

Tenor of Our Times

Volume 11

Article 5

Spring 2022

A Building Full of Life: Celebrating the Clifton L. Ganus, Sr. Building

Julie E Harris

Harding University, jeharris@harding.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.harding.edu/tenor>



Part of the [History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Harris, Julie E (Spring 2022) "A Building Full of Life: Celebrating the Clifton L. Ganus, Sr. Building," *Tenor of Our Times*: Vol. 11, Article 5.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.harding.edu/tenor/vol11/iss1/5>

This Special Report is brought to you for free and open access by the College of Arts & Humanities at Scholar Works at Harding. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Tenor of Our Times* by an authorized editor of Scholar Works at Harding. For more information, please contact scholarworks@harding.edu.



HARDING
UNIVERSITY

“A Building Full of Life: Celebrating the Clifton L. Ganus, Sr. Building”

The Clifton L. Ganus Sr. Building has served in a variety of capacities in its seventy-one years on Harding’s Searcy campus. Throughout its various incarnations, this space and its inhabitants have created thriving, vibrant communities over and over again. Harding University’s identity is its dedication to the Christian mission and providing a quality education. These are only carried out through the creation of relationships and a community that expands to serve others and bring them to a knowledge of God, ideas which are still part of our mission statement today. For three-quarters of the life of Harding University, the Ganus building has been part of that mission and Harding’s story. These walls may not speak, but they have housed generations of Harding students and memories.

Harding College moved to Searcy from Morrilton, Arkansas, in 1934. The Ganus building was originally designed as a new student center, as part of the 1948 presidential 1.5-million-dollar fund-raising campaign for a seven building expansion of the campus. A new Industrial Arts building was built separately from the campaign to manage the construction. The first of the new structures was Armstrong Hall, a men’s dormitory, which opened in January of 1950, ready to house 200 students.¹ Following the construction of the Beaumont Memorial Library, the Ganus Student Center was the third building completed, with Cathcart Hall, the Lee Music Building, and the recently renamed (2021) Antony-Wright Administration Building coming shortly after. At the same time, the original College Church building was completed, as well as the demolition of the old gymnasium, training school, and the much-mourned Godden Hall.² Comments lamenting the destruction of Godden Hall and those surrounding the forthcoming demolition of the Ganus Building are echoes of one another.

The new Student Center’s name was announced in January 1951, prior to its official opening. The building was named for Clifton L. Ganus, Sr., who was serving as the Chairman of the Board of Trustees at the time. Ganus was elected to the Harding Board of Trustees in 1939 and served as Chairman of Harding’s Board of Trustees from 1940-54.³ At Harding, Ganus was well-known for being interested in student welfare. For example, Ganus established a \$2,000 student loan fund (which was a significant amount in the 1950s, given that tuition for ten weeks in 1953-54 was \$150.00, with the per credit hour fee being \$7.50 and Room and Board costs at \$47.50 a month).⁴ Ganus also offered a yearly \$100 prize for the academically top ranked male

¹ “Excellent Progress in Financial Drive,” *Harding Bulletin*, April 1948 (vol. 23, no 16), p.1; “Industrial Arts Building Will House Facilities to Train Industrial Personnel,” *Harding Bulletin*, April 1948 (vol 23, no. 16), p. 2; “First Building from Campaign will be: Men’s Dormitory to House 200 Students,” *Harding Bulletin*, April 1948 (vol 23, no. 16), p. 1. <https://scholarworks.harding.edu/hubulletins/90/>

² “Building Program Nears Its Goal,” *Harding Bulletin*, December 1951, (vol.27, no. 9) p. 3. <https://scholarworks.harding.edu/hubulletins/116/>

³ “Excellence is a Habit,” *Harding Bulletin*, September 1966 (vol. 42, no. 7), p. 6. <https://scholarworks.harding.edu/hubulletins/268/>

⁴ *Harding Catalog 1953-54*, p. 20, 23, 25. <https://scholarworks.harding.edu/catalogs/5/>

and female students, which was bestowed at graduation.⁵ The Ganus Building dedication as the Ganus Student Center occurred on June 2, 1954. The Student Center had been open and in use since the Spring of 1951, but Harding dedicated all the new presidential campaign buildings together. Dr. George Benson, then president of Harding College, presented C.L. Ganus as Chairman of the Board keys to all the new buildings on campus.⁶ C.L. Ganus died in September 1955, and this volume contains a full biography of him in a companion article.⁷

The Ganus Building was originally designed to create a new focus for Harding students as the Student Center. The building contained a small cafe, called the College Inn, the post office, student publications, and a banquet hall. As the Student Center, the Ganus Building had a warmth and coziness that the students loved, including a fireplace in the lobby. Upstairs, four signs hung down from the ceiling and pointed the way to the Alumni office, *Bison* office, *Petit Jean* Office, and the Emerald Room. Such signs proved tempting to tap, and by April 1951, *The Bison* was already pleading for students not to hit the signs.⁸ Harding students were involved in the process of creating this new community center from the beginning, including helping to tear down other older structures. The student body also submitted nominations to name the upstairs banquet hall, where two classrooms are now. A student committee then selected the Emerald Room from the nominations, and that name was in turn approved by the faculty. Social club mixers were held here, as well as formals and Homecoming class reunions. Johnice Hearn reminisced on Facebook recently about her wedding reception being held there sixty-five years ago.

The downstairs portion was called “the Hub,” a name which in 2022 belongs to the Harding Bookstore. The Hub name also resulted from student submissions. *The Bison* reported that “the student who turned in [the Hub] suggested that it would be appropriate because the inn will be the center about which student activities revolve.”⁹ And so it was. Alumni stories of meeting their spouses in the Ganus, at a mixer, relaxing here, or while checking their mail, are too numerous to relate. It was the center of student elections, as seen in one of the photographs in this volume. The *Petit Jean* office was on the east end of the second floor, where history and political science faculty offices are now. One alumnus remembers getting locked in the building while proofing *The Bison*. The post office boxes were located where Foreign Language offices

⁵ “C.L. Ganus, Sr.,” *Petit Jean Yearbook 1953-54*, Vol. 30, p. 87. <https://scholarworks.harding.edu/petit-jean/30/>; “110 will receive Degrees on June 7,” *Harding Bulletin*, May 1951 (vol. 26, no. 17), p. 1. <https://scholarworks.harding.edu/hubulletins/111/>.

⁶ “Progress, Achievement, Academic Growth Result,” *Petit Jean Yearbook 1954-55*, Vol. 31, p. 8. <https://scholarworks.harding.edu/petit-jean/31/>; “College to Stage Celebration June 2-3,” *Harding Bulletin* May 1954, (Vol. 29, no. 16) p.1. <https://scholarworks.harding.edu/hubulletins/131/>.

⁷ “Excellence is a Habit,” *Harding Bulletin*, September 1966 (vol. 42, no. 7), p. 6. <https://scholarworks.harding.edu/hubulletins/268/>

⁸ “It’s A Small Matter, But Please...,” *The Bison*. April 28, 1951, p.2. <https://scholarworks.harding.edu/thebison/505/>

⁹ “Student Center will be Named for C.L. Ganus,” *The Bison*, January 27, 1951, (vol. XIV, no. 12.) p.1. <https://scholarworks.harding.edu/thebison/493/>

are currently, and the current glass walled classroom, often referred to as the “Fish Bowl,” was the Bookstore. Community formed here and blossomed.

One of the key methods through which any society creates community is through food, and it is not surprising that food also featured heavily in the memories of the Ganus Building. Patti Cobb, now a women’s dormitory, held the main cafeteria, but the Ganus Student Center held the “College Inn,” which boasted “clean, comfortable booths and the refreshing fountain [to] attract students [at] all hours of the day.”¹⁰ This cafe/restaurant bred an atmosphere of camaraderie where minor dates for social clubs met, and cups of coffee were consumed regularly. Alumni from the 1950s remember distinctly “hot donuts” baked by Dixie McCorkle and her staff, while a later generation from the 1960s and early 1970s remember fondly Mrs. Hazel Lomax’s cinnamon rolls. The photograph in this volume of Mrs. Lomax was featured in *The Bison* in 1971.¹¹ The Emerald Room was the banquet room on campus, and there was a dumb waiter on the first floor that carried food from either the College Inn or Patti Cobb. The Ganus Building as a Student Center was filled with laughter, life, and community.

The Ganus Student Center eventually became too small for the community it helped to foster. Harding originally built the student center to serve a population of approximately 750 students. However, by 1965, student enrollment had nearly doubled to 1,467, and it continued to grow until reaching 2,319 in 1973. The Ganus Building simply could no longer provide enough space when the student population had tripled from its original capacity. In 1973, the student center moved to the Hammon Student Center, which shifted the focus of campus activities. The Ganus now began a new phase in its life as an academic building. Renovation brought office space and classrooms, as the Ganus now housed the Admissions office, Foreign Language and Speech Departments, and classes. The campus radio station KHCA also moved into the basement of the Ganus.¹²

The Foreign Language and International Studies department resided in the Ganus Building for almost fifty years, from 1973 to 2022, and continually created a close-knit community with their students while reaching out to the wider Harding community and to the globe. Alumni speak with affection of their classes in French, Spanish, Italian, and German, and of close relationships with faculty, such as Dottie & Winfred Wright, Noble Goss, Terry Edwards, and Ava Conley.¹³ The Italian club, the French club, and the Phi Sigma Iota honors society often hosted events in the Ganus. Missions, both at home and abroad, have been a consistent part of the Foreign Language department. Some faculty like Winfred and Dorothy (Dottie)Wright and Robert McCready came as teachers to Harding after spending time in the

¹⁰ “College Inn Ad,” *Petit Jean Yearbook* 1950-51, p. 173. <https://scholarworks.harding.edu/petit-jean/27/>

¹¹ “‘Good Friendly Service’ Displayed at College Inn,” *The Bison*, Feb. 12, 1971 (vol.46, no. 10), p. 4. <https://scholarworks.harding.edu/thebison/965/>

¹² “Phase II Goals Accomplished,” *Harding Bulletin*, October 1973, (vol. 49, no. 4), p.1 <https://scholarworks.harding.edu/hubulletins/352/>

¹³ “Foreign Language Department adds Course in Spanish,” *Petit Jean Yearbook* 1973-74, vol. 50, p. 78. <https://scholarworks.harding.edu/petit-jean/50/>

mission field, in the Wrights' case, after six years in France.¹⁴ Former Chair Ava Conley set a great precedent by leading over forty mission trips to Latin America, and others have continued the tradition of overseas campaigns to France, Latin America, and elsewhere. In fact, all of the Foreign Language faculty have been part of such campaigns. Closer to home, the Ganus Building provided a setting to direct the state foreign language competition for high school students and to have an after-school program for kindergarten through sixth grade students. The Ganus Building was home to all of these outreaches, campaign meetings, and weekly French and Spanish devotionals continuing even as this journal goes to print.

The move to the Ganus Building meant an upgrade in the facilities of the Foreign Language department, as the small language room in the American Studies Building only had one reel-to-reel tape recorder and a blackboard.¹⁵ As part of the 1973-74 renovation, the Foreign Language department received a new, modern language lab. Winfred Wright recalled that the equipment for the language lab did not have a dedicated room. "We bought a mobile, wireless system ... [and] an antenna was placed under the carpet of both rooms [111 and 112]. The podium was a large unit that held all the wireless headsets. The teacher could tune into any student, hear the source tape and the student's response, and then communicate directly with the student. It could be used as a traditional lab or as an electronic classroom."¹⁶ The lab was considered one of the most advanced in Arkansas, with six individual learning machines, private booths for independent study, and a reading room with language periodicals and games.¹⁷

The Ganus Building was renovated again when the Communications Department moved to a new building in 1998. Foreign language offices and classrooms now occupied the entire left side of the building, and the department now had a dedicated space for the language lab, which itself was upgraded with new technology. "Methodologies [had changed] so instead of installing a traditional audio lab, it was decided to go for the computer equipped lab."¹⁸ This new lab included Macintosh G4 computers, a CD burner, scanner, a laser jet printer, and special headphones designed for language comparison. The dedication of the new lab was February 15, 2001, and then chair Terry Edwards honored Winfred and Dorothy Wright for their service to the Harding community by naming it for them.¹⁹

In the early 1970s, both Foreign Language and Speech were part of the Humanities Division at Harding. It made sense to house these programs in their own building to allow them to grow and thrive. The Speech Department, which later became the Communication Department, included both what is now the Communication and Communication Sciences & Disorders programs. Communication remained in the Ganus Building for twenty-five years,

¹⁴ HU Honors Former Professors with Computer Lab Dedication," *The Bison*, Feb. 23, 2001 (vo. 76, no. 13), p.1 <https://scholarworks.harding.edu/thebison/1600/>

¹⁵ "HU Honors Former Professors with Computer Lab Dedication," *The Bison*, Feb. 23, 2001 (vo. 76, no. 13), p.1 <https://scholarworks.harding.edu/thebison/1600/>

¹⁶ Email interview with Dr. Winfred Wright, April 20,2022.

¹⁷ "Communication: The Key to Humanities," *Harding Bulletin*, April 1974 (vol. 49, no. 10), p.3. <https://scholarworks.harding.edu/hubulletins/347/>

¹⁸ Email interview with Dr. Winfred Wright, April 20,2022.

¹⁹ "HU Honors Former Professors with Computer Lab Dedication," p.1

1973-1998. The department faculty, including Betty Ulrey, DaBn Tullos, and Pat Garner, became some of the new landmarks of another community in the life in the Ganus Building. As academics became the focus rather than student life, mentoring by faculty members like Mike James and Dottie Frye became critical to creating an atmosphere to encourage student growth.

The faculty also created greater connections with Searcy and the surrounding area. By 1970, Richard Walker was running a speech pathology clinic, and with the move into the Ganus, the clinic came as well. The renovations created a new twelve-room speech clinic, and local Searcy residents remember coming to the Ganus for speech therapy, creating yet another era of rich service in the life of this building. The newly equipped carrier current radio station, KHCA, was also a Ganus staple and included a recording and listening laboratory with twelve sound-treated booths equipped with modern cassette recorders, and audio and video recording equipment.²⁰ KHCA created a wider reach for spreading and connecting the Harding community to others.

Between 1985 and 1988, Communication housed the fastest growing majors on campus, expanding from 154 majors to 207 in three years. Harding's undergraduate program in speech pathology also gained a national reputation for excellence among graduate schools. The Speech clinic continued to expand, run by Dan Tullos. Each speech pathology major completed 200 hours of supervised clinical instruction, working with the clinic's clients, ranging in age from six months to forty-five years. The service to the community had little to no cost but was limited to fifty clients at any one time.²¹ To outfit the Communications Department with necessary equipment, the Ganus Building underwent another renovation from 1987-1988. This time the west side of the building was overhauled and a computer graphics lab, a new darkroom, remembered well by our current campus photographer, Jeff Montgomery, and an editing control room for video productions were all added. The computer graphics lab featured MacIntosh computers which directly assisted public relations, advertising, and print journalism majors. The radio station continued to serve in a dual fashion of playing popular music and broadcast worship services on Sundays. The Ganus Building again provided a home for growth, creating community, and serving others.²² Communications' continued student growth and a desire to house the radio station, located in the Ganus basement, and the television station, which was in the Ezell Bible Building, in the same place eventually meant all the Mass Communication pieces moved into the new Reynolds building in 1998.

Communications' move to a new facility with the Music Department meant one last major renovation for the Ganus Building, and another department arrived to share the Ganus as its home. The remodel was completed over the 1998-1999 school year, and the History and Political Science (then Social Science), Department moved into the west side of the first floor

²⁰ "Communication: The Key to Humanities," *Harding Bulletin*, April 1974 (vol. 49, no. 10), p.3. <https://scholarworks.harding.edu/hubulletins/347/>

²¹ "Training for Communication Disorders Careers Ranked Among the Best at Undergraduate Level," *Harding Bulletin*, October 1988 (vol. 64, no 2), p. 5. <https://scholarworks.harding.edu/hubulletins/490/>

²² "Mass Communications majors Soar to Top in Growth Category during Last Three Years," *Harding Bulletin*, October 1988 (vol. 64, no 2), p. 5. <https://scholarworks.harding.edu/hubulletins/490/>

and the second floor of the Ganus in the summer of 1999. This was also the occasion of the addition of the new Winfred and Dottie Wright Language Lab. Like Foreign Language and Communications, the History and Political Science faculty, led by acting chair Fred Jewell and chair Tom Howard, set about the work of creating community in the Ganus Building. The Macintosh computer lab was removed and became an office space for Fred Jewell and now serves as a small conference room and workspace. The Ganus Building again provided space for students and faculty to connect in new ways. Paul Haynie commented, “It’s nice to have all of the faculty together on the same floor. It makes it much easier for us to compare notes and to talk to each other about our classes. It’s been a real blessing.”²³

The move into the new facility also allowed for new technology for the History and Political Science Department. A small new computer lab with WESTLAW software aided pre-law students, and later SPSS statistics software was added to the computer lab in 2008 for political science research. Eventually, in 2013, the computer lab was joined by a mobile laptop computer cart. In 1999, the classrooms had the potential to be smart classrooms for PowerPoint use, but that transformation waited until the 2001-2002 school year.²⁴ Initially, there was a computer on a cart upstairs that had to be wheeled into the classrooms. The technology changed greatly from 1999 to the present, and there have been multiple refittings to keep classrooms up to date – both in History and Political Science and in Foreign Language. The office spaces also have had to be redesigned to include more faculty or accommodate office staff and student spaces. Over its next twenty-three years, the History and Political Science Department averaged 100-150 majors at any given time across six different programs.

Community is not built by technology and programs, though. As former Administrative Assistant Courtney Eaken reminisced, “a building is just that. It’s the people that make it so special and...who bring their flair to the brick and mortar.”²⁵ The Ganus Building provided the home base, while Harding faculty and students worked together to create a scholarly and spiritual community. The Ganus Building provided space for a student lounge for History and Political Science students for the first time. The Ganus basement was transformed from a radio station to a space for parties, meetings, and occasionally classes. The Ganus Building basement also has a reputation of being a safe shelter when tornadoes come to Searcy, and the entire building has also provided shelter through other storms as well. The faculty taught students here on the day after 9-11 and through this latest Pandemic

The fostering of community also occurred in class, in organizations, through remaking the physical space, and through family. History, Geography, and Political Science classes in the Ganus often had distinctive personalities, including the freezing cold temperatures of a class filled with the stories of Paul Haynie. Students brought sweaters and blankets and sometimes kept spares in other faculty’s offices. Legend has it that on Civil War field trips students could

²³ “History Department Relocates,” *Petit Jean Yearbook 1999-2000*, (vol. 76), 77.
<https://scholarworks.harding.edu/petit-jean/76/>

²⁴ “History Department Relocates,” *Petit Jean Yearbook 1999-2000*, (vol. 76), 77.
<https://scholarworks.harding.edu/petit-jean/76/>; Dr. Steve Breezeel emails to Jim Baird, 2008 and 2013.

²⁵ Facebook comment, Sunday April 17, 2022.

see their breath on the bus that Paul Haynie rode in. Liann Gallagher has taken over the role creating cold classrooms since 2016. Classes with Kevin Klein brought images of World War I as a bar fight, while Fred Jewell delivered a memorable lecture on the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Julie Harris' classes included music integrated into lecture and occasionally Chinese calligraphy painting, and one never knew when Jan Fortner would suddenly start speaking Hebrew, Greek, Latin, or Italian in class. The Ganus Building also became the launching point for forays wider afield – field trips to different religious sites with Church history, medieval castles, nuclear missile silos, the Arkansas State Capitol, and even New Orleans for its World War II Museum. In 2012, the department began an American Experience Tour of sites pertinent to American history and politics. The Ganus Building became a hive of activity for planning these trips and storing the increasing amount of necessary gear.

Part of the lively community of the History and Political Department in the Ganus has been its organizations. Barristers, Young Democrats, Young Republicans, the short-lived Walking Club, and Historical Fiction club all met here, but it has been Phi Alpha Theta (History) and Pi Sigma Alpha (Political Science) which have been the flag bearers in creating community. Election Watch parties began in 2004, and the Ganus upstairs classrooms filled with anxious students and engrossed faculty watching multiple computers and television screens to call races as data came in. In 2012, student publications returned to the Ganus Building once again in the form of this journal, *Tenor of Our Times*. *Tenor* is now in its eleventh volume, all of which have been produced, agonized over, and celebrated in the Ganus Building Red Room. Inductions for both honor societies, trivia game nights between the two societies, and lectures on piracy, empire, sports history, and the historiography of Pocahontas.

The Pocahontas lecture on February 16, 2012, by Kimberly Laing had to be postponed, however, because of another feature of the Ganus community – family. Dr. and Mrs. Laing welcomed their daughter, Jordan, on the day Mrs. Laing was to lecture. The Ganus Building in its earliest incarnation helped create new families by fostering many relationships that blossomed into courtship and marriage. For those who have worked here, the Ganus Building has provided a second home for children as they grow up. Going to Dad's or Mom's office was a treat, or sometimes the regular after school stop. The presence of children has also provided comfort for students missing younger siblings, as well as examples of healthy familial relationships when a student's own start was difficult. Community is built on these relationships.

The relationship of the department with the Ganus family was re-emphasized with the creation of an Endowed Chair for History and Political Science in March 2017. The new chair was named after Dr. Clifton L. Ganus Jr., Harding's third president, former chair of the History and Social Science department, and the son of C.L. Ganus for whom the building was named. This new Ganus chair allows the department to do things not permitted by its normal budget.²⁶ Thus, new levels of community outreach were planned and launched from the C.L. Ganus Sr. building using Ganus Jr. Chair funding. In 2018, a History Faire for local school children ages

²⁶ "Chair established in honor of Dr. Ganus," *Chronicle of the Harding University History and Political Science Department*, Summer 2017, Issue 2, p.1.

3-10 began. In 2021, the History and Political Science Department launched three new outreaches, thanks to the work of Kimberly Laing, to the local community and to the community of teachers. The first was “Talking Shop,” a virtual book club for current secondary classroom teachers to read and discuss methods and content. The second was History Explorers for children grades 3-6 which meets weekly to read, have activities, and journal about history. The last was a Social Science Symposium, again for current secondary teachers, which was hosted in July 2021 partly in the Ganus and partly elsewhere on campus. This drew alumni from the department back for a seminar on using games in the classroom.

This building has had many lives and memories, but unfortunately like all things and people bound by time, it has begun to show its age. The systems of the Ganus Building that were cutting edge in 1951, or even in 1973, are now becoming difficult to repair. Classrooms that have witnessed so much knowledge and learning are still functioning, but one electrical outlet at the front of the room does not allow easy access to technology and software. History Explorers needed resources and spaces beyond those the Ganus Building could supply. Those maintenance costs and the need for more updated spaces to fit the needs of building community for new generations to come are why the time has come to say goodbye to the Ganus Building. On April 16, 2022, the Ganus family, the Foreign Language Department, and the History and Political Science Department held a reception and celebration in honor of Ganus Sr and the Ganus Building. The memories flowed through the conversations in person and online of those whose lives had been shaped by the communities created here.

Kristi Bond, current chair of Foreign Language, said: “We have been blessed by the community members that have passed through those doors, the ones who went before us, the ones that have stayed to work, the ones that have carried our community to other places, the ones who have taken what we teach and gone on to do greater things than we will.”²⁷ This is what it means to build community and particularly communities for eternity. On behalf of those who have worked, learned, laughed, communicated, and lived as part of the Ganus Building’s life, we are thankful for having been a part of its story.

²⁷ Email between Kristi Bond and Julie Harris, April 20, 2022.