Buildings bear names of special people

BY JEFF A. GRANT

Groundbreaking ceremonies were held last month for the college’s new instruction building (pictured below). It will house the music, drama, art, journalism, business and radio-television programs. It has yet to be named.

Lingreen Hall

Lingreen Hall is located in the center of campus just north of the Clocktower. This building was named after Minnie Lingreen who began teaching here in 1939. She taught a variety of subjects, including history, political science, economics, geography and sociology. In June of 1971, she retired from Centralia College.

Her continuous service to the college has always been considered vital. She passed away in 1995.

Corbet Hall

On the southeastern corner of our main campus is Corbet Hall. It is named after Margaret Corbet, a teacher and administrator who began working here in 1924 and who helped keep the college up and running during the Depression. Corbet was very interactive with the students and faculty. During the Depression, she approached business people in the community to ask for money to get by on for that month.

Ehret Hall

On the northeastern corner of campus is Ehret Hall. In honor of Art Ehret’s time, effort and dedication to the college, Ehret Hall was named after him. Ehret was another faculty member who helped the college through the tough times of the Depression. In 1925, Centralia College hired him to teach chemistry. He also served as registrar-bursar, dean of men and later as the dean of administration. When he died in 1974, he had the longest record of two-year college teaching in the state.

Batie Science Center

The northwestern edge of the campus is home to the Batie Natural Science Center. The center was named after an exceptional teacher and administrator, Bill Batie. Batie arrived at the college in 1943, helping the college make it through the low enrollment periods during World War II. Batie enjoyed visiting local schools with his human skeleton and talking with students. Batie became the dean of instruction at the college before he retired in 1973. He now resides at the Stillwaters Estates Retirement Community.

Van Prooyen Center

The Van Prooyen Child Care Development Center is two blocks south of our campus.

This building was named after Dr. Cornelia Van Prooyen in honor of her commitment to education. Van Prooyen was a medical professional and the first female doctor in Lewis County. She was known as a friend and neighbor to the community.

She was a charter Foundation board member in 1982 and the president of the Foundation from 1985 to 1986.

Van Prooyen spent long nights caring for ill patients, putting her community and patients before her own needs. She passed away in 1987.

Staeger Business Center

The Staeger Business Center is located in the Professional Technology Building. It was named after Joe Staeger for his support of the college. Staeger is still active in the community and is recognized for his service to local organizations.

Hanson Building

The Hanson Building is just west of our college’s gymnasium.

The Hanson building was named in honor of Dr. Nels Hanson who not only served as college president, but also has been a generous supporter of the college.

Hanson came to the college in 1969 as the school’s president. He was known as a man of vision who led the college through many tough times during his 15 years here.

Hanson is remembered for his efforts in developing more class options for Centralia’s students.

Naming Buildings

The buildings of Centralia College have been named in honor of the great teachers and leaders of our community. Currently, a new instruction building is under construction and it will be completed in 2002. Who will decide what it will be named?

According to Dr. Hank Kirk, college president, the naming of campus facilities, including buildings, is the prerogative of the college’s board of trustees. He said the board of trustees recognizes the importance of its role in naming campus facilities and does so in the best interests of the college and the community.

“In the past, most named college buildings have been so designated by the board in honor of those who have provided extraordinary service to Centralia College,” said Kirk.

He noted that past buildings were built almost entirely with state funds, but in recent times, more community college facilities also are being named in recognition of those who provide financial support for building projects.

“The state no longer can be counted on to provide all needed funding for building projects. Without private financial support, the facilities might not otherwise be built,” said Kirk.

The general trend in higher education across the nation, said Kirk, is to name facilities to recognize both extraordinary service and support, including financial, of the college and/or its programs.

So, what name will the new building bear? We’ll just have to wait and see.

Jamie Myers contributed to this story.