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CHAPTER 10

TO THE CENTENNIAL, 1978-1985

The choice of Jack Critchfield to replace Hugh McKean came after a search that lasted through the summer of 1968. When he accepted the call to Rollins, Critchfield was serving as associate provost at the University of Pittsburgh. That office was his sole administrative experience. He had received a BS in Education from Slippery Rock State University, a small former normal state school in Pennsylvania. Afterward he earned a MA and, in 1968, an Ed.D from University of Pittsburgh. For the eleventh time, the college entrusted its future to a person with no collegiate presidential experience no fund-raising experience and a meager administrative background. As with the others, he was forced to learn how to govern while he was governing. He did possess promising personal qualities: he was young (36), bright, personable and he approached his new challenge with a youthful enthusiasm and an approach reminiscent of an early Paul Wagner. While McKean governed somewhat impressionistically, believing quality would speak for itself, Critchfield set about governing with a management outlook. After the intensely personal and paternalistic style of President McKean, the community believed they saw in Critchfield a more objective, more predictable and professional management approach to college governance.

True to this perception, one of Critchfield's first endeavor was to lead the faculty in a college governance restructuring process. He spearheaded a revision that led to the creation of the College Senate headed by a faculty president, vice president and

secretary. The revision also created the new office of Provost that, along with the faculty Senate structure, placed academic affairs completely in the hands of the faculty. This represented a major shift in the college's traditional governing arrangements. Traditionally, the President had posed as the academic leader, presiding at faculty meetings, keeping involved sufficiently with academic affairs so that he could represent intelligently the college's academic program. The direction of the new governance, which tended to separate the president from academic affairs, undoubtedly came from Critchfield's university experience. On the other hand, placing more authority with the faculty was probably another reaction to Wagner's overbearing leadership style. It remained to be seen whether or not it was wise to isolate the president from that essential academic core of the college community.(20)

Four years before Critchfield arrived, the faculty had already set in motion a major curriculum revision. The Hourglass Curriculum provided a course of study that required students to begin broadly with Foundation Courses, concentrate on particular interest in the middle year as well courses in related fields and participate in directed studies. In their senior years students would draw upon the Foundation Courses and major interests to integrate their knowledge through a Senior Synoptic Course. Passing a Comprehensive Examination would be required for graduation. The new curriculum drew upon the college's progressive student-centered heritage. "Inherent in the new plan," the catalog explained, "is the philosophy that each student should move from a passive absorption of knowledge to self-motivated learning." In a statement Hamilton Holt would have found familiar, the catalog made clear the "final responsibility for each student's academic progress rests with the student."

Students responded with enthusiasm to these new progressive initiatives creating their own alternative programs. In the academic realm students initiated the Holt House, in which students chose “dons,” to serve as “a faculty advisors.” The student and the don designed a personalized program of study, which they formalized with contracts. In the social realm students pushed for alternative housing choices, and special interest groups like Holt House, Fine Arts House, the Student Center for Social Concerns, and the Environmental Conservation Organization.

Coincidentally with the new curriculum reforms, social pressures calling for more diversity began to reshape the college community. More than a decade after the Supreme Court's desegregation decision, Rollins still remained an all-white college. Responding to demands for change, the Admission Office had admitted its first African American student in 1968. By the mid-1970s a larger enrollment of African American students led to the creation of the Black Student Union. Founded in 1972 to serve an ever-increasing population of black students, the BSU aimed to “bring together students who are interested in, passionate about, or members of the black community.” Almost immediately the BSU began to make the college aware of the nation's African American heritage. The organization fostered Black Awareness Week was its successful cultural diversity contribution. In its first years this annual event attracted activists such as Dick Gregory and Jesse Jackson. The first Black Awareness Week also focused on “An African Happening” and a “soul luncheon.” In later years, the latter morphed into an annual event called Soul Food Sunday, a “semi-formal, catered dinner of traditional African-American cuisine celebrating Black History Month.” Soul Food Sunday, declared a BSU

proclamation, “embodies everything that the BSU stands for—community, inclusivity and connection”

By the mid-1970s, the numbers of black students still remained just a trickle. In the half dozen years after 1965, the Admission Office admitted just over twenty African American students. Concerned with this slow pace of recruitment, the BSU issued a public petition in 1975 for a policy of affirmative action. It “demanded” the college increase black students to number “no less than ten percent of the total student body.” The BSU called for the college to provide “more financial aid for black students,” to appoint a BSU faculty adviser “familiar with problems peculiar to black students,” to add more courses and books in the library “dealing the history, sociology and literature of black people.” The petition was followed by a faculty appeal, initiated by Professor of English Maurice O’Sullivan, asking the Trustees and President Critchfield to act quickly to meet the demands of the black students. Citing the 1977-1978 Handbook stating the college’s “commitment to understand and value other cultures and to identify and correct deficiencies in the social structure,” the faculty petition called on the administration to “increase the minority population of the total college community with all deliberate speed,” and “for President Critchfield to report to the faculty in the May faculty meeting on the progress being made.” One year after the centennial, enough black students had enrolled to allow for the creation of an academic minor in Africa and African American Studies.

Within a few years after the introduction of the Hourglass Curriculum, the faculty had made so many revisions that it hardly resembled to original course of study. Therefore, in 1978, a curriculum committee, headed by philosopher Bruce Wavell and historian Jack Lane, proposed yet another major curriculum reform. The new curriculum was based on

Benjamin Bloom's taxonomy, a set of three hierarchical models used to classify educational learning objectives into levels of complexity and mastery: Skills acquisition, Cognitive and Affective development. Skills included composition, mathematics, foreign language, the Cognitive area comprised social sciences and science, and Affective Area those of arts and literature. Written composition and value skills were assigned to courses throughout the departments. A grant from the National Endowment for Humanities allowed the faculty to attend training workshops in each area. The new curriculum was firmly in place by the time Critchfield arrived on campus.

The new curriculum, by drawing upon the Bloom taxonomy, was on the cutting-edge of educational thought at the time. Its source was the rise of the era of "academic accountability," a movement that gain steam in the years ahead. Lane and Wavell had explored the possibility of creating a revised core curriculum more in tune with Rollins's past traditions, but found no enthusiasm among the faculty. The recently arrived faculty resisted another program that required teaching interdisciplinary courses. The Bloom Taxonomy allowed for a rational, sequential approach to learning while at the same responding to a growing trend among faculty toward emphasizing departmental concerns. What bothered both Lane and Wavell and other faculty members was the loss of interdepartmental cooperation and the lack of a clear rationale for how the new program contributed to a liberal education. The taxonomy compromise brought more order to the curriculum but it left unanswered the question of the how it contributed to a liberal education. Tag least through the centennial years, that question remained answered.

The Roy E. Crummer Graduate School of Business, which had offered the MBA and the MSM, discontinued the MSM in 1981, when it began the drive to receive accreditation

from the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business. The undergraduate business major was abolished at the same time. A night program leading to the MBA was substituted for the MSM and a special MBA program for local business executives was added in 1982. In 1985, Rollins won AACSB accreditation, joining schools like Harvard and the University of Chicago as colleges with MBA programs but not undergraduate majors in business.

Even the Rollins College School of Continuing Education experienced curriculum revisions. In 1972, the School's name had been changed from the Central Florida School for Continuing Studies. As well as its graduate degree programs in Physics (until 1973), Criminal Justice (until 1974), and Education, the School had offered the Associate of Arts (AA), Bachelor of General Studies (BGS), and BS degrees. The School was divided into the Division of Continuing Education (DCE) and the Division of Non-Credit Programs, which encompassed the School of Creative Arts. In 1982, the DCE curriculum was rewritten with requirements in Skills and Perspectives, and BGS and BS degrees were discontinued. Enrollment increased eleven percent in one year.

Rollins adopted another experimental program in 1983. The Community of Learners was composed of a small group of students and a Master Learner, a faculty member who took a term away from teaching to join the community. Together, the learners attended classes, participated in a special seminar, maintained diaries, and offered each other support. The COL student members formed new opinions of faculty, and the faculty member gained a fresh perspective of education—from the students' point of view. Area Studies majors flourished, with African/ Afro-American Studies and Irish Studies successfully transitioning to formal minors.

Throughout these early years, although not directly involved, Critchfield actively supported the new academic and social changes taking place on the campus. With his academic responsibility diminished by the new governance structure, he was able to devote a large portion of his to time fundraising. He created the college's first functioning Development Office, but failed to appoint a professional director. He tended to hire officers with training and experienced in fields other than development, one of whom was a retired general. As with former presidents, the bulk of fundraising, therefore, fell on his shoulders. Critchfield's greatest virtue in this area was his talent for establishing relationships with local businessmen to a degree that had eluded other presidents. He made many new contacts that would serve the college well in the future. Perhaps his most important contribution to the financial future of Rollins College was to bind the relationship with the Harold Alford family and the Alford Foundation. The Alford's son Ted and his wife Barbara graduated from Rollins in 1968 and immediately became fervent supporters of the college. In 1967, the family provided the funds for the Alford Athletic Scholarship. Later the family's gift allowed the college to build the Alford Pool, its first swimming facility. Over the decades, Lake Virginia had provided the only opportunity for recreational swimming and intercollegiate swim tournaments. By the 1950s, however, the water in the lake had become too polluted for swimming, Alford Pool, completed in 1973 and located on the shores of Lake Virginia, became a perfect facility for aquatic sports and for favorite space for student recreation.

A year later, Hauck Hall, home of the Foreign Language Department, was built next to Casa Iberia with a gift from Frederick A. Hauck, a legendary benefactor from Cincinnati who had retired in Winter Park. The Music Department moved into recently constructed

R. D. Keene Hall later that year. In 1978, thanks to a gift from George D. and Harriet W. Cornell, the Art Department and the Rollins College Museum of Art found a new homes in the Cornell Fine Arts Center. To Critchfield's great credit these necessary buildings, constructed in Rollin's traditional Spanish Mediterranean style, added a new dimension to the physical plant.

Consistent with a pattern of all too familiar deception, Critchfield was led to believe that the college had balanced its budget throughout the McKean years. It therefore came as a shock when the new President learned in his first year he would be required to raise an additional one hundred thousand dollars to balance the budget. He later found the college had operated in the red for the past decade but a secret "angel" had made up the difference with a single gift at the end of the each year, Such a bestowal was unavailable to Critchfield. At the Board of Trustees's insistence he balance budget, Critchfield began selling offsite property owned by the college to make up any deficit. The first to be sold was the Pelican Beach House on New Smyrna Beach. Built as a conference center for the Presbyterian Church USA in the 1920s, Rollins received it as a gift in 1931 and Hamilton Holt turned it into a recreational beach house for the college community. The college sold the ocean front lot for \$150,000, the building was demolished and replaced by 150 unit condominium. Critchfield also sold Martin Hall on Lake Virginia across from the college, a gift of John and Prestonia Martin. John Martin was a specialist in international affairs, served as visiting professor at the college during the 1930s. His wife Prestonia Mann, was a popular writer on feminism and poverty. The building housed the Music Department until the construction of Keene Hall in 1974. The Two pieces of extremely valuable property were sold for what many thought were bargain prices.

From the beginning of his tenure, Critchfield indicated that he would serve no more than eight to ten years. True to his promise he announced in 1977 he would retire at the end of the 1978 academic year to assume the post of CEO of Florida Power Company. Students dedicated their 1977-1978 yearbook, *The Tomokan*, to President Critchfield "in grateful thanks for his years of dedication to Rollins College." The issue contained tributes from several members of the community. One was particularly perceptive. "Jack brought to the presidency a realism of what could and could not be accomplished. He was a pragmatic, tolerant leader with an ability to generate the best in people. He compensated for his lack of academic experience with insight and good common sense." Perhaps these qualities were the exactly ones most needed to sustain the college in the post McKean years.

The announcement sparked a presidential search that ended with the appointment of Thaddeus Seymour as Rollins's twelfth president. For the first time since the Blackman era, the Trustees appointed a man with a long and successful background in academia, and for the first time the college would be guided by a person with experience as president of a college. After receiving an undergraduate degree from the University of California, Berkeley, he was awarded a masters' degree and a doctorate in literature from the University of North Carolina, Seymour had taught at North Carolina and Dartmouth College and in 1959 he was appointed Dean of the College at Dartmouth. Ten years later he accepted a call to the presidency of Wabash College in Indiana, where he remained until coming to Rollins.

Seymour found the college in a period of disquiet. Members of the liberal arts faculty indicated to him the college was losing its focus. A major cause, they argued, was the

that over several decades Rollins had added piecemeal peripheral programs extending the college far beyond its central liberal arts mission. The Trustees created a School of Business early in the McKean administration and McKean shortly afterward appointed a dean. The purpose of the school, McKean told the faculty, was to encourage more males to apply for admission. The business school limped along indifferently until 1964 when Roy E. Crummer, a successful Florida business man, donated a million dollars to build a new facility to house the program. From this point, the Crummer School of Business made consistent growth. After several months of preparation under the deanship of Dr. Martin Schatz, the graduate school received accreditation from the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business. By 1980, fully one-third of Rollins (mostly male) undergraduate students were majoring in business, requiring a large increase in the size of business faculty. This distortion of the undergraduate major threatened to turn the college into a business school with a liberal arts college attached. For years the liberal arts faculty attempted to deal with this problem but with little success

The first incident of program expansion came when Rollins began offering adult education courses after World War II for Air Force personnel at Patrick Air Force Base. The program was so successful (at least financially) that in 1960 the Board of Trustees authorized extending the program to the Winter Park campus. In order to distinguish it from the liberal arts college, the Institute for General Studies awarded a General Studies degree. Under President Critchfield, the program, renamed the School for Continuing Education (SEC), began offering additional degrees in Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science. The year Critchfield announced his retirement, Continuing Education added a Masters Degree in Guidance and Counseling. Most of the courses in the program were

taught as overloads by Rollins faculty. This condition raised the question of whether or not the SCE was sapping the resources of the liberal arts college.

Seymour's experience at Dartmouth and Wabash left him with a deep commitment to traditional liberal arts education. President Seymour reset the direction of the college. Rollins, he proclaimed, must "return to its roots. Our aim is to know ourselves and to be known by others as the finest small liberal arts college in the Southeast, standing among the finest colleges in the country. The future destiny of Rollins College depends upon its excellence--the quality of the educational experience, the quality of the students and faculty, the quality of individual performance and the quality of our life and work together."

In one of his first acts President Seymour initiated the process that pointed the college toward that potential. At his suggestion, the Trustees established a College Planning Committee, charging it with "the responsibility to organize and implement a comprehensive planning effort which will engage the participation of all elements of a college community." In particular, the charge asked the committee to:

1. articulate the institutional mission of the college
2. propose an institutional structure and program which reflect this mission
3. develop appropriate objectives for each division of the college
4. recommend allocation of funds, physical resources and personnel
5. determine the needs and goals of a development effort to coincide with the college Centennial.

The committee, under the chairmanship of Dr. Daniel R. DeNicola, Professor of Philosophy, presented a mission statement early in its work that set the tone for its report and for the college's expectations: "For nearly a century the primary mission of Rollins has been to provide excellent liberal arts education for students of ability and promise. It

is and should remain a small independent co-educational institution serving a national constituency."

After eighteen months of exacting labor, the committee produced a detailed study of this "set of imposing tasks," including recommendations for implementation. With the publication of the Planning Report, a wave of optimism and expectation swept the campus. Upon recommendation of the Report, the business major became a business minor. The communication major was placed in the same category. The initial apprehension that turning business and communications majors into minors would cause a drop in enrollment proved unfounded. For the next few years enrollment remained steady and in some years significantly increased. Thus, one of the chief issues facing Seymour when he arrived had been resolved without serious damage. As Seymour noted during the debate, "if you say you are a liberal arts college, then you have to be a liberal arts college."

Other revivals added emphasis to restoration of the college's traditional roots. In 1980, the college revived its dormant Classics Department, complete with an endowed chair funded through a National Endowment for the Humanities grant. The second change was symbolic but nonetheless significant: Rollins diplomas were once again written in Latin. Then to emphasize Rollins was secure in its academic identity and a liberal education was supposed to be fun as well as serious, Seymour enthusiastically revived Fox Day, the annual ritual that during the Critchfield administration the faculty insisted on discontinuing.

President Seymour hired two new administration officers who would make significant contributions to securing the future of the college. In 1984, he called David Erdmann to

serve as Dean of Admissions. A graduate of Colby College, Erdmann came to Rollins with a deep appreciation for the importance of a liberal education. During his almost thirty years as Dean, Erdmann created a professional approach Rollins's admission process and attracted over thirteen hundred highly qualified students to the college. Seymour's other recruitment was Treasurer Jesse Morgan. Seymour had persuaded Morgan to come to Rollins from his position as Vice President-Treasurer at Tulane University. Under Mr. Morgan's guidance, the school eliminated operating deficits and overhauled its bill collection and investment procedures. President Seymour later said "persuading Jesse to come over from Tulane was the best thing I have had a hand in here at Rollins."

Having brought some stability to the college's finances, Seymour turned his attention to the need for two new buildings. Mills Memorial Library, the last building constructed during the Holt administration, was proving woefully inadequate to meet the needs of a college growing in numbers of students and faculty. Olin Library, dedicated in 1985 and funded by a 4.7 million dollar F.W. Olin Foundation gift, had a capacity two times that of Mills Library. Gamble Rogers's design was consistent with the college's traditional Spanish Mediterranean architectural style with the addition of a few Gothic and Roman features. The state-of-the-art library followed prevailing trends in library design with open floor space that mingles reading stations and bookshelves. Olin Library instantly became the center of campus academic life.

Sadly, historic Knowles Hall II was demolished to make a space for the library. At one time considered the most beautiful building on campus, the demolition of Knowles meant the loss of another physical reminder of the college's early history. Fortunately, Chase and Carnegie Halls, both built in styles similar to Knowles II, provided some reminders of

the college community's rich architectural past. As the college's oldest structure, Pinehurst was in a special category. As part of the centennial celebration, President Seymour ordered the renovation of Pinehurst in a way that would return it to its original state. The building was stripped of layers upon layers of paint then repainted according to the instructions found in the original plans. To ensure that the college's only remaining wooden building would survive the wrecking ball, Pinehurst was placed on the Winter Park Register of Historic Places. One of Seymour's last contributions to Rollins's physical landscape was to secure funds for the construction of a home for the Social Science Division, which had been displaced by the demolition of Knowles II. The funds were given by the college's most generous benefactors, George and Harriet Cornell, both 1939 Rollins graduates. Built in a style resembling a Spanish villa, the distinctive feature of the Cornell Hall for the Social Sciences was a community open space in its center. A tiled loggia containing permanent benches, wooden tables and a deli cafe nearby became a central gathering space for students and faculty. The courtyard features an engraved "Schoolhouse Stone," a slab cut from the Silurian formation near Central Valley School in New York, a school founded by George Cornell's grandfather.

The years of the Seymour presidency proved to be a turning point in Rollins's history. At a time when the college community was somewhat adrift, or at best standing still, Seymour instilled in the college a revived enthusiasm and provided a sense of continuity and gave it a new sense of direction. By the end of his tenure, the college had firmly established that its identity and its future lay with its historical liberal education mission. It was left for future presidents to determine how the additional programs and the liberal arts fit a single liberal education mission. Perhaps John Phillips, president of the National Association of

Independent College and Universities best summarized what he called Seymour's remarkable accomplishments: "He's gone against the trends of others saying whatever people want, let's provide it. Seymour had never veered from his purpose of establishing a high-quality liberal arts institution in a place that's associated in the public's mind with Disney World and fun in the sun."

In this period when the Rollins community was reclaiming its roots, it was nearing fortuitously its one-hundredth anniversary. In addition to an elaborate ceremony on Founder's Day 1985 (which included a revival of the Animated Magazine and a colorful fireworks display), the Centennial allowed the college to emphasize and reflect on its venerable liberal education heritage. During that century, the little school, founded in a tiny village on the fringes of the Florida frontier, had been transformed into a preeminent liberal arts college. As one measure of its success, the annual *US News and World Report* annually ranked the college number one in academic quality in the Southeast. Another gauge came in 1992 when the Associated Colleges of the South selected Rollins as the only Florida college asked to join the prestigious consortium.

The one hundred year journey had not been void of highs and lows or without exhilarating successes and dispiriting failures. Often on the edge of financial disaster or suffering from self-inflicted wounds, time after time, at the last moment, a group of intrepid souls saved the little college from oblivion. The single most meaningful phrase to describe the vicissitudes of college's one hundred year journey would be: "Rollins College Persevered." Perhaps the insight of the great scientist Louis Pasteur explains the resolute character of Rollins College. "It may be necessary to encounter defeats," Pasteur once

observed, “so you can know who you are, what you can rise from, how you can still come out of it.”

In spite of every obstacle thrown in their paths, year after year, decade after decade, long successions of committed presidents, administrators, faculty, students and staff expended their love and labor in creating and passing on to the next generation a well-grounded liberal arts college. The intrepid little band of nineteenth century Congregationalists had dreamed of a college, “with her broad foundations wisely laid,” and with “fair halls clustering in their quiet shade by the blue lake,” growing to become an exceptional institution of higher learning. One hundred years later, that vision had finally come to fruition. However, no one participating in the Centennial commemoration thought the college had reached its potential. Everyone understood that, in true progressive tradition, they were willing to future generations a liberal arts institution prepared for even more changes and transformations. A committed belief in transformative change is probably the most revealing and enduring legacy of the college’s one hundred year history.

No one understood the significance of this tradition better than Hamilton Holt. In the first Animated Magazine brochure in 1927, he wrote, with prophetic insight, a clever introduction that portrayed Rollins College speaking for itself. Drawing inspiration from Daniel Webster’s plea that Dartmouth was small but still loved, the “College” then proclaimed:

I am only a small college and as I have no Daniel Webster to plead for me, I want to tell you frankly of my history. In point of years I am the oldest of all educational institutions in Florida. The earliest years are of stories and service on the part of those devoted New Englanders who dreamed of a college in Central Florida. How well they planned and how wisely the built is revealed in the spirit and purpose of Rollins College. While I am proud of my past and dedicated to a continuance of the old ideals, I am facing the future with

new confidence born of the devotion of many friends, the loyalty of thousands of Alumni and the dedication of the faculty and my new president. With the help of all these the "New Rollins" is being built.

Almost a century after Holt penned these words, the vision of a "New Rollins" being built, yet rooted in past liberal education traditions, remains the college's central ideal and its main source of identity.

FIAT LUX

NOTES

1. My depiction of post-World War II higher education was reconstructed from Christopher Jencks and David Reisman, *The Academic Revolution* (1962), 28-50. Report of the Presidents Commission on Higher Education, 1947, 41-51; Frederick Rudolph, *Curriculum*, 282-285.
2. McKean to Lester Sutler, January 24, 1952; *Spandspur*, September 27, 1951.
3. President's Annual Report, 1954.
4. Faculty Minutes, January 7, 1952.
5. Trustee Minutes, July 11, 1951; Report to the Trustees, February, 1952. Emphasis added.
6. Trustee Minutes, February 23, 1952.
7. *Ibid.*
8. President's Annual Report, 1955; 1956.
9. *Ibid.*, 1965.
10. *Ibid.*, 1953, 1954, 1955.
11. *Ibid.*, 1960.
12. President's Annual Report, 1966, 1967, 1968.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Trustee Minutes, May, 1969; December, 1969.
15. President's Annual Report, 1968.
16. President's Report, 1963
17. Faculty Minutes.
18. Trustee Minutes, 1969.