





In the northwest suburban area that is the Harper College district, discussion and planning for a two-year college began as early as 1950. An active committee was at work on the project in 1961, and a survey of community residents was made in 1962. Following a feasibility study, a Steering Committee, chaired by Dr. Frank Smith, and including Gerald McElroy, Willard Brown, Donald E. Truitt, Jessalyn M. Nicklas, Erie Jones, Harold Slichenmyer, Eugenia Chapman, Mrs. R. B. Yadon and Henry F. Sander recommended that "the citizens of the two high school districts (211 and 214)...take appropriate steps to bring to the voters of the four townships the proposal that a community college be established."

A referendum, held in March, 1965, established a community college, electing Abraham M. Bernstein, John A. Haas, James J. Hamill, Milton C. Hansen, Richard L. Johnson, Jessalyn M. Nicklas and Paul O'Dea to the first board. By the end of the year, the Board had hired the first president, selected architectural firms to design the campus and retained a consulting firm to make a study of the district to aid in curriculum planning and growth projections.

During the first six months of 1966, the 200-acre campus site was selected, and the College was named William Rainey Harper College, in honor of the outstanding educator who was the first president of the University of Chicago and originator of the community college concept. In the spring, district voters were asked to support the building of the College. A \$7.375 million bond issue referendum passed in June 1966, and in September, \$3.375 million in revenue bonds were sold. By 1967, the architectural master plan was completed and approved. The State of Illinois approved Harper College as an Area Vocational School, setting \$750,000 in trust for the College vocational program. Federal assistance was given in the form of a \$2.6 million grant and the College received the first scholarship, a gift from the employees of U.S. Gypsum Research Center.

The first faculty members were hired, and the first student accepted in January of 1967.

"My very first contact with
Harper College after applying for a
position with the opening college
was with the vice president of
instruction, Dr. Herbert Pankratz.
Dr. Pankratz should be credited for
being the person primarily
responsible for the selection of the
original faculty. Some of us have
since retired, but there are a goodly
number of that original faculty still
present.

"It is impossible to even begin to try to revive the atmosphere which prevailed at that time but anyone who wishes to study early Harper history in depth should make a strong point of looking into the contributions made by this man to the beginning College. Whatever this College is today can be traced somewhat back to him."

John Thompson, former faculty member and administrator A photograph taken of Harper faculty and administrators just prior to the beginning of classes included 66 persons. Twenty-five years later 15 of the 66 are still at the College, a tribute to the initial selection process and to the commitment and loyalty of Harper people. In September classes opened for 1,725 students in temporary facilities at Elk Grove High School.

"The Harper College Library began in a small portion of the Elk Grove High School Library, separated from it by a wall of shelving. Stan Lotko, Bob Thieda, Betty Cwik and some part-time workers began working to assemble a book collection soon after President Robert Lahti was hired so as to have a library by the start of classes. Since there were no faculty to make requests, they worked ordering books from a list published by AAJC called the Opening Day Collection. This was a standard procedure for new developing community college libraries. In the summer of 1967, Lotko left to take another position and my employment began August 15, 1967. "



Ground was broken in October for the first six buildings at the College campus.

"Harper classes started in September 1967, beginning at 4:00 pm, continuing to 10:00 pm, meeting in the classrooms used by the Elk Grove students by day. The administrative offices and one quonset building for faculty were on the back side of the student parking lot. All of these were without

facilities.' On many occasions, the telephone operator, Bea Murphy, who made a great contribution to Harper, and others would make a run across the parking lot to use the school facilities, not too convenient—especially in winter which was soon upon us."

Ambrose Easterly, former director of library services

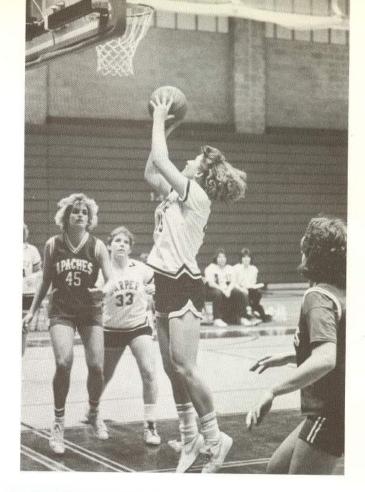
"The Harper College library had one outside direct entrance and some work space on the second floor during the day. The faculty, an excellent group hired by Herb Pancratz and Lahti, came on board just before classes started. George Makas, head of the music department, who stayed on at Harper until he retired after 15 years and was one of the original excellent members of the faculty, came in to look over the library books bought using the Opening Day list. His comment: 'This is a fine collection of music books, but not the ones I would use to teach my music classes.' Our response: 'George, you tell us what books you need to teach your classes, and those are the ones we will buy.' That was the

library's active and continuing acquisition philosophy for all Harper faculty. I hope it still is.

"Donn Stansbury began as director of admissions at Harper College as one of the original staff, a 'plank owner' as the U.S. Navy refers to a person who is one of a ship's original crew. Donn stayed at Harper contributing significantly to Harper's success and helping to develop admission and student policies until he retired, progressing through a number of titles and jobs to vice president for student affairs."

Ambrose Easterly

The second year of classes began with more than 3,700 students enrolled and faculty size doubled



"We started the first organized competition in women's sports on the junior college level. We started out with limited funds and have grown by leaps and bounds to the full schedule of competition today."

Martha Lynn Bolt

"I was a student when the Harper physical plant consisted of two mobiles stationed in the Elk Grove High School parking lot. The role of a mature adult returning to school was a new concept, and numerous times I would be stopped in the halls with a question from students who assumed I must be a teacher."

Florence Dorn

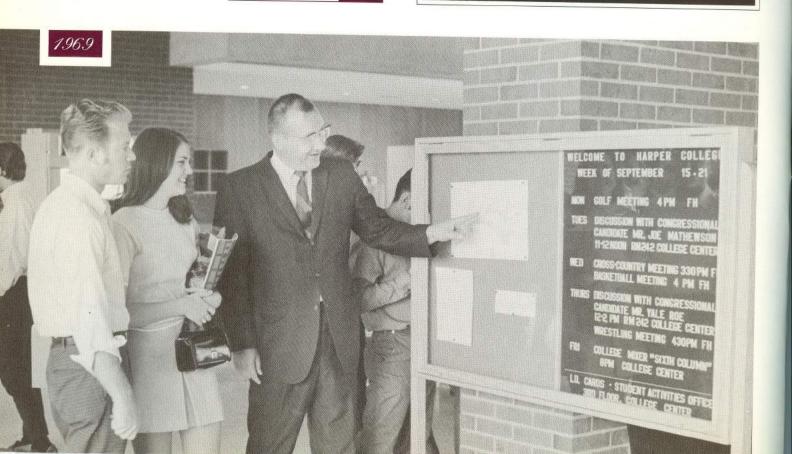
At the first commencement in June of 1969, 114 students received degrees.

"When we first moved into Building A from the Elk Grove High School campus, I worked from 2:00 to 10:00 pm. One morning I was surprised by a call telling me the vice president wanted me to come in right away. I was told the vice president's secretary and her student aide were absent that day and the aide had the keys for the office and files. I had to try several places before accepting the fact that one file key could not be duplicated. Of course that was the one he wanted most."

Betty Marscin, former word processor



Phase I of campus construction was completed on schedule in September of 1969 in time to serve a fall enrollment of 5,400 - a student population two years ahead of the most liberal projections. Students were enrolled in non-credit continuing education courses for adults, which were offered for the first time that fall. Harper and area business and industrial firms began cooperative planning for a series of in-service management conferences.



"I remember the
administrative trailer where I
registered at the southwest
corner of Elk Grove High
School and having Spanish
classes in the high school,
having a tent for dental
students' graduation (when I
played the piano) or was it my
graduation in 1969? I
remember the old stable where
we had golf and gym classes. I
remember when Steve Martin
came to Harper before he was
famous."

Pat Martindale

"One day when we were still in the barn, a group of students snuck a horse past Mr. Gelch's office on the first floor, into my office on the second floor, to my surprise! That's a day I will never forget."

Martha Lynn Bolt
assistant athletic coordinator

The Dental Hygiene Clinic opened in 1969 and in February of 1970, 62 nursing students were "capped" in recognition



"Harper gives students a second chance. Katie received a "D" in Principles of Biology. She didn't pay much attention in class, didn't study very much and giggled quite a bit. A year and a half later, Katie was back in biology. The second time she earned a solid "B" and didn't giggle at all. I asked Katie what had changed. She said, 'After high school, I wanted to party and have fun. I knew going to a four-year school would be a complete waste of money.' So she came to Harper, checked out the college scene and had a great time. After a year and a half, Katie had a career goal and was excited about earning a degree. I could describe her as a hard working student who most instructors would enjoy having in their classes."

Neil Schanker assistant professor of biology Formal dedication of the campus was held on May 3, 1970, with a month-long dedication observance climaxing at the second annual commencement.

"Some of my fondest memories are of the lovely dinners that were held for all staff members at Harper and the entertainment that went along with them. The food was always great and Bea Murphy's wit, Phyllis Scherer's choreography and coaching and the great performances of the staff members really made evenings of fun for the rest of us."

Betty Marscin

With the fall semester, enrollment topped 7,000 as the College continued to grow at a rate two years ahead of projections.

A federally funded adult basic education program opened with a curriculum in English as a Second Language for foreign-speaking residents.

On March 31, 1971, Harper College received full accreditation from the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.

Fall enrollment climbed to 9,193 students and enrollment in continuing education classes increased 46 percent.

"Harper College brings me great memories. In 1973, when I was going to ESL classes I met my husband there. Harper had offered great opportunities to all nonnatives to learn English as a Second Language. I still remember the excellent staff of educators that showed us care, friendship and loving patience to all. These were dedicated teachers like Jeanne Smith and Jean B. Chapman (who I saw a couple of months ago after 18 years) and she remembered me and my name complete by looking at me. It was marvelous! I felt very happy to see such affection. I also worked for Harper a few years ago as an ESL teacher aide for Adult Educational Development (nonnative literacy). I felt proud of this opportunity to help other people to learn English the same way I did. Now I teach preschool children and I feel I owe it to Harper College for the opportunity to learn another language. Thank you for the memories. Love,"

Leydi Sanchez

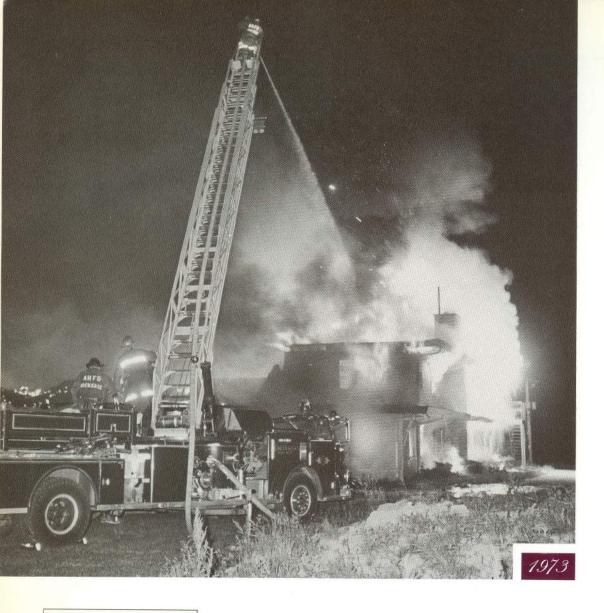
"One August day when
Harper had just started the fall
semester, I brought my young
daughters to school to see the
Canada geese. (They were a
novelty then.) President
McGrath, who was new to
Harper, saw them feeding the
geese and called Ray White to

take a picture, then later sent the picture on to me. Those girls are now married or engaged, graduated from college and both are elementary school teachers in New York State and Indiana."

Solveig Bender, math lab supervisor In the spring of 1972, Harper received approval by the State of Illinois to build a Health Science Complex (Building D) and a Music Wing (Building P). Construction began in June and was funded with 75 percent state monies and 25 percent local funds.

The enrollment crunch of 11,000 students in September 1972, was eased somewhat by the completion in January 1973, of Building T, a 6,000 square foot building adjacent to the power plant which provided interim career/vocational classrooms.





"I remember standing in the parking lot watching my office which was on the second floor of the 'Barn' fall to the first floor, and Mr. Gelch and Dr. Lahti saying, 'There go a lot of memories into a fire.' I remember Dr. Lahti making the decision to let the barn burn, but at the same time letting the P.E. faculty know that we would still have our jobs at Harper."

Martha Lynn Bolt

Harper's fieldhouse, housing all physical education activities, was destroyed by fire in June 1973. This structure was a former stable on the property purchased for the Harper campus in 1966.



Following the loss of the building, the College applied for state approval to construct the permanent physical education facility ahead of the master plan schedule. Denied initially, approval was eventually granted for construction beginning June 1977, with local funds.

The William Rainey Harper College Educational Foundation was established to broaden and enrich the College program through support of projects that could not be funded by the College budget. Some of those projects include a \$25,000 gift from Allstate Insurance for the installation of computer equipment to benefit students with disabilities; a GED scholarship from the Foundation and Motorola to give students further educational opportunities; and the 2+1 Engineering Scholarships funded by Northrop Corporation and Square D Company to give future leaders a boost in their engineering careers.

"Harper College was the first or one of the very first in the United States (world?) to offer child care while parents attended classes. This was a big thing in the early '70s. Somehow (public relations) word got around so that an ABC television crew showed up on the first day of kids' classes. Following the publicity, we were overwhelmed with every imaginable request for information about budget, furnishings, staff and such."

Charles Joly, associate professor of psychology

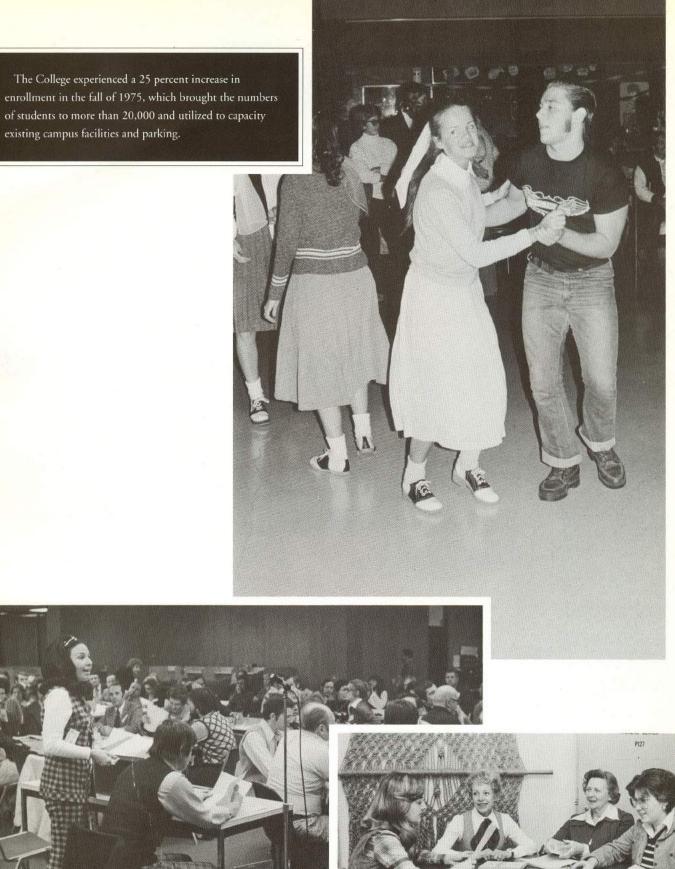
In the fall of 1974, Buildings D and P were opened for classes, as enrollment climbed to 15,500. This growth placed Harper third in the enrollment among the public community colleges in the state.

A successful referendum held in September 1975, approved funds for completion of the original campus, purchase of a second site at Palatine and Schoenbeck Roads in Arlington Heights, and construction of the first phase of buildings on that site when required by enrollment increases.

"During high school, my parents told me that my freshman and senior years of college would be my responsibility, financially, and that they would take care of years 2 and 3. Well, I was not a genius at saving money while in high school, and Harper saved me from going to work full time and allowed me to finish my last three years at Southern Illinois University. I

saved at least \$3,000 by going to Harper, and established a good grade point average along with good study habits. During a summer break from SIU, I took a class at Harper that allowed me to have enough credits to graduate on time in four years, thus saving me more money. Although I only went to Harper for one year, it was a smart, fun and financially rewarding decision."

Matt Gorecki





Buildings G and H were completed in January 1977, and ground breaking for Building M, the Physical Education Center, took place in June. New buildings were designed to be accessible and convenient for disabled students and alterations to original buildings gave easy access to all parts of the campus. Support services were also provided to assist students with various disabilities in achieving success at Harper.



While the 1977-78 enrollment in continuing education classes continued to rise dramatically, the overall College enrollment showed only a modest increase of 5.7 percent, a repeat of the 1976-77 increase.

"I was among those who stayed overnight on campus because of the blizzard in either 1977-78 or 1978-79.

Had a great time even though I had to have my car towed the next day."

Evelyn Peters, clerk typist in the LRC, retired in June 1979

"I am continually amazed at the life stories my students have to relate and how they eventually returned to school. Once such story was about a father who had lost his wife to cancer when she was around 30 years old. He had five children to raise, and with his mother-in-law's help, he succeeded. He returned to GED classes when his youngest child was a senior at Conant. The student, the father, wanted to graduate at the same time as his youngest child."

Mary Pat Fontana, AED adjunct faculty "Another student, a truck driver, decided to return to school when he found he had extra time to study. Two weeks into the class he was promoted to dispatcher and found all his free time gone. He continued classes anyway and earned his GED."

Mary Pat Fontana



The sharp drop in enrollment growth coupled with staggering inflation in all areas of operations resulted in severe financial constraints and reorganization of the College in 1977. Harper's first president, Dr. Robert Lahti, resigned in November. Dr. John Birkholz, vice president of academic affairs, was appointed interim president. In July of 1978, James J. McGrath was selected from 140 candidates as president of Harper College.

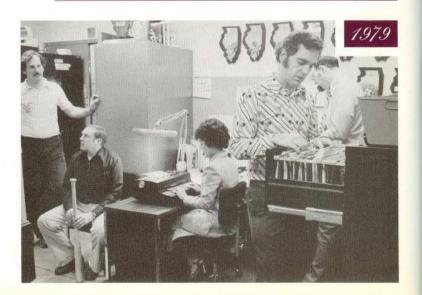
Ground was broken in April 1978 for Buildings I and J, designed to provide laboratory, office and classroom space for the Division of Business and Social Science.

After the defeat of a second referendum, the College continued the campus-wide effort to cut costs and increase revenue. In the fall of 1979, enrollment once again showed a slight increase. An economic downturn and rising tuition costs at four-year colleges made Harper the choice of additional college-bound youth as well as adults seeking new job skills.

Buildings I, J and M were completed and opened to classes during the 1979-80 academic year, and three new transfer programs were initiated in the physical education area.

"Tom McCabe came to a night school class of Ken Jauch's to borrow keys to open the TMPS division office. Having a poor memory, he left with Ken's keyring, which also contained keys to Ken's car. Needless to say, Ken was surprised when he left that night to discover his car keys missing. Tom had to be called to deliver them about 12:30 am."

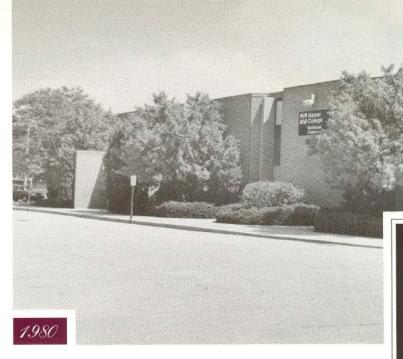
Rich Bernstein, professor of electrical engineering and physics



In August 1980, the
Northeast Center opened
in the Hawthorne School
in Wheeling, and was
relocated in the former
Stevenson School in
Prospect Heights in 1981.
Harper College continued
to attract new students,
and experienced an
enrollment increase of 6.2
percent over the previous
fall.

"We had a student a few years ago who was very excited about attending the GED graduation ceremony. When he didn't show up, the teacher was very concerned and called him the next day to inquire what had happened. He said, 'My wife gave me a surprise graduation party and I was having such a good time I forgot all about attending the ceremony."

Sharon Martin, AED adjunct faculty



"When I was a student senator, the president of the senate did not have a gavel. He had a Nerf football. If anyone got out of order, he threw it at them."

Michael C. Held, staff and 1986 graduate "The best event at Harper College was when a car rolled into the lagoon! Nothing heralds the arrival of spring better than a Volkswagen floating butt up in the water."

Susan Wirkus-Pundurs

In October, the Friends of Harper was organized as a support organization to assist in informing the community about programs and resources offered by the College, as well to serve as a conduit to the College for suggestions from the community. The scholarship program of the Educational Foundation was expanded through donations from several area firms. The

first Award for Excellence was presented to Barbara Fleming-Carney at the 1981 commencement.

In 1981, the growth continued with a fall enrollment of 22,686. During the academic year, the Human Performance Laboratory in Building M began offering fitness workshops to various groups within the community, and prepared to offer a career

program in cardiac exercise technology. In February a permanent exhibition of art owned by the College was opened to the public.

By the end of the spring semester, program planning was in progress for College broadcasting on the cable television network to be installed throughout the district. During the summer months, College officials developed a program in the high technology area of computer aided design and manufacturing (CAD/CAM). The project received support from Governor James Thompson, who had placed emphasis on attracting new industry to Illinois by providing training opportunities which are possible through community college programs. In addition, area high technology firms provided assistance and support in planning for the program. With donation of equipment from Applicon, Inc., an area computer firm, and encouragement from manufacturers interested in using the training program, the College opened the CAD/ CAM Center in the fall. This new facility and accompanying resources greatly expanded Harper's partnership with area industry.

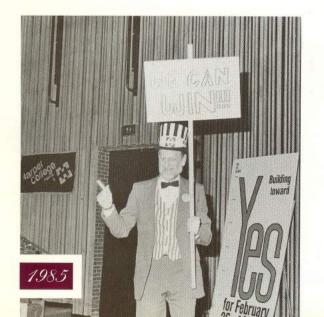
In 1985, Harper College found itself at a financial crossroad. Very simply, revenue was not increasing at the same rate as the cost of goods, services and utilities. Harper College could not continue to offer 1985 services and advantages on a 1965 tax rate. In order to meet the growing needs of the community, a referendum to increase the tax rate was put on the ballot.

An outreach campaign began with the formation of a steering committee in July 1984. The entire Harper community participated in helping to get the word out.

The successful referendum allowed Harper to continue to provide quality education and also resulted in closer ties among faculty, staff and administrators who had worked together so well.







"When I first came to Harper as an adjunct faculty member, I was visited in my class by Harley Chapman, my department chairperson. After the visitation, Harley debriefed me, pointing out several things that he noticed about my teaching. I was very impressed. I had never had such a perceptive and appreciative observation. At that moment I thought, 'If this man is typical of the College, then Harper is a school that takes teaching very seriously.'"

Jerome Stone, professor of philosophy

Transfer Programs

Since Harper College opened classes in 1967, transfer programs have been offered which allow students to complete the first two years of study at Harper and then transfer to a senior institution to continue study toward a baccalaureate degree.

"Regarding the articulation with Northern on initial acceptance of Harper credits, we submitted our desires; they said no; we told them we would encourage our students to attend other state schools and left the meeting. The next morning they called and said they would accept the credits as we requested."

Donn Stansbury, former registrar and vice president of student affairs

Students may prepare for almost any major by fulfilling general education requirements of the first two years at Harper. Over the years, the College has worked to improve articulation with Illinois colleges and to continue building the national reputation for academic excellence enjoyed since its establishment. As a result, transfer students have found ready acceptance of credits earned at Harper in colleges and universities across the country.

"Rick Walsh received an associate degree at Harper, and continued education at Southern Illinois University, earning a bachelor's degree. He attended one year of graduate school at SIU, then continued on to University of Miami at Coral Gables, earning a master's degree at the School of Architecture. He worked for the U.S. government and was a HUD official and city planner for the state of Wisconsin. Rick died January 21, 1991."

Mrs. McDermott (Rick's mom)

One of the reasons for the success of the transfer programs at Harper is the quality of instruction. The highly-qualified faculty provides the transfer student with an excellent foundation for continued study. This is proven in surveys of students who have transferred, and maintained a grade point average as good or better than those students who entered the four-year college freshmen.

"From the first day that Jerry walked into microbiology, I sensed trouble. Jerry did many of the things that annoy teachers - coming to class late or not at all, not paying attention to directions and always looking totally bored. In short, he made it abundantly clear that he wanted to be anywhere except in microbiology. After flunking the first exam, Jerry withdrew from the course. I was not sorry to see him leave and did not expect to see Jerry again. The first week of the next semester, guess who walked in? Inwardly I groaned. But Jerry totally surprised me by apologizing for his behavior last semester and explaining that he had taken care of his 'mental problems.' We shook hands and I sensed a new Jerry, more mature and more motivated. Jerry is taking other courses this semester, but if he retakes microbiology, I don't think I need to worry about him."

Neil B. Schanker

Another reason for successful transfer is Harper's commitment to the individual student. As stated in the transfer section of the first College Bulletin, "Harper College will provide professional counselors to aid the student in the development of his (her) program. Each program will be designed in accordance with the individual needs of the student." This individualized approach is beneficial to every Harper student, and particularly helpful to the student who wishes to tailor a transfer program to meet the requirements of a senior institution.

Career Programs

When classes opened in 1967, students had a choice of eight programs of career preparation. In 1992, more than 60 career programs are offered by Harper College. Throughout the first 25 years of the College's existence, programs have been added to meet the employment demands created by expanding technol-

ogy, new business in the area and to meet the changing needs of residents of the College district. The growth in scope and number of career programs instituted by Harper College over the years reflects the dynamic economy of the region served by the College.

Continuing Education

"Harper's entry into the continuing education field began with the offering of classes in Barrington."

"In addition to the usual benefits acquired from ballroom dancing, i.e., physical fitness, mental relaxation, emotional expression and social skills, a 'romantic' benefit has emerged. Because our classes include single men and women as well as couples and our rotating system allows everyone to meet each other, six marriages have resulted so far. The added benefit for us is all the enjoyment we have attending so many weddings!"

Marilyn and Hank Turek,

ballroom dance instructors

"During my freshman year in College (1984-85), there was an incredible number of geese living around the north ponds that lie between the Euclid Avenue parking lots and the north buildings where most of my classes were. And with the geese came goose poop

- lots of it. Dodging it on the way to classes became a daily routine and a great way to exercise! Is this still a dubious 'Harper tradition'?"

Matt Gorecki

Community Orientation and Involvement

The College has continued to add offerings over the years in response to community needs, adding graduate extension credit courses offered by Illinois colleges and universities. Management training and development seminars were designed to meet the needs of area businesses. A special women's program was developed relating to women's changing roles and family life and assisting with reentry to college or the workplace. By offering courses at off-campus locations such as high schools, industrial plants and local government offices, the College has brought credit and non-credit classes even closer to district residents. Specialized programs for employees of public service departments and tailored training for business/industrial workers are offered on-site.

The general areas in which courses are offered now include business management, personal finance, secretarial, microprocessors, small computers and programming, data processing, photography, fine arts, homemaking arts, law, airline services, foreign languages, dance, physical education, CAD and manufacturing and the College Level Examination Program (CLEP). The continuing education courses and seminars have shown a 377% increase in enrollment from the fall semester of 1976 (180), to the fall semester of 1991 (858). The number of sections offered increased from 133 to 680.

College/Community Cultural Events

Over the years, the College has presented a wide variety of cultural arts programs for students, staff and area residents. The modestly priced programs have featured well-known performers and lecturers.

The music department presents several concerts each semester featuring choral and instrumental groups with membership drawn from students, faculty and staff and community residents. These groups are also represented in the cast, crew and orchestra for spring and fall productions of the Harper College Theatre. The dinner/theatre evening offered for each production has become an event anticipated by the community every semester.

The art department regularly offers exhibits of work by student and faculty artists and annually hosts the National Print and Drawing Competition. The activity calendar each semester has included films, recitals and master classes, art exhibits and lunch hour entertainment.

From the beginning, the College board and administration have been committed to the concept of an institution oriented to its community. Harper has enjoyed and benefited from a heartening involvement and interest by members of the community who continue to give countless hours to accomplish key phases of the College's programs.

Advisory committee members selected from the community for their expertise and knowledge give support to Harper on career programs, management training seminars for business and industry, women's programs, senior citizens' programs, public relations, the College's long range plan and fund raising.

Community leaders serve as volunteer directors of the Harper College Educational Foundation, which provides scholarships, supports special educational seminars and funds curriculum development projects of faculty to enhance the educational programs of the College.

President James McGrath retired from Harper College in 1988 and went on to pursue other interests. The new president, Paul N. Thompson, came on board and immediately issued a challenge: to "build community" at Harper College. The community and College personnel responded to the new president's challenge and embarked on a process to form a shared vision to carry the College into the 21st century.

A total of 72 focus groups made up of College personnel and community members met over a 16-month period and produced a document called "Our Preferred Future." The statement enumerated 12 goals which continue to guide the activities of Harper College. The cornerstone of that document is quality teaching and active learning. Like the community it serves, Harper has mirrored the changes in its service district.

From the beginning, the
College has aimed at the highest
educational standards and
maintained an ongoing internal
evaluation. In that same spirit of
reaching and setting new goals,
the College is now implementing
the Preferred Future plan and
continues to call upon community members to be involved in
the future of Harper College.

Meeting the needs of new technology, expanding enrollment, diversity and a global economy will continue to present a challenge to the Harper community.

For the first time since 1979, new construction is taking place. A classroom building which will house a new bookstore and art studios is to be completed by December of 1993. The new building will connect Buildings P and F, providing an inside passageway from Building A to Building F.

The new construction will help alleviate the space needs attributable to the growing student population, which peaked at 28,000 in the fall of 1991. Projections for 1992-93 show that trend will continue.

Changing, Growing,
Responding describes the spirit of the past 25 years at Harper College. Concepts such as the Preferred Future, Strategic Planning and Quality have become more than just esoteric ideas for a few. The Harper administration, faculty and staff are translating these concepts into very specific goals and objectives.

The Silver Anniversary
Celebration year (1992-93)
is a special opportunity to
highlight the accomplishments of the Harper faculty,
staff and students, to
recognize the contributions to
the College from the
community, and to say thank
you to all our partners in
education.

The Silver Anniversary also provides a time to reflect on Yesterday's Dream, while facing Today's Reality and looking forward to Tomorrow's Promise.

As Harper plans for the future, community participation will continue to be sought as an important element in developing programs and resources for the community.

