

"The scent of rebellion is in the air": Oakland City College during the Age of Aquarius

Dr. Randy Mills

Almost all the mandatory convocations at the small church-related college I attended in Indiana were boring events that have left hardly a scrap of memory save for one. Coming out of the old gym which hosted these dull proceedings, I often experienced a lingering headache, the result of the nose being assaulted by the fragrance of Brute aftershave cologne worn by scores of hopeful freshmen males. In the fall of 1969, however, during my own freshman year at Oakland City College, one particular convocation proved an exception to the boredom rule. Six or so students marched into the gym wearing black armbands and singing an off-key version of "Blowing in the Wind" to protest the Vietnam War. Convocations at OCC at that time were held in an ancient brick building constructed in the 1920s and lovingly labeled the "cow palace." Four rows of worn wooden bleachers rode up the two longer side walls and the protestors stationed themselves at the top row of the east side of the gym in front of a painted out window.

I cannot remember who the convocation speaker was that day. I can tell you, however, that there ended up being a lot of necks sore that day, including mine, from craning around and watching what was happening on that upper bleacher. It was, after all, a turbulent time. The late summer of 1969 had witnessed Woodstock, along with the pronouncement of the "Age of Aquarius." That day in convo, our own OCC protesters were participating in a national Moratorium against the country's involvement in Vietnam. On many other campuses, the Moratorium basically shut down classes for a short duration. Not so at OCC. The day before, the same group of protestors who for once made a convocation interesting had gathered in front of the school gym to sing anti-war songs, their youthful faces flushed with righteous confidence. Their actions and strong beliefs scared me a bit. In the rural southern Illinois region where I came from, one did not question authority. I stopped and watched the group from a safe distance, me, a green freshman, waiting to see what

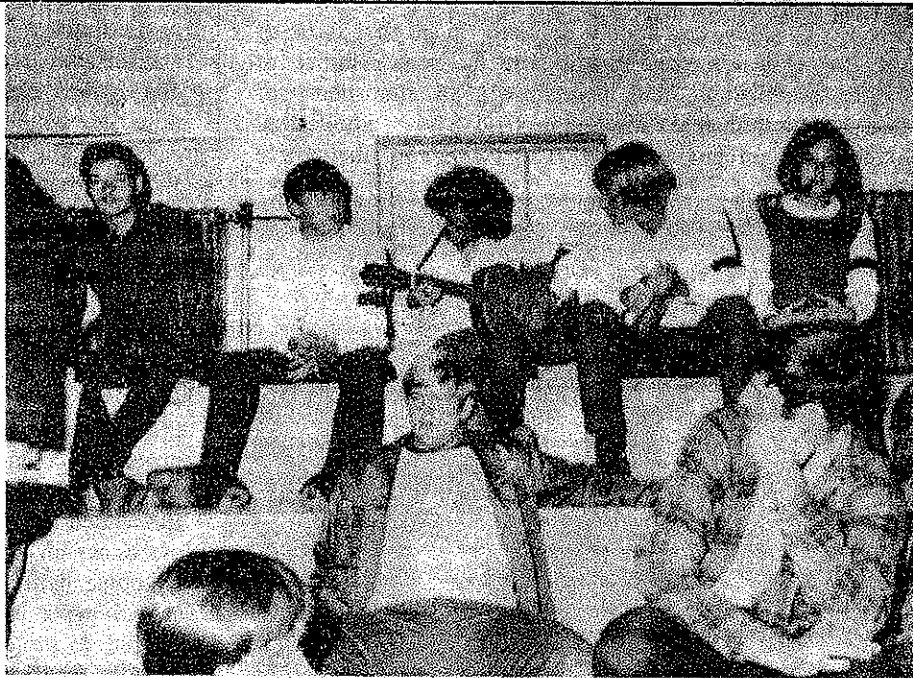


Photo from the *Collegian* of OCC students protesting the Vietnam War at a school convocation. Top row, left to right, John Wathan, Wesley Adamson, unidentified student playing guitar, Mike Collins, and Ginger LaGrange.

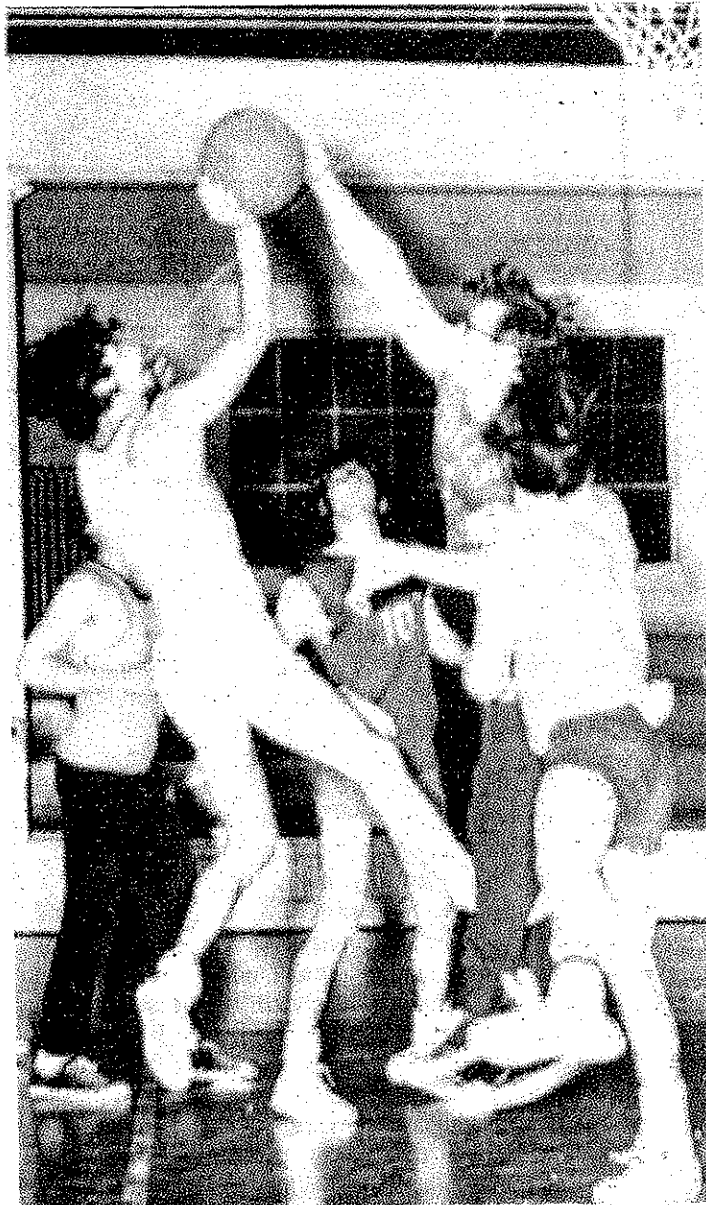
the city police or campus authorities would do, and, in the process, missed cafeteria hours. As it turned out, I ended up feeling sorry for the rag-tag group. No one in authority showed up.

Other than the arm bands and singing activity, and a few letters to the school newspaper against the war, students at OCC did not frequently discuss or argue about Vietnam as far as I remember, certainly not in the way they did on most other campuses. Interestingly, however, OCC would endure a high level of student agitation in the early 1970s, driven by both the counter-culture mood of that day and internal dynamics unique to the church-related school.

By the mid and late 1960s, the school's conservative leadership still maintained and enforced long established traditions and standards. These conservative ideas included no dancing on campus, dress codes, and strict dorm hours, among other rules. While much of the student body, including myself, came from conservative areas and backgrounds, the values of the counter-culture had still soaked down to influence many OCC students' sense of freedom—their right and even their duty to question

authority. This tension would lead to student unrest, OCC style, by the early 1970s. One essential entity at the college which drove such student unrest, and also came to foster intellectual inquiry and student involvement, was the school's student newspaper.

The O. C. Collegian, boldly declared in its first issue of the 1969 fall semester that it bore the responsibility of aiding, establishing, and maintaining "an atmosphere of free and responsible discussion and . . . intellectual exploration on our campus." *The Collegian*, the article



The author, blocking Brad McCandless' shot during an intense intramural basketball game. Bob Mullen looks on. A full intramural sports program during the early 1970s allowed some OCC students to escape the elements of tension between college administration and students. (*OCC Yearbook*)

continued, would be published "with editorial freedom" in order that the school newspaper "might maintain its integrity of purpose as a vehicle for free inquiry and free expression in an academic community such as Oakland City College." Among the *Collegian* reporters at this time were a number of strong and intelligent personalities, aggressive gadflies, who believed it their responsibility to ask difficult questions and prod authority. Their attitudes and actions created a spirit of dissent, as well as a large dose of youthful idealism, on the little conservative campus. The faculty sponsor of the student newspaper, Judy Whitten, allowed her charges an amazing amount of leeway in what they wrote. She recently recalled, "I became the *Collegian* sponsor in the 1969-1970 school year, and the newspaper reflected, in a small way, what was going on in the country. We were a microcosm of the world. It was also a student newspaper, so I attempted to let it be that—student-oriented."

Issues of the *Collegian* in the early 1970s often ran several pages and contained a rich variety of articles regarding the many different aspects of the college's daily life. Embedded in these issues was a consistent stream of pieces which harped on student rights. Editorials, regular columns, letters to the editor, and other articles in the school paper indicated that many OCC students strongly desired to bring dancing on campus, to have more say in school decisions and in the quality of classroom instruction, to receive better food in the cafeteria, to have more freedom in the dorms, to live off campus, to have control over the discipline of fellow students, and to wear the latest fashions.

I was not a part of this aggressive idealistic group, being far too fearful at the time to face the reality of my own personal struggles with what I had been taught about the world. Instead, I filled much of my time with reading books, involving myself with pseudo-intellectual conversations, and playing intramural basketball, the latter allowing me to still keep in touch with my high school glory days, a time when my life seemed much simpler. Secretly, however, as I hurried to find the latest copy of each new issue of the paper, I dreamed of being brave enough to wade into those exciting waters of dissent.

Scott Slater, an OCC student from Warsaw, Indiana, also recalled the tension on the Oakland campus during this time, and his attempts to deal with the perceived need for more student empowerment. "I remember a lot of rules at OCC—the 10:30 curfew for women, weekday curfews, dorm music rules, and so forth—rules that made it pretty tough on students." Scott also became heavily involved in the strong intramural sports program at OCC as a way of finding something to do and to burn off steam. But eventually, Scott, like so many of his college peers across



Class officers at OCC during the early 1970s often used their position to tackle issues of student class. Class officers at OCC during the early 1970s often used their position to tackle issues of empowerment. Pictured here are the OCC 1972 junior class officers. Standing, left to right, Teryl Almond and Jim Roehm. Sitting, left to right, Janice Loveless and Scott Slater. (OCC Yearbook)

the nation, felt moved to act regarding what he considered too much administrative authority. "On the national level, there was a lot going on with the war in Vietnam and the youth movement. I thought the administration at OCC needed to be more open to the interests of students, so I ran for VP of our junior class. I really wanted to help change things and make the campus better."

One example of the strictness on the OCC campus at the time can be seen in an early 1970 announcement in the *Collegian*. The college Dean issued a reminder regarding the school's dress code. Authorities had, up to then, enforced the strict policy in only a haphazard manner, but now the Dean, perhaps sensing a change in the last few incoming freshman classes, decided to tighten the enforcement of the rules. "Women students are permitted to wear slacks during the winter season in the following situations: 1) When the preceding night's temperature is 20 degrees or below. 2) When snow or ice is on the ground. This attire is permitted any place on campus including classrooms, dining hall and the library." A year later, the rules changed to allow OCC women to wear

slacks, but only after chapel services. Meg Gardner Whittle recently remembered how several OCC females marched in front of the President's house to protest the policy. "We thought we were so progressive."

The vigorous spirit of questioning rules such as this, and authority in general, is evident in a regular column written by Bill Menke, in the *Collegian*. In one piece, Menke encouraged OCC students to constantly confront faculty and administrators in order to create change. "Banding together in a mature adult way reminds the faculty member of his or her responsibility." The article forcefully noted, "the channels [of protest] here are endless-petition, personal group confrontation, or personal confrontation with the [department] chairman. If these routes prove unsuccessful, arrange with the Dean of Academic Affairs a time when your group or spokesman can meet with him. Don't forget the President and the Board of Trustees. You, however, cannot stop after one confrontation, you must keep trying. The quickest way to fail is to stop trying." That particular column received a sharp reply from an administrator, who quickly dashed off a letter to the *Collegian*. "One goes to college to get an education," the letter declared in part, "not give one." The initial article, and the ensuing response from the administrator, brought forth a lively debate on campus.

In late 1970, one particular student gripe came to a head. An aggressive group of upperclassmen called for a boycott of the school cafeteria, declaring, in a written statement to the *Collegian*, "Until now you couldn't fight City Hall. But it has been proven that when a number of the students of Oakland City College band together, 'city-hall' will sit up and take notice. In our free and democratic society, industrial unions have proved the power of the STRIKE.... Therefore, we suggest that the students who are discontented with the present situation refuse to pay for or accept a meal ticket at registration time." I remember being astounded by how many ways someone at the college cafeteria was able to prepare bologna, but I was not ready to go hungry over the issue. Fortunately, the problem was addressed and the boycott never took place.

Collegian articles suggest that the college administration sought to deal with increased student concerns and complaints both by listening to student demands through so-called school "talk outs" and also by trying, some students claimed, to take more control of the college newspaper. *Collegian* reporter R.T. Wallis responded quickly to the latter event, writing in the college paper, "It would seem that OCC's peculiar brand of homebrew [ed] tyranny has raised its ugly head. On April 1, an unofficial group including the advisors of the *Collegian* and the *Mirror*, the current and future editors of the yearbook and paper, the dean of students and the admissions counselor

Oh No, Please Not That

It would seem that OCC's peculiar brand of homebrew tyranny has raised its ugly head.

On April 1, an unofficial group including the advisors of the *Collegian* and the *Mirror*, the current and future editors of the yearbook and paper, the dean of students and the admissions counselor met and took it upon themselves to form OCC's first Publication Board. They set as their tasks the selection of yearbook and newspaper editors, the job of "officializing" campus publications and a periodic review of the quality of any journalistic work done on this campus. They would also have themselves give an annual publications award and remuneration for editor's efforts.

It must be pointed out here that an intolerable few of the hardworking staff members of both "official" campus publications were consulted before the formation of this organization. In addition, the president of Alpha Phi Gamma, the national honorary journalism fraternity, was never notified and finally received information by word of mouth five days after the meeting was held.

The docket regarding the board's inception does include the president of APG, the yearbook and newspaper editors and advisors, the College Publicity Director and an unknown quantity entitled the College News Service Director.

On paper it all sounds tame enough, but this writer has some serious reservations. Like why was all of this a secret till now? Why weren't key people consulted? Why is an administrator the board chairman (Mr. Pointsett was appointed chairman) of such a vital student activity? What will be the extent of editor obligation under financial remuneration?

Perhaps it does sound tame, but the implication should be clear. It's a seven letter word: control. Two years ago, at an Indiana Collegiate Publications Association convention in Hanover, Indiana, OCC representatives found themselves relatively free of administrative censorship in contrast to other publications represented. Let us pray that our good fortune is not about to change.

—R. T. Wallis

One of *Collegian* writer R. T. Wallis' aggressive columns.

met and took it upon themselves to form OCC's first Publication Board." Wallis explained how he thought the board was just a smoke screen to wrestle control of the paper from the students. "Perhaps it does sound tame, but the implication should be clear. It's a seven letter word: control."

Wallis needed not to be worried about students' voices being shut down in the *Collegian*. In the very next issue of the college paper, students complained openly about the school's scholarship policy, lack of student activities, and dorm rules. Regarding the latter, Wallis himself asserted, "Then there is the question of punishing dorm rules offenders. For this purpose, an enlightened group of students exist with the awesome title of 'Dorm Council.' Some say that for the most part members are elected; but you can't believe anything you hear." Wallis was especially concerned with what he thought to be the unfair procedure for handling rules infractions. "When a dorm resident breaks a rule, no matter how trivial (keeping your tiny cubby-hole neat), the punishment invoked tends to run toward a classic psychological horror called 'campusing.'

This 'campusing' may be likened to the solitary confinement practiced in the British navy during the eighteenth century. In its extreme form it resembles being locked in the tower of a medieval castle. Perhaps a properly constructed dungeon might serve the college's needs in any future Women's Residence Hall." Wallis also blasted what he perceived to be administrative hypocrisy. "The TRIBAL CUSTOMS, our consistently inconsistent rulebook, states with pious assurance that all punishments are designed to be 'educational rather than punitive.' I challenge that statement. 'Campusing' is an emotionally debilitating atrocity which (I predict) will someday cost the college quite a sum."

Wallis was not the only student complaining about strict dorm rules. Philip Ponder revealed in the college newspaper how "several Jordan Hall residents have been singled out by members of the dorm council over petty matters that hardly deserve the attention of a college or university dorm council." Ponder was also concerned that dorm council members at OCC were chosen by school administrators, and not by students, arguing, "In most universities, the different administrators believe that college students are capable of choosing their own dorm council members."

Perhaps taking their cue from students at larger universities, some OCC students attempted to band together to confront the college administration. In the early 1970s, Susan Baker informed the student body, through the pages of the *Collegian*, of an exciting alternative to the student talk outs, which many OCC students came to believe were too unyielding and school controlled. She wrote of a group of students who had created a new organization for school reform at OCC called CONCERN. "Though the group's purpose is inherently expressed in the name itself, it is spelled out in full title "Committee Of Neglected Crusaders Energetically Reforming Now (which proves the members must have something on the ball just to remember all that!)."

Another aggressive OCC person for students' rights, Stan Cobb, who worked on the *Collegian* staff, lamented over another problem at the school. "In the time span of one week, several humiliating events have occurred on OCC's campus under the super direction of our campus lawmen. One night, the Campus Cops followed some students who were only driving around campus, and somehow the student driver found himself right behind the Campus Police only to find a lengthy five-cell flashlight beaming at his face. One should consider such an act dangerous to the drivers of both cars and unlawful as well." Cobb went on to assert that, "countless students have complained about the poor timing of our Campus Police. We adults,



Some of the *Collegian* staff for the 1969-1970 school year. Stan Cobb stands on the back row, third from left. The young woman standing next to Cobb is Susan Baker. (*OCC Yearbook*)

however, should realize that a female driving by Dearing Hall after dark could not possibly stop and carry on a conversation with male residents, for that, as one knows, is a 'no-no.' And for naughty couples that would prefer occasional privacy, forget it. The Campus Cop knows every nook and cranny on our campus. Arrangements could be made, however, for couples who would like to 'double' with a pair of police. Our maturity must surely turn into pumpkins at 10:30 p.m."

In late 1970, Susan Baker complained in the *Collegian* about the non dancing rule and several other issues that angered students. Baker, however, saw hope for change emerging from several recent aggressive actions taken by students, particularly a surprise "panty raid" on the girl's dorm. Baker declared, "The scent of rebellion is in the air. . . . If we are to be accused of immaturity, we should point out that by and large, we are treated like children—so what can you expect? Together we could finish sweeping the cobwebs out of this antiquated institution; and if we have to disturb a little peace to do it, let the dust fly!"

OCC students had also long bemoaned the lack of a student union building—a structure administrators had promised for some time would soon be constructed. By early 1971, OCC student power had achieved one goal of sorts: the college purchased an older house at the edge of the campus to be used as a makeshift student union.

Susan Baker wrote to the student body, declaring, "Okay, you've got it." That's right and if you're willing to make it work, Sherman House can be the end to the boredom problem that plagues this campus. How does it sound? Your place. To play your kind of music; play cards, chess, etc.; study together; hold meetings; just socialize. And it's waiting in that big gray house on the corner." Students, however, were not completely satisfied even after being given the use of Sherman House. Diane Hampton, one of the editors of the *Collegian* during this era, sarcastically noted, "It has been rumored that a student union building is somewhere in the offing but it's sorta like the second coming of Christ—no one seems to know just when. But those of us who believe in the second coming also believe in that mysterious thing called a student union building, and it will come, provided the Lord doesn't come first." Hampton was not far from wrong in her tongue-in-cheek observation. A true student center would not appear until the next century.

The unrest and tension of that time at OCC is also evident in the sudden appearance of a new underground campus newspaper called *Daylight*. *Collegian* writer Linda Leslie spoke to the existence of the rival paper in the form of an interesting *Collegian* editorial. "Something considered radical by most has struck the small conservative campus of Oakland City College. I am referring to the recently published underground newspaper. The newspaper called *Daylight* shocked most of the faculty and administration, but the majority of students on campus agreed with one person's comment placed on the bulletin board, 'Truer words were never spoken.' Journalistically," Leslie judged, "*Daylight* was an absolute wreck. The grammar probably turned more people against the paper than anything else. The spelling was annoying." Of more importance, Leslie asserted, "making unnecessary personal slams is not a very mature way of stating an idea. Also, 'four-letter' words may be prevalent in today's speech and literature, but they do not belong in journalism." Leslie added, however, that she "found the two major ideas presented by the paper far from radical. Weekly open visitation and later dorm hours are two things most students on this campus have wanted for a long time. Later dorm hours were actually almost achieved, but we know what happened there, don't we?"

In the same *Collegian* issue, another student bitterly complained of ill treatment he believed he had received from campus authorities, declaring, "The OCC 'Gestapo'

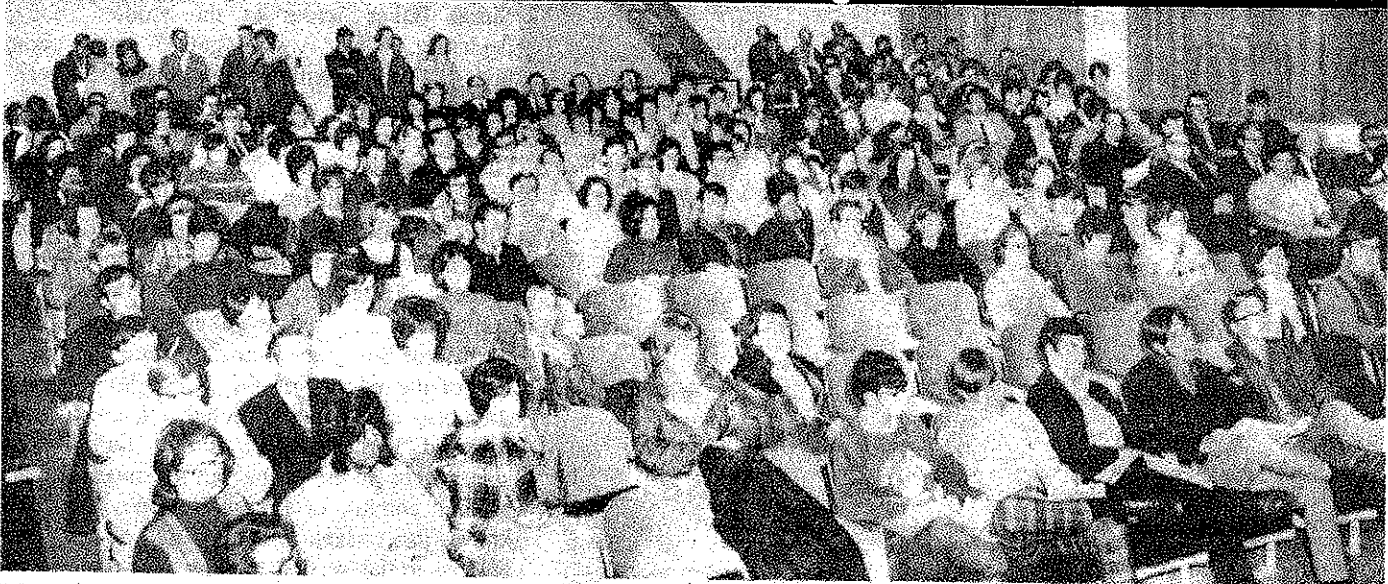


Photo from the *Collegian* of the OCC student body at the first "All College Talk-Out" in Stinson Hall. Several OCC students who sought more student empowerment considered these talk-outs to be administration controlled.

has struck again." The writer then went on to tell of a student who had moved off campus. "Within days after he had moved in, he was forcefully evicted. At 9 a.m. the door to his humble abode was kicked in, and he found himself being [told] to move back to the dorm or face suspension from OCC. And it wasn't the landlady doing the threatening either. ...I could have hunted up the editors of *Daylight* to print my reaction to this incident, but I wanted to endorse my feelings with my signature. However, I don't blame those editors for their choice of anonymity.... But I hope they and others will find voice for their thoughts in the legitimate press. Then perhaps, the truth would make us free." Later that year, the same student bemoaned of the lack of student government power. "It is time we realized that other campuses elect Student Governments to see that the students have some say in the way the school is run. The most monumental problem our Student Senate faces is the choice of what group will play at the Homecoming Concert. We don't have a Student Government, we have a Treasury Department."

In the midst of all this verbal turmoil, a new college president, Dr. Bernard Loposer, came to Oakland City from the University of Alabama Huntsville in the fall of 1971. Relatively young, kind, energetic, and quick witted, Dr. Loposer soon captured the approval of OCC students. Loposer stated his pro-student philosophy in an open letter to the "College Family." At the onset, he noted, "The touchstone of uniqueness here at Oakland City College is rooted in our belief that the most important element in education must remain the *people* who are engaged in the pursuit of truth." He then went on to proclaim the college



The OCC Student Union Board, standing in one of the rooms of a small residential building purchased by the college for a student union. Back row, left to right, Joe Betz, Dr. Sam Leak, sponsor, and Ed Collins. Front Row, left to right, Gay Weir, Ron Malin, and Meg Gardner. (OCC Yearbook)



OCC College President, and student favorite, Dr. Bernard Loposer, being taken to third floor Jordan Hall for a "Birthday" Shower. (OCC Yearbook)

"the people place." His letter hit a deep chord with many idealistic students.

An odd show of respect for the new president came early in his administration when several students, who resided on the third floor of Jordan Hall, kidnapped Loposer from the Presidents House on campus on his birthday, and carried him up to the third floor for that floor's customary birthday dunking in the dorm showers. Joe Betz, Carl Runyon, John "Hoss" Browder, Kevin Eskew, myself, and maybe some others I'd forgotten, carried out the cheeky deed one night, throwing a blanket over Dr. Loposer when he

answered the door and placing him in someone's car for the quick ride to Jordan Hall. We threw our new president, clothes and all, into the showers. Fortunately, Dr. Loposer understood the daunting experience as a sign he had gained the initial respect of even the most daring of OCC students.

Loposer solidified his popularity by going out of his way to "rap" with students, often seeking out the more aggressive leaders and listening to their ideas. Under Loposer's influence, an increase in dorm "rap" sessions occurred. The spirit of student empowerment and responsibility Dr. Loposer attempted to cultivate would soon help turn student complaints toward more positive activities. One positive result, for example, was a plan to have a student march to Evansville, to raise money for the college and to give the school some positive publicity. In his *Collegian* column, "Under the Lid," Jim King related the background story to this important march. "One night Tom Malin, Bill Byrd, Bill Menke, John Redpath, Kelly Whitsitt, and John (Hoss) Browder were engaged in one of these rap sessions, and the topic they were discussing was, if I may use a much worn out term, campus apathy. Ideas were presented and discussed and then someone mentioned a march to Evansville. Later the idea spread and Margie Schneider, Nancy Brown, Linda Waltz, Kathy Garner, and Linda (Gunga) Dorrel joined the movement, and now well you can see the results all over campus.... The main point of this column," wrote King "is that the march was thought of, planned, initiated, worked on and promoted by students."

The popular college president moved quickly to further connect the administration to students by an especially stunning move—initiating a Student Judiciary Court. This body was given unheard of power over student disciplinary actions than OCC student governments of past years and perhaps represented the pinnacle of student empowerment at OCC. The *Collegian* reported the exciting news, explaining, "The Judiciary Court will settle disputes between organizations and act upon cases referred to it by the students. The court will also act upon serious offenses brought it by the dormitory council, Dean of Students, Student Senate president and/or the Judiciary Court Chairman. The court will try the offender and recommend proper action to the Dean of Students. The Dean of Students will then enforce the decision of the court. Any tried offender may petition for recall. The court will supervise all campus elections and review decisions made by the Senate." It was a heady change from the more traditional position of previous administrations. Virginia O'Leary, an English professor at OCC, and a lawyer, became very involved in this endeavor, adding her voice to the call for more student involvement and power. O'Leary had demonstrated her support of OCC students in



Dr. Loposer being carried on student shoulders, leading the OCC march into Evansville. (OCC Yearbook)

the late '60s when the appearance of the first "rock band" on campus had met with heavy criticism from several of the faculty. Dr. O'Leary told a *Collegian* reporter, "The sounds of youthful exuberance, positive sounds of celebration, are music to my ears."

Members of the court quickly acted to make the entire student body aware of this new aspect of student empowerment on campus. Another *Collegian* article reported that "the Judiciary Court of Oakland City College is part of the constitutional reform in student government effected in the past year. The creation of the Court places all matters of student discipline within the jurisdiction of a court composed entirely of students. How effective the Court is depends entirely on how well the students use the Court." Members of the first board were Grady Jones, Keith Clark, Carl Runyon, Margie Schneider, Steve Benjamin, Tom Malin, Bill Byrd, Mrs. Virginia O'Leary (sponsor), Steve Smith, and Ruth Blemker.

The sense of student empowerment during Barnard Loposer's administration was not to last. In late 1972, President Loposer carried out a very unpopular act when he dismissed two students without going through the

recently created Student Judicial Board. Essentially, the student board was upset with the fact that the two students had not been given the due process the board was supposed to provide as promised by President Loposer. Dr. Loposer, however, would not back down from his stand and many students ended up feeling betrayed. In a tense piece in the *Collegian*, Student Judiciary Board members asserted, "Many questions have been raised due to the fact that two students were expelled in October by Dr. Bernard A. Loposer, president of the College, without consultation with or consent by the Student Judicial Board. Some basic understandings were sought; the results of that meeting now need to be brought to the attention of the student body as a whole." The article then pointed out that "The Judicial Board, in opposition again to the decision of the President, recognizes that Dr. Loposer has the authority to pursue the methods as stated in the meeting, but sincerely believes that the Board is capable of hearing all matters of student discipline unless the cases are of an extreme critical nature. If such situations develop, they should be referred to the civil courts."

The article clearly presented President Loposer's arguments as well. "Dr. Loposer was very clear in his

assertion that the orderly operation of the college has to be maintained for the very survival of the college. The school paper further stated that the responsibility for the governing of the affairs of the student body must be assumed by students as a whole if the current philosophy is to function properly. If there is a breakdown in the procedures as they have been established in line with the existing philosophies, then a vacuum will be created within the academic community. In the face of such a refusal by the student body to assume these responsibilities, the administration will have no choice but to act in a manner which is considered to be in the best interest of the student body as a whole and of the college as an educational entity."

President Loposer quickly moved to carry out damage control by reasserting his closeness to students' concerns. In a lengthy article in the school paper the college president explained, "By entering an institution of higher education, [the] students must admit that [they] are ignorant and in need of deepening [their] understanding of the world around [them] through the pursuit of truth. However, [students] soon get caught in the great hang-up of the system. This in turn fosters the feeling that [they] are studying for tests and meeting requirements instead of really learning those things that are more relevant to the truth. What we need to do is to provide opportunities for students to learn and enjoy learning. We need an approach which would be conducive to the elimination of the basic ignorance that inhibits our knowing higher truths."

Loposer then shared his own vision of how needed changes might occur on campus. "All revolutions must begin in a small way. They must begin with the change within the individual. I am not referring to the establishing of rap sessions. All rap sessions seem to do is blow off steam to somebody who wants to gripe. Rather, I would suggest the word 'revolutionary' or the 'inner change' as descriptive of this approach. Thus, I submit this in an open letter to you as students to think on these things and if there be any merit, let the spontaneity of the quest of truth move us to do those things that will lead to a deeper growth intellectually and a broader approach to the society that ultimately will receive us as it looks to us for leadership."

Dr. Loposer's words, published in the *Collegian*, came across to many idealistic students as too abstract. Toward the end of President Loposer's tenure, some students pounded away at the vulnerable president and the rest of the college administration. Argued one student in a *Collegian* column, "The students have lost what faith there was in the administration. And I boldly state that, deep within, the administration has lost the faith they once had in themselves. The faculty is relentlessly attempting to stand on dry ground only to find themselves sinking fast in dissatisfaction along with the students." Recently, Carl Runyon, a member on the Loposer created judiciary board, recalled his disillusionment with the long ago student dismissal incident. "I know Dr. Loposer felt strongly that he must act quickly and decisively, but the entire



OCC's first judicial court. Standing, left to right, Steve Smith and Ruth Blemker. Seated, left to right, Grady Jones, Keith Clark, Carl Runyon, Marge Schneider, Steve Benjamin, Tom Malin and Bill Byrd. (*OCC Yearbook*)



Collegian sponsor Judy Whitten, editing the next issue of the OC Collegian.

experience was extremely disappointing for me. For a brief time I thought OCC might become a true Christian liberal arts school, one where student governance designed to make students responsible for their actions had the potential to teach students to be spiritually, morally sound."

In truth, President Loposer struggled with complex problems of which the student body remained completely unaware. He had inherited the complicated financial troubles the college had developed prior to his term and which, under his leadership, came to a climax in 1973. The *Collegian* duly noted that these difficult events, along with some personal issues, caused Dr. Loposer to abruptly turn in his resignation at the end of the 1973 school year. His leaving heralded the end of an era at the college.

The ensuing near collapse of the school in 1974, and the long duration of re-establishing OCC on a solid financial footing, may have done much to blunt the kind of student

empowerment seeking culture which existed at the school in the early 1970s. Enrollment dropped drastically by 1974 and stayed low for over a decade. Given this reality, perhaps many students were more willing to sacrifice arguable student rights to keep the doors to the college open. Perhaps too, students changed over time as well, becoming more passive regarding social issues and issues of authority. However, like their contemporaries at other schools, many OCC students in the early 1970s, as the *O. C. Collegian* gives evidence, were strongly at odds with the historically conservative system at their college. They often demanded their rights to lifestyle choices and input into the decision making process.

As I've grown older, I've come to realize how naïve some of the demands of OCC students were back in the early 1970s. Things seemed so black and white to us in those days and when our demands were not addressed, "the scent of rebellion," as Susan Baker aptly phrased it, certainly came to linger in the air. Perhaps I've grown wise enough to understand that what many students perceived as unfair policies on the part of conservative minded administrators were most always offered in good faith and often based on information unknown to students. Nevertheless, I certainly wish to thank the people who served at the college in my time as a student there, people such as Judy Whitten, Virginia O'Leary, Bernie Loposer, and others, who believed Oakland City College students, given guidance, could, with the administration, tackle many of the school's problems. These special mentors helped to create some sweet, wonderful, messy, and sometimes scary lessons in democracy.

Biographical Notes

Information and photos for this work were primarily gleaned from issues of the Oakland City College student newspaper, the *OC Collegian* and from the school's yearbook the *Mirror*. Copies of the *Collegian* and the *Mirror* can be found in Oakland City University's library archives. A fuller story of the college can also be found in my book *Enter to Learn, Go Forth to Serve: The Oakland City University Story 1950-2002*, Stinson Press, 2002. Also, the author wishes to thank Mary Elaine Gardner (Meg) Whittle, Carl Runyon, Scott Slater and Judy Whitten for sharing some of their memories of OCC during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

You can contact Dr. Raudy Mills at Oakland City University, 138 North Lucretia Street, Oakland City, Indiana 47660 or at rmills@oak.edu.