

WPCC building plan is under way today

Former Sen. Sam J. Ervin Jr. praised Burke County's dedication to education in an address before he broke the first ground for Western Piedmont Community College's new College Center. Ervin, who also broke the first ground for the school's first building in 1966, challenged an audience of about 200 "to let nothing on this side of the grave put an end to your pursuit of knowledge."

Dr. Gordon C. Blank, president of the college, noted that the groundbreaking was purely ceremonial because the contractor has already started leveling the ground for the \$750,000 facility. He said he was glad to see the work proceeding ahead of schedule because of the school's eagerness to begin using the new building. The 24,888 square foot building will house student services, a cafeteria, a book store, classrooms and student activities rooms.

Special guests at the ceremony included Mayor Andrew M. Kistler, N. C. Rep. W. H. Lachot Jr., N. C. Rep. Myrtle E. Wiseman and N. C. Sen. Donald R. Kincaid.

Brief greetings were made by Daryl Carswell, student government association president, Dale Kaufman of the faculty senate, Ray Childers of the building and grounds committee of the board of trustees, County manager Dr. Robert Cantine, Ray Weaver, vice-chairman of the Burke County Board of Commissioners, and Jack Copeland of Odell Associates Architectural Firm.

Ervin was introduced by W. Stanley Moore, chairman of the board of trustees. Moore noted that the senator had achieved national fame between the time he broke the ground for the main building in 1966 and today. Moore said the fame was not necessarily a result of Ervin's association with the college, but observed, "It was here that you first saw him digging up the dirt."

Ervin said two of the greatest events in Burke County's history involve the establishment of educational institutions. The first was 193 years ago, when Burke County, established only six years, chartered the Morgan Academy. The first president of that school was James Templeton, minister of the Quaker Meadows Presbyterian Church.

The second event Ervin noted was the establishment of Western Piedmont Community College. At a time when most bond issues were being defeated in the state, Burke County voted by a ratio of 16 to one to support the bond issue which would support the school. "I think that's one of the high water marks of our county's history," he said.

Ervin said he would like to repeat the remarks he made some years ago at the dedication of an institution to study aging. He said, "As we age, while we become subject to some limitations, the human mind remains active and there is no reason why we should not continue to learn as long as we live."

Ervin said he would urge everyone, but particularly the students in the audience, to "devote your efforts to the acquisition of learning as long as life shall last."

"The world of the mind is an illimitable land whose boundaries are as vast as the universe itself, and thought is calling us at all times to the undiscovered counties lying beyond the next visible range of mountains," the former senator said.

He continued, "Fortunate, indeed, will you be if you will fondly embrace the belief that knowledge is the most lasting wealth, and if you will woo her with such constancy that you will be able to say in modesty and in truth at sunset each day: I am wiser today than I was yesterday. While you may fear that knowledge will become proud because she learns so much, you may be sure that wisdom will always remain humble because she knows so little."

After concluding his remarks, Ervin took a shovel and broke the first ground. The other special guests also took turns breaking the earth, and Dr. Blank called on all present to dig one spade of earth in the symbolic beginning of the new building.



Staff Photo By Andy Hern

Former Sen. Ervin turns shovel of earth.