



The first Commencement was held on May 31, 1964.

PIONEERING SPIRIT

When the college opened in 1961, the first class of 330 freshmen and sophomores, like the original faculty of 30, had an unflagging sense of the pioneer spirit. They attended the new California Lutheran College even though the school had no history, no traditions and no academic record.

A very different institution from what we have today welcomed the first students in September 1961. The master plan of the founders anticipated that the campus would eventually be built on Mt. Clef Ridge overlooking the Conejo Valley. The existing structures on the south campus would then be transformed into a commercial development. Because the dormitories would one day become hotel rooms, they were designed like suites, each having a private bath. The dormitories were never converted, but the concept set a blueprint for all CLU residence halls to follow, resulting in significantly better and more personalized student accommodations than those typical of college campuses.

The vision of a commercial



development was endorsed through 1979. During that period, the college leased office space to an insurance company, a print shop, a

barbershop, dentist and bank. But the plan to build a new campus north of Olsen Road never materialized, and in the early 1980s, the leaseholders were asked to vacate to provide much needed additional space for college uses.

The founding faculty came to CLC from across the nation. They were strongly committed to the Lutheran tradition of higher education and to the philosophy of the liberal arts college. Since many of the faculty had already earned tenure at other institutions, the Board of Regents voted to honor their tenure status, which

contributed to attracting a cadre of outstanding teachers. It was largely on the basis of this prestigious, experienced faculty that the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) granted California Lutheran College accreditation during its first academic year, an amazing and unprecedented accomplishment.

The campus in 1961 – looking across Kingsmen Park to the Centrum buildings.



Dr. Gaylerd Falde, Dr. Orville Dahl, the Rev. Carl Segerhammar (front row l-r) and the founding faculty set the standard for academic excellence.

The devoted first faculty members laid the academic and social foundations of the college. They set the lofty precedent to pursue academic excellence in every possible way.

This philosophy has continued to guide the University throughout its history. In 1986 the name of California Lutheran College was changed to California Lutheran University to better reflect its breadth of undergraduate, graduate and professional programs.

During the intervening years, not only did the name of the college and the physical appearance of the campus change but also the face of the students, faculty and staff. While the original faculty and students were predominantly Lutheran, today's professors and students represent a diversity of ethnic and religious backgrounds and come to CLU from around the globe.

