Scattered photographs...

representing times that can never again be visited...

bring us to...
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It was November, 1946.

Harry Truman was president. Young John F. Kennedy had just been elected to his first term in the United States Congress. Danbury State Teachers College had 300 students, 20 faculty members, and two buildings.

The world was beginning to settle back from World War II, and predictions were being made on Wall Street that the United States might have to import half the oil we consume in just twenty years. The oil industry did not agree and replied with "new resources can be found and made productive to meet our economic and strategic future needs."

"Football fever" was the boom of the year, radio was still supreme, although television was beginning to creep into homes. Football fans as far away as 250 miles from a stadium were watching games broadcast live on RCA "Eye Witness" televisions. While you rode in your Nash, Hudson, or DeSoto you might turn your car radio to the March of Time or Bing Crosby crooning away on the Philco Radio Time.

General Motors had just announced it was raising prices $100 per car. The economy was in difficulty, and people were asking "where do we go from here?" The price of lead, the scarcest of all metals, rose from 8 1/4¢ per pound to 10 1/4¢ per pound, and copper and zinc would follow soon. Housing costs were soaring, and most U. S. prices were on the rise.

.Movie theatres were featuring The Jolson Story, Song of the South with "Ol Uncle Remus, Brr Rabbit, and Brr Fox," The Big Sleep with Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall, and Bing Crosby and Fred Astiar were starring in Blue Skies. The best to come out of Hollywood in a dozen years was The Best Years of Our Lives.

H. L. Menken's Christmas Story was at the top of the reading charts. Approximately 700 people a year were being arrested for marijuana offenses, although a marijuana committee appointed by the former Mayor of New York Fiorello H. LaGuardia announced in 1945 that "the drugs dangers were greatly overrated."

Over 50,000,000 people were comic book fans. Bette Davis was starring in the Danbury Empress Theatre in My Darling Clementine. Ray Baldwin was Governor.

Danbury State Teachers College students were reading about campus events in the monthly college paper the "Inkling." The DSC Women's Glee Club, the Bridge Club, the Arts and Crafts Club, the Red Cross Club, and "farewell parties for the fellows" had all been the pastimes of DSC students.

An exodus from the classroom had begun about a year before Pearl Harbor. Lured into better paying jobs, more than a third (about 350,000) of the nation's teachers quit their profession by 1945. By the following school season 113,000 emergency teachers had been engaged, compared with only 4,000 such teachers in 1940. An education crisis existed in 1946. The teacher shortage was depriving 61,750 children of schooling, and the National Education Association reported that "at least 2,000,000 pupils were being affected adversely" by the situation as vacant teaching positions had increased by more than 14,000.

46,087 students had just taken the College Boards and Princeton was beginning to use "IBM machines" to score the tests.

The Big Four were at snarls over Trieste Police, the New York Transit strike was over, Gromyko was demanding that exporting nations economize to raise their shipments abroad, and Truman was asking a Republican Congress to "put the nation above the party."

The Atomic Age was here. Danbury was still turning out hats. "What's the buzz" was the "jive talk" heard at Kinner's Drug Store. The 1946 American had greater mobility than ever before. He had survived war, social change, advances in science, mechanical inventions; he had reached a new zenith with greater life expectancy than ever before.

The opening to women of high-paid jobs outside the home led to an exodus from the kitchen. Change was taking place. Our democracy was doing what Hitler said it could not do—speed in adjustment in both industry and business, adaptability to change. It had won us a war. Fluidity was essential to national existence.

It was November 13, 1946.

It was the day that Ruth Alice Haas became president of Danbury State Teachers College.
Ruth Alice Haas . . . A woman with that special grace, that special kind of initiative and compassion that is reserved for those who possess charisma, greatness.

A modest woman yet a woman who knows what she wants and goes out and gets it.

Western Connecticut State College is her college. She'll tell you that it's only the product of what the people wanted and needed, yet everyone really knows that without her determination, her devotion, and her personal magnetism Wesconn would not be where it is today.

A graceful lady, yet a woman who can fight with the best of the politicians and usually come away the victor.

51 years spent in her profession. 44 years at Wesconn, 28 as president of the institution that was born the same year she was.

This brief tribute, this brief record of accomplishment, is for Ruth Alice Haas. It is only one tribute of many, yet it is hoped that this compilation will serve not only to repeat what was, but guide to what will be.

The statistics are many and the list of accomplishments long for the more than four decades Ruth Haas served Connecticut and Wesconn. She brought a rapidly growing institution of higher education through good times and bad. She guided campus growth from 300 students to over 3,000 full-time. She guided the addition of numerous buildings to the existing 28-acre campus and then decided to plan for the future with the development of a new 250-acre campus. She saw times of protest, tight budgets, happiness, and sorrow. She brought thousands upon thousands to the beginning of their futures. Even her final chapter represents a new beginning for Wesconn—a beginning she planned carefully for.

Ruth Alice Haas was born in Syracuse, New York, and attended schools there and in Amherstberg, Ontario, Canada. She attended Syracuse University where she earned a B.S. degree in Education and an M.A. degree in Political Science. Before coming to Danbury, she taught in Watertown, New York, and in the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University.

In 1931 Ruth Haas came to the Danbury Normal School as Dean of Women. In 1946 she was appointed President of Danbury State Teachers College, becoming the first woman in the United States to serve as president of a four-year state college.

The graduating class of 1947 wrote in their yearbook: "We have felt a warm friendship for Dean Ruth Haas. For President Ruth Haas, we feel even a warmer comradeship. She has been an intense part of our dorm and college life and now she has become the leader in a new precinct of our endeavor. We welcome her to her new position as she welcomed us to our collegiate career when we were freshmen. We welcome her, as we leave this institution, knowing she will lead our college on to greater heights of development."

The young, bright-eyed administration of President Ruth A. Haas had taken over. Within the next decade the college would be accredited by the New England Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges, establish a graduate program leading to a Master of Science degree, drop the "Teachers" from the college name, build Curley Hall—the first student recreation center, and build Higgins Hall and Berkshire Hall, more than doubling the size of the college.

Dr. Haas, constantly aware of the area's growth and development, kept looking ahead from each new program and each new building. As the fifties drew to a close and we entered the sixties Ruth Haas kept moving. In program development she guided the college to the four-year liberal arts program, the four-year secondary education program, the nursing major, the sixth-year reading certificate, the business administration degree, the Masters in English, the Library Science Consortium, the Masters in Mathematics, sixth-year certificate in Elementary Education, Masters in History, and on into countless other new course offerings and degree programs all designed to better serve the individual and the area.

When she wasn't developing new programs she managed to put an addition on Fairfield Dormitory, build a new student union and food service facility, erect a new heating plant, build two new dormitories, enlarge the student union, purchase and renovate White Hall, build a new library, and for good measure put an addition on Higgins Hall.

To close out her career at Wesconn she broke ground for the new 250-acre Wesconn campus on the west side of Danbury to provide for adequate educational facilities for western Connecticut through the year 2000.

To Ruth Haas all of these accomplishments were the product of a "family affair." She always kept the education of the individual as her single goal in life, and never permitted anything to deter from that objective.

Some say she stayed too long, while others say she didn't stay long enough. As is the case with any individual who achieves greatness there are always the detractors, the antagonists, but even they would admit that the accomplishments of Ruth Haas have significantly contributed to the future betterment of our society.

The graduating class of 1948 wrote words of tribute to Ruth Haas that possibly best summarize what all the tributes and all the accolades have said: "Possessor of keen perception for the individual problems of her 'flock' . . . able counselor, governed always by deep desire for true progress . . . advocate of good, working relationship between college and community . . . unassuming . . . warm, responsive friendliness . . . whimsical sense of humor . . . gracious example of the qualities of charm and intellect."

This small collection of tributes and photographs, it is hoped, will bear witness for future generations that such a great lady did exist, and many thousands are all the better for her coming our way.
Governor Ella Grasso

"I am honored to add my words of tribute to Dr. Ruth Haas. Her unyielding efforts to improve the quality of education and her personal commitment to young people has benefited generations of students.

"My husband, Tom, and I have known Ruth for many years, since he served on the Board of Trustees. Then, as now, she is loved and respected by all who have had the opportunity of knowing her because of her pursuit of excellence and outstanding human qualities.

"Indeed, Ruth's quiet wisdom and gracious serenity enhanced her passionate commitment."

Mayor Charles Ducibella—City of Danbury

"Undoubtedly, Dr. Ruth Haas is the recipient of many professional tributes, all very well deserved. She is an outstanding woman whose accomplishments in higher education and administration have greatly benefited the community and the individual students of Western Connecticut State College.

"My association with Dr. Haas, on a personal basis, goes back many years, however. To me she has always ranked high as a warm and wonderful human being and, because I hold her in affection, the sense of loss of her leadership at the college is tempered by my feeling that she has earned and should enjoy the contentment of complete relaxation and the pursuit of personal avocations her heavy schedule has not permitted until now. We expect, though, to call on Dr. Haas for community service from time to time, which will please her, I know.

"My sincere good wishes to Dr. Ruth Haas for her future Happiness."

Mrs. Bernice Niejadlik—Chairman Board of Trustees

"There are people the Lord calls upon to do things beyond the ordinary and they are generally the able and the willing and the humble among us. In addition to possessing these attributes Ruth Haas is one of education's rarest treasures, a person of unusual warmth and insight. From the depths of her belief, and with her capability for solving tough and perplexing problems, her dedication to duty, her lofty attitudes and her honest willingness to adjust to realities of life, she has helped to shape new dimensions for education in our State and she has stimulated, delighted and charmed us all on the way."

Dr. James A. Frost—Executive Secretary Board of Trustees

"The qualities that raise the great leader above the ranks of ordinary executives are the courage and firmness to make decisions in the best interest of the majority tempered with concern and compassion for the individual. These are qualities possessed in the fullest measure by President Ruth A. Haas. It is a rich and gratifying experience to have been one of her colleagues in the administration of the Connecticut State Colleges."
Claire T. Gredde—Dean

"I have had the privilege of working with President Ruth Haas for 31 years. Although our college has grown from a single purpose institution of 300 students to a multi-purpose institution of 3000 students, Dr. Haas has never lost her very personal touch with the students and staff. Her accessibility and warm response to individuals and their concerns have been the hallmark of her administration. No problem is too great or too small for her attention. I am certain that her gracious influence will remain in the lives of the many people who have been in contact with her."

Gertrude Braun—Academic Dean

"A thirty year association with President Haas is impossible to summarize in a few words. How does one find words adequate to pay tribute to a great lady and a very special friend? The years telescope into memories of a president who encouraged a young teacher and helped her to grow; a president who molded a small normal school into a fine multi-purpose college; a president who, above all, always found time for everyone of her college family—students, staff, faculty—but above all, students.

"I served on a committee a few years back. We were charged to name the last buildings built on this White Street campus. We were unanimous in choosing one name—the Ruth A. Haas Library. But what a paltry tribute! Bricks, mortar, and even marble, cannot do justice to all that she has meant to the growth of Western Connecticut State College."

Kathleen McGorry—Chairman

Faculty Advisory Council to Board of Trustees

"For me, Western Connecticut State College will always be intimately associated with Dr. Ruth A. Haas. She has brought to governance of higher education a human dimension that is rare among college presidents, and it is this factor that accounts for the unique spirit of the college. It has been a privilege for me to have known her not only as an education leader, but as a friend. The poet William Butler Yeats has said it better: 'Think where Man's glory most begins and ends, And say my glory was I had such friends.' I think that expresses how we feel about Dr. Haas."

Dennis Baskella—Student Government President

"Dr. Haas has always displayed a personal interest in the students of this college and has maintained access to her office for all those who chose to make use of her 'open door.'

"I am confident that I speak for the majority of Wesconn's students when I express to Dr. Haas appreciation for the special interest shown students at this college. All too often students become computer numbers at an institution of higher learning. This has not been the case at Wesconn and that is because we have been fortunate enough to have a college president who cared for each of us as if we were her own children."

Stephen A. Collins—Editorial Director

Danbury News-Times

"Dr. Ruth A. Haas, more than any other individual, has been responsible for the growth of Western Connecticut State College at its present campus, as well as for the careful manner in which the site was obtained and the planning developed for the new campus."

"Through no fault of hers, her dream of seeing the new campus buildings under construction before she retired has not been fulfilled.

"But because she dared dream in the mid-1940s, through the 1950s and into the 1960s, facilities and programs were developed at Western Connecticut which enabled hundreds of young people to fulfill their own dreams of obtaining their college and post-graduate degrees. Because she dared dream, Dr. Haas' influence for good to the college, to the community and to the state, so evident in the past four and a half decades, will continue for decades to come."
Reflecting On The Past...
In 1946 Bing Crosby gave the following advice to parents on “How to handle teenagers:"

“Teensters are positively people! Try to remember, they have a lotta problems...mainly parents. When their jive talk gives you the heebie-jeebies, and their rootin'-tootin' clothes make you despair for 'civilization' ... better bear up and shut up. They'll grow up and get over it, even as you and I. And when they sound off with ideas for improving the world we made ... well, maybe us parents could learn sumpin' if we'd stop snooting the kids and listen.”

Crosby's advice may not really apply to today's Wesconn student, but basically every generation's students have shared a common goal—a better society and world in which to live.

In 1946 students were concerned with the economy and world peace—the same concerns of the 1975 Wesconn student. Several decades may separate the 1946 and 1975 Wesconn students, however, beyond the different clothes, the different life styles, and the different moral code, lie the same basic desires—love, happiness, and peace.
Student confrontation became a way of life in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Dr. Ruth Haas always maintained viable channels of communications during her 28-year presidency, and the result was that Wesconn never had a violent, or even a near-violent, confrontation while many colleges in the nation were erupting in turmoil.

The "Haas Open Door" policy has almost become legendary in Connecticut and the New England region. It hasn’t been a policy of appeasement — it has been a policy of sincere personal concern for every student on the Wesconn campus. The result has been effective student leadership where mutual respect for everyone’s position and opinion has prevailed.
Looking To The Future...

Campus Development 1950

New Campus Development 1975
Using The Present . . .
The present Wesconn campus has reached its saturation point with 3000 full-time students and nine buildings on a 28-acre site.

Building For The Future

Wesconn’s future, as well as western Connecticut’s, is to be found on the 250-acre new campus site.
Searching For A Future...

Gloria F. Brunell — Campus Search Committee Chairman

"Being an integral part of the search for the next president of Western Connecticut College has been for me an awesome responsibility and an exhilarating challenge. The support and cooperation of the entire campus community has been marvelous."

Claire T. Geddes — Administration Representative Campus Search Committee

"It has been a privilege to be elected by my colleagues to serve on the advisory search committee. It is an awesome responsibility to be involved in the selection of a president. I regard serving on this committee as the high point in my professional career."

Jim Dyer — Alumni Representative Campus Search Committee

"Those factors that I regard as important in selecting a new president for Wesconn relate to the areas of program development, public relations, and physical growth.

"I believe that Wesconn needs an individual who will maintain the existing accessibility to the college presidency established by Dr. Haas; expand, in a viable manner, the role of public relations for the college; and establish new and innovative programs that will meet the needs of a growing and rapidly moving region, while at the same time be working for the expansion of Wesconn's physical plant."

Paul S. Hines — Faculty Representative Campus Search Committee

"The terribly long hours and the brutally frank, honest, open and above board interactions with my colleagues on the Presidential Search Committee shall always remain a memorable experience. The awesome responsibility of the task was both frightening and rewarding — frightening when one thinks of the import of our final decision for the college and rewarding in that no other use of these hours could have a more dramatic effect in shaping the future of the college."

A Search Lasting Over One Year!

When Dr. Ruth Haas announced her retirement, the search began for her successor. The Board of Trustees for the Connecticut State Colleges asked the local campus to elect representatives to serve on a Campus Search Committee. Faculty, students, alumni, and administrators all met to elect the people who would serve to decide who the next Wesconn leader would be.

Immediately upon its election the Campus Search Committee met to draw up a criteria from which to work and establish guidelines for selecting a new Wesconn president. At the same time the Board of Trustees was setting up a subcommittee of the Board to serve as a Search Committee. The Campus Search Committee had seven representatives; two faculty, two students, two administrators, and one alumni. The Trustees' Search Committee was comprised of four members of the Board. Eleven people selecting not only an individual to become Wesconn's new president, but also choosing the very future of the college.

The Campus Search Committee led the search process from the very start. Meeting long and unprecedented hours, the local group filtered 350 applications down to a final grouping of five people to be interviewed.

The Trustees' Search Committee, meeting with the Campus Search Committee, agreed upon the final five candidates to be interviewed.

Through the cooperation of the Wesconn Student Government Association the Search Committees were able to bring the five candidates under consideration to Wesconn for interviews. After careful deliberation, joint meetings between the Trustees' Committee and the Campus Committee, and very long hours of analysis and review, the time for a decision had come.

After a year's search and review of 350 applicants from just about every state in the nation, the Campus Search Committee was invited to present its analysis of the five candidates interviewed to a meeting of the entire Board of Trustees. From this meeting came the final decision on Dr. Haas' successor — Dr. Robert M. Bersi, a 43 year-old educator from California State College at Dominguez Hills.

The unity and comradship that prevailed among the members of the Campus Search Committee was unparalleled in the College's history. The Campus Committee had to cope with the delicate, sensitive, and careful deliberations that are part of a presidential search, as well as with rumors, campus snoppers, and general misinformation on the part of some supposedly "informed" local sources who wished to convey that they were on the "inside" of the search process. The local committee prevailed, however, and through their devotion and monumental efforts Wesconn has a new president who truly matches the needs of the college and its future.
Selecting A President...

Stan Mingo—Student Representative Campus Search Committee

"It has been a very difficult task in searching for and selecting the right college President for Western Connecticut. After receiving approximately 350 applications, which were thoroughly reviewed by the Search and Advisory Committees, we made our final decision. I personally thank each committee member for their dedication and cooperation over the many months of deliberations..."

Christine E. Westlake—Student Representative Campus Search Committee

"The unique opportunity to participate as a member of this committee has been a rewarding and fulfilling experience. My feelings are quite positive as I reflect upon the quality of intense involvement which the members of this committee have shared. I feel privileged and honored to have shared such positive interactions in selecting Wesconn's next President."

Bernice Niejadlik—Chairman Board of Trustees

"The search for a new college president is one of the most important and challenging tasks for a member of a board of trustees. This is the fifth such search in which I have been involved. "The greatest reward for me personally, beyond the fact of locating a good president, is the opportunity to become acquainted with the college community. Working closely with members of the administration, faculty, student body and alumni has proven to be most rewarding."

William McKee—Administration Representative Campus Search Committee

"It has been a very impressive experience being a member of the search process. Many vitae were submitted and certainly they represented some tremendous applicants for the presidency. "Another positive aspect of the venture was the zeal and thoroughness of the advisory members in considering applicants."

Seymour Smith—Member Board of Trustees' Search Committee

No Comment

Richard Gurney — Member Board of Trustees' Search Committee

"As a trustee I have had no duty more important than assisting in the selection of a president for Western. I respect and shall observe the principles of affirmative action, but my sole effort will be toward selecting the best possible man or woman for a position of such extreme importance."

Marcus R. McCraven—Member Board of Trustees' Search Committee

"The selection of a person who will have a major role in the future development of WCSC requires the best collective judgment of all those involved in the selection process. Being cognizant of the type of leadership Wesconn is accustomed to makes the task even more challenging. "In my search I look for a candidate who has demonstrated the possession of those qualities needed to successfully interact with all segments of the college community—students, faculty, Administrators and community at large. I place particular strong emphasis on classroom experience and the candidate's attitude toward innovation and change. The President of Western should be committed to lead WCSC to a fulfillment of its mission while at the same time supporting the concept that vocational or career orientations are no less important to the education of our students."

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As I retire from Western Connecticut State College, I would like to leave a message for all members of our college family.

Our college is a very fine one and the members of the college family have always been loyal and most cooperative. In order to achieve our highest goal, we must continue to work together very closely so that we will always be proud of our college.

The students must remain the most important segment in our family. Many more opportunities must be made available to them for their varied interests and needs.

I am most grateful to all members of our college community for working with me to make our Alma Mater a fine college. In the future, I will watch the progress of the college with great pride and interest as I know you will continue to give your utmost in developing its future.

My very best wishes for the good health and happiness of each and every one.

Ruth A. Haas
It was June 1975.
Gerald Ford was president.
Caroline Kennedy had just graduated from high school. Western Connecticut State College had 3,000 full-time students and 200 faculty members.
The world was beginning to settle back from the Viet Nam War and Watergate. An oil crisis existed because the United States relied on importing too much oil.
Football fever and television were hand-in-hand. All in the Family, Walter Cronkite, and Johnny Carson were the television giants, and people were watching television transmissions by satellite.
People were driving Chevrolets, Fords, and Dodges. Housing costs were soaring and most U.S. prices were rising.
General Motors had announced a $150.00 per car increase. The economy was in difficulty, and people were asking “where do we go from here?”
Movie theatres were featuring The Day of the Locust, Godfather II, The Great Waldo Pepper, and a revival of Gone with the Wind.
Fear of Flying and Jaws were at the top of the reading charts. Marijuana was being considered less harmful than once thought, and legislation was being introduced to “de-criminalize” it.
Wesconn students were reading the weekly campus paper the Echo and listening to the campus radio station WXCI-FM, joining the Yearbook, the Environmental Sciences Association, the Psychology Club, the fencing and tennis teams, the football team, and pondering the plight of M.I.A.s.
An education crisis existed as thousands of college graduates could not find jobs, and only 60 openings in teaching positions existed in all of Connecticut.
The 1975 American had greater mobility than ever before. He had survived war, social change, advances in science, men on the moon, mechanical inventions; he had reached a greater life expectancy than ever before.
Women were fighting for rights. Change was taking place. Our democracy, however, was not adjusting as rapidly to social demands and economic needs as it once could. Man was facing critical decisions of priorities.
It was June 30, 1975.
It was the last day that Ruth Alice Haas would be president of Western Connecticut State College.
The final chapter of Ruth A. Haas’ career at Western Connecticut State College and the beginning chapter of a new era can best be marked by re-stating what the class of 1946 wrote in their yearbook while Ruth Alice Haas was beginning her presidency:

“We have learned through sad experience that only when every nation understands and appreciates every other nation can a world be free from war. One of the duties of the educators is to help bring this about. The breaking down of racial barriers and religious and economic prejudice will guarantee our future peace.

“The world must be brought into the classroom. There, all are Americans, true; yet each has his own vast heritage of old world culture and custom. This is not a set-back; it is a set-stage. The world is in the American classroom; it remains merely to realize and capitalize on this fact.

“As yet the peacemakers have formed only the foundations of things to come; they have acted for this present generation. To the educators falls the task of preparing future citizens for that future civilization. Their task will have been accomplished if today’s children take over tomorrow’s world with understanding, with enthusiasm, and with love.”
As the 1974-75 Wesconn year drew to a close Governor Ella Grasso restored to the Board of Trustees for the Connecticut State Colleges a long-time friend and ally of Wesconn, Jim Dyer.

Jim had first been appointed to the Board of Trustees by former Governor John Dempsey in 1970 while he was a student at Wesconn. Jim became the first undergraduate student in Connecticut’s history to serve on a board governing public higher education in the state, as well as the youngest appointee in the nation at the time.

While Jim was serving his first term his record of service and accomplishment was both stunning and significant. He led the fight against former Governor Meskill’s imposition of tuition in Connecticut’s public colleges. He gained increased benefits and services for single students, married students, and elderly students. He authored the Dyer Report on State College Policies and Governance that exposed inadequate health facilities, fire safety violations, and security shortages in the state college system. And he worked long hours to maintain peace on Connecticut’s campuses in the face of national turmoil.

In the spring of 1973 Jim Dyer’s first term drew to a close and Mr. Meskill, a man who could not take criticism of his inadequate policies, did not reappoint Wesconn’s trustee.

Upon taking office Governor Ella Grasso, a sensitive and compassionate leader, recognized immediately the impressive record of service Jim Dyer provided Connecticut. As soon as the first opening occurred on the State Colleges’ Board of Trustees Ella Grasso saw to it that Jim Dyer was reappointed.

Jim, a member of Wesconn’s Alumni Board of Directors and the Wesconn campus Search Committee for a new president to succeed Dr. Ruth A. Haas, will bring to the Board of Trustees much in the way of perception regarding the realities of a college campus. His first term was marked by dramatic and innovative action that prompted closer trustee-student-faculty relations. It is safe to assume that in his second term the State Colleges will benefit from his service even more.

Good work Ella!
On July 1, 1975, Dr. Robert M. Bersi, associate vice president of California State College in Dominguez Hills, California, was named as the new president of Western Connecticut State College.

The appointment was announced at the college during a press conference and marked the end of more than a year's search for a successor to Dr. Ruth A. Haas. Dr. Bersi emerged as the successor to Dr. Haas out of more than 350 applications from virtually every state in the nation. Dr. Bersi was chosen by both the local campus Search Committee and the Search Committee of the Board of Trustees as the two groups' first choice.

Dr. Bersi brings to Wesconn an impressive background of professional experience. He is a man of exceptional ability who comes to Connecticut with the unanimous support of both the local Search Committee and the Board of Trustees.

The new Wesconn president holds a bachelor's degree in economics from the University of the Pacific and masters and doctoral degrees from Stanford University in speech and higher education. The 43-year-old educator has dealt successfully with the broad spectrum of support sources for a state institution of higher education. He is a proven administrator who has participated fully in and who has a thorough understanding of the academic process. He is totally committed to higher education.

Dr. Bersi is an individual who has developed excellent personal and public relations with students and staff, with alumni, with people in the immediate community, with business and professional groups and with leaders on the state level. His success can be attributed to his personal concern for the reputation and public character of his institution rather than merely its image.

As the local campus Search Committee stated, "Dr. Bersi's talents and experience match the needs of Western Connecticut State College."

Welcome to Wesconn Dr. Bersi!
A Place To Think
A Place To Express Yourself . . .
a place to learn ... a place to love ...
a place to have fun . . . a place to go from
... It's Wesconn!
A Place Of
Many Faces,
Many Moods,
Many Hopes,
And
Many Dreams.
You Will Find An Answer At Your Journey’s End.
As The Dawn Is Breaking On Your Future
My Child Is There None Of Your Love Alive?
... think about the dreams you planned ...
WESCONN FOR ELLA

Ella T. Grasso became the first woman elected governor, without succeeding a husband, in 1974 and she did it with the help of Wesconn students. The 1974 election managed to cut into the post-Watergate apathy that strangled the campus at the beginning of the semester, and by November enthusiasm for Grasso had surfaced in the form of the Wesconn Students for Grasso, headed by Bob Faubel.

The highlight of the Grasso campaign was a rally at Kennedy Park, near the campus, consisting mostly of Wesconn students. Grasso applied that "motherly charisma" to the rally gathering and by the time the speeches were over Wesconn students were even more convinced that they had selected the right candidate to lead Connecticut back to quality services and prudent fiscal management. When the votes were in Wesconn found itself on "the winning side" as Grasso piled up a 200,000 vote plurality.
Hey Man! Dig those 50's . . .

The Board of Governors sponsored a "trip" away from the realities of 1974 and took the campus back to those bopping and greasy 50's. About 400 Wesconn greasers stomped, twisted, and Rocked Around the Clock for four hours.

Virtually everyone attended the big hop in appropriate attire (and grease). "Greasy Fred and His New Haven Stompers" provided the sounds and by the time the end of the evening rolled around everyone had discovered that whether 1950 or 1974 Wesconn students know how to have fun.
FALL WEEKEND '74
Fall Weekend '74 was an assortment of dancing, drinking, listening, eating, watching, and makeup. Square dancing, films, a beer and pizza party, football, Halloween, and a terrific princess, all provided for a great Board of Governors "Harvest Hoedown Happening."
Is This A Place Where The Dreams You Dream Can Happen . . .
My life is just a tapestry..
HALLOWEEN
One of the Highlights of the year is the annual Wesconn Halloween dance. This year over 500 Draculas, Frankensteins, ghouls, ghosts, rabbits, tin men, Harpos, and assorted other freaks, packed the Elks Hall to drink and dance to the sounds of Playground.

This year's Halloween dance was most definitely the highlight of Fall Weekend and proved, again, that the events that offer escapism from reality are the most popular.
Miracles, Mirages, Magic Shows!
Having Fun And Helping Someone Too!

Part of Fall Weekend is Ted Hines’ Sadie Hawkin’s Square Dance. It is an event that enjoys much popularity and provides much fun, but more significantly, it is an event that helps others too. Every year the money raised from Coach Hines’ dances is donated to a charity. This year over $300 was donated to the Hanahoe Children’s Association proving that Wesconn students can take time to think of others while they are having fun.
Fall Weekend princess ‘74 was Josie Marraro, the candidate from Litchfield Hall. Runners-up were Rhonda Ford from Afro-Am, and Nancy Cholewa representing the Sophomore class.

Having fun was the dominate theme, as is usually the case with any planned weekend activity, but what set this Fall Weekend aside from many of the others was the fact that, for the first time in many years, this was a weekend that witnessed Wesconn students having fun with each other instead of just staying in isolated groups. It was truly a weekend of shared experiences.
At exactly 12:30 p.m., on February 28th 1975, WXCI-FM completed its second year of broadcasting. Rob Abbett, who was the first WXCI announcer on the air, showed up for the WXCI birthday festivities to begin the station's third broadcast year.

WXCI has come a long way in two years at 91.7, with plans to go even farther in the coming years. Boosting its output from 10 watts to 1200 watts will put WXCI-FM sounds all over south western Connecticut. As WXCI enters its third year it continues to prove that student investment, combined with student volunteers, makes for outstanding success.
This was the year the sacred walls of the female dormitories fell! Co-ed housing finally became a reality at Wesconn after years of Victorian governance. The sex barriers fell (as well as a few other things) and the isolated dormitory girls finally achieved the thrill of their lives — the chance to see a man wandering the halls.

Newbury Hall was the first "experiment" with co-ed housing and success blossomed along with the parties. As the year drew to a close men's housing was being expanded much to the girl's delight.
In these post-protest years the campus mood is probably best reflected in the kind of events the college community undertakes. At 9:05 p.m., on March 4th, 1975, Wesconn bounced its way into the Guinness Book of World Records.

Bruce Loman and Bob DiNardo had set out 72 hours earlier to beat the world dribbling record with the help of numerous supporters from all elements of the campus.

The duo nearly doubled the old record of 38 hours and 47 minutes as they took alternating two hour shifts at bouncing the tan sphere. Ken Venit, news director for WTNH-TV New Haven, was so intrigued with the great event that he drove all the way up to Danbury to do some bouncing — or at the very least get in on the massages!
Chiquita Banana and the Texas Rangers managed to pack the second floor of the student union for a B.O.G. coffee house featuring Bill Lauf.

The mid-winter coffee house sparked enthusiasm not seen at Wesconn too often and guided the B.O.G. for the remainder of the year.

Hi Ho! The Texas Rangers
Two hundred and eighty-eight students received degrees at the 73rd commencement in Ives Auditorium on Sunday, January 26th.

The usual ceremony took place with parents really being the most delighted people of the day.
Frat Life

Fraternity life became a reality for the Wesconn campus this year. Panty raids, beer blasts, initiations, paddles, ‘joint committee’ meetings, moons, the sorority, hot dogs, Wayne, and a lot of good times all served to move Wesconn in a direction geared to social activity unlike any previous year ever witnessed.
“Nostalgia 1920” was the theme of Winter Week '75. The Board of Governors sponsored the many activities that took place during Winter Week and very large attendances were attracted to virtually every event.

A free continental breakfast started off the activities which was followed by old cinema productions of “Reefer Madness” and “Sex Madness,” early 1920 and 1930 “X” rated movies.

A snow sculpture was scheduled, but Wesconn’s Weather Center refused to cooperate. Skit, a basketball game, the crowning of Winter Princess Lori Brown, a coffee house, and a Roaring 20’s semi-formal were all successful events.

Adding to the Winter Week activities were the efforts of the freshmen and the fraternity. The Frosh sponsored a Valentine dance and the fraternity topped off the week's events with what they are best known for — a beer bash.

Although the temperature was cold, Winter Week '75 proved to be a warming event.
Give me a night that’s romantic and long ....
a night to remember, a night to photograph.
With the revival of beer bashes came the Thursday night drunk at club "13," otherwise known as the 6 & 7.

Every Thursday, for two semesters, witnessed Wesconn's "in crowd" drowning themselves, as well as their grades, at the friendly corner bar, just 45 seconds from the campus.

Club 13
Winter Concert
The annual Winter Concert filled Ives Auditorium with an overflow crowd. The concert, under the direction of Dr. Whitcomb and James Furman, is an eagerly awaited event by both the college and Danbury community.

This year's concert was like all the previous years—an outstanding success, proving again that Wesconn leads in music.
Twentieth Century

Art — Music — Theatre — Dance — Poetry —
The Twentieth Century Arts Festival is dedicated to a greater understanding and appreciation of the arts of our time. This year’s festival was an assortment of art, music, theatre, dance, and poetry.

The highlight of the many events that took place was a superb concert conducted by Aaron Copland. Copland has been the recipient of the Pulitzer Prize for Music (1945) and the Presidential Medal of Freedom (1964).

Adding variety to the music portion of the festival was the Paul Winter Consort. Winter, offering a sharp contrast to Copland, held a standing room only crowd spellbound by the tremendous innovations he brings to the musical world.

The 1975 version of the Twentieth Century Arts Festival represents Wesconn at its cultural supremacy.
I've got to be where my spirit can run free... got to find my corner in the sky.
Joseph Michael Elder

Debbie Russo

Linda Tylski

Carol Doyle
Forrista Bowman

Claire Joyce Jansen

Jean Woodruff

Valerie C. Johnston
Susan Tomlinson

Catherine (Kellie) Bohuslav

James M. Sillery
William Robert Kershaw

Beverly M. Willis

William Pinkes
John M. Pilla

JoAnn Eletto

Joan Spooner

Maura Daly
John Pytel

Cynthia Ann Sigsway

Sandy Lenart

E. Marie McPadden
Elaine Ann Lagarto and Mark Bochnewich

Linda Kenez
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Mary Lynn Greening
Richard J. Alhage

Gloria Skowronski

Lori Lynn Nelson

Marilyn Horton
Wayne, Missy, Christa, and Grace Beninson

Patricia Pilner

Marie Hulicki

Marilyn Hayett
Bob Faubel

Josephine Scalzo

Muriel G. Steinberg

Glee Ione Hart
Madeline Logie
Marion D. Burch
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147
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B.S. El. Ed. p. 129

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B.S. Music Ed. p. 128

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B.S. Med. Tec. p. 109

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B.S. El. Ed. p. 73

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B.A. Soc. Sci. p. 103

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B.S. Sec. Ed. Hist. p. 94

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B.S. El. Ed. p. 106

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B.S. Music Ed. p. 132

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B.S. El. Ed. p. 77

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B.S. Sec. Ed. Math p. 137

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B.A. Psych. p. 141

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B.S. El. Ed. p. 127

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A.S. p. 87

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Edison, N.J.
B.S. El. Ed. p. 116

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B.A.A. Bus. Admin. p. 123

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B.S. Music Ed. p. 137

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Trumbull, Conn.
B.S. Music Ed. p. 141

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B.A. Hist. p. 101

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B.A. Psych. p. 91
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Address</th>
<th>City, State</th>
<th>Major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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<td>B.S. Ed. p. 137</td>
</tr>
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<td>B.S. Sec. Ed. Hist. p. 96</td>
</tr>
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<td>B.S. Sec. Ed. Spanish p. 133</td>
</tr>
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<td>B.S. Sec. Ed. Histo. p. 137</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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<td>B.S. Nursing p. 102</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>B.A. Soc. Welfare p. 85</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
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<td>B.S. El. Ed. p. 97</td>
</tr>
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<td>B.S. El. Ed. p. 131</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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<td>B.S. Nursing p. 111</td>
</tr>
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<td>B.S. El. Ed. p. 70</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>B.S. Sec. Ed. Hist. p. 102</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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<td>B.S. Nursing p. 113</td>
</tr>
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<td>B.A. Psych. p. 145</td>
</tr>
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<td>B.A. Bio. p. 76</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Waterbury, Conn.
B.S. Nursing p. 111

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B.S. El. Ed. p. 120

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B.A. p. 126

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B.S. El. Ed. p. 142

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B.A. Psych. p. 136

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B.A. Sp. & Theatre p. 131

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B.A. Chem. p. 124

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B.S. Music Ed. p. 141

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B.S. El. Ed. p. 93

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B.S. El. Ed. p. 115

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B.S. El. Ed. p. 133

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B.A. Bus. Admin. p. 96

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B.A. Eng. p. 113

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B.S. El. Ed. p. 99

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B.A. p. 89

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B.S. El. Ed. p. 132

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B.A. Hist. p. 70

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B.A. Bio. p. 140

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B.S. El. Ed. p. 77

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Derby, Conn.
B.S. p. 132

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B.S. El. Ed. p. 132

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B.A. Music p. 86

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B.S. El. Ed. p. 105
Claire Trisch Geddes

After thirty one years of service to Western Connecticut State College Dean Geddes decided to join her husband in retirement.

Mrs. Geddes, one of the last members of the original Haas Administration, served in many capacities at the college. She is more recently known as the Dean of Women and the overseer of housing, however, her start at Wesconn was in the area of Physical Education.

It was a young Claire Trisch who met a young, "polished," Al Geddes at Wesconn some twenty years ago and they've been together ever since. The entire college wishes Claire and Al Geddes continued happiness and success in Wesconn's longest romance.
In the midst of happiness, gaiety, achievement, came sorrow . . .

William Williams
Michael Macaluso
Sheryl Delieto

Friends that will not soon be forgotten.
Warthog Vs. Colonials

The great debate of the year centered around the selection of a new college mascot to replace the Indian.

The Student Government Association had asked the student body to recommend a mascot via ballot and the winner, to everyone's surprise, was the Warthog!

With only 274 students voting, and with more than 50 different suggestions, the Warthog was able to run to victory with 13 votes. The Warthog campaign was really nothing more than an anti-jock effort by a group of students wishing to get a chuckle out of cheering "Go Warthogs."

The Student Government Mascot Committee rebuffed the efforts of the Warthogs, led by Chief Warthog Louis Hall III, and selected the Colonials as the new Wesconn mascot.

The Warthogs protested the SGA's actions and for two semesters the college was subjected to leaflets and posters supporting the Warthog.

Student Government remained firm in its decision, with Peter Faass leading the pro-Colonial forces, and soon the Administration approved the SGA selection.

One could not help but wonder why so much energy and time was put into trying to force an unwanted mascot on the campus by the pro-Warthog organizers. Possibly if the same amount of effort had gone into the anti-tuition campaign the college would be without the increased fees today.
Who Killed J.F.K.?

Twelve years has passed since the death of John F. Kennedy, yet the debate still goes on over whether a conspiracy existed.

Wesconn students got caught up in the national debate when David Detzer's class was assigned the task of undertaking a mock trial to determine who killed Kennedy. "Judge" Detzer presided the two day trial which ended with a jury decision that best reflects the overall view and opinion of the nation — a hung jury unable to reach a definitive decision.

Adding fuel to the conspiracy theory was a lecture at the college by Dick Gregory. The nationally famous activist held his audience captive for over four hours in a packed Ives Hall while he lectured on the ills of society and concluded by accusing Howard Hunt of assassinating Kennedy.

There were no answers to resolve the many questions surrounding J.F.K.'s death as the year drew to a close yet, for some reason, everyone felt a little better for at least asking the questions.
Clubs And Organizations
ENGLISH SOCIETY

EASTERN STATES ASSOCIATION

APRES GOLF CLUB
THETA PHI SIGMA

VARSITY CLUB
Wesconn's chapter of the Connecticut Intercollegiate Student Legislature continued its long tradition of involvement in state politics this year under the expertise of Bob Fauble. Fauble, elected state treasurer of C.I.S.L., led Wesconn's delegation to the Hartford General Assembly to participate in the annual mock legislature.

C.I.S.L. took a conservative turn in 1975, reflecting the mood of Connecticut campuses. Bills on campaign reforms, women's rights, student fees, cable television, abortion, and a host of other issues of the day came under long and lengthy debate by the student legislators.

When C.I.S.L. finally adjourned much had been learned regarding the political process in Connecticut.
THE JAZZ ENSEMBLE
ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES ASSOCIATION
SIGMA ALPHA IOTA

DRAMATONS

NEWBURY HALL ASSOCIATION
This was the year of the frat. Under the leadership of Wayne Beninson Wesconn’s fraternity offered a series of social events that will not soon be forgotten. “When’s the next beer bash?” was a question frequently heard around the campus as Wesconn students eagerly awaited the fraternity events that, without a doubt, contributed significantly to the beer industry economy in western Connecticut.

It wasn’t all drinking and dancing, however, as the fraternity donated some of their energy and profit to charity, as well as to the welfare of the campus community.

The dances, beer parties, clam bakes, smoking sessions, and other “related activities,” added greatly to Wesconn’s social year, proving that the “frat is here to stay.”

As the year drew to a close the fraternity was undertaking the purchase of a house near campus to further soothe the social needs of those honored with the paddle.
BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS CLUB

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES
AFRO-AMERICAN SOCIETY
The Wesconn Board of Governors continued its second year of responsibility for Fall, Winter, and Spring Weekend activities in the same outstanding fashion begun last year. A series of trips, movies, coffee houses, dances, parties, and speakers, all added up to a very successful year for BOG, and proved that BOG is one of the campus organizations that not only meets its responsibilities, but even does a little more than is expected.
NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN

HISTORY SOCIETY
Student Government

While many colleges around the nation are experiencing the demise of student government Wesconn continues to be the exception. The Western Connecticut State College Student Government Association continues to meet the needs of the student body and respond in viable fashion to those problems facing the college.

This year, under the presidency of Dennis Boskello, the S.G.A. maintained reduced student fees, while at the same time providing adequate services. The student government also fought back attempts by the Student Affairs Office to take over the S.G.A. funded Student Handbook. S.G.A. remained firm in its position that what it pays for it will have the sole control over.

The S.G.A. also lowered the proposed “Student Development Fee” that the Student Affairs Office tried to “sneak” through a trustees’ meeting and initiated budget reform affecting all clubs and organizations.

In the area of campus governance the S.G.A. added the class presidents to the Executive Board, established clear duties and responsibilities for Senators, and defined clearly the relationship between the Board of Governors and Interdorm Council. The S.G.A. also developed true and definitive constitutional amendments regulating the Student Court.

Among the other accomplishments of the year was the changing of the college mascot from the Indians to the Colonials, regulations providing that no student would receive academic penalty for observing a religious holiday, approved Army ROTC on campus, revised S.G.A. By-Laws, established Rotoract, opposed mandatory faculty evaluation as demanded by the distant Board of Trustees, and continued expansion of the campus radio station and yearbook.

Undoubtedly one of the most important acts of the year was the Student Government’s support of the Wesconn Presidential Search. In response to former State College Trustee Jim Dyer’s request for assistance the S.G.A. took the unprecedented action of lending financial support to the Campus Presidential Search and the Board of Trustee’s Presidential Search committees. The S.G.A. unanimously voted assistance to provide the two committees with the opportunity of conducting the kind of search that would result in the selecting of the best possible individual to succeed Dr. Haas. It was truly an act of generosity that reflects well the kind of faith the S.G.A. has in the college.

The Boskello Administration was a highly successful one, that managed to accomplish a great deal despite the pettiness of student politics. It is to Dennis Boskello’s credit that he was able to maintain a viable S.G.A. in the face of sometimes idiotic actions.
JEWISH STUDENTS ORGANIZATION

MATH CLUB
The college's literary magazine, Conatus, undertook many social activities this year to provide the campus with various cultural affairs. Poetry readings, visiting lecturers, wine and cheese hours, art shows, coffee houses, and art bazaars were all part of the many functions sponsored by Conatus.
FENCING TEAM

GOLF TEAM
Cheerleaders

Tennis Team

Women's Volleyball
Basketball
Wesconn Loses To Fordham!

Three-year head coach Dave Rice announced in February that he was leaving his position at Wesconn to become the new football coach at Fordham University. Rice had provided Wesconn with much in the way of innovation in the sports program and he had managed to upgrade football at the college.

Rice said that it was basically “a question of professional advancement” that led him to his decision. “We all really like this place,” said Rice, “but the financial strain on my staff and their families and me and my family” is too much.

Rice took his entire six-man staff with him to Fordham leaving Wesconn pretty depleted as far as football staff was concerned. “We feel that based on circumstances at Wesconn, we milked it from every possible pore and got as much out of it as we could,” stated Rice. “I am sure Wesconn still has the possibility for growth but it might be two years away from where it could be.”

Succeeding Rice is William Sferro, defensive coordinator at Trinity College. Sferro brings to Wesconn eight years of college coaching experience.

New Varsity Coach Bill Sferro

Coach Dave Rice Announcing He’s Leaving To Become Head Coach At Fordham University.
Some Sunshine, Some Love, Some
Happiness . . . Spring Weekend '75
Spring Weekend '75 offered the campus much in the way of "fun and games." "A Carousel of Time" was the theme for the weekend which managed to provide great opportunity for passing time. Drinking, dancing, drinking, eating, drinking, and listening were the basic elements of the annual Spring Blast.

King and Queen were Donald Vinson and Lori Nelson. Freshmen upset Sing Competition by sweeping to victory over the other classes. The fraternity sponsored its 8th annual clam bake at Kenosia Park and well over 500 students attended to consume the 200 pounds of hot dogs, 80 kegs of beer, and 40 bussels of clams. In addition to the food and beverage, patrons were offered the opportunity of participating in "joint committee meetings" behind the Schaefer truck. Few will forget the cold, overcast day, that the clam bake was held on as students sought warmth through various means under the blankets.

By the time Spring Weekend was over, and the beer had stopped flowing, the "Carousel" had gone round and round too many times to remember!
CAROUSEL OF TIME

21 Movie Joe 8pm HFTD LN
22 Musical Mime 8pm MKR AUD
23 Funky Dance 6:30-1 AM CONN Lunge
24 Alphonse & Cori 8pm CH LG
25 Semi Formal 7:30 to 11:30 PM
26 Sing 7:45 to 10 PM IVES
27 Clam Bake
28 Freshman Class

FREEBEE 7:00 PM FOREN AFT
When are you going to come down . . .

When are you going to land . . .

Time isn’t on your side anymore . . .

Your future lies beyond here.
The Seventy-Fourth Commencement
The Last Commencement!

For retiring Dr. Ruth A. Haas the 74th Commencement was an ending, while it marked a beginning for 573 graduates.

The exercises turned into a tribute to Dr. Haas as dignitaries expressed words of praise for her 51 years in education.

As the Recessional marched off the Wesconn field you realized that although Dr. Haas would no longer be president she would remain in our memories for a very long time to come.
Dr. Haas conferring her last degree after 28 years as Wesconn's president. The recipient of a Sixth Year Diploma was Thomas Sweeney.
If we could
do it all
over again
would we,
could we?
Scattered
pictures of
the smiles
we left
behind,
Smiles we
gave to one
another for
the way
we were.
If there's a time and a place to begin love it must be now... let it go... set it free.
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In the same sense of sincerity and dedication demonstrated by all students who have given of themselves to work for the social and academic betterment of this college, The Board of Governors expresses its appreciation for their contributions toward a successful and satisfying completion of another year. To those students who have now graduated, the Board extends its best wishes for an equally successful and satisfying future.

Special Thanks to Jerri

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Class of 76
You did it, Class of '75!

Congratulations!

All the dining service staff wishes the Class of '75 the best of all possible worlds.

We want to thank all the members of the graduating class for their patronage.

Good luck! Good health! Good cheer in the years ahead!

We wish you all in the vital years ahead!

We're proud to have served some of the finest young people in the country today!
The outcome was that we should change the mascot, with over 50 different suggestions as to what the new mascot should be. As you may already know, the leading vote winner was Warthog (13 votes). New ideas and incentives they bring with them to implement.

Campus Recruiter Airs Warthog

By Debbie DiSesa

"Our main objective is to help the college graduate to consider the Air Force as a job," Air Force Recruiter Stan Stumpf would like students to know.

Recruiter Airs Warthogs

Warthog is teams will take part in a specific area, that still required P.S. to take part in that particular field of hyst.
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As I started to write this year's statement I began like most editors must begin — with the intention of writing something unique — something of great importance. I realized very soon, however, that the yearbook statement is actually to be found throughout the 252 pages that we are presenting to the campus this year.

There will be special meaning for individuals throughout this book. The staff and I hope that everyone finds something unique and important in the more than 1000 photographs appearing in this publication.

This year we have provided more coverage of more events than ever before. It is, of course, impossible to cover everything — although we come close. We try to provide something for all the varied elements of this multi-purpose campus.

The 1975 Wesconn yearbook is dedicated to retiring President Ruth A. Haas. The opening section is intended to present more than just words and pictures. We hope that the reader will find how much this college has changed during the 28 year presidency of a very kind and gracious lady.

1974-75 was a very unique and exciting period. It opened with Nixon resigning. It closed with Dr. Haas leaving, and Dr. Robert Bersi beginning. In between all of these events were exams, parties, beer blasts, budget troubles, politics, love, hate, life, and death. Hopefully this publication has captured those events that are important to the Wesconn population.

A yearbook is a time consuming effort. It takes over a year to prepare a book of this size and quality. It takes the work of a great many people. As is always the case there are individuals who must be singled out for their special contributions.

Jim Dyer, very simply, is the heart of this book. His patience and endurance with us accounts for this yearbook’s existence. Hopefully the words “thank you” will serve to adequately express the staff’s and my feelings for Jim’s efforts on our behalf.

A special “thank you” is also in order for Robert Steinberg. Bob served as editor during the first semester under difficult circumstances. He took over a very large and complex organization unexpectedly and managed to keep everything functioning without a single delay. His guidance and “words of wisdom” helped me greatly when I became editor. After Bob graduated he still assisted this publication a great deal.

Beyond all of the awards and the words lie the individuals — the students this book is meant to please. Hopefully the reader will find that they are pictured somewhere within these “Scattered Photographs” and a moment of their life will have been permanently captured for many, many, generations to see.

Ron Pagano
Editor-In-Chief
Yearbook '75
YEARBOOK ’75

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- Student Government Association
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Special thanks to Gene Schmidt
The paper stock used is 100 pound gloss. Press work is black ink with four process color and tempo colors. Type faces used are Optima, Optima Italic, Optima Semi-Bold, AKI Lines, Avant Garde, varying in size from 8 point to 60 point. The cover is custom screened using Natural material covering with applied colors of black and olive. The cover was designed by Jim Dyer. The end sheets are contempore slate gray. The binding is Smyth Sewn, rounded and backed. The book has been published in a quantity of 1,650 copies as authorized by the 1974-75 Student Government Association. Pages 1 through 16 have been overrun in a quantity of 250 and bound in a soft-cover using contempore gray with applied black ink. The overrun has been published as Tribute to a Great Lady: Ruth Alice Haas.

Special appreciation to the Class of 1975 for contributing an eight page section of color. Almost every photograph appearing in this book was done by Jim Dyer. Seniors pictured in the senior section and listed in the senior directory requested to do so.

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