

Land Tracts Valued at \$433,000

Largest Bequest Ever Received by Chowan

Chowan College has received a gift of two tracts land totaling 437 acres, with an estimated value in excess of \$430,000, from the estate of an alumna, the late Miss Mary P. Thomas of Cofield, class of 1902.

The gift is the largest bequest in the history of Chowan for the college's general endowment fund.

Mary Thomas also donated \$5,000 through her will to establish a scholarship to aid deserving students.

After graduating from Chowan, "Miss Mary" taught in a number of area schools. She was a member of Bethlehem Baptist Church, where she served as a Sunday school teacher of the adult class, president of the Woman's Missionary Society, and leader of the Sunbeam missionary organization for children.

Mary Thomas was also active in the community, supporting a number of worthy causes with her contributions and service. "Mary was a good community worker," noted her sister, Miss Ruth M. Thomas.

Former Trustee

During her long association with Chowan, she served as a member of the Board of Trustees and in the Alumni Association.

Dr. Bruce E. Whitaker, noted "The bequest from Mary P. Thomas represents one of the largest gifts in the history of Chowan College, and the largest by far for the general endowment. The gift comes at a critical time when small private colleges are depending on the generosity of their supporters to help provide a quality education for young people. Her meaningful gift will greatly advance the program, progress



MARY V. THOMAS
Class of 1902

and service of Chowan, through all the years to come in the life of the institution."

Continued Dr. Whitaker, "No alumna loved Chowan more than did Mary Thomas. She held a special place in her heart for her alma mater. She placed her trust, faith, energy and resources with her alma mater. Through her service and support of the college, she made an important contribution to the progress of Chowan."

Family Commitment

The president said that over the years "the members of the Thomas family have supported Chowan with their service, love, prayers and gifts."

He added, "The gift by Mary Thomas through her will is the latest example of this family's commitment and sacrifice to help Chowan accomplish its mission of providing young men and women with a quality Christian higher education."

Her sister, Ruth, is an alumna, class of 1917, and her mother graduated from Chowan in 1876. Her brother, the late William Abraham ("Will") Thomas, served two four-year terms as a member of the Board of Trustees; three years as a member of the Executive Committee of the Board; and six years as the treasurer of the Board.

The family heritage of service to Chowan was also demonstrated by her paternal grandfather, Abraham Thomas, and father, Dr. R. P. Thomas. Abraham Thomas was named to the Board of Trustees of the old Chowan Female Institute in 1854. Dr. R. P. Thomas served on the Board of Trustees a record 33 years, including 17 as chairman.

In order to recognize and honor the benefaction of three generations of the Thomas family, the Board of Trustees authorized the dedication of the college dining hall as Thomas Cafeteria on Dec. 16, 1966.

"Miss Mary's gift will help to perpetuate the ideals of excellence, quality and service exemplified by the Thomas family," Dr. Whitaker concluded.

Spring Completion Slated

Old Gymnasium Becoming New Student Center

By GREG BASSETT

A spring completion is expected in the remodeling of the old gymnasium into Chowan's new student recreation center.

The old hangar-like gym which was built in 1954 and once served as the campus' gym and class room building, will replace facilities of Askew Student Center.

Plans call for the center to contain several activities unavailable in the Askew Center. It will feature two television lounges, a game room, a weight room, conference rooms, a offices for the SGA, and a complete student laundromat.

The college post office will be relocated in the student center in an expanded format, while the bookstore will be enlarged in its present location.

\$50,000 Project

According to the college's superintendent of buildings and grounds, Jack Hassell, \$50,000 will be spent to refurbish the gymnasium in an effort to turn it into a "first class" student center.

"We hope to set up the student center so it can become a drawing card for all the students," said Hassell. "We want it to be a

place where the students can go and enjoy themselves."

The planning of the recreation center first began four years ago, said Hassell, when the college first planned constructing the new Jesse Helms Center. He said the plans have changed little and were conceived by a special school committee with help from student opinion.

Current layout plans call for the north part of the gym which once held locker rooms to become a game room complete with pinball machines, ping-pong tables and other game machines.

In the northeast portion of the building, a full scale laundromat will be constructed so that students may conveniently do their wash without leaving campus.

The basketball court will remain so students can still engage in some play, while there are also ideas of using the court for a roller rink, Hassell said.

The center will, the committee hopes become a popular meeting place on campus and will serve as the location for various activities, including the SGA dances which are now held in Thomas Cafeteria.