



Since the mid-1960s, Cal Lutheran has been a center for the arts.

BUILDING A CITY

When California Lutheran College (CLC) was founded in 1959, Thousand Oaks was a dusty town known mainly for its movie sets and Jungleland Wild Animal Farm. Its population at the time, including the areas of Westlake Village and Newbury Park, was



Early visitors enjoyed touring the campus in a horse-drawn carriage.

14,000. The college drew many new residents to the community. It attracted a cadre of highly educated, talented and civic-minded faculty and administrators from across the country.

They came to the Conejo Valley motivated to contribute to their community while they built a new college.

In 1963 a group of Conejo Valley business and civic leaders banded together to form Community Leaders Club, a volunteer organization whose goal was to strengthen ties between the college and the community.

In 1964, the same year that CLC graduated its first class, the City of Thousand Oaks was incorporated.



Thousand Oaks and Pederson Ranch in 1959.

The college and its new alumni had a major impact on the cultural and educational life of the new city. Since the fledgling city had no large auditoriums, CLC often hosted major functions and served as a gathering place for community and civic activities. Reaching beyond the campus, members of the faculty and staff founded new organizations and programs and assumed leadership roles. Alumni settled, worked and volunteered in the new city, establishing businesses and families.

As the years passed, Cal Lutheran strengthened its role in the community. Dr. Richard Adams, chair of the Drama Department, founded the Conejo Valley Arts Council; Music Department Professor Elmer Ramsey founded the Conejo Symphony Orchestra, the forerunner of the New West Symphony; and Dr. Raymond Olson, upon retiring

as president of the College, became the founding president of Conejo Future Foundation. Dr. Olson was an untiring advocate of establishing a cultural center in Thousand Oaks.



Cal Lutheran faculty founded key community organizations such as the Conejo Symphony Orchestra.

His unrelenting efforts resulted in the concept for the Civic Arts Plaza and founding of the Alliance for the Arts. During the 1970s, former President Mark Mathews founded the Mathews Leadership Forum to foster greater understanding between students and the business community.

The tradition of community service continues. Today, faculty and administrators are leaders in civic, business and volunteer groups. With the assistance of CLU undergraduate and graduate students, they conduct surveys and produce data to help local and regional organizations and governments in planning and decision-making. They offer consulting services to small businesses and tax aid to seniors. They develop economic forecasts. They volunteer here and abroad to build shelters and feed the homeless. They partner with other universities and biotech firms to conduct scientific research.

CLU alumni hold leadership roles in the region spanning from city, county and state elected positions, to police and fire administration, clergy, attorneys, school superintendents, teachers and principals, social service managers and community volunteers.

From the beginning, Cal Lutheran has been a gathering place for the community.