

Sherman Hall 100th Anniversary

Stained glass light lazily yawned into Hoxie Thompson Auditorium where important men and women took their seats with white lunch boxes. Opening their boxes, they settled themselves in for a “beautiful picnic,” as President Marjorie Hass later said. Guests chose from 3 piles of sandwiches, 3 kinds of salads, various desserts (popcorn and pies), and tea versus water. President Hass herself carried around a bottle of tea as she mingled among those in attendance.

Sherman Hall positively beamed with pride at the smartly dressed visitors to its 2nd floor, and the event truly met the expected ceremonial air appropriate for such an occasion. Several professional photographers swarmed around the seats, arranging their equipment and scoping out the best angles. The bustle of activity continued for well over a half hour, every moment filled with shaking hands and the lively chatter of reunited friends and colleagues.

At noon on Wednesday, April 8, 2015, President Hass took to the podium and thus began the celebration of regional partnership. 100 years to the day (that is, 1915), Sherman Hall was dedicated. She deemed “the global headquarters of Austin College” as located in Sherman, Texas. Dr. Carol Daeley came to the podium to give the first remarks by faculty. She has been at Austin College for 42 years. Take a moment to lift your hands off your laptop or other digital device and settle them in your lap. Think about that length of time. 42 years of teaching!

Her office has always been in Sherman Hall. In August of 1973, she was on the 3rd level, and throughout her time at AC, her office has been housed on all three levels. With a sparkle in her eye, she recounts the “minor ghost story” of Sherman Hall. The ghost, eventually identified as an AC student, is now a Professor of History at another college. Though Dr. Daeley shivers at the unnerving feeling of hearing the “steps and creaking,” the student is fondly remembered as the “friendly ghost” or the “ghost who studied.” Continuing on, Dr. Daeley refers to Austin College, its students, and its faculty as a community “that [she] stepped into and found a home in.” She retires at the end of this semester, and we wish her the best and our congratulations.

Dr. Don Rodgers came to the podium next and urged us to include more community. He sees the “rapidly changing job market” and comments that, in light of this change, “students [are meeting] unprecedented challenges.” Seniors (and even freshmen), listen up! It is time to pay attention to Dr. Rodger’s assessment of the world past the borders of our college campus. In jobs out there, you must have internships and prior experiences to even have a chance (not to say that’s the only way, of course). Get motivated on those stacks of applications and look forward into your future (without flinching).

Switching topics, President Hass introduced the Center, “moving the needle” as she says. We (Austin College) are responding to our largest challenges (e.g. water usage, resources, mental illness, etc.). The keynote speaker, Dr. Ian Carlton, expanded on President Hass’ introduction by going into depth on how the University of Oklahoma has implemented a similar program called the Institute for Quality Communities (IQC). You can find out more about it through iqc@ou.edu or through their twitter account @OUIQC. He presented the goal of “walkable as opposed to drivable” and how that can revolutionize a city (less traffic-related deaths, more community interaction, decrease in

obesity as people get in their 30 minutes of physical activity).

President Hass concluded the event by labeling our chosen area of change as “The Greater Austin College Metro Area” (some good-natured chuckles in the audience). After the laughter subsided politely, she left us with a single thought to mull over: “what is the role that we can play?”