keep it from

encroaching on the daily operation and mission of that college. Many educators see such political machinations and are repulsed. They idealistically refuse to engage in it. Invariably, they lose. Dr. Pruitt always brings his reference point back to Thomas Edison's Board of Trustees and the support it gives both to the College and to him personally. He said, "The reason I can go out and advocate for this college is because at the end of the day I come back to a group of trustees who don't care about special interest groups and politics. All they care about is what is good for Thomas Edison, and they know that I will pick my battles carefully. They know and understand every action I take; they are well-informed. It takes an extraordinary mutual trust, and I have never known a stronger, more knowledgeable board than the Thomas Edison board."

After several years refining the legislation and gathering support, the State College Autonomy legislation was finally passed effective July 1, 1986.

FURTHER POLITICAL MANEUVERINGS

In his fifteen years at Thomas Edison, Dr. Pruitt had countless encounters with state government. His role in acquiring college facilities is a case in point.

When the first president, Dr. Brown, negotiated for facilities with Trenton Mayor Arthur Holland, the Treasurer's Office, the Chancellor's Office, Governor Byrne's Office, and whomever else may have been involved, the agreement was that if the College would move into the Kelsey Building in Trenton, the state would provide from its resources the capital requirements needed to maintain the facilities. The brownstones next to the College were to be reserved for the future use of Thomas Edison State College. That was the agreement on which the incumbents — President Brown, Mayor Holland, Chancellor Dungan, and Governor Byrne — shook hands.

The advantages to the arrangement were that the state would maintain the Kelsey Building and would renovate the brownstones. The downside was that the College was at the mercy of the state bureaucracy. In addition, the customary procedure was to have any such agreement codified in one of two ways — either by written and signed contract, or, as is more likely in state government, by enacting legislation to spell out the exact terms of the agreement. In this case the parties literally shook hands on the agreement. Nothing was contracted or codified.

Administrations change. Governors' priorities change. Personalities change. Loyalties change. Securing space for the College had to be fought anew each year. There was no predictability in the process. The College did not have control over its own facility, and it could not plan. Expansion was a serious problem. Fortunately for the College, many of the personalities were still living and were reachable. Chancellor Dungan reaffirmed to Chancellor Hollander his support of the agreement. Mayor Holland was still in office. Governor Byrne reaffirmed to Governor Kean the intent of the agreement. The issue was not resolved during that administration, but Governor Kean then reaffirmed to Governor Florio his support of the intent of the agreement, and under Governor Florio the legislation was finally passed, but not without the usual bureaucratic nightmares.

Jim Humphrey was acting vice president for two years when Michael Scheiring was on loan to Governor Florio. Jim had been with the College almost from the beginning, and he had been involved in all of the discussions as the administrations changed through the years. Jim was able to locate copies of memos and letters summarizing aspects of the discussions, and he hand-held the process through the legislature, not an easy task considering the usual delays, tabling, and session timing. Having the legislation in hand and having the buildings renovated and usable are two different things. When Jim retired in 1992, the College finally had the promise in writing. The next few years were devoted to getting additional legislation passed that would fund the renovations, and finally in 1996 groundbreaking for the townhouse renovations became a reality.

Creating an architectural masterpiece that would appropriately house the many facets of the College, its staff, and its programs was no easy task. The Statewide Testing and Assessment Center with forty-one colleges participating in the state continues to thrive under its new

name, Serving the Adult Collegian. The Center for Corporate and Public Partnerships with seventy-seven corporate members continues to exist as Corporate College Programs and the Center for Higher Education Programs. The Distance and Independent Adult Learning (DIAL) office, which includes the Going the Distance Public Broadcasting service program, the Computer Assisted Lifelong Learning (CALL™) Network, the new Interactive Television (ITV) program, and the community college Degree Pathways program, will be housed in the renovated townhouses. The Degree Pathways Program encompasses nineteen of the twenty-one community colleges at this time. The National Institute for the Assessment of Experiential Learning draws participants from around the world, and The John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy is unique in the nation and continues to attract national recognition for the College.

It takes special skill and insight to create a construct that considers not only the rapidly increasing physical needs of the College but provides the consistently mission related framework. It also provides the public support and recognition, the health and clarity of sound administration, and all of the other aspects surrounding a physical and philosophical structure. What Dr. Pruitt has constructed over the fifteen years of his tenure is unprecedented in the world, certainly in the United States, according to Nicholas Carnevale, board member and chair of the Foundation. "The College is in an almost explosive evolution, and I suppose one would have to call that a revolutionary rather than an evolutionary condition. That explosiveness in growth comes from Dr. Pruitt's leadership, his charisma, his desire, his focus."

As early in his tenure as December 1986, Dr. Pruitt's leadership was recognized and honored when the Exxon Foundation announced its selection of the 400 "most effective college presidents in America." Dr. Pruitt shared the limelight in New Jersey with the presidents of Princeton University, Drew University, Rutgers, and Brookdale Community College.

This is the master builder, the visionary weaverbird as seen in Dr. George A. Pruitt who continues in his presidency "doing it his way."

THE UNSUNG HERO — DR. ARNOLD FLETCHER

In a November 14, 1947 letter to his sister, President Harry S. Truman bemoaned that, “All the president is, is a glorified public relations man who spends his time flattering, kissing, and kicking people to get them to do what they are supposed to do anyway.”⁶

That may be true for all presidents, but it certainly must be true for interim or acting presidents, for often their time in office is so short that all they can do is maintain the status quo until the new president arrives. But they *are* the glue, and they *do* hold everything together while the new prospects are wined and dined, courted, investigated, and promised who knows what if they take the job. The interim or acting president is the unsung hero. He or she never gets listed in the annals as an official president; every protocol source says the same thing. In a way, it is as though the president said, “I’m going golfing for a year. Cover for me, but don’t think for a moment that you are really the president.” And so it goes among the unsung heroes.

Thomas Edison had an extraordinary unsung hero twice in its history: Dr. Arnold Fletcher. During Dr. Brown’s leave of absence and consequent resignation, Dr. Fletcher served as acting president for a full year. During the six months between Dr. Matusak’s resignation and Dr. Pruitt’s starting date, Dr. Fletcher again served as acting president.

Charismatic without being maudlin, of high moral character, artistically accomplished with a delightful sense of humor, and naturally easygoing, Dr. Fletcher has earned the respect and admiration of all who ever worked with him. A look at the combined eighteen months he served as acting president and at other events during his years with the College gives insight into some of these qualities.

Scanning the history of Thomas Edison State College or the history of New Jersey from 1972 to 1997 gives the strong impression that the state was eternally in a fiscal crisis. In board minutes, letters, memos, and newspaper articles, the fiscal picture of the higher education community was constantly portrayed as being in a state of panic. And so it was in 1978 when Dr. Fletcher first assumed his responsibilities as acting president.

He had been monitoring the enrollment statistics for months, and within the first six months of Fiscal Year 1979, he was predicting a \$250,000 shortfall in student revenue. This was recorded in the December board minutes, and Dr. Fletcher concluded that the College needed to have a better and more consistent method of projecting student enrollments. With students enrolling every business day of the year as opposed to the customary fall, winter, spring, or summer enrollment schedule at traditional institutions, budgeting for student revenues was almost impossible. Although he devoted considerable energy and thought to resolving this dilemma, as did Dr. Matusak during her three years as president, an acceptable enrollment projection strategy was not developed for another five or six years.

The student revenue shortfall was exacerbated by the \$28,000 deficit in state appropriations. Board minutes record that Chancellor Hollander urged the College to be more entrepreneurial in pursuing private money and grants, and to use student revenue monies to see the College through the appropriations deficit. However, as stated, student revenues were down, so the fiscal picture during Dr. Fletcher’s year as acting president was grim at best. None of this was his doing; he inherited the problem but had little time and very little authority to make changes that would dramatically change the picture. His only recourse was to exercise a freeze on travel, new equipment, testing expenses, and consultant hirings — in other words, the major work of the College.



Dr. Arnold Fletcher and wife Toni talk with former Trustee Alan Ferguson (left) at the 20th anniversary Gala.

Add to this the state's intrusion into operations by refusing to approve the position Director of Administration and Finance. (It was several years later before this was upgraded to a vice presidency.) In effect, the Department of Civil Service was saying that the College could not hire someone qualified to manage its budget and finances. The legislature and the governor were saying that they had to cut short the appropriations needed. The chancellor was saying raise more private dollars, and Dr. Fletcher should have been saying, "Who needs this?"

The April board minutes, prior to Dr. Matusak's arrival in July, record the Board's outrage at the state's continual intrusion into college operations and administration. They passed a resolution admonishing the executive and legislative branches of state government for determining which specific personnel positions would or would not be funded without consultation with the College. The resolution stated other specifics and urged the Council of State Colleges to study the issue and reaffirm each institution's autonomy in the management of its fiscal affairs, subject to audit.

This is a significant incident in the College's history because it reflects some of the challenges that face an interim or acting president who can do little more than hold things together, and who rarely receives acknowledgement for the fact that he or she did so. It was a troubling year for the College and for Dr. Fletcher who remained constant in his optimism and dedication. Interestingly, upon completion of his year as acting president, the Board authorized a special and appropriate compensation. Like all other aspects of the state bureaucracy, the State Salary Adjustment Committee held the paperwork unsigned for over six months.

Dr. Fletcher is remembered by other former and current staff who worked with him as having been the ultimate team player. He and Dr. Brown made a dynamic team together, their personalities complementing each other, their vision or perceptions stretching each other. He and Dr. Matusak also worked closely. As she reflected on her years working with Dr. Fletcher, she turned her head as a tear formed in her eye. When she was able to speak, she said, "You just don't know how many times I would have stumbled along the way if it weren't for that man. He was my main support, and we are close friends to this day."



Vice President for Academic Affairs and Acting President Dr. Arnold Fletcher

His six months as acting president before Dr. Pruitt came on board were relatively uneventful with no major issues, but having a second turnover in presidencies in such a short period of time can be traumatic to college personnel. Dr. Fletcher managed that interim period with his customary diplomacy, guided the College through its tenth commencement ceremonies, managed the budget process for the next two fiscal years, held Academic Council meetings and Board of Trustee meetings, and was fiercely dedicated to getting the College launched into the technological revolution.

In 1981, Dr. Fletcher wrote a treatise in which he proposed that the future success of Thomas Edison would be in the technological revolution and the delivery of independent study by computer. He emphasized that there was no college in the state, and perhaps in the nation, better suited or more capable of developing distance education. No other New Jersey college was involved in correspondence or distance education, and given the nature of Thomas Edison, it was mission-driven to pursue expansion in that direction. To show his commitment to that end, he relinquished his need for his executive assistant Bill Seaton and pushed him out into the technological world. Like the "Go west, young man" directive of old, Dr. Fletcher told Bill to find out what the College needed to do to become a part of this new educational environment. This was like launching a thousand ships, as it turned out, because it was through the Challenge Grant four years later, and after Dr. Fletcher's retirement, that the College was finally computerized.

Dr. Pruitt worked with Dr. Fletcher for only six months before he retired, but

they knew each other for years through CAEL, and Dr. Pruitt was well aware of Dr. Fletcher's contributions to the College. He said in a recent conversation that, "This institution owes a great debt to Arnold Fletcher. He provided the anchor, the stabilizing leadership force while the institution was experiencing volatility at other levels. His was the steady hand at the wheel. His style was not to call a lot of attention to himself, but it was very clear to me that everything about the institution had been influenced by Arnold's good judgement, his experience, his ethics. His was the purest of dedication and commitment. We celebrate that every year at Commencement when we present the awards to the Arnold Fletcher scholars."

When Dr. Fletcher retired in 1982, Dr. Pruitt proposed and the Board of Trustees approved the awarding of vice president emeritus status to Dr. Fletcher. In 1986, the Academic Council and the Board of Trustees approved criteria for giving special merit awards to baccalaureate graduates for exceptional achievement in independent learning. Called the Arnold Fletcher Awards, this program will continue to honor Dr. Fletcher for generations to come — a fitting tribute to the once "unsung hero."

It is with much appreciation and great pride that the College acknowledges Dr. Arnold Fletcher for his leadership and service to this unique institution.

¹ "My Way," words by Paul Anka (original French lyric by Gilles Thibault), music by J. Revaux and C. Francois, c. 1967, recorded and made popular by Frank Sinatra.

² Mary Summer Rairi, *Dreamwalker* (Norfolk, VA: Hampton Roads Publishing Company, Inc., 1988), back cover.

³ Charles Earle Funk, *2107 Curious Word Origins, Sayings & Expressions from White Elephants to a Song & Dance*, (New York: Galahad Books, 1993), p. 598. The barmecide feast, or banquet, comes from the "Story of the Barber's Sixth Brother" in *Arabian Night* where a beggar asked for bread from a Persian noble, Barmecide. He was served empty platters of food and empty goblets of wine, but he pretended to eat and drink until his host was so amused, he served a real banquet.

⁴ Total Quality Management is an assessment system used to evaluate the effectiveness of the management of any corporation, organization, institution, or government.

⁵ Peter C. Alden, Richard D. Estes, Duane Schlitter, and Bunny McBride, *National Audubon Society Field Guide to African Wildlife* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Publishers, 1995), pp. 861-875. Weaverbirds are of the Ploceidae family, small to medium-size, finchlike birds with 142 of the world's 160 species found in Africa. See p. 874 for the sociable weaverbird.

⁶ Harry S. Truman in a letter to his sister, November 14, 1947, as cited in the book by David Wallechinsky, *The 20th Century, The Definitive Compendium of Astonishing Events, Amazing People, and Strange-but-True Facts*, (New York: Little Brown and Company), 1995, p. 34.

IV. A House Is Not A Home



The nursery rhyme about the old woman who lived in a shoe depicts a house that is unsuitable for its occupants. Most illustrators of the story show people hanging out the windows or pouring out the front door. That shoe image relates well to the crowded or inappropriate conditions that existed in many of the buildings occupied by Thomas Edison during its twenty-five year history. But even if the “shoe” is the right size for the number of occupants, what exactly makes it a home and not just a house?

Hal David and Burt Bacharach raised this concern in their 1964 hit song “A House Is Not a Home”¹ wherein they state that “a chair is still a chair even when there’s no one sitting there,” but a house is not a home without occupants who care about one another. That means that the over crowded “shoe” house could be a wonderful home if all the occupants lived in friendship and harmony.

From Thomas Edison’s earliest days, the concept that the College needed a “shoe that fit” was not a priority for those who authorized and/or legislated its physical and fiscal affairs. Some would add that the first five years were more like twenty, and the desire for proper accommodations has been a continuing struggle for college administrators during these past twenty-five years. But why?

In 1965, Governor Richard Hughes appointed a Citizens Committee for higher Education (also known as the Goheen Commission), which studied New Jersey’s higher education needs and recommended the expansion of the public higher education system. Their activity resulted in the Higher Education Act of 1966, which established the Board and Department of Higher Education. Funds were provided to create new county and state colleges as needed, and from its inception in January 1967, the New Jersey Board of Higher Education approved, almost monthly, one state or county college building project after another. Sixteen of the nineteen county colleges were founded, established, and built prior to December 1971 when Thomas Edison was officially established. Stockton State College and Ramapo College of New Jersey were founded in 1969 and 1970 respectively, and their campuses were built and expanded as need arose, so money was not the central issue.

The original plan for Thomas Edison was to create a college that functioned within the Department of Higher Education; its offices were to be those of a “department” within a larger organization. The very first “house” was at 225 West State Street in Trenton in what was known as the Higher Education Building, the last building in the block that features the state capitol, the legislative offices, the state library, and the state museum. At the other end of the block was the empty Kelsey Building, behind which are the Barracks — the historic buildings where George Washington housed his troops in Trenton.



A view of the Kelsey Building at Thomas Edison. Directly behind the building are the Old Barracks where General George Washington housed his troops during the Revolutionary War.

Eight years and four moves later, Thomas Edison would return to West State Street to find its home in the Kelsey Building, but not without the memories of a battle well fought. Having the atmospherics of a “war zone” with the Continental Army barracks situated virtually in the back yard, the battles of the past may have set the tone for the battles to come.

Although established in December 1971, the College first opened its doors to the public on September 4, 1972, at its *second* location, the second floor of 1750 North Olden Avenue in Ewing Township, a suburb of Trenton. Most people view this address as the first physical location. However, the first literature and application-for-enrollment form used the 225 West State Street address, which made it a Trenton-based college initially, if only for a few months.

The 1750 North Olden Avenue site was known as the McShain Building. John McShain, a Philadelphia businessman, maintained offices on the first floor. McShain and John B. Kelly, actress Grace

Kelly's father, were good friends and business associates. Their companies were often linked together in Philadelphia conversations as Kelly Brickwork and McShain Construction. Staff member Carol Kuykendall recalled arriving at the McShain Building on September 4, 1972, fifteen minutes before President Brown. (He was still known as the director of the College at that time.) Carol teased him that she had fifteen minutes seniority over him as a result of her early arrival.

The College occupied 1600 square feet of space on the second floor of the McShain Building. The floor was divided by partitions — not walls — into six small rooms with a long hallway down the center. At the top of the stairs was the receptionist's desk and the director's secretary just outside Dr. Brown's office. Within a few months, Jean Titterington, Tom McCarthy, Bob Herbster, Jim Humphrey, John Clark, Michelle Ferreira, part-time counselors, and secretaries were all vying for space. Dr. Arnold Fletcher and Dr. Paul Jacobs soon followed.

Privacy was nonexistent, with room dividers reaching only about five feet from the floor. Every telephone call and every counseling session was a shared event. Emily Carone remembered that almost everyone smoked. There was a full ashtray on nearly every desk. How times have changed.

Emily also commented on interesting personalities who worked at 1750 North Olden Avenue. She said, "One of the first receptionists didn't last long, nice though she was. We could not break her of saying, 'Hello. Thomas Jefferson College,' which got everyone very upset. We'd remind her many times, and she'd say 'Thomas Edison' maybe two or three times. The next thing we knew she'd say, 'Thomas Jefferson.' We just had to let her go."

Emily concluded her reminiscences with a tilt to her head, almost dream-like as she spoke: "I always associate that building with Dr. Fletcher. He was really the soul of 1750 North Olden Avenue. Although Dr. Brown's office was there, he was not in very often. He was out raising money and other support. So Arnold was really the head person."

Within less than a year, the need for more space was critical. In August 1974, Dr. Brown wrote to the director of the Division of Purchasing and Property, pleading for 1,848 square feet of additional but temporary space at 1780 North Olden Avenue. A separate building, the property was owned by Stephen Nalbone of Lawrenceville Township. The proposed cost to lease was \$5 per square foot. Dr. Brown proposed that the cost would be defrayed by a \$100,000 grant given by the Eli Lilly Foundation, Inc.

The College was still a department within the Department of Higher Education; the mandate was to serve as a credentialing body for those students who enrolled and as a counseling service for adults throughout the state, whether they enrolled or not. The state bureaucracy rarely viewed Thomas Edison as an institution needing an academic setting or image. In time, however, 1780 North Olden Avenue was finally secured, but it lacked the more formal image that the two-story brick building at 1750 had. Many of the older records loosely refer to 1780 as the "storefront."

Bob Herbster, then assistant registrar, vividly recalled the move. "The Registrar's Office had asbestos-lined filing cabinets for student records. Our office and the Counseling Office were moved to the storefront building, but the state didn't send anyone to help with the move. Brian McDonnell, Tom McCarthy, and several others of us moved those heavy fireproof filing cabinets down the stairway from one building over to the other. There was no elevator, and these things weighed at least as much as a refrigerator. We had four or five of them. The building at 1780 was exactly what it sounded like — a long, narrow storefront with very cheap partitions of paper-coated, mock wood paneling that went up about six feet. The rest of the area was open with tiled flooring. It was minimalistic and kind of dark, as I remember. The lights did not line up with the cubicles. If you happened to have a lot of light in your cubicle, fine; if you didn't, too bad. The last cubicle where the secretaries worked had neither windows nor lights."

Annette Singer, a counselor at that time, commented that every time someone got an enroll-



Jim Humphrey, then Director of Administrative Services, and Tom McCarthy, Registrar, inspect the construction of the Kelsey Building during its remodeling in 1978 and 1979



ment, Tom McCarthy would point up and say, "You're one step closer." Annette thought Tom meant closer to a goal, but Tom meant to God. It was his way of saying, "We're moving up."

Continuing in his determination to find adequate and appropriate facilities, Dr. Brown, officially president of the College at that point, along with Administrative Assistant Jim Humphrey, and Ray Male, the vice president for External Relations, pursued many options. One was for partial use of Drumthwacket, now the Governor's residence in Princeton. Ray Male was assigned the responsibility for pursuing this option, but it never got off the ground. By spring 1975, Dr. Brown's correspondence reflected the frustration that overcrowded conditions were causing, especially at the 1780 North Olden Avenue.

Meanwhile, John McShain vacated the first floor of his building and placed it on the market. Desperate to at least maintain the status quo while negotiations continued for other space, Dr. Brown wrote to McShain. He mentioned that the move to the Forrestal Campus of Princeton University was probably going to happen, but that the space would not be available until at least December 1, 1975. He asked to lease the space

vacated on the first floor of 1750 North Olden Avenue. His letter sounded almost pleading. "It would be of great value to us to be able to occupy the entire building after the first of July until we relocate. We would be willing to take on the obligation of janitorial service and trash removal in exchange for the additional 1,000 square feet of space. This would relieve you of the necessity of day-to-day oversight of the building itself.

"This arrangement would, of course, be predicated on our current lease which you may terminate with reasonable notice. We will simply hope that you or a new owner would not wish to occupy the building before the first of the year. The arrangement I suggested would also eliminate the necessity for negotiating a new lease with the state, which we have found to be very complex, particularly for short-term occupancy.

"I would appreciate your reaction to this proposal, and I want you to know that we have appreciated very much the fine cooperation that you and your staff have given us during the past two-and-one-half years. If you do visit Trenton in the near future, I would certainly appreciate an opportunity to meet you."

McShain agreed to the new arrangement, but the move to Forrestal did not take place until March 1976. The College now had both floors at 1750 and the "storefront" at 1780 North Olden Avenue. Mary Haggerty, secretary in the Registrar's Office, remembered that era: "Our area was very small with only five or six file cabinets with student files. Everything moved with index cards. Everything was handwritten. When a student's transcript came in, it was recorded on an index card, and then when everything for that student was in, the index cards were moved to the transcript evaluators." For many years enrollment growth was viewed in terms of volumes of index cards and numbers of student files, and the Registrar's Office suffered most by the crowded conditions.

The new location was still not ready in February 1976. Through various contacts of his own, Dr. Brown had learned that Johnson & Johnson was vacating space they rented from Princeton University — 10,000 square feet all on one floor of the old Accelerator Building on the Forrestal Campus. This site was part of the building complex that did atomic energy research in the 1940s. The building was not new, but it was in good repair and would serve well as temporary quarters until such time as a permanent location in an urban setting, preferably Trenton, could be found.

But once again, as they negotiated for the Forrestal site, they were urged to consider other locations. It was clear that the state bureaucracy did not put the Thomas Edison campus in the same league as the county and state colleges. This is extraordinarily well-stated in a memo from Dr. Brown to Theodore Liscinski, director, Division of Special Services, dated February 19, 1976. It said:

I understand from Jim Humphrey that you would like our reaction to the various locations that Mr. O'Connell has shown us as alternatives to the space that we have applied for at the Forrestal Center in Princeton, New Jersey. As you will recall, we have requested approximately 10,000 square feet, and we believe that Princeton would be agreeable to an annual rate of \$70,000.

In the case of each of the four locations which we have looked at, considerable renovation would be necessary which would require anywhere from two to five months delay for occupancy. Our current space at two locations, as you know, is overcrowded, particularly at 1780 North Olden Avenue where twenty-five employees are using one small lavatory, and even the most senior staff share their small offices with two other people. The fact that we have no leases at either location and could be evicted on thirty days notice, and we will have our Middle States accreditation visit early in April, create great urgency concerning this matter.

Regarding each location, the Pennington Circle [Pennington] building would require considerable time for completion. It is too large for our current needs and is designed in such a way that other tenants would reduce the desirability of the building. It is not of quality construction, and its location is substantially inferior to the Princeton property on Route 1. We were shown property on Brunswick Avenue [Trenton] in a very run down building with no parking space. Considerable renovation would be necessary, which would be very time-consuming. The Bordentown location, on the old military academy campus, will require dividing large rooms into offices, and this configuration would involve a great deal of wasted space. We would be required to lease at least 12,000 square feet in order to accommodate our offices. Therefore, the lower price per square foot would be false economy.

The location at East Windsor, again, is an inferior location. The quality of construction is poor, and the layout does not lend itself to a college office facility. The cost of the facility would be higher than the Princeton location.

I appreciate your interest in showing us alternative locations, but I am convinced that the long-run interests of the state, as well as the College, would be best served by acting expeditiously in negotiating a lease with Princeton.

In summary, I feel that the Princeton location is far superior to any of the current alternatives, and it would be highly desirable (in my opinion, essential) to move to Princeton by the 15th of March. I would appreciate your full cooperation in this matter.

For some people, perhaps many more than the college staff ever knew, moving a half mile north of Princeton to the Forrestal Campus of Princeton University, which naturally carried the coveted Princeton address, was viewed as extravagant. Nevermind that all of the new county colleges and the other two new state colleges had within three years or less of their founding built beautiful campuses. Nevermind that the Accelerator Building, second floor only, was a cement block building from the World War II era.

Dr. Brown kept in his files a particularly scathing March 1976 article by Ken Carolan of the *Trentonian*, who opposed the move to the Forrestal Campus. He wrote in part:

No one can argue that Edison College serves an extremely worthwhile purpose. But one can argue with Dr. Brown's apparent illusions of grandeur. He could not find "suitable" space anywhere among the acres and acres of



(l to r) Assemblyman John S. Watson; Raymond Steen, former Chairman of the Board and President of Broad Street National Bank; and Dr. George Pruitt pose in front of several paintings from the Bradshaw Collection, a set of 65 drawings of old Trenton buildings and scenes. Mr. Steen donated the collection to the College in recognition of the famous artist's work. Mr. Bradshaw studied at the Kelsey Building when it was a School for Industrial Arts.

empty offices in the heart of Trenton. But lo and behold, he did find plush office space available at the spanking new Forrestal campus of Princeton University. Dr. Brown considers it highly suitable.

A call to N.J. Chancellor of Higher Education Ralph Dungan's office brought the reply that Dungan considers the plan to move Edison out of Trenton "inadvisable" — but apparently he lacks the power to stop it. That power rests in the State Treasurer's office.

A spokesman for the treasurer's office confirmed that "tentative" approval for the move had been given last week based on the promise of the board of trustees that Edison would move back into Trenton 'in a year or two.' (Sure they will!)

The spokesman added that Dr. Brown had indicated Edison was about to be evaluated for full accreditation by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. Obviously, a Princeton address and wall-to-wall carpeting are requirements for recognition.

If they want plush, we can give them plush right here in Trenton. Office space is now available in the Inn of Trenton directly across the street from the State Education building. Free indoor parking. Wall-to-wall carpeting, air-conditioned. The whole smear at a price equal to or lower than the Princeton space.

A Trenton location would also be far more desirable to the employees at Edison who face a thirty-mile round trip ride to work — many of them by bus. Though few people deal personally with the college, those who do will have difficulty getting in the Forrestal campus located in the woods off Route 1.

And the fact that few people do visit the college raises the question of why fancy office space is required. Particularly in these times of cutbacks and tuition increases in the field of higher education.

But mostly the proposal to move Edison College out of town is just another slap in the face to Trenton and another example of the hypocrisy of the state government which has promised to end the mass exodus of state agencies — and also, by the way, to economize wherever possible.

The lease at the Forrestal campus has not been signed — at least not as of last Friday. The Office of Fiscal Affairs which must make a recommendation on all state leases has not yet seen it.

Finally, the leaders of the state legislature must give their approval before Edison College is Princeton bound.

Let's hope these leaders thoroughly look over that lease and the reasons for moving.

The article reflects Carolan's opinion based on the information available to him at the time, but there are several interesting words in the article worthy of a good chuckle.

He stated that the College had ". . . no campus, no classrooms, no professors, and no students." Even Thomas Edison's literature mistakenly encouraged that image for a while, but indeed from the beginning, there was a building, and there were part-time professors and many, many students.

As for "plush" office space at the "spanking new" Forrestal campus, the facility was serviceable with gray metal desks and chairs. The board room was the lunch room, the meeting room, and the training room furnished with six-foot metal folding tables and metal chairs. There was carpeting, but no one realized that wall-to-wall, light brown, industrial carpeting was considered plush.

Staff who served on the accommodations committee for a later (1982) Middle States accreditation team site visit remember well the physical condition of many of the meeting rooms and offices in the Inn of Trenton. The hotel was eventually sold and many of its rooms remodeled for office use, but in those days quantity of available space far surpassed quality. Members of the evaluation team still speak "fondly" of the Inn's rooms with red flocked wallpaper. All that was missing were

the mirrors on the ceilings.

As for students having "difficulty getting in the Forrestal campus located in the woods off Route 1," all they had to do was bear right off Route 1 (north or south), stop at the guard's station for directions to the parking lot, and park. Most staff who worked there remember that the air conditioning didn't work in the summer, and the heat was "iffy" in the winter.

But what was it like at Forrestal? The building was almost L-shaped, perhaps more on a 135 degree angle, like a boomerang. The conference room and rest rooms were in the middle at the bend. Academic affairs staff and the president's office filled the left wing; counseling staff and the Registrar's Office filled the other wing.

The accelerator, still there from the atomic energy research days, could be seen by walking through the supply room in the right wing. The supply room had a floor-to-ceiling glass window at the back that looked out on the accelerator. The building had originally been designed as part of Princeton Plasma Physics, and the equipment used in atomic energy research had never been dismantled. Staff could go to the back of the supply room and look down on this two-story machinery sitting idly in a room about the size of a basketball court. The wall of glass was covered with chicken wire for added protection. Once in a great while someone would walk through on the lower level, but this was rare. Behind the building was a fenced in area with a sign that said "Radioactive Materials: Do Not Go Beyond This Point." All of that is gone now. The building was demolished around 1992.

Reflecting on that aspect of the Forrestal site, Dr. Brown recalled that there was some discussion as to whether or not staff would suffer from the effects of radiation, but apparently he was assured that that would not be the case.

Former Board member and Chair, George Hanford, created a strong visual image of the site, which certainly counters the image portrayed in the *Trentonian* article. He said, "I remember the Holiday Inn out on the highway before you turned off Route 1. The Accelerator Building looked like a two-story Holiday Inn, to my recollection, but it didn't look permanent. It looked plastic. The carpet ran along the corridor as it would in a Holiday Inn."

Holiday Inn carpeting notwithstanding, it was a wonderful move for the College because in image alone, it moved the College up from the storefront feeling to an actual campus. That helped the College's image from that point on.

Dr. Laura Adams added another dimension to the image. She remembered that "The staff felt like pioneers, as much for the places where we worked as for the mission itself. I think that was part of our problem: we felt like temporary people. The Forrestal site was not visible at all to the rest of the world. However, it was a convenient location for faculty who liked to travel down Route 1 to get to us."

Almost everyone remembered the Forrestal period as a time of building strong, lifelong friendships. Management Information Systems Director Drew Hopkins reflected: "What strikes me the most about that period of the College's growth was that we were so close with all of the employees. Tom Eklund, Tom Streckewald, Brian McDonnell, and I just bonded very quickly; we were young, and we were jokesters. My office was right across from Brian and Tom Eklund's. We would have wastebasket basketball matches going across the hall frequently. Sometimes we wouldn't get caught, and other times we would. Lunchtime we'd play frisbee golf across the lawn of the Forrestal campus." For those who worked at the Forrestal site, those friendships and the sense of pride in a shared cause far outweighed the crowded conditions or the undependable heating and cooling system, but when the time came to move on to new facilities, everyone was eager and ready.

MOVING TO THE KELSEY BUILDING IN TRENTON

In his 1973 *Accreditation Planning Document*, Dr. Brown briefly addressed the facilities issue. The



Trenton Mayor Arthur Holland (deceased) and President George Pruitt at the 75th anniversary celebration of the Kelsey Building in 1986

Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, the regional accrediting body, provided guidelines for what was to be discussed in planning documents, periodic reviews, and/or accreditation reports. "Current Plant and Physical Resources" was one such topic to be thoroughly considered. Dr. Brown stated: "By the nature of the College, only office space is required, and therefore it is anticipated that the College will be able to rent adequate space for its operation. There is no plan at the present time to establish a campus or separate office facility for the College."

This was not improvident on his part. It was exactly in keeping with the directions he was given upon his appointment as director, for it was not until the spring of 1973 that the Thomas Edison concept began to change to an independent, state institution — independent, that is, from the "department-within-a-department" concept.

To open its doors at the Olden Avenue site, move to the Forrestal campus in Princeton for three years, and finally move to Trenton as a permanent home was the culmination of seemingly endless discussions and politicking.

The first reference in the historical records regarding moving to Trenton was a March 1976 letter from Richard C. Leone, state treasurer, to Jonathan Thiesmeyer, chairman of the Board. The letter stated in part, "I am sympathetic to the problems that led you to move to the Princeton location, and I accept in good faith your assurances that this is a temporary step before returning to an urban center such as Trenton or New Brunswick. Let me assure you that my office will do everything possible in the next year to find an appropriate location in the city of Trenton for the College."

The April 1976 board of trustees minutes refer to a discussion about renovating the Kelsey Building for future occupancy. By the December 1976 meeting, discussions had progressed to a point where the Board approved in principle the plans to renovate and occupy the Kelsey Building. In January 1977, the Department of Higher Education approved the Kelsey Building as the permanent site for the College. Approximately \$800,000 in bond money would be used for renovations. However, just two months later, the March board minutes indicated that the cost projection had already increased to \$900,000, although the bond issue money was still to be approved at \$800,000. But why was the focus on the Kelsey Building?

Even as early as 1972 when the College was founded, the state was looking for the right tenant for the landmark Kelsey Building at the edge of the capitol complex. Trenton's Mayor Arthur Holland sought to preserve the building's historic use as a school. Researching the Kelsey Building for the seventy-fifth anniversary celebration in 1986, Sally Lane, director of the Trenton Convention and Visitors Bureau, wrote:

All three interests came together when Trenton Mayor Arthur J. Holland sought out Thomas Edison President James Brown to convince him of the merits of moving into the city. Brown liked the idea but was frankly concerned that his institution would outgrow the Kelsey Building. Aware that Stockton and Ramapo State Colleges — founded the same year as Thomas Edison — were expanding within large campuses, he knew he had to plan for long-range needs.

The solution came from state Senate President Joseph P. Merlino, who had rescued the Kelsey Building from threatened demolition. He convinced Governor Brendan T. Byrne that the row of brick townhouses between the Kelsey Building and the State House — already owned by the state — offered the natural site for college expansion.

At a time when developers were threatening the residential character of the State House

Historic District, that planned marriage of the block's architectural gem and its less showy neighbors satisfied college, state, and city concerns. Now, after years of piecemeal expansion, college personnel look forward to completion of the townhouse renovations, which will reunite the College in one compact area surrounding the Kelsey Building.

Writing in 1986, Sally Lane reflected on promises that went back to 1976, but it was in 1996 that groundbreaking for the townhouses finally occurred, twenty years later.

The Kelsey Building and Trenton's new City Hall were built on much the same schedule; begun in 1909, both were completed in 1911. The building was a gift of Henry Cooper Kelsey, a banker who served for twenty-seven years as New Jersey's secretary of state. A shopkeeper's son who believed in helping people to help themselves, he was impressed by the idea of a school that would train artisans for the city's booming factories and workshops. Although he had no previous connection with the School of Industrial Arts, he bought land, hired prominent architect Cass Gilbert, and paid for the building at a final cost of nearly twice as much as the \$100,000 he had originally pledged.

His motive was a romantic one. It was intended to memorialize his wife, Prudence Townsend Kelsey, who died in 1904. A bronze tablet on the building's facade is dedicated to her, and the first-floor auditorium is named Prudence Hall. The widower also lavished more than \$12,000 on the decoration of a single room on the second floor, a permanent exhibit space for the porcelain and art his wife collected on their annual trips to Europe.

The Kelsey Building has been associated with educational institutions with each of its tenants. The first was the School of Industrial Arts, begun in 1890 and housed at other locations in Trenton until 1911 when the Kelsey Building was completed. The school expanded beyond its original intention and was renamed Trenton Junior College in 1947. It was fully accredited in 1967 and renamed Mercer County Community College. It moved to West Windsor in 1970.

The bill introduced by State Senator Merlino on January 21, 1974, provided for the building's preservation and required the state to provide a use "... consistent with the preservation of the building and the integrity of its architectural design." The perfect tenant was Thomas Edison College.

Over the entrance to the building and suspended from the building's facade by lacy ironwork hangs a large clock. Henry C. Kelsey was a great proponent of public clocks, so it is not surprising that he wanted his building to have one. Nor is it surprising that attached to its face are two bronze markers, permanently memorializing the time of his wife's death at 11:49. Sometime in 1983, Public Relations Director Barbara Waters Eklund obtained permission from Trenton artist Peggy Peplow Gummere, to use her pen and ink drawing of the Kelsey clock as the College's logo. Ms. Gummere studied as a young girl at the School of Industrial Arts before going on to the Pennsylvania Academy of Arts and a distinguished career as an artist.

Not unlike other efforts to move a project through the state bureaucracy, the renovations process moved slowly. The July 1978 board minutes stated that the bids for the renovation of the Kelsey Building all exceeded the estimates by over \$300,000. The Department of Higher Education agreed to fund the balance over the bonded amount plus \$75,000 to finish the first-floor conference rooms and provide carpeting and window blinds.



Thomas Edison State College broke ground in 1996 to turn five historic townhouses into headquarters for the College's electronic classrooms and for training and conference centers. Participating in the ceremony are, from left: Assemblyman Reed Gusciora, D-District 15; Senator Peter A. Inverso, R-District 14; Assemblywoman Shirley Turner, D-District 15; Senator Dick LaRossa, R-District 15; Dr. George Pruitt, college President; David Hespe, Assistant Council, Office of the Governor; Richard Arndt, Vice Chair of the College's Board of Trustees; and John Fallon, Project Manager. DF Gibson. Architects.

Once again, however, it was assumed that the College would never need an entire facility all its own. The September 1978 minutes stated that the building renovations did not include the second floor. It was thought that the College would only need three of the five floors, but the Hotline, a state-funded program to provide educational information services for all of New Jersey, had been added to the Thomas Edison portfolio, and more expansion had taken place. The Board requested that the second floor be finished for college use.

Still going at a snail's pace, however, the renovations project continued into 1979. At the February board meeting, Acting President Arnold Fletcher reported that treasury had agreed to the second floor renovations, but that it would delay the project a few months.

Dr. Larraine Matusak began her presidency officially in July 1979 and fell headlong into final renovations and furniture selection. The move to Trenton was scheduled for September 8.

STAFF RECALL THE MOVE TO TRENTON

Program Advisor Anne Bielawski, secretary Rosemary Breining, and PONSI Director Jim Ratigan remember moving day. Anne reflected: "We were moving over a weekend. Some of us were assigned to work Saturday and some Sunday. Three of us who were assigned to Sunday were to direct the movers for everything on the fifth floor — furniture, boxes, odds and ends. We got there around 9:00 a.m., and we were there all day; the movers never got to the fifth floor. I later learned that there were problems with the moving crew. Our furniture and boxes were never even loaded on the truck, let alone delivered that day."

With his eyes sparkling and his magnificent laugh, Jim Ratigan recalled: "I was assigned to work Saturday on the third floor. The state would always contract with the lowest bidder regardless of the quality of service rendered, so we knew what was coming. Things would get broken or lost or delivered to the wrong floor. That's why we had to have staff there to make sure that everything came off all right. There were a number of us who were here all that day because the furniture was delivered in parts, so we would build a desk if it needed to be put back together, and so forth. We were here all day with screwdrivers and wrenches and all that stuff, putting desks and file cabinets together."

Rosemary Breining was secretary to Jean Titterington, director of counseling. A Thomas Edison employee for twenty years, she recalled that her desk stayed with her for over ten years until its demise, and her moving story captured some of the humor that has helped her survive the many changes over the years: "Jean had broken her ankle, so I packed up her office as well as my own area and all the files and materials for the counseling office. We had the floor plans for the Kelsey Building early in the summer. All of the room and desk assignments were ironed out well in advance. At that time, we had three secretaries [in our department]. Jean wanted the two other secretaries situated under what looked like an archway on our end of the third floor; I was to sit in the back by her office. The Saturday we moved, I decided to hand-carry a lot of Jean's confidential files and many of the things I thought she would need immediately. Thank goodness I didn't trust them with the movers."

"When I got to the Kelsey Building, the third floor didn't look anything like the floor plans. We had to improvise right on the spot. The movers delivered the two desks for the other secretaries, all of their boxes, and Jean's furnishings, but my desk and all of my files were put on a truck going to Florida. They didn't get back to the College for over a week."

Talking by telephone with former Director of Development Dr. Laura Adams, Dean Emeritus Ruth McKeefery asked about the effect the move to Trenton had on the College's overall image. Laura commented: "It wasn't until we got the Kelsey building in Trenton and refurbished it that Edison was finally seen as a substantial and visible institution. I think that was to Jim Brown's credit because he was instrumental in making that happen. Being down the street from the State House and being able to have lunch with the new chancellor of Higher Education, Ted Hollander, was a plus. But just that visibility made a huge difference. I think that's where the sec-

ond stage of Edison's growth took off. We all felt really excited about being down there in the middle of things and having such a wonderful place to work."

Building on his observation that the Forrestal Accelerator Building looked like a Holiday Inn, George Hanford stated that "the Kelsey building was in sharp contrast. It was built to last!"

There are six floors in the Kelsey Building, counting the basement which houses the mail room, storage rooms, and maintenance facilities. The first floor features the reception area, the Board Room, and Prudence Hall, which can accommodate about 200 people for large gatherings such as the State-of-the-College address forum held every September. Other meetings, even dinners, have been scheduled in Prudence Hall, although the room is closely monitored for proper usage, especially by outside agencies.

In the early years in Trenton, the second floor housed the Registrar's Offices. The third floor was the public affairs division at one end, and the president's offices at the other end. The fourth floor was academic affairs, and the fifth floor was administration and finance and the Education Hotline until it was moved to the Department of Higher Education. At that point in time, staff still numbered between seventy and eighty, but there was room to grow.

And that was the problem! Various representatives of state offices who interacted daily with the College were of the opinion that Thomas Edison was a size six in a size ten shoe as far as the Kelsey Building was concerned. Prior to autonomy for state colleges, and prior to legislation that eventually secured the building as Thomas Edison's home for all time, not having a permanent campus and not owning its own buildings kept the College in a constant tenuous position. Look prosperous; lose funding. Any empty room or unoccupied desk would be leased out.

Heat and air conditioning temperatures were controlled by the state (and still are). The building is owned by the state, and the College had not yet earned its "separate but equal" rating for a physical plant comparable to all the other state colleges.

The dedication of the Kelsey Building and reception for Dr. Matusak was held on February 28, 1980. Over 250 people attended, and the upbeat feeling of the entire affair was very much needed. Dr. William W. Turnbull, president of the Educational Testing Service from 1970 - 1981, was guest speaker. He extolled the College and its mission and pointed out the need for the state to recognize and acknowledge its value.

However, bureaucracy was already at work. When state agents saw space, they had to fill it. When they filled space, they had to count it. When they counted it, they had to report it. Very pragmatic. As Dr. Matusak reported to her Board each month, the Kelsey Building had become a "caravansary" (temporary quarters) for all state agencies, especially Prudence Hall. Anyone who needed a meeting room could sign up for Prudence Hall.

Every floor appeared to be fair game, and when they found space on the fifth floor, it went to the Capital Planning Commission. One of the "caravans" was the Casino Control Commission. At its February 1980 meeting, the Board of Trustees passed a resolution supporting Dr. Matusak's fight to keep the Capital Planning Commission from taking up residency on the fifth floor. It was a losing battle, however, and the Commission stayed for several years while the College grew and was bursting at the seams for lack of space. Dr. Matusak spoke of both commissions in her newsletters.



New Jersey's former First Lady Lucinda Florio receives a gift from President Pruitt during a Prudence Townsend Kelsey Memorial room tour. The Kelsey room was opened to the public for tours during the New Jersey State House Bicentennial celebration.

(June 1980) On my return to the office today, I found the reconstruction (subdividing of our fifth floor) very advanced. Many new and permanent walls have been con-



Vice President Dr. Arnold Fletcher, President Matusak, and Trustee Eleanor Spiegel enjoy a laugh as they robe for Commencement.

structed, and personnel from the Capital Planning Commission plan to move in almost immediately. I want to thank each of you for your letters of support protesting this turn of events. We, too, have been working very hard on avoiding this intrusion. Among many others, Senate President Merlino wrote a letter on our behalf. The Trenton Times printed a story on the impending move, but no one with the authority has called a halt to the rapid construction, which continues even as I write to you.

Despite our early protestations, public hearings on Caesar's Boardwalk Regency's application for license renewal are being held at the College. Mandated by the governor's office one week before the hearings were to begin, we were forced to postpone our long-planned, anxiously awaited student art exhibit as well as numerous

other events scheduled for the first floor. The hearing is expected to last approximately four weeks and may be followed by a similar hearing for Bally's license renewal in November/December.

At least this decision by the Casino Commission has prevented the Department of Higher Education from seeking additional office space in our basement, which is currently being used by television crews and court reporters.

In November, she again wrote: "There is good news about the Casino Control Commission. While our first floor is still being used extensively for a second license hearing (Bally's), we have been assured by the governor's office that this is the last hearing to be held in our building. By January 1, 1981, we will have our first floor back with the freedom to schedule it as we wish."

That was not quite the case, since state agencies continued to use college facilities for many years, but criteria were established, and the College finally had the option to say no if there were scheduling conflicts.

STAFF REMINISCE ABOUT THE KELSEY BUILDING

The entrance to the Kelsey Building has three steps that lead up to an arched vestibule. The two heavy mahogany front doors are ornamented with a tilework frieze that combines the shield of the School of Industrial Arts, an open book, an artist's palette, and a portrait of a student. About three feet out from the doors are two lacy ironwork outer gates. The guards used to shut the gates after securing the building every night.

Dr. Paul Jacobs, then director of Testing and Assessment, and Susan Simosko, then director of the Statewide Testing and Assessment Center, were working late one cold fall evening. At that time, everyone was encouraged to leave downtown Trenton at 4:30 p.m. since there were no restaurants open, no place to shop, and little or no security. On this particular evening the guards had locked the building and secured the iron gates.

Not knowing about the gates, Paul and Susan stepped out of the mahogany doors, allowing them to close — and lock — automatically. They were trapped between the doors and the locked gates. In due time, however, Susan, in her intrepid fashion, climbed over the high gates, making it across the iron spikes and over the limited space at the top. She walked toward the capitol building until she found a security guard who called the police. Eventually someone came to open the gates to get Paul out.

I myself had an unusual experience at the Kelsey Building.

It was fall, probably early November, because the leaves were off the trees, but there was still some daylight around 5:00 p.m. My car was in the small lot behind the build-

ing. Except for my car, the lot was empty. I started the engine and sat there thinking about the day while I waited for the car to warm up. Within a few minutes, I noticed that the ten or more trees in the park between the townhouses and the State House were gradually filling with huge black birds. Entranced, I began counting them. Each tree seemed to host about fifty birds. Soon there were some 500 large black birds in that little park. I remembered the movie *The Birds*, and although I knew that these birds would not attack humans, it was the most eerie feeling I've ever experienced. I felt that I had invaded the sanctuary of a rookery.

Just as I began to panic, wanting to "peel rubber," as we used to say, Joe Albright of *The Jersey Journal* came into view. He went from side to side and corner to corner all over that little park, saying prayers, scattering food, and making the sign of the cross — giving his blessings. The most incredible sense of peace came over me. I slipped the car into reverse, backed out of my designated spot, and quietly edged down the driveway to the street, hoping I would not disturb that seemingly holy place. I never saw those birds in that number ever again. It was a one-time experience.

Then there were the infamous Kelsey pigeons. Their droppings were a health hazard, and they were plentiful. The sidewalks around the building were directly under the eaves, so you either walked or slid through the excrement, or you were directly assaulted from above.

The problem was apparent from the first day Dr. Matusak parked her car next to the fire escape behind the building and directly under the rear eaves. She soon referred to her dark blue car as the "president's poopmobile." The problem went unresolved from 1979 until January 1986.

Former board member Robert Taylor told interviewer Rita Novitt: "We had discovered somewhere during my employ at Bell Laboratories, that the West Street Laboratory in New York had a similar pigeon problem to the one we had at my Bell Lab site in New Jersey. The New York site found that if you put plastic owls out on the roof, it discourages the pigeons since owls are a natural enemy of pigeons. According to Bell Laboratories, the best owls for this purpose were ones imported from Italy. So we ordered a few 'Italian' owls and put them on the Kelsey Building."

In his quarterly report to the Board, Dr. Pruitt announced that he took Bob Taylor's advice and purchased five twenty-one-inch Italian owls to make the pigeons "an offer they couldn't refuse." The board minutes for April 1986 indicated that the Italian owls were to be known henceforth as the Robert Taylor Memorial Owls. Rita Novitt commented that prior to the owl purchase she complained so much about the pigeon debris on the sidewalk that when she left the Board in 1990, she was given one of the owls as a humorous remembrance of that era in the College's history.

THE KELSEY BUILDING PLUS

As the College grew, the shoe began to fill. Enrollments surpassed 6,000, and staff count was over 100. The Kelsey Building "shoe" bulged. Temporary quarters were found at 108 West State Street for sixteen staff members from the testing, portfolio assessment, and nursing programs.

In February 1987, Dr. Pruitt advised the Board: "We have been discussing again the feasibility of acquiring the townhouses that adjoin the Kelsey Building, which once renovated, will complement the historic image of this portion of the capital block." But ten more years would elapse before that project would come to fruition.

Commenting on the temporary facilities at 108 West State Street, staff recalled very little of note except that the stairs were narrow, and the steps were short.

Additional temporary space was found at 28 West State Street on the third and fourth floors of a bank building. But these efforts were a patchwork quilt approach to college needs.

The real answer to the space problems was to create an academic center that would allow



Front view of Thomas Edison's Kuser Mansion.

students to receive advising, counseling, and other services in an appropriate kind of environment. Jim Humphrey, then acting vice president for administration and finance, worked with policy makers to make them aware of the unique programmatic needs of the College. He found a building one block north on Hanover Street that had been a lease property for over twenty-five years and needed to be transformed from an office space to an educational environment. However, it would not be an academic center in the traditional sense where there would be a lot of classrooms, and that was the challenge — making people understand those unique needs.

Current Vice President and Treasurer Michael Scheiring commented that the result was a hallmark for the College. "All of this was being negotiated during a period when the

fiscal picture in New Jersey was not good. This was the only facility being built in Trenton at that time. The reason for that was obviously the influence of Dr. Pruitt and the determination of Jim Humphrey in making sure that when every other capital project in the state had been delayed or stopped, this one was going forward."

The 24,000 square foot facility on Hanover Street, within easy walking distance of the Kelsey Building, was gutted and completely revamped specifically to meet the academic services needs. On October 17, 1992, the College occupied those newly remodeled facilities.

Additional space was leased in what is known as the Kuser Mansion, a privately owned, three-story old home that had been leased by various state agencies in recent years. It is one block further west of the Kelsey Building on West State Street. The 108 and 28 West State Street facilities were vacated. The Thomas Edison Trenton complex now consisted of the Kelsey Building, the Academic Center (Hanover), and Kuser Mansion.

In 1993, legislation was enacted designating state financial support for the townhouse renovations next to the Kelsey Building. The legislation was part of a historic facilities package that included renovation of the War Memorial Building and the Old Barracks. Even with the legislation in place, ground-breaking was delayed three more years until July 1996.

Each stage of the restoration and remodeling project of the townhouses has had its interesting snags and delays. Before construction or reconstruction could begin, there had to be an archeological dig behind the townhouses and under sections of specific townhouse units. Leading this project was the Trenton-based archeological consulting firm Hunter Research. Richard W. Hunter, president of the firm, spoke excitedly about the project. "What we found was a rare site. There are very few in urban areas, and very few from this early period that have survived." He was speaking of the discovery of a colonial-era iron and steel works that made bayonets and gun barrels for the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War. Called a plating mill, the workers beat bars of silver into sheets or plates which were then turned into other things. It was the first effort toward mechanized blacksmithing and was in existence before July 4, 1776.

The plating mill was the older of the two buildings discovered. A steel furnace was also found. Mr. Hunter explained that Isaac Harrow bought the land in 1731 and built the mill. He produced very high quality products that matched anything made in England. One of only fourteen mills in all of the colonies, it was New Jersey's first and one of the first in the nation. About ten years after the mill was built, the steel furnace was completed. Both relied on a nearby stream, called a run, which flowed past the Old Barracks and on down to the Delaware River nearby. The British Army tried to destroy industrial facilities, and these were no exception, although they were restored later. Both the plating mill and the steel furnace fell into disuse between 1900 and 1910 when the area was being "gentrified."

The townhouse restoration project was expected to be completed in the fall of 1997. However, a new snag in financing the project suggests that the renovations will not be completed in time for the 25th anniversary celebrations in September 1997.

NORTH AND SOUTH JERSEY SATELLITE OFFICES

Annette Singer, Angela Fontan, Selma Gitterman, and Janice White Toliver, all academic counselors in the early years, worked out of the north Jersey offices. The first site was at the Montclair Public Library. Annette remembered being sandwiched between book shelves at the library. In May 1981, the College finally moved to its own offices at 20 Evergreen Place in East Orange. According to staff, that office and that building were "environmentally controlled," but they didn't know what environment was controlling it. In the winter, they were freezing; in the summer, they were roasting. They survived two locations in East Orange before more appropriate facilities were finally found in Newark.

The four women in north Jersey made the most of their hardships, but maybe they had less to endure than the south Jersey staff of men. The men's stories border on the ridiculous as then counselors Jim Ratigan, Jules Kahn, and Ralph Viviano coped with their physical environment.

Their first site was in the adult center in Vineland. However, the site was closed unexpectedly, and Jim Ratigan, who served the south Jersey locations before moving permanently to the central Jersey sites, recalled:

I joined the College the beginning of April 1974, and I spent the first week and a half at 1750 North Olden Avenue. That was my introduction to the College, and then right in the middle of Holy Week, my boss Jean Titterington and I went down to Vineland to lease space from the Board of Education. At the end of the day, Jean said, "Tomorrow is Good Friday. You'll have the day off. We'll have a staff meeting in about a month, so do well, get busy, and we'll see you in a month."

We were at that site for about a year when we learned that the state of New Jersey was building in Vineland; the College accepted an offer to move there where more space could be provided. The new office building was supposed to be completed July 1st, so we were supposed to move in then. We notified the Board of Education that we were vacating June 30th. They needed the space, so everyone agreed on the July 1 schedule. However, on July 1 the building wasn't close to being ready. We had no choice. We were out on the street. For weeks and weeks, the College had a mobile office. We joked about hiring a van or a bus or something like that, but the office was literally the trunk of my car. I would stop on the road at a phone booth and call in to Trenton to say, "I'm on my way to a meeting. Do I have any messages," and so on.

Finally, in the spring of 1975, the move to the New Jersey Department of Labor and Industry Building, 50 Landis Avenue, Lower Level, Vineland, took place. Jim Ratigan returned to Trenton to manage a grant from the Department of Labor to work with the city programs department, and Jules Kahn left the Trenton office to work out of Vineland. Jules laughed as he recalled that building:

Our offices in the Labor and Industry building were really small and compact. Ralph Viviano joined me to work in the Vineland office. It was so small that one of us had to go out when the other had a student in the office.

We had a lot of problems with people living in the walls of the



The Thomas Edison Academic Center on Hanover Street in Trenton.

building. Literally living in the walls. Vagrants! They would congregate outside during the night, and in winter they would look for warmth. Somehow they would sneak into the building and live in the heating ducts. That posed a problem when you heard them rustling around. It was kind of scary. We finally moved out of there to Cherry Hill where we worked at the Cherry Hill Library doing monthly presentations there and at the Camden County library.

Jules and Ralph had many interesting encounters with potential students in those early years. As college literature would get around, some people would misinterpret what the College offered and would come in with portfolios, expecting to receive a degree on the spot. One time a woman walked in with an accordion and started playing it. She had heard about the prior-learning assessment process and wanted immediate credit for demonstration and performance. When another woman took off her coat, all she was wearing was a tutu. She proceeded to dance, thinking she should get college credit for that right then and there.

They also had their share of reporters who would use various means to find out whether or not the College was legitimate. One reporter tried to corner Jules about college credits for belly dancing. "If I were a belly dancer, would I get credits?" she asked. Jules patiently told her to do a college search to see if there were any colleges that offered credits for that, and then perhaps she could.

As bizarre as these stories sound, other staff members had counseled people who claimed to be aliens and wanted credit for that. One lady was writing a book about proper diets for horses and wanted credit for *human* nutrition courses. These are only a few of the stories.

Has the "house" become a "home" for Thomas Edison? Certainly all of the current buildings — Kuser Mansion, the Academic Center, and the Kelsey Building — are comfortable, well-used homes, but once again, the "shoes" are bulging at the seams from expansion and development. Dr. Pruitt stated that when the townhouses next to the Kelsey Building are finally completed, the College will already have outgrown them.

¹ "A House Is Not a Home," lyrics by Hal David, music by Burt Bacharach, c.1964.

V. Nobody Does It Better

The song "Nobody Does it Better"¹ perfectly expresses the reputation Thomas Edison enjoys in higher education. As has been noted elsewhere, Empire State College and Minnesota Metropolitan State College (now Metropolitan State University) were created about the same time as Thomas Edison, and like Thomas Edison, their clients are mature adults. What those two institutions offer is unique for them, but they are not like Thomas Edison. In the last few years many institutions have extended their traditional programs to include aspects of what Thomas Edison does. Still, there is no other college that has all of the educational options and support services of Thomas Edison. Former Director of Enrollment Management at the College, Iris Saltiel referred to the variety of options as a smorgasbord of opportunities, from salad to dessert with many choices in between. The College was also first in several areas not yet mentioned. Thomas Edison was the first public, noninstructional, higher educational institution established in the United States; the first noninstructional higher educational institution to be accepted as a candidate for accreditation by one of the regional accrediting bodies in the United States; the first to receive accreditation status; and the first external degree program that offered support services. In fact, members of the accreditation team of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, the accrediting body for the mid-Atlantic region, commented that the extent of pre- and post-enrollment advising services far exceeded expectations or what was perceived by the team as even necessary. Thomas Edison remains unique today in all of these areas.

Maintaining that uniqueness and doing so with quality and integrity is a weighty responsibility not taken lightly by anyone involved with the College, but it does seem to come naturally. If one is an "Edisonian," the initials "S.F." semper fidelis, or always faithful, should always come after the name. For example, there is an Admissions Office secretary who has been with the College for over fifteen years. Mary Wyszynski, or Mary XYZ as she is affectionately called, might well sign her name Mary Wyszynski, S.F. There are many others who are equally faithful, but no one could be more dedicated to the College than Mary XYZ, S.F.

But why is "always faithful" an earmark of the true Edisonian?

WHAT THE COLLEGE DOES AND HOW IT IS EVALUATED

What does the College do that makes it unique? How has the College maintained standards of excellence? After looking at the trial-by-fire experiences of the three presidents and the acting president, one wonders how there was any time or energy left for attaining and maintaining academic standards of excellence and high-quality client services for students and the general public.

The answer was simple, although the efforts to accomplish it were not. The early years were devoted to developing what the College was all about — the core functions and the mission — but traveling along that same path was the critical need for effectively administering what the College was all about. That process was as time consuming as was the development of the services to be offered. Through the Academic Council, the faculty, and the staff, Thomas Edison's creators designed the ideal mechanisms for quality control through:

- * academic policies
- * the degree development process
- * the evaluation of credentials
- * the methods for degree completion
- * faculty training
- * the advising services
- * the constant reassessment of each of those mechanisms

Dividing these categories into two groupings — methods and services, and quality control — helps to illustrate those aspects of the College that make it so distinctive.



METHODS AND SERVICES

Testing: The current Testing and Assessment program includes the many examinations now available, the portfolio assessment method of earning credits, the PreGraduation Conference (temporarily suspended—see below), the Practicum, the Demonstration of Currency process, the full range of options in the Distance and Independent Adult Learning (DIAL) Center, and advisement services. When the College opened its doors in 1972, all credit awarded to Thomas Edison students was based on the evaluation of transfer credit. The only in-house way to add to those credits was through the examination program, and the first examinations available were those already prepared by the New York Regents until March 1974 when the College launched its own Thomas Edison College Examination Program (TECEP). After Dr. Paul Jacobs became the director of testing in 1975, the program was expanded to include over 105 examinations. The TECEP program was successful for two reasons: 1) the available examinations met specific degree requirements, and 2) they were developed by the best faculty in the state. Many of that group of consulting faculty are still with the College today. They recall that it was an exciting challenge once they accepted the notion that end-of-course examinations might replace classroom teaching. Once oriented to Thomas Edison and once given free reign to design examinations that tested what a student should know without considering how the student learned, faculty were eager to be a part of the “new tradition.”

In designing new tests, the faculty did not include built-in traps to see whether or not a student was in class the day the professor used the literary term *muliebrity* (womanhood), for example, and final grades after taking a test would have no correlation to absences or missed pop quizzes. The examination questions had to draw out knowledge of a complete course. Based on this new criteria, the TECEP examinations were gradually developed, tested, and made available to the public.

Today's high school and college students automatically take and fret over tests known by their acronyms PSATs (PreScholastic Assessment Test), SATs (Scholastic Assessment Test), LSATs (Law-Scholastic Assessment Test), or GREs (Graduate Record Examination). These examinations, developed and offered by Educational Testing Service, are a part of the current educational experience. This was not a common experience for all students in the 1960s and early 1970s, although the SATs had been available since 1947. The G.I. Bill and financial aid options were slowly breaking down the elitist image of higher education by providing more avenues for lower income people to go to college. However, going to college or even to a technical school was still not perceived as the primary option for most students. Granting college credit for the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) general and subject examinations was not readily accepted when they first appeared in 1967. In fact, to this day many colleges do not accept them as substitutes for college courses, but that decision is more often financially motivated than educationally motivated. In traditional colleges, students pay fees to be in the classroom, not to bypass the classroom. For Thomas Edison, the examinations were to become one of two major options for earning college credit for over fifteen years until Guided Study became an option.

Dr. Israel Rubin, professor emeritus at Jersey City State College and Thomas Edison faculty consultant, was one of the faculty in the early 1970s who designed examinations for Thomas Edison in the fields of labor economics and labor relations. He continued with Thomas Edison until his retirement in 1994. Dr. Rubin said, “It was an invigorating learning experience for me as well as a test of my mettle as a college professor. I had to subdue my ego — my role in front of the classroom — and think only of what a student should know had he or she taken my course.”

Over time, many of the 105 TECEP examinations were eliminated; they were either not in demand or had become obsolete. Other new examinations were developed, bringing to fifty-five the number available today. The examination program, however, now includes eleven other testing options in addition to TECEPs, making 414 different examinations available to Thomas Edison students.

William Kelly, former student trustee and 1994 graduate, spoke about his use of the TECEP program. "Back in the late 1960s I took an extended course in law through a correspondence school. I thought I had fourteen credits to transfer in, but Edison kept telling me that the correspondence school was not accredited. I couldn't transfer the credits. I tried to appeal the decision several times, but the decision was final. I took it hard at first — all that work — but it was the right decision for the College. I took TECEP exams to get that credit, and I've always been a little proud that not only did I still know all that course content from twenty years before, but I knew that my college had a quality control system in place."

Bill also commented that he was glad that he twice failed a TECEP examination because it proved to him that the tests really meant something. "I'd been taking exams in sales management, operations management, personnel, and business ethics, and I just breezed through them; that's what I do in my work, so I knew the material. But I tried to take the introduction to finance exam without studying for it. I did that twice, thinking that I could bluff my way through, and I flunked it twice. I ended up sitting in class for that course. It gave me a good feeling about the quality of my degree when I finally finished."

A number of people have used the testing program exclusively to complete their degrees. A 1996 graduate, Doris Rodriguez first enrolled with the College in 1977. She completed her associate degree exclusively through testing in only eight months. Her professional career with AT&T parallels the eighteen years it took her to earn her baccalaureate.

She started with AT&T in the typing pool, but her ambition, her natural instinct for being in the right place at the right time, and her abilities enabled her to move up through the ranks, working in many different positions in AT&T's international division. She did network planning and negotiations, planning and implementation of an international gateway, and staff management for the European region, which involved much travel. She "stopped out" (the term used for temporary withdrawal from the College) of Thomas Edison for a time but returned to continue on with her independent learning schedule. Test-taking became second nature to her as she moved up into management, eventually becoming a manager for service quality and new services for the Deutschland Group. Her career was an education in itself, opening doors to technical knowledge and offering interfaces with many cultures and languages.

Doris was an Arnold Fletcher Scholar and the student speaker at her commencement in October 1996. In his introduction of her, Vice President and Provost Dr. Jerry Ice said that she is a perfect example of the Thomas Edison adult learner — a person who acquires knowledge through a compelling personal and professional history and who is able to synthesize and articulate that knowledge at the college level. Doris, however, wanted to be more than a test-taker. As TECEP takers know, test results only indicate pass or fail, and Doris explained in her commencement speech that she wanted to have at least one letter grade on her transcript, so she took one in-class course. She received an A.

Doris's story is an excellent reminder that Thomas Edison students often study on airplanes, in hotel rooms, or at the computer in the wee hours of the morning. Because the method proves to be so flexible for students, the testing program continues to flourish, although other degree completion methods abound. No other college offers as many testing options as Thomas Edison. "Nobody Does It Better."

Assessment: The second method for earning credit was soon added to the College's options in 1973, individual assessment/group assessment of college-level learning. A major departure from the Regents External Degree Program, this assessment concept quickly became the Thomas Edison hallmark. Other institutions across the nation were experimenting with the concept, but Thomas Edison set the standards for excellence for the process.

One of the earliest initiatives was the group assessment of the Garden State Ballet, a formidable New Jersey dance school that had many of its courses evaluated for college credit. The Garden



(clockwise from left) Assoc. Deans Ronald W. Sukovich, Dr. Barbara P. Losty, Dr. Susan O. Friedman, and Dr. Samone L. Jolly who manage four of the major degree programs.

State Ballet's intention at the time was to provide a dance major option for its students, but it did not generate large numbers of students for the College. The Department of Labor and Industry was a strong provider of training courses for state employees, and many of those courses were evaluated for college credit under the group assessment program. Sea Girt Police Academy also used group assessment. From 1976 to 1980, the Office of Special Programs administered the group assessments for these and many other training programs throughout the state.

The individual assessment program was the forerunner of what is now called portfolio assessment. This is a process used by the College to assess experiential college-level knowledge for credit. The process involves the collection of evidence and documentation to support a course-challenge process. In some cases, performance constitutes the appropriate demonstration, as in dance or piano performance.

Many students have used the assessment process to earn credits, but some students are particularly memorable for the College. Despite paralysis in both her arms and legs, Madelaiden Calderon of West New York was on stage with the rest of the class of 1982 to receive her Associate in Arts degree. A piano

teacher who now uses indirect teaching methods with her students, Madelaiden used both the testing and assessment methods to earn credits. Two years later in 1983, she completed her baccalaureate degree in humanities.

The first Thomas Edison student to earn his baccalaureate degree solely by portfolio assessment was Marco Meirovitz, a 1981 graduate. Marco is the inventor of Mastermind, a logical thinking game that has been printed in over thirty languages. In addition to his knowledge of psychology, mathematics, and many other areas, he is fluent in eight languages. His assessment was as exciting for the faculty consultants as for the College. In fact, some of the courses used to identify his areas of expertise might easily appear on a masters or doctoral transcript. The subjects ranged from highly specialized courses in logic and classical Hebrew to fifty-seven credits in electronics and engineering sciences. Faculty assessors marveled that any one person could have that much college-level knowledge without ever having been in a college classroom. But then, "Nobody Does It Better," and that goes for Thomas Edison students as well as for the College itself.

When Guillermo Estevez, A.A. '82, of Union City finally had the opportunity to earn a college degree in the United States, time was very important to him. He had just spent nineteen years as a political prisoner in Cuba and was anxious to continue his education and to get on with his life. By combining his transfer credits with eighteen credits earned through TECEP examinations and twelve credits earned through portfolio assessment, Guillermo was able to receive his associate degree in arts. His special assessment was based on knowledge he acquired during training to qualify as a jet pilot. Guillermo is known for his work with the New Jersey office of the International Rescue Committee, Inc., an organization that works with refugees who have suffered political and religious persecution. His commitment to education — his own and those he refers to the College — is just one illustration of someone who celebrates life and who helps others to do the same.

Another notable student who used portfolio assessment was Frank Hawrylo, B.S. '79, whom the College refers to as the "Renaissance man," a modern day Thomas Alva Edison. Well advanced in knowledge of electronics, Frank is a prolific inventor, musician, research scientist, and project engineer. He holds forty patents, and his work has been included in over fifty distinguished publications. He is highly regarded in his field. In addition, Frank is a professional accordion player

and has performed for audiences around the world, including a private audience with the Pope.

Although Frank focused on subjects related to technical services in industry, he found the portfolio assessment option a viable means to assess his knowledge and expertise in many other areas. Based on his successes in the assessment method, Frank has become a dynamic promoter of the assessment process; he talks about the College wherever he goes.

Banking president, former student trustee, and Foundation Director Thomas van Arsdale talked about quality control in the assessment process. He earned many of his credits through the portfolio process. One portfolio was for a course in economics, but credit was denied. He appealed the decision and asked for a different professor to give a second opinion. Again credit was denied. He was very upset at first. His reaction was: "How can they dare deny me this? I could teach this course. Yet, when I calmed down enough to look at what I had presented, I understood that I had not demonstrated my knowledge in that subject. There just wasn't enough there to support my claim for credit."

As with most of the Thomas Edison methods for earning credit, the student has the opportunity to resubmit the portfolio if the knowledge can indeed be demonstrated. Mr. van Arsdale did just that, and credit was finally awarded.

Dr. Robert Fishco, dean of Business Technologies at Middlesex County College, works with Thomas Edison in several areas, but speaking about his work with portfolio assessment, he was adamant that it is probably more difficult to put together a quality portfolio than to take a three credit course. He said that the quality of a student's learning and of the assessment process is equal to or, in many cases, better than the traditional college classroom, and he expressed the personal satisfaction he felt when a student succeeded. He said, "When the student has the knowledge and is able to prove it through the portfolio process, it is an extraordinarily delightful experience to acknowledge that by awarding three, six, or nine credits, depending on what was submitted."

Looking at the complexity of the portfolio assessment process, Dr. Linda Mather, Professor at William Paterson College and faculty member for Thomas Edison, commented that the process seemed complicated to her and required a lot of hard work. She observed that at first, students tend to think the process will be easy. They have knowledge in a given subject, and all they have to do is prove it. But preparing that proof so that a professor will agree is a challenge. She lends interesting insights into how a Thomas Edison faculty consultant makes the transition from evaluating classroom learning to evaluating independent learning.

From her perspective, in a classroom the student's work is evaluated based on a predetermined grading scale. However, portfolios are not given grade assignments; either credit is granted, or it is denied. Evaluating portfolios stretched her to reconsider what is learning and what is teaching. Dr. Mather explained that when one of her students in a traditional classroom received an A, she liked to link the teaching/learning process. She mused, "I taught well, and the student learned well." However, within the same class a student might receive a D. She questioned, "Does this mean that I taught badly and that the student learned badly? Both A and D students receive three credits. How does that equate to the Thomas Edison student who may be self-taught or who learns the material by nontraditional means, with no one taking credit for the teaching? If letter grades were given, would the learning rate an A or a D." Coping with these questions since becoming a faculty consultant at Thomas Edison changed for all time some of her concepts about the teaching/learning process, and discussing them with her colleagues in committee meetings or in the Academic Council meetings has prompted further discussions and workshops on how to evaluate portfolios once the teaching element is set aside.

PreGraduation Conference: The Bachelor of Arts degree was approved by the Board of Higher Education in November 1974. When students began enrolling in the B.A. degree program, the Department of Higher Education became concerned that the degree had no mechanism for establishing quality assurance. Unlike the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration

(BSBA) degree that had built-in currency mechanisms, as is appropriate for professional degrees, the B.A. degree had none. As a result, the Department imposed upon the College the unusual solution of requiring a PreGraduation Conference in the specialization or area of concentration. The PGC, as it is known, was to be an oral "examination" between the student and one faculty person.

Greatly concerned that the student's graduation fate rested solely with one professor who knew the student for just that one hour of the conference, Dr. Paul Jacobs instituted an additional quality control feature. He used two faculty members during the conference: one who functioned more as the "major" professor, and the second who was more like a professor in the student's "minor." The sessions were tape recorded, and as an additional safeguard, a third professor, who was not present, listened to the tape and assessed the fairness of both the "major" and "minor" professors' questions as well as the student's remarks. Although this arrangement was designed for quality control and fairness, the process easily became cumbersome, and after several years, both the "minor" professor and the "listening" professor were dropped.

Listening to Dr. Robert Thompson, emeritus professor of osteopathic sciences at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, talk about his experiences as a Thomas Edison faculty member tells much about how dedicated the faculty are to providing their own version of fairness as well as quality control. When he was first assigned to do PreGraduation Conferences, he observed that the students were quite anxious about the experience. He asked permission to talk with the students prior to the PGC meeting. He did not prompt the students on subject matter or questions to be asked, but talked with them about their personal lives, what they planned to do next, and what they had learned through their educational experiences. In general, he tried to put them at ease. As a result, he found the students to be more relaxed, eager to begin, and hard to stop once the conference was under way! He spoke highly of the Thomas Edison student: "Most students are eager to please," he reflected, "but the older, highly motivated Thomas Edison students are incredibly eager to show how well they are doing and how much they have done. It is a marvelous experience to work with students who have such a clear idea of what is expected of them."

The original, individual-student form of the PreGraduation Conference has been discontinued. Its replacement is designed to provide outcomes assessment of curricula and programs rather than individual achievement and will apply to all of the college programs and degrees.

The Practicum: One Thomas Edison method for acquiring credits is the Practicum experience for students in the associate and baccalaureate degrees in social and human services. The practicum is a means by which the College evaluates the student's ability to apply theory and principle to his or her field of professional study. Students must have current experience in the field of their option in order to complete the degree program. While this experience is usually full-time paid employment, it may also be extensive part-time or volunteer experience. Dr. Linda Lengyl, professor of law and justice at The College of New Jersey (formerly Trenton State College), has worked with Thomas Edison since 1978 and has assessed hundreds of practicum experiences. Like many others, she extends herself beyond what is required for each of her assignments which are in the criminal justice field. She explained: "I usually talk with the student by telephone for awhile, getting to know them a little, learning of their background so that my questions will be of the highest quality when the practicum is actually held, and also, so that the student is a little more at ease."

"It is a very detailed exercise, and I pour my all into it. I want to give the students the benefit of the doubt, but I also want to make sure that they are worthy of getting credit. I'm exhausted at the end of it in an exhilarating kind of way."

When asked how Thomas Edison's practicum compared to internships at her home institution, The College of New Jersey, Dr. Lengyl naturally spoke highly of internships as good work experiences for young students. However, she added that the internships are often very narrow

because they only encompass one intern position for a short period of time, maybe six weeks or even six months. The practicum at Thomas Edison, on the other hand, is often a reflection of years, even a lifetime, of effort on the part of the student. Therefore, in Dr. Lengyl's experience, the Thomas Edison practicum student has worked much harder for the credit earned than the Intern student at any college.

Distance and Independent Adult Learning (DIAL): Guided Study courses are available to students on an independent, distance-learning basis. The course is completed during a sixteen or twenty-four week semester. Each course is structured around weekly readings, video and/or audio tapes, and written assignments throughout the semester with proctored examinations at mid-term and at the end of the course. Students are assigned a faculty mentor who is available by mail, telephone, or even computer e-mail, if they so agree. The mentor provides feedback on student progress throughout the semester but does not "teach" the course.

Dr. Dominick Iorio, dean of the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Rider University, and Thomas Edison faculty member since 1982, talked about his own personal growth in teaching in the Guided Study program. A seasoned professor in over twenty-five subjects in religion and philosophy, Dr. Iorio said: "I was fascinated by the Guided Study process, and I was intrigued by the way I had to *relearn* the subject in order to teach it at a distance. Also, I was fascinated by the caliber of writing that the students do for the course and the obvious amount of work they put into their studies. It occurred to me that these students were doing as much or better work, certainly *more* work, than my students in the traditional classrooms. I find grading difficult, however, because every student seems to deserve an A. That's how good the work is."

Dr. Mariagnes Lattimer, professor emeritus at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, teaches in the social work field and is board-certified in clinical social work. She has served on the Academic Council, mentors in the Guided Study program, and does many practicums for the Associate in Science (A.S.) and Bachelor of Science in Human Services (BS/HS) students. When asked whether or not she had to make any adjustments in her teaching approach with Thomas Edison students, she responded that the major adjustment was to remember that Thomas Edison students are working adults. She explains: "They are not just sitting in a classroom and going to the library. They have families and jobs and crises in their lives. One of my students had a horrible tragedy in her family; she could not concentrate on her studies for awhile. When her assignments didn't come in on schedule, I called her, and we talked about the tragedy. I told her to take her time; the work would be there when she was ready to come back. And sure enough, one day I received an assignment with a note saying simply, 'I'm ready to come back.'"

"Another student, a policeman, was beside himself because his wife was due with their first baby. I told him to forget about deadlines except for the midterm and the final, which he could work out with the College. After the baby came and he had returned to his studies, I got a note from him that said simply, 'It was a girl.'"

Learning to work exclusively with adult students at Thomas Edison and adjusting to distance learning modes have been critical conditions for building the successful Guided Study program, but the path has had its share of challenges. Like the song, the College says that "Nobody Does It Better," but at the College that sometimes meant that "Nobody Had Done It, Yet." The College was often the first, as in the unexpected challenge that emerged out of a cooperative program between Thomas Edison, Wayne State University in Detroit, and the New Jersey public television station New Jersey Network (NJN). It was the College's entrée into distance learning. Starting with just two courses, the program grew so rapidly that the College had to contract out for textbook purchases, although duplication of video tapes for the courses was still done in house. William (Bill) Seaton, director of the program, told about "pioneering" in the tape distribution method in education. He said, "We found that more and more students wanted copies of tapes, so we made that a part of the registration process and charged the students to pay a small rental fee for the tapes. Nobody in the United States was doing that at that time. We called the exec-

utives at PBS and tried to explain to them what we were doing. They really panicked. None of their contracts were written to allow that to happen, so we had to go through a long period of negotiations, letter writing, and phone calls to work out the kind of arrangements that would give us legal permission to duplicate and distribute tapes. We can be very proud of that. We were the pioneers in that kind of distribution method. Now, getting duplication rights is very common and a part of the standard contract at PBS."

Contract Learning: A fairly recent addition to the independent study methods offered by the College is the contract learning option. Contract learning allows students and faculty to develop a learning experience that is not as structured as either the on-line classroom or the Guided Study course. The program is primarily designed for the hard-to-find courses that are not readily available in established distance and independent-learning formats. In the first year, enrollments in contract learning surpassed registration for on-line courses. Currently, eighteen courses are available through this option, and its success is indicative of the sensitivity college staff have to changes in student needs.

Expansion: The explosive development and technological changes in the distance-learning program might be compared to the difference between pushing a wheelbarrow and piloting a supersonic jet, and it happened in less than ten years. The program started with a director and one secretary; together, they processed registrations and payments, xeroxed course schedules and syllabi, mailed textbooks and video tapes, contracted for faculty consultants, processed assignments back and forth between the students and their mentors, and performed any and all tasks related to running the program. The video duplicating system was done with two connected VCRs, and copies were often third generation. The program now has equipment that duplicates twenty-two tapes simultaneously using a 3/4-inch master or tapes that are downloaded directly from the satellite. Quality has improved 100%.

When the College put courses on-line in 1993, Bobby Cugini, a double amputee, was the first student in the nation to enroll electronically with Thomas Edison. Bobby is a cosmetics salesman who coaches wheelchair basketball in his spare time. He enrolled in an English composition course through a telephone hookup. He could plug into his studies through his home computer almost any time. A telephone link tied his computer to the instructor's system, and they communicated via their keyboards.

The 1986 challenge grant funds enabled the College to launch the Guided Study on CALL™ program. More than 100 distance learning courses are now available, and twelve are on-line. The current goal is to move the on-line classroom to the network, and with the addition of instructional designers, the College is *developing* courses specifically for on-line use as opposed to having courses *adapted*. Just ten years after the challenge grant funding in 1986, the wiring and design work for the first Interactive Television (ITV) classroom was completed in the Academic Center (1996). When the hardware installation is complete in 1997, the College will be offering live instruction in a real time mode. The audience will be students enrolled through the Degree Pathways program, discussed in the next chapter.

Student Services: Services to students have undergone many changes through the years. In the first few years, enrolled students continued working with the academic counselors who assisted in bringing them into the College. Those students who used the individual assessment process (known now as portfolio assessment) were advised by a different group called portfolio advisors. When Dr. Fletcher became the academic vice president in 1973, he persuaded President Brown to hire academic advisors to work exclusively with enrolled students, and the academic counselors were reassigned to work only with nonenrolled students. By 1977 when the College received its first accreditation by the regional accrediting body, the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, student services were further defined so that transcript evaluators, working within the Registrar's Office, also worked with enrolled students, but usually only to answer questions about the completed academic evaluations of transcripts and other work.

The College was growing at such a pace that student caseloads became necessary. Students were usually assigned according to degree options, but because there was no computerization, and few typewriters for that matter, everyone did their work alone and by hand. A program advisor at the time, Dr. Ruth McKeefery remembered it well: "I answered all of my phone calls directly at my desk. We had no receptionist to screen calls. I wrote all of my letters long hand and did all of my own filing. I did personal counseling and program planning, registered students for testing, processed my students who were using individual assessment, and recruited my own faculty. Each of us had a caseload of between 475 and 500 students."

Following the recommendations from President Matusak's Implementation Committee, the student services operation changed so that more students could be served by the same number of staff. However, as the College continued to grow, and as state support continued to diminish, a reassessment of student services was once again needed. Upon his arrival in December 1982, Dr. Pruitt appointed a special Student Services Task Force to analyze the problems and to make recommendations that would maximize services using the same number of staff. The result was the Advisement Center approach, and caseloads were eliminated. A Phone Center with an 800 number was established, and students could reach any one of several advisors every afternoon during set hours. Individual appointments were still held during morning hours. Several advisors were reassigned to specialize in the portfolio process, and all evaluators and advisors were grouped in degree teams so that problem cases could be discussed, and quality in services could be reviewed and constantly improved.

As computerization took place, further refinements in services followed. Backlogs in records evaluation were gradually eliminated, and the hard copy student files were no longer permitted to go out of the Registrar's Office.

As often happens with "systems," even this more efficient student services system began to break down as enrollments continued to soar upwards and as state appropriations continued to soar downwards. The College recognized that increased enrollments, not increased fees, were critical to meeting future needs. A college-wide Client Services Review Task Force revisited and reevaluated the ways in which the College services its clients and made determinations about how to better position the institution to respond to the requirements and demands of current and future clients. The recommendations coming out of that review focused on realignment of key functions, revision of key processes, and made the Thomas Edison student the center of all functions and processes.

The structural elements central to the realignment called for a more comprehensive system than what had been established under the Advisement Center and its Phone Center subset. The new realignment created a Student Services Center, which brought Admissions Services and the Financial Aid office out of the Public Affairs Division and into Academic Affairs so that all services — from inquiry to applicant, applicant to enrollment, and enrollment to graduation — were under the same supervision with the same mission. The program planning processes were integrated with the records evaluation processes to maximize the use of institutional resources. This transition was completed in 1996 and appears to be serving its purposes very well.



Tom Streckewald (deceased), Director of Institutional Research, Outcomes Assessment, and Planning, and Dr. Ruth McKeefery, Dean of the College, share a light moment during a staff celebration of the College's reaccreditation in 1992 by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.



Pictured during a reception honoring the first graduates of the BSN Program are (seated - l to r): Gloria Boseman, Faculty Committee for Nursing and former study group facilitator; and graduates, Beatrice Lauter, Joy Shurgot, and Willy Wallendal; (standing - l to r) J. Marian Stone, Thomas Edison BSN Advisor; Dr. Regina Sanchez-Porter, Faculty Committee for Nursing and HATPE Clinical Examiner; Marianne Hoy, Faculty Committee for Nursing and Study Group Facilitator; Mary Smith, graduate; Wilma Govett, graduate; Betsy Snope, graduate; Hortense Anderson, Faculty Committee for Nursing; and Dr. Dolores Brown-Hall, Associate Dean and Director of Nursing. Graduates not present for the photograph: Fern Papalia and Linda Garbrech.

THE "NOBODY DOES IT BETTER" BSN AND MSM

The Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN): Dr. Dolores Brown Hall, associate dean and director of the Nursing Program, came to the College in 1983; her charge was to implement the already approved BSN degree that was modeled after the New York Regents External Degree BSN program. She accomplished that and much more as the years passed. Much like the College that found itself moving rapidly away from the original design, which was also modeled after the Regents, the Thomas Edison nursing program evolved to answer the needs of its own students.

Dr. Brown Hall explained that Thomas Edison has increased the variety of methods the students can use to satisfy portions of the nursing component of the degree, that is, paper and pen examinations instead of performance-

only versions of select components. Dr. Brown Hall also plans to redesign the entire degree to address new trends in the nursing field, such as managed care and community-related nursing, and to represent the Thomas Edison philosophy and framework.

Dr. Brown Hall and program advisor Marian Stone worked side by side to build the program from zero students to the current enrollment of 250 students. The degree earned National League of Nursing accreditation on its first try in 1990 and reaccreditation in 1995.

The Master of Science in Management (MSM): The MSM degree is another first in the nation — the first graduate program offered by a distance learning institution using a cohort group that stays together throughout the process, and which uses on-line computer courses as its primary mode of communication. The three faculty experts who worked with college staff to develop the concept were Dr. Charles Nanry from Rutgers, the State University; Dr. Edward Mazze from Temple University; and Dr. William Brant from Rider University. Their brainstorming resulted in the creation of a blue ribbon panel of experts from business, industry, and academia who further brainstormed to determine: 1) what should an individual have learned after completing a graduate business degree program so that their learning correlates with what is required on the job, and 2) how can such a degree program be packaged so that it uses state-of-the-art technology and is not site-based.

From the panel's discussions and recommendations came the final proposal for a degree designed to serve employed adults who have had professional experience in the management field. The program integrates theory and practice of management as it applies to diverse organizations, educational institutions, and other agencies. The development of analytical, problem-solving and decision-making abilities, and the application of those abilities to actual and simulated management situations make the program unique.

After a two-year delay within the Department of Higher Education, the MSM was finally approved in May 1994. All students enrolled in the first class and each succeeding class moved through the degree in a cohort group. They all take the same courses at the same time. They interact and communicate with each other via computer, and they stay together, working almost as a team. This approach makes it unique in the nation — another first.

Course design was also unique, and it was a team effort, a team consisting of people who taught at various colleges and universities but who were all faculty consultants at Thomas Edison. Dr.

Deborah Cutchin, director of the Urban Education Consortium, Center for Government Services, Rutgers University, and other Thomas Edison faculty, served on the course development team. Dr. Cutchin's recalled:

There were three kinds of challenges facing us as we worked together. The first was that we were to work as a team, but we didn't have a lot of working time together, and we didn't necessarily agree on very much. Most faculty don't work as a team to put a course together, so our first challenge was to develop a set of norms and standards of behavior amongst ourselves — a new level in group dynamics.

The second challenge was to learn to work with a professional course developer who had expertise in on-line courses. Again, most faculty never have to bend their own concepts in lieu of someone else's expertise — someone who has a different view of the world than we have. We had to learn how to transform course content into visual stages so that a student could work through the course on-line.

One of the early discussions was to see how far out we could go on the computer system. We tried many options, but each one had to test positive for each potential student and the technology that student might have, so our design ended up being more conventional than we at first intended. That can change, however, as technology advances. For example, the interactive classroom is already changing the possibilities.

The third challenge was to learn firsthand what would be reasonable expectations for one professor teaching a class of twenty, thirty, or forty students all using e-mail or computer conferencing as the means of communication. None of us had experience in that, so we learned as we designed. The actual course content was the easiest part because the course objectives were so clearly defined in the degree proposal.

One of the most fascinating aspects of the program is the total interaction of the students and all of the courses. In a traditional graduate program, Course A students, subject, and professor have little or no impact on or interaction with what is taking place in Course B. We say, "Here's my course. Sit there. Take it. Leave." We never discuss how my course relates to the rest of the student's program. In the Thomas Edison MSM, it all has to tie together. There are entry- and exit-level assessments for each student. Emphasis is placed on the individual student's needs, and those needs are met somewhere during the program. This is new. The technology will improve as the program matures, but for the concept, content, and strength of the program, once again Thomas Edison is out in front.

Dr. McCutchin might well have said, "Nobody Does It Better." The first Beta group in the Master of Science in Management will graduate in 1997.

QUALITY CONTROL

The Academic Council and Advisory Committees: Before all of the above occurred there was a great period of experimentation, both in administrative procedures and in services to be delivered. In his December 1973 progress report, Dr. Brown wrote of the dramatic changes that were necessitated by the break between Thomas Edison and the New York Regents. When the cooperative arrangement ended, it became necessary to develop a totally independent system of determining academic policy and implementing the degree and assessment programs, as well as of developing new degree programs. In order to strengthen the academic leadership of the College, the academic vice president position was created and Dr. Fletcher was hired to provide that leadership. The TECEP program had been started under Dr. John Clark who was on a one-year leave of absence from the Educational Testing Service (ETS) in Princeton. The portfolio assessment process was still being refined, although students were encouraged to use that option for earning credit.

One of Dr. Fletcher's first tasks was to finalize guidelines for the newly created Academic Council and to provide orientation for the twenty-two appointees at their organizational meeting set for January 1974. With the Council's oversight, eight committees were established to create new degree programs and specializations (the College does not use the term "majors") to expand the testing and assessment programs, and influence quality control in student records evaluation.

All faculty serving on the first Academic Council or one of its committees were fully employed faculty at other colleges in the state, and their priorities and loyalties were to their home institutions. Working with Thomas Edison was a sideline for additional income and a way to stretch their knowledge and expertise without the trappings of the faculty senate, the unions, the administration, or their faculty peers. Since it was a sideline, they were often slow in returning graded papers or evaluated portfolios; sometimes two or three months would go by. These delays were unacceptable for maintaining quality services to students, and it is surprising that students stayed with the College under those circumstances. However, in time specific guidelines and standards were established for faculty. As enthusiasm for the new college grew throughout the state, working as a faculty consultant for Thomas Edison changed from a sideline job to a privilege, and faculty response time improved dramatically.

The work of the Council was exciting, as some recall it. Dr. Charles Nanry particularly enjoyed the discussions about courses and curricula and the lively debates as to whether one or another course was deserving of three credits or two credits. It was a very healthy exchange of ideas on topics that they would never have had occasion for discussion at their home campuses. Dr. William Younie from William Paterson College of New Jersey added an interesting dimension to serving on the Council. He explained: "One of the difficulties I've had with both the Academic Council and the Advisory Committees is that when I come here to one of the meetings, I have to change my mind slightly, and in some cases I *greatly* change my attitude. In the past my concern was primarily for my institution, for fulfilling certain administrative bureaucratic needs, but here at Thomas Edison the focus is always on the student. While there is a concern for academic rigor and a concern for proper sequencing, the main question is not how difficult should we make it for the student, but how can we facilitate the learning. Here, we ask how better can we know our students, how better can we assess them and work within an adult framework."

One of the major thrusts of the Advisory Committees was to continually upgrade the curriculum and the degree requirements. All degrees go through a regular five-year review process wherein the degree is literally torn apart, analyzed, and put back together with or without recommended changes to maintain currency, relevancy, and professional standards. Faculty often compare what is done at Thomas Edison with what is done at their home institutions. However, when it becomes apparent that a particular course or an entire subject field is no longer needed or appropriate for a degree program, there is no hesitancy or debate once approved by the full council. No one at Thomas Edison suffers as a result. The "philosophy department," for example, is not threatened because a course may no longer be required because there is no philosophy department. "We could objectively analyze the curriculum and seriously look at quality control without worrying about ourselves or our colleagues. And we really learned a lot more about academics across the curriculum than we ever would have at our home institutions," stated Dr. Linda Lengyl from The College of New Jersey.

The Advisory Committees have always been very stringent in setting high standards. Dr. Thomas Simonet from Rider University, whose affiliation with Thomas Edison began in 1974, commented on his twenty-two years. "Edison has always insisted that the standards be higher than at a typical four-year college. In response, the Academic Council has made sure that there is no cheapening of the Edison degree. We have an unspoken commitment to the College when we meet around the table. We have built new friendships around that commitment, but more importantly we have built strong loyalties to Edison."

Dr. George A. Randall, professor of mathematics, science, and technology at Gloucester County

College and faculty member at Thomas Edison since 1994, commented that the Advisory Committees and the Academic Council are extraordinarily responsive to changing trends in the educational environment. He is particularly proud that the College developed the Environmental Sciences specialization in the Bachelor of Science degree. He said, "We have a hazardous materials program at Gloucester, and there isn't a baccalaureate degree in the United States for that yet. A lot of our students are interested in the management end of the field, so I can send them to Edison into either the Bachelor of Science in Management or the Bachelor of Science in Environmental Sciences. That's how I became familiar with Edison. My colleagues kept telling me to send our associate degree students to Edison. The closest four-year college does not offer what our students need. Now, twenty-four of the twenty-eight full-time faculty in my department not only support Thomas Edison, but promote it." Dr. Randall is working on the remaining four.

Academic policies and procedures were accumulating at such a rapid pace during the first five years that staff could not stay current with the changes. Large three-ring binders literally stuffed with the accumulation of policies, policy changes, and policy exceptions were carried all over the state by academic counselors as they went to their many counseling sites, or the papers sat in huge stacks on the shelves in program advisor offices. The accrediting team for the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools commented on this seeming disorganization during the 1976 and 1977 evaluation process, although accreditation was not withheld because of it. Nevertheless, when Dr. Ruth McKeefery joined the staff in August of 1977, she voluntarily developed and produced the first staff handbooks which explained all of the program processes such as the PreGraduation Conference and the individualized assessment. She also created the first "Policy Reference Handbook." The staff handbooks became "how-tos" on every process, which included forms with sample letters for needed correspondence. Later on Dr. McKeefery also designed faculty handbooks and encouraged her staff to develop program planning handbooks and other tools for maintaining quality in services to students.

Dr. Robert Fishco, professor of business technologies at Middlesex County College, recounted some of his work with the Advisory Committees and the Academic Council. In particular, he stressed the committee work that preceded the 1992 Accreditation Team site visit. Working with an ad hoc advisory committee to review all of the business programs, the general education and major requirements for the degree, and the core requirements for the specializations, his committee examined every option and made recommendations for change. He summarized: "The changes that committees recommend usually get approved by the Council. There have been very few where there has been major contention, and usually I was the person on the Council saying, 'Wait a minute. Where are we going with this thing.' It's that kind of scrutiny that built the quality of the institution, and everything we've done at Thomas Edison is equal to or better than any of the four year colleges around."

Working with the Advisory Committees or serving on the Academic Council provides unique experiences for Thomas Edison's part-time faculty. Some discussions are about degree requirements as each program goes through its customary five-year review, but some of the discussions and actions take on interesting aspects that probably would never occur on a traditional college campus.

One such discussion and action came through an Advisory Committee working with the DIAL (Distance and Independent Adult Learning) program. The issue arose following the death of one of the faculty mentors who was mentoring three different courses in economics. He died in the middle of the semester, and there was no



Taking a break at a 1992 faculty workshop - Dr. John Cosgrove, Fordham University, and Program Advisor Patricia Jackson

one to take his students. That problem was finally resolved after significant delays and some trauma on the students' parts, but the Advisory Committee reviewed the circumstances and recommended two new policies. The first was regarding the number of courses a faculty member could teach in one semester, and the second was that for every course and every faculty member, there must be a backup professor ready to take over in a crisis. Approved by the Academic Council, the new policies and procedures are in place. The situation has not arisen since that one unfortunate death, but the proper protections and quality control are clearly defined for future need.

Bill Seaton, associate vice president for DIAL, tells of other considerations that have been made. One in particular was a policy issue. When the College first offered Guided Study, many of the courses were for nine credits scheduled to be completed in 16 weeks. Feedback from students quickly illustrated that sixteen weeks for working adults, especially for a nine-credit course, was unreasonable. The Academic Council considered this problem, and rather than discontinuing the nine-credit offerings, or worse, holding fast to a sixteen-week schedule, they authorized the extension of the course to a twenty-four-week schedule. This was a fifty percent increase in the time allowed for course completion.

Consulting Faculty: Dealing with quality control in the faculty is much simpler at Thomas Edison than at other institutions. Although the College has a very strong commitment to retaining quality faculty, at the same time staff can easily recommend that a professor who does not perform to standards get no new assignments. Academic Vice President and Provost Dr. Jerry Ice talked about that small percent who seem unable to meet deadlines, a critical aspect of working with students at a distance. He said, "Whether you're working with students in California, Maine, or New Jersey, getting those written assignments graded and returned in a timely manner is very important. Occasionally, we have a faculty member that we repeatedly have to call about that; if they do not respond to our efforts to help them or make suggestions, we just have to discontinue using them. And it's not just the rapid responses that are important. If the quality of their work starts to slide, and they don't adjust, we can't use them. That's why we say that we have the best faculty in the nation. We only use the best from all of the colleges in the tri-state area."

Another significant change was in the hiring of consulting faculty to evaluate portfolios or do individualized assessments. Until the early 1980's, whenever an out-of-state student applied for prior learning assessment, whether by portfolio or the old individualized method, the College hired and trained a faculty person in the same geographic area where the student lived. This was very time-consuming and costly for the College, and it was virtually impossible to maintain standards of excellence in both student and faculty performance. Hiring out-of-state faculty was eliminated except in the immediate tri-state area or in rare cases where a subject area specialist is not available in New Jersey.

Faculty training was increased and improved, and a faculty evaluation system was instituted. One means was through student feedback, especially in programs where students had one-on-one contact with faculty as in Guided Study and contract learning. Some faculty are too hard on students, and of course, some are too easy. Advisors watch for behavior patterns in addition to the feedback.

A student/professor team who adapted to a rather unusual professional work situation was a student who worked for FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Association, headquartered in Washington, D.C. During the summer of 1996, there were many hurricanes and fires, and the student had to travel the entire United States for his job. He was taking a Guided Study course and did not want to withdraw or fail, so he mailed assignments to the faculty mentor from wherever he was — in Oregon, Texas, Michigan, Florida, or elsewhere — and the mentor agreeably dealt with the traveling student in whichever city was appropriate. That student was highly motivated, and so was his mentor. He did not have to accommodate the student to that extent, but he did.

TECHNOLOGY

The technological developments at the College merit special mention. The revolution in the management of automated information systems nation-wide has been so spectacular that in a twenty-four hour period, a quantum leap in technology could occur, and the world would be introduced to a new major breakthrough. The early "sophisticates" in computer technology were somewhat smug about their facility with the keypunch card system of data storage and retrieval. It was quite common for 85-90% of the staff on any given college campus to lack the know-how for using existing computer equipment.

In May 1977, it was thought that Thomas Edison's only need for computing services was for the storage and retrieval of student demographics from which enrollment figures could be obtained and counselors could access student addresses, telephone numbers, and degree information. Also, it was thought that there was no need to computerize student transcripts because the unique Thomas Edison transcript could not be made uniform for all students, given the hundreds of institutions, wide variety of test scores, and individual assessment reports that might appear on them. Dr. Brown wrote in a memo to the Department of Higher Education as follows: "At the present time, we do not contemplate any new projects or systems for the College. We see no benefit to an on-line system or the rental of terminals since for our purposes the batch method is entirely appropriate. Complete student files are available for counselors. These files contain information that could not be stored in a data bank. Therefore, there is no need to call up information on the spot. The financial records and payroll are, of course, done by the state, and our internal record keeping system is entirely adequate for our needs."

In 1977, Dr. Brown could not have known about imaging, word processing, on-line courses, or any of the other applications that were rapidly emerging. The technology explosion occurred within the next few years after 1977. Dr. Brown left in 1978, and it was during Dr. Matusak's tenure that the first in-house computing efforts were begun.

Drew Hopkins, current director of Management Information Systems, was an administrative assistant in 1977 and a substitute academic counselor shortly thereafter. He recalls that the first piece of technology was a very small database that was stored on Princeton University's mainframe computer, an IBM Big Boy. Thomas Edison used that computer to access its student lists. When the state colleges formed an alliance called the New Jersey Educational Computing Network (NJEEN), the College joined that alliance for the same services.

Around 1980-1981, the College began preparations for the 1982 accreditation site visit. Dennis Smith, director of Institutional Research, who was responsible for data collection for portions of the Institutional Self-Study Report, negotiated with Drew's supervisor to use him one or two days per week to assist with the statistics. During the next year, he was finally transferred to work with Dennis exclusively.

With Dr. Matusak's assistance, the College acquired an IBM mainframe computer. Paul Jacobs was assigned responsibility for training staff in its use. As director of Testing and Assessment, he recognized the word processing potential for test creation and revision. Where test revision would normally take weeks to accomplish on a typewriter, the word processing capability reduced the process to one day or less. Paul spoke proudly of his training efforts with secretaries at the College. Professional staff and managers were not introduced to word processing until several years later. Many secretaries rebelled against the innovation at first, having only recently received training in the newer electronic typewriters that featured a memory capability.

Four terminals were installed to operationalize the capabilities of the IBM 5520 mainframe. One terminal was placed on each floor of the Kelsey building. All secretaries for that floor had to sign up for its use, and as they became skilled in the many applications, they joked about getting in the "terminal" line to get their typing done. There was only one printer for the entire college, so work that was prepared on the second floor had to be retrieved on the



Governor Tom Kean (left) and Dr. George Prull, President of Thomas Edison, share the podium at a public gathering.

fifth floor where the printer was housed.

When Dennis Smith left the College, Drew's position was expanded to include supervision of computing services. No one knew how vast this operation would become, but Drew was immediately assigned responsibility for replacing the IBM system with new equipment that would communicate with the IBM mainframe so that information could still be shared with other users of the IBM system. The Wang system emerged as the most viable at the time. One of the significant factors in the selection of Wang was that Wang had a mini-computer system that required very little knowledge of machine language and programming skills. In-house staff could build a database and work on word processing documents without any knowledge of Basic and Fortran or any other language. Two new positions were authorized for the new Management Information Systems Office, and the College launched its first in-house programming operation. Many of the stock programs could not be used or even adapted, so creative programmers were needed to implement the systems. Twelve terminals were later added to the four in place.

It was in 1986 when the College had its next major breakthrough.

Governor Tom Kean created the Challenge Grant Award Program for the state colleges. Thomas Edison was awarded \$1.8 million to automate the College, initiate the electronic classroom concept, and develop the sampler testing program. The greatest impact was in the automation of the student records and records evaluation process, which was severely backlogged. Completion of the automation not only increased efficiency but allowed for enrollment expansion.

The other emphasis was the beginning of the electronic classroom concept. The first offering was for eight independent study courses. A student enrolled in a given course could communicate through e-mail as well as an electronic conferencing capability. This was the first on-line classroom development, which has now been expanded to include complete degree programs available through Guided Study, as it is now called.

The student record system, a student financial system, the student evaluation and program planning system, the On-Line Computer Classroom, and the sampler test feature were the platform from which the next lines of technological development were launched.

Significant equipment gifts by the Digital Equipment Corporation increased the potential for refinements and expansion. Through an Equipment Leasing Fund program in the Department of Higher Education, the College received a \$1 million grant to install a local and wide area network, which replaced the desktop terminals with personal computers. All of the word processing functions that the Wang system provided were migrated down to the desktop. Now the staff had word processing right on their desks as opposed to connecting to the mini-computer. Wang Office was replaced with Microsoft Mail, and other systems can be added in the future. From any desk, staff can connect to the Wang, the file server, e-mail, to documents on the network server, and the DECVAC system that runs the Computer Assisted Lifelong Learning CALL™ network. With two UNIX servers, a Sun workstation, and a Silicon Graphics workstation, almost anything else can be introduced.

Meeting More Than Accreditation Standards: All aspects of the College routinely come under very close scrutiny, whether or not it is in the design of a new degree specialization, new policies established by the Academic Council, new or revamped faculty training workshops, revised college materials to enhance student empowerment, new courses, new or deleted examinations, or any other area of academic programs and services. This is outcomes assessment as only Thomas Edison does it. Little wonder that in 1977, 1982, and 1992, the College easily received its initial and then subsequent accreditations by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.

Interestingly, the first status visit by the association was June 7, 1973, when the College was requesting "Candidate for Accreditation" status. The site visitation team was Dr. Paul L. Dressell, assistant provost, director of Institutional Research, Michigan State University; Dr. Kathryn L. Hopwood, dean of students, Department of Counseling and Student Development, Hunter College of the City University of New York; and Dr. John J. Theobald, executive vice president, New York Institute of Technology. Dr. Theobald chaired the team. At that time Dr. Martha E. Church was the associate executive secretary of the Commission on Higher Education, Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.

When Dr. Pruitt came to the College in 1982, he commented often to his management team that they tended to overemphasize the College's accreditation status. Although this is certainly desirable and important, especially from one college to another, and in particular to graduate schools that might be accepting Thomas Edison students into their programs, being accredited by one of the five regional accrediting bodies only verifies that the College has met the minimum standards for excellence. Most colleges choose to go through the accreditation process by a regional body or a program review by a professional association. This is done in five- or ten-year cycles. Thomas Edison, however, incorporates the self-assessment process into every aspect of its operations on a yearly basis, or in some areas, on a daily basis. Therefore, accreditation by the regional association is always expected but no longer applauded or publicized. There is no press release for "not failing." Positive news releases are reserved for the "above-and-beyond" stories. Fortunately, there are many such news releases, because "Nobody Does It Better."

¹ From the movie *The Spy Who Loved Me*, words by Carole Bayer Sager, music by Marvin Hamlisch, © 1977, popularized by singer Carley Simon.

VI. Reach Out And Touch Someone



Thomas Edison strives to work with as many constituencies in the state as possible. The mandate is to reach out and touch the lives of corporations, businesses, individuals, and other colleges or groups. Where many colleges bring in their constituents to the confines of the campus, Thomas Edison goes out across the state and networks.

Thomas Edison has built many partnerships over the twenty-five years of its history; most have been very long-lasting. Those partnerships fall into three categories: 1) City, state, and national partnerships where the College fashioned new models, 2) educational partnerships where the College shaped new traditions, and 3) business or corporate partnerships where the College forged new irons. Some of these partnerships will be presented below.

FASHIONING NEW MODELS

Group Assessments: As the College made itself known in New Jersey, staff “took to the streets” to provide counseling and college information sessions throughout the state. Cooperative arrangements with external groups such as Adult Schools, libraries, and state agencies were important in providing counseling sites for the traveling staff, but the earliest cooperative programs began through what was called the “group assessment process.” Based on the same principle and guidelines used by the American Council on Education (ACE), which evaluated noncollegiate courses and made credit recommendations, the group assessment process was a means Thomas Edison used to evaluate programs or courses that provide a common learning experience for a particular audience. The College would hire faculty from other colleges to evaluate the courses, determine whether or not the courses were college-level, and make credit recommendations accordingly — three semester hour credits, four credits, etc. Once the program was evaluated and credit recommendations were made, an individual student taking that course could apply for college credit through Thomas Edison.

For example, the College worked with state agencies such as the Police Academy at Sea Girt to evaluate some of their training programs. In the first assessment of the academy, faculty determined that the psychology, sociology, and English courses were not up to college-level standards; they recommended specific changes to upgrade the courses. The academy complied, and the courses were re-evaluated. Police academy trainees could then apply for college credit through Thomas Edison if they had passed the course or courses identified.

Many state agencies offered training programs for their employees. Corporations were strong providers of employee training. Smaller organizations such as ballet companies, secretarial and technical nonaccredited schools offered many training programs that when successfully completed were not transferable to colleges and universities without an ACE credit recommendation. In the 1970s, even an ACE credit recommendation was no guarantee that any college or university would accept the training program as college credit, even when the course was taught by college professors and may have exactly paralleled a course taught at a college. Because the training source — the secretarial school, the corporation, the technical school, the ballet company — was not accredited by one of the five regional accrediting bodies, the learning was simply not acknowledged.

Thomas Edison provided two new options for such learning experiences: 1) It provided a local means of evaluating the courses without going through the American Council on Education, although the same high standards were used as though it were done by ACE, and 2) it provided the college that would accept the credit recommendations and the degree programs wherein they could be applied. With the full faith and credit policy within the state, credits transcribed by Thomas Edison would be honored just the same as credits earned through in-class instruction. The group assessment program at the College was a major source of cooperative ventures with many organizations throughout the state for about ten years until the College became an official New Jersey representative of ACE through administration of the Program on NonSponsored Collegiate Instruction, the ACE version of the group assessment process.

In addition to this focused group assessment program, other cooperative relations were being developed as early as 1973 between Thomas Edison and other public colleges, and between the College and all of the adult learning centers in the state. Thomas Edison had counseling sites at 139 locations throughout the state during its first four years, and over the next seven years, the number of sites varied according to need. In 1983, the entire preenrollment counseling concept was revised to be more like traditional admissions recruitment, and sites are no longer maintained as they had been.

The Prison Project: In 1975, the Garden State School District wanted to implement a pilot project through CETA (the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act) to expand educational opportunities for men and women in New Jersey prisons. Thomas Edison received the funding because the best and least expensive program for working with inmates was offered by combining Thomas Edison's own TECEP examinations with the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) examinations offered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS). The initial grant for \$78,000 funded one counselor hired specifically for the project, Leon Genciana. The project was directed by Jim Ratigan; Jan Palmer was added later.

In 1975, 179 inmates were enrolled from eleven prison sites. Tutoring faculty were hired to lead CLEP-preparation sessions and to teach inmates how to study independently for the TECEP examinations. Subsequent funding came from the State Manpower Services Council. Thomas Edison was the only four-year college in New Jersey serving the correctional system at that time.

Dr. Paul Jacobs, director of Testing and Assessment for the College, had an experience with a prison visitation that he remembered vividly. He recalled: "I was asked to go up to the women's prison in north Jersey to talk about individual assessment with some of the inmates. I wasn't very nervous; there seemed to be prison staff around everywhere. I met with a group of women in their cells, and I remember talking about assessment. We got along just fine with no problems. When I left, I asked one of them what her offenses were, and she said 'Murder.' I was really flabbergasted because we were sitting there talking about secretarial skills."

Jim Ratigan had done significant volunteer work in prisons before coming to Thomas Edison, so he was familiar with the procedures for visiting or offering any public service to inmates. With only a two-person staff to start, he and Leon Genciana visited every correctional facility in the state and set up the broader program for counseling, tutoring, and testing. Jim remembered one particular experience.

The Trenton Psychiatric Hospital had what was called the Vroom Building, an "ad seg" or administrative segregation unit where they kept inmates from rival gangs. They did not want members from different gangs to be mixed together, so they devised this method of segregating them. Jim had an appointment to meet with an administrator to discuss the project setup. He got there early and had to wait in an open, but very secure, waiting room with iron doors, stone walls, and a reception desk behind bars. There were just two benches but no regular furniture. A sign on the receptionist window said "be back from lunch soon," so Jim sat down on a bench to wait.

After a few minutes, two heavily armed policemen came in with a prisoner who was handcuffed, shackled, chains, the whole thing. The policemen saw the sign about being out to lunch, and they said, "Oh, well, we have to wait a few minutes, so let's go get a cup of coffee." Apparently, they had keys to get out, because once in there, you could not get out without a key, and they left. But they left their prisoner there with me.

I thought, "They don't bring someone in here in chains and handcuffs for a speeding ticket or a parking fine." and I got worried. They left me with that prisoner for fifteen minutes. It was the longest fifteen minutes of my life. The prisoner probably knew how futile it would have been to do anything except just sit there in the locked room, but my mind wasn't thinking about that as I sat there. Obviously, it turned out okay., because I'm still here.

Thomas Edison still serves incarcerated students, but there no longer is a CETA- funded program to cover fees.

The CETA Project: Another project Jim Ratigan directed also began in 1975 when the State Manpower Services Council provided funds to hire three more counselors to work directly with the unemployed. Hired specifically for that project were Ralph Viviano, Angela Fontan, and Louise Perkins. All student fees were subsidized by the CETA Prime Sponsor, and they covered the TECEP and CLEP examinations plus individual assessment. Initially a two-year grant, the project was maintained for five full years. During that period about 600 unemployed New Jersey residents were enrolled in the College.

ANDATEC: In 1976, the College entered into a cooperative program with the Alcohol, Narcotic, and Drug Abuse Training and Education Center, a program that trains rehabilitation personnel. The College provided an assessment of the college-level knowledge the individuals derived from ANDATEC courses and personal experience. Over 135 students were enrolled in the program.

Civil Service Project: During the first nine years, state agencies had the greatest attraction to the College. This meshed well with the Department of Higher Education's view of Thomas Edison — to serve the state whether students enrolled or not. It was to the College's advantage when students did enroll, as state appropriations continued to decline, and the dependency upon student revenues became more dominant. In 1980, another project emerged through the Vocational Development for Selected New Jersey Civil Service Employees Through the Evaluation and Award for Certified Learning program. (If the student could survive writing that name on the application form, he or she was accepted.) The project provided \$20,000 to evaluate knowledge of individuals in select civil service titles. This was a short-term grant but typical of the requests received by the College, which had long since been identified as the expert in the assessment of college-level learning.

The Hotline: A major grant project that was eventually realized was the proposal for federal funds under Title I of the Higher Education Act of 1965. It started as a project to provide learning opportunities for retirement communities and was projected to reach 500 senior citizens. This was not funded; however, the proposal was rewritten to request development funds for a Statewide Counseling Network Clearinghouse of Educational Resources. The College was already providing the counseling services throughout the state. The proposed project expanded that service to a telephone network, which came to be known as the Hotline. What is interesting is that this project later caused conflict between the College and the Department of Higher Education.



Assemblyman John S. Watson (right) at the 20th anniversary Gala.

The Hotline was established and served extraordinarily well during its tenure in the Kelsey Building, the College's home. The conflict, however, centered around its funding and the impact that funding had on the total budget request for the College. Although the governor's final budget recommendation was close to the amount requested by the College, when the announcement was made, the Department of Higher Education reallocated funds it promised the College for expansion of the Hotline and gave the funds to other colleges. The relationship between the Department and the College from about 1974 to 1978 had a "yo-yo" effect, as Dr. Brown described it, and is reflected in many documents from the period.

Chancellor Dungan announced grants made to state colleges from Title I State Advisory Council funds. He spoke about traditional projects, yet he commended the

nontraditional ones. However, the projects that he funded were primarily for traditional colleges proposing nontraditional projects. Thomas Edison was designed to do the nontraditional projects, but six of the ten projects funded in the traditional colleges were for programs Thomas Edison had as part of its proposal and was better able to honor. In one of his few angry moments, at least those captured in writing, Dr. Brown wrote to his senior staff: "It would seem that Edison College — as in the Chancellor's words, 'the cutting edge of education in higher education in New Jersey,' — isn't even informed of either the nature of the Title I Project [I inquired twice about information and nothing was received] or consulted on the nature of projects that involve the work of the College. Six out of ten of the projects funded have an impact on the work of Edison College, and I doubt that the sponsors of any one of them have any idea of our existence."

The College continued supporting the concept of a statewide Clearinghouse of Information, using its own staff and time. The College again submitted a grant proposal under Title I. It finally was approved under Chancellor T. Edward Hollander in June 1978. Funded under various names, the project became known as the Hotline and stayed in operation until it was assumed by the Department of Higher Education a few years later and was moved to another site. Of the four people hired specifically for the project, two were retained by the College when the project moved: Sharon Smith, who eventually became associate registrar, and Michael Klebanoff, who eventually became a senior transcript evaluator.

The John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy: The John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy at Thomas Edison is the first such body in New Jersey to form long-term partnerships with leaders in government and business to develop applied, hands-on strategies for managing change. Driven by the needs of its partners, the Institute focuses on planning for positive change rather than analyzing outcomes that have already occurred. It provides access to a wide range of "best practices" and external resources. The Institute's mission is three-fold:

- To build the capacity of local governments, businesses, nonprofit organizations, associations, and community groups throughout the state to make sound policy decisions.
- To plan and implement sound solutions to community problems.
- To work through the formation of partnerships in which the Institute provides state-of-the-art, timely, high-quality, and precisely applied and tailored research, policy advice, and organizational support.

The idea for the Institute grew out of discussions Dr. Pruitt had with Dr. Badi Foster, then president of the AEtna Institute, the training resource center for the AEtna Insurance Company. The discussions centered on the significance of evaluating products and services in higher education. Commenting that the public demands warranties of quality assurance in most products they "buy" except for education, Dr. Foster praised Thomas Edison for its emphasis on competency-based programs and outcomes assessment as a means of providing those warranties. As Dr. Foster defined the variety of training resources his Institute provided, he mentioned a series of seminars that were held to help the employees of the company understand the applications of the 1986 Tax Reform Bill.

During later discussions with the New Jersey State Treasurer regarding the same tax bill and the state's need for similar seminars, Dr. Pruitt proposed to the treasurer the creation of a unique policy institute that would function as a public policy research center. It would provide upfront research and analysis of civic problems or situations and make recommendations for change. The ideal institute would not be the traditional think tank that did mental autopsies on situations after the fact, but it would bring together experts who could inform policy decisions before they were made and recommend strategies for implementation once decisions were in place.

The idea became a reality following the election of Douglas Palmer as mayor of the city of Trenton. Mayor Palmer's plans for making Trenton a better city and a stronger force in the state led to discussions with Dr. Pruitt regarding the creation of the Trenton Office of Policy Studies



Dr. George Pruitt (right), President of the College, and Trenton Mayor Douglas Palmer (left) accepting the New Jersey Exemplary State and Local (EXSL) Award from Governor Christine Todd Whitman.

(TOPS), the forerunner of the John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy. Dr. Pruitt explained: "Mayor Palmer was elected on a reform platform that posed a new vision for Trenton, and while at the conceptual level he had some sense of what that vision meant, on the operational level he did not know how to solve the problems facing him. As we talked, it became clear that Thomas Edison could manage a process whereby experts in the various fields being addressed could be assembled in an apolitical, nonpartisan way to inform the issues without assuming any role in the final decisions. As it all seemed to formulate right in front of me, I sat back and laughed. Thomas Edison finally had a 'client' for the institute I envisioned. The result, of course, was the Trenton Office of Policy Studies with John Thurber as its director. Primary funding came from the Fund for New Jersey and the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, and what later became the Institute was launched April 22, 1991."

TOPS was the first of its kind in the nation — another first for Thomas Edison. It was a unique arrangement between two equal partners. The city had to trust that the College would be responsive to its needs; the College had to trust that her representative, John Thurber, would be privy to con-

versations and information that would enable him to draw upon the appropriate external expertise needed to assist the city in its policy decisions. The right personalities, the right agenda, the right motivation, and the right agreement made TOPS the extraordinary success it still is today.

The first assignment was a request by the New Jersey Attorney General's Office to develop a new initiative to fight drugs and violent crime in Trenton neighborhoods. TOPS canvassed the nation and found a program that was not just law enforcement, but also emphasized engaging the police, public health workers, and youth in constructive activities to create a better community together. Similar programs followed, and Trenton's successes with TOPS's leadership became known throughout the state and nation. Other New Jersey cities requested TOPS's assistance, and since funding was primarily from foundations, the services were free for the asking.

In the fall of 1994, TOPS received two Exemplary State and Local (EXSL) awards, one at the state level and one at the national level. The EXSL award is given by the National Center for Public Productivity in recognition of significant innovations and achievements. TOPS is one of twelve programs in the state to receive this distinction. The state award was presented jointly to Dr. Pruitt and Trenton Mayor Douglas Palmer by Governor Christine Todd Whitman. The national award was presented in Minneapolis during the Seventh National Public Sector Productivity Improvement Conference. TOPS was one of only twenty-five programs recognized nationally.

The next stage in the College's public policy mission was to broaden the partnership concept by creating a new institute that would manage and direct a full public policy initiative. Functioning separately from the three major divisions of the College, but still under the aegis of the College, the Institute for Public Policy was created and formally launched in January 1995. It was renamed the John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy in September 1996. William A. Watson, who was Mayor Palmer's chief of staff, became director of the Institute when John Thurber was appointed vice president for Public Affairs that same year.

A major partnership was established with the Urban Mayors Association in 1996. The Institute's role was to provide public policy and research support as well as some organizational assistance to help the association function better and share insights with each other on issues such as education and economic development.

Another partnership is the Urban Environment Initiative, which focuses on trying to address the needs of urban communities in relationship to parks, open space, waterfront resources, playgrounds, trees, and so on. It is one of the newer initiatives and will operate out of the Institute's

Center for the Urban Environment.

John Thurber commented that the Institute's role is unique in government circles. He stated: "We help the city to think seriously and strategically about how best to serve Trenton residents and the neighborhoods and communities in the area in a very serious way, but we never substitute our agenda for theirs or limit our input or expertise to a particular mayor or party. It is completely independent. An important issue to keep in the forefront is how best to insulate ourselves from the day-to-day crises and agendas of the moment without losing track of the priorities set by the Mayor of the moment; that way we do not become irrelevant to any particular administration."

Three other public policy initiatives were the HINT project, the Trenton Management Review Commission project, and the Department of Corrections study. In January 1993, the New Jersey Legislature and the Governor signed into law a bill naming Thomas Edison and the New Jersey Institute of Technology as partners to collaborate in an eighteen-month study for the purpose of developing a system of portable personal data cards for the storage and retrieval of patient medical history and healthcare cost reimbursement information. Thomas Edison's responsibility in the HINT (Healthcare Information Networks and Technologies) project was to focus on the statewide healthcare survey, which provided data on claims processing and general administrative healthcare costs. The HINT research team concluded that \$760 million in administrative costs savings could be achieved through use of an electronic data interchange in New Jersey. Under the leadership of Project Director Mark Gordon, HINT made eighteen major recommendations to the state legislature for its consideration as methods to reduce administrative healthcare costs. Funding for further study and implementation of recommendations has been ongoing since it began in 1993, and Thomas Edison continues to be a major player in this landmark study as a state and national model for healthcare reform.

The Trenton Management Review Commission focused on reviewing the city's operations in the areas of cash management, inspections, data processing, telecommunications, and energy retro-fitting. The goal was to identify areas for potential cost savings. The studies, coupled with previous studies in public works and vehicle maintenance, have already generated eight to nine million dollars in savings recommendations. Vice President and Treasurer Michael Scheiring led the commission in its work.

One of the challenges for the John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy is to resist the temptation to take too much credit and to have too much of a profile. John Thurber cautions his staff and all who work with or under the aegis of the Institute to keep the egos in check. "We're extremely proud when we look around the city and state and see change based on recommendations our teams have produced, but we remind ourselves regularly that we do not launch the programs; we do not make the final decisions that bring about change. We have to be content to stay in the background and let others take the limelight."

The New Jersey State Library: Thomas Edison's affiliation with the New Jersey State Library is a major "first," not only for the College but for the whole country. After two years of review, Governor Christine Todd Whitman signed a historic executive order paving the way for transferring administration of the state library to the College. The affiliation between these two important statewide institutions was made through the hard work, perseverance, and leadership of many individuals from the governor's office, the Department of Education, the state library, the library community, and Thomas Edison staff with the full support of the legislature. On July 6, 1996, the state library became an affiliate operation of the College.

Discussions began in 1994. The proposal was a radical digression from traditional approaches in state reorganizations, but the emerging realization was that the missions of the two entities were complementary, although distinct. Both provided statewide information services and education at a distance. In addition, the College had twenty-five years of cooperative relationships with the

state libraries, and this "joining" was symbolic of what had been the pattern since 1972 when the College was founded.

The need for a new home for the state library was indicated in the report entitled "Government That Works." The Department of Education, the previous home for the library, initiated a feasibility study that explored various possibilities. In all of the resulting discussions, Thomas Edison emerged as not just a possibility, but as the primary desirable location. Representing Thomas Edison in the discussions were Vice President and Treasurer Michael Scheiring and Director of Human Resources Carron Albert. Carron recalls some of the discussions: "Six years ago, the Library had 160 people on the payroll, and it was open on Saturdays. Lawyers especially were there at all hours, and it had such a strong presence in the community. In fact, it was one of the leaders in national library models for state libraries. Since that time, the staff had been reduced to eighty-eight, and they could barely keep the library open during regular working hours. Budget cuts and benign neglect were the primary factors.

"But the library staff that remained tried to compensate for the continuing budget cuts by increasing their personal commitment. These people not only worked extra hours for no pay, they would work at home. They would bring in their own computers from home, because the library did not have Internet access. The library staff literally kept the place up and running."

Moving the library under the aegis of the College was not easily accomplished. Research and negotiations were ongoing as other interested agencies vied for consideration, but Thomas Edison consistently proved to offer the best operational compatibility, legal affiliation, and structural relationship for the "marriage." Through that marriage, the library and the state of New Jersey expected to realize considerable operational efficiencies and savings. In addition to the functional benefits and the logic of such a relationship, efficiency and financial savings may have cast the final vote. The merger was set for 1996, the 200th anniversary year of the state library.

In May 1996, Governor Whitman signed the executive order providing the legal context for the affiliation to take place. A "Memorandum of Agreement," denoting the operational caveats of the affiliation, was subsequently signed by the president of Thomas Edison; the secretary of state; the commissioner, Department of Personnel; the treasurer, state of New Jersey; and the commissioner, Department of Education. Seldom is an opportunity presented for such an auspicious event in higher education circles. Thomas Edison and New Jersey established a national model for the location of a state library within the aegis of an institution of higher education.

The first year of the merger was devoted to freeing the state library from the many encumbrances it experienced under state regulations. One of the first steps was to take the library staff off the state's centralized payroll system and all other state systems including purchasing, banking, investments, travel, and hiring. It was a repetition of what the College went through following the 1986 autonomy legislation except that it had to be done in about six months.

It will be the first time, at least as far as anyone knows, that an institution of higher education in this country will be awarding federal grants. Most other institutions receive federal grants or federal funds, but because the library is under the aegis of the College, in effect, the College will be the entity that awards the federal monies. The library administers over five to seven million dollars in federal grants each year. That's another first.

State librarian Jack Livingstone reflected on the merger: "This affiliation, which seemed so unlikely at first because of its uniqueness, has proven to be so effective that in the short space of nine months major accomplishments have occurred. "A state-wide technology plan, Libraries 2000, has been developed and is already underway. The state library has opened its resources to all Thomas Edison students via the Internet. A reordering of priorities is allowing state library staff to visit local libraries for the first time in many years. Grant opportunities for local libraries are now designed and funded promptly to fill immediate library needs. In these and many other ways, this affiliation is already helping both organizations fulfill their educational responsibilities

to the people of New Jersey.”

As the College and the state library begin the next stage in their relationship, both expect programmatic and service enhancements to emerge that will have a major impact and benefit for the citizens of New Jersey and the students of Thomas Edison.

SHAPING NEW TRADITIONS

The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning: Originally funded in 1974 by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Cooperative Assessment of Experiential Learning (CAEL) grant of \$821,000 was first administered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) in Princeton, New Jersey. Additional funding came later from Carnegie, the Ford Foundation, the Fund for the Improvement of Post-secondary Education, and the Lily Endowment. Thomas Edison State College was among the ten founding members; current institutional membership is over 700. Although Warren Willingham was designated project director, within months Dr. Morris Keeton from Antioch College was elected chair and is now affectionately known as the father of The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (the current name).

CAEL was officially chartered effective June 30, 1977, following a three-year period of extensive organization and policy development. The organization's main objective was to develop improved methods in the assessment of experiential learning. Two Thomas Edison presidents served on the Board of Trustees: Dr. Lorraine Matusak representing at the time the University of Evansville and Dr. James Brown representing Thomas Edison. Dr. Arnold Fletcher, vice president for academic affairs at Thomas Edison was among the members who launched the corporation in 1977. Dr. Fletcher cites the work the College did with CAEL as an important factor in building the acceptance of the distance learning model for higher education and in particular the prior learning assessment concept. As a regional manager, Dr. Fletcher and the College sponsored programs and meetings to share the College's perspective on nontraditional learning. The connection with CAEL contributed greatly to the respect Thomas Edison rapidly gained around the country.

Dr. Brown and Dr. Laura Adams (now Dunham) were both very active in CAEL. As stated in Chapter Three, Dr. Brown met Dr. Matusak through CAEL, and both met Dr. George Pruitt who served as executive vice president of CAEL before coming to Thomas Edison as president.

Laura Adams was director of academic programs at Thomas Edison from 1976 to 1981; she served on CAEL consultant teams that worked with other colleges and universities interested in nontraditional education methods and the assessment of nontraditional learning. She was a writer for many CAEL publications, and was later elected to the CAEL board. She reflected on that time period: “I was always impressed with the creativity and the quality of the people I met through the CAEL board. Morris Keeton, Pam Tate, and many others were the innovative folks, the ones with vision who really did feel that they had a mission. We built strong relationships and lifelong friendships from our experiences together. Edison was a leader back then, and it will always be one of the leading institutions of that organization.”

Other Colleges: Cooperative ventures stretched beyond New Jersey boundaries. In 1982, the College entered into an agreement with the Lifelong Learning and Independent Study Division of Ohio University, through which Thomas Edison students could take independent study courses and examinations without enrolling in Ohio University. Grade reports were issued instead and recorded on a Thomas Edison transcript. This cooperative venture with a major out-of-state university was well-received by students, and it was also indicative of the growing status and recognition Thomas Edison was enjoying. Further cooperative programs were pursued with Indiana University, Pennsylvania State University, the University of Missouri, and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

One cooperative program that is ongoing is the “Going the Distance” program, a partnership with New Jersey Network and Burlington County College. In the early 1990s, public broad-

casting was responding to the Mind Extension University initiative put forth by the cable industry. The New Jersey Network (NJN) thought that with the vast array of colleges that offered telecourses, it ought to create a consortium of colleges across the nation to offer an associate degree. Thomas Edison was invited to be on the initial steering committee. William Seaton, associate vice president and director of the College's distance learning program, served on that committee which developed the basic concept. Thomas Edison, Burlington, and NJN were the primary New Jersey partners that launched the program. Brookdale Community College, County College of Morris, and the New Jersey Institute of Technology joined later on. "Going the Distance" through this model has become a national model, and once again Thomas Edison was there as one of the founders and supporters.

Serving The Adult Collegian (STAC), formerly *The Statewide Testing and Assessment Center*: Of the many qualities that early administrators of the College had that helped to distinguish them and the institution from the traditional was the value they placed on networking. Group assessments, work with state agencies, affiliations with libraries and adult schools, relationships with county and state colleges, corporate programs, and many other networking and outreach activities gave the College the strong foothold needed to survive the financial hardships and external skepticism that often accompanies the creation of new traditions. It was this commitment to networking that fostered the idea for an adult-focused center.

Funded through a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE), the STAC was officially opened in December 1980 and housed at the Kelsey Building site in Trenton. The original intent was to provide the other eight state colleges a means by which their students might access prior-learning assessment without enrolling in Thomas Edison. Each of the colleges designated a representative who would work with their students who had acquired college-level knowledge through various means outside the college classroom and wished to have that knowledge assessed for college credit. Those same representatives met on a regular basis to discuss students or issues of mutual concern. Thomas Edison provided the counseling and testing services since the College was the expert in those processes. Each of the participating colleges developed their own policies and procedures for awarding the credit once Thomas Edison had done the evaluation. In fact, it was a membership requirement that each institution have in place a policy that allowed for that kind of flexibility both in awarding credit and in accepting transfer credits from other institutions where students had been through the prior learning assessment process.

Not all of the state colleges readily accepted the assessment method or the credits recommended by the College. The first group of eight participating colleges was an interesting mix of private, county/community, and state colleges and universities as follows: Caldwell College and the College of Saint Elizabeth (both private colleges), Middlesex and Somerset county colleges, Glassboro State College (now Rowan University), Stockton State College, Trenton State College (now The College of New Jersey), and Rutgers University (Newark).

The focus for STAC those first few years was to educate the other institutions regarding the process, but equally important was to develop quality assurance in the process itself and to help in the standardization of institutional policies. This was critical to its success and increased the likelihood of a student's credits being accepted for transfer among the participating institutions.

Under the capable leadership of its first director, Susan Simosko, membership grew to sixteen institutions. When Dr. Ruth McKeefery became dean of the College, she was given responsibility for building stronger ties and cooperative programs with New Jersey colleges. One way this was done was to increase the number of articulation agreements between county colleges and Thomas Edison; a second way was to expand the focus of STAC to include all areas of service to adult students. As a result, STAC membership grew to its current number of forty-two participating colleges out of the fifty-four colleges in the state.

Dr. Thomas J. Grites, assistant to the vice president for Academic Affairs at Stockton State

College and faculty consultant at Thomas Edison, has been actively involved in STAC for many years. Dr. Grites states that by being affiliated with Thomas Edison, other colleges are able to keep up with not only all of the advancements at Thomas Edison but with the research and new technologies as they relate to adult students. He said: "One of the challenges institutions like mine face is that our focus is primarily on the traditional student. We don't have time or money to stay abreast of what's opening up for adult students. Through STAC and Thomas Edison, we can stay on top of things."

"Stockton is starting to look more at our services to adult students and improve how we can better serve that population. We're moving more into the electronic delivery of courses, and I learn all of that from Edison. I've become a single resource on campus for adult students. We now have a club for nontraditional students. Although the membership is small, it's very active and is becoming more recognized. So, directly and indirectly, STAC and Thomas Edison have been models and teachers for how to work with adult students."

Through the *STAC Newsletter*, published by Thomas Edison four times each year, each of the member colleges can publicize portfolio assessment workshops, adult enrollment trends, and other seminars and activities of mutual interest. It has proven to be one of the most effective associations in higher education in New Jersey, all based on the dreams, visions, and hard work of Laura Adams Dunham, Susan Simosko, Ruth McKeefery, Maureen Marcus, and others at Thomas Edison. STAC continues to be a viable resource and patron of adult student needs.

Degree Pathways: Dean Emeritus Dr. Ruth McKeefery helps to put in historical perspective not only the Degree Pathways concept but how ideas are born, nurtured, and implemented at Thomas Edison.

For many years, academic counselors had regular counseling sites at libraries, high schools, corporate meeting rooms, colleges — anywhere a Thomas Edison representative could hang his or her hat for a few hours to meet with adults interested in higher education counseling and/or enrollment with the College. Three colleges provided regular sites: Glassboro State College (now Rowan University), Middlesex County College, and Brookdale Community College. As emphases changed at Thomas Edison, many of the regular counseling sites were dropped, and admissions staff focused more and more on group information sessions.

Sensing a need to maintain more of a presence at other colleges, in particular the two-year colleges, Dr. McKeefery, then dean of the College, designed a "two plus two" program that would involve the College with every county college in the state. At a 1993 brainstorming, planning session with ten other administrators and Dr. Pruitt, many ideas emerged that addressed concerns for meeting budget and student enrollment projections during the continuing state fiscal crisis. Dr. Pruitt called for proposals from three areas: corporate programs, Guided Study programs, and county college programs. With encouragement from the president to produce a full-fledged proposal, Dr. McKeefery proceeded with her "two plus two" concept. From that seed came the New Jersey Baccalaureate Degree Completion Program, now called Degree Pathways.

The Degree Pathways partnership between Thomas Edison and each of the nineteen county colleges provides baccalaureate degrees at a distance for adult students completing associate degrees at their two-year colleges. Thomas Edison has always had articulation agreements with the county/community colleges, but what those agreements accomplished was to guarantee uncontested transfer of specific associate majors into Thomas Edison's comparable baccalaureate degrees. Those agreements did not necessarily provide the means to accomplish anything other than what is offered to all



Pictured left to right are Dr. Thomas Grites, Stockton State College; Dr. Ruth McKeefery, Dean of Thomas Edison; Dr. Thelma Dulerte, Atlantic Community College; and Dr. Marilyn Goodson, Caldwell College. Dr. McKeefery presented Certificates of Appreciation from the Statewide Testing and Assessment Center to the liaisons whose terms expired Spring 1992.

Thomas Edison students. Degree Pathways, however, provides all of the methods for earning credit at the College and adds direct access at the local community college via the electronic classroom.

Each of the two-year colleges has a designated computer and learning center for receiving Guided Study courses on campus and in time will be able to receive live classroom transmission of specific courses when that capability is completed in 1997. Dr. John TenBrook, professor of business studies at Camden County College and faculty member at Thomas Edison, talked about the roles played by the county colleges and Thomas Edison.

Our mission at the two-year college is to provide the first two years of college and focus on career programs. I'm comfortable with that, but we need to take more responsibility for assisting our students in accessing those next two years of study. Through our partnership in the Degree Pathways program, we have the best of both worlds where our two-year student can still take some courses at their home institution or at other four year colleges nearby, but with the added incentive of taking Thomas Edison Guided Study courses, DIAL On-Line Computer Classroom courses, Contract Learning courses, or any of the other methods offered there.

Although facets of this have been around for a long time, this new Degree Pathways program is the most comprehensive baccalaureate degree completion program offered in the state, and students can become a part of it even before they finish their associate degree. This program helps to take the two-year student out of the Type A and Type B boxes we've put them in — that old "educational tracking" system that has lost us many a college student because they were locked in and couldn't change their minds, let alone their futures.

Degree Pathways became popular and successful because of the environmental changes it brought about as much as for the educational opportunities it presented. As part of her proposal, Dr. McKeefery projected the development of an Institute for the Adult Learner,

different from any conference or institute now available in the nation. The nineteen county/community colleges and Thomas Edison might jointly plan and offer first a state institute and, in time, a national institute that explained, taught, and promoted the Degree Pathways cooperative program as a national model. She projected that from an initial attendance of 100 to 200 people, the institute could eventually host thousands of conference participants who would be eager to expand their knowledge and service to the adult learner. Dr. McKeefery stated that, "When I made that proposal in 1992, and even when I retired from the College in 1995, there was no such conference or institute available in the United States. Once again, Thomas Edison can be the first. I'd like to see that happen."

The National Institute on the Assessment of Experiential Learning: The National Institute on the Assessment of Experiential Learning was spun from a concept Dr. Pruitt had for developing areas where the College had expertise that could serve as national models. Beginning with the planning stage in 1988, Dr. Debra Dagavarian, director of the Institute, worked with a staff committee to organize and implement the idea. In her recollection of that time period, she laughed as



Registrants, faculty, and staff at Thomas Edison's National Institute on the Assessment of Experiential Learning gather for a group photo session. The 1996 Institute was hosted by the Merrill Lynch Corporation at its Education Center in Plainsboro, New Jersey.

she identified the committee members: "Paul Jacobs, Rich Hamilton, Phil Sanders, Barbara Waters Eklund, Iris Saltiel, and myself. As we sat around the table, someone noticed that every one of us was left-handed. It was so weird." Some say that left-handed people are very imaginative and creative. Whether or not that had any influence on the outcome, that first Institute was successful with twenty-five registrants from around the nation.

Faculty for the Institute included experts from across the nation, many of whom were acquainted through their association with the Council for Adult Experiential Learning (CAEL); Dr. Harriet Cabell from the University of Alabama; Dr. Ross Ann Craig from Delaware County Community College; Dr. Leah S. Harvey of Metropolitan State University; Dr. Alan Mandell from Empire State College; Dr. Paula Hooper Mayhew from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education; Dr. Urban Whitaker of San Francisco State University; Ms. Susan Simosko (former Thomas Edison staff) of Sheffield, England; and Thomas Edison staff, of course.

In the succeeding years of the Institute, faculty included Dr. Morris Keeton, University of Maryland; Dr. Elizabeth Kasl, Columbia Teacher's College; Dr. Amy Lezberg, New England Association of Schools and Colleges; Dr. Gerald Patton, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools; Dr. Barry Sheckley, the University of Connecticut; and Dr. David Carter of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

The National Institute is a Thomas Edison showcase. It is highly regarded among higher education professionals who work with adults, and it is valued even more by those who have experienced it.

When Dr. Urban Whitaker, one of the Institute's faculty, was honored with the Morris T. Keeton award at the International Conference on Experiential Learning co-sponsored by CAEL in November 1995, he mentioned the contribution that Thomas Edison's National Institute has made to his own professional development. It is gratifying to receive such adulation from someone who has helped to shape the field of prior-learning assessment as profoundly as he has.

FORGING NEW IRONS

Corporate Programs: From the beginning, as the College opened its doors to students in September 1972, plans were underway for finding entrée into the corporate world of post-secondary education for employees. Although access to higher education was afforded veterans after World War II, their place on campus and the distance maintained between the "regular" students and those GIs who took advantage of the opportunity were rigidly held.

Primarily focused on the seventeen- to twenty-one-year-old and on the idealized image of a college education, academia did not emphasize lifelong learning. Corporations, labor unions, and the military picked up the ball and ran with it. A 1960s Carnegie Foundation study called attention to the disparity in dollars spent by academia as opposed to other sources. In 1987, \$80 billion was spent on traditional post-secondary education in this country. That same year, \$210 billion was spent by the corporate sector. Not only was the dollar amount almost triple, but it soon became obvious that the teaching and learning was of the highest caliber. In fact, some of the most effective teaching and research in actuarial science, banking, economics, and taxation, to name a few, was occurring within the insurance and banking industries rather than exclusively within graduate schools of business.

When Thomas Edison was created to focus exclusively on the mature adult learner, the corporate world took notice. Although the American Council on Education (ACE) had through its Program on NonCollegiate-Sponsored Instruction (PONSI) been evaluating corporate education programs for some time, here at last was an institution that might be able to bring together the curious mix of educational opportunities and accomplishments their employees were acquiring.

At first, Thomas Edison's outreach was to individual students at corporate sites, a program

similar to services extended to state agencies in New Jersey. PONSI-evaluated courses offered ACE credit recommendations that Thomas Edison accepted, so employers cooperated in making their employees aware of the College's programs. Briefing rooms for counseling were made available; students were enrolled. Following his arrival in August 1975, Dr. Paul Jacobs began to develop the group assessment concept as an extension of the individual, prior-learning assessment option. As indicated above, state agencies were particularly interested in having their in-house courses evaluated for college credit, and as interest increased, Gene Meskill was hired in November 1976 to assume responsibility for group assessment directly under Arnold Fletcher, then vice president for academic affairs.

However, the group assessment process became a concern of the Middle States Accreditation Team when they made their site visits in 1976 and 1977; they did not withhold accreditation but raised the issue as a concern, which plagued the College for several years until it was resolved in 1982. In fact, it was more of an issue with the Department of Higher Education than it was with the Middle States Association. The concern was that the College might be misusing its credit-awarding authority to make personal evaluations of nonaccredited instruction outside the context of the ACE-PONSI process. Other issues had to do with associations and articulation agreements the College had with unaccredited institutions and proprietary schools. In effect, Thomas Edison seemed to be franchising its services. That practice was discontinued in 1983.

However, the group assessment program had already begun to change in 1981 when the American Council on Education approached the College about becoming a PONSI evaluator for New Jersey. Encouraged by the Department of Higher Education to take this higher road in the evaluation of corporate training programs, Gene Meskill made the transition for the College before leaving in January 1982. The program floundered somewhat for over a year until the College created a separate PONSI office, and Jim Ratigan was appointed director. It has flourished ever since.

Within New Jersey, the College has permanent relationships with over seventy-five major corporations, including AT&T, Atlantic Electric, Digital Equipment Corporation, American Educational Institute, the Chubb Institute, Prudential Insurance Company, the American Institute of Banking, Kepner-Tregoe, and PSE&G, to name a few.

Ms. MaryAnn Whittemore, adjunct professor at Burlington County College and a faculty consultant at Thomas Edison since 1990, talked about her current work with Thomas Edison students employed at PSE&G. Until her retirement in 1994, Ms. Whittemore had been an education services officer with the Army and the Air Force for twenty years. Her first work with the College was as a member of the Academic Council and the Liberal Arts Committee. She has now added on-site counseling at PSE&G to her work schedule. She pointed out, "Just for clarification, I do not do academic advising. I provide general information in a counseling mode to potential and currently enrolled students." This is just one of the many services provided through the Center for Corporate and Public Partnerships.

In addition to the PONSI evaluated courses, which are now accepted by forty of the fifty-four New Jersey colleges, Thomas Edison maintains on-site delivery of individual study options including Guided Study on CALLTM. Through its Center for Corporate and Public Partnerships, the College continues to create educational opportunities for employers and employees invested in lifelong learning.

The PONSI Colloquium became a natural outgrowth of corporate outreach as questions and issues common to most businesses began to emerge. To address those issues, the center's twenty-two-member Advisory Council recommended and supported regional PONSI sponsors meetings along with a state-wide annual meeting. In 1992, the annual meeting became the Corporate-Higher Education Colloquium and attracted participants nationwide. Some emerging issues were about the challenges and opportunities of diversity, the classroom/technology conflict, and major

technological and informational changes coming with the turn of the century.

The most recent colloquium had participants from eleven states and the District of Columbia. Dr. James Carnes, president and CEO of the Sarnoff Corporation in Princeton, New Jersey, was the keynote speaker. Listening to his comments about the virtual classroom of the near future, one thinks of the interactive electronic classroom now being installed at the Academic Center with two more scheduled for the townhouse addition. Picture Thomas Edison students as Jim Carnes painted the scene: "I envision tremendous applications for education. It will be more interactive. A professor will have a display screen with insets of the faces of his distant pupils. In the center of the screen is a worksheet or a film or an experiment. Students would see the same thing at their site. With this setup, the students can take part in the experiment; they can beep in a question or an answer. It could be multi-locational — a virtual classroom. Technology's role is to assist the learning, not to replace the teacher."

Although the College has worked with businesses and corporations from the beginning, the possibilities for the future seem endless, and one feels as though the College has only scratched the surface of educational relationships and cooperative programs in that arena.

Thomas Edison's Stint with the NFL and the NHL: One of the most interesting corporate ventures the College made was in sports. As restructuring took place following Dr. Pruitt's arrival in December 1982, staff in the admissions and counseling offices were reassigned to focus on two separate audiences: one group focused on communities, state agencies, and individuals interested in the College; the other group focused on organizations, corporations, and businesses for both student enrollments and other educational services, including course evaluations through the Program on NonCollegiate Sponsored Instruction (PONSI). Ralph Viviano, Lance Davis, Jerry Middlemiss, and Jim Ratigan were the corporate outreach people.

Jerry was completing his doctoral program through Rutgers University and was writing his dissertation on sport in higher education — a natural for the "natural." Jerry is a lacrosse coach and avid sportsman in his spare time. As he researched his topic, it occurred to him that the College was the perfect institution for the athletes who dropped out of college, got into the professional ranks, and would still like to complete college for their own personal reasons. But just as military personnel always had difficulty completing a degree because they were moved from base to base, so a professional ballplayer might be sold to another team some distance away from where he had been taking courses, or he would be traveling all over the nation as a part of the normal playschedule for his team.

Encouraged by Dr. Pruitt to pursue the possibilities not only for his dissertation but for the possibility of potential students for Thomas Edison, Jerry met with members of the National Football League and the National Hockey League Players Associations in Washington, D.C. to discuss terms for an agreement between the associations and the College. The proposal was not rejected but was not promoted either, and a few players actually did enroll. For example, center Billy Carroll of the New York Islanders hockey team enrolled, doing much of his studying on airplanes going from one city to another. However, from a public relations point of view, the NFL and NHL Association leadership was more interested in concepts that sounded like the classroom they knew from their experience. Furthermore, the individual players seemed to be less motivated to work independently. There were a few others who enrolled, but Thomas Edison was never promoted to the players. In his customary colorful language, Jerry Middlemiss told it his way: "The associations wanted to be able to say 'Our athletes are going back to college,' meaning



Pictured at a 1988 PSE&G dinner honoring employees who have earned degrees from Thomas Edison (l to r), Joe Zambuto, BS '88; Gregory Mecchi, BS '88; Robert Hovey, BS '87; Dennis Kabachinski, BS '88; Douglas Stoxen, BS '88; and Randall Thorson, BS '87 give thumbs-up on their accomplishments.



Dr. George Pruitt, President of the College, and Dr. Sonja Eveslage, Associate Vice President for Public Affairs, meet with McGuire Air Force Base officers in 1989 to discuss educational opportunities for members of the armed forces. Pictured from left are Captain George W. Paffendorf, the Educational Service Officer for the New Jersey National Guard; Dr. Pruitt; Brigadier General Kenneth L. Rieth, Deputy Adjutant General, State of New Jersey; Dr. Eveslage; and Colonel Vincent J. Zolnoski, Jr., Education Coordinator, Education Center, Fort Dix.

the Joe Six-pack version of college where you walk on campus, sit in a classroom while some expert spews forth pearls of wisdom, and you regurgitate it right back. The idea that some of their players were disciplined enough to study independently and take examinations when they were ready was not something they seemed ready to grasp. Perhaps its time will still come."

Ironically, a former Thomas Edison employee who became director of admissions at Fairleigh Dickinson University (FDU), took Jerry's concept for working with professional athletes and created a program for the New York Giants who did summer practice at FDU. Out of that they created a cooperative program among several colleges so that the players could more easily transfer credits when they moved to other clubs.

The only real loss to Thomas Edison was that Dr. Pruitt was not able to follow through on his hope to have "the best football team in America," comprised of the various professional players who might have enrolled in the College.

Cooperative Programs with the Military: The Federal government is the largest business in the nation, and the Department of Defense is a strong provider of training programs for its military personnel. Coming to the College with many years experience working with military personnel at McGuire Air Force Base, Jean Titterington immediately launched into a counseling outreach mode with all the military bases in and around New Jersey. As director of counseling, Jean paved the way for the long association enjoyed by both parties.

In January 1975, Jules Kahn was hired to work at the south Jersey counseling sites, particularly the military bases. It is interesting how people, places, and events intertwine in Thomas Edison's history. Jean T, as we referred to her, introduced Jules to Jim Colaizzo, the education officer at McGuire Air Force Base. Jules remembers having met Jim in the 1950s when Jules was in the Air Force. Jim was a counselor at McGuire back then, so when Jules was introduced to him in 1975, they felt a common bond and worked easily together. Thirteen years later, Jim Colaizzo retired from the military and was hired by Thomas Edison as an admissions representative. Naturally, one of his outreach sites was McGuire Air Force Base.

Jim Colaizzo was a strong Thomas Edison advocate, and through his introductions and referrals from McGuire (and also from Fort Dix Military Reservation, the Philadelphia Naval Yard, Fort Monmouth, the Lakehurst Naval Station, Fort Meade, and Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland), Jules would get forty to fifty people at each of his monthly information sessions. Jules remembered that for a short period, he also covered Bolling Air Force Base and the Pentagon! The major drawing card for military personnel and their spouses was the flexibility in completing a degree with the College. Many colleges honored the ACE credit recommendations for military training, but almost all other colleges had residency requirements and time limits on credit accumulations. Thomas Edison did not. Personnel could be transferred all around the country serving short or long periods at each military base; they could attend classes at local colleges in each area, and their credits would be transferable if they fit into a degree program.

Thomas Edison's acceptance by the military grew rapidly, but the biggest step came when the College became a Service Members Opportunity College (SOC) member. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., SOC coordinates the educational programs for all military personnel, and to be a recognized member of SOC is prestigious. In fact, being a SOC member is imperative to being used by service persons and their attendants. Being a member of SOC increases opportunities for enrollments and provides free promotion of the College through SOC publications.

Director of the New Jersey State Approving Agency for College Programs, Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs, Mr. David Hulteen recalled attending Department of Defense conferences in the past and never seeing representatives from Thomas Edison there. As he worked more closely with Vice President Dr. Fletcher and later Vice President Dr. Ice and expanded his associations with Department of Defense leadership at the national level, he was influential in helping the College finally receive approval for veteran's training. In reviewing some of the issues that emerged during those years of negotiations, he recalled the gradual changes that took place in educational requirements for certain military personnel: "To stay in service, you had to accumulate numbers of credits, but to be an officer, or to go from captain to major or major to colonel, you had to demonstrate not just credit but degrees. Some colleges banked credits, but Thomas Edison awarded degrees. That was a major plus for the College, and Thomas Edison is a class operation. The officers began to recognize that difference, and that's part of why you've grown around the world.

"Now when I go to those worldwide education conferences sponsored by the University of Maryland, I see all the major players there with their big college displays, but there is Thomas Edison with this one little booth where everyone is lined up to get information. You not only offer degrees, but you are fully accredited by an outside agency, and you are a full senior institution in your home state. You pulled it off because you maintained such high standards. That's why it's so easy to be a flag-waver for Thomas Edison."

Mr. Hulteen spoke proudly and personally of students he worked with who have graduated from Thomas Edison. When he can, he attends commencement ceremonies for students he has worked with who are graduating. This is particularly exciting, since the College's faculty *have* to attend commencement at their home institution. One of his students, who prefers to remain anonymous, graduated October 1995. She had an inoperable brain tumor several years ago. She worked in military and veterans' affairs at Atlantic Community College. Fortunately for her, medical advancements during her illness finally made an operation possible, and she fully recovered, went back to finish her associate degree at Atlantic, and then continued on at Thomas Edison for her baccalaureate. She is currently enrolled in Central Michigan University working for her masters degree.

Cooperative programs continue to be a mainstay in college operations, providing not only new and continuing enrollment streams but stronger community and state relationships.

VII. Dear Hearts And Gentle People La Crème de la Crème



At a White House dinner honoring Nobel Prize winners in April 1962, John F. Kennedy said, "I think this is the most extraordinary collection of talent, of human knowledge, that has ever been gathered together at the White House, with the possible exception of when Thomas Jefferson dined alone." That is exactly how to describe the people who have been missionaries for Thomas Edison State College. The staff, the faculty, the Board of Trustees, and the Foundation Board of Directors are, or have been, the finest collection of talented, bright, dedicated people any college could ever hope to have. They are the "dear hearts and gentle people," *la crème de la crème*. That does not mean that there might not have been a "kook" in there somewhere, but if there were Oscars for Best Performance by a missionary, the "Edisonians, S.F." would win every year.

Individuals in all four of the groups mentioned are definitely *la crème de la crème*, but particular situations or events illustrate the different facets of those same people. This chapter looks at two of the four groups: the staff and faculty.

There are hundreds of stories to tell. Those that were selected for inclusion here reflect several categories: praise from others, general stories, spirit and dedication, accomplishments and opportunities, or just funny stories. A special category — the "coming to Edison" stories — tell either the interesting backgrounds that led to employment at the College or the actual, literal "coming to Edison" event.

STORIES ABOUT STAFF

One of the proudest moments for staff is when they receive a few words of appreciation for their work and dedication. Usually it comes from unexpected sources, which makes it exceptionally nice. In all of the ninety-three personal interviews done for this history, the College and the three presidents were almost always praised, but several people mentioned their interactions with staff. Eleanor Spiegel, former trustee and board chair, was always particularly appreciative of the sense of dedication she saw in the staff. Fred Abbate, current trustee and past chairman of the Board, added to that perception: "As I walk throughout the College and talk to people, I get a real feeling of dedication to a common cause, whether a secretary or a counselor, a dean or a vice president. This is not true of any other academic institution I've been around and known."

Faculty consultants are excellent sources for feedback because they work directly with college staff in a variety of settings. They often compare their experiences at their home institutions with what happens at the College; fortunately for Thomas Edison, their comments are usually very positive. Dr. Theresa M. Rosania, associate professor in management science at Kean College of New Jersey, remarked: "Staff have always been great, but they are walking straighter, taller, more dynamically than they were years ago. It was kind of, 'We're not sure who we were then, but dammit, we know who we are now.' And that's exactly what I feel, too."

At a dinner meeting/interview with Adele Ellis (B.A. '94), immediate past president of the Alumni Association, and Paul Hays (B.S. '89), president, remembrances turned to Dr. Natale Caliendo, former vice president for public affairs at the College. Dr. Caliendo was struck by a car while walking in January 1996 and was killed instantly. Nat, as he was affectionately known, worked closely with the Alumni Association, and Adele's comments reflect some of their interactions. She stated, "Nat was the only guy I ever met who you only have to meet once and you feel like a friend. Either that or you didn't like him. There was no one who was ambivalent about him."

Dick Gillespie had a special interaction with Nat Caliendo. Dick recalled that he was at a turning point in his relationship with the Foundation. He said, "I was ready to say I had done my duty for the College, but I remember talking with Nat about that, and he said, 'Just hang in there with me for another year,' which I agreed to do. Nat brought an energy, a collegial-type approach to the Foundation that I thought was just terrific. He also helped to bring focus to the Board in terms of what the role could be. But another aspect to it was his presence. You can go to a lot of meet-

ings, sit there, have lunch, and go away, and no one knows you're even there. But Nat had such a force to his personality that you always knew he was there. He had that charm. He was a passionate man about anything he believed in." Dr. Caliendo continues to be missed by those who knew him.

Dr. Paul Jacobs, former director of test development and research at the College and now a faculty consultant, co-authored a number of books with alumni Marco Meirovitz, B.A. '81. Paul comes from a family of educators and published authors; most notable was his aunt Geraldine (Goldie) Jacobs Klein who created the original *Jolly Jump Up* children's books. Goldie, who changed her name to "Geraldine Clyne" for publishing purposes, wrote and designed the series; her husband did the print cutting for publication. Following in the family tradition, Paul not only co-authors mind-development books with Marco Meirovitz but is a sole author as well. Leaving Thomas Edison in 1990, Paul is a successful comedy writer and performer, although he continues to write educational books.

The College has had its share of interesting personalities, one of whom was a serious marathoner who worked at the College just less than one year. Fred Savitz was a program advisor during the Forrestal Campus days. Every day on his lunch hour, he hurriedly changed clothes and spent the entire hour running. According to associate dean Ron Sukovich, who worked closely with him: "Fred would run eleven miles during lunch every day. Then he decided to quit marathons because he wasn't winning. There were just too many fine athletes, and his chances of coming in first were minimal. So he changed to ultramarathons, the seventy-five to one-hundred-mile races, because that narrowed the field to only about forty to fifty runners, which increased his chances for winning. He'd probably still be with the College except that he thought we were going to evening hours, and he was a devoted family man who wouldn't share his family's time with anyone else. We never did make the change to evening hours, and I was sorry to see Fred leave."

Another interesting personality from the Forrestal days was Betsy Watson, also a program advisor. Betsy was a vegetarian, and in the year and one-half she worked at the College, she converted many staff members to a vegetarian diet, at least at lunch time. Emily Carone admitted to being one of the converts to Betsy's dietary habits. Emily recalled: "Betsy taught us about alfalfa sprouts. In fact, she grew her own and brought them in for us. Many of us had been going to lunch at Fat Eddy's in Monmouth Junction; we were all hooked on Fat Eddy's fantastic hamburgers of every sort — the animal burgers, buffalo burgers, lion burgers, and so forth — and we'd rush out there by the carload about once a week to scarf down those burgers until Betsy turned us into vegetarians."

Asked whether or not she stayed a vegetarian after Betsy left the College, Emily admitted that she only lasted about three years with it, but she does restrict her meat intake.

Another interesting Betsy characteristic was that she liked to go barefoot at work, and on some occasions she would forget that her shoes were off when she needed to go to a meeting or an appointment. There never was a rigid dress code at the College, but shoes were required.

Assistant Controller Anna Benitz shared several interesting coincidences for the history. She recalled that during her first semester back in college full-time after having her daughter Spring, in 1968, students from all the state colleges gathered at Cadwalader Park for a march on the State House to demand fiscal autonomy for their institutions. She remarked, "You can see how slowly the wheels of government turn. It wasn't until 1986, twenty years later, that I got my position with Thomas Edison, and the colleges were granted autonomy." She added, "As a sidebar, I grew up in Edison Township, went to Edison High School, and lived near the Edison Tower in Menlo Park



Dr. Nat Caliendo (deceased), Vice President for Public Affairs, with members of his staff. Seated from left: Dr. Caliendo, Jayne Ulmer, Rosemary Breining, and Peggy Bodner. Standing from left: Linda Soltis, Francine Taylor, and Cindy Warrick.

for over ten years after I married. Now I work at Thomas Edison — but in Trenton, of course.”

Eileen Vela, B.A. '95, one of several alumni who met with Foundation Director Rita Novitt when she was visiting in New Mexico, told a wonderful anecdote about Dean Emeritus Dr. Ruth McKeefery. Eileen enrolled in the College in 1973 but stopped in and out several times over the years. She reenrolled again and then decided that she did not have time to devote to her studies. Following the new guidelines for stopping in and out, Eileen notified the College that she was withdrawing. Official withdrawal makes it possible to return under the same degree program requirements. Upon receiving Eileen's written notice, Dr. McKeefery called her personally to discuss it. Eileen continued the story. “The dean told me, ‘You have only nine hours to finish your degree. We won't let you quit.’ So, in effect, she was refusing to give me permission to pull out. She said, ‘I will have a counselor call you with all of our nine-hour courses, and you pick one.’ It was a strange call, and I almost got angry, but I realized that she was really just trying to help me. Well, the counselor called, and we must have spent a half-hour on the phone going over all of the nine-hour courses trying to find something I could take. I finally did “Future Studies” and finished my degree. I'll never forget that. I would probably still be either stopping out or working away at it a little at a time if it hadn't been for Dr. McKeefery.”

Not everyone at the College interacts directly with the president on a daily basis, but many who do have interesting stories to relate. One such story came from Carron Albert, director of human resources. As has been stated, the nine state colleges were granted governing autonomy in 1986. One necessary step in implementing the various aspects of the autonomy legislation was to disengage from the Department of Personnel and to come off centralized payroll. Carron recalled that Dr. Pruitt determined that the College should stay on centralized payroll because Thomas Edison was small, and it would not be cost effective to be independent. Carron told the rest of the story as follows:

I told my staff that we would stay with centralized payroll. The response was, “Whew!” and we went about our business. A few months later, Dr. Pruitt said, “We have to pull off centralized payroll, and we need it done in six months.” I remember thinking that it was all over for me. I'd drop dead trying to pull that off.

Well, during the next six months we interviewed payroll vendors, selected one, worked to learn the system, and got it up and running. Before we processed our first payroll, I remember Dr. Pruitt telling me he was going to a conference with other college presidents, and those presidents also were going off centralized payroll at the same time. They had a pact that if they got the call from their colleges, and everything was fine, they would go out and celebrate. If they got a call saying that it had gone haywire, they would all go out on the beach at sunrise and commit hara-kiri.

With that hanging over our heads, we processed our first payroll — on schedule and with no mistakes. We're still processing payrolls today, and we're still all here, so I guess the presidents' lives were saved by the “check” instead of the “bell.”

Demonstrating the “dear-hearts-and-gentle-people” spirit shared by all staff, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Local 4277 created a scholarship fund to which any staff person can contribute, although the sponsorship is clearly the union's. Named in memory of Thomas M. Eklund, former assistant dean of the College, the scholarship is designed to help students who have difficulty meeting all their obligations with other forms of financial aid. Tom Eklund lost his life tragically on March 26, 1994. His dedication to Thomas Edison and its students prompted union members to keep that dedication alive for students and staff alike by creating the scholarship program.



Dean Emeritus Dr. Ruth McKeefery holds the Distinguished Service Award and Citation presented to her at the 1995 Commencement.

It is of special interest that Tom Eklund was a manager and therefore not a member of the union. That his memory should be so honored by the union membership is indicative of the Thomas Edison spirit that overrides such artificial barriers.

Thomas Edison staff who have not started or completed their college education are encouraged to enroll in a college-supported degree program. Nia Abuwi was the first to take advantage of the opportunity. She was clerical/support staff at the time and has since moved into professional status since receiving her Associate in Science in Management degree in 1983 and a BSBA in 1989. Others who have graduated from Thomas Edison as employees are:

Maureen Marcus	A.A., 1990 and B.A., 1992
Bettye Smith	A.A., 1990 and B.A., 1994
Cindy Warwick	B.A., 1992
Debra Ware	B.A., 1992
Suphrana Sargeant	B.A., 1992
Martine Christophe	A.A., 1993
Louis Martini	ASM, 1993
Jamie Heulitt	A.A., 1994 and B.A., 1997
Peggy Allen	A.A., 1996
Cecelia Blasina	ASM, 1996
Sheila Taylor	A.A., 1996
Jayne Ulmer	B.A., 1997
Patricia Memminger	BSBA, 1997

At least twenty-one professional staff are published or have had their works performed. This is exciting since Thomas Edison does not participate in the "publish or perish" concept typical of higher education institutions.

In the event it should appear that the Thomas Edison spirit is devoid of fun or a sense of humor, a few "coming-to-Edison" stories can allay that perception. The most colorful "coming-to-Edison" story was given by L. Ann Bielawski, known to everyone as Annie B. It was December 1976, and Ann was applying for the position of administrative assistant to Jean Titterington, director of counseling when the College was located at the Forrestal site in Princeton. Ann had just completed graduate school and had virtually no employment experience, but she was called for an interview. Ann recalled, "In my usual fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants manner, I waited until the last minute to get more information about the College. I went to the county library. They never heard of Edison, so I didn't get the catalog. Next door to the library was a secondhand consignment shop. Since I didn't like any of the clothes I had, I decided to see if I could find something appropriate to wear. Well, I found this great pair of pants that I liked, but they were a little tight. I had a blazer on that matched almost perfectly, so I bought the pants anyway, wore an overblouse with it and the blazer to complete the picture. During the interview, the pants seemed to feel tighter and tighter, so I casually unzipped them. I sat there the whole time with my zipper unzipped under my blouse. No one could see it, but I thought it was hysterical. I couldn't even laugh until I got outside."

Sharon Smith, former associate registrar, was attracted to Thomas Edison because of the attitudes she experienced during her interview. Her background was in criminal justice, and she was committed to the service aspect of that field, but her job was very stressful. Feeling burned out and looking for change, she took interest in an information specialist position that was available

in the Education Hotline. She remembered her interview with Jim Ratigan and Louise Perkins: "They were so excited about what they were doing at the time that I really became more attracted to the job just because I wanted to work with people like that. I was offered the job and took it. After about two years, I applied for a lateral move to the Registrar's Office. Tom McCarthy was the registrar at the time.

"Every year the College staffed a booth at Trenton's Heritage Days celebration, and that year I was assigned to work the booth. It was a very hot June day, and I was about six months pregnant. Tom McCarthy came by and talked with me awhile, and as he observed me, he said that if I could work in that kind of heat, being pregnant and all, and still stay positive about it, then he would like me to work for him. It wasn't long before he hired me as a transcript evaluator; later I moved to senior evaluator, assistant registrar, and finally associate registrar."

Sharon left the College in 1996, but she leaves an indelible mark and a dynamic legacy in the success stories of college staff.

Vice President Emeritus Dr. Arnold Fletcher told his story of coming to Thomas Edison. "I had been an academic dean at Wilmington College in Delaware. I went there in a temporary position to help it become accredited. After I had done all I could, I looked around for an experimental program. All through my career in higher education, I had pushed for development of more experimental programs, particularly for adults. Then I went to Monaco for a year as president of a college there. When we came back, I was eager for more experimental experience in higher education, so I applied to Edison at the same time I was a finalist for the presidency at Earlham College in Indiana. However, my wife Toni did not want to make another house move, so I promised her I would only consider a position where I could still commute. I withdrew from the Earlham search. Jim Brown had already offered me the vice president's position at Edison, so the timing was perfect. But it was a 120 mile round-trip commute to Trenton from south of Philadelphia, and I did that for ten years before I retired. I remember at the retirement dinner in 1983, one of the staff members got out a little chart and showed how I had driven around the world ten times making that commute to Edison every day."

Yes, Arnold, and you were usually one of the first to arrive in the morning, always beating those who had the ten-minute commute.

Drew Hopkins is one of the examples of Dr. Pruitt's "new tradition" in staff reengineering that resulted when the College went through several reorganizations as it grew. Drew was hired as an administrative assistant but in time became the director of management information systems. His hiring story began in December 1977. He was just out of college and was trying to make a living playing music in nightclubs, but according to Drew, that was not paying the rent. Desperate for a job, he applied for a Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) position with a state agency. It was a surveying job, i.e., he would be surveying CETA employees to determine how well they were succeeding. At the same time, he applied for the Thomas Edison position. He told this story:

I was offered the CETA job on the spot, and I started the next day after the Edison interview. It was interesting because I grew up in Ewing and drove by the building on Olden Avenue where the College started, but I had no idea there was a college there. Jim Ratigan interviewed me, and he told me that he was waiting for final state approval for the position, but that I would have the job when it came through. Well, I had to take the CETA job. Jim didn't know if it would be days or months, the way the state operated.

My undergraduate degree was in sociology; the work I'd be doing at the College would be managing the CETA grants that funded the prison project, so I was really interested in the job. Anyway, I had to take the CETA job, and I hated it. All we did was go to work

in the morning, sit around reading the newspapers all day, and then go home. That wasn't for me.

I called Jim every day, begging him to get me out of there and on the Edison payroll. Finally, after about a week, the position was approved, and I quit the CETA job. It's funny to think of it now, begging Jim like that. We just hit it off, so it seemed like an okay thing to do.

It is interesting that so many people were interviewed by Jim Ratigan, but then, he has been with the College since April 1974, and he was responsible for the hirings of many people who are still with the College. My own story is a case in point.

It was August 1977. I had a morning interview at the Forrestal Campus in New Jersey, but I didn't get off work until 1:00 a.m. in western Pennsylvania. Afraid of falling asleep at the wheel either going out or coming back, I convinced my father to ride along with me, and we set out in the dark for an eight-hour trip across Pennsylvania to Princeton. After sunrise the next morning, we stopped long enough for me to wash my hair in a gas station restroom about two hours out. Arriving in Princeton around 9:00 a.m., I sponge-bathed in the ladies room at Bamberger's department store in the Harrison Street shopping center. Just minutes before going on to the Forrestal Campus, Dad stood guard while I changed clothes behind the recycling bins in the far corner of the shopping center parking lot. Dad slept in the car while I went in to be interviewed by Jean Titterington and Jim Ratigan. I took the job when it was offered and stayed twenty years.

The next three stories reflect the interrelationships that sometimes move us along on our individual paths. Robert Herbster, now a program advisor, started with the College in October 1973. Bob was stationed at McGuire Air Force Base after coming out of Vietnam. He worked for Jean Titterington in the education office at the base. Jean was hired by Dr. Brown as the associate director of counseling at the College; she started just one month after the College opened its door. Before she left McGuire, she told Bob that she was going to work for this new college starting up in Trenton, and that two months before he got out of the service, he should call her. "We'll see if we have any work for you," she told him. So in the summer of 1973, Bob did call Jean and was invited to Trenton for an interview with her and Registrar Tom McCarthy. Bob continued the story:

"Tom didn't have anything for me just then, but Jean needed a counselor, so I started in that capacity. I was the first paid counselor, although it was part-time at first. I traveled all over the state for five dollars an hour and two cents a mile, or whatever the state reimbursement was back then. My first counseling site was the Flemington Public Library where I did group briefings. Then in December an administrative assistant position opened up in the Registrar's Office. It was really a transcript evaluator, but the titles were different then. It was full-time, and I became the first transcript evaluator. As you know, I later became the assistant registrar before I transferred over to program advising."

It is interesting, though, that Bob might never have applied to the College, if he had not known Jean Titterington. More importantly, he might never have met his future wife Michelle Ferreira who joined the College in 1974.

Jules Kahn, director of financial aid and veterans' affairs, worked for Dr. Arnold Fletcher when they were both at Wilmington College in Delaware. Jules was the assistant academic dean at Wilmington. About a year after Dr. Fletcher left Wilmington to work for Thomas Edison in late 1974, he called Jules to encourage him to apply for a counseling position at the College. Jules remembered: "I was happy where I was, and it was going to be quite a commute for me unless I uprooted the family, but I went up to Trenton to talk with Jean Titterington. I got so excited about the College because of my own experience as an adult returning to college that I just couldn't say no. Jean offered me a counseling position to work out of the south Jersey office."

Stories of Jules' experiences in the south Jersey offices are noted in other sections of this history. He has never lost his enthusiasm and missionary zeal for the College.

Jim Ratigan, director of the PONSI program, came to Thomas Edison because of his acquaintance with Tom McCarthy who had been registrar at Wheeling Jesuit College when Jim had worked there. To avoid being transferred to New England by his current employer, Jim let Tom know that he was looking for a job that would keep him in the area. Tom told him that he had been working for a year at this new college in Trenton and that they were looking for someone to run a satellite office in south Jersey to establish a presence there. Jim was interviewed by Jean Titterington, and the rest is history.

These interconnections tell not only of friendships but of quality people whose work record and ethic made them desirable employees and the "dear hearts and gentle people" for the "new tradition" in higher education. That all three — Jules, Bob, and Jim — are still with the College after twenty years, is further testament to that *crème de la crème* stature of the College and its people.

Dr. Jerry Ice, vice president and provost, thought that he must have been preparing for his position at Thomas Edison most of his life. He started out in higher education at Montclair State University in north Jersey, designing undergraduate evening programs specifically in business and liberal arts for part-time, evening adult students. At the same time, he was completing his doctoral work at Fordham University in New York; his focus was on nontraditional practices in higher education, and Thomas Edison was included in his dissertation research. Completing his doctorate in 1976, he went to the University of Indiana in Pennsylvania where he directed the continuing education division, which enrolled some 13,000 part-time students in noncredit courses.

His interest in nontraditional education, especially in prior learning assessment, kept him interested in Thomas Edison as he continued to move up in his career. When Dr. Fletcher retired, the academic vice-presidency became available, and Dr. Ice aggressively went after the position. His credentials, his years of experience, and his commitment to the adult learner made him the perfect candidate for the position. Dr. Pruitt thought so, too, and Jerry was hired as of July 1, 1983, along with Michael J. Scheiring, vice president and treasurer. Although two entirely different personalities, both men nevertheless are examples of the "dear hearts and gentle people" who found their way to the College and stayed to help it grow.

Mike Scheiring spoke of his attraction to the College in the context of that growth aspect. He said, "What interested me the most was the opportunity to help shape the institution, to grow the institution. In addition, the College had a very focused mission. I had been involved with a lot of different organizations and state agencies that had multiple missions, multiple agendas, and huge budgets, but this was the first organization that had a very clear sense of what its niche was. That made it very exciting to me."

Peggy Bodner came to the College in July 1988. Her story of coming to Edison requires a few comments about a former employee to make the picture clear. Mr. Thomas Mooney began working as head of the mail room after he retired from a thirty-year career as a draftsman. He is diminutive only in size, and he ran a tight ship in the mail room, which was also the center for receiving and processing all orders for supplies. If staff needed pencils, they had to go through Mr. Mooney. Much loved by all staff, Mr. Mooney took a second retirement in 1993 but continues to come to holiday functions and special occasions.

Peggy told her story this way: "I was originally hired to be secretary to Jim Humphrey. Mr. Mooney happened to be under his supervision also. On the day I started, Jim was on vacation. As I checked out my desk, I found that the previous secretary had completely cleaned it out — no pencils, pens, telephone pads, nothing. Sue Marren shared the office space with me and gave me a requisition form to fill out. Since Ed George was also in our office area, when I filled out the

requisition form, I figured I might as well order a box of pens and a box of pencils so there would be enough for Jim, Ed, and myself.

"When Mr. Mooney received the requisition, he called me and asked me specifically, 'How many pens do you need?' I quickly realized that he had no intention of giving me a box of pens, so I said about four. He said, 'How about two?' and we finally settled on three. It was my first clue that it didn't matter who you were, it was Mr. Mooney's stockroom, and you'd get just what you needed and not an iota more."

Bonnie Kasa, college receptionist and secretary in the Academic Center, had been the receptionist at the Kelsey Building before transferring to the Academic Center. The Kelsey Building is the main building where many visitors come and go. Bonnie told of one such visitor: "It was mid-July, and a 'street person,' probably homeless, came into the reception area, wearing a winter coat. He had a hat on with ear flaps, which he had pulled down over his ears. He pulled up a chair next to my desk and asked me for a quarter to call his girlfriend at Trenton Psychiatric Hospital. He said to either give him the quarter or let him use my phone.

"Well, I had been given strict orders about letting anyone use the phone, and I didn't have a quarter handy to give him, so he just stayed there sitting beside me for over an hour. I kept trying to signal people as they walked by, but no one got the message until vice president Rich Hansen came by. He went into the Board Room around the corner from my desk and called me on the phone. He said, 'Is that man bothering you?' and I said, 'Yes, of course!' He called the capitol police, and they were really nice to the man as they led him out the door."

The president's secretary, Anne Tither, noted that Dr. Pruitt has had many unusual personalities writing to him over the years. A man from Virginia wrote to say that he is one of the original disciples of Jesus. The "Holy Ghost" corresponded with Dr. Pruitt from San Diego. A person with imagination begged Dr. Pruitt to invent a machine that could see through concrete walls and into peoples homes so that everyone could be watched. A man who identified himself as Christ, began writing to Dr. Pruitt in 1987; his letters still come in from Florida regularly. Another letter from New York urged the president to "Read It." It contained pages and pasted-together notes on life after death. "Michael" wrote from Michigan explaining the constitution in detail, and a man from Texas wanted help in getting his divorced wife back from California. "Sorting through this kind of mail is just part of the job," said Anne. "One man applies for every job advertised by the College. My greatest fear is that one day someone might actually hire him."

Senior Clerk Transcriber Mary Buzby recalled the day Dr. Pruitt was forced to send everyone in the Kelsey Building home because Program Advisor Howard Bueschel spray painted metal in-out trays near a vent and inadvertently caused dangerous fumes to spread through the building.

The very first employee of the College — other than Dr. Brown, of course — was Carol Kuykendall who reminisced about the early staff holiday parties. Carol was the organizer, and she told about some of them: "The first December there were only a few of us, so everyone brought their spouses or a date, and we held it in the evening. The ladies wore long gowns, and the men were in suits.

"For many years after that, I continued to organize the holiday party and entertainment. We held them at Goodtime Charley's or at Charley's Brother. I don't think we ever went to Charley's Other Brother. Those are real names of restaurants. I always kind of liked that. The parties are different now with so many staff people, but those early years were great."

During the year and one-half of research in preparation for writing this history, staff members were invited to tell their favorite story about working at the College. Some of those stories have been included above. Although some of the stories did not relate directly to the College, many people expressed their appreciation of other staff, especially during times of crisis. The secretary to the HINT project, Frances Smith, gave thanks for all the love and support she received during one particularly challenging year when her marriage ended and her mother-in-law, her

favorite uncle, a good friend, and her mother all passed away. Fran said, "College staff made my life more bearable and less stressful. They were my therapy and my medicine as I went through my year of crises. Thank you all for your love and support."

Principal clerk transcriber William Johnson summarized his coming-to-Edison story in this enigmatic poem.

Synchronicity
Who am I?
What do I want?
And how can I attain all I desire?
First, dear seeker,
You must become a citizen of the field
And give attention of the self to itself
As it discovers itself.
Then,
You have but to dream
All your desires
Into being.

Recalling anecdotes and special events during her fourteen years with the College, Associate Dean and Director of the Nursing Program Dr. Dolores Brown Hall spoke of one commencement in particular. One of the graduating nursing students had been in an auto accident the morning of commencement and was in the hospital. A call about the student reached Dr. Brown Hall at the War Memorial Building just before the processional began. She left immediately for the hospital, and at the approximate time in the afternoon when the student would have been walking across the stage, Dr. Brown Hall handed her the diploma.

Reflecting on the nursing program, Dr. Brown Hall commented that nursing examinations are never canceled, regardless of weather conditions, because they are so complicated to schedule, and they often require a full day to complete. On one occasion, one of the examiners called in sick. There were no available last-minute substitutes, so Dr. Brown Hall went to the testing site, driving through heavy snow to get there. When the testing day ended, she, the students, and the other examiners realized that they were snowed in. Everyone had to spend the night until the roads were cleared.

The stories about staff would not be complete if they did not include the Thomas Edison staff softball team. Organized by Drew Hopkins, the first league the team played in was made up of state agency teams. The Thomas Edison team wore blue tee shirts with a light bulb and the college name in yellow on the front and an individual number on the back. Tom Streckewald, Tom Eklund, Jerry Middlemiss, Drew Hopkins, Bob Herbst, Brian McDonnell, Larry Stamat, and I were the regulars. Jim Brossoie and Mitch Bondi were regulars also, but they weren't college employees until a few years later.

I was the oldest player and the only "girl" on the team for years until Carron Albert joined the staff, although Betsy Watson played one or two games. The team almost never won, but it didn't need to win to have fun, and it probably had more fun than all of the other teams in the league put together because it never took itself seriously.

After Dr. Pruitt became president, and after the two new vice presidents, Jerry Ice and Mike Scheiring, joined him six months later, the president and all three vice presidents were regulars on the team, in spite of knee injuries and other complications. Mitch Bondi's brother Joe pitched for many years, and a few other "outsiders" also played on the team from time to time. The team disbanded eventually as demands on staff time increased, but it was a memorable time for those who participated. It was the only time that Dr. Matusak and Dr. Pruitt could legitimately refer to Thomas Edison's "sports" program.

One of the players on the Thomas Edison team was Thomas C. Streckewald who started with the College as a program advisor, served several years as director of development, and was then appointed director of Institutional Research, Outcomes Assessment, and Planning — a great title for a great man. Tom was killed in a tragic auto accident in 1994. His uniqueness and commitment to the College are legendary.

Tom was a brilliant man and very hardworking, but he was prone to procrastination. He spent an inordinate amount of time preparing to do the next job and then had to work all-nighters to make his deadlines. His end product was always exceptionally well done, but many times I would feel constrained to lend support for the all-nighters. One such occasion occurred when Tom was writing the final Self Study Report for reaccreditation. Tom had poured himself into the project for months ahead of time, but he could not bring the document into focus the way he envisioned it. We began our week of all-nighters when he finally got it together. The first night, however, all ceiling lights in the Kelsey building went out at 11 p.m. Unbeknownst to Tom, this was an automatic shut-off controlled off-campus by another state agency. Tom knew he would have to be there most of the night, so he rounded up all the lamps from people's desks and brought them to his office, to the xerox machine, and to the printer so he could continue working. The next day he received permission from the state bureaucracy to keep the lights burning after 11:00 p.m. The rest of the week was uneventful, although exhausting, and the Self Study document was excellent, as usual for Tom.

Each year since Tom's death, the College Foundation has sponsored a golf tournament fundraiser in his memory. Tom was active in the community and was president-elect of the Princeton Chamber of Commerce when he died. Because of his strong community ties and his dedication to the College, he is remembered through this event and will continue to serve the College for many years to come.

Tom Streckewald, Nat Caliendo, Leon Genciana, Tom Eklund, Jim Humphrey, Tom Donlon, John Smith, Jim Colaizzo, and Shirley Nichols have passed on to new adventures, but they, like all Thomas Edison staff, will always be the "dear hearts and gentle people," for that seems to be a requirement for the job.

THE FACULTY

As discussed in detail in Chapter One, the College first used the New York Regents' advisory body for policy considerations and clarifications. As the break with the Regents came nearer, Academic Vice President Dr. Arnold Fletcher proposed the creation of an advisory council that would serve Thomas Edison exclusively. The College had already been using thirteen faculty members to assist with test development, but the only remaining record that names them neglects to give their first names in some cases.¹ Their responsibilities were to serve on a committee to write new test questions, evaluate examinations, and grade or score examinations taken by students.

When the advisory council concept was accepted by Dr. Brown, that original group of thirteen faculty consultants was merged into a subcommittee of what was finally called the Academic Council,² a twenty-two-member body whose members represent two- and four-year public and private education institutions in New Jersey with select members coming from organizations in the noncollegiate sector. Membership stayed at twenty-two for two years and then increased to twenty-five until 1983 when it increased to twenty-seven, three of whom are Thomas Edison staff.

Faculty consultants sometimes served on committees of the Academic Council, but the majority worked independently with the testing and assessment programs, and later in the distance learning programs. The nature of the Council's work has been discussed elsewhere in this book, but aspects of the Council, its committees, and the testing, assessing, and mentoring work of the faculty is given here through the eyes and words of the individual

faculty members who now number 453. Some of their stories illustrate the character, dedication, and quality of those “dear hearts and gentle people” who represent New Jersey’s *crème de la crème* of higher education faculty.

Commenting on the stature of faculty who serve on the Council, Dr. Mariagnes Lattimer from Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, noted that most have struggled through the career progression at their home campuses, and many have had additional experience in administrative matters — a department chair or a deanship — prior to working for Thomas Edison. “That makes those sitting around the Council table a high-quality and well-qualified group of professionals who are not there to vie for recognition or advancement,” she asserted. “They are concerned only with the students of Thomas Edison and the credibility of the degree programs the College offers.”

Her description of her colleagues is echoed in remarks from Dr. J. Wade Farrior, associate professor of natural sciences and mathematics at Gwynedd-Mercy College in Pennsylvania. Dr. Farrior became a Thomas Edison faculty consultant in 1989 and has served on many committees and on the Academic Council. He stated that one of the rewarding aspects of working for the College is the opportunity to meet professionals from colleges where he would normally not have an association. Brought together at Thomas Edison, professional bonds with faculty from other institutions develop into friendships. He said, “All the people I have met through the College are wonderful. That’s the plus that working here brings, aside from being able to help adult students. You make it so easy to like working here. I notice that when the committees or the Council give advice, the College takes it, and many ideas are implemented rather quickly. It just doesn’t happen that way at other places.”

Pride in the College and the work that they do as faculty is voiced by Dr. Thomas Simonet, professor of communications at Rider University. A faculty consultant since 1977, his comments reflect the intensity given to making the Thomas Edison degrees and specializations of the highest quality. He said: “We were asked to design a new specialization, and as a Committee, we insisted that we had to find three other programs at major colleges and universities to use as a guide. We made a chart, and we put in the requirements from Rutgers or Harvard, or the University of Pennsylvania — whichever colleges were appropriate for the specialization — listing the courses in a journalism major. Then we would pick out the common courses required by all three institutions, and we would say, ‘Thomas Edison will require that.’ Maybe we would change the title, but the content would be the same. Most of the major institutions have at least four or five courses in common, so we would settle on those.

“Then we looked at optional courses, and we’d select the best, the strongest courses that would strengthen the specialization. We never picked institutions that no one ever heard about. We chose major colleges and universities from all over the United States. These were the majors at those colleges, and we wanted to make sure that ours would be every bit as good.”

Dr. Simonet easily and proudly said “ours” when he referred to Thomas Edison. He is not just a part-time faculty person who does a job and gets paid for it. He is a member of the Thomas Edison team.

Dr. William J. Younie, professor of special education and counseling at William Paterson College of New Jersey, serving the College since 1990 on the Academic Council and on advisory committees, and who has done extensive work with portfolio assessment and PONSI, has focused primarily on policy issues in the Human Resources degrees but willingly extends his interest to other areas. He said, “I’ve been interested in other areas that are not within my area of expertise because I’ve gained a lot from the experience. Every meeting I go to, I come home with something new, particularly the ideas of distance education. In addition to hoping that I have contributed something, I’ve learned a great deal. Working for Thomas Edison is a very positive experience.”

Praise for Thomas Edison is always welcome, but praise of the faculty should be stated with equal

fervor. The backgrounds of the faculty consultants as a group would read like a *Who's Who in Higher Education*.

Dr. Deborah Cutchin explained that her attraction to working at Thomas Edison was based on her own interest in nontraditional education and her frustration with traditional institutions that seemed unresponsive to the concept of graduating students who were qualified to actually do something as opposed to the more elitist concept of education for education's sake. Feeling like an "odd fish" in the traditional institution, she found that her interests and the Thomas Edison philosophy matched perfectly. She summarized: "I was very interested in the Master of Science in Management degree because of my own personal crusades for competency-based education. My own professional expertise is in executive development, and much of the work I did in that area was competency-based, so I felt that it was a really good match with something I had been involved in for almost twenty years before I came to Thomas Edison."

Most of the Thomas Edison faculty are rather modest about their accomplishments. Dr. Cutchin has served as a consultant to other states and many foreign countries and has lent technical assistance to local government training institutes and officials in Poland; the Slovak Republic; Pakistan; the city of Savannah, Georgia; the United Nations; the International City Management Association, Washington, D.C.; and the University of the Western Cape, Bellville, South Africa, just to name a few. She is a widely published author and speaker, but her dedication to Thomas Edison remains strong regardless of other demands.

When Dr. Mariagnes Lattimer was first attracted to Thomas Edison in 1971, she was assistant dean of the Graduate School at Rutgers University. She recalled that Rutgers had an association with the Open University of England. As the similarities between the Open University and newly created Thomas Edison became obvious, Dr. Lattimer was assigned to develop an association with the College. Although her interest in the College preceded her first appointment as a faculty consultant by several years, that interest has not waned in the twenty-three years since.

Dr. Lattimer has received many honors including Educator of the Year by the New Jersey Association of Black Educators, a Fulbright Commission assignment as an American Educational Expert to the Federal Republic of Germany, Woman of the Year by the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women, and she was identified by Fisk University as one of the nations outstanding women in their *Directory of Significant 20th Century American Minority Women*.

Like many of the faculty who work with Thomas Edison, Dr. Lattimer voluntarily participated in college public relations efforts. She represented the College on National Public Radio where delegates from three colleges were asked to explain the programs at their institutions. Students called in to ask questions. Dr. Lattimer recalled some of her concerns about doing that: "I was representing Thomas Edison. Although I am very knowledgeable about the College, I really had no idea what I was supposed to be doing when I went into that studio. A call-in show gets a variety of responses — some very knowledgeable and some totally ignorant about differences in institutions, so I was doing my best to explain Thomas Edison. Apparently, I did a fairly good job because many of the students who were calling in were directing their comments primarily to me. They would say, 'Well, even though it sounds like you have to do more work at Thomas Edison, it really seems to be a quality college degree.' That's what I hoped I was getting across."

Dr. John TenBrook, dean of business administration and engineering technology at Camden County College, readily identifies with the "our college" concept. He took an interest in the portfolio assessment process at Thomas Edison in the late 1970's and participated in the training workshops the College offered to faculty. In 1989 he received his first appointment as faculty consultant and has always been an ardent spokesperson for the College.

Dr. TenBrook has an open door for the students in the Guided Study program. Guidelines for mentoring a Guided Study course identify the faculty mentor as primarily a resource person. The

burden is usually on the student to make contact and do most of the work. However, Dr. TenBrook found that to be a limiting relationship and began extending himself in many ways. He told it this way.

I've learned how to be a better, more responsive mentor. The first contact initiated by the mentor should show a willingness to help the student complete the course, not simply lay out the time lines and the administrative responsibilities of the course. I've found that when I extend my availability to the student beyond the recommended times for contact, I get better work and response from them. I explain my role at Camden County College and tell them that they can reach me there any day of the week, although I prefer that they call me at home on Sunday evening. They know they can reach me outside of scheduled times.

I've also learned over the years that students respond better when they are given encouragement about what needs to be improved rather than being told that their work is unsatisfactory. It's the little touches. I purposely use a green pen to grade papers because all of my own college papers were always graded with the obligatory — and glaring — red pen. Red is a stop flag. If you go through it or ignore it, there's a penalty. I don't want to give that message.

I've changed in other ways, too. For the first time last year, I sent a student's paper back to him and told him that if he made appropriate corrections, I would reconsider it and regrade it. Students do better work when given the opportunity to improve.

Another faculty example is Dr. Robert Thompson, emeritus professor of osteopathic sciences at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. Dr. Thompson serves Thomas Edison as a mentor in history courses in the Guided Study program. When asked what he perceived as his own personal accomplishment in his work at the College, Dr. Thompson responded: "The most significant thing is to have been brought to a true understanding of the state of my ignorance. I have learned so much from all my students because every once in awhile I encounter students who have an unusual and deep understanding of my own field, and they surprise me with what they know. I have one student now [statement made in late 1995] who is trying desperately to enter a Ph.D. program in the Philosophy of Science at the University of Maryland. He has had so much philosophy up to this point that I have a sixty-five-page paper on my desk that he has written on some aspect of Descartes. So, working with the Edison student reminds you that you have to constantly keep up with your students, and I think it helps you perceive your own strengths and weaknesses. That's what Thomas Edison has done for me in my own field."

The comment made to Dr. McKeefery at the close of the interview at Dr. Thompson's home told it all. He said, "I would like you to look around this room and to have you appreciate the fact that almost every book on the shelves here has been acquired with a view to helping the students at Thomas Edison, and it has been the greatest happiness for me to have had this experience. I am honored to be a part of this family."

As proud as the College is of its students, Thomas Edison is equally proud of its staff and faculty consultants. The illustrations are just a few of hundreds about the "dear hearts and gentle people" and, most assuredly, *la crème de la crème*.

¹ *Dear Hearts and Gentle People*, words by Bob Hilliard, music by Sammy Fain, c. 1950, popularized by Dinah Shore, Bing Crosby, Gordon MacRae, and Doris Day, first recording by Gordon MacRae.

² S. F. is an abbreviation for *semper fidelis* used in chapter 5 as an identifying symbol similar to Esquire or Junior.

³ In a letter written by Dr. Brown on September 29, 1972. The thirteen people identified were: Professor George Battista, Dr. Jean Gray, Dr. Mark Sandberg, Professor Richard Semenik, and Professor Steve Zelinger of Rider University; Professor Theodore VonBosse and Professor Gordon Berkstresser of Stockton State College; Dr. L. Hiraoka and Mr. J. Hurler of Newark State College; and Professor Duffy, Professor Pinsley, Dr. Everard, and Professor McKinney of The College of New Jersey.

⁴ See the Appendix for a complete list of the first Academic Council membership.

VIII. Gonna Build A Mountain

When Leslie Bricusse and Anthony Newley penned the song "Gonna Build A Mountain" in 1961, their interests were focused on writing music for the film *Stop the World — I Want to Get Off*. Little did they realize how widely used the title and words to their song would become. In fact, the sentiment was expressed by first President Dr. James Brown in a telephone conversation in 1995. His tenure at the College had ended in 1978, and in a discussion with me he was concerned that he might not remember enough details and anecdotes to be of help in researching the history. He mused about that for a minute and said, "On the one hand, it was like working a jigsaw puzzle, and you knew that the right pieces were there somewhere. You just had to find them and add them in the right order. At other times, it was like trying to build a mountain. You could only dream the layers and envision the final picture, hoping all along that enough people shared your vision to build it together."

His words have inspired this portion of the story because Dr. Brown did have the support of so many people who shared his vision. The Board of Trustees has, without question, been the backbone of that support system. Looking at this major body that was and is instrumental in the success and ongoing vision of Thomas Edison State College gives insight into that "build a mountain" mindset.

This chapter focuses on the people who served or are serving on the Board of Trustees. First are the full members, then the student Trustees. In a meeting it is impossible to tell them apart unless you already know.

FULL MEMBERS

The first advisory body to the College was not a board of trustees since the College had not yet been identified as a state college within the state college system. It was a department within the Department of Higher Education, and the appointed group was simply called the Advisory Council. A large cumbersome body of twenty-four members, their purpose was to guide the development of the College and make recommendations on a structure for the institution. The membership was carefully selected to give specific representation to other interested groups or institutions in the state, although it must have seemed unwieldy to Dr. Brown when he was brought into the picture several months later.

Fortunately for Dr. Brown and the College, the Advisory Council truly had the interests of Thomas Edison at heart. Their work reflected the "fingers in" concept, meaning a direct involvement in college operations rather than a policy board that advised but did not participate in daily operations — the "noses in, fingers out" approach. The role of the Advisory Council in laying the foundation for the "mountain" that was to be built required their hands-on involvement. They had to design a workable structure for an institution that was changing almost by the minute. They were asked to design the first personnel plan, and they delved into the academic policies for situations that were so new, no one had experience in them other than the New York delegate who was experiencing the same phenomenon with the Regents External Degree Program. In all, the Advisory Council served well. Mr. Jonathan Thiesmeyer and Mrs. Eleanor Spiegel served on that council.

Mr. Thiesmeyer and his wife Janet now live in New Hampshire, but they have stayed in contact with the College through the years of his retirement. Previously employed by Western Electric in Princeton, New Jersey, Jon, as he prefers to be called, came to the attention of Chancellor Ralph Dungan who was searching for appropriate people to work on the development of the new "college without walls" concept. The chancellor called together a group of men, all of whom were academics except for Jon who represented the business world. At that time, he was director of corporate education for Western Electric, which was somewhat ahead of its time in providing training programs for its employees.

During those preliminary meetings, Dr. Dungan elaborated on the external degree model recently established by the New York Department of Education, so Jon was truly in on the ground floor,



or the first layer of the mountain, as it were. It is not surprising that he was appointed to the Advisory Council, and even more appropriately, that he was appointed to the first board of trustees and made the first board chair.

Jon remembers his own educational experience as a reference point for identifying with Thomas Edison adult students. "I worked three jobs while attending college the first three years," he recalled, "and I worked a year before I even started college, so I knew what some of our Edison students were experiencing as they juggled work and study time." He graduated from Wesleyan College in 1932, and he was determined that his two children would be college graduates as well, as indeed they are.

He was especially interested that this new college would focus on adults since his work at Western Electric emphasized the need for continuous education and training of employees. He remembers the first building sites at 1750 and 1780 North Olden Avenue in Trenton and the move to the Forrestal Campus. When asked if he recalled any problem people or particular criticisms of the College during that time, he gestured broadly and raised his voice to say, "They wouldn't dare criticize. I'd take them on."

Enthusiasm comes through as Janet Thiesmeyer interjected, "When this college was beginning, they called it the 'college without walls,' and I said to Jon, 'How can this be?' He said, 'You'll see. We're going to do it.'" Both Thiesmeyers recalled the first commencement held in the New Jersey State Museum auditorium June 15, 1973. Jon said, "The first person in line was a small man with silver hair, maybe in his early sixties. He bounced as he moved along, waving his diploma. He shook my hand hard and just smiled all over. It was well worth any amount of effort on my part just to see that one man so exuberant, so proud."

Jon's only regret about his service on the Board of Trustees is that he did not have more time to devote to the College. As he listened to Associate Vice President Linda Holt's description of the College today, the number of students, and all of the technological advancements, his wife commented, "Look what you started, Jon."

Mrs. Eleanor Spiegel also served on the Advisory Council, but her initial involvement was from a different perspective than Jon Thiesmeyer's. Mrs. Spiegel, or Ellie as she was known by all, was very active in her Leonia, New Jersey, community. In 1969, she ran for the local school board in the first contested election in Leonia. Prior to that there had always been a committee that appointed people to the board. There was some dissatisfaction with the quality of education in town, so a group of local citizens worked to elect three members to the board. As it happened, Dr. Robert Birnbaum, vice chancellor in the New Jersey State Department of Higher Education, was a member of the local citizens committee that was attempting to bring change to the educational system.



Trustees pose at a 1981 Trustee training seminar led by Mary Louise Peterson from the National Association of Governing Boards. Clockwise from left: President Matusak, Bob Taylor, Ms. Peterson, Ellie Spiegel, George Hanford, Alan Ferguson, Rita Novitt, and Pat Danielson.

As a result of his acquaintance with Ellie and because he was impressed with her knowledge, commitment, and interest in all aspects of education, he asked her to participate in a series of meetings that brought together people from all over the state to talk about the creation of a New Jersey institution that would focus on education for adults. These meetings preceded the appointment of the first Advisory Council and the establishment of the College in December 1971.

Ellie recalled that the meetings were held at the Forsgate Country Club near Jamesburg, New Jersey, a location that had easy access from the New Jersey Turnpike and was centrally located for the forty or fifty people coming from the northern and southern parts of the state. Many points of view were represented in those meetings, and Ellie commented that in hindsight, she understands now that two dominant viewpoints persisted: one to create a New Jersey external degree program exactly like the New

York Regents, functioning as a subsidiary of the Regents, and the other to create a New Jersey institution similar to the New York Regents but independent and in fact broader in scope.

As a result of her involvement with those early planning sessions, Ellie was a logical appointee to the Advisory Council when the College became a reality. Her continued interest and obvious commitment to the new institution made her a valid and valuable appointee to the Board of Trustees when the institution was separated from the Department of Higher Education in 1973.

Known for her determined commitment to diversity in all aspects of community development, education, and public welfare, Ellie carried that concern to the Advisory Council and on into every phase of college development. She commented, "I wanted the Council, the Board, the faculty, the staff — everything about the College to reflect the diversity I saw in life. Business and the community are diverse in terms of their racial, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. But when you get academic people together, you tend to get all white people, and so this was a question I always asked. I extended this same concept to bringing diversity of experience to academe, that is, recognizing education that was gained in totally different ways from the usual way of sitting in a class and producing a paper or an examination. My concern was that the College not simply replicate what I considered the limited view of other educational institutions. Thomas Edison needed to be diverse in its options for obtaining credit and in its ability to evaluate learning that had already taken place outside the classroom."

Ellie's hopes, at first, were that Thomas Edison would open its doors to the seventeen- to twenty-one-year-olds in addition to the adults it was intended to serve. That did not happen, although occasionally a student in that age group does enroll. Clearly the vision was for the mature adult, so Ellie became a spokesperson for that cause. For many years, she served as trustee representative and later chairperson to the Council of State Colleges, a statutory body composed of board chairpersons and presidents of New Jersey's public colleges. Having been a legislative aide at one time, she learned the dynamics of lobbying in the political arena. With that background and insight, her leadership in the Council of State Colleges contributed greatly to the autonomy legislation, which was finally enacted in 1986.

In the fall of 1984, Ellie received the national Association of Governing Board's Distinguished Service Award in Trusteeship. The award is presented each year to two outstanding individuals or boards who have demonstrated extraordinary qualities of leadership and dedication in serving their institutions and American higher education. Ellie was the first woman ever to receive such an award, the first from New Jersey, and the first from a nontraditional institution.

The first Board of Trustees was appointed May 1973, and as indicated, Eleanor Spiegel and Jonathan Thiesmeyer were the only two members from the Advisory Council to move over to the Board. The Council continued meeting for several months until the Board was fully briefed and functional. The hands-on approach continued for many years as members struggled with understanding their roles and building their confidence that the fledgling institution could fly on its own.

One other trustee from that first Board was available to be interviewed for this project. Dr. Richard Pearson served on the Board for four years. His background made him a perfect candidate for trusteeship at Thomas Edison because of his understanding of and affiliation with the College Board and the Educational Testing Service (ETS). In fact, in 1947 he worked for Henry Chauncey at ETS. In 1956, he left ETS to become president of the College Board, whose headquarters were in New York. He served as President until 1969 when he left to teach at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City.

His unique combination of experience brought him to the attention of Chancellor Ralph



Chairman of the first Board of Trustees Jonathan Thiesmeyer and his wife Janet in their home in New Hampshire.

Dungan who learned of him through his association with the New York Board of Regents' staff. Mr. Pearson related the story as follows: "I knew all about the external degree concept when I was at the College Board. One of the programs at the College Board was to set up exams for the New York external degree program. We started that seven or eight years before Edison was even thought of in New Jersey. I was a key person in getting them going at the Board. Dungan knew about that, and I think that's why he asked me to be on the Edison Board in 1973.

"Dungan and I had already worked closely together in the founding and development of Mercer County Community College. I was on that board for six or seven years, and Dungan was the head of the freeholders in the county. Dungan was a first class Chancellor of Higher Education, and I was glad to work with him on any project."

Mr. Pearson recalled some of the discussions that led to the creation of the College. "The idea was to open a new avenue for older people who wanted to complete their undergraduate program. We wanted to make that possible through examinations." His interest in the College has not waned over the years; in fact, he still has a file of papers and documents from those four years on the Board, and in his interview with Linda Holt, he cited references from reports written by Dr. Brown, whom he believes had a broader vision for the College than Chancellor Dungan or anyone on the Board at the time. His sentiments are strongly supported in testimony and narrative throughout this history.

Current president Dr. George Pruitt suggested that boards of trustees have had uneven records in higher education. Over the years that has changed because there is a clearer understanding of the organizational dynamics and the relative role of the various parties, i.e., the roles of the Board, the president, and the faculty. He believes that today's boards understand the division of labor, although there is still the political debate about how individuals and interest groups should be represented and organized. Dr. Pruitt commented that, "Many boards have lost sight of one of their important roles — to hold the interest of the public and the interest of the institution harmless from the interest of the various constituencies."

Although a decisive, astute leader for the College in his role as president, Dr. Pruitt became very sentimental and emotional when he spoke of his boards or his staff. As for the trustees, he commented that after fifteen years, he still looks forward to board meetings, and that very few presidents can honestly say that. "Every member of the Board is unique, but I have close, personal relationships because I have so much respect and affection for them — not only individually but collectively. In fact, they interact collectively with a special chemistry that enables them to function as a whole and not as a collection of individual personalities. By selecting caring people who understand their roles and responsibilities, we've created the best board in the state.

Dr. Pruitt observed that many institutions and boards have compromised themselves by inviting "constituents" to sit. They put alumni on to represent alumni, faculty and employees on to represent those groups, students to represent students. "The minute that happens," he said, "there is an inherent corruption of the fundamental purpose for having a board in the first place. That is not to mean that these constituents are corrupt or that their interests are illegitimate. Our board has always understood that its accountability and responsibility is to the broader public interest and not to the special interest of any particular constituency or any point of view that might be developed because of that particular perspective."

This discussion brought to mind the state-wide controversy that arose over the appointment of students to the Board of Trustees. This issue emerged after the State College Autonomy Legislation was enacted in 1986. The effort by legislators and those supporting the bill was based on the notion that by so doing, a democratization of the institutions would result, giving students a say in their own governance. Dr. Pruitt's analysis of the issue is helpful in understanding the impact that legislation would have had for Thomas Edison. Dr. Pruitt said: "When the statute was passed creating student trustees, I opposed that part of the statute for philosophical reasons. It is

a wonderful political theory for governments and other organizations where the participants are the owners. In a government, the people own the enterprise, but in a college, the students, faculty, and staff do not own the enterprise. Therefore, it is inappropriate to transfer the logic that works under a principle of government to an organization that has a different set of assumptions. It's the responsibility of the Board to keep that from happening.

"So, when you start putting those constituents on the Board, you inherently contradict the purpose of the Board in the first place. I did not oppose the legislation totally, only in principle. With that in mind, the legislature allowed us to write special language into the legislation specifically for Thomas Edison, so that the student trustees could be selected by the Board and not by the students. Again, I am proud to say that we have had extraordinary student trustees. Many are the same general age as the rest of the Board and have similar backgrounds, but they do not come to the Board as spokespersons for the student body. They are advocates for the College. It's an important distinction."

Another outstanding trustee was Alan Ferguson, appointed to the Board in July 1976. Alan was educated in a very traditional school in England and was not aware of the nontraditional movement in higher education. However, he became a strong convert as he assumed his new responsibility as trustee, and one of his first challenges was to educate his colleagues at Prudential who made the usual remarks about getting a degree without going to college. Explaining the Thomas Edison mission was relatively simple, but explaining the testing and assessment methods for earning credit was always a challenge.

Alan served eight years on the Board, one as board chair, and he was chair of the search committee that hired Dr. Pruitt in 1982. He remembered the commencement ceremonies as the highlight, and he especially recalled the year an eighty-two-year-old graduate walked across the stage to the thunderous applause of several generations of her family.

The next new appointment to the Board was George Hanford in February 1977. He also served as chair for two years from 1989 to 1991. During his tenure as trustee, Mr. Hanford was president of the College Board in New York. He compared his work with the Thomas Edison Board of Trustees and the College Board of Trustees as being decidedly different. (Since it is awkward to discuss them using the full names, the names are shortened here to Edison Board and College Board.)

Mr. Hanford made a point of the distinction between the two boards because he found the Edison Board to be a refreshing change for him. As he explained, the College Board was composed primarily of educators who spent most of their time discussing educational issues. The Edison Board, on the other hand, was composed primarily of nonacademics who spent most of their time discussing financial matters. Financial concerns were always in the forefront because the College was state-supported, and the state was constantly in a fiscal crisis.

But it wasn't the financial crisis that was refreshing to Mr. Hanford. He clarified: "There was always some concern about whether or not this experiment was going to make it. But none of the issues that I recall were educational. The trustees acted as trustees are supposed to act. They hire a chief executive, and they let him or her run the College. The only area that was ever a concern was in the finances. In the early years, the finances were not presented in a way the Board was able to understand, and that caused some problems for a while. It wasn't until Bob Taylor came on the Board in 1978 that the presentation of the finances finally made sense. He helped with that."

Everyone who served on the Board prior to autonomy recalls the two accounts listed on the financial pages, state appropriations and student revenues. Each account had its restrictions. For example, at that time the College could go "in the red" in the state account, and the state would cover the deficit, within reason, but the College could not go "in the red" in the student-revenue account. On the other hand, the College could carry forward accumulated



Former Trustees George Hanford (left) and Alan Ferguson enjoy a reunion at the 1992 Gala. In the background are Joy Ferguson and Trustee Nicholas Carnevale.

monies from the student account but could not carry forward monies in the state appropriations account. Any accumulation in that account would be taken back by the state at the end of the fiscal year. Representing this and other complications on a financial report was a challenge for the early administration, and it wasn't until 1979 that a position was approved by the state so that the College could hire a financial vice president. For the time being, however, the problem was solved by the assistance of Trustee Bob Taylor whose fiscal acumen was extraordinary.

In 1992, after fifteen years as Trustee, George Hanford was awarded the degree Doctor of Education, *honoris causa*, by the College at the October commencement ceremonies. In 1995, he was interviewed by Linda Holt at his home in Cambridge,

Massachusetts. His living-room window looks out onto the Harvard campus where he now is in constant demand to serve on boards and committees. Linda reported that as he reminisced about his days at Thomas Edison, he looked out that window and then inside at the many awards and honors that are displayed on the walls. Speaking with intensity and emotion, he said, "Of all the honors I've been given, I cherish my honorary degree from Thomas Edison State College more than any other."

Perhaps when you have been building a mountain and the mountain finds a way to say "thank you," that is reward enough, but Thomas Edison will always be grateful for the wisdom and guidance of people like George Hanford and all of the Trustees.

As each Trustee recalled his or her experience on the Edison Board, references to other trustees were readily made. Just as George Hanford spoke of Bob Taylor, so Bob Taylor recalled George Hanford, using the phrase "venerable member of the Board." But Robert Taylor, or Bob as we were encouraged to say, came to the Board with considerable knowledge and wisdom that proved exceedingly beneficial, not only in financial matters but also in educational systems.

His "coming to Edison" story was a result of several related things going on at about the same time. He stated that he was vaguely aware of the College because Dr. William O. Baker, then president of Bell Laboratories where Bob worked, was a charter member of the State Board of Higher Education, which was formed in 1966. Dr. Baker was involved in all of the discussions leading up to the creation of the new "college without walls." Through Bob's association with Dr. Baker and his acquaintance with Jonathan Thiesmeyer, Bob's knowledge of Thomas Edison gradually increased. When Jon Thiesmeyer retired and moved to New Hampshire, Dr. Baker asked Bob if he would be interested in becoming a Thomas Edison trustee.

This interest in Bob's availability for trusteeship stemmed from earlier experiences. In the early 1970s, Dr. Baker asked Bob to serve on an advisory committee of the Board of Higher Education to study collective bargaining issues pertaining to the county colleges. Bob agreed and worked with Dr. Edward Goldberg, then vice chancellor of the Department of Higher Education. Several years later, Bob was asked to serve on a commission to study the missions, forms of governance, and financing of the county colleges. Bob chaired that commission through the completion of the study in 1979.

His appointment date to the Thomas Edison Board was effective June 1978 because he was filling the unexpired term of Jon Thiesmeyer, but his swearing-in date was actually January 1979. Bob's memory of these dates and events is keen because in the fall of 1978, he suffered a heart attack and was out of the office for two months. Having had what his physician termed a mild heart attack, Bob was able to resume his interests in higher education and followed through on his appointment to the Thomas Edison Board.

Following his eleven years as trustee, Bob was appointed to the board at William Paterson College of New Jersey, and he has maintained a strong presence in the higher education community ever since. That gives him a unique perspective on the New Jersey educational system. His words tell it best: "Higher education in New Jersey is moving in very constructive directions, both in the public and private sectors. The community colleges have established their niche. They serve many purposes, but one in particular is to provide the remediation necessary to compensate for inadequacies in the K-12 system. The private sector in higher education is struggling to maintain its niche. Whether all of the institutions survive will be the question, but those that do will thrive. The public sector is where the greatest strength lies. Rutgers is carving out an ever-improving niche; the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, the New Jersey Institute of Technology, and each of the state colleges and universities have differentiated missions so that they are highly individualized institutions relating to the needs of the state in very effective ways. I'm very optimistic for them."

Bob's service and dedication to the total higher education community in New Jersey make him a "mountain builder" par excellence. When he spoke specifically of his years with the Thomas Edison Board, he said, "There is more bonding among trustees on the Edison Board than any other board that I have been part of or witnessed. I remember our social occasions at Lorraine's [Dr. Matusak] and at Rita Novitt's house. It all comes flooding back, and I can feel that same warmth and camaraderie we felt back then."

Other references to Bob Taylor as trustee appear elsewhere in this book — for example, his Italian owls and the pigeon project in Chapter Four.

When Richard Pearson left the Board in 1979, Thomas Seessel was appointed to fill that vacancy. He served two six-year terms and was chair for two years. He then agreed to serve on the Foundation Board of Directors. His participation has been invaluable to the College.

Currently the president and CEO of SEEDCO, a nonprofit community development firm located in New York City, Tom's background is formidable. He is a Phi Beta Kappa *cum laude* graduate of Dartmouth College who received his Masters degree in public affairs from Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School where he has taught as a visiting faculty member. He became interested in Thomas Edison through Anita Leone who was a special assistant in the Department of Higher Education. Ms. Leone was familiar with Tom's work in the mid-seventies in state government as founding executive director of the Housing Finance Agency (HFA) and as a deputy commissioner in Environmental Protection. At the time he learned about the trustee position at Thomas Edison, he had his own management and public relations consulting firm.

Tom has two remembrances of commencement ceremonies that stay with him. The first was when he was chair of the Board and as chair, handed the graduates their diplomas and shook their hands. One woman smiled broadly as she approached him. Being very short, she motioned for Tom to bend down. "I'm eighty-one years old," she said, "and I'm so happy to be here today." Tom commented, "And that's just it — the role reversal. The older people were on the stage getting diplomas, and the young people were in the audience cheering them on."

Tom's second story refers to the 1988 commencement when then Governor Thomas H. Kean was the speaker and was awarded the degree Doctor of Education, *honoris causa*. At the point in the ceremony when the honorary degree is awarded, the customary doctoral cowl, or hood, is placed on the candidate by the Board chair. "When I started to put the cowl over his head," Tom remembered, "I realized that I was putting it on backwards. One of the staff was trying to correct me and was getting quite upset about it. As I started to take it back off to put in on the right way, the governor said with a wink, 'You're not going to take this degree away from me now, are you?' I assured him that I was not. He was such a sport about it."

Tom Seessel continues his "mountain building" through the Foundation now and expresses great

pride in being part of such a unique institution.

Patricia Fingerhood Danielson, A.A. '73, was appointed to the Board of Trustees July 1979 and served for twelve years until 1991, the same terms as Tom Seessel. Pat's recollection of board meetings and relationships echo similar sentiments as others already stated. She added, however, that, "the Edison Board was a group of hearty souls — people who would come out in a snow storm to go to a trustee meeting. They all came to the meetings; there were no honorific appointees who would show up every once in awhile. It was a strong, working board, and it was a privilege to be appointed to the Board of my first alma mater."

Pat's "coming-to-Edison" story goes back to 1971 when she was auditing courses in the graduate school at Princeton University but could not matriculate there because she did not have an undergraduate degree. She learned of Thomas Edison when it was first announced in the local paper. Having attended two years at Buffalo State Teacher's College in New York, she was one of the first to apply to the new college when it opened in September 1972, and she was in the first graduating class of Associate in Arts students. The day after the June 15, 1973, commencement ceremonies, the *Trenton Times* headline read, "70 graduated from Edison, one bound for Princeton."

The next appointment to the trustee board was Ms. Rita Novitt in December 1980. At the time, Rita worked in sales relations and distribution services at Johnson & Johnson. She is a graduate of Douglass College, Rutgers, the State University. In 1989, she was elected to the Douglass Society, a distinction given to honors graduates who have been notably successful through their work in the humanities and community affairs. Rita serves on many boards in addition to her work as trustee and now foundation director, including the Board of Directors of the Fielding Institute in Santa Barbara, California, and the board of the New Brunswick, New Jersey, Cultural Center. In 1995, she was presented the Humanitarian Award by the National Conference of Christians and Jews.

Rita's "coming-to-Edison" story was different from most. She believes that her nomination to a Board was instigated by Dr. Margaret Mahoney, a member of her neighborhood homeowner's association who was a vice president at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Rita was president of the homeowners' association. She recalled that following an important issues meeting, Dr. Mahoney commented that Rita should be on some boards. No further comments or discussions ensued until Rita received notification that she had been nominated to a board of trustees for a state college in northern New Jersey. She continued the story:

I was very excited about it, but I decided to get to know the college a little better, so I did a dry run by going up to the college to meet with the president. At the time, I was still working at Johnson & Johnson, getting up at six a.m. and putting in a full day. As I jokingly comment, I was putting a quart-and-a-half into a quart bottle of work every day. Their board meetings began at four p.m., so it meant that I would be traveling north during peak traffic times, and it was a sixty-mile drive one way. On my dry run, I drove through terrible traffic going up but took a different route back home. As it was explained to me, although the meetings began at 4:00 p.m., they apparently were very lengthy, requiring a break for dinner and going on well into the evening.

When I returned from that exploratory venture, I seriously considered whether or not I could be consistently productive and clear-thinking at meetings that began so late in the day, especially after the long drive. I notified the Department of Higher Education and the college president that I would have to decline the nomination, but that I would be glad to serve if there were something closer to my home. A short time later, I was nominated to the Board of Trustees at Thomas Edison.

It is interesting that prior to making her decision to decline the first board nomination, Rita met

Dr. Matusak at a social gathering. In their conversation, Rita spoke of her nomination to the other state college board, and Dr. Matusak said, "I wish you had been nominated to our board." Dr. Matusak's gift for seeing the qualities and potential in people on very short acquaintance proved very insightful over the years as Rita began her ten years on the Board of Trustees of Thomas Edison. She began during the unexpired term of Kevin Shanley, who had served only two of his six-year term. Kevin resigned with much regret, but it was opportune that his resignation made Rita's appointment possible.

Rita spoke strongly and often of the "bonding" that characterizes the Trustees at Thomas Edison. She said it beautifully: "We were all in the boat rowing the same way, trying to recognize which current to overcome and when to rise with the current or ride against it. We were always a team."

Because of common interests and frequent interaction outside the College, Rita and Dr. Matusak had become well-acquainted. One such occasion was when Rita was asked to accompany Dr. Matusak to a meeting in Boston. Rita's telling of the story helped to visualize the trip. "The state car was not fit for long distance travel, but Lorraine insisted that we could make it. Well, if there are fifty gas stations on the way to Boston, we stopped at thirty-five of them because there was always a new noise that had to be checked out. We would listen to the noise, analyze what we thought it might be, and take it to a shop for repair. We'd tell the mechanic what we thought was happening to the car, and they'd always say, 'No, I don't think so.' They'd do some minor adjustment, charge us, and we'd be on the road again until that same noise or another one started."

Dr. Matusak hosted many gatherings at her home following meetings or events where board members were in attendance. One such gathering was a picnic in her backyard, which bordered Jacob's Creek in Titusville. As the late afternoon event turned into early evening, people relaxed and enjoyed being themselves. Shoes came off, and many headed for the creek. Alan Ferguson, Arnold Fletcher, Bob Taylor, Rita, and others waded in the creek, looking for special stones for Rita to take back to her yard in Princeton. Rita recalled, "Arnold came down to the creek with a large galvanized tub for the stones. The men were in and out of the creek in their bare feet, hunting for just the right stones for me. And there was Lorraine, saying, '...and this is my board member, and this is my vice president for academic affairs,' pretending to introduce the barefoot men to some invisible guest. Here were all of these brilliant minds, these highly qualified people in high positions in the outside world. Get them to a picnic, and they are just like anyone else."

Rita recalled other gatherings where Alan Ferguson and Arnold Fletcher played duets on her piano, and the rest of the group stood around singing. Dr. Fletcher had been an accomplished performing pianist at one time and was still extraordinarily good. Alan was a casual player who played only on rare occasions. Once when Dr. Fletcher and Alan were going to play four-handed, Rita asked Alan if he needed to practice sight reading before they started. Alan responded, "No. I'm as good as I'm ever going to be."

Her remembrances extend far beyond the party stories, although they are strong in her mind, but Rita's service and dedication to the Board and then to the Foundation as a director are exemplary. Her commitment is typical of other board members, but as of this writing, she will have served the College for over seventeen years. Her work on the Foundation Board will be mentioned later. Suffice it to say for now that when Rita Novitt says that she is "gonna build a mountain," she probably means two.

Christian Yegen served on the Board from December 1981 until June 1993 with two years as board chair. A brilliant self-assured person and financial wizard, Chris was an excellent influence on the Finance Committee and as chair, but he was not particularly interested in the suit and tie image usually associated with trustees. He preferred to dress more casually in open-collared shirt and sometimes a pullover sweater.



Trustee George Hanford and his wife Elaine at the 75th anniversary celebration of the Kelsey Building.

Each year at the September meeting, the annual trustee picture would be scheduled, and the other trustees would wager as to whether or not Chris would remember to wear a coat and tie. One year he did not, and staff scurried around the building looking for a tie and jacket that would fit his lean figure. George Hanford occasionally still asks if college staff have talked to Chris lately and “was he wearing a tie?” Chris’s contributions to both the Trustee Board and the Foundation Board were testimony to his commitment to the College as he played his part in “building the mountain.”

Mr. E. Harvey Myers’s first appointment to the Board of Trustees was in January 1983 to fill the unexpired term of Ms. Allison Jackson, who had resigned. When Harvey came up for reappointment in 1988, he had moved his residence from Monmouth to Mercer County, which made him ineligible. State regulations restrict to two the number of trustees that can be from any one county at the same time. Therefore, Harvey’s reappointment was delayed until 1990 when the next vacancy occurred in Mercer County.

Harvey’s career as an architect reads like the story of a typical Thomas Edison student and is a powerful example of determination and family support. His story began back in the mid-fifties when, already out of high school, he first decided to be an architect. In an interview, he recalled, “I had not taken the right high school program, so I had to go to night school to get up to speed before I could even think about architecture.” Harvey attended Jersey Prep School taking physics, geometry, calculus, and other courses needed to prepare him for further study. He commented, however, that the only college in New Jersey that offered a degree in architecture at that time was Princeton University. That was not a viable option for him because he could only go to night school. All of the other architectural schools were in New York.

By this time a family man working a day job, having married his high school sweetheart just one year after graduating, Harvey set his course for the “experience” route to licensure. He commented, “If you didn’t go to college, then you had to have fifteen years-experience directly under an architect in order to qualify to take your exam. After ten years of night school in nonmatriculating courses and six more years of study, apprenticeship, and preparing for the exams, they finally let me take them.”

Reflecting on those years at the School of Design and Construction at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, Harvey shook his head as images returned. “It was the worst part of Brooklyn at the time. They had guards at the doors, guards in the hallways. I would come out after school late at night and hope that my car would still be there.” He chuckled a little as he thought about living in Newark during the years of commuting to New York because the New Jersey Institute of Technology now offers a degree in architecture. “They added that in the seventies,” he said.

Getting his first apprenticeship position is a delightful story. He explained, “I also went two nights a week to a drafting school in Newark. After two years, I thought I was pretty good, so I put together a portfolio of drawings of doors and windows. Out of ignorance, I picked out three plates that I thought were nice, put them in a folder, put on a suit and tie, and went knocking on doors. I stopped at a firm called Frank Grad & Sons. They were the biggest architects in New Jersey. I asked for Mr. Grad, and they said they were sorry, but I couldn’t see him. I was determined, so I went back. He just happened to walk by, and they told him I wanted to see him. Sure enough, he came out. I told him I was looking for a job. He looked at my drawings and hired me. I was in that office for about two weeks when I found out that everyone in the office was a graduate architect. He really took a chance with me, and I stayed with them for twelve years until I struck out on my own back in Princeton.”

Harvey commented that the experience route is no longer available for would-be architects and attorneys. College degrees are required before one can take the examinations.

His career path story relates directly to his eventual association with the College as a trustee. Prior to becoming vice president for public relations at Thomas Edison in 1977, Ray Male was

an active person in Princeton and Mercer County government and was well-known to Harvey. Ray talked with Harvey about enrolling in Thomas Edison and having his noncredit courses evaluated for college credit. Ray wanted Harvey to be the first Thomas Edison graduate with a degree in architecture. Working through a Princeton professor of architecture, Harvey put together a portfolio in anticipation of his eventual enrollment. He did not recall why it all fell through, but Mr. Male left the College in 1981 before Harvey enrolled. Shortly thereafter, he received a call from the governor's office inviting him to become a Trustee at Thomas Edison. Harvey accepted and never pursued the degree after that, but he continues to learn as he accumulates new experiences. "I studied George Hanford when he was on the Board. I listened to him and took note of how he analyzed things. I do that with Dr. Pruitt, too. They are all talented people, and I learn what I can from being with them."

He is now the senior trustee — not in age, of course, but by appointment date.

Dr. Fred J. Abbate, executive director of the New Jersey Utilities Association, was appointed to the Board in July 1987 and served as chair from 1993 to 1995. When he was first approached about trusteeship, he was director of public affairs research at Atlantic Electric; he then was an executive-on-loan to the Partnership for New Jersey program serving as the director of Leadership New Jersey, a program that honors and develops the state's most promising leaders. He is a published author on political theory and contemporary philosophy and has lectured throughout the country on politics, legal theory, education, communications, and decision-making. He also wrote a play for New Jersey Network about Thomas Alva Edison. His friends and colleagues at Atlantic Electric often referred to him as the Kierkegaard of the Kilowatts. Fred is one of the liveliest, most vital, and winsome trustees one could hope to find.

He first learned about Thomas Edison almost ten years before becoming a trustee. In his role as director of human resource development at Atlantic Electric, he encouraged employees to take advantage of the company's tuition assistance program, and many employees did enroll at the College. Others were using the PONSI recommendations to establish credit in company-sponsored training programs. Then in 1987 he was asked to consider a trustee appointment to Thomas Edison. Much sought after by Governor Kean and then Governor Florio to serve on various commissions, boards, and committees, he had begun to turn some of the requests down, but when asked to serve specifically on the Thomas Edison Board, he readily accepted and has not regretted it.

Fred recalled his first meeting with Dr. Pruitt. "I think we wanted to size each other up. Of course, I was immediately impressed with him and have been ever since, but I think I allayed his fears that I was not some wide-eyed crazy nutcase who was joining the Board to destroy it. My admiration for George and the institution, and my commitment to the whole idea of Edison has become stronger each year. I tell George all the time that we've become apostles for the cause. Wherever I am in the country, whenever I'm talking to people, if I can get a plug in for Edison, no matter what the context, I'm apt to do it — even inappropriately sometimes."

One of Fred's successes in proselytizing for students is the woman who cuts his hair. He not only got her to enroll with the College, but she graduated at the October 1996 commencement.

Another enthusiastic "apostle" is Mr. George Fricke, current board chair appointed to the Board in June 1989. In the last seven years before his retirement from New Jersey Bell, George (as he chooses to be called) was Director of Corporate Training for New Jersey Bell employees throughout the state. He had about 120 people on staff — thirty course developers, and about sixty instructors. It was through this work that he learned about Thomas Edison.

When he learned about the potential for having the New Jersey Bell training courses evaluated for college credit recommendations, he pursued it immediately and was pleased that so many courses qualified. His acquaintance with Thomas Edison grew as college staff interacted with his staff to do the PONSI evaluations. Independent of this, Chris Yegen, a Thomas Edison trustee

from 1981 to 1993, also served on the Board of Directors at New Jersey Bell. Chris hoped to get the president of New Jersey Bell on the Thomas Edison Foundation Board of Directors, and he asked a vice president to intercede for him. The vice president asked George Fricke what he knew about Thomas Edison, so that he would be well-informed before approaching the president of the company. George told the rest of the story this way:

"Because of my experience with the evaluation of the courses, I gave him a glowing report about what a great organization it was, how important it could be for our employees to help them get their degrees or to encourage them with a piece of a degree to go on for more. It was such a good selling job that he said, 'Okay, you go on the Board as our representative.' I relayed that to Chris who set up an interview for me with Rich Hansen and himself. It was a delightful meeting, and I was ultimately invited to represent New Jersey Bell on the Foundation Board. I started on the Foundation Board and served about two years. That's when George Pruitt stepped in. We had a meeting in Trenton, and George said that with my background in training and using the Edison services, maybe it would be better to put me on the Board of Trustees."

George Fricke recalled that his short time on the Foundation Board of Directors was very productive. He facilitated in getting a \$25,000 grant from the Bell Atlantic Foundation to be used for a downlink for the CALL™ network.

George Fricke's enthusiasm is infectious, and it is almost easy to build mountains with him on the team.

Carole Nerlino came on the Board in June 1990. Like George Fricke, she began her professional relationship with the College by serving on the Foundation Board of Directors, but her affiliation with Thomas Edison began when she was a student. Carole had worked her way up in the corporate world by taking available training programs in financial planning, options, and commodities. Over the years she acquired many licenses that had been evaluated for college credit by the American Council on Education, but she had never been in a traditional college classroom. Getting a college degree seemed out of reach as both she and her husband reared three children and worked. None of Carole's clients or co-workers knew she had never been to college.

When she learned about Thomas Edison in 1983, she immediately enrolled and began an arduous three-year schedule of night classes at Morris County College, Montclair State University, and Fairleigh Dickinson University, sometimes enrolling at all three the same semester just to get the right courses. Combining that with thirty-three credits earned through the portfolio assessment process and credit from the licenses which had been evaluated, she completed the degree in 1986 and was selected to represent her graduating class as student speaker.



From left: Trustee George Fricke and wife Carole; Dr. Richard Hansen, former Vice President for Public Affairs; and Trustee Carole Nerlino at the 20th anniversary reception.

It was her business acumen and her corporate connections, however, that brought her to the attention of the Foundation, and she was invited and accepted membership on the Board of Directors where she served until 1990. When an opening occurred on the Board of Trustees, she gladly accepted the invitation to serve and is now in her second six-year term.

Speaking of her role as trustee, she commented that she was particularly interested in discussions regarding the Master of Science in Management degree and the Bachelor of Science in Nursing. "Those are areas where controversy has had its impact, and I appreciate how much work goes on behind the scenes to make those dreams a reality."

Wendy B. Logan was appointed to the Board April 1992. Her appointment continues a strong relationship with the Johnson

& Johnson Corporation established by Rita Novitt. Wendy is Chief Purchasing Officer at Johnson & Johnson; her work demands are extensive, but her interest and commitment remain strong as she completes her six-year term as trustee.

Thomas M. O'Neill, a September 1992 appointee to the Board of Trustees, has a fresh picture of the College. In an interview, he recalled that when he was approached by Dr. Pruitt to serve on the Board, he said yes because, "Nobody says no to George Pruitt." Such is his esteem for the president. "To me, and to lots of people I know, Thomas Edison State College is George Pruitt. Those of you who have been around longer have the historic perspective on it, but to me the two are indistinguishable."

Thus began Rita Novitt's interview with Tom O'Neill. Although he is aware of the College's history, he is more concerned about its future. The executive director of the Partnership for New Jersey, Tom sees the hope for the College's future dependent upon its ability to stay ahead of the crowd. "We have pioneered in distance-learning using the computer and the Internet. But what had once been our edge has now become widespread. More and more people understand the technology and what it can do. Costs have decreased so that it is affordable to the average person and to other colleges. As other institutions of higher education dabble in distance learning, they take away our edge. It doesn't become their primary teaching mode, but they get involved enough to give us competition. The real issue for Thomas Edison is to really know the market and appeal to that market more effectively than anyone else."

As trustee, Tom will have the opportunity to voice that concern and participate in decisions that will bring about change as a new layer in building the mountain evolves.

Ms. Marilyn R. Pearson served only four years of her six-year term as trustee. Appointed November 1991 to replace Pat Danielson, Marilyn's responsibilities as vice president, senior marketing manager with Business Financial Services, a division of Merrill Lynch, took her out-of-state to relocate in Michigan. Her interview with Linda Holt was conducted by car phone as she was traveling from Saginaw to Southfield, Michigan, and then on to Chicago. An extraordinary financial genius, Marilyn is also one of the warmest, most charming women you could meet. Quiet and unassuming, one is caught off guard by her brilliance and business knowledge. For some time before resigning from the Board, she juggled her schedule so that she could be in New Jersey for the quarterly board meetings, such was her commitment. However, because of the New Jersey residency regulations for trusteeship, she was forced to resign. She agreed to serve on the Foundation Board of Directors and continues to make the commute to Trenton from wherever she is just to be present for directors' meetings.

When asked who first approached her about the College, she spoke fondly of Jim Humphrey (now deceased), a twenty-year employee of Thomas Edison and who was a member of her church in Trenton. Jim was acting vice president for Administration and Finance at the College just before his retirement, and he was also actively involved in the financial matters of his church where Marilyn was the treasurer. It was Jim who introduced Marilyn to Dr. Pruitt who later extended the invitation to serve on the Board of Trustees.

Marilyn attended college when her twins were still little, so she identified with the Thomas Edison student who juggles work and study. She knew that had she not obtained her college degree, she would not be where she is professionally today. She concluded her interview by saying: "I wanted to let you know that the Board of Trustees is the best Board I've ever worked on."

Richard W. Arndt was appointed trustee in July 1993. Dick is executive vice president and CEO of the American Cancer Society's New Jersey division. He first learned about Thomas Edison through Foundation Director John Quattrone, long-time friend and an associate in the American Cancer Society. They first met around 1968 when John was chairman of the board of the Mercer County unit, and Dick was a field representative. Interestingly, it was John who recruited Dick — John was the volunteer chairman, and Dick was the staff person assigned to fill a vacancy in



KYW-TV (Philadelphia) newscaster Dick Sheeran is all smiles as he receives his diploma. Student Trustee Sheeran joined 798 other graduates, including inventor Thomas Alva Edison who received an earned degree posthumously, in the class of 1992.

the county unit office. Both were graduates of Rider University, and they maintained their friendship over the years. John became a foundation director at Thomas Edison, and he soon solicited Dick to "get on board" as well.

Dick recalled a particular meeting about the College: "John met me in New Brunswick at my office. He brought a video tape of the College, and his excitement was unlike anything I knew about him. He talked about the mission and the students and what he was trying to do through the Foundation Board. He asked me to consider membership on the Foundation Board of Directors. I was really impressed, both by the College and by John's enthusiasm. How could I say no to that? John convinced me that I should give it a whirl, and I did. I worked with the Foundation for awhile, especially in helping to develop their planned giving program."

Dick served about two and one-half years on the Foundation before deciding that his role as fund-raiser for the American Cancer Society might present a conflict in trying to raise funds for the College, although that situation had not yet arisen. It was fortuitous, then, that an opening on the Board of Trustees made it possible for Dick to be appointed to that body, and he began his first six-year term as trustee in 1993. Of the two boards, Dick commented: "There is a great relationship among the people

who serve on both boards. They are all volunteers, but the dedication is astounding. There is a great commingling of minds and personalities for a common good." And about the College, he said, "I think Edison will probably be the star in Trenton. It has so many unique opportunities that aren't being filled by any other institution in the state. Edison is going through change in its physical facilities, which can do nothing but improve the quality of life in Trenton. The College presents an academic renaissance in Trenton, and it's in an ideal location with the State House next door and Revolutionary history in the backyard."

Dick explained his "star-in-Trenton" image: "With the grayness of the city itself, the College is offering to reach out through the various elements of the community — legislative, political, academic, the Institute for Public Policy, and now the state library. There is a whole different role that has started to shine and that has great potential in the future. In addition to being an institution of higher learning, I think it will be a major resource for the state of New Jersey. The state capital needs more than legislative offices and bureaucratic offices. There is a lot of potential, and the synergy of all of those things combined can make the star of Trenton shine."

Dick is now in his fourth year as trustee. The College looks forward to at least eight more years with Dick as a Trustee.

The two most recent appointments to the Board of Trustees are Mr. Nicholas L. Carnevale and Mrs. Ida B. Hammond. Nick has the distinction of being chairman of the Foundation Board and a member of the Board of Trustees at the same time. Since most of his college affiliation has been with the Foundation Board, his comments will appear there. Ida Hammond has served the College for so many years it would be inconceivable to think of Thomas Edison without her. Her story and comments will appear in the section on students and alumni. Suffice it to say here that both Trustees are important figures in the story, and the College is extremely proud to be a part of their lives.

There are many other Trustees who have played a significant role in the history and development of Thomas Edison State College. For various reasons, they were not available to be interviewed, but their names are listed in the Appendix.

STUDENT TRUSTEES

The first student trustees were appointed in September 1988. Staff at the College recommend students who meet the criteria and who, in their judgement, would have the interest and time to serve. The students must be New Jersey residents, must have completed at least sixty semester

hour credits toward their degree, and must have knowledge of and experience with a variety of methods for degree completion. The president reviews all recommendations, interviews the candidates, and makes recommendation to the Board of Trustees for action and appointment. All appointments are for two years — the first year as an alternate but participating member, the second year as a voting member.

The first two appointments were Antonio D. Pirone, a partner at CUH2A, an architectural firm in Princeton, and Richard A. Sheeran, correspondent-at-large for KYW-TV News (Channel 6 Philadelphia). Interested and actively involved as student trustees, both served their designated terms as prescribed. Dick graduated in 1992.

Thomas H. van Arsdale was a New Jersey resident when he was first appointed student trustee in 1989 but moved out-of-state before his two-year term ended. At the time of his appointment, he was president and CEO of The Dime Savings Bank of New Jersey. He is now president and CEO of the Franklin First Savings Bank in Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania.

Tom has a rather unique background story about *not* going to college. He said, "I grew up in Keene, New Hampshire. My high school principal told me when I was a senior, 'Do yourself and your parents a favor and don't go to college.' I guess I was so active in everything except studies that he did not expect me to do anything worthwhile in life. I spent a few years as a bellhop and then went into the Army where they tested me, and I learned that my IQ was north of 140. I was shocked. I began thinking about what that principal had told me and decided that he wasn't going to run my life. I vowed to do well. I took a lot of courses in the Army and always got honors.

"When I got out of the Army, I thought I would really set the world on fire. I went to Johnson & Johnson and said, 'Here I am. Take me.' Well, they didn't want me, so I settled for a bank teller position and worked my way up. I went to the American Institute of Banking and kept inching my way along. Within two years, I was a bank officer, and within about five years I became the number-two person at the bank. Eventually, I became bank president, but I still needed to get that degree, and that's when I learned about Thomas Edison. I got my associate degree, and I'm almost done with my baccalaureate."

Tom counted his time as student trustee as one of the most remarkable relationships that he has ever had because, "It was one of those many things in my life that was not likely to take place. To be honored, to be a trustee of a college — it was a wonderful experience."

Tom also served for a time as a director on the Foundation Board, but found the distance too far to manage after moving to Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania.

Theodore Kessler was division manager, special services, at New Jersey Bell before his retirement. He was appointed student trustee in 1990 at age seventy; he is believed to have been the nation's oldest student trustee of a major college or university. Ted graduated in 1992 with a B.A. in humanities. In addition to his expertise in management and real estate, he is a distinguished watercolor and waterfowl carving artist. He used his skill and knowledge to do portfolio assessments in fine arts as well as in management.

Speaking about Mr. Kessler, former Board Chair, George Hanford, said he will never forget what a great joy it was to introduce the trustees at commencement and to save until last the student trustee. "They were all great trustees and great people, but I'll never forget Ted Kessler when I introduced him. The audience must have been surprised and pleased when this older gentleman, robed like a trustee, stood up. He looked just like one of the rest of us. It was great fun to do that."

Mrs. Laura J. Simurda was appointed student trustee in 1991 and



Student Trustee, Ted Kessler, BA '92, working in his art studio.

served a little more than one year of her two years. Very shy, Laura often commented to me that she was so much in awe of the other trustees she could not speak, but she served well during her term.

Ms. Drunell Levinson became a student trustee in 1992. Enrolled in the B.A. degree program, she graduated in 1993. She has since completed a Master of Arts in decorative art and is enrolled in a doctoral program. Drunell did portfolio assessments in an interesting variety of subject areas including acting, landscape design, marketing, directing, office skills, and black theater, and she used the TECEP program for math and English and took some in-class courses at Mercer County Community College.

Drunell had eighteen years experience in the theater before pursuing other ventures. She studied drama under Geraldine Page and Shelley Winters in the '70s and '80s, and in 1986 won a Best Supporting Actress nomination for an Audelco Award, which recognized black theater. But the role of which she speaks most proudly is that of student trustee at Thomas Edison. "It was an honor and a delight to associate with such brilliant but warm and friendly people. It certainly was the highlight of my career as a student."

Bill Kelly, Mae Slabicki, and Bill Kisby have two things in common. Each was a student trustee at the College, and each was in a friendly competition with one of their children to see who would graduate first.

William R. Kelly is a district manager at AT&T where he has worked for over thirty-four years. He remembered his first contact with Thomas Edison as if it were yesterday. "It was around 1990, and my son had already started college. I saw a poster in one of our buildings at AT&T. It was an ad about Thomas Edison, so I decided to find out if that might be a way for me to go. I already had about seventy credits from Maryland and Rutgers. Actually, I tried to go back to Rutgers after being out about ten years, and they said I'd have to start from scratch, so I looked into Edison and enrolled. I took TECEPs, sometimes taking two or three in one day.

"My son Bill and I had this competition to see who would get through first. He was studying at Loyola College in Baltimore. It took us both four years, but I beat him by two weeks. I graduated officially May 1, and he graduated May 15. Of course, my ceremony wasn't until October. I was appointed to the Board of Trustees as student trustee in 1993, so I was sitting on the dais with my trustee robe on when I got my diploma. It was a tremendous experience and quite an honor."

Ms. Mary (Mae) Slabicki, assistant director of research and education, The Academy of Medicine of New Jersey, was appointed to the Board in 1994. Mae's thirty-two-year-old son did not go to college directly out of high school, but when he did begin, he and Mae were enrolled at Mercer County Community College at the same time. He finished at Mercer and went on to Rider University for his baccalaureate degree. Mae graduated with an associate degree the semester before her son earned his baccalaureate at Rider. Part of their friendly rivalry was for both to achieve good grades, and she is proud to report that her son graduated with honors. Mae's challenge now is to complete her baccalaureate degree at Thomas Edison. She said, "I'm down to my last thirty credits, and they're the hardest because I'm busier than I've ever been on my job." Working toward a Bachelor of Science in public health, Mae enrolled at the College in 1991 and has been taking Guided Study courses.

Lt. William Kisby was still with the New Jersey State Police doing investigative work in white-collar and organized crime when he enrolled at Thomas Edison in 1993. In an interview, he commented that sometime in 1990 his son, who was enrolled at the University of Chicago, stimulated his interest in working toward a degree. Bill was planning to retire from the State Police and change careers. Not having a degree had already lost him a job at Stockton State College where he was more than qualified to teach courses but was denied the opportunity. He had been guest-lecturing for some time and was asked to set up a curriculum for a course in white-collar and organized crime, his forte. Two days after getting the assignment, the job was

rescinded because Bill did not have a masters degree, which the college presumed he had. Bill did not have a bachelors degree either, but he had had police academy training and other training courses. Becoming an expert in his field, he began teaching at Atlantic Community College; his students were law-enforcement people attending the Casino Career Institute. He was determined that he would get his college degree so that he would never have that kind of rejection again.

Bill was appointed student trustee in 1995; he earned his associate degree in 1996 using Guided Study courses, testing, and portfolio assessment in creative speaking and martial arts. He has been an instructor in the International Korean Karate Association for twenty years. He, too, was in his trustee robe at the commencement ceremony, and he looks forward to continuing on for his baccalaureate degree. He did change careers. He is now with TransUnion, a national fraud investigation center. As for his friendly competition with his son, he says, "There wasn't any question that he would graduate before I did, but knowing that we were working toward the same goal at the same time was high incentive for me, and being a student trustee just added to the significance of the whole experience."

Cordell Trotman was just appointed to the Board as student trustee in September 1996, and she reports that, "I'm just getting the feel of it, so there's not much to say yet. It is indeed an honor, though."

Albert Merck, long-time member of the Board of Higher Education for the State of New Jersey, speaks glowingly of Thomas Edison. He notes that the College is one of the few higher education institutions that is cost effective. As he told Linda Holt, "This is testimony to the fact that the state adopted a technique for reaching what was largely an unreachable population through the conventional campus-oriented, post-secondary education." But Mr. Merck's eyes got a little twinkle as he commented on the Thomas Edison Board of Trustees. "We'd hear from the Department of Higher Education staff that if they had to represent the Department on a state college board of trustees, the plum was to go to Edison — not because it was easy in some way, but because it was the best board in the state."

Now isn't that what everyone has been saying? And when the Thomas Edison Board of Trustees sets out to "build a mountain," you know that it will stand forever, it will be beautiful, and it will be unique.

¹ "Gonna Build A Mountain," words and music by Leslie Bricusse and Anthony Newley, from the film *Stop the World — I Want to Get Off*, c. 1961.



IX. People Who Need People

"People who need people" are, indeed, the luckiest people in the world. More than likely, they are also the happiest, the busiest, and perhaps the most challenged people in the world because people who need people engage in relationships and interactions that can be frustrating and demanding as well as rewarding and uplifting. When one considers what constitutes a foundation, which is a fund or an endowment for the maintenance of an institution or concept, images of corporations interacting, granting money, and raising money business-to-business comes to mind. What is really at the base, however, are the people who represent either the foundation, the institutions, or the people who are granted the money. Dr. Pruitt once counseled his cabinet that approaching a potential donor for college support is not an "idea-thing" but a "people-thing." A grant proposal or financial appeal might be the greatest idea in the world to be implemented by the greatest institution in the world and administered by the greatest people in the world, but if no one at the giving end knows even one person representing the grant applicant, the proposal might never pass the first cut. He stated, "It is not who you know or what you know, but who knows what you know," and that is just one reason why "people need people."

Never was this truer than for the Thomas A. Edison State College Foundation, Inc., the independent organization that supports the mission and programs of Thomas Edison State College. It has been the individual members of the Foundation who have struggled to understand their role and dared to approach individuals and organizations to garner support of all kinds — individual or corporate, monetary or product gifts, grants, services, donations, space, speeches, even meals. The Foundation is the people, and the people are the Foundation.

The first known mention of a foundation at the College was made in the January 24, 1975, Board of Trustees minutes where it was reported that plans were under way to create an Edison State College Foundation. Those same minutes reported a grant from The Charles Edison Foundation to support the creation of an Office of Institutional Research. For many years, all gifts and grants given to the College went into the miscellaneous revenue account, since there was no other way for the College to receive monies.

The January 23, 1976, minutes indicated that an Edison Foundation had been established; it was not an independent organization, however, and at that time trustees were considered part of the Foundation, which went by the name The Thomas A. Edison Foundation for Nontraditional Learning, Inc. The minutes also stated that the first donation pledged was a five-dollar gift from trustee Robert Kavesh who served on the Board from 1973 to 1977. The December 14, 1979, minutes announced the first annual fund drive; as of that date thirty-five individuals had given a total of \$600.

Sometime in late 1980 things began to change. Dr. Laura Adams had been serving as director of academic programs. Together with Dennis Smith, who was the director of institutional research, the two collaborated on grant writing for the College. The two largest grants were a Title III proposal to the Federal government and a Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE) grant to fund the Statewide Testing and Assessment Center. Dennis, Laura, Dr. Matusak and Dr. Fletcher made several trips to Washington, D.C., to lobby for the grants and work with congresspeople to gain support for the funding. In a recent interview, Laura related an interesting anecdote from one of those trips: "We were seeking support for the Title III proposal, which would enable the College to get ahead in technology. We went to see Chris Smith, who is still the congressional representative, but this was the first week of his first term in Washington. It was literally like the *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* story. He had no knowledge of how Washington worked, he was quite naive about how to approach these things, and some of his people seemed to be really innocent and provincial. They simply didn't know the ropes. Although he did try to help, we did not get the Title III grant. However, we finally did get the FIPSE grant, which was highly competitive, and Chris Smith obviously learned the ropes because he is still there."

What came out of all the trips to Washington and Laura's and Dennis's extensive efforts to bring

in grant money was the obvious need to create a fund-raising position. Laura believed that she could succeed in that area, and she negotiated with Dr. Matusak to give her an opportunity to try. According to Dr. Matusak, Laura proposed that if she were allowed to focus exclusively on development for one year, she would be able to at least raise her own salary money in revenue. If she did not do that, she would resign. Laura recalled the bold step she proposed to take. "I always liked a challenge, and Ruth McKeefery was a logical person to take over in academic programs, so Larraine went along with my proposal. We created this executive director of the Foundation position, and I had the task of developing that — selecting the Board, getting them approved, setting an agenda, and looking for ways we could raise funds and friends for the College."

Laura also recalled that she organized the first Phonathon fund-raising campaign, which had minimal results because an alumni data bank had not been compiled, and no effort had been given to developing a full-fledged alumni association, although a handful of alumni volunteers met periodically in an attempt to create an Alumni Association. They sincerely wanted to help, but there were no systems in place, nothing to support a development office or an alumni association. Laura made some progress in creating the structures, but her year was up before significant headway could be made. She resigned from the College to accept a vice presidency for external affairs at another institution. Interestingly enough, she went on to an outstanding career in finance until she changed careers again to become a Presbyterian minister.

The creation of a development office at the College, however, changed for all time the mind-set for building what is now an effective foundation. In February 1981, Dr. Matusak hired Dr. Richard Hansen, or Rich as he was called, as the first vice president for community affairs. It became Rich's responsibility to develop and expand the existing foundation and oversee the development office. In addition, he created an alumni office and made Annette Singer, assistant director of counseling, the first alumni director. Thomas C. Streckewald, a program advisor in the Bachelor of Science degrees, was hired to replace Laura as director of development. Both Tom and Annette acknowledged that they were "green" in their new roles, but Annette knew how to win people over to the College and was perfect for her new responsibilities, and Tom was a strong organizer who was able to create the proper systems for receiving gifts and donations, developing an alumni data bank, and organizing the foundation meetings and activities.

One of the first orders of business was to separate the Foundation from the state and establish a core of foundation directors who could recruit additional members. The focus for a number of years had to be in "friend-raising" rather than fund-raising, because the College was still so little known by the general public. In his interview, Rich recalled some of the dynamics that stimulated the reorganization: "We saw that the funding source from the state was going to be precarious in the early '80s. We got approval from the Attorney General's Office to form a related but separate foundation whose funds could not be touched by the state and would not be mixed with the state appropriation. At that time, we had to have a link between a member of the Board of Trustees and the Foundation. Trustee Chris Yegen became that link."

Creating the new foundation and assembling its founding members took almost two years; on October 7, 1983, the Foundation was officially restructured and disengaged from the state and was established as an independent organization, although the first organizational meeting was still a year away. The name was changed to the Thomas A. Edison State College Foundation, Inc. During the next year, the charter members were selected, and on October 1, 1984, the founding members met for the first time. They were: Christian C. Yegen, chairman of the board and president of the Integrity Financial Group, Inc.; Edward E. Booher, former chairman and president of the McGraw-Hill Book Company; John J. Connolly, president and chief executive officer of the National State Bank; Richard J. Gillespie, president of Gillespie Advertising; Larry G. Woolf, president and chief operating officer of Caesars Tahoe; and George A. Pruitt, president of Thomas Edison State College. Richard S. Hansen and Michael J. Scheiring, both vice presidents at the College, were elected nonvoting members of the Foundation. It was a stellar group of founding members.

It is interesting to note that Mr. Booher was a charter member of the New Jersey State Board of Higher Education when it was created in 1967; he was chairman of that board when the resolution was passed establishing Thomas Edison.

Two other appointments were made at the October 1, 1984, organizational meeting. Richard Hale was appointed corporate attorney, and Joseph Grillo was appointed corporate auditor. Richard Gillespie, Richard Hale, and Joseph Grillo are still actively involved with the College and the Foundation as of this writing. Staffing that first meeting were Gerri Collins, Thomas Streckewald, and Barbara Waters Eklund.

Chris Yegen was appointed chairman of the Board of Directors and president of the corporation. Several years later, Dick Gillespie assumed the chairmanship and held that position until 1994 when Nicholas Carnevale took over as chair.

Rich Hansen vividly recalled the early efforts to attract new people to the Foundation Board. The five founding directors recommended potential members and made many visits with Rich or on their own. Rich recalled that he was always amazed at how excited people got when they learned about the College. "These people had not one iota of prior contact with the College, but when we sat down to talk with them, they just seemed to get turned on. A light would go on, and they were fired up about what the College was doing for adults. I got used to it after awhile, but it was still very exciting to watch that transformation take place. Not everyone agreed to become a foundation director, but many did. Michael Moore joined us. He was president of the Trenton Times Corporation, and he stayed with us until he moved to Washington, D.C. Ingrid Reed was on the Board for awhile. She was the assistant dean for planning and administration of the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University. It was an exciting time to be a part of the College."

John Fischer was another director that Rich Hansen brought to the Board. John was with the Digital Equipment Corporation at the time, and it was through him that the College received two very large equipment grants that were vital to the technological enhancements needed to implement the academic delivery system of the CALLTM Network. Although living in South Carolina now, John still maintains his membership on the Board of Directors of the Foundation.

Founding member Dick Gillespie has not only helped to build the Foundation to its current membership of thirty, but he has been a major contributor during a time of incredible growth in his own advertising company. Needing additional space for his expanding operation, he moved to new facilities just south of Princeton and even the name of his advertising agency changed to reflect the expanded operations. Now called The Gillespie Organization, Dick is chairman of the board, but he is the organization. Nevertheless, he remains the same caring, dedicated person he always was. That was never more obvious than when he cleared his calendar to reminisce with Rita Novitt about the early foundation board and activities.

Dick remembered his first meeting with Rich Hansen and Dr. Pruitt to discuss a potential donation to the College. He said, "As we talked, it became apparent that I might be of some assistance in a public-relations way since advertising was my business, but I wanted to know more about the College. Rich invited me to a graduation ceremony, which was a week or so away, and I agreed to go. I wasn't prepared for what I experienced, but I came away really sold on Edison.

"I remember it vividly, how taken I was by both the age of the graduates and the enthusiasm of the audience. It reminded me of going to New York Mets baseball games. The Mets fans used to hand banners from the stands. That's just what some of the families of the graduates did at the Edison graduation. There were banners hanging in the balcony or being held up by family. 'Go Grandma,' one of them said. Another said, 'Congratulations Grandpa.' The look of those graduates told me that this was a special place. I agreed to join the Foundation as a director."

One of the first projects Dick worked on was a print ad campaign that would be used on radio commercials as well. He used drawings of Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Edison, and Abraham

Lincoln as examples of people who had not gone to college but who were extraordinary achievers, like many Thomas Edison students. Framed copies of those print ads still hang in the Kelsey Building reception area.

Dick understands that people need other people to help them along their paths. He is deeply concerned about people who are truncated from successful paths because of circumstances that seem to be beyond their control, and he is committed to helping people break through some of those barriers. He commented that, "Some people are good and work hard, but often because of life's circumstances, don't have the same opportunities as others. I try to help when I can, and that's why I'm at Edison. Along the way I've obviously made some terrific friendships and met some wonderful people, but for me that's my driving call to Edison. I see it as a place that gives people opportunity that they might not otherwise have a chance to get."

Building the foundation board became a priority as each founding member reached out to enlist the support of others. Dick Gillespie brought in Andrew Brown, his neighbor, who was then president of Opinion Research. Andy left Opinion Research to pursue other venues and is now with the Total Research Corporation. Still very active on the Board of Directors, Andy co-chaired the 1992 Gala with Rita Novitt and co-chaired the 1994 Gala with John Quattrone.

Dick also enlisted J. Robert Hillier, chairman of The Hillier Group, an architectural firm based in New Hope, Pennsylvania. Dick remarked: "The nature of the Board began to change, not only in numbers, but in the quality of the people and their connections to the region. That was very significant for the long-range plans to build an endowment and a powerful advocacy group."

Thomas van Arsdale, president and CEO of the Dime Savings Bank of New Jersey, became a director. He recalled some of the questions he faced as a director trying to raise funds for a state college. He also recalled wondering who would give money to an institution that did not have a football team, a huge campus, or some kind of emotional "student in residence" experience that would evoke fond memories. He credits former vice president for Public Affairs Dr. Natale (Nat) Caliendo with helping the foundation directors restructure their thinking and their agenda to create those kinds of experiences — the dinner-dances, the cruise down the Delaware River, the golf tournament, and other fund-raising events that create a camaraderie that stimulates gift-giving and donations.

Thomas Seessel, former Trustee and now foundation director, answered some of the questions being raised. He commented that: "We no longer have the view that government will take care of the state colleges. The line between public and private is blurred. Many private colleges are now receiving some public funding; as a result corporations will more readily give to state institutions. Thomas Edison and other state colleges will benefit from that. Of course, the College has gained national recognition for its work, especially in the technological delivery of academic services, so the corporate sector can relate to what Edison is doing and can find a way to be supportive, either through financial donations or through in-kind gifts, such as computers or technological know-how."

S. John Quattrone, president of S. John Quattrone Associates, an insurance and investment firm, became a director in 1985. He became involved when the foundation focus was primarily on expanding membership. As he spoke with Rita Novitt, he commented that the Foundation has changed its focus to fund-raising, and "We now have a strong group of directors who want to see the College grow and be successful. To that end, we have set a \$2.5 million fund-



Founding members of the Foundation at their first meeting. Clockwise from left: John Connolly, Ed Booher, Dr. George Pruitt, Christian Yegen, Dr. Richard Hansen, Michael Scheiring, and Richard Gillespie.



Betty Wright (right) Financial Assistant at Thomas Edison, and friends of the College James Caulfield (center) and Marci Shatzman made a day of it at the First Annual Thomas C. Streckewald Memorial Golf Classic July 1995.

raising goal for the next four years." As co-chair of the Legacy and Planned Giving Committee, John hopes to interest more alumni in long-term and estate giving. John's foundation work also includes the Development Committee, and he is a regular volunteer on the Gala Committee each year. With many service organizations and charities vying for his time and attention, it is little wonder that the Italian American National Hall of Fame recently honored him with the Humanitarian Award. One of John's frequent expressions when referring to foundation fund-raising events is, "We're having fun raising funds."

Owen O. Freeman, Jr., chairman of the board of the Commonwealth State Bank in Newtown, Pennsylvania, joined the ranks as foundation director and remains a strong supporter. George Fricke, retired executive from New Jersey Bell, and Carole Nerlino, a vice president at Shearson Lehman, became strong advocates. Both are now serving on the Board of Trustees of the College.

A trustee for ten years, Rita Novitt now serves on the Foundation Board of Directors, joining in 1990. In a recent interview she observed that it was the 1992, Twentieth Anniversary Gala that brought focus to the Foundation Board. The gala was a fund-raiser, but it was also a major image-raiser. Co-chairing the Gala Committee with Andy Brown, Rita also observed that the frequent meetings, the camaraderie, and the hard work to produce a high-quality, fund-raising dinner-dance brought the board members together as they had never been before. She commented that the people needing people concept was the catalyst for unifying the individuals into a very strong organization. Not only was that gala successful, but it laid the groundwork for the next year's event which celebrated the first ten years of Dr. Pruitt's presidency. Held at the New Jersey Aquarium, it was a "smashing success." To use Rita's term, the foundation board has now "bonded." "We're all on the same train going in the same direction," she said.

As each new member finds a place to serve the needs of the Foundation, some raise large sums of money, some acquire major service gifts, and some are more successful in bringing in additional new members or in providing wise counsel. Current chair Nicholas Carnevale has nearly thirty years experience in community service, many of which were on various foundation boards whose primary purpose was in fund-raising. Nick has extraordinary insight into eleemosynary, or charitable, nonprofit organizations.² His analysis of the Thomas Edison Foundation helps to put the growth years into a meaningful perspective. Also interviewed by Rita Novitt, Nick stated that every person who has served on the Board has been a committed individual, but that as the purpose of the College has become more defined and as the state has gradually reduced its financial commitment, the role of the Foundation has changed. Fund-raising has become a stronger focus so that the College can more readily develop and exercise its margin of excellence. Nick added, "That's what convinced me to be involved, and that's what convinces me now to stay involved. We are a body providing these extra funds, amplifying that attempt at a margin of excellence that the state either cannot or will not promote."

As he reviewed the College's history and that of the foundation board, he compared the process to the human growth cycle. He suggested that the College is like a happy family growing together and that perhaps the current cycle would be the preteen years, the rapid growth period where bonding and social development are critical. "The parallel is valid between family and a growing institution," he said. "We're here to benefit thousands of people each year, and using that parallel, we would want to be delivering this benefit to our children based on the experiences we've had. Dr. Pruitt and others have selected members from the community who have a broad, experiential life, and we are passing on the best of what we have gathered in our lives to a board that's going to exist for a long period of time. Our growth is so rapid now that we may be approaching the teen years, which are almost explosive in a family's life.

We have to stay focused, but we have to be flexible enough to adjust to the future."

Among his many commitments, Nicholas Carnevale has several long-term affiliations, including twenty-eight years with perfect attendance at Rotary Club International. He has served on the boards of the American Boychoir School and the Westminster Choir College, and has worked all of his adult life with service organizations such as the American Red Cross, the American Cancer Society, and the Community of Italian-American Organizations, to name just a few. One of the goals he had for himself was to identify people for the Thomas Edison Foundation who are "better than me," as he explained it. "Better in their exposure to corporate life, which seems to be the source for private dollars, and better in the sense of being more expressive and able to represent a bigger cross section."

One way that this has been accomplished by the full board was by the creation of the Spirit of Edison Award which has been given now for three years. The Spirit of Edison Award recognizes both a graduate of the College and a community leader who reflect the creativity, commitment, and entrepreneurial spirit of the great inventor for whom the College was named. The 1994 awards went to alumnus Frank Hawrylo, B.S. '79, and to John P. Neary, executive vice president, Corporate Communications, CoreStates Bank.

Frank Hawrylo's accomplishments are mentioned in several other sections of this history. He has been one of the College's most active advocates since his graduation. A past president of the Alumni Association, he was the first recipient of the Alumni Association Award for Outstanding Service. Other recognitions of his achievements include the RCA Outstanding Achievement for Research Award in 1980 and the Sarnoff Corporation Outstanding Achievement Award in 1987.

John Neary, or Jack as he prefers, recalled that his first association with the College came through the Mercer County Chamber of Commerce's Education Committee. Jack represented CoreStates New Jersey National Bank on the committee, and Dr. Pruitt was chair of the committee. Through that association, Jack and Dr. Pruitt became acquainted, and then through Jack's involvement in the city of Trenton's relationship with Thomas Edison's Institute for Public Policy, he decided that the College was a place where he could contribute something of himself. He immediately became active in the Development Committee of the Foundation and is currently co-chair of the 25th Anniversary Gala Committee.

If Jack Neary was impressed with Dr. Pruitt and Thomas Edison State College, the Foundation Board was equally impressed with Jack Neary. At the 1994 gala, foundation chair Nicholas Carnevale explained to the assembled guests, "Neary's vision, caring, compassion, and no-nonsense leadership have had an incalculable impact on organizations as diverse as the Trenton Urban League, the Center for Strategic Urban Leadership at Rutgers-Camden, the Trenton Office of Policy Studies, Young Scholars Institute, New Grange, and the Education Committee of the Mercer County Chamber of Commerce. Through his leadership, CoreStates New Jersey National Bank has built strong community development partnerships with countless neighborhood organizations — partnerships that are changing lives and changing neighborhoods." At the time, Jack was vice president at CoreStates Financial Corporation, but he has since moved on to the Philadelphia office where he is executive vice president for Corporate Communications.

Jack is constantly planning and negotiating for change in the community he loves. He sees the John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy, the Foundation, the whole college as, "...an incubator for leaders. Give potential leaders an internship and opportunity to work with the College and the Foundation. Do we lament the absence of leadership in this country, or do we step in and become a catalyst for change? Thomas Edison and all its parts have the potential to be that catalyst."

Like others who came before him, Jack Neary understands so well the "people who need people" aspect of the College and its foundation board.

The 1995 Spirit of Edison Awards were presented to alumnus Steven de Souza, '76, and to

James Kilgore, president and publisher of *The Princeton Packet*. More about Steven de Souza is presented in the section on students and alumni.

A member of Rotary International, Jim Kilgore has held directorships in the American Red Cross, the Urban Journalism Workshop Advisory Board, the Princeton Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Princeton Area TWIN Program Advisory Board. Jim believes that his newspaper provides a public service that deeply affects the communities it serves. The *Princeton Packet* is New Jersey's oldest weekly paper, founded in 1786. Jim's father bought the *Packet* in 1955. It had seven papers when Jim became general manager in 1979; now it has thirteen. The paper has an exemplary reputation for providing the community with valuable and timely information, and the commitment to service is a high priority for all employees. That is not surprising given the level and degree of public service Jim personally commits to the greater Princeton area.

Jim has since joined the Foundation as a director, and he looks forward to extending his commitment to public service to support the mission and goals of Thomas Edison through the Foundation.

At the 1996 annual gala, the Spirit of Edison Awards went to alumna Paula Vaughan BSBA '90 and to Richard Gillespie. (More about Paula will be in the alumni/student section of this history.) Many of Dick's accomplishments and evidence of his commitment to the College and the community have already been mentioned, but in his conversation with Foundation Director Rita Novitt, he emphasized the importance of the annual galas in image-raising for the College. He explained that the College was becoming better-known in the state, and well-known in national educational circles, but the galas presented the College to the public as a "class act." Annual dinner-dance fund-raisers are very common in New Jersey, and often it is many of the same people who attend these various affairs in support of one another. It took only one year, however, for Thomas Edison to establish a precedent for being *the* Gala to attend. Planned to the nth degree, the event is exciting, elegant, and "short on speeches, long on fun," as Dr. Pruitt assures the participants. Previous co-chairs Rita Novitt, Andrew Brown, S. John Quattrone, Maria Imbalzano, and a host of committee members make sure of that.

Not to be outdone by the foundation directors who have served many years on the Foundation, the newer members are a formidable group representing a broad range of backgrounds and businesses. Deborah Aguiar-Velez is CEO, president, and owner of Sistemas Corporation; Donald K. Conover is a retired Corporate Education & Training vice president for AT&T; Margaret Pyles is senior director for training and development, Bristol-Myers Squibb; John J. McCann is executive vice president, Lynch, Jones & Ryan, Inc.; Maurice Perilli is executive vice president and chairman of the board, Roma Federal Savings Bank; Marilyn R. Pearson (previously mentioned in the section on Trustees) is vice president and senior marketing manager for Business Financial Services, Merrill Lynch; Peter S. Longstreth is managing partner, Aegis Property Group; Paul A. Hays is lead emergency planner, General Public Utilities Nuclear Corporation and president of the Thomas Edison Alumni Association; Eric Robert Lear is a partner with the accounting firm Lear & Pannepacker; Maria Imbalzano, Esq. is an attorney with Stark and Stark; Arthur Krosnick, MD is on staff at the Joslin Center for Diabetes; Linda Villa is human services vice president with AT&T; Paula Vaughan, president-elect of the Alumni Association, is vice president, Change Management, with Prudential; and Dr. James E. Carnes is president & CEO at the Sarnoff Corporation.

Dr. Carnes, or Jim as he is known, is currently vice chair of the Foundation Board. Recently he told how he got involved in electrical engineering and eventually the Sarnoff Corporation. He always wanted to be a Navy jet pilot, and through the Navy he completed his baccalaureate degree at Pennsylvania State University. However, during his school years his eyesight went from 20/20 to 20/40, and he was dropped from the Navy's pilot program, although he continued on as a navigator. His eyesight continued to deteriorate, and he was no longer eligible for any flight aspect of the Navy's program. Not being content with ground school or the airplane

maintenance program, he left the Navy when his tour of duty was up and went to Princeton University to get a Ph.D. in electron device physics. Broadly referred to as an electrical engineering degree, Jim's specialty involved work with transistors.

Jim joined RCA Laboratories in 1969 as a member of the technical staff then transferred to the Consumer Electronics Division in Indianapolis in 1977. He returned to Princeton in 1987 as a vice president. He became president and CEO in 1990. His community service is extraordinary; he serves on the New Jersey Institute of Technology Foundation Board of Overseers; the boards of trustees for Rider University, the New Jersey Inventors Congress and Hall of Fame, and the Independent College Fund of New Jersey; and on the boards of directors for the New Jersey State Chamber of Commerce and The Thomas Edison State College Foundation, Inc. The list goes on and on. The author of more than 100 papers and presentations, he also holds nine U.S. patents, and he has been honored by many organizations, including the Greater Princeton Area National Conference of Christians and Jews and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers. Little wonder that in 1994, Thomas Edison State College awarded him the honorary degree Doctor of Humane Letters.

Jim recalled meeting Dr. Pruitt at the annual Boy Scouts Good Guy Awards program. The Sarnoff Corporation was the 1991 Corporate Good Guy, and Dr. Pruitt was that year's Man of the Year. Jim continued the story: "I was on the podium receiving the award and giving a little pitch for Sarnoff. Then this fellow George Pruitt was introduced, and he mesmerized me and everybody else with this wonderful acceptance speech. He had found his old Boy Scout uniform, and he had someone there video taping the event because it was his father's birthday, and he wanted to send the video to his dad. He got his uniform out, and I was going to cry. He gave this wonderful speech, mentioning his dad, and I thought, 'What a guy!' Afterwards we talked a bit, and about a month later George called me up and came over. I decided I wanted to learn more from this George Pruitt. I became a foundation director because of George's charisma. It was a bonus to have the College be so interesting as well."

And that is how "people who need people" get together to become the luckiest people in the world.

Foundation Chair Nick Carnevale was asked what distinguishes the Thomas Edison Foundation from other eleemosynary organizations such as the Rotary or other service groups. He responded, "It is not that the foundation is different. If one strips away everything, the process is one of convincing the public that you are doing a greater good than the institution is capable of doing by itself as a group of individuals. In the beginning, the Foundation was primarily an advocacy group, but as it evolved, the need for raising public funds to strengthen the institution and to implement the margin-of-excellence concept became stronger.

"The Foundation will be raising larger sums of money in the future. Our sense of discretion has to be high. Our sense of honor has to be high, and we have to patrol ourselves as to how we spend these monies. Discretion, logic, honesty — it's going to have to be more acute as we go through these parallel teenage years. But it's exciting to watch new life growing and becoming stronger and stronger. The mystique of what we are still prevails, but that can be to our advantage if we know how to use it. We have a great future ahead of us."

According to Rita Novitt, "The quality of the College, what it has produced, the people who have come through as students, the people who are affiliated with the College — we should never forget that even though we don't have the ivory towers of Princeton and a three billion plus endowment — yet — our greatness is equal to theirs. We serve a different population, and



Paula Vaughan (left) and Dick Gillespie (right) hold their "Spirit of Edison Award" bowls as they pose with Dr. George Pruitt. The awards were given at the 1996 Gala.

our students are, more often than not, already accomplished in their fields. We are an institution of people who know how to serve people, and we are the ‘luckiest people in the world.’”

¹ “People” from the Broadway musical *Funny Girl* (1964), words by Bob Merrill, music by Jule Styne, c. 1963.

² The word “eleemosynary” flows easily in Nicholas Carnevale’s speech, and you know for certain that it is a natural part of his vocabulary. I was delighted to learn the word and proud that I could finally pronounce it.

X. To Dream The Impossible Dream

Dr. Deborah Wolfe was a founding member of the New Jersey State Board of Higher Education established in January 1967; she served continuously until 1994 when the Department of Higher Education was dissolved. Dr. Wolfe was present when the Board established Thomas A. Edison State College in 1972, and she aggressively supported many actions of the Board, which contributed to the development and recognition of Thomas Edison as a unique and quality institution for the adult learner in the national higher education system. Dr. Wolfe champions lifelong learning in all forms, and even her colleagues on the Board of Higher Education teased her for her expression, that "Education is from the womb to the tomb," which is one reason that she favors Thomas Edison and its students.

A frequent participant in the Thomas Edison commencement ceremonies, Dr. Wolfe commented that Thomas Edison graduates have dared to dream seemingly impossible dreams for themselves, and by fulfilling those dreams, they set new standards for transforming dreams into reality. These thoughts provoke a generalization for the so-called "typical" Thomas Edison student and graduate; most of them dream "The Impossible Dream." They "run where the brave dare not go." They keep trying when their "arms are too weary" and often with their "last ounce of courage." Different from the hit song *The Impossible Dream* from the Broadway musical *Man of La Mancha*, which proposes that the dream is to reach the "unreachable stars," the Thomas Edison dreamer has the clear and attainable goal of earning a college degree. It is the pathway, the years, the responsibilities, the pitfalls that make the dream seem so impossible, yet over 12,000 Thomas Edison graduates can sing from the mountain top that they have succeeded in their quest. Although many of their stories have appeared in other sections of this history, this chapter is exclusively about some of the students and graduates of Thomas Edison. These are but a few of the thousands of stories that could be told.

STUDENTS

Staff and faculty of Thomas Edison have always been certain that its students are the best in the nation. There is no data to support that as yet, but in her January 1980 letter to the Board of Trustees, second President Dr. Lorraine R. Matusak wrote: "Frequently we are questioned concerning the academic ability of our students. Apparently some individuals automatically form the judgment that if a student does not desire to attend a traditional campus, perhaps it is because he or she cannot compete. There is constant evidence to the contrary. One pertinent piece of information is that on the recent analysis of CLEP (the College Level Examination Program) exams administered through the state college system, it was noted that Edison College students average twenty to thirty points higher than other state college students."

Many Thomas Edison faculty members echo this observation as they recall their interactions with specific students. Dr. Dominick Iorio, former dean of the School of Liberal Arts and Science (now retired) at Rider University, told of Robert, a student who wrote brilliant assignments in the Guided Study course, "The Religious Quest." Dr. Iorio recalled: "I can't remember his last name, but he was really graduate level with tremendous perceptions about world religions. He had attended George Washington University earlier in his life, studying with one of the leading Muslim scholars in America. Coming back to college later on gave him an even more mature view of things. He was an exceptional student."

Dr. Iorio encounters many interesting students in this course. In 1995, he recommended a Thomas Edison student to the Princeton Theological Seminary. Dr. Iorio commented, "She was brilliant in her responses whether in her assignments or in discussions where she really pumped up the other students. She raised the level of expectations for me and the others."

Few professors have social outings with their students. With Thomas Edison students, that can be a logistical problem since they are not in one location during a course. Dr. Iorio managed it, however, with one of his "Religious Quest" groups. He told how this came about. "The students came together as a kind of community. They developed friendships and loyalties to



one another, and at the end of the course we had a picnic at the home of one of the students." Reflecting on the course, he added, "Their essays were thoughtful, well-considered, and very sophisticated. They were doing work far beyond the level of the textbooks, and we were doing all of this by computer."

Dr. Iorio sees Thomas Edison students as semipolished gems that need just a little more refining in certain subject areas. He sees his role as educator in the Socratic sense. "I am helping the student bring to life what they already know. The Edison student is first a pilot, a nurse, a police officer, a housewife, a business manager, and then a student. They are accomplished people, so we bring those experiences to bear in the ethics and religion courses. The Edison student has maturity and sophistication that are absent in the younger student."

Dr. Thomas Simonet, professor of communications at Rider University, commented that, "Maybe eighty to ninety percent of the Thomas Edison students are overqualified for the baccalaureate degree; the rest are certainly qualified." Dr. Simonet conducted many PreGraduation Conferences (PGCs) before they were discontinued in 1996. The PGC is a one hour oral conference during which the student discusses aspects of select topics in his or her area of specialization. Dr. Simonet stated that he took notes during the conferences he conducted because the Thomas Edison student often made remarks that he could later use in one of his own lectures at Rider University. On many occasions he uses Thomas Edison students as guest lecturers in one of his communications classes at Rider.

Having evaluated communications portfolios for Thomas Edison students, Dr. Simonet cited examples where the student applying for communications or public relations credits had experience well beyond the course need. He mentions one student who was vice president for public relations for a major supermarket chain, a \$3 million corporation. Another student is a public relations representative for Northwest Airlines. Recalling more of his association with that student, Dr. Simonet said, "On a number of occasions, I have had some of my Rider University students interview him. He is accredited by the Public Relations Society of America, which is kind of rare, and he was so accommodating to my students. When he was with Republic Airlines, he produced a video showing the many ways that computers were being used in public relations offices. This information came out in his PreGraduation Conference for Thomas Edison. I told him that my Rider students could benefit from the information, and he sent me a copy of the video, which I've used many times."

Dr. Simonet enjoyed reminiscing with Dr. Ruth McKeefery about specific students whose PreGraduation Conferences were done with him as faculty assessor. He recalled Dorothy (Dodi) Murphy Wagner, B.A. '81, who was completing her degree from the state of Washington when Dr. Simonet conducted her PGC. Now living in New Jersey, Dodi was a newspaper reporter and public relations specialist during her years as a student; she earned fifty-four credits through portfolio assessment in many areas, including fund-raising. Dr. Simonet considers Dodi one of the many "self-directed and overqualified" students he has enjoyed working with through the years.

He mentioned many other outstanding "overqualified" students including an Hispanic journalist who worked in a summer program for minority high school students with Dr. Simonet, a "very overqualified" screenwriter, a senior account executive for a major broadcasting corporation, and a writer who works for the *Miami Herald*. Dr. Simonet cites John Holtz, B.A. '87, as the strongest example of all. He says, "John was the director of public relations at an important New Jersey council. He has been a guest speaker for four or five of my classes at Rider and has almost become an adjunct professor here. He gives a wonderful presentation on how to interview a public relations spokesperson and how a public relations spokesperson can present his or her side."

Dr. Simonet also commented that many of the Thomas Edison students he has met have become friends, people from across the nation whom he might never have met otherwise. He concluded, "It impresses me in two ways: one is the quality of the students who are attracted to Edison, and two, the generosity of these people in helping other students such as my students at Rider."

The Thomas Edison student not only dreams "the impossible dream," but by helping others with their dreams, "the world will be better for this," as the song also states.

Dr. John H. TenBrook, business professor at Camden County College, marveled at the diversity of work experience among the students he mentors in the Distance and Independent Adult Learning (DIAL) courses. He recounted some of them. "I've had students from all across the United States and Canada. I had a pipeline worker from Alaska, a marine in Hawaii, about two dozen airline pilots, and several who were incarcerated who could neither initiate nor receive phone calls. In those cases, we had to rely on written communication, but I urged them to elaborate on their answers to questions in writing to ensure that they were conveying the message they really intended." Dr. TenBrook recalls William Byrne, B.S. '95, an airline pilot who was completing his baccalaureate degree so he could go to law school. "His work was superb. He went to painstaking lengths to do the homework, and his examinations were in a class by themselves. I never met him face-to-face, but when he asked me to write a letter of recommendation for him, we were well acquainted, and his work was so outstanding that I was pleased to write on his behalf."

Dr. Thomas J. Grites, assistant to the vice president for Academic Affairs at Stockton State College, recalled his favorite student example, a woman who sought his counsel on the fastest way to complete an associate degree. At the time, she had three children, had accumulated only nine credits from Ocean County College, and wanted to move more quickly toward her goal of becoming an attorney. Dr. Grites referred her to Thomas Edison and urged her to take as many examinations as possible because he believed that to be the fastest way. The student returned six months later with her associate degree in hand. She transferred to Stockton for her baccalaureate degree, went on to Rutgers Camden Law School, and is now a practicing attorney. He commented, "I keep her transcript in my desk to show to potential students what hard work and determination can accomplish. I've used her as an example many, many times."

Dr. Robert Thompson, professor emeritus in osteopathic sciences at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, talks about some of his students who stand out. One woman from Arkansas left an indelible impression with him. He recalled, "I usually call the students at the beginning of the Guided Study course to learn something about them before the lessons start coming in. I asked her why she was working for her degree. I'll never forget her telling me that she wanted her children to remember her for something other than being a school cook. Of the over 300 students I've worked with, she stands out because of the candor of her answer. She was about forty miles from the nearest library, and getting her work done was very difficult for her."

Dr. Thompson also recalled an incarcerated student who is an extraordinary artist as well as student. During the day, he teaches other convicts how to use word processing equipment. When he is released some years from now, he has been promised a position at one of the fine arts schools in Baltimore.

Commenting on a 1995 class of nineteen students enrolled in a Guided Study course with him, Dr. Thompson observed that four of the nineteen were nurses, and three of them were pursuing their baccalaureate degrees in order to apply to law school. He added that another of his students drives an eighteen-wheel truck all over the United States. "His strongest characteristic is his enthusiasm," said Dr. Thompson. "He does not have a typewriter; he must write to me on lined paper, and I have to accept that there are things that he just can't do, given his circumstances. He may not win a Pulitzer Prize, but his infectious enthusiasm and his hard work and determination make him an admirable student. He spends days and nights in that rig, and I appreciate how hard it is for him to keep up with his studies."

Dr. Ruth McKeefery, dean emeritus of the College, was a spokesperson and advocate for Thomas Edison students for almost twenty years before her retirement, but she is particularly proud of the students who are selected to be the Arnold Fletcher Award recipients. The Arnold Fletcher Scholars, as President George Pruitt refers to them, are chosen from the graduating class each

year based on criteria established by the Academic Council. *Who's Who Among Students in American Colleges and Universities* lists the Arnold Fletcher Award recipients in their yearly directory and gives each one a certificate of congratulations from the publisher. The award is given in honor of Dr. Arnold Fletcher, first academic vice president of Thomas Edison, who also served twice as acting president.

According to Dr. Patricia Sparks, current vice provost and academic dean, beginning with the 1997 graduating class, select students will be recognized for acceptance in the Lambda Tau Chapter of Alpha Sigma Lambda, a national honor society for adult students. Thomas Edison is a charter member of Alpha Sigma Lambda. Dr. Sparks expects to induct the first Thomas Edison members at the twenty-fifth anniversary commencement.

Thomas Edison Foundation Director Dr. James E. Carnes, president and CEO of the Sarnoff Corporation, was commencement speaker and honorary degree recipient at the 1994 graduation ceremonies. Jim told an interesting story about a graduating student. To maintain his pilot's license, he has to have a currency rating with a certain number of flight hours. Jim located a flight instructor named Scott McVeigh and flew a number of times with him. At the 1993 commencement, Jim was seated in the front row on the platform along with other foundation members; he listened as the students announced their names before walking across the stage. His recollection of the rest of the story revealed his excitement: "I'm sitting there, and I hear this name Scott McVeigh, and there's my flight instructor getting his degree. I jump up out of my seat and say, 'Scott! Scott!' and as he came by, I shook his hand. We never connected about the College when we were flying together, so neither of us knew the other was associated with Thomas Edison, yet there we were. It was great."

Mr. David Hulteen, director of the State Approving Agency for College Programs, Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs, talked about the courage of some of the Thomas Edison students. Speaking of the 1995 commencement ceremonies, he commented, "I knew one of the graduating students very well. She worked in the Military and Veterans' Affairs Office at Atlantic Community College. Several years ago, she had an inoperable brain tumor. Well, medical science developed some new processes while she had this condition, and finally the doctors were able to operate on her. Until that time, she had gone on disability and had to discontinue her studies. When she recovered from the surgery, she finished her associate degree at Atlantic and transferred to Edison, graduating this year with her baccalaureate and going on for her masters. She had such courage. I was so proud of her."

Dr. Sallyann Hanson, computer science professor at Mercer County Community College, also spoke of courage when referring to one of her students in a Guided Study course. Dr. Hanson commented, "I talked with this woman a lot because she seemed to need a lot of encouragement. She was taking care of her husband who was dying of cancer, and the student was trying to complete her degree so that she would be able to support herself when her husband was gone. She was under such stress. It was extremely hard for her to get the assignments done on time. She had great inner strength to do all of that at one time."

Thomas Edison Program Advisor Ann Bielawski told of two students who really dreamed the impossible dream. Ann said, "People used to ask me how long it would take to get their degree, and I used to have a rather pat answer, such as 'It all depends,' until one spring when I counseled two women who wanted to complete seventy-four credits in five months. One wanted to go to law school, and the other wanted to enter a masters program. Both needed to be finished by September 1. I told them that it simply was not possible. They were doing a number of different portfolios in different subject fields, and logistically it couldn't be done. Well, they did not accept my opinion, and both processed their portfolios through the Assessment Office. I didn't work with them on that part of the process, but come September 1, they both had their seventy-four credits and were graduated. It took courage, faith, and a whole lot of hard work, but they proved me wrong. Now when I'm asked a similar question, I say it is highly unlikely that a degree can be

completed in such a short period of time, but when an *Edison* student sets out to do the impossible, I serve best by getting out of the way."

Irene Bentz, a program advisor in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree, shared the story of a BSN student who had become inactive. Irene recalled that BSN staff were contacting all inactive students to see if they needed help in returning to their degree programs. When Irene contacted this student's home, she learned that the student had passed away. Her children told Irene that their mother's dream was for her children to see that she could overcome the many difficulties she had experienced and could complete her degree at Thomas Edison. Although she did not reach her impossible dream, the children told Irene that their mother's determination and courage set an example that will influence the rest of their lives.

Ida Hammond, A.A. '77, B.A. '79, learned about Thomas Edison shortly after it began in 1972. She was working full-time and had one daughter in college and a son in elementary school. Ida and her husband William are staunch supporters of their children's education, but both agreed that it was time for Ida to get the college degree she had postponed to raise a family. She and the two children carried on a friendly competition for good grades, and William took on many of the household chores so that Ida could study or go to the library. It was a family affair.

Ida quickly came to the attention of Academic Vice President Dr. Arnold Fletcher who asked her to be a student representative to the Academic Council. Later, President Dr. Lorraine Matusak discovered Ida's charm and her ability to serve as a good spokesperson for the College. She asked Ida to participate in an interview about Thomas Edison on the Philadelphia television program "Channel Six for Perspective New Jersey."

When the Office of Alumni Affairs was created around 1983, then Director Annette Singer urged Ida to become active in alumni work. Being active led to leadership roles on several alumni committees and eventually to becoming president of the Alumni Association. As president she served on the Board of Directors of the Thomas Edison State College Foundation, Inc. When her term as president of the association ended, current President George Pruitt asked Ida to serve on the Board of Trustees. Ida accepted and has come full circle with her alma mater. She has surely dreamed the impossible dream and continues to encourage others as they dream.

Perhaps the most widely known student was Edward Stitt who earned an associate degree from Thomas Edison and was working toward his baccalaureate degree when he passed away. Mr. Stitt was eighty-seven when he was decreed the oldest undergraduate college student in the nation. In February 1985, the Disney Channel launched a search for the oldest undergraduate and discovered him. Their search was part of a promotional campaign for the movie *The Undergrads*, which starred Art Carney as a sixty-nine year-old student. Mr. Stitt's college education began in 1916 when he took courses at Georgetown University Law Center. He did not continue in formal education for many years but was always the student. He was a licensed commercial pilot, a retired executive officer of the Navy, and the successful owner and manager of his own business, but his return to the classroom waited until the 1950s when he took classes at Rider College (now Rider University). Stopping out again for many years, Stitt enrolled with Thomas Edison and engaged his studies with renewed vigor. He was preparing for courses on the history of Africa and statistical theory in economics and business when he was interviewed in May 1985.

Mr. Stitt's award received international press from as far away as the *China Post* as the Disney Channel promoted its movie. He received a plaque for, a \$1,000 gift, and a trip to Walt Disney World and the Epcot Center in Florida. A subsequent award came to him from the New Jersey Association for Lifelong Learning, which declared Mr. Stitt the Outstanding New Jersey College Student of the Year.

As mentioned in Chapter Nine, beginning in 1994, the Thomas A. Edison State College



Ed Stitt (at age 75), AA '85, and Dr. George Pruitt hold the Disney Channel certificate given to Mr. Stitt for being the oldest undergraduate.

Foundation, Inc., began awarding Spirit of Edison awards at the annual gala dinner-dance. Two awards are given each year: one to a member of the community and one to a Thomas Edison alumnus or alumna. The 1994 award went to Frank Hawrylo, B.S. '79, former alumni president. The 1995 alumni award went to Steven E. De Souza, B.A. '76. He is known for writing witty action movies and writing them quickly but has had a diverse career in print, broadcast media, screenwriting, and directing. A native of Philadelphia, where his parents still reside, Steven now lives in California. His writing credits include the feature films *Die Hard*, *Die Hard 2*, *48 Hours*, and the *Flintstones* as well as television episodes of *The Six Million Dollar Man* and *Knight Rider*. He directed MTV's *Halloween* and HBO's *Tales from the Crypt*.

The 1996 Spirit of Edison alumni award went to Paula Vaughan, BSBA '90, a strong supporter of the College and president-elect of the Alumni Association where she is a member of the Major Donor Advisory Committee, vice president of the Member Relations Committee, and co-chair of the Regional Meetings Committee.

On the job, Paula is a vice president for Prudential where her current assignment is in Change Management. When she enrolled at Thomas Edison in 1989, she had completed about two-and-one-half-years work toward a degree — work that she began in the '60s. She pursued degree completion with the same enthusiasm and intensity that she has for everything in her life and completed the remaining requirements in less than one year.

Paula travels extensively for Prudential. She met former Director of Alumni Affairs Annette Singer at a conference on leadership roles for women where she volunteered to get involved with the Alumni Association and has not stopped since. In addition to her work and her alumni activities, she serves as vice president of the Newark Emergency Services for Families. Recently Paula was selected as a member of the 1996 class of Leadership America, a national nonprofit organization that recognizes, educates, and connects accomplished and diverse women to increase their individual and collective impact globally. Only one-hundred women are selected each year.

Former academic counselor Angela Fontan, talking from her home in Florida, recalled working with Mary Wyckoff, B.A. '81, published author, culinary artist, and herbalist. Mary completed portfolio assessments in several areas related to a cookbook which she later published. Invited to Mary's home for a private demonstration of her cooking artistry, Angela observed that far more was involved in Mary's cooking than just knowing what ingredients to use, what amount, and the dietary value of each item. Angela asked her how she knew about certain herbs and where they originate and how she learned to grow her own. Mary explained how she researched every aspect of her cooking, reading history books on many countries, studying botany, and experimenting in her kitchen. This pushing and probing for the roots of Mary's knowledge led to portfolio assessments in other areas. Angela also remembered their discussions about how to attract butterflies to the backyard and what plants to grow to minimize pests, techniques Angela uses in her own beautiful backyard to this day.

A sampling of other Thomas Edison alumni authors includes the following:

- Mary Wyckoff, B.A. '81, published the cookbook *The World of Cooking*.
- Marco Meirovitz, B.A. '81, along with former staff member, Dr. Paul Jacobs, wrote *Brain Muscle Builders: Games to Increase Your Natural Intelligence*. Marco's latest publication is a new thinking skills program called *ThinkAbility*. Co-authored with Dr. Jacobs and Ms. Norma Levine, this work contains a teacher's manual, a student workbook, and a game kit. Another book co-authored with Dr. Jacobs is *Visual Thinking: Entertaining Activities to Increase Intelligence*.
- Willard Randall, B.A. '82, published *A Little Revenge: Benjamin Franklin and His Son*, a dual biography of Ben Franklin and his son William.

- James C. Morgan, A.A. '75, published *Slavery in the United States: Four Views*.
- Dorothy Masom, B.A. '79, published *Encaustic Painting*, which traces the history of that art. Dorothy is an accomplished artist as well. She received the 1984 Interfaith Forum on Religion, Art, and Architecture Award for her fifteen encaustic paintings of "The Stations of the Cross."
- Robert W. McGee, BSBA '83, published the book *Accounting for Software*.
- Alfred A. Curran, A.A. '81, published the book *German Immigration to Pennsylvania: 1683-1933*.
- Selene Z. Christian, A.A. '88, contributed to the *American Poetry Anthology*.
- Judith Lasch, B.A. '86, authored and published many books, including *The Teen Model Book*.
- Joseph Risse, B.A. '82, published *The Complete Electronics Career Guide*.
- Joyce G. Stecher, B.A. '82, received the Golden Poet Award for 1989 for her poem "Of Two Minds," published in the anthology *Great Poems of the Western World*.
- James J. Carter, A.A. '74, BA '75, published *Nasty People*.
- Evelyn Clarke Mott, BSBA '86, published the children's books *Steam Train Ride* and *Balloon Ride*. Both books include Evelyn's own photography to illustrate the stories.
- Lily Solmssen, B.A. '92, is an internationally recognized photographer. Now a photo librarian at the United Nations, her work has appeared in *Modern Photography* and many other publications, including those of the International Labor Office and the World Health Organization.
- Steven Levicoff, B.A. '87, published his fifth book, *Street Smarts: A Survival Guide to Personal Evangelism and the Law*. Another book, *Christian Counseling and the Law*, was a finalist for the Gold Medallion Book Award.
- Lea Bayers Rapp, B.A. '89, has received many journalism awards and is a contributor to the parody *Life's Little Destruction Book*.
- Barbara G. Dan, B.A. '86, is a novelist and the founder of Eden Publishing Co. in Nevada. Barbara wrote, "All this because I heard about Thomas Edison and decided to pursue my dreams when most people are thinking of hanging it up or settling for second best."
- Marilyn B. Peterson, B.S. '91, who has co-authored other books, had her first book published on her own. *Applications in Criminal Analysis* is a textbook for law enforcement and criminal justice courses.
- Dr. Michael D. Reynolds, B.A. '80, has written many articles and co-authored the book *Observe Eclipses*, an astronomy book for lab use.
- O. Edwin French, A.A. '74, has authored two books, including *Clinical Ladders for Nurses and Other Healthcare Professionals*. He consults and lectures extensively throughout the United States.
- Jean Quinn Manzo, B.A. '95, is a first-time author with the publication of *Surviving Without a Secretary*. Jean is a senior copywriter for McGraw-Hill's professional book clubs and a computer applications instructor for Middlesex County Vocational Technical Schools.

These are just a few of the published authors who are Thomas Edison students or graduates; the names have been gleaned from historical records, the College's quarterly newspaper *Invention*, other Thomas Edison publications, and interviews.

Not to be outdone by authors, the Thomas Edison student might also be a licensed patent holder, an artist, a dancer, a politician, a day-care provider, a sculptor, a policeman, or one of hundreds of other professions. Listed below are additional samplings of student and alumni accomplishments as reported to the College.

- Letty P. Thoms, B.A. '90, recently exhibited a portrait of Count Basie at the Monmouth County (NJ) Museum in Lincroft. This painting is one of a series, *Expressions of Jazz Musicians*, consisting of performers from the 1940s to the present.
- Dr. Carolyn Houss, B.A. '78, intended to enter the field of medical illustration but became so intrigued by her studies in science, she went on to graduate school in osteopathic medicine. In 1984, she was elected chief intern by her fellow interns at Memorial General Hospital in Union, New Jersey.
- Barbara Mann, B.A. '84, is Fort Myers, Florida's first lady of the arts. An accomplished pianist, church organist, and choir director, Barbara has been a leader in cultural development there. Founding officer of the Community Concert Association of Fort Myers in 1948 and a strong promoter of the arts for the next thirty-five years, Barbara was honored when a new concert hall was named for her, the Barbara B. Mann Performing Arts Hall, a 1,700-seat, world-class performing hall.
- Ruth Olinsky, B.A. '84, poet and artist, has exhibited in many juried shows. Ruth was one of several artists who exhibited in the 1981 Thomas Edison student art show held at the Kelsey Building in Trenton, New Jersey.
- Patricia T. Tindall, B.A. '80, is another well-known New Jersey artist who exhibited in the 1981 art show.
- Aida Mejias, B.A. '85, works primarily with oils and is well-known for her "monk" paintings. Aida exhibited in the 1981 art show at the College.
- Carole A. Nerlino, BSBA '86, hosted her own radio show answering callers' questions concerning personal finance and investment strategies. At that time, she was a vice president and certified financial planner at Shearson Lehman. She has been a member of the Thomas Edison Foundation and is currently on the Board of Trustees.
- Elizabeth Girvan Lindsay, B.S. '80, is one of a select few women in Florida to hold a contractor's license. Elizabeth owns her own construction and interior design firm in Sarasota.
- Jacqueline Calnan, B.A. '90, believes that Thomas Edison gave her the self-discipline needed for independent learning. A producer for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Jacqueline did her Masters in Public Administration at Harvard. She loves her work, which on occasion has taken her to a morning seminar with economist Robert Reich, lunch with Michael Dukakis, and dinner with the Czechoslovakian Foreign Minister, all in one day.
- Larry A. LaSota, A.A. '73, a member of the College's first graduating class, is a sound mixer who has worked on television shows such as *Major Dad* and *Doctor, Doctor*. He was nominated for an Emmy in the sound mixer category for his work on *Designing Women*.
- Garry H. Ritchie, B.A. '79, at last report, is vice president and general manager of WYOU-TV in the Scranton-Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania area.
- Aviva Goldman, B.A. '90, has sung with Placido Domingo and was offered a contract with the Metropolitan Opera Company. She was a freedom fighter in Israel's War for Independence. A noted gourmet cook, she has published four best-selling cookbooks. In 1984 she was the only layperson to address a major congress in Paris on the needs of the disabled. A Holocaust survivor, she is conversant in fourteen languages, and she raises hundreds of thousands of dollars for medical, musical, and other causes throughout the world.

- Ron Thorn, B.S. '90, wrote to Registrar Gregory Dye, that "Amazingly enough, I will have completed my undergraduate degree in only five terms: those of Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, and Bush."
- Havelin D. St. John, A.A. '87, was granted a patent for his invention, the "Magnetically Linked Theft-Sensing System." The invention is designed to deter theft of electrical and/or electronic equipment in home offices and businesses.
- Sisters Renee Keefe and Denise Thwing, BSN '91, graduated together in the Bachelor of Nursing program. One day Kathy, their younger sister, supported them by bringing lunch while they studied. Renee recalled, "Our reaction was to forget the food. We needed a patient to practice on." Within minutes, Kathy was in an old nightgown, being examined.
- Al Johnston, A.S. '90, was granted a patent for his invention, the Safe-T-Box Carrier.
- Robert Hovey, B.S. '87, was the first graduate of the Thomas Edison cooperative program with PSE&G. He graduated with a specialization in nuclear engineering technology.
- Joseph Kulak, A.A. '92, is a licensed builder in the construction trades and teaches carpentry, general maintenance, and other trade skills at the Mercer County Vocational Technical Schools. He is active in the Alumni Association, currently serving on the Board of Directors.
- Michael K. Hynes, B.S. '89, was elected president of the Air Line Pilots Association, Mutual Aid Association, the world's largest pilots' union with over 43,000 members. Hynes was the first nonunion member of the Mutual Aid Association and was appointed to the Board of Directors in 1990 and to additional terms thereafter.
- Owen J. Ravino, B.A. '93, received the Outstanding Professional Achievement Award from the Alumni Association in 1994. Owen was instrumental in developing the wonder drug L-asparaginase for use in patients with leukemia and other cancers. In 1990, he received the Harry Faulkrod Award as the Science Humanitarian of the Year from Merck & Co., Inc.
- Michael Arsics, currently enrolled and active, is a seventy-five-year-old B.S. student who is single-handedly selling Thomas Edison to the aviation industry. A licensed aviation mechanic, he also holds an FAA airframe and power plant mechanics certification. He is a student representative to the B.S. Degree Advisory Committee.
- John Beall, B.A. '76, dropped out of high school and began his own work in electronics in 1958. In 1970 he founded his own company manufacturing electronic switching systems. He earned his Bachelor of Arts degree from Thomas Edison in less than one year, using testing and individual assessment. Now retired to the southwest, John remains an avid supporter of the College.
- Elizabeth Lindsay, B.S. '80, has been named chair of the Board of Regents in Tallahassee, Florida. Elizabeth is an interior designer and a partner in a cattle, citrus, and vegetable business in the Sarasota area.
- Carl T. Buscher, A.A. '76, B.A. '80, is communications manager of the Construction Financial Management Association as well as editor of its magazine *Building Profits*.
- Howard Tsvi Bisk, B.A. '85, started an alumni chapter in the Middle East/Mediterranean area. He invites all graduates residing in Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, Egypt,



Alumni honored for their service to Thomas Edison State College gather for a group photograph in front of the Kelsey Building. Front row, (l to r) Harold Frankel (AA '83, BA '85), Ruth Olinsky (BA '84), Ida Hammond (AA '77, BA '79), Frank Hawrylo (BS '79); second row, Cecile Caruso (AA '84), Barbara Wallace (BS '83), Walter Keller, Alyce Kambis, Mildred Koslow (BS '83), Norma Horton (BSBA '83), Richard Reigle (BS '86); back row, Dr. Richard Hansen, Vice President for Public Affairs; Annette Singer, Director of Alumni Affairs; and Al Quinton (BA '82).



From l to r: Patricia Danielson, AA '73, and former Trustee; Attorney General Cary W. Edwards; Pearl Bailey; Dr. George A. Pruitt; and Assemblyman John S. Watson at the 1987 Commencement

Israel, and the gulf states to contact him at Rehov Alterman 15/13, Kfar Saba, Israel 44228.

COMMENCEMENTS

Much has been said about the uniqueness of the Thomas Edison commencement ceremonies. Although traditional regalia is used, and all the traditional pomp and ceremony are provided, each year the ceremony becomes a warm, lively, even raucous event from the moment someone dares to call out, "Yeah, Mom!" or "Go Grandpa!" From that point on, the audience hoots, claps, and cries as the graduates one-by-one call out their own names before walking across the stage. No one wants to miss commencement. It is the highlight of the year.

The first commencement was held in the New Jersey State Museum auditorium. Documents differ as to the number of graduates for that year, but the program book lists exactly seventy names. Chancellor of Higher Education Ralph A. Dungan was commencement speaker, and Anna Marie J. Gentile of Rumson, New Jersey, was the student speaker. The date was June 15, 1973, and the only degree granted was the Associate in Arts.

The second commencement was the first in which academic regalia was worn. The ceremony was again at the museum auditorium and continued there for one more year. For several years, President Brown invited Mrs. John (Madeleine Edison) Sloane, a Thomas Edison descendent, to attend the commencement ceremonies to no avail. Mrs. Sloane lived in West Orange, New Jersey, where the Thomas Edison Laboratory site is also located. Mr. Paul J. Christiansen, then president of the Charles Edison Fund, arranged for the 1976 commencement ceremonies to be held at the historic site in West Orange, and Mrs. Sloane was finally able to attend. In 1977, the College moved the annual ceremony to October; it remains a fall event to this day.

Every commencement is memorable, but some stand out more than others. In 1979, the New Jersey Historical Commission celebrated the 100th anniversary of the invention of the first successful incandescent light by Thomas Alva Edison. The commission presented the Edison Centennial Award honoring an individual and organization that excelled in the field of electricity through scientific endeavors or Edison historic research. Thomas Edison graduate, Frank Hawrylo, B.S. '79, who worked at RCA, was presented the award.

The 1979 commencement was distinctive also because it was the first year that an honorary degree was given. Governor Brendan T. Byrne was the degree recipient, and the ceremony was moved to the War Memorial Building in Trenton. For the first two years, there was only one student speaker representing the associate degree graduates. In 1975, there were graduates in both associate and baccalaureate degrees, so the program featured a student speaker for both levels. Each year after that until 1986, there were two student speakers, one each for the associate and baccalaureate degree graduates. In 1986, the College discontinued the associate degree speaker.

At the 1981 commencement, the College hosted an Edison exhibit, "Edison and the Electrical Age: 100 Years," featuring artifacts, photos, and working models of inventions on loan from the Edison Laboratories in West Orange. In 1982, Alumni President Bruce Hubscher, B.A. '76, welcomed the new graduates into the Alumni Association. It was the first year that the alumni president participated in the commencement ceremonies. That same year, the organ went out in Memorial Hall. Registrar Tom McCarthy urged Vice President Arnold Fletcher to, "Get on the piano and make some noise. Just bang away. No one will pay any attention until the service starts anyway." Dr. Fletcher did far more than "bang away." The assembled audience was treated to magnificent classical music as they gathered in their seats; Dr. Fletcher provided an impromptu fifteen-minute concert. No one can remember whether or not he also played the processional and

recessional, but it seems quite likely.

Another first took place in 1984 when the College alma mater was presented for the first time. Music and lyrics were written by Roy Meriwether, noted jazz pianist with fourteen albums to his credit. Currently with a new release called *Opening Night* on Fahrenheit Records, Roy was a child prodigy who began performing at age four and has played to audiences around the world. His extended work *Black Snow*, supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, depicts the history of black Americans and has been hailed as a milestone in the history of jazz composition. The College is fortunate to have had Roy as a friend and supporter over the years as he chose to recognize the uniqueness of Thomas Edison State College by creating its alma mater.

The 1986 commencement was unique for three reasons: 1) it was moved to Richardson Auditorium on the Princeton University Campus, 2) there was only one student speaker, and 3) it was the first year the Arnold Fletcher Awards were presented. Eight students were award recipients that year. Brigadier General Charles E. Yeager was commencement speaker and honorary degree recipient.

Returning to the War Memorial in 1987, the first Distinguished Service Awards were presented to a founding member of the Board of Trustees, Mrs. Eleanor Spiegel, and to Assemblyman John S. Watson following his retirement from public office. The Institute for Public Policy was later named after Mr. Watson in honor of his many years of support to the College and his extensive community service. That year also brought famous singer and humanitarian Ms. Pearl Bailey to Trenton as an honorary degree recipient. Ms. Bailey spoke briefly, telling of her own return to college after raising her family. She concluded her remarks with spirit, saying, "Go for it, honey!" She then delighted the assembly with a rousing rendition of "Hello, Dolly" from the Broadway musical in which she had starred for many years.

The 1988 commencement featured then Governor Thomas H. Kean as speaker and honorary degree recipient. Members of the platform party particularly remember the occasion because Governor Kean was supposed to leave immediately upon receiving his honorary degree to go to another engagement. His guards and aides were off stage frantically signaling to him, but he refused to move. He had become so engrossed in the students as they came across the stage and the audience calling out in support that he stayed to shake hands with each graduate and only grudgingly left at the closing moments.

Distinguished Service Awards went to trustees Robert H. Taylor in 1989, Rita Novitt in 1990, to Patricia Danielson in 1991, to retiring staff member James Humphrey in 1992, and to trustee Christian Yegen in 1993, but it was the 1992 commencement that made international news and had more coverage than did Edward Stitt with the Disney Channel story. That was the year that Thomas Edison, the man, received an earned degree. Commencement speaker was Dr. Reese Jenkins, director and editor of the Thomas A. Edison Papers; Dr. Jenkins also directed the project that compiled and documented the vast amount of work produced by Edison during his lifetime. College staff, faculty, and scholars reviewed all the documentation with the same rigorous evaluation that all student documents receive in the assessment process. Mr. Edison's degree was accepted by his great-grandson, Barry Sloane. It was the first time that a regionally accredited college has awarded a degree to an individual based entirely on portfolios assembled and evaluated after his death. Dr. Jenkins told the graduates, "You have in your graduating class one of the most influential people who ever lived."

In 1994, commencement was moved to the Crescent Shriners's Auditorium in Trenton while the War Memorial Building underwent major repair. In 1997, however, it will be held in the



Dr. George A. Pruitt expressing thanks to jazz pianist Roy Meriwether, composer of the College's alma mater.



(from l to r) Dr. George A. Pruitt, Brigadier General Charles (Chuck) Yeager, Major General Frank Gerard, Trenton Mayor Arthur Holland, and Princeton Mayor Barbara B. Sigmund at the 1986 Commencement.

Princeton University Chapel to honor the bond between the two institutions as Thomas Edison celebrates its twenty-fifth birthday.

THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

The December 1976 minutes of the Board of Trustees mark the first mention of an official Alumni Association. President Brown announced that a small group of alumni met at the Princeton Holiday Inn to organize and elect officers. Gordon Beaver, B.A. '75, was elected president of the association. This small group struggled for several years until the College developed better systems for the storage and retrieval of alumni data. The presidency passed to John Beall, B.A. '76, who lived in New Jersey at that time, then to Carl Buscher, A.A. '76 and B.A. '80, and to Hugh Crosson, B.A. '76. The Alumni Association

was incorporated in 1979 as a private, nonprofit corporation; however, developing the membership and creating a presence continued to be a challenge. Finally in 1982, college staff and the Alumni Association developed stronger cooperative relationships, and Alumni President Bruce Hubscher, B.A. '76, was invited to participate in the commencement ceremony to bring greetings to the new graduates and to induct them into the Alumni Association. The Office of Alumni Affairs was created with Annette Singer as director. She remained director for thirteen years until 1996.

Following Bruce Hubscher as President of the Alumni Association was Frank Hawrylo, B.S. '79, Alfred Quinton, B.A. '82, and Norma Horton, BSBA '83. Computerization at the College, alumni surveys, and strong leadership brought the association to new heights as the program expanded. Under Norma Horton's leadership, new levels were established in alumni giving through the annual Phonathon. Norma established an endowed scholarship in her name through the Thomas Edison Foundation. It was her impossible dream that the Alumni Association might one day have its own permanent building where members could meet for business, training programs, or social gatherings. Although that has not yet happened, the dream is not forgotten.

Mildred Koslow, B.S. '83, followed Norma Horton as president of the association. As each president built on the strengths of the previous presidents, the fellowship grew, and the association began to take on a life of its own, sponsoring financial planning sessions and other kinds of training programs in addition to fund-raising through the College Foundation, mentoring with enrolled students, and general support of the College at all public events. The hat passed to Ida Hammond, B.A. '79, under whose leadership the association revised its mission statement to more accurately reflect its purpose and its ability to assist the College in long-range planning. The revised mission was approved at the September 1992 meeting.

This was an important step for the association; it established a unified statement of purpose that clarified what was to be accomplished if the association worked in tandem with the College instead of separately from it. The statement affirmed that the Alumni Association was created to provide a vehicle for the College's graduates to promote and advance the well-being of the College in the achievement of its mission and purpose. In addition to serving as an advocate and conducting financial campaigns, the Association provides opportunities for volunteerism well beyond the annual Phonathon.

Ida Hammond's tenure as president was followed by Jane Coult, B.A. '86, Adele Ellis, B.A. '94, and current President Paul Hays, B.S. '89.

Reviewing several stages in the growth of the association, Annette Singer recalled that each president brought new insight and stronger leadership to the group, but it was under Norma Horton's

leadership that the by-laws were revised from a nine-member board that met twice a year to a twenty-six member board that met six times a year. More frequent meetings inspired stronger friendships and closer ties with the College. This was most prominent in the annual Phonathon, which began as a *staff* event supported by the Alumni Association. As Norma Horton and each succeeding president worked with Annette and Tom Streckewald, development director at the time, the Phonathon gradually became an *alumni* event supported by college staff. The full alumni board participates in at least one session of the Phonathon, and the board pledges full support monetarily as well.

Annette recalled the beginnings of the PHT awards and banquet. PHT stands for Putting Him/Her Through. The PHT award is a certificate many of the graduates give to members of their families or friends who have been particularly supportive while they were going after their "impossible dream." Annette told this story: "John McNamara, BSBA '87, wrote the Alumni Association saying that he wanted to recognize his wife who had been so helpful and encouraging to him. He sent a copy of a certificate used by another institution, asking if the College could do something similar. I gave it to the board to consider, and Ida Hammond took charge of it. She designed it, researched it, and got Dr. Pruitt's support for the printing of the certificates.

"In November 1987, we invited all past graduates who wanted to honor their families to a champagne brunch at the College. We were stunned by the response. Prudence Hall in the Kelsey Building was packed and spilling over into the Board Room. People came from all different years of graduation, and most of them brought their honorees. The alumni kept saying, 'Don't tell so and so. He doesn't know he's getting this award.' And that's how we began giving the PHT certificates. Now they are incorporated into the alumni banquet held after commencement each year, and the graduates still try to keep it a surprise for those who have supported them in their quest."

Former trustee and board chair George Hanford echoed the sentiment and excitement engendered by the PHT certificate concept. He believes the PHT part of the banquet ceremonies to be one of the most exciting moments of the day because it takes far more support, patience, endurance, and love to help an adult achieve an educational goal than it does a seventeen to twenty-one-year-old student. Seeing the graduates honor their families and friends in that way puts a capstone on the commencement day activities.

As Annette Singer reviewed the names of the current Board of Directors of the Alumni Association, she repeatedly referred to them as brilliant, articulate, committed, motivated people who would do anything to help, whether making phone calls at the Phonathon or stuffing envelopes for a regional meeting. "Whatever you do," she continued, "do not waste their time. They want to be involved in a meaningful activity. It could be painting walls or scrubbing floors — the job doesn't matter. There just has to be a good reason and that they're contributing something to the College."

One of the more recent activities of the association is the development of regional seminars. Held primarily in the tri-state area, enthusiasm is high, and participation increases as the word gets out. Emphasis is also placed on out-of-state meetings; a number have been held in California, Washington, D.C., Arizona, Colorado, Michigan, New Mexico, North Carolina, Georgia, and anywhere college staff might be.

I hosted one such meeting in Scottsdale, Arizona where I was vacationing. The meeting was held at a hotel convenient for the fifteen people who agreed to come. Unfortunately, and unbeknownst to any of the participants, Scottsdale was hosting its annual horse show and parade the same day. About one hour before the scheduled time, all streets were closed to traffic, and only six people made it through to attend the brunch: Irene Wazzan, ASM '92; James Heyen, B.S. '94; Leslie Wright, student; Joseph Ashley, BSBA '93; Geoffery Reid, student; and Joseph Wilmet, BSBA '82. It was enjoyable, and all stayed long enough for the streets to reopen.



Former alumni president John Beall, BA '76.



Former alumni president Norma Horton, BSBA '83.

Not all out-of-state alumni gatherings are hosted by staff. One notable event was hosted by former trustee and now foundation director, Rita Novitt. Meeting at the home of Audrey and Bill Maehl in Santa Fe, New Mexico, Rita talked with Octavio and Eileen Vela, B.A. '95; Garron Christi, B.A. '93; Rose Gibbs, A.A. '79, and Charles Gibbs; and Mary (Meg) Gregory, B.A. '87. Meg had at one time lived in New Jersey, which was when she became a student. Her strongest memory of working toward her degree was her fear of taking the oral PreGraduation Conference (PGC). This was the only requirement remaining after completing all the course work, and Meg kept postponing the examination. She maintained an active enrollment status for five years before finally getting up enough nerve to face the PGC. She reported that it was not the problem she had anticipated all those years, and she graduated in 1987.

Eileen Vela's story about Dr. Ruth McKeefery preventing Eileen from withdrawing is told in Chapter Seven. More about all their comments to Rita Novitt are in Chapter Eleven.

It is interesting that host Dr. Maehl is a former president of the Fielding Institute in California, the graduate school where Dr. Lorraine Matusak, second Thomas Edison president, earned her doctoral degree. Rita Novitt had been a trustee on the Fielding Board and became good friends with the Maehls; it was through that friendship that the alumni were gathered and graciously entertained.

At an alumni gathering in San Diego in 1996, Doris Cone, B.A. '86, reported that she lived and worked in New Jersey before retiring in 1989. She now devotes her time to Habitat for Humanity projects; a trip to Hawaii in 1995 saw Doris working with a group that built seven houses in seven days. Others at the gathering were Jean Douglas, BSBA '93; Tim Gercke, B.A. '85; Jacob Schwartz, B.A. '94; and Elenore Scherck, A.A. '78 and B.A. '84, and Marie Scherck, B.A. '84, a mother and daughter team who graduated together. Elenore (the mother) is a budget analyst with the Navy space program.

These meetings are a challenge to organize. Students and alumni in a focused area are invited. The response varies, but immediate past-president Adele Ellis has great expectations that this outreach effort can improve.

Adele Ellis began her association with the College in 1986 as a student. With two children to care for and no previous college experience, Adele and her husband Kyle agreed that Thomas Edison would be a way to get into the higher education system using the independent study and examination methods. Adele used the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) and the Thomas Edison examinations (TECEPs) for the first two years, graduating with an Associate in Science in Management degree. With that success behind her, she enrolled in a six-year premedical school program at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey but soon learned that the expense exceeded the family budget. With her children in school, she could not arrange her classes to accommodate their needs. She returned to Thomas Edison to again use independent study to complete a baccalaureate degree with a concentration in the sciences.

Adele is very animated when she talks, and her excitement is infectious. She explained that after completing her baccalaureate with Thomas Edison, she pursued teaching certification through New Jersey's alternate route which required her to be in class all day two days each week. In addition, the school where she had begun teaching was a Catholic school, and the diocese required that she be certified by it as well. This meant going to class every other Wednesday for special lessons. As she recalled the amount of time this took away from her husband and children, she laughed, "Isn't it incredible that Kyle and I are still married? You can stay married a long time when you don't run into each other enough to fight."

That sense of humor and illustration of sheer determination to "dream the impossible dream" were part of the dynamic that made Adele Ellis such a strong president for the Alumni Association, although she had been active for many years before. Adele remembered some of the

committee meetings she attended for the association. One rather interesting meeting place was a restaurant off Exit 8 on the New Jersey Turnpike. Since Alumni Board members were coming from all over the state to meet for a few hours before returning home or to work, they often chose Mom's Peppermill Restaurant in Hightstown as a half-way meeting point. Adele recalled that "Mom" was the no-nonsense owner who was never too sure about this group of people who converged on her diner-style restaurant to hold meetings. Other times they met at the Hightstown library or moved the meetings around the state, depending on who was on the board that year. "We put a lot of miles on our cars and bought a lot of gas for Edison," she jokingly commented, although it was very true for any of the volunteers who were committed to the College and the Alumni Association.

Adele especially enjoys a fairly recent Alumni function, dressing the graduates. She recalls her own graduation and how awkward it felt not knowing anyone other than telephone voices of college staff. At first, several of the alumni, who were there to host an alumni table and take graduates over to the banquet following the ceremony, began offering to help the graduates with their robes and caps. Over the next few years, it became an official alumni function to "dress the graduates." It has become an opportunity to meet and greet, encourage alumni participation, hand out business cards, and put everyone at ease. Adele views it as one of the most rewarding aspects of being in the Alumni Association.

Paul Hays, current Alumni Association president, recalled his commencement ceremony but reflected further back to what brought him to that point. He enlisted in the Navy and took all the intense math, engineering, and thermodynamics courses he could before being shipped out. Following his military career, he went into the commercial nuclear power industry and did the same thing, taking the regulatory commission training for a certificate but earning no college credits. By that time he was married with two sons. He tried night school but was forced to take low level math courses when he already excelled in advanced calculus. After learning about Thomas Edison, he enrolled in 1981 and did assessments for much of his degree requirements. A serious illness delayed the process for a time, but in 1989 he finally completed his baccalaureate degree in nuclear engineering technology.

His work as an alumni volunteer began following a Phonathon call from Dr. Sonja Eveslage, associate vice president at the College. When Sonja learned more about Paul, she invited him to sit on her Corporate and Public Partnerships Advisory Committee. Paul accepted, and through that affiliation, he met Annette Singer who encouraged him to become active with the Alumni Association.

Paul and Adele have Phonathon stories in great supply and love to share them. One year, Adele promised people that Paul Hays would mow their lawns if they made a pledge. Adele believes that her promise got some pledges simply because it broke the ice, so to speak. Of course, Paul never followed through with the mowing. Another time, she made repeated calls to the same telephone number in Florida where a husband, wife, and daughter had recorded a musical message on their answering machine. Everyone at the calling table that evening had to place a call to hear the message.

Over the years, Adele has developed a good telephone rapport with one donor who will only give to the College if Adele makes the call. Sometimes potential donors will say that their contact with the College was so minimal that they feel no connection and no obligation to give a donation. Paul Hays has the quintessential answer. He said, "Cool. How long would it have taken if you hadn't been able to go through Thomas Edison where you had so many options for degree completion and probably were able to use all of your previous college credit? So you did that in six months? You ought to be *really* grateful and give a very large donation."



Alumni president Al Quinton, BA '82, presenting a check from the Alumni Association to Vice President Richard Hansen at the 1987 fund-raising Phonathon.



Alumni President Paul Hays (BS '89) and his wife Fern (left) with immediate Past-President Adele Ellis (BA '94) and her husband Kyle at the 1996 Gala.

The regional planning meetings have been increasing the active alumni ranks as sessions are now held all over the state. An Atlantic City meeting drew about one-hundred alumni; a meeting and golf outing in Monmouth County was another success. At the time of the interview with Paul Hays and Adele Ellis, Adele had recently returned from Los Angeles where she had met with students and alumni from that area. With Internet connections now, Paul sees no reason why alumni in many states could not be on the Board of Directors. Paul also predicts that the alumni board will have to promote more social gatherings in the near future. "We've become too busy, and our meeting times are

focused exclusively on work that needs to be done. We have to have fun together to keep the spirit going — the backyard barbecues, maybe another Trenton Thunder baseball game. That's why the regional meetings and mini-chapters are a good idea. They create the framework for the camaraderie you need to build loyalty," he concluded.

Both Paul and Adele view their colleagues as missionaries for the College. They carry catalogs and other literature with them everywhere they go. They make an astute observation about the alumni who are not yet involved with the College or the Alumni Association. They say, "We're trying to explain that we don't need to recruit; we just have to activate you."

All colleges have brilliant accomplished students, so it may seem presumptuous to brag so outrageously about Thomas Edison students and alumni. The difference is that many, if not most, of the people cited in this story were accomplished before enrolling with the College. The small cadre of colleges who focus exclusively on the adult learner sees these differences as traditional campuses never can. Thomas Edison provides the best possible methods, degrees, and services to these accomplished people. It is in their willingness to "run where the brave dare not go," to keep trying "when their arms are too weary," often with their last "ounce of courage" that these students and alumni achieve their "impossible dream." How could the College be any less than outrageously proud?

¹ "(To Dream) The Impossible Dream," from the Broadway musical *Man of La Mancha*, words by Joe Darion, music by Mitch Leigh, c. 1965.

XI. Please Don't Tell Me How The Story Ends

Every person interviewed for this history was asked to play the role of seer and predict the College's future. All were guided through a review of past events at the College from their perspective, and all were encouraged to interpret those events and recollections. Some were cautious as to how they interpreted events; most were excited to recount hallmarks in the story, especially where personalities played a role. Students, faculty, staff, trustees, foundation directors — everyone brought a piece of the puzzle into a unique mosaic that challenges reproduction. And everyone earnestly proposed a future model or direction for Thomas Edison State College. Not unexpected, most saw the College's future as a leader in the technological delivery of distance learning education.

Vice President and Provost Dr. Jerry Ice spoke of the future in connection with the New Jersey Intercampus Network, a cooperative program among New Jersey colleges, using technology to share and deliver educational courses and programs. In that context, Dr. Ice posed that Thomas Edison's role might be the hub around which all community colleges, state colleges, and universities will be tied together through data and video. "It's somewhat like a Taj Mahal sitting out there on an island with no roads to it yet," he said. "In fact, there is no one living in the Taj Mahal at this point. This will be the new location for Thomas Edison State College, and our faculty will design the roads to link everyone to us. Our faculty has the talent and ability to create this brave new world. The College has been a leader in educational innovation for twenty-five years. Working together to build a new model has been our tradition. Together we have engineered a new tradition."

Former Trustee Robert Taylor commented that growth and change are the hallmarks of Thomas Edison. He suggested that growth and change ought to be the essence of traditional institutions, but that is not necessarily the case. "With Edison," he said, "it's built in, and you find yourself on a moving ship that is going in new directions in new places, breaking new ground continuously." With growth and change being hallmarks of the College, future predictions can be seen only as guidelines. The Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools reaccreditation team's 1982 report cautioned the College not to lose sight of its experimental and entrepreneurial nature. Those words of wisdom have become a bulwark for the myriad of entrepreneurs who find their home in the employ or service of Thomas Edison.

With growth and change as a basic premise, with successful entrepreneurs at the helm of the moving ship, and with the visionary leaders who mark the future through flexible short- and long-range plans, it seems wise to say, as Kris Kristofferson has written, "please don't tell me how the story ends." It is interesting that this song was written in 1971 when Thomas Edison State College was created, and it is no stretch to imagine that many times during their presidencies, Dr. James Brown, Dr. Lorraine Matusak, and Dr. George Pruitt might have posed the thought, "please don't tell me how the story ends." The excitement and challenge are often in the unknowing.

Since everyone eagerly predicted a continued future in the technological delivery of educational courses and student services, what was chosen for inclusion here are those new or insightful spins on what that future might look like. They are divided into three categories: growth and expansion, programmatic changes or enhancements, and challenges — things that must be done to accomplish the other two.

GROWTH AND EXPANSION

Dr. Israel Rubin, professor emeritus in economics at Jersey City State College and faculty consultant to Thomas Edison for twenty-five years, saw a continuing need for the College to provide a validation-of-credentials service to foreign émigrés who have relocated to the United States. Dr. Rubin works with an émigré organization that assists individuals in



Los Angeles area alumni gather for a photo moment following a reception hosted by Thomas Edison President Dr. George A. Pruitt in 1994.

the relocation process. He observed that émigrés' credentials are not easily accepted, and a role that Thomas Edison might play is in the evaluation of those credentials and in providing the means for supplementing what education would be needed to get American creditation. Dr. Rubin saw this as a potential enrollment stream, particularly from Russian and Polish émigrés, but also from any of the thousands of immigrants who enter the United States each year.

Dr. Deborah Wolfe, former member of the New Jersey Board of Higher Education and a nongovernmental representative to the United Nations, followed a similar theme. She proposed that the College work through the United Nations to take educational opportunity to all nations in the world through the NonGovernmental Organization, which has over one million members. In her inimitable style, Dr. Wolfe said, "I would take Dr. Pruitt to meet with the Secretary General of the United Nations and tell him, 'We have something that could help you in the process of updating the knowledge of your staff in any part of the world, or we could work with you on any kind of problem.'" Thomas Edison could be a world university as seen through Dr. Wolfe's eyes.

Continuing in a similar vein, Dr. T. Edward Hollander, former chancellor of Higher Education in New Jersey, suggested that Thomas Edison should formally go international, perhaps in cooperation with other colleges, to capitalize on the world market and the ability to transcend time and place barriers through distance learning technologies.

Mr. David Hulteen, director of the New Jersey State Approving Agency for College Programs, Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs, saw the College focusing on the military for an unlimited enrollment stream. According to Mr. Hulteen, the Department of Defense plans for a smaller, more efficient military force to use as peacekeepers of the world. This force, including the part-time soldier, will have to be highly educated, and the Department of Defense will ensure that educational benefits are provided to make this happen. Thomas Edison is already working with the military community, but Mr. Hulteen estimates that the potential number to be trained and educated is at least one-half million. He concluded, "Thomas Edison could have seventy percent of its student enrollment on active duty."

One step towards that potential, he suggested, would be to become a partner in the GI Bill process, working directly with the armed services and becoming a part of their educational advisory council. Mr. Hulteen is well aware of Thomas Edison's long affiliation with the military and the extensive work that has already been done by college staff, but he urged a proactive role in pursuing even stronger relationships. "Once the College reaches a significantly higher percentage of enrollments from the military," he continued, "expansion into graduate degrees that will specifically service military needs, such as physical sciences and engineering, could be pursued."

Mr. Hulteen suggested that just within New Jersey, Thomas Edison should maintain a permanent physical presence at the major installations. For example, he stated that McGuire Air Force Base, once listed on the closure list, is now expanding its mission. Within the next three to five years, the base will have from two- to five-thousand more airmen on site. He predicted that they will expand to the Fort Dix Reservation, and that by the year 2,000, there would be from ten- to fifteen-thousand military and civilian personnel working out of the McGuire installation and surrounding sites. Mr. Hulteen saw Thomas Edison as a major educational provider for that population. "Who's to say," he concluded, "that Thomas Edison State College shouldn't become Thomas Edison State University?"

In an interview with Dr. Ruth McKeefery, dean emeritus of Thomas Edison, the military enrollment potential was a natural response to the question regarding the College's future. Pushing Mr. Hulteen's proposal to have a Thomas Edison office at the McGuire Air Force Base, Dr. McKeefery suggested that the College might make regular extended site visits to major military installations around the nation. For example, she commented that San Diego has several Navy bases. "There may be as many as 10,000 people based there, on land, at any given time," she commented. Other major bases, such as Norfolk, Virginia, have that same potential, and a regular

presence at those sites would strengthen relationships with the education officers as well as with potential students.

Dr. McKeefery observed, "It's very interesting that over the years in-state students complain about the fees, but out-of-state students never do. We also found that out-of-state students communicate less with us than in-state students. We guessed that it was because they did not want to pay the long-distance charges, so either they read the materials with more care, or they read the materials first before making the calls. We noticed, too, that out-of-state students seemed to progress better than in-state students. Perhaps there is something we can learn from these observations." Dr. McKeefery suggested that particularly in times when the state of New Jersey seems disinclined to support higher education, as it might, Thomas Edison might advertise more heavily to its out-of-state market without minimizing in any way what is being done within the state.

Her final comment regarding the future of Thomas Edison logically came back to the military and what Dr. McKeefery considers the greatest potential for a strong relationship beyond that already established through the Servicemembers Opportunity College (SOC). PACE, the Program For Afloat College Education, is a program established by Congress in 1974 to provide classroom instruction to Navy personnel while at sea. Several new versions of PACE now make it possible for Thomas Edison to link with the program through Guided Study on-line and contract learning courses.

Students and alumni meeting for the first time in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in September 1996, talked freely about the directions Thomas Edison might go to meet the needs of people in their state. In addition to focusing on the military bases located throughout the state, such as Holloman Air Force Base, White Sands Missile Range, Fort Bliss Military Reservation, NASA in Las Cruces, and Cannon Air Force Base in Roswell, the group agreed that two other markets had high potential: 1) the technological laboratories and institutions that dominate the state, and 2) United States postal workers.

They observed that companies that are involved in research and development need trained managers. They have all the educated people they need, that is, people with Ph.D.s, but what the companies lack are people with functional management training or experience. Thomas Edison could satisfy that need through the Master of Science in Management degree, which emphasizes practitioner-based, not just textbook-based, management training. In New Mexico, the military bases and the corporations have traditionally sent their employees off-site or even out-of-state for specific training needs. Now, with distance learning programs becoming available, those same employees could remain on-site to receive their training via computer or other distance-learning modes at tremendous savings to the companies. The New Mexican alumni and students believe that Thomas Edison could be that distance-learning provider. With regard to the United States Post Office (USPO), the alumni observed that the USPO provides postal employees with ongoing training and seminars on quality management. This is done through on-site classes on a periodic basis, usually quarterly, much like the old circuit judge's schedule where justice reigned every other Tuesday. Thomas Edison would take the place of the circuit postal trainer, offering courses via an electronic classroom generated in New Jersey, for example, and transmitted via satellite to anywhere in the nation.

This small group of alumni was speaking about the future needs of their state, but those needs multiplied by fifty states give an interesting slant on future directions Thomas Edison might take.

Military personnel, employees of the Federal government, and corporate employees are logical markets for the Thomas Edison model. Faculty caution, however, that the College should not neglect the potential at sister colleges. Dr. Harry Hoitsma, professor in health professions at Montclair State University and faculty member at Thomas Edison since 1979, urged the College to develop stronger linkages with sister institutions in the state. He explained: "We should start with a state-wide advisory council whose mandate would be to design something



Dr. Deborah Wolle, founding member of the New Jersey State Board of Higher Education, chats with Hans Spiegel, husband of former Trustee Ellie Spiegel, at the College's 20th anniversary Gala.

new in interinstitutional arrangements, something that would capitalize on what Edison has to offer in conjunction with what the other colleges can provide. We can't look back and model on the basis of past experiences, although those experiences have been successful. Something new has to be carved out, especially where issues of tenure or hiring come into question, or other faculty-related issues such as training or short-term contracts. An advisory council could focus on broader issues than any one institution might have. Thomas Edison has excelled in this kind of leadership, and faculty associated with the College have learned to leave their old ideas behind when they sit at an Edison Council. Students become the focus, and though I have only mentioned faculty issues here, education and learning can be the focus once again for all institutions.

"The community college program Edison has, Degree Pathways, is a good model for what could happen when colleges get together without territorial issues being a threat. The proposed advisory council is only one of the ways Thomas Edison can expand its offerings and its scope of influence in this state."

Dr. John TenBrook, professor of business, labor studies, and management at Camden County College and Thomas Edison faculty member since 1989, suggested that the electronic classroom being launched in 1997 will open the door to significant institutional collaborations, co-registering students from many campuses, especially in courses that are often canceled due to limited enrollments at one institution. Fiberoptics, telecommunications, and remote sites will benefit institutions that might be experiencing low enrollments but that need to keep specific courses available for degree requirements. Dr. TenBrook said, "Thomas Edison is an umbrella for any student in the state. Other institutions could still provide their specialized areas but to a much wider audience. Atlantic Community College could maintain their culinary management course, Camden County College could emphasize fiberoptics or laser technology, Gloucester County College could stress respiratory therapy, and everyone in the state could enroll in those courses under the Thomas Edison umbrella. Everyone wins because the courses serve enough students state-wide to meet the minimum (or more) enrollment needs."

Many interviewed faculty agreed that retention rates at traditional campuses are approximately fifty percent — that is, about fifty percent of all entering freshmen actually graduate within the four year period expected at traditional campuses. The fifty percent who drop out eventually become potential Thomas Edison students as they mature and find their way back to degree completion, whether for personal satisfaction or for job-related purposes. Thomas Edison has maintained this symbiotic relationship with the other institutions throughout its twenty-five year history. Rather than Thomas Edison being a threat to other institutions for student enrollments, quite the opposite is beginning to occur. Traditional institutions are looking to the adult market as a means to address a trend in decreased enrollments. Only through a strong intercollegiate program that addresses state-wide needs will these issues be resolved to benefit all. Dr. Hoitsma's state-wide advisory council offers a viable solution to many of those issues.

Dr. Sonja Eveslage, associate vice president for public affairs at Thomas Edison, stressed to the corporate community that Thomas Edison "is not just a little blip in higher education. We are an internationally renowned institution that functions like a mega-university with nineteen branch campuses." All the structural pieces are not in place yet, but the potential is there. "We have to work harder at being tied in with more of the decision making networks and the technological

uses for academic resources. We have to be there when and where the decisions are being made rather than being reactive to situations or events that someone else creates," she concluded.

Jack Neary, executive vice president at CoreStates, mentioned a community/corporate aspect not regularly addressed. He observed that Thomas Edison has been a deliverer of education to the workforce for those who are looking to expand their education and who for various reasons either "stopped out"² for awhile or who never started their college education. This population has special needs — some are not adept in the new technology, some need other kinds of assistance. Jack commented that Thomas Edison as a whole must be user-friendly. It must continue to provide educational access in a nonthreatening environment. He suggested that corporate America needs to become champions of the educational process for the entire workforce. "The issue is diversity," he observed. "We're no longer talking about local economy. We're talking about a global economy. The world is no longer just white; it's no longer just the United States. The best way to compete is to have a culturally rich workforce — an educated workforce composed of people of all races, colors, and creeds." He believes that Thomas Edison can be the binding force that brings together not only culturally diverse populations of adult students but that also unites all the options, "whether it is Pierce Junior College at night, Temple University during the day, or Thomas Edison for distance learning. Our job is to educate the public about Thomas Edison and make people aware that this is not just 'book learning.' This is really being brought to the cream of the crop in terms of the educational world. Thomas Edison can be a major player in coordinating all of that."

Along the way, other questions have to be answered. Is there a finite growth number beyond which the College would not or should not go? What can Thomas Edison expect in state support in the short- and long-term budget picture? How many faculty would be needed, and can the current staff handle significant enrollment growth? Will there be more graduate degrees, additional masters programs, or even a doctorate? Some of these issues are considered in the next section on programs.

PROGRAMMATIC CHANGES OR ENHANCEMENTS

One of the newest educational programs that has long-term potential is a credit option called course-packs, which are essentially computerized courses in which students complete an assignment, mail it in to be scanned, and get a response that not only tells whether or not the answer is right or wrong but also provides a diagnostic statement about each question answered incorrectly. The student then reviews the diagnosis and redoes the assignment. Bill Seaton, associate vice president and director of the Center for Distance and Independent Adult Learning (DIAL) at the College, predicted that a student will soon be able to dial in over the Internet, e-mail answers to assignment questions, and get instantaneous responses. That dramatically improves turnaround time and has tremendous potential for further development.

This credit-bearing option raises questions as to the role faculty will play in Thomas Edison's future. Will faculty be less involved? More indirectly involved? Will faculty be designing new courses? For what audience?

Vice President and Provost Dr. Jerry Ice believes that continuing education is a potential new market for the College. He said, "We have been degree-centered, and we have focused on new learning options, but companies and organizations have a need for nondegree-oriented training to build, for example, new leadership teams to better handle diversity or product quality, or to bring together a team approach to problem-solving. If we could develop courses that could be delivered by combining video and text, we could move into the continuing professional education areas. It would have to be different from the traditional continuing education role now offered quite adequately by community adult schools and various other providers. It would have to be a specialized market not yet being served, but the possibilities are endless, and our faculty can design those courses."

Most of those interviewed who looked at the future programmatically went directly to graduate programs as the most logical route for expansion. Dr. Mariagnes Lattimer, professor emeritus in social work at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey and a Thomas Edison faculty member since 1979, proposed a Master of Science in Social Work as the next graduate degree for the College. She explained, "We graduate a number of people in the human services degree program; unless we give them an opportunity to go on to the next level, that degree is going to become obsolete for them fairly soon. I serve on the Board of Examiners for Social Work, and I know that the grandfathering phase is over. We've taken in a number of individuals who were Thomas Edison students under the Certified Social Worker license; however, if they want to do anything in the way of counseling or administration, they're going to need the clinical degree. They will either have to get an additional two years in a masters program, or they will find that their degree has diminished because privatization is changing the common denominator. That statute is a practice statute; it's not a protection-of-services statute. The bottom line is that the Edison graduate in human services is going to need a masters degree. I'd like to see that be the Master of Science in Social Work."

Several people suggested that the next masters degree should be a Masters in Public Policy. Vice President for Public Affairs John Thurber believes that degree to be the most logical next step in graduate programs. "There seems to be a great natural linkage there if we can provide practicum opportunities," John explained, "or to have staff involved who are teaching and mentoring and otherwise involved in being supportive of that program. It would be a great win for all of us." It is possible that the John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy could provide those opportunities for practicum experiences and could provide case studies as well to supplement theoretical courses.

CHALLENGES

Faculty Consultant, Ms. Maryanne Whittemore, adjunct professor at Burlington County College, raised an important question. She said, "Do we want to be the Harvard of adult education? My guess is that we emphatically say 'Yes!' We're already a leading contender, but there is a specific need for Thomas Edison. Technology and knowledge are changing so much that people will continually need to learn. We need to have some idea of how large we can become and still remain effective." That concern is dominant in long-range planning as the College looks toward the twentieth century.

At the same time the College is urged to develop more intercollegiate programs and become the umbrella for students seeking a variety of options for degree completion, the College is also cautioned that traditional education is rapidly moving into the adult market. Former Chancellor T. Edward Hollander commented that where Thomas Edison in New Jersey and Regents in New York were pioneers in alternative education for adults, "...conventional higher education is going to be eclipsed over the years by nontraditional education. The nation can no longer afford to maintain the higher education establishment in the traditional mold. Nontraditional modes will increase on the traditional campuses." He suggested that the electronic classroom, interactive television, and student-directed learning will increase. What is called nontraditional today will become the new tradition, and there will be fewer resident colleges.

Thomas Edison has led in establishing that "new tradition," so it is ironic that it should now find that new tradition a hurdle to overcome. Dr. Charles Nanry, professor of human resource management at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey and Thomas Edison faculty member since 1976, stated it this way: "The College will have to be very agile and aggressive, searching for new opportunities. A characteristic of the successful organization is one that has a kind of restlessness, that gropes for whatever that leading edge is, and is willing to take some risks to get there." Dr. Nanry sees this done through several ways, but he encouraged consortial arrangements and constant exploration.

Dr. John TenBrook of Camden County College commented that mentor training for Guided Study courses should be increased. He suggested, "Mentor training should be required, and every new mentor should have a 'mentor' — an experienced mentor in the same field of study so that an engineer will be teamed with an engineer and not a Spanish teacher, and a historian would be teamed with a historian, not a physicist. That would help the new mentors tremendously, and the experienced mentors would gain from it as well. The College needs to be firm about mentor training, and if a new member can't make the training session, he or she should not be a mentor." Other faculty agreed that faculty training is vital to their effectiveness with Thomas Edison students. They observed that being a professor for twenty years in a traditional classroom assures a command of the subject matter, but it does not prepare one for distance-learning or working with adult students.

Not all challenges are programmatic or faculty related. Staff who work with student records strongly urged the acquisition of imaging equipment as soon as funds are available. The only imaging that is currently done is with academic transcripts, but there are volumes of materials in student files that could be imaged. This would eliminate many of the problems involved when students "stop out" for several years and then return to finish their degrees. Former Associate Registrar Sharon Smith explained that student transcripts were microfilmed, but microfilm has a short shelf life. Imaging would eliminate the possibility that microfilm might be damaged in storage or in some other way. She saw an urgency for acquiring the best technology available to keep the College on the forefront of services to students.

Sharon also predicted that very soon one college will be able to send academic transcripts to another college by Speedy Express, an electronic means endorsed by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars. This will eliminate delays in updating student records when a Thomas Edison student is taking a course at another institution. Guidelines for processing and monitoring such a system need to be in place before it will be deemed a secure system for transferring academic records, but the groundwork has been laid.

Vice President and Treasurer Michael Scheiring commented that when the College first embraced the technological delivery of academic services, it envisioned a paperless office; he observed that there is probably more paper than ever. What has happened is that there is a lot more information — technological information — and sifting through that is a challenge in itself.

Drew Hopkins, director of Management Information Systems, saw tremendous cost savings ahead as staff use the Internet for internal communications. "We could eliminate printing costs for the house newsletter, the Thomas Edison News, and we could still have all the pictures and graphics that we have now." Drew suggested that staff could participate in work-group computing, a means by which various staff members form a group to work together on a common project, sharing information and documents. They could work from their own desks and at off hours, depending on the project. Software for that process has been established generally, but internal application is forthcoming.

Many of those interviewed cautioned the College not to lose sight of the student in the effort to stay on the cutting edge of technology. Mrs. Ida Hammond, former alumni president and current member of the Board of Trustees, proposed that the focus on students could be shared with alumni volunteers who would make themselves available to mentor, advise, console, celebrate, or just be there for students who need or want that kind of encouragement and support. "We can do it now by computer on the Internet, or we can pick up the phone, but our students need to know that we have alumni who believe in the College and who want to serve," she stated adamantly. "Working with students is one of the most rewarding ways to do that."

A number of people suggested that how the College markets itself in the years to come will be the key to its success. Foundation Director S. John Quattrone proposed a "loan closet" stocked with six-minute video and audio cassette tapes, featuring vignettes about students, alumni, or special events at the College. John said, "The trustees, foundation directors, alumni,

or anyone representing the College could take these tapes out on loan when they're going out to make presentations whether for fund-raising or for any purpose. It's the personal stories that pique the interest." John's efforts to promote planned giving through the Foundation builds on the assumption that when students and alumni have gratitude for what Thomas Edison made possible for them and have reason to take great pride in their alma mater, planned giving, bequests, and annual fund giving increase. The success vignettes of students and graduates contribute strongly to that sense of pride.

Trustee Harvey Myers observed that other institutions are copying the marketing language Thomas Edison has used over the years. "In the last two or three years, they have begun saying the exact same things that we've been saying," he stated. "We have to find new language or new advertising that makes us stand out again."

Looking at the public relations history reveals aggressive promotion of the College throughout the twenty-five years. Although President Brown wrote in his first Eighteen-Month Report dated December 1973 that the College had mounted a modest \$500 newspaper advertising campaign. Public service announcements and newspaper articles were readily accepted by the New Jersey papers. Over the years, articles about the College have appeared all over the world, in the *China Post*, the *Korean Times*, *USA Today*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *New York Daily News*, the *New York Times*, the *New York Post*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Army Times*, the *Monterey Herald* (San Francisco), and in other cities such as Detroit, Miami, Omaha, Phoenix, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, and Denver. Major articles have appeared in *Woman's Day*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Newsweek*, and *Modern Maturity*. The granting of the Thomas Alva Edison earned degree in 1993 brought world-wide print and television coverage with CNN, CBS, NBC, ABC, NPR, and WOR-TV, and the College is regularly referred to on the popular television game show *Jeopardy*. The College also maintains a strong presence through its Web site on the Internet and through the Web site for the blind.

Each year, print materials, both promotional and for special events, are recognized for their high quality, and Thomas Edison has received numerous awards from the communications industry. What then can the College do to improve upon its successes in public relations? How can it distinguish itself from the institutions that are clamoring for the adult market that has been Thomas Edison's sole focus? These are some of the questions facing the current and future leaders.

Mr. Nicholas Carnevale, trustee and chairman of the Foundation, that President George Pruitt will take the College to even greater heights. "He has been so legislatively active and knowledgeable that I think his influence is going to lead the legislature in the future as opposed to the legislature leading him and the College."



Dr. Mariagnes E. Lattimer, Professor Emeritus in Social Work at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. Dr. Lattimer has been a faculty consultant for Thomas Edison since 1979.

Mr. George Fricke, chairman of the Board of Trustees, considered the state's continued reduction in support of higher education as the most significant factor affecting the College's future. "Severe budget reductions have continued for over nine years. With this trend the traditional institutions are reaching out to new markets, which means that they're jumping into distance learning and the adult market. It seems ironic that all these years we have fed enrollments back to the traditional campuses and have not been competition but rather support for them, and now those same campuses are going after our market — distance-learning and adults. It's a matter of survival for all of higher education, so I understand it, but it presents new challenges that President Pruitt will be leading us through now and in the years to come."

If so much is laid at the feet of Dr. George A. Pruitt, what does he say about the future? Dr. Pruitt responded: "If I had to give a sound byte answer to the future of the College, it would be to exploit existing and emerging technologies in ways that provide high quality options and learning opportunities for adults, to serve them where they are instead of where we are, independent of

time and place, anywhere in the world. In a way, it is a mission — using this type of technology to give high quality, universal access to higher education to adults. That is an extraordinary, revolutionary, really powerful transforming idea. I'm encouraged by it. We're not going to change our focus."

Dr. Pruitt added that the College is frequently asked to expand its focus to include the eighteen-year-olds or elementary schools or people with disabilities. He responds that those opportunities are valid and that in time all populations will be using distance learning modes, at least to some extent. "We try to be a catalyst for that and a cheerleader, but we will continue to focus on the adult because that is our client base. We will become much more involved in the direct delivery of education as opposed to the older days when our major role was to counsel people regarding their options."

When asked about the potential competition from sister colleges, Dr. Pruitt responded, "Whereas most colleges and universities are using the technology to jazz up existing practices, we are considering how the technology will allow us to do things we've never done before. The focus, however, is always on the adult student. We're good because we've never lost sight of who our clients are."

And with that as the final word, we enter the next twenty-five years filled with hope, excitement, and joy. We are not certain what lies ahead, but that is why it feels just right to say "please don't tell me how the story ends."

"Please Don't Tell Me How the Story Ends," words and music by Kris Kristofferson, c. 1971.

"Stopping out" is a term appropriate for adult students who sometimes take breaks between enrollment periods. They are not "dropping out" never to return, but "stopping out" to rest or handle health, family, or financial constraints. A Thomas Edison student who properly withdraws during their "stopping out" period returns under the same degree guidelines and requirements as when previously enrolled.

Here's To Our College

Words and Music by:
Roy Meriwether

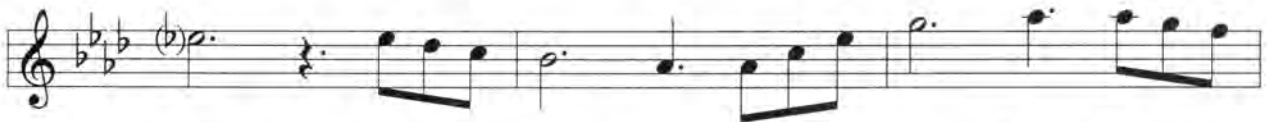
Slow March Tempo



Here's to our



col - lege, our al - ma ma - ter. You met the chal - lenge of our



needs. Age did- n't mat - ter, on - ly our know - ledge. We did in -



deed, there to suc-ceed in col - lege. You serv'd our life - long dream, you ans-wer'd



ev' ry need. Now on the day we pay you tri - bute,



hon - or. Here's to our col - lege, our al - ma

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ma - ter, All hail to thee, Ed- i - son State, all hail to



thee, Thom- as Ed- i - son State Col - lege, all -



hail to thee. Here's to our col - lege, our al- ma



ma - ter. All hail to thee, Ed- i - son State, all hail to



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Letters of Congratulations

GOVERNOR WHITMAN
ON THOMAS EDISON STATE COLLEGE

While I was not among the forward-looking New Jersey leaders who helped Thomas Edison State College get started, I have always admired its innovative approach to higher learning, and now I have the privilege of working with President Pruitt in an exciting period for the College and for higher education in New Jersey.

Decade after decade, Thomas Edison has succeeded in its unique mission. The College established itself in the 1970s as a means for busy adults to earn an undergraduate degree outside the traditional campus setting. In the 1980s, Thomas Edison became one of the nation's first colleges to offer on-line access to higher education. Now in the '90s, Thomas Edison State College is joining with New Jersey State Library in an unparalleled partnership that will expand

the College's outreach to its more than 8,500 students from across the country and around the world.

Proud of its past and poised for a new century, Thomas Edison State College continues to merit its distinction as America's premier distance-learning college for adults.



New Jersey Governor Christine Whitman

FORMER GOVERNOR JIM FLORIO

Thank you for your letter introducing the history-of-the-college project, which you plan to publish as part of the 25th anniversary celebration, and for inviting me to participate. It has been my pleasure to always be particularly supportive of Thomas Edison State College, as it serves a very vital purpose in providing quality education to New Jersey students.

I especially support the mission of the college enabling adults to pursue degree programs, while maintaining professional and family obligations. And I commend the college community for its creativity and resourcefulness.

With more and more people involved in life-long learning, the ability of educational institutions to adapt their programs and schedules, to accommodate all who seek knowledge and wisdom, fulfills the most basic principle of public education.

Congratulations on being a part of one of life's most worthy endeavors. Please accept my wishes for a successful celebration.

FORMER GOVERNOR TOM KEAN

It is a great honor for me to have the opportunity to express my best wishes to you on the occasion of your 25th Anniversary. Congratulations on 25 years of providing quality education to adults in our state and around the world.

In the past twenty-five years, communications technology has become more sophisticated and prevalent, making our lives more global, connecting us in ways that we never thought we would be connected. But Thomas Edison State College knew, and has led the way toward making higher education accessible throughout the world. Thomas Edison State College has truly been a leader. There are nearly 12,000 graduates who understand just how important Thomas Edison State College is, but many, many more who appreciate and respect the opportunities you make possible. I am proud to have supported you in all your efforts.

I wish you continued success in the future. Happy Anniversary!

BRENDAN BYRNE, COUNSELOR AT LAW

Thomas Edison State College was a good idea 25 years ago and is even a better idea today. The concept was based on the fact that life experience can be combined with formal courses to produce a college degree.

In my time, a number of distinguished New Jersey leaders boasted a degree from Thomas Edison State College. The degree obviously served them well.

The college is named after Thomas Edison who created many innovative improvements in our lives. Following that inspiration, Thomas Edison State College has turned on many lights. I'm for it.

Appendix

THOMAS EDISON STATE COLLEGE ORIGINAL ADVISORY COUNCIL 1972-1973

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University College
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Dr. Merle Allshouse, President
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Dr. Jerry Brown
Vice President for Academic Affairs
Rider College (now Rider University)

Reverend Thomas Fahy, President
Seton Hall University

William Bywater
President, District Three
International Union of Electrical, Radio,
and Machine Workers, AFL-CIO
East Rutherford, New Jersey

Diego Castellanos
Coordinator for Hispanic Affairs
State Department of Education
Trenton, New Jersey

Bernard Moore
Communications Director -
Press Secretary to the Mayor
City of Newark

Earl Phillips, President
Urban League of Essex County
Newark, New Jersey

Richard M. Roper
Organizer and Acting Executive Director
Mayor's Task Force on Education
City of Newark

Olive Ryan
Assistant Librarian
Haddonfield High School
Haddonfield, New Jersey

Eleanor Spiegel
Member, Leonia Board of Education
Leonia, New Jersey

Ruth Stamps
Former Member, State Scholarship Commission
Pleasantville, New Jersey

Dr. Adele Stern
Chairwoman of Curriculum
Montclair High School
Englewood, New Jersey

Dr. John Summerskill, Director
Office of External Degree Programs
College Entrance Examination Board
New York, New York

Jonathan L. Thiesmeyer, Director
Corporate Education
Western Electric Company
Princeton, New Jersey

Stanley J. Salett
Assistant Commissioner
Division of Research, Planning, and Evaluation

Dr. Donald J. Nolan, Director
Division of Independent Study
Regents External Degree Program
New York State Department of Education

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Alan Ferguson	George Hanford
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Rider University

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Montclair State University

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William Paterson College of New Jersey

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Bruce Hubscher

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Mildred Koslow

Ida B. Hammond

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Adele Ellis

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AND HONORARY DEGREE RECIPIENTS

(* indicates honorary degree recipient)

1973 Dr. Ralph A. Dungan, Chancellor of Higher Education, New Jersey	1987 W. Cary Edwards,* Attorney General State of New Jersey
1974 Dr. John Summerskill, Vice President Educational Testing Service	Pearl M. Bailey,* Actress, Singer, Humanitarian
1975 Dr. Mary I. Bunting, (Former President, Douglass College) Assistant to the President, Princeton University	1988 The Honorable Thomas H. Kean,* Governor State of New Jersey
1976 The Honorable William T. Cahill Former Governor, State of New Jersey	1989 Dr. Badi G. Foster,* President Aetna Institute for Corporate Education
1977 Dr. T. Edward Hollander, Chancellor of Higher Education, New Jersey	1990 Alex J. Plinio,* Former President The Prudential Foundation
1978 No record	1991 Dr. Fred W. Friendly,* Professor Emeritus Columbia University
1979 The Honorable Bill Bradley United States Senate	1992 Dr. Reese Jenkins, Director and Editor Thomas A. Edison Papers
1980 Brendan T. Byrne,* Governor State of New Jersey	Dr. James Hall,* President Empire State College
1981 Dr. Morris T. Keeton,* President Council for Adult and Experiential Learning	Dr. Deborah P. Wolfe,* Founding Member New Jersey Board of Higher Education
1982 Dr. Allan W. Ostar, President American Association of Colleges and Universities	George H. Hanford,* Former President The College Board
1983 Dr. Ernest L. Boyer, President The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching	1993 Dr. Frank Newman,* President Education Commission of the States
1984 Dr. John R. Coleman, President The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation	1994 Dr. James E. Carnes,* President and Chief Executive Officer The Sarnoff Corporation
1985 Dr. James L. Fisher, President Council for Advancement and Support of Education	1995 Dr. Shirley S. Chater,* Commissioner Social Security Administration
1986 Charles E. Yeager,* Brigadier General, Retired United States Air Force	1996 Dr. Fred S. Humphries,* President Florida A&M University

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1973 Anna Marie J. Gentile, A.A.	1982 Guillermo Estevez, A.A.	1990 Arthur Eberhard, BSBA
1974 Bertram R. Brown, A.A.	Elaine Solomon, B.A.	
1975 Carol Most Bergman, A.A.	1983 Antonia Marotta, A.A.	1991 Scott Moniak, B.A.
1976 Carl T. Buscher, A.A.	Janis Miller, BSBA	
1977 Alice Weinstein, A.A.	1984 Malachi Reed, A.A.	1992 Marcelline M. Eachus, BSN
Robert C. Buenzly, B.A.	Ruth R. Olinsky, B.A.	
1978 no record	1985 Marcy Miller, A.A.	1993 Maureen B. Kane, BSBA
1979 John H. Golden, A.A.	Howard Tsvi Bisk, B.A.	
Lorraine Achec Rizzuto, B.A.	1986 Canole A. Nerlino, BSBA	1994 David S. Partridge, B.S.
1980 Robert Francie Lynch, A.A.	1987 John Holtz, B.A.	1995 Adrienne Mosley, B.S.
Patricia Tryon Tindall, B.A.	1988 Wendell E. Baisden, B.A.	
1981 Ileana Coll, A.A.	1989 Marcia L. Markwardt, B.S.	1996 Doris E. Rodriguez, B.A.
Cecil Johnson, B.S.		

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