

# Arthur G. Hansen

## Purdue president becomes Texas A&M Chancellor July 1



of this, he delegates to our administration. Internal work of this toughness is in asking the questions and analyzing the responsibility. But, this hardness is combined with a softness for people — people.

"Because most of the hard decisions take place behind the scenes and the human concern is on the surface, his appearance is as if he is a soft person. But, this is misleading because, when the decisions are made, the hard questions have been handled and answered.

"You can run a university in a number of different ways."

Felix Haas, executive vice president in charge of answer. But, I think the Hansen administration is a model of careful analysis, decision-making and authority and considered before the person is probably as an administrator a mix as any."

Hansen came to Purdue from Georgia Tech in July 1971 after 11 years at the University of Michigan. He had been president from 1946 to 1971, why we do things the way we do them.

He's very real. Gay Totten, editor of the Purdue Alumnae, said: "Dr. Hansen through his complete tenure at Purdue at the end of his career, he's added a period of great unrest. Purdue

had had its share of turmoil — we had student demonstrations, sit-ins and a lot of angry rhetoric.

"Like many kids of that era, students were angry about a lot of things. When Dr. Hansen got here, there were a lot of feelings to be mended, a lot of rapport to be established."

Maurice G. Knoy, former president of the Purdue Board of Trustees, said: "Nationally, it was a poor time to hire a president. When we went on our presidential hunt (in 1971), we found that a number of first-class possibilities had decided to get out of higher education.

"At the time (Hansen) was hired, he was mandated to do certain things here. He had to be the chief operating officer of a large university. On top of that, he had to raise money. He not only had to run the place, he had to fund it as well."

And Hansen succeeded. When he arrived at Purdue, no development office existed and private fund-raising efforts were almost non-existent. Today, private gifts total \$17 million a year.

Michael Ferin, director of development, said: "Dr. Hansen has almost been a member of the development office staff. He takes advice from our professional fund-raisers and puts it to use."

But Hansen will not play the same role at Texas A&M. "I'm not going there with the intent of running a development office," he said. "But certainly I'm available for any possible advice or help with any particular group at any particular component of the System."

"But, that will have to come at the request of the presidents or the Board. I always will try to present the case for funding — like the Permanent University Fund — for the components of the System but that's a different thing from being directly involved with the development effort."

Hansen frequently is called a "student's president." Faculty and administration obviously admire his ability to communicate with students.

Hicks said: "He probably spends more time with students

than all the other Big 10 presidents put together."

King agreed: "As a university president, there are so many functions with legislators, alumni, etc., that to be that close to the students is a little above and beyond the call of duty. But the Hansens have done this."

This admiration for Hansen's administration isn't limited to the Purdue campus. Robert Kriebel, editor of the Lafayette Journal and Courier, said he feels Hansen's top achievement as Purdue president is the stable, competent environment he has maintained.

"These have been solid years," Kriebel said. "There haven't been any spectacular new buildings and no new schools have been created, but there's just been a solid, organizational presence in the president's office."

When Hansen came to Purdue in 1971, he said he felt a college president should serve a 10-year term. In November, he announced his resignation.

The people at Purdue are obviously sorry to see him leave. Hicks said: "Since he announced his resignation, I have heard no one who has said anything but 'Gosh, I wish he wouldn't go.' The faculty, students, townspeople and administrators all have expressed very sincere regret that he's leaving."

"I don't see how A&M could have done any better. I can see that there may be difficulties that anyone could run into but I don't see how (the regents) could have found anyone better suited for the job. He can do the job — whether he succeeds depends on them."

Stories by  
Denise Richter  
Battalion staff



Hansen takes time out from his busy schedule as Purdue president to talk with university students.

His willingness to devote this extra time has earned him the reputation as a "student's president."

### Students sorry to see them go

## Hansens liked, respected

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. — Every time the 1977 Mustang stopped at a light, the passenger's seat slid forward. When the car moved, the seat slid back. Bad enough any time, but when you're a student and the passenger is the president of your university, it's mortifying.

But it shouldn't have been. Dr. Arthur G. Hansen, president of Purdue University and soon to be chancellor of the Texas A&M University System, handled the situation with typical grace.

"Do you want me to fix this?" he asked.

The fact that he was riding in a car full of students in the first place helps to explain why he's known at Purdue as a "student's president."

"Everyone admires and respects him," said Ed Miller, editor of the student newspaper, the Purdue Exponent. "You might be able to find a few students who would say, 'Arthur Hansen? Who's he?' But these wouldn't be the students who have worked with Dr. Hansen. They wouldn't really know him."

Jim Dodson, student repre-

sentative to the Purdue Board of Trustees, said: "He's a top-notch person — a very sincere man. He has to run a circus — all of the administrators report to him and he has to coordinate all of that along with activities ... like budgeting and trying to get state funds."

The current recession has hit Indiana hard — the state has a 12 percent unemployment rate, the second highest in the nation. This economic gloom has spread to higher education with- in the state.

Since Purdue is funded by student fees and legislative appropriations, which have not increased to keep up with inflation, students are having to pay the difference. Tuition and fees will increase 16.5 percent next year — from \$1,158 a year to \$1,350 a year.

Students know the problem is serious. "I think a lot of students are worried about whether they're going to be able to come back to school and finish their educations," Dodson said.

However, Purdue students realize the problem is not exclusive to their university and don't blame the administration for their economic woes.

Steve Ferdon, president of the Residence Halls Council, said: "This is a serious problem, but President Hansen has worked hard to get the money we need, when we need it."

Students cited Hansen's willingness to work with them as one reason for his popularity.

"He'll treat you like an equal, but if you want to make a change through Dr. Hansen, you have to approach him with a very business-like and professional attitude," Ferdon said. "You'll be gone in four years, and he'll still be here. Your proposal has to be based, not on the short-term effects, but (on its) long-term outcome."

Hansen also received high marks for the amount of time he's willing to spend with students.

Mike Donohue, president of the Purdue Student Union Board, said: "He's very accessible. If you need to talk to him, you can. He could have made the university presidency an easy job, but he took the time to become accessible."

Hansen's rapport with students hasn't gone unnoticed. George S. King, director of the

Division of Intercollegiate Athletics, said: "In an 11-year period, he and Nancy have been involved in more student functions than any other president in the country. I've often marvelled at the pace they've been able to keep."

In fact, the night of the sliding front seat incident, Hansen had been at dinner with a group of students and had to hitch a ride back home when Mrs. Hansen had to leave the restaurant early to meet with another group of students who were coming to their home for an ice-cream party.

This was no isolated event — they meet with students as often as time permits, sometimes four or five nights a week.

But although students said they will miss the Hansens, they don't resent his leaving.

Ferdon said: "All the students I've talked to like Dr. Hansen and say they don't blame him a bit for leaving ... they're happy for him."

"It's tough for someone who went to Purdue ... to walk out of the job after 10 years. He was walking on eggs, and I think he's done a great job all the way."

## Interviews only tell part of the story

He looks like a chancellor. Navy blue suit, white shirt, dark shoes. He drives a stately dark blue Oldsmobile Regency and stays in Chicago's Americana Congress Hotel, an elegant blend of crystal, thick carpet and tuxedoed porters.

This is Texas A&M's chancellor-designate — Dr. Arthur G. Hansen, president of Purdue University.

We get in the car for the 2½-hour drive to West Lafayette — his wife driving and he and I in the back seat so we can talk. He pulls two turkey sandwiches (white bread, no mayonnaise) out of a paper sack and hands me one.

On the way to Purdue, we discuss Apple II computers, Boilermaker basketball, steel mills and student newspapers. At a highway toll booth, he gets out of the car to rummage around in the trunk for a clean coffee cup for me.

At the Purdue Memorial Union, he carries my suitcases in, makes sure I'm properly registered for my four-day stay, and leaves his home phone number in case I need anything.

This, too, is Texas A&M's chancellor-designate.

Before I called Hansen's office to tell him about my upcoming visit to Purdue, I was carefully coached. "Don't ask him if you can come," they said. "Tell him you're coming. That way, maybe you'll have a better chance at getting in to see him."

When I spoke to his secretary, she told me he was busy but would call me in an hour. I was skeptical. One hour later, I was talking to Hansen.

"You're coming to Purdue?" he asked. "That's marvelous. Do you need a place to stay?"

Definitely not the reaction I had expected. In fact, the entire stay was not what I had expected.

I went to Indiana to find out

more about Hansen. I packed winter clothes and my reporter's attitude.

Reporters are trained to be skeptical. When reporters hear only good things about a person, they automatically suspect the worst.

But this time, my reporter's instincts were wrong. I heard only good about Hansen because the people I interviewed only had good things to say about him. I read through 10 years of the Lafayette Journal and Courier looking for controversy only to find that the most controversial event during his tenure was his refusal to allow co-ed dorms.

During my stay at Purdue, I interviewed Hansen, administrators, faculty and students. But the unofficial time spent with him and his wife, Nancy, was far more revealing.

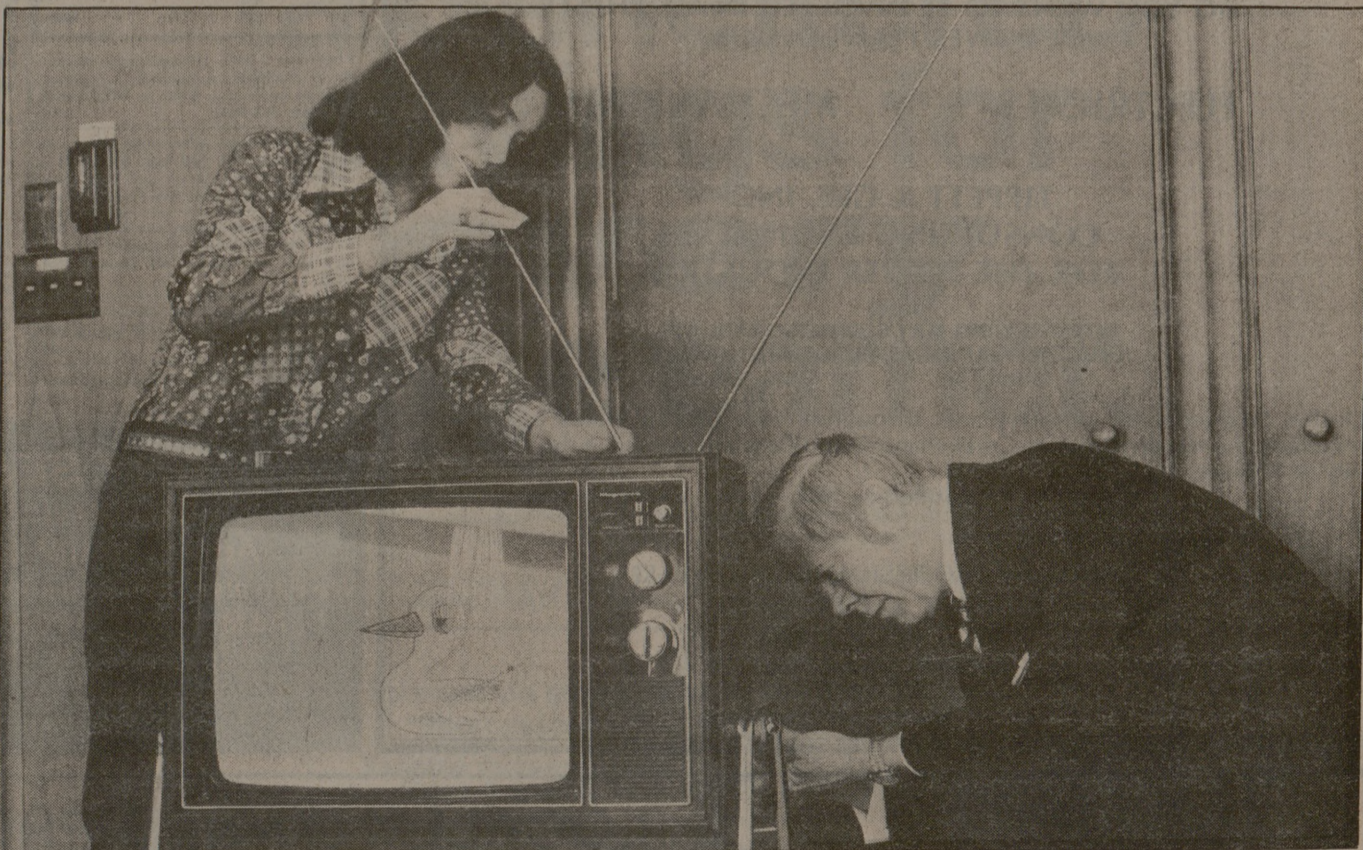
One afternoon, Mrs. Hansen took me on a tour of the campus. As she showed me around, a student walked up to her and said: "I just want you to know how much I think you and Dr. Hansen have done for the University. We're really going to miss you."

That night, I was invited to a party a group of Purdue Marching Band members were holding — at the Hansens' house. In the middle of the party, Hansen set up his Betamax recorder. Fourteen band members and a Texas A&M reporter helping themselves to generic ice cream and M&Ms now are preserved for all time in the Hansen's video-tape library.

His resume is impressive, but only tells part of the story.

Hansen was born Feb. 28, 1925, in Sturgeon Bay, Wis. He entered the U.S. Marine Corps during World War II and was sent to Purdue as an engineering student under the V12 program.

He received both his bache-



When a new television set was donated to one of Purdue's residence halls, the Hansens were invited

to the dedication ceremony. When the set developed problems, Hansen doubled as TV repairman.

lor's and master's degree from Purdue and worked as an aeronautical research scientist at NASA's Lewis Flight Propulsion Laboratory in Cleveland from 1948 to 1958.

In 1958, he received his doctorate from Case Institute of Technology. That year, he was named head of the nucleonics section of the Cornell Aeronautical Laboratory in Buffalo, N.Y.

Hansen joined the faculty of the University of Michigan as an associate professor in 1959 and became chairman of the mechanical engineering department in 1965. The following year he went to Georgia Tech as dean of the College of Engineering. He was named president of Georgia Tech in 1969.

His field of specialization in research is fluid mechanics, ap-

plied mathematics and turbo-machinery. He is the author of two books and 40 technical papers.

On July 26, 1972, Hansen married Nancy Lou Tucker of Indianapolis. They had dated when she was a Purdue student and he was a graduate student, and were reunited after he became president of Purdue.

He is the father of three sons

and two daughters by a previous marriage.

But a written biography only can give statistics — it can't really describe the man. Actions best describe a person's true character. Hansen has proven himself as a capable administrator and a warm, caring person during his 10 years at Purdue. And he's bringing all this and more to Texas A&M.

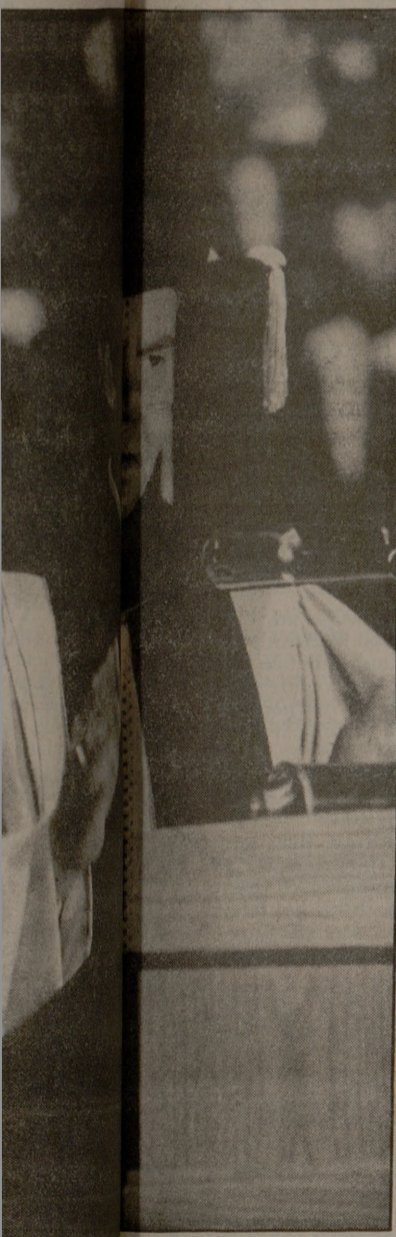


photo courtesy of the Purdue Alumnae

ment address during  
University.

ercher. I prefer to have people  
on the very cutting edge of  
knowledge and who can  
transmit that knowledge directly  
to students.

My position at (Purdue) has  
been to try to find people who  
do both. In my way of  
thinking, (teaching and re-  
search) go hand in hand.

Q. What was your opinion of  
the hiring of Texas A&M  
athletic Director and Head  
Coach Jackie Sherrill?

A. I felt there was a great deal  
of hypocrisy. People were point-  
ing their fingers at A&M as if  
there was something brand new.  
There was also a feeling that the  
academic community had lost its  
sense of values, to which I would  
reply, "Who establishes those  
values?" Those values are the re-  
sult of our society. You may  
complain about them, you may  
like them but that's the way  
the world happens to be.

One thing, however, that I  
felt was important was that we  
try to pursue excellence. To  
pursue excellence, you have to  
pay a price for it. Whatever the  
price happens to be, I'm going to  
get the best people available  
and respond to what the  
market price happens to be.

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