FROM LEAD & ZINC TO
Blue & Gold

THE EXPANSION OF
Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College
VOLUME II: 1944-1969
This history is dedicated to all Golden Norsemen, past, present, and future.

“Once a Norseman, Always a Norseman”

Very special thanks to Dr. Charles Angle, whose personal recollections breathed life into a collection of names and dates and brought NEO’s history to life for a whole new generation.

© 2015 Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College
When I arrived at NEO A&M College more than five years ago, the name of former NEO President Bruce G. Carter hung in the campus air, synonymous with NEO’s tradition of excellence.

Through stories shared with me by faculty and staff, alumni, and members of the local community, it is clear that it was Dr. Carter’s guidance which first established NEO’s superior reputation in both academics and athletics. It was his leadership that provided an enduring springboard for generations of students, because his is the ultimate example of what can be accomplished, both in education and in life, when great effort is applied for the betterment of our community and ourselves.

During Dr. Carter’s 26-year tenure at NEO, the college entered an unprecedented phase of expansion and growth. Stories of his courage in accepting the challenge of a small junior college in northeast Oklahoma, his success in fundraising for capital improvements, his press for improved and expanded academic programs, all achieved through his enduring example of hard work, inspires us to this day.

It’s fairly simple to list how much money he raised, how many buildings he constructed, how enrollment grew, but it’s more important to paint a portrait of his character. Something of that portrait takes shape in the history that follows: “From Lead and Zinc to Blue and Gold: The Expansion of Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College, Volume II: 1944 – 1969,” which is as much the story of one man’s influence as it is the founding of NEO’s Golden Norse Tradition.

While I regret I did not have the opportunity to know Dr. Carter personally, like many people in our community, I have been inspired by his example. In the leadership of Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College, Dr. Carter set the bar high. I am privileged to inherit his mantle of leadership and honored to have my time at NEO referred to as a renaissance of “the Carter years.”

As we approach the college’s centennial, I hope you enjoy Volume II of NEO A&M College’s history and find inspiration in our great Blue and Gold tradition.

Jeffrey L. Hale
President, NEO A&M College
In 1943, Northeastern Oklahoma Junior College, formerly the Miami School of Mines, sat on the banks of a rural creek in Oklahoma’s Ottawa County, with five empty buildings, six faculty members, and a shortage of funds. Enrollment had been diminished by the war effort, the post-war outlook for the mines was uncertain, and the relevancy of the college curriculum was in question. Although faculty salaries were extremely low, it was difficult to justify keeping the college open.
The young Bruce G. Carter, state director of the National Youth Administration program, was asked to consider the position of college president. No one would have blamed him for turning down the assignment, but where others saw problems, Bruce Carter saw opportunity.

Since the age of 15, Bruce Carter had been working hard, then working harder, to build a life from adversity. Forced to drop out of school in the 8th grade to support his family, Carter returned to his education at 19 and put himself through school in record time. After finishing his studies in only two years, then completing his bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degrees, Carter proposed to Miss Nola Funderburk and launched his career as an educator. He taught history and speech, became class sponsor, directed theater productions, developed an interest in politics, ran for Congress, was appointed Postmaster, and eventually acquired such a reputation for tireless work that he drew the attention of state and national leaders, including Oklahoma Governor Robert S. Kerr, who suggested Carter employ his energy and ambition on behalf of a struggling junior college in rural Oklahoma.
The Carter family arrived in Miami, Oklahoma, in March of 1943 and Bruce immediately began building and promoting an educational empire. He began by expanding the existing curriculum and program offerings, made a practice of hiring faculty members with advanced degrees, and developed new programs to meet the needs of the post-war economy.
In the early years of his leadership at the college, Dr. Carter served as administrator, public information director, instructor, counselor and even head resident of one of the dorms. Under his leadership, the floundering industrial school transformed into one of the finest junior colleges in the country. The most enduring change for the college came when Carter asked the state legislature to change the school’s name from Northeastern Oklahoma Junior College to the current Northeastern Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, to reflect what he knew to be important keys to the economic future of the state and the nation.
By 1946, a 248-acre farm had been purchased and agricultural courses added to the basic curriculum. Soon the Livestock Judging Team achieved national recognition and became a real source of pride for the college. NEO's reputation in the academic and agricultural community was growing.
Next came the purchase of the “North Campus,” the former facilities of the Spartan School of Aeronautics, which were converted into student housing, food service and shop buildings to support vocational and industrial education courses. Dr. Carter knew these programs would be important keys to the economic future of the state and the nation.
Later the college would institute a fine arts program, including music, art, drama and stagecraft, bringing national recognition to the once declining school of mines. By the time the North Central Association reaffirmed the school’s accreditation in 1949, Dr. Carter had brought about nothing less than a complete metamorphosis of the college.
Prior to Dr. Carter’s arrival, several of the school’s programs of study were of questionable application for a college degree. With a new emphasis on programs of vocational and technical training, including data processing, auto mechanics and home economics, the college expanded to one of the most modern schools in the nation.
To support these programs, the college also instituted an ambitious building program of student living facilities, offices and classroom space.

The first new building was Cunningham Hall, constructed in 1952, followed by a Physical Education Building in 1956, which featured a tiled swimming pool; Copen Hall opened in 1958, followed by the Student Union in 1960; finally the Library-Administration building opened in 1967, followed in 1968 by an impressive Fine Arts Center with a 900-seat auditorium.
With new programs and climbing enrollment, campus housing became a priority, and a new dormitory, Dyer Hall, was opened in 1960, followed by Russell and Vann Halls in 1965. Married couples also found homes at NEO when the city of Miami, in cooperation with the college, built 52 apartments on campus in 1964, as the City of Miami’s Urban Renewal plans took into account the expansion of the college.
The college was growing so quickly there were even periods of time when a number of temporary buildings had to be acquired with the help of the federal government. But it was all worth it to Dr. Carter, who believed that junior colleges had a vital role to play in the patterns of higher education.

"Junior colleges offer an opportunity to many young people to begin their higher education close to home [...] and can offer more personal care and direction to students during their first two years of college."

- Brace G. Carter
Prior to Dr. Carter’s presidency the condition of NEO’s physical facilities matched its bleak enrollment picture. World War II followed an economic depression, during which time and money for colleges was scarce, until the GI Bill provided financial aid to veterans. Enrollment at the junior college rose for a while, declined during the Korean conflict and settled into a steady uphill climb when veterans returned for good in 1953.
By the 1960’s, extensive construction on campus had begun, assisted by funding from the federal government through the Urban Renewal Agency.

The approval of a long-range campus development plan signaled the beginning of a period of unprecedented physical expansion for the school. Between 1949 and 1969, more than 20 buildings were constructed, most named in honor of faculty members who gave years of loyal and dedicated service to the college.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAJOR CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS SINCE 1921</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PROJECT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHIPLEY HALL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GYMNASIUM (OLD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KAH-NE-YOU-AH HALL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMONS HALL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DYER HOUSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MACHINE SHOP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIBRARY - ADMINISTRATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABLES HALL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRESIDENTS HOME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUNNINGHAM HALL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WOODWORKING SHOP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COPEN HALL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHYSICAL ED. BUILDING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DYER HALL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STUDENT UNION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAINTENANCE BUILDING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LINDSEY APARTMENTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPEAKER APARTMENTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RUSSELL HALL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAN HALL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHANEY APARTMENTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEED APARTMENTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HARRILL -DOBSON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GYMNASIUM (NEW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FINE ARTS CENTER</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Melvin Shipley, Gladys Copen, Joe Ables, Frank W. Cunningham and Don and Marian Dyer all had academic classroom buildings named after them, while student housing was named for William M. Russell, Faye Vann, Virginia Lindsey, Merrill Chaney, Oran Need, and Mabel Speaker.

It is fitting that we remember the men and women who shared their time and talents with a generation of NEO students by continuing to honor their names on campus today. Even more appropriate was the naming of the Student Union for Dr. Carter, whose commitment to students was matched by the respect the students of NEO A&M College felt for their president.
Not content with only new construction, Dr. Carter also instigated a rigorous campus beautification program in cooperation with the new NEO Alumni Association and local community. Their first project was to close J Street NE and create a grassy central mall area for students. Next came the addition of the Lions Club fountain, the chimes tower and reflecting pool, lighted fire pits and discussion of a statue of the school mascot. It was Dr. Carter’s goal to develop the college into an area of great beauty.

“\nI hope to make NEO the beauty spot of the state.\n”

Bruce G. Carter
The final tier of Dr. Carter’s campaign to make NEO one of the leading junior colleges in the nation was the establishment of a strong Alumni Association. He worked hard to establish ties with local business and community leaders, encouraging them to sponsor scholarships for deserving young men and women. From his efforts emerged one of the most outstanding endowment programs among junior colleges, dramatically improving the quality of education and serving the three-fold purpose of preparing students for service in a useful and profitable vocation, affording hundreds an opportunity to secure a liberal education, and qualifying students for advancement into various professional schools and universities.
Students

Whether students were seeking a terminal program, pre-professional training, courses of community and recreational interest, or night school for leisure learning, NEO’s open admission policy and growing reputation brought enthusiastic students to NEO’s door.

TEST SCHEDULE, SECOND SEMESTER 1964-1965

May 14-25-65

3, 4, and 5 hour classes — Also 1 and 2 hour classes meeting on the same days as the 3, 4, and 5 hour classes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classes regularly meeting on Monday and Friday at:</th>
<th>Test Schedule For:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5:00 o'clock</td>
<td>Monday 9-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00 o'clock</td>
<td>Monday 10-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 o'clock</td>
<td>Monday 12-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 o'clock</td>
<td>Monday 1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 o'clock</td>
<td>Monday 3-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00 o'clock</td>
<td>Monday 5-7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 and 2 hour classes — Also 3, 4, and 5 hour classes meeting on the same days as the regular 2 hour classes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classes regularly meeting on Tuesday and Thursday at:</th>
<th>Test Schedule For:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5:00 o'clock</td>
<td>Tuesday 9-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00 o'clock</td>
<td>Tuesday 10-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 o'clock</td>
<td>Tuesday 1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00 o'clock</td>
<td>Tuesday 3-5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students

Since the early days of the school, students had taken it upon themselves to organize social clubs and occasions, eager to take part in the collegial atmosphere of the college. Students were as excited as alumni to build new traditions at the college, and rallied around their favorite clubs and faculty members with enthusiasm.
During Hell Week, “Freshers” rolled up their pants legs, wore their clothing inside out, routinely got tossed into water tanks, and sported the famous NEO green beanies, which signified their lower social status on campus. Epic Tug-of-War battles were staged, resulting in the losing class being forced to perform ridiculous stunts designed by the victors. Many good memories and lifelong friendships began on the green lawns of NEO.
For entertainment, students often attended club meetings and socials, played cards or pool in the union, and listened to the weekly radio-show “The Voices of Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College,” which could be heard every Tuesday evening at 5:30 on KGLC.

The average date was just to go to the student union for a Coke. A guy was a really big spender if he took you to a movie,” recalled Karen Neer, class of 1959-60.
Dances were always popular on campus, especially during “Now or Never” week, when the tables were turned on unsuspecting male students as girls did the asking on dates and footed the bill. To organize student activities and cultural events, the NEO Student Senate elected their own President Carter, John Carter, son of NEO’s popular president, to lead the way.
And for Homecoming, the staff of the “Viking” yearbook added a touch of movie star glamour to their publication by asking celebrities like Bing Crosby, Jerry Lewis, Van Heflin to judge contests for Homecoming and Viking Queen. Whether it was Hollywood or hometown, popular dramas, comedies and musicals made for excellent entertainment in NEO’s new Fine Arts auditorium.
"We have been so fortunate here in the type of young people we have as students. I'm very proud of them."

– Dr. Bruce G. Carter
Students

For recruitment purposes, the college established a wide variety of events designed to engage potential students and expose them to campus life. These events included Senior Day, Aggie Day, various musical festivals, a science fair, Engineering Day, Homecoming, a local high-school basketball tournament, the annual Town and Gown dinner, a Fall Freshman Mixer, various dramatic and musical productions and Sunday dinners in the cafeteria.
World Student Service Fund
Sponsored by the Beatrice W. Hildreth Foundations at American Universities; International Student Services; U.S. Committee on Cooperation; National Federation; United States National Student Association; and the United Student Christian Council in the U.S.A.

President: Bruce O. Carter
Northeastern Oklahoma A & M College
Musk, Oklahoma

Dear President Carter,

Yesterday our traveling secretary, Miss Sonia Greens, was in the office and told me of her trip to Northeastern Oklahoma A & M several weeks ago. Sonia said that she planned to see you and Mrs. Carter and I do want to thank you for your generous hospitality accorded her. It was indeed nice of you to have her in your home.

As you know, at that time, we did not have a NSSF drive on your campus last year. It is my hope that this year your students will have a most successful campaign. There are still places in the world where student conditions are tragic. Thus we must do all we can to help alleviate these conditions.

We feel too, that we are doing a real international educational job among American students. I thought you might be interested in the enclosed booklet which is a reprint of an article written by our national executive, Mr. Kitchen, for the March issue of the American College Bulletin. The article best explains the international work of NSSF.

Again, thank you for your interest and cooperation in our work.

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

Isabel Quinlan Martin
Regional Secretary

International Students

Not content to merely recruit local and regional students, the college also actively recruited young people from all over the world to NEO. From as far away as the Middle East and South America, international students made their way to northeast Oklahoma to join the NEO family.
The college’s most effective recruitment tool was a championship athletic program, and local high schools were invited to take part in celebrating the Norsemen’s success. Local high school bands were featured prominently in homecoming parades and invited to campus games that showcased NEO’s growing prominence in athletics.
Norse Tradition Established

As a master of public relations and advocate of physical as well as intellectual pursuits, Dr. Carter understood the importance of a highly successful program in intercollegiate athletics, to make the “Golden Norsemen” synonymous with excellence.

He began by hiring NEO head football coach S.A. “Red” Robertson, a man whose stature on the NEO campus would eventually become as legendary as Dr. Carter’s own.
But poor funding and a lack of male students didn’t stop Robertson from accepting the job or instilling in his “Vikes” the expectation that they would someday be champions.

“One of the first things we did when we came here in 1945 was tell the players that no one beats us on our field.” They also refashioned the existing school mascot, a Viking, into the Golden Norseman, evoking a spirit of strength and conquest for the team to rally around.
Finally, Coach Robertson placed pictures of former All-Americans on the wall of the locker room and reminded every player they had a responsibility to be great.

His strategy worked, culminating in three Junior Rose Bowl Invitations for the Golden Norcena.
EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL

Junior Rose Bowl Game

ORANGE COAST COLLEGE
VS. NORTHEASTERN OKLAHOMA A & M

MESA, CALIFORNIA
MIAMI, OKLAHOMA

GOLDEN NORMESEN

1963

PASADENA ROSE BOWL
1 P.M.
DECEMBER 14, 1963

This program published for the Pasadena Jr. Chamber of Commerce by Loggin Printing & Binding Co.,
74 N. Raymond Avenue, Pasadena, California. Sponsorship: 7-7149.
Over 22 years, Coach Robertson enjoyed 21 winning seasons and a career record of 162-49-7 overall. Following a heart attack at the beginning of the 1966 season, Coach Robertson retired as head coach of the Golden Norsemen, but remained at NEO as Dean of Men and Financial Aid Director until 1976.
While Dr. Carter expressed pride in the record of the NEO football team, it was the Norse Stars, NEO’s impressive all-girl precision drill team whose performances impressed and charmed crowds during half-time shows across the nation, that Dr. Carter dubbed “his team.”

Organized in 1951 by the president himself, the Norse Stars displayed poise and charisma wherever they went, gaining a national reputation for impressive performances and drawing many fans for the Golden Norsemen.

Back at home, the Norse Stars performed on campus, in city parades, and at community events to great acclaim. They were Dr. Carter’s not-so-secret public relations weapon and one of NEO’s most beloved traditions, enduring to this day.
When Dr. Carter assumed leadership of NEO in 1943, the campus consisted of 5 buildings, employed 6 instructors, and was graduating 10 students a year.

Two and a half decades later, NEO could boast a campus of 25 modern buildings, regularly enrolled 2500 students each term, employed 86 professional faculty, and routinely graduated classes of 400 students.

Until the day he left NEO, the retiring president retained his warmth and regard for young people, giving of his personal and financial resources as well as time with a disarming generosity. Even after the construction of the president’s home, a Georgian brick home on the west side of campus, later named Carter House in honor of its first occupants, Dr. Carter would often walk to his office and back home down the mall, stopping to visit with the students in whom he had invested so much during his career.
Off campus, Dr. Carter was known as a civic leader, church member, and family man who pursued his ambitions in an objective and moral way, and regarded his long career of public service as part of his stewardship responsibilities. Dr. Carter’s induction into the Oklahoma Association of Community Colleges Hall of Fame in October 2014 was a testament to his dedication to the field of education, his interest in improving the quality of instruction, and his commitment to bettering the lives of Oklahoma’s junior college students.

Dr. Bruce Carter was nothing less than a pioneer in junior college education and a shining model for the students he loved as they and NEO A&M College entered the latter half of the 20th century.