

# BCC Accepts \$500,000 Endowment; Names Auditorium For Williamson

BY SUSAN USHER

Announcement of plans to name the Brunswick Community College auditorium for Ocean Isle Beach developer Odell Williamson dominated a combined dedication Sunday of the college's new ALS building and groundbreaking for the 1,500-seat facility.

College trustees voted 5-3 Sunday afternoon to accept a \$500,000 endowment from Williamson to support operation of the auditorium, in turning naming the facility after him. The decision was announced later in the afternoon in ceremonies held in the student center area of the ALS building.

BCC President Michael Reaves said, in announcing the gift, "Williamson has played a critical role in the growth of the college and foundation. He has challenged us, set the stage and now sets the pace with his vision for our future."

"He has provided a spiritual kind of leadership, showing us where we need to go and how we need to get there."

Williamson, a former state legislator, was among the original founders of the college and has served on the board of directors of the BCC Foundation since its inception. He was accompanied by his wife, Virginia, at the groundbreaking. They received a standing ovation upon announcement of the gift.

With the threat of wet weather, ground was initially "broken" for the auditorium in a tub of dirt hauled into the student center for the occasion. Later, trustees walked out to the high site of the auditorium west of the ALS building and performed the ceremony again.

The endowment will be established by gifts from Williamson over a period of up to five years, with an initial gift of \$100,000. The endowment itself will be untouched. However, the income it generates has been designated by Williamson to be used for administration and operation of the auditorium.

"These funds will help make the auditorium more accessible to the community at an affordable cost by taking pressure off operating funds (for the college)," Reaves pointed out.

BCC Trustees Chairman David Kelly said he understands the money will be used by the foundation to hire a manager for the auditorium.

Glen Peterson, attorney for BCC's Board of Trustees, said the endowment is actually a contractual arrangement between the BCC Foundation, the non-profit agency that will administer the endowment, the college



BCC PRESIDENT MICHAEL REAVES (left) announces gift of a \$500,000 endowment from Odell Williamson, who stands at right with his wife, Virginia.

trustees and Williamson. The income will continue for the life of the college, so long as the facility continues to be used as an auditorium. Should that use cease, or the college cease to exist, the endowment will then benefit the Cape Fear Council, Boy Scouts of America. While the endowment must be invested in accounts or instruments backed or insured by the federal government, the BCC Foundation will have some control over how it is invested.

Presentation of the gift was contingent upon trustees agreeing to name the facility the Odell Williamson Auditorium, "a normal provision when a major contribution is made," according to Peterson.

Voting to do so Sunday, in a 20-minute continuation of the board's last regular meeting, were Trustees James Rabon, Lewis Stanley, Durwood Clark Sr., Cora Green and Charles Lanier.

Trustees voting against the motion were Shirley Babson, Eugene Hewett and Kelly Holden. Absent from the meeting were Trustees Benny Ludlum, Jerry Munn and Tommy Bradsher.

In discussion before the vote, Mrs. Babson told fellow trustees, "I appreciate this very much. But since the taxpayers are paying \$3 million for this building, not \$45,000 a year five years from now, I think this auditorium should be named after the

community." Holden said he didn't like the proposal either. "This is Brunswick Community College and I think it should be the 'Brunswick Community College Auditorium.'"

Hewett asked for clarification of several points by Peterson before the vote.

Several trustees also expressed discomfort at their not having advance knowledge of the negotiations with Williamson; however, Trustee Lewis Stanley said the gift was a project of the BCC Foundation, requiring the full board's involvement only when it came to agreeing on the name of the facility.

According to Vicki Spencer, the college's resource development officer and staff to the foundation, the endowment is one of the largest gifts ever made to any member institution of the state's community college system.

Trustees opened the way for such a gift at their meeting, adopting a motion presented by Lewis Stanley, chairman of building and grounds, providing that in the event of a substantial gift to the college, the trustees could, at their discretion, consider naming all or a portion of the facility in honor of the donor.

Construction of the auditorium, at a cost of \$2.5 million to \$3 million, is being funded by the balance of an \$8 million bond approved by

county voters. County funds will be used to maintain the building.

Trustee Lewis Stanley accepted the symbolic brass key for the new Administration/Library/Student Center building from architect Joe Johnson of J.G. Architects of Wilmington, and presided at the ribbon-cutting by Tamala Grissett, Miss Brunswick County, and Melissa White, Little Miss Brunswick County.

"We hold our future in our own hand," Stanley said as he related a story. "Are we going to squeeze it to death or let it fly as it has these past 10 years?"

Also speaking were Royce Angel, vice chairman of the State Board of Community Colleges, Mark van Sciver, special assistant to Bob Scott, president of the community college system; Steve Skillman, who chaired an advisory committee that assisted in planning the auditorium; Gene Pinkerton, Brunswick County commissioner; Bruce Caldwell, president of the BCC Foundation; and Doug Baxley, chairman of the Brunswick County Board of Education.

"The people of Brunswick County in developing this institution have made a strong commitment to education. BCC has given education a new dignity that will benefit all levels of education in Brunswick County," said Baxley.

# Board Moves Ahead

Though Brunswick County Commissioners have yet to address the issue in open session, the county school board went forward one small step last week with its latest plan to fund a new elementary school at Supply.

Brunswick County Board of Education members voted 4-2 on Oct. 2 to proceed with a three-year plan to build a new elementary school. Dot Worth of Shallotte voted against the motion.

Under the proposal, the board and the county government would split the \$5.5 million cost for the school.

School officials presented the plan to commissioners in late August, with little response. Since then, the item has not been discussed by commissioners or formally acted on. As of Tuesday afternoon, it was not on the agenda for the commissioners' Oct. 17 meeting.

However, school board member Robert Slockett told fellow members that he had met with Board of Commissioners Chairman Frankie Rabon and was assured that a majority of the commissioners would support the plan. And he said Tuesday the board is trying to get the item on the county board's agenda for action.

On that basis, the school board agreed to have its architect, Charles Boney Jr. of Boney & Associates, to go ahead with preliminary work. The tasks are some that have to be done anyway, said Slockett. In the near future, the board may give the go-ahead for design work—with or without further assurances by the commissioners, since money is on hand for the early stages of the project.

Meanwhile, Slockett said the school board has authorized its attorney, Glen Peterson, to contact Rabon. "We want to feel as confident as possible next year when the time comes for them to put in their first share of the money. We want them to adopt a motion or resolution saying they intend to put money for it in next year's budget," he said. Beyond that, Slockett acknowledged, the commissioners cannot readily make a formal obligation that would bind future boards.

The plan calls for costs by this schedule: \$286,000 for planning and design to be completed by May 1990, \$19,500 for the bidding phase, to be completed by June 1990, and \$5.2 million for construction and inspection work completed by January 1992.

As proposed the schools would kick in \$800,000 this year from half-cent sales tax revenues. In 1990-91 and the first six months of 1991-92, the county would make monthly payments of \$152,750. The schools would allocate \$950,000 in sales tax revenues in 1990-91 and \$1 million in 1991-92.

At current budget formula, the plan would require commissioners to increase the county property tax rate by 5.2 cents in fiscal year 1990-91, and by another 2.6-cents in fiscal year 1991-92.

The school is intended to serve approximately 650 students in the Sunset Harbor and Supply areas, helping to relieve overcrowding at Southport Elementary, Shallotte Middle and Union Primary.

In another money matter, the board learned that the state did not increase its funding for regular teachers based on first of the year student enrollment. Brunswick County Schools added only 12 students, not enough to warrant additional funding. The county had allocated the schools an additional \$646,984 to fund 19 positions, on condition that any portion covered by the state be reimbursed.

The state has funded six new "enhancement" positions for subjects such as art and music, but with funds that cannot be used to hire regular classroom teachers.

**Trying To Boost Scores**  
Superintendent John Kaufhold introduced to the board a five-point plan staff anticipates will lead to improved SAT scores for future Brunswick County high school seniors.

The SAT, or Scholastic Aptitude test, is the major college entrance examination used in 22 states, including North Carolina. An assessment of analytical, reasoning and verbal skills, it is designed to help predict a student's chance of success during the first year of college. SAT scores are used to varying degrees in screening applicants for college admission.

This year North Carolina seniors had the lowest average scores in the nation. About 57 percent of the state's seniors took the test—a much larger percentage than took the test in the top-scoring 25 states. North Carolina seniors scored an average composite of 836, or five points less than last year. They averaged 397 on the verbal portion of the test, down four points, and 439 on the math, down one point. Kaufhold told school board

members on Oct. 2 that the school system intends to address the low scores through these steps:

- 1) "Strongly encouraging" students to take the Preliminary SAT (PSAT) to gain experience in taking this type of standardized test;
- 2) Recruiting students to take the SAT preparation classes now offered in the high schools, and to offer the class in summers for those whose schedules cannot accommodate it during the regular school year;
- 3) Increasing the teaching of critical thinking skills, with less emphasis on rote learning methods;
- 4) Redesigning advanced studies classes to make them more rigorous and challenging; and
- 5) Assessing the middle school math program to make sure students are getting the kind of foundation they need in order to take advanced math classes, and counseling and encouraging students to enroll in the more challenging high school level math classes.

## Board Responds To Parents

The board also responded to a letter from Michael King, parent of a Union Primary School student and representative of a group of concerned parents who want to see a greater emphasis on intensive phonics in the language arts/communications program. After approaching the board in September, King received a letter from Kaufhold reiterating his previous position. The letter did not address the group's request for a "pilot" status and offering of 15 minutes of intensive phonics training each day. Instead, Kaufhold advised that the board advocates "a combined instructional approach" to the teaching of reading. "If the phonics approach is advisable for some children, it may be used in conjunction with other methods," he wrote. "It is believed that the school principal, Mrs. (Clara) Carter, should determine the type and the extent of reading instruction through frequent supervision."

King was concerned that Kaufhold, not the board, had responded to the group's query, that no distinction was being made between intensive phonics and phonetics, and that the letter had not addressed the group's request. "It puts it all on Mrs. Carter's shoulders," he told the *Beacon* in an earlier interview. "I would rather have a yes or no to this. If this program is so integrated, why can't they integrate 15 minutes of intensive phonics?"

Associate Superintendent William Harrison, who works with curriculum, said nothing in the new program forbids use of phonics, but that the new curriculum emphasizes teaching children, not a specific program. He added, "We don't want a Spalding-type program. If phonics is needed—and it will be at times—they can do it. We want students to have all the word attack skills they can. I feel sure they will be getting the phonics and a lot of other things."

## Other Business

In other business school board members:

—Agreed to lease the Alternative School building at Pincey Grove to Brunswick County Commissioners for two years to temporarily house county offices. Attorney Glen Peterson is drawing up the agreement, which stipulates that the school system will retain use of a classroom and an office, and that the county will assume maintenance and upkeep.

—Increased Superintendent Kaufhold's local supplement by \$3,000, or \$250 per month, retroactive to July 1, in recognition of his having a doctoral degree. The supplement will continue until such time as the state reinstates the doctoral supplements it previously paid.

—Held first reading on a policy governing excess expenditures for lodging and registration fees.

—Heard various reports from staff and board members.



BREAKING GROUND FOR BCC'S new auditorium—for a second time Sunday—are from left: Cora Green, Virginia Williamson, Odell Williamson, Bruce Caldwell, David Kelly, Kelly Holden, James Rabon, Gene Pinkerton, Michael Reaves, Lewis Stanley, Charles Lanier, Shirley Babson, Durwood Clark Sr. (behind Babson) and Eugene Hewett. Earlier the group broke ground using a tub of dirt brought into the ALS building for the occasion.

## AT LONG BEACH

# Vereen, Somers Face Rematch For Top Post

Former Long Beach mayor James Somers will get another try at unseating incumbent Mayor John W. Vereen III as a result of Tuesday's primary election, while Vereen will pursue election to a third term.

Approximately 45 percent, or 954, of the town's registered voters turned out at the polls to narrow the field for Nov. 7. They eliminated Commissioner Bob Miller as a contender for the mayor's post, and dropped incumbent William H. Millard from the slate of seven

commissioners, insuring election of at least two new commissioners.

A third incumbent commissioner, James Sloop, was the top vote-getter Tuesday, with 691 ballots. Still in the running with Sloop for three commissioners' seats are Danny C. Leonard, 666; Jeffrie D. Ensminger, 637; Joan Altman, 552; William D. Easley III, 540; Joe Edwards, 517. Millard collected only 255 votes.

Miller, who had run unsuccessfully for commissioner in 1987, was appointed earlier this year to fill the vacancy created by the death of

Lester Lee Presnell, but had filed for the mayor's post. Sloop and Millard were elected to the board for the first time in 1987. Sloop is a former Long Beach police chief.

Vereen received the most votes of any hopeful in the mayor's race, 653, followed by Somers with 388 and Miller with 161. Vereen is serving his second term as mayor. If elected for a third term, it would be a novel occurrence for the town of approximately 2,000 voters.

Somers was elected mayor in

1983, but lost a bid for re-election in 1985. In 1987 he also made an unsuccessful attempt for the town board.

Tuesday's count was unofficial pending a routine canvass of the results today (Thursday) by the Brunswick County Board of Elections.

Elections Supervisor Lynda Britz said she had received word of no problems during the election or of any anticipated challenges. "In fact, none of our workers even called in today. It was a very quiet election."

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