

State and Local

Workers outlast weather, material barriers

A&M opens new alumni center doors



By Elisa Hutchins
Staff Writer

Texas A&M students and former students received a late Christmas present Saturday as Clayton W. Williams Jr. formally opened the Clayton W. Williams Jr. Alumni Center by cutting the ribbons in Corps style, with a saber.

Planning for the \$7 million center, located at the corner of Jersey and Houston streets, began in 1979 and its construction was supposed to be finished by the beginning of this year, said Jim Jeter, associate executive director of the Association of Former Students.

The center cost \$2 million more than the association originally planned, he said.

"We had some problems getting materials and the weather also played a big factor in the delay, but we had no major problems," he said.

Ernest T. Pitzer, Class of '50 and former 1986 association president, did a lot of initial planning, but died before the building was completed.

About 1,500 present and former students as well as community members and guests of Williams' and Pitzer's families attended the ceremony of the long-awaited building.

Randy Matson, executive director of the former students' association, said, "After more than 100 years, the Association of Former Students now has a permanent home."

The association offices were located in the System Administration Building in the mid 1950s and, for the last 14 years, at the MSC.

Matson, Class of '67, Williams, Class of '54, President Frank E. Vandiver, David Eller, chairman of the A&M Board of Regents, and association president W. Mike Baggett, Class of '68, spoke at the dedication ceremony.

Williams, a Midland oilman and owner of Claydesta Communications, contributed \$2.5 million for the center.

Baggett said, "He (Williams) followed through on his promise early, even with the difficult times in Texas. If it was not for him, it would have been harder to get things done."

Vandiver said Williams has done more than his share for the University by donating money and teaching a management class on entrepreneurship.

Thousands of former students donated money and materials for the center and Jeter said the building is, for the most part, paid for.

"There are several conference rooms that community members can rent," he said. "We have already catered two wedding receptions. But former students have really come through on this project."

He said it is the largest and most tastefully decorated building of its kind. There is a 6,000-square-foot reception area called the Great Hall. It has two large curving mahogany and brass staircases and a 1,200-square-foot board room for association executive members.

The Glitsch Library and Aggie ring collection have been moved to the center. The Aggie ring office, which used to be on the first floor of the Pavilion, has also been moved to the new center.

Williams said having the building named after him is the highest honor he could receive.

"It culminates everything that is Texas A&M," he said of the center. "It represents athletics, education and the pride of being a former student."

"I'm grateful association members asked me to donate the money. I've done a lot of things for A&M, but every gift I've given has given me so much more in return."

New lab to aid A&M in studying biotechnology

By Mary-Lynne Rice
Staff Writer

Granada Genetics, the first private sector tenant of Texas A&M's research park, opened its new offices and laboratories Friday.

Granada Genetics is a subsidiary of Granada Corp., a Houston based operation owned and directed by A&M Board of Regents Chairman David Eller.

The firm — whose research also serves three others of Granada Corp.'s other biotechnology labs — will conduct biotechnology research in conjunction with A&M.

Granada Genetics had previously established its administrative offices in the ANCO insurance building in Bryan. Friday evening it moved to its new location at One Research Park on Discovery Drive, west of the veterinary school, to continue its work with A&M, said Dr. Mark Money, A&M's vice chancellor for research park and corporate relations.

Dr. Joseph Massey, president of Granada Genetics, cited A&M's well-known research in agriculture and biotechnology as its reason for choosing to move into the research park complex.

Money said that A&M's reputation will help to attract top-notch scientists, and that the park has a convenient location close to the main campus research facilities.

Granada Genetics' current projects deal with state-of-the-art genetic manipulation in the field of nutrition, Money said.

"They're developing applications for biotechnology in the agricultural field," he said.

Massey said current research deals with animal embryo transfer, shrimp mariculture and work with hormone development and recombinant DNA.

Money said Granada's move to the research park will help broaden the job market in Bryan-College Station for students and graduates and it also will provide consulting opportunities for the faculty.

Clayton W. Williams Jr., Class of '54, addresses the crowd at the grand opening of the Clayton W.

Williams Jr. Alumni Center. Williams donated \$2.5 million toward building the new center.

Photo by Sarah Cowan

STUDENT CAMP

Association '87 - '88

Aggie Friends

The Big Hug

Jump Into A Great Beginning

Hands Across A&M

Bonfire Cookie Crew

Ice Cream Extravaganza

Youth Fun Day

TAKE 3

Holiday Services

Food For Thought

Tues. Sept. 8th 6:30 p.m.

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