

# DIXIE STATE

MAGAZINE



SPRING 2011



INSIDE: *Reviewing Dixie's 2nd Half Century*

# THE COLLEGE

*a Community Built*

by Lyman Hafen, '77

DIXIE STATE  
COLLEGE OF UTAH



100  
Years

Thanks to wise leadership and the can-do community attitude known as the “Dixie Spirit,” the College embarked upon its second fifty years with hopes as bright as the Dixie sun.

Ever since its doors first opened under the noble sandstone arch on Main Street in 1911, each decade of Dixie’s history could justly be described as the school’s “Golden Age.” But for hundreds of alumni now reaching their own golden years, the 1950s and 60s truly were the “good old days.” They were the middle years of the College’s first century, years marked with challenges and triumphs, with old traditions and new visions—a kind of crossroads where things could have gone different directions. Yet thanks to wise leadership and the can-do community attitude known as the Dixie Spirit, the College embarked upon its second fifty years with hopes as bright as the Dixie sun.

Among the many notable Dixie students of that era was a St. George boy named Jeffrey Holland. Native born with red sand eternally embedded in his shoes, he embodied all that Dixie stood for in those days. An excellent scholar and a fine athlete, he and his classmates loved their home town and appreciated the sacrifice their forbears had made to transform a pioneer village into a burgeon-



**PART II DIXIE'S 2ND HALF CENTURY**

ing modern community. They would make the most of what Dixie College offered and use it to catapult themselves into the big wide world where they would make their mark for good. Jeffrey Holland went on to earn a doctorate at Yale. He became an acclaimed teacher, a proven administrator, and eventually became president of Brigham Young University. Today he is a world-wide religious leader. Exactly 50 years after he came to Dixie College, construction began on the institution’s most impressive edifice to date: the Jeffrey R. Holland Centennial Commons Building.

And yet, in 1961, Dixie College was still housed in the original sandstone building on Main Street and still shared its halls with the 11th and 12th graders of Dixie High School. It wasn’t until 1963 that the College officially moved from its original home on Main Street to the new campus on a sage brush flat along the eastern edge of St. George. In 1966, Dixie High School moved to its present campus on 700 South, leaving the original Dixie Building to become part of Woodward Junior High School. More recently, the building has been completely restored

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*Above: Work on the new College Gymnasium, located on 700 East in St. George, was completed in 1957, but it remained the only building on the new campus until 1961, when the Fine Arts Building was completed.*

## THE COLLEGE *a Community Built*

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by the City and serves as the St. George Arts Center.

During those golden years of the 1950s and 60s, Dixie's athletic teams became known as the "Rebels." The name "Dixie" had been the affectionate nickname of the region since the first Mormon settlers arrived in the 1850s to grow cotton. The "Rebel" mascot was adopted in January 1952, and grew more and more dear through the decades as it became synonymous with winning sports programs like Sark Arslanian's legendary football teams packed with All-Americans, and Doug Allred's thrilling basketball teams manned with the likes of future national business leader Nolan Archibald, and future NBA star Lionel Hollins. During those years football games were played in the Sun Bowl and basketball was contested on the shiny hardwood of the Dixie Gymnasium which at the time was the largest public building in the community, even though it stood virtually alone in the alkali and creosote, well beyond the edge of town.

President Arthur Bruhn's vision for Dixie College required the campus be move to the east side of town where it could grow on the six city blocks purchased with donated community funds. The gymnasium opened in

1957, but it was not until the early 1960s that state funding allowed for more buildings to pop up on the new campus. In the fall of 1963, with the completion of the Fine Arts Building, the Home Economics Building, the Science Building, a heating plant, a cafeteria and the Shiloh Dorm, 375 college students began classes on the new campus. Dixie's second half-century was underway, and the sky was the limit.

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It was a heady time for the faculty, students and community, yet, as was always the case in this isolated corner of the state, it came only after much sacrifice and hard work. And lest anyone get too proud, there were no sidewalks, grass or parking in the beginning, and the dust on the new campus was so pervasive those first years the female students wore tennis shoes to trudge through the dirt and mud until they could get inside and change to their dress shoes. For several

years a recurring student government project was to recruit volunteers to help plant grass.

The College and the town suffered a blow when President Bruhn succumbed to cancer in July of 1964. His successor, Ferron Losee, came from California with his own vision for Dixie College. His idea was to create a true community college that would grow in enrollment and facilities. In fact, he foresaw an enrollment much larger than most had imagined, with a great deal of emphasis on vocational programs that would attract new students.

Three new buildings were constructed for vocational education. The auto mechanics program was expanded and an aero-tech curriculum was offered for airplane body and engine building. By the end of Losee's era in 1976, a new library had been built, along with a student center, a liberal arts building, the Shenandoah Dorms (later named Nisson Towers), an administration building, the Tanner Fountain, the mosaic mural on the Fine Arts Building, and extensive landscaping. Enrollment had swelled to more than 1,200 students.

With the arrival of President Rolfe Kerr in 1976, a new era began at Dixie that would result in creation of the original Dixie Center which was built on the college campus. The actual construction of the center occurred during the presidency of Alton Wade who

won the support of the city, the county, most of the towns within the county, as well as the state legislature and many private donors. Approval of the Dixie Center required a leap of faith by the majority of Dixie's citizens and it was not an easy sell. A formidable movement against it was mounted as some felt it was too big and too much to place on the backs of taxpayers. When the dust finally settled, southern Utah had a much needed 5,300-seat indoor arena (the Burns Arena), a 1,200-seat auditorium (the Cox Auditorium), a formidable convention hall, a swimming pool, and other amenities. And when funding ran out before the landscaping had been put in, Rod Orton and other community and business leaders rallied in much the same way the Dixie Education Alliance had done in the 1930s and 1950s, by creating the "Spirit of Dixie Committee." The committee raised private money and in-kind donations to install the Dixie Center's landscaping, sidewalks and parking. Once again, the community had come through to ensure the future of Dixie College.

During the administrations of Presidents Douglas Alder and Robert Huddleston, the community continued to help build the college campus. Hansen Stadium, where the Dixie Rebels opened their 1984 football season, was built entirely by donations, as were the Bell Tennis Courts, the Bruce Hurst Baseball Field, and the Cooper Softball Complex.

The 1980s proved to be another golden era for athletics at Dixie College. On March 23, 1985, coach Neil Roberts' Dixie Rebel basketball team won the NJCAA National Championship by defeating Kankakee College of Illinois 57-55. It was Dixie's first national title. Coach Greg Croshaw built a powerhouse football program that was perennially ranked at the top of the national standings.

In 1986, campus leaders, under the direction of vice president Stan Plewe, visited other junior college campuses in the West to determine how best to integrate computers into Dixie's program. It led to a computer master plan resulting in the creation of several student labs, and a decade later the Smith Computer Center was established in the former Dixie Center convention hall. Soon the entire campus was computerized and computer curriculum was greatly expanded.

During the latter part of the 1990s a movement began within the community that

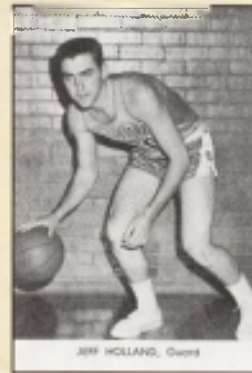
would change the school forever. For more than 80 years the college had offered no more than two-year degrees. The school prided itself in being one of the finest community colleges in the country, but the rapid growth of St. George and Washington County was creating the need for Dixie to offer more. Enrollment was growing and so was the market for four-year degrees, but the vision of the State Board of Regents was for Dixie to remain a two-year institution. It became evident that if Dixie College was ever going to break out of its mold, it would again require an appeal to the state legislature, and that meant another groundswell of community support.

In much the same way as other important initiatives took off in previous decades, a grass-roots community effort was mounted to gain approval for a limited number of four-year degrees at Dixie. Key local leaders formed a committee under the

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Washington County Economic Development Council, chaired by Maureen Booth and advised by local attorney Tim Anderson, to lead a political campaign at the state legisla-

*Work has begun on the Jeffrey R. Holland Centennial Commons Building, which will be named after Holland, who was a student leader and athlete at Dixie College 50 years ago.*



*Above: Workers painstakingly place mosaic tiles on the Fine Arts Building facade. The building was completed and ready for classes in 1961, but the mural wasn't added until 1975.*

ture to expand the role of the college. Senator Bill Hickman led the crusade at the Utah Legislature, and Dixie College Vice President Tad Derrick, taking leave from his position for two months, helped spearhead the lobbying effort. After a complicated battle with the State Board of Regents and the Legislature, excellent leadership and tireless community effort won the day.

In March of 1999, Governor Michael Leavitt signed a bill authorizing the granting of two bachelor's degrees at Dixie—in business administration and computer science. The Board of Regents soon changed the institution's name to Dixie State College of Utah. Since that time more than 20 bachelor's degrees have been added. It was a monumental step toward what more and more college supporters saw as Dixie's destiny: university status.

Another community-driven project emblematic of the Dixie Spirit was underway as the 20th Century came to a close. The

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# THE COLLEGE *a Community Built*

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Rotary Club again played a key role in creating the Encampment Mall, a large green space in the middle of campus near where the original St. George pioneers camped upon their arrival in the valley late in 1861. The mall's statues and landscaping enhance the campus in a beautiful and meaningful way. Again, the funding and labor came from community donations.

Dixie's evolution into a four-year institution meant that its athletic programs would no longer compete on the junior college level. In 2006, Dixie's sports teams made a huge jump to NCAA Division II affiliation. In 2009, much to the consternation of many die-hard Rebel fans, the nickname for Dixie's athletic teams was changed to "Red Storm." Change is never easy and large numbers of college supporters found it difficult to give up the Rebel moniker. Many are still adamant that it should be changed back. Yet as time passes, the new nickname is growing on the current generation of students.

The nickname change came during the latter part of the new century's first decade. At the same time, the College's board of trustees was seriously considering the possibility of becoming affiliated with the University of Utah, a move that could potentially gain the school university status more quickly and efficiently than natural evolution would. The issue created a rift in the community as many touted the undeniable benefits of joining the state's prestigious university,



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while others felt strongly that Dixie, as it has so many times before, should remain in charge of its own destiny and grow to university status on a natural course determined by local leaders and its always loyal community.

As Dixie State College of Utah stands at the threshold of its second century, two monumental developments underscore the leadership of current president Stephen Nadauld. Ground has been broken for the new Jeffrey R. Holland Centennial Commons Building, and the Utah State Board of Regents has approved DSC's plan to pursue university status. The College begins its second century

with more than 9,000 students and the way is now open for this venerable institution, so beloved by its community, to soon become a regional state university.

As President Nadauld recently said, "Dixie has a glorious past and an extremely bright future. We are on a wonderful upward trajectory—there



*Jocelyn Palmer, student body president, and Maureen Booth, chair of the citizen committee, are elated knowing their hard work finally paid off.*

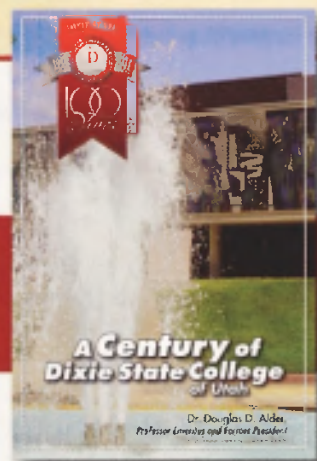
*Left: Legislators Steve Urquhart, David Clark, Bud Bowman, and Bill Hickman stand by for the signing of House Bill by Governor Leavitt.*

will be 10,000 students in the blink of an eye. Dixie is emerging from a singular time in its century-long past. It has been a tremendous period of growth and transformation with all the accompanying adjustment and accomplishment that such vast progress will encounter. Dixie will continue the move to university status with the same spirit that has served it so well since doors first opened to this institution. The character of this college—its students, faculty and staff—as well as the alumni and community that support its success are still the cornerstone which Dixie State builds upon and which will help it realize the goal of university status."

The spirit of which President Nadauld speaks is the spirit of cooperation and loyalty that began more than a hundred years ago when townfolk donated precious nickels and dimes to build the original Dixie Academy. It continues today as citizens and alumni give in many ways to perpetuate an institution that has made such a difference in their lives.

It's the same Dixie Spirit that historian and Dixie College professor Karl Larson tried to capture in words decades ago. "I find it difficult to put into words what Dixie College has meant and still means to us here," he wrote. "It has been and remains the cultural heart of Utah's Dixie. It has meant the broadening of individual and community horizons.... From its halls have gone forth good citizens, men and women who have had their hearts touched with a desire for knowledge. They have made their mark for good all over the world...sharing with others that which they received in Dixie."

—Research & Contributions by Doug Alder



Keep a permanent copy of Dixie State's inspirational history in your home.

**A CENTURY of  
Dixie State College  
of Utah**

by Douglas D. Alder  
Professor Emeritus and Former  
President of Dixie State College

Available at the Dixie State College Bookstore  
<http://bookstore.dixie.edu/home.aspx>

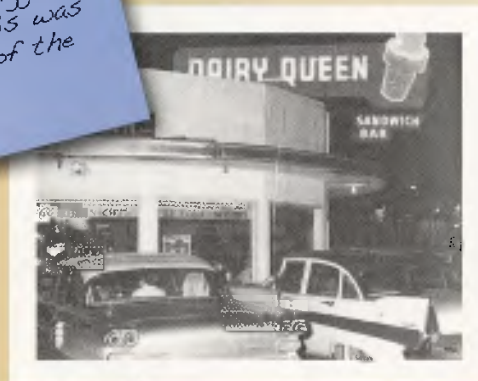
# DIXIE COLLEGE

## Timeline

“My Dad had taken me to basketball games in the big gym. We watched the tallest man I'd ever seen, Nolan Archibald, play ball there. The way everyone talked about Archibald, I put him in the same category as the men in the Bible we learned about at Sunday School. And I figured that gymnasium was the biggest building on earth. This was my first real taste of the "Dixie Spirit."  
-Lyman Hafen



New campus with no sidewalks or grass is so dusty, girls wore tennis shoes to get through the mud and dirt until they got inside the building, then changed to dress shoes.



Popular hangout is Dairy Queen on the Blvd. (where Cafe Rio is located today).

Ties are officially severed from Dixie High School and College moves from its home on Main Street to the new campus on the east side of the valley. Enrollment is 365.

Program Bureau begins with Roene DiFiore, "Mrs. D" at the helm teaching the songs of Dixie.

1961

1963

1966

1967



Yell No. 14  
 Boom-a-lackee,  
 Boom-a-lackee  
 Bow-wow-wow  
 Chick a lackee, Chick a lackee  
 Chow, chow, chow,  
 Are we in it? Well I guess  
 Dixie Rebels,  
 Yes, Yes, Yes!



The sandblast student activity in Snow Canyon was a Welcome Week tradition for 30 years.

Costumed Rodney Rebel appears at ballgames to rev up the crowd.

Fine Arts mosaic mural is dedicated. Tanner Fountain is added to campus.

Many of Dixie's finest students leave to fight in the Vietnam War.



President Losee puts emphasis on enrollment, which swells to 1,000.

Institution's name is officially changed from Dixie Junior College to Dixie College.

Students allowed to wear shorts on campus with the approval of a new dress code.



1968

1969

1970

1975

1983

# DIXIE COLLEGE

## *Timeline*



*“The college experience I had at Dixie got me where I am today and made me who I am. I owe it all to Dixie and I am giving back to the school by being involved.  
-Wendy Bulkley  
2000 student body president*”

Dixie wins its first National Championship. The Rebel basketball team finishes the season 35-1 and defeats Kankakee College of Illinois 57-55 for the title.

Paul Andersen organizes the Pioneer Courthouse players, which precedes St. George musical theater and Tuacahn.

Encampment Mall is dedicated by President Hinckley on the site of the first pioneer camp in the St. George area in 1861.

When state funds dry up, Dixie College, St. George City, and scores of volunteers combine to complete work on the grounds of the new Dixie Center on campus.



**1985**

**1987**

**1990**

**1998**





“The entire community got behind the push for 4-yr programs, and funds were raised to show our financial backing. But we were still lacking. The night before we needed them, an anonymous donor came up with the rest of the money. . . The rest is history. It was a matter of luck, timing, commitment, and of prayer by many people—along with help from above—that we succeeded. It is very satisfying to know that our efforts helped advance the destiny of Dixie into someday becoming its own university.  
 —Maureen Booth, citizens committee chair



Groundbreaking for Jeffrey R. Holland Bldg. is March 21, 2011.

Athletic teams have their name changed from Rebels to Red Storm.

Dixie College becomes Dixie State College of Utah.

Despite strong opposition, citizen committees, students, and legislators work tirelessly to change Dixie to a four-year school. Cause for celebration!

Athletic teams become NCAA Division II affiliated and no longer compete on the Junior College level.

Dixie celebrates its Centennial year. Enrollment grows to over 9000 with more than 20 bachelor's degrees offered.



1999

2000

2006

2009

2011