

**Texas Technological College's
Special Niche
In the Realm of Higher Education**



**An Address by Tom Sealy,
Member Coordinating Board,
Texas College and University System**

Milestone Dinner
International Center for Arid and Semi-Arid
Land Studies
and Museum Development Program

LUBBOCK COUNTRY CLUB SEPTEMBER 15, 1967

Division of Information Services
Texas Technological College
Box 4640
Tech Station
Lubbock, Texas 79409

To: _____

Texas Technological College's
Special Niche
In the Realm of Higher Education

Dr. D. M. Wiggins is ordinarily noted for his candor and his honest expressions of opinion. I am afraid that in introducing me he deviated somewhat from his policy and was given to exaggeration in his comments. I do appreciate, however, his kind remarks, and I would like to say of him that because of his long background in the field of higher education, his presidencies of Texas Western College and Texas Tech, his service on the Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System, and the other posts he has held in this field, I know of no Texas citizen more knowledgeable in this subject or more dedicated to the welfare of our state in the realm of higher education. It is a pleasure to sit with him as a member of the Coordinating Board and to have the benefit of his wise counsel and advice on matters that come before the Board for its determination.

Not long ago a client of my law firm, who resides in Montreal—a beautiful city situated on the banks of the Saint Lawrence Seaway, with green valleys, forested hills, and numerous lakes nearby—came to see me about some of his properties which were being leased for oil and gas. His family had owned some lands in Ward and Reeves and Winkler Counties for many years, but he had never seen them, and he asked me to drive him over these lands. This I did, and as we were passing through some of his country, a chaparral, or roadrunner, ran across the road—a bird, as you know, which is indigenous to our area. My client was quite interested in this particular bird, asked me all about it, and asked if I knew what family of birds it categorized. I told him it was my understanding we referred to it as the Chaparral, the Roadrunner, and the Paisano (a Spanish word for "countryman" or "fellow countryman"), but I understood it was related to the Bird of Paradise family. We drove along a little further, my friend was observing the sparse vegetation, the mesquite, the sand dunes, the prickly pear, the shinnery, and finally asked me if I was sure this bird

was associated with the Bird of Paradise family. I told him I was reasonably certain it was, and he then remarked that in his opinion the bird was a long way from home!

I also remember an occasion when a lady from California was in my office with her husband, and one of our West Texas sand storms hit the city. While we were involved in our business, she observed the sand storm from the window of my office and finally exclaimed that she couldn't understand why anybody would live in this God-forsaken country. Of course, I had to admit it didn't look very pleasant at the moment, but I said that nobody had a finer climate ordinarily than West Texans, certainly there were no better people anywhere else, it was a high, dry, and healthful climate, and if she would only stay here long enough to wear out one pair of shoes she wouldn't want to leave.

Now you may ask me what these preliminary remarks have to do with the subject of my address this evening and with Texas Technological College, one of only four public institutions of higher learning in Texas designated as a university by the Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System. For an answer to that question, let's look at the record.

Opening in the fall of 1925 with an initial student body of 910, Texas Technological College has already exceeded in the ensuing years the fondest dreams of its earliest and most enthusiastic supporters, and during its 1966-67 term had an enrollment of 18,000 students.

Administered by a Board of Directors, chaired by Roy Furr, one of Lubbock's most prominent and successful citizens, and composed of prominent Texans throughout the state, and by Dr. Grover Murray, its relatively new president, a dynamic and dedicated educator, who has already made a most favorable impression on his colleagues in similar administrative positions in other institutions of higher learning in Texas, and with an outstanding faculty with undergraduate, graduate and research programs of the highest order, Texas Tech stands at the threshold of an era of accomplishment and growth which will further enhance its prestige in the realm of higher education.

But while Tech's progress as a public institution of higher learning has been remarkable, this isn't enough for Tech. Its leadership is seeking not only to continue its progress in all phases of higher education but to achieve a special niche in this field.

This is not only a laudable objective, it is in accord with the provisions of House Bill No. 1 of the 59th Legislature which created the Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System, and admonished it, among other things, to

"Develop and promote one or more degree or certificate programs to the highest attainable quality at each institution of higher educa-

tion for which the particular institution is uniquely suited and for which there is marked promise of excellence."

The Governor's Committee of 25 on the Study of Education Beyond the High School, on which Dr. Wiggins served with me, in suggesting the creation of the Coordinating Board, also recommended that each institution of higher learning select some specialty in which it might hope to achieve national and even international eminence.

The Coordinating Board was created by the Legislature at the recommendation of Gov. Connally to coordinate various degree programs, facilities, and physical plants of the 22 publicly-supported senior colleges and universities and the 38 publicly-supported junior colleges, so as to avoid overlapping courses and degrees and duplication of effort, to prescribe the role and scope of each of these institutions, to control the creation of new degree programs, and to eliminate and consolidate others, to review the budgets of each of these institutions for the Legislature and its Budget Board, to determine building formulas, to establish a common core curriculum for junior colleges which would be acceptable at all senior institutions, to determine the need for new colleges and universities, and to devise a master plan for public higher education in the State of Texas.

This Board has also recommended that each of these public senior institutions of higher learning achieve renown in at least one particular subject in higher education. Texas Tech is one of the first of the Texas institutions to accept this challenge and now proposes under the leadership of its Board of Directors and Dr. Murray, to establish a suitable and appropriate museum and study complex to house its new concept in the specific area in which it expects to achieve greatness, namely, its International Center for Arid and Semi-Arid Land Studies, commonly referred to as ICASALS.

This center, then, will be and become "Texas Technological College's special niche in the realm of higher education."

Situated as Texas Tech is—in the land area that must be classified as semi-arid—no finer or more appropriate study could have been conceived for the special service which Texas Tech can render mankind in the years to come.

Consider for a moment some of the aspects of this study and the research phases that will be involved.

Dr. Harold Cassidy, Yale chemist, told a recent meeting of the American Institute of Biological Sciences at College Station,

"We are exploiting the earth the way a parasite exploits its host. If our host, the earth is

killed, we have nowhere else to go."

Writing in the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, Texas Tech's own Professor Thadis W. Box recently commented, with respect to the gross abuses of the range lands of West Texas in the period from 1870 to 1900:

"In 21 years, the range (of West Texas) changed from a virgin grassland to a man-made desert. In 1873 the first buffalo hunters arrived; by 1894 domestic cattle were dying by the thousands on overgrazed ranges."

We already know that the great Ogallala Formation of water underlying the high plains of West Texas, supporting, as it does, the economy of Lubbock and the surrounding area through the irrigation of cotton, grain sorghums and other crops required by our people, is being depleted at a rapid pace, and it is obvious, as it was to the Governor and the Legislature when they created the Texas Water Development Board, the Texas Water Commission and the Texas Water Quality Control Board, that ways and means must be devised not only to avoid pollution of waters but to supplement and supplant our underground reservoirs in West Texas with water from other sources if the economy of our state is to continue to grow and flourish.

All kinds of research will be involved in solving these problems. Studies, for instance, to continually improve our fertilizer compounds so as to get better crops with less water, better and cheaper methods to desalinate and make potable water from the oceans surrounding our continent for use for domestic, crop, and livestock purposes, the discovery of a chemical formula that will ultimately secure the complete eradication of mesquite, shinnery, prickly pear, the brush and other pests of this nature which rob our grazing lands of their fertility, soak up the rainfall, and continually encroach upon our soils, the development of new crops and food plants which will thrive in a semi-arid or arid land through the application of chemicals and other growth media.

Remember that at least one-half of the earth's land area is arid or semi-arid country, and the solution of these and other problems is not only imperative but desperately necessary if we are going to be able to continue and enhance the prosperity of our own geographical area, as well as other arid and semi-arid land areas on this planet and successfully contend with today's population explosion.

I personally know of no project more important to mankind, and I salute all those who are directing their efforts to the procurement of the building funds necessary to enable Texas Tech to achieve national and international prominence and eminence in this chosen endeavor.

Thank you very much.