Critics of what seemed to be a patronizing college-town relationship failed to realize that the trend in the land, for better or for worse, was toward a more intimate association between college administrators, mayors and city councils. Many public junior colleges, like the one in Boise offering a liberal arts curriculum adopted the name “community college,” dropping the term junior, and revamping courses of study to meet local needs, instead of emphasizing a projected university experience. BJC expanded vocational programs during the 1950s, but the original name was retained while steps were taken to achieve the status the founder had wished for the college. Bishop Barnwell’s desire seemed to be fantasy when he said, “Fifty years from now I hope to be sitting on a cloud smiling down upon a great university.” That this could happen seemed more feasible when Barnwell repeated it at commencement twenty-two years later.

Few people remembered the bishop’s dream or wish, and Chaffee did not pronounce it his goal, but it was his daydream, if not aspiration. When the 1946 George Peabody College report recommended that Idaho’s junior college law be changed, making BJC an integral part of the Boise public school system, Chaffee penned “no” in the margin of his copy. In the next paragraph beside this statement, “The superintendent . . . should have under his immediate direction the dean of the junior college,” Chaffee wrote, “not good, Washington a horrible example.” He criticized this system in his own book, recalling the years when BJC’s Dean Clites was responsible to Superintendent Vincent.

Back from the Navy about a year when the Peabody report was published, Chaffee continued to nurture the school’s independence from the local school system. While adding faculty and buildings as the student body increased, BJC attempted to meet Boise’s vocational training needs without becoming an Orange County Community College. Opened in temporary offices by the Middleton, New York, Chamber of Commerce in 1950, this school was similar to many educational institutions designed for commuting students. No dormitories were needed, and the curriculum was quite utilitarian, whereas “prep school” junior colleges like BJC emphasized the liberal arts, as did Carl McIntosh (1947-1951) at Pocatello. Community post-secondary schools were democratic, while traditional junior colleges were “quasi-authoritarian in philosophy and curriculum,” some officials believed.

BJC added practical occupational courses, however, a new name, Boise Community College, was not adopted. Although President Harry Truman’s hesitant 1947 Commission on Higher Education finally decided all junior colleges should
take up the term "Community," the Boise trustees remained unconvinced. A brochure labeled "Your Community College" was distributed. However, the school remained BJC because partisans believed southwestern Idaho should have fields of study offered at Moscow and Pocatello.

Encouraging the academic growth of two-year colleges, the University of Chicago's Robert M. Hutchins responded to the Truman Commission report. Author of The Higher Learning in America (1936), this proponent of intellectualism in education felt the Commission used every cliche and slogan of contemporary educational discussion. In short, the report skirted on the edge of illiteracy and sometimes fell over the brink. Advocating the expansion of junior colleges, the commissioners preferred to call them community schools without a clear understanding of their purposes, organization or activities, Hutchins concluded in his acerbic critique published in the April, 1948, Educational Record.1

FREEST GENERATION OF STUDENTS

As matters turned out, BJC eventually qualified as an area vocational institution during the 1960s, with curricula half general and scientific and half practical or technical. However, the school's academic mission was not preempted. Had it become a community college as defined in the 1950s, a center for the arts may never have been erected, although a sports arena was probably inevitable. Retiring long before the pavilion and fine art decisions were made, Chaffee saw those two structures that strengthened town and gown relationships rise not far from his home on the crest of the bench above the campus.

The college gradually became more sophisticated while adding and expanding programs, yet it remained outwardly a small and rather ordinary school. The physical plant consisting of an administration building, assembly hall, student union, gymnasium, wooden stadium, a health center and heating plant included several war-surplus structures and tattered shop buildings dating back to airport days. More townspeople attended high school athletic contests and various programs, where certain facilities were superior to those found at the college. More Boise families were represented in the student body there, but the situation was hardly static.

Improving the physical plant while upgrading academic and vocational programs, the people in charge brought about significant changes during the "American Graffiti"-"Happy Days" decade, when the "silent generation" seemed to be more conformist and prudent than the previous one. Computer science was beginning to provide efficiencies as television brought Billy Graham's exhortations and Elvis Presley's "Blue Suede Shoes" into the living room. The consumer society became increasingly affluent and homogenized as the Cold War and a lingering McCarthyism gripped America. Blacks boycotted buses in Montgomery, Alabama, and President Eisenhower placed the National Guard in the halls of Little Rock Central High School three years after the Supreme Court's 1954, Brown v. Board of Education desegregation decision.

Fortune found students to be steadily cautious. Yale's President A. Whitney Griswold told them they seemed to share the prevailing mood of the hour, consisting of "bargains privately struck with fate — on fate's terms." David Riesman predicted in his Lonely Crowd (1950) that the typical senior of the class of 1955, pursuing the
upper rungs on the corporate ladder, would expect his wife to be doing casual
volunteer hospital work at age forty-five. Meanwhile, Adlai Stevenson told the
graduates at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts (one of the exclusive
"Seven Sisters" schools) that they should "influence man and boy" as housewives
and mothers.

Pennsylvania was platting suburban Levittowns, and Boise was destroying its
architectural heritage as the college built two dormitories, one named for Ann
Morrison and the other for Lynn Driscoll's deceased son. Joseph McCarthy's witch
hunts failed to uncover card-carrying communists in government, and the searches
and entrapments of paranoid officers, which provided surreptitious material for a
paperback called The Boys of Boise, produced little but fear and ruined reputations.

The college boys of the 1950s were characterized as "careful young men," when
sociologist Reuel Denney decided they were, along with the coeds, the "freest
generation of students in the 20th century." Unlike the activists of the next decade,
their lifestyle was personal rather than politicized, and they were not arrogant. They
were also patient, as was the student who left this memorial carved on a Boise Junior
College desk, "In memory of those who died waiting for the bell."

Home economics courses were advocated as educators extolled a homemaker role
for coeds. The modern feminist movement was still below the horizon and the Equal
Rights Amendment, formulated before the birth of this generation, had suffered a
subliminal fate. Chauvinists concluded that many girls enrolled in college to find a
husband, and some of their instructors encouraged matrimony for them. The
president of Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri, where interior decorating,
home economics, cosmetics and grooming classes were offered, felt the youthful
collegiate years were "rehearsal periods" for wedlock, and the girls in public colleges
heard similar observations. 2

While coeds were preparing themselves for the marital bliss many of them would
forsake, students and faculty were again donning uniforms and boarding ships or
planes bound, this time, for Korea. Their feisty president in Washington, who had
launched the Atomic Age in August, 1945, when Hiroshima and Nagasaki were
destroyed, had decided to intervene in Korea in June, 1950, in order to contain
communism. Coach Lyle Smith put on his Navy blues, leaving George Blankley in
charge after the Broncos won forty consecutive football games, and some members
of the squad also entered the military along with many other students. Of the nearly
one thousand enrolled in the fall of 1950, about seventy percent were males, and
one-third were freshmen, while there were fewer sophomores as well as freshmen the
following year because of the conflict. However, total enrollment, counting part­
time and night students, numbered a thousand, taught by fifty instructors.

Truce negotiations, started at Kaesong in July, 1951, continued until the armistice
was signed at Pnumunjon in June, 1953. That fall fifty faculty, aided by several
part-time teachers, instructed over seven hundred daytime students including seven
from Bolivia, El Salvador, Guatemala, British West Indies, Hawaii and England.
Expecting at least two thousand by the end of the decade because more families were
migrating to the Boise Valley and the birthrate was increasing, Chaffee asked the
trustees for dormitories, additional space for the library, and modern quarters for
athletics and the sciences. 3
Library construction was delayed until the 1960s. Meanwhile, the contemporary one in the Administration (Haga) Building was enlarged by converting Spulnik's second floor chemistry laboratory into stacks, after the physical and life sciences building was ready for occupancy in 1955. The following year Lyle Smith moved into his office in the school's first bona fide gymnasium. Some educators argued the library should have preceded it. Chaffee admitted that the library was the "focal point" on campus, with the responsibility for growth ultimately lying with himself as well as the person directly in charge.

Mary Bedford, librarian from 1937 until 1953, was succeeded by Ruth McBurney, a graduate of Whitman College and the University of Washington, who had gained experience in Paris. The 15,000 volume collection included about eight hundred books acquired when the college in Gooding closed in 1937, and slightly more than fifteen hundred donated by State Senator Irvin E. Rockwell in memory of his wife, Lallah Rookh White. Discussing his gift with Caldwell printer James Gipson, Rockwell said that he gave his library to Boise's college instead of one in Gipson's hometown, because the capital city was his "second home."4

A devout Christian Scientist, Rockwell had once headed an accounting firm in Chicago, where attorney Clarence Darrow was a personal friend, before Rockwell decided to locate in Bellevue, Idaho, at the turn of the century. A member of the State Board of Education, he preserved some of his correspondence with Darrow after the famous lawyer died in March, 1938. The "champion of the underdog," Darrow was best remembered in Idaho for his successful defense of Western Federation of Miners officials, who were held in Boise charged with the 1905 murder of former Governor Frank Steunenberg. Darrow had also defended John Scopes,
while humiliating William Jennings Bryan, during the 1925 evolution trial in Dayton, Tennessee. In his twilight years, Darrow sided with small businessmen when he headed in 1934 the National Recovery Act Review Board.

Rockwell sent several Darrow letters to Conan Mathews in August, 1944, explaining "In view of Darrow's international reputation and regard, ... I leave it up to you folks whether or not to 'enshrine' these characteristic Darrowian eruptions." The agnostic and Christian Scientist had debated theological questions, and several of their letters tucked away in a file drawer for almost forty years, surfaced in the 1980s among correspondence concerning Rockwell's books.

About three months after Mathews received the Darrow letters, Rockwell returned to Boise for the dedication of his library beneath a framed portrait of his late wife and beside a tall grandfather clock. These precious things were placed in an alcove, where the collection was displayed in his handsome wood and glass bookcases. Walking from his Boise residence, he entered the library and enjoyed a "continuing friendship" with his books, the portrait and the chiming clock. Author of The Saga of American Falls Dam (1942), Rockwell died twelve years after his wife at Bellevue in September, 1952, at age eighty-nine. Thereafter, his books were classified and placed in the appropriate stacks when the library was erected in the 1960s.

Rockwell's contribution, about ten percent of the total collection, seemed large when Mary Bedford began the cataloging process. Starting with the Lincoln books, she completed the task before retirement. Other collections were received as Ruth McBurney took charge, such as J. Neilson Barry's Pacific Northwest history files catalogued by Annie Laurie Bird, and books from the library of Margaret Cobb Ailshie, late publisher of her father's Statesman. The total collection increased from 13,000 volumes in 1950 to over 20,000 during the decade. However, junior college standards called for many more. Had it not been for the Boise Public Library with three times as many books and the State Library, students and faculty would have been severely handicapped. Some use was also made of the Law Library in the basement of the State House as well as the Historical Society's books and archives, housed in the museum across the river in Julia Davis Park.

Acel Chatburn supervised the cooperative film library containing over four hundred titles, numerous projectors and records valued at $30,000, owned jointly with twelve Boise Valley school districts. At the Public Library, where students crammed for exams or gleaned material for their papers, BJC shared a cataloguer before the war, and the college paid the wages of a student "page" afterwards, who assisted ten to twelve hours each week.
The downtown library maintained standards some students failed to respect, as did the college, and discipline problems cropped up now and then, McBirney recalled. When the library was on the ground floor of the Administration Building, several of the more daring students briefly livened up the study room by riding their bicycles around the tables, reason enough for moving the library upstairs.\(^5\)

While the Carnegie Library considered college faculty and students an important segment of its reading public, BJC’s was designed for campus patrons only, and some taxpayers became exasperated, insisting that all libraries should be open and free. McBirney, struggling with the problem, developed a plan allowing townspeople to pay a five dollar refundable deposit. Public service cards were issued toward the end of the decade to high school students without fee upon the request of their instructors. Nonetheless, dissatisfaction prevailed and the press suggested BJC had a caste system which excluded the “great unwashed mass,” while any resident of the state could borrow books at Pocatello’s college. This was actually the case in Boise, critics found when they pursued the issue. They also discovered that Carnegie, with a much larger collection on two floors, could better serve the community.\(^6\)

**DISTURBING THE PEACE**

The Boise Independent School District’s facilities and teachers were overtaxed during the 1950s, when enrollment grew from ten thousand to nearly twice that many in the elementary and secondary schools. Consequently, the number of high school graduates increased, and half of them enrolled at BJC, while another fifteen percent attended other colleges or universities. Thus, three-fourths of the college-bound graduates remained in Boise, doubling the full-time student body after the Korean conflict. The population of Ada County, about seventy thousand in 1950, grew slightly more than thirty-two percent to over ninety during the decade. With this community and campus growth came a variety of unusual acts of behavior somewhat similar to certain antics which ruffled the characteristic tranquility of other college towns.

The raccoon coats were gone, Model T Fords were rare, and drive-in hamburger stands had lured young people sporting pre-war cars with lowered rear ends and license plates under glass away from the soda fountain at the corner drug store. Most everyone liked “Ike,” and the nation was at peace, while roguish youths were disturbing it on campus. They were hardly aware that the successful Communist assault on Dien Bien Phu, leading to the division of Vietnam along the 17th parallel, would change their lives. Meanwhile, lots of blood was shed in many of the television programs students were watching as their government contemplated involvement in Southeast Asia. Someone estimated that more people “died” on TV in 1954, than the country had recently lost in Korea. Of positive value that year was the containment, by Salk vaccine, of poliomyelitis.

Creating considerable concern for college administrators were the non-violent student raids in Caldwell and Boise. Stealing the top plank from the Valkyrie’s recently installed three-piece Boise Junior College sign on Capitol Boulevard, gave College of Idaho suspects a shot in the arm until their President Thomas Shearer investigated. Shearer, learning with dismay that huge C of I letters had been painted on Bronco Stadium, and another set burned in the turf, suspected his students had also stolen “Boise.”

Pouring oil on turbulent waters, Chaffee and Gottenberg told Shearer “emphatically” there was no proof that his students were responsible for the damage. Their
"Boise" is missing from the Valkyries' sign. Boise State University Archives

Tune changed, however, when it was reported that the sign, "Boise," had been seen in a C of I dormitory. Meeting at lunch, BJC's Ted Landers promised Caldwell's student body president the return of his missing victory bell if he would bring "Boise" back. Wishing to create a "sane relationship," the football and basketball rivals also considered a joint dance with a big name band another way of soothing tempers.

Unaware at the moment that twenty-eight Boise rowdys had just burned BJC in his football turf and bent over the goal posts, an emotional Caldwell official called Chaffee about midnight, warning him that scores of vigorous youths had crammed themselves into cars that were reportedly headed for Boise. Promptly calling the police, Chaffee and the officers met the out-of-towners as they rounded the corner off Capitol Boulevard. Assured the damage to their campus would be compensated, the Caldwell students soon departed. Driving to the dormitories, Chaffee and a policeman checked the ownership of the missing cars. Completing their detective work they inspected the campus from one end to the other and found the remainder of the BJC sign burning in the west corner and a grounded goal post near the opposite one. Caldwell's president Shearer accepted a bill for repairs, and the cost of the damage to his campus was assessed to the twenty-eight BJC culprits, who were grounded themselves the remainder of the school year.7

FEMININE UNMENTIONABLES

Robust, silver-haired, retired University of Oregon dormitory director Genevieve Turnipseed, affectionately known as "Mrs. T," was a superb dorm supervisor (1951-1958) as well as Dean of Women. Still, some of her headaches landed on Chaffee's desk as he valiantly tried to keep a finger on every phase of campus life. When a coed was apprehended climbing through a window, Turnipseed brought her before the formidable disciplinary committee: Chaffee, Gottenberg, Potter, Chatburn, Baker, Phillips and Smith. Several of them had reprimanded the
"ringleaders" of the panty raids the previous month, which were similar to the underwear snitches on many campuses where outrageous students were also swallowing gold fish or stuffing into telephone booths.

According to the initial alarming report, a hundred milling male students had tied up Morrison Hall's housemother during the November, 1956, raid which did not climax until after midnight. The Driscoll boys who hung "feminine unmentionables" from their windows had scandalously removed garments from several coeds, it was rumored. However, Vice President Gottenberg quickly assured the press that this sort of antic was simply imaginative, and the housemother testified that she had not been confined. "The boys have always been gentlemen," she said, trying to protect the school's reputation. Agreeing, Gottenberg claimed the housemother had been as "free as a bird," and the participants were just a bunch of kids with excess energy. The crowd had dispersed when a patrolman passing by in his prow! car stopped to inquire. Gottenberg assured him the situation was well in hand.

Morrison and Driscoll Halls are similar.

The panty raid led by Driscoll Hall had been preceded by one cooked up by Morrison coeds, and the giggling girls had emerged waving boxers and briefs victoriously. The vigorous water fight that followed was almost as spirited as the discussion at Chaffee's staff meeting the next day. Turnipseed, Dean of Men John Phillips (a psychologist who had joined the faculty in 1954) and his predecessor, sociologist Paul Baker (on campus since 1947), decided that the editor of The Roundup should be removed. With other raiders, he was excluded from Driscoll Hall and all student activities after one of them confessed he had beer in his room and that one or two bottles were taken to Morrison Hall during the panty raid.

Some of the participants had been seen tipping mugs earlier at the "T.K." tavern, across Broadway from the stadium. However, the editor lost his job because he had written an exaggerated story about the clownish event, which he delivered to the Statesman despite the long-standing rule that all publicity must be cleared by the
president's office. Admitting his guilt, the former editor was allowed to continue with *The Roundup* as a reporter. After all, his story was amusing and there had been a reason for the excessive exuberance; football players had led the raid after Coach Smith told them their bid for a coveted bowl game had been rejected.

The panty raids were inspired by similar ones at other colleges, but not the underwear affair orchestrated in May, 1952, at the university in Moscow, where Student Body President Ray Cox, a law student, headed the raiders off at the pass. Told he was talking like a married man, Cox persuaded the conspirators to purchase colorful panties and storm the dorms before dawn. Alerted, coeds greeted them with a continental breakfast which was quickly consumed as the raiders hustled their hosts over to the student union, where dancing followed the auction of the unmentionables, with the proceeds going to a crippled children's fund. If the snatchers in Boise had followed Moscow's example, officials surely would have found little reason to object.⁸

Some months after the panty raid, Paul Baker interviewed a prospective student who admitted he was not certain he could abide all of the regulations. Sent to John Phillips, the applicant was told he would not be accepted without three letters of "firm recommendation" from the college he had previously attended. When officials were convinced that he fully intended to honor campus rules, he could register. The case was unusual, yet students were expected to conform during the homogenized-society decade when Americans, it was said, were items in a "national supermarket, categorized, processed, labeled and priced for merchandising." Colleges, hoping they were not turning out this type of product, attempted to understand personal differences, and cultivate the growth of each individual, but there was no concerted effort to meet the specific needs of ethnic minorities, on or off campus, except to eventually honor the Supreme Court's 1954 desegregation decision.

Basques were numerous, but there were few Hispanics, blacks, and not many Asians in valley schools. Consequently, segregation did not exist. Nonetheless, most blacks lived in Boise's River Street neighborhood, and Nampa's Spanish speaking peoples were largely confined to one section of town. That non-Asian ethnic groups, Chicanos and Native Americans in particular, were not proportionately represented on campus was due to economic factors, and tuition could not be eliminated or fees reduced until BJC became a state institution in 1969. The Hawaiian athletes who were recruited received modest scholarships as did a number of superior high school scholars regardless of parentage, and all students were admitted to the dormitories on a first come, first served basis. Minority students, however, were barely visible during the 1950s, and just thirty blacks, fourteen Native Americans, forty-nine Asian Americans (about two percent of the student body), and a few students with Spanish surnames were enrolled in the 1960s. Minority learners increased to about seven percent of the student body by 1974, including more Chicanos and Basques than blacks, Asians or Indians.⁹

**COMMUNITY TIES AT TWENTY-FIVE**

There were no minority faculty before the 1960s, and no faces other than white in the *Les Bois* photographs of the athletic teams. At the same time, ethnic students were active club participants, while several of them assisted foreign language instructors.
There was no overt discrimination, yet black athletes were not actively recruited by BJC and most of the small colleges in the region for several reasons. Jim Thorpe and Joe Lewis were yet to be followed by large numbers of minority athletes in American sports. At Boise, with the exception of two or three graduates of Hawaiian schools, Coach Smith, operating on a limited budget, recruited largely from local schools, occasionally signing youths with particular promise, who might have found berths at large universities.
After the 11,000 seat stadium was completed in the fall of 1950, and the gymnasium seating 3,250 opened in January, 1956, the school became more attractive to young aspiring athletes. Still, the Broncos had three All-American football players before these structures were built, and three more when the twenty-fifth anniversary rolled around in 1957, the year George Blankley's basketball squad was rated fourth in the National Junior College Athletic Association league. Attempting to identify the reason for, and the significance of Bronco successes, their spokesman Gordon Ross told the Statesman "community spirit" had helped the teams, not only by backing them during games, but this enthusiasm encouraged outstanding high school athletes to enroll at BJC. At the same time the Broncos provided wholesome, inexpensive spectator entertainment throughout the school year.

Pointing up the town and gown connection in her field, piano instructor Eleanor Snodgrass extolled the cultural value of the $40,000 Cunningham Memorial Organ installed in 1953, with aid from the Boise Choristers. Usually played by Griffith Bratt, a half-hour radio concert had been broadcast, with Roy Schwartz as commentator, each Sunday afternoon throughout most of each school year. The Music Department, headed by Bratt since 1946, a reservoir of student and faculty talent, was frequently tapped by civic, church and fraternal groups, while campus recitals were open to the public. Distinguishing himself was recitalist Carroll Meyer, with BJC since 1948. Popular for several years was the student-produced musical series designed to advertise BJC, "Bach to Boogie." Enrolled in music composition classes at the time, Gib Hochstrasser, whose "Kings of Swing" remained the area's popular big band in the 1980s, put together an eighteen-piece orchestra for the first production. Started in 1933 by Kathryn Eckhardt with both student and local talent, the fifty-piece symphony orchestra, directed by John Best, gave three major concerts each season, and Bratt's A Capella Choir performed at valley high schools, for civic groups and on campus.
Speaking for the trustees, Ed Baird said that BJC's twenty-five years of educational service was primarily a story of community activity. Baird was particularly pleased with the multiple use made of the year-old gymnasium for dances, the state high school basketball tournament, concerts, conferences and commencement, besides regular college games and physical education classes. Agreeing that the gymnasium had strengthened community ties, Chaffee felt night school was a conspicuous example of cooperation. Offering eighteen courses in 1952, the college provided townspeople with a choice of forty-six five years later. Both day and evening classes were opened to the public during the week-long observance of the college's twenty-fifth year, celebrated during the second week of May, 1957.

There would be numerous academic, athletic and community events in 1982, the institution's fiftieth year, when it was too large and diverse to be presented to the public during a one-week open house, but this approach was appropriate the twenty-fifth year. There were no commemorative basketball or football games; however, days before the observance began, the eight-man track team won the Intermountain Collegiate Athletic Conference meet at Cedar City, Utah, where coach Clisby Edlefsen was named ICAC president. This victory, the popular Broadway hit, Noel Coward's "Blithe Spirit" performed on Friday and Saturday nights, the Valkyries' annual mother-daughter luncheon in Hotel Boise's ornate Crystal Ballroom, and the speech of the French consul general from San Francisco, prefaced the anniversary celebration.

The week-long program planned by chemist Joseph Spulnik's committee began on Sunday with a band, choir and string quartet concert, which also featured the school's madrigal singers. There were art exhibits, recitals and various professorial pronouncements, while the college's motion picture promotional film was viewed by service clubs downtown. The crowning event was the anniversary banquet in the gymnasium on Saturday night, with printer Walter York serving as master of ceremonies. Former trustees Ella Budge, Lynn Driscoll and Harry Morrison responded when York nudged them to their feet, as did Mayor R.E. Edlefsen, Chaffee and several alumni who were seated with their classes beyond the traditional head table.
Rising to the occasion, Chaffee cited Roy McFall, president of Modesto Junior College who said in his congratulatory telegram that BJC's history was a "memorable story in the field of junior college education," which bore "eloquent testimony" to proper campus-community relationships. Gottenberg read a letter from Vande Bogart, president of a northern Montana college for twenty-one years, who mentioned the "remarkable teamwork" between the college and the community he had observed while in Boise.10

GRADUATING SCHOLARS

Actually, the prime event that best served as a preface for the twenty-fifth anniversary took place a year before the memorable May, 1957, college-community banquet. Bishop Barnwell had returned for the first time since his departure in 1935, to address over two hundred graduates during the twenty-third commencement. Now the retired Bishop of Georgia, Barnwell had turned Chaffee down each time he asked him to counsel a graduating class. In 1941 there was a misunderstanding, the busy Bishop explained, and he had other engagements; in 1947 he wrote, "nothing would give me more pleasure . . . but it just is not possible," whereas in 1950 it was not a matter of money, but one of time and too much work. Writing to Barnwell in November, 1953, this "persistent cuss" told him, "You might just as well give in because I am going to continue to bombard you with requests, and your declining years will have little peace should you fail to get here for a commencement address." Finally in March, 1956, Barnwell replied, "You are making a big mistake, but if you want me, I will agree to come . . . ."

Barnwell told Chaffee he had a heart problem, but he thought he would last through the summer, as he did (and another year) dying at Savannah on May 6, 1957, one week before BJC's twenty-fifth anniversary open house. However, he was fit the year before when he delivered the baccalaureate-commencement oration. Retrospective the day before graduation as he looked out over Boise, Barnwell wistfully confessed, "I knew if I came back I would be homesick."

Several weeks before his departure in 1935, Barnwell had told the second commencement graduates he felt certain something had been started that would outlive them; the beginnings of an institution of higher learning of which they could be proud. The Episcopal Church had shown the way and the community, recognizing its obligation, would carry on. This had been done, Barnwell observed in his 1956 address, and he found no reason to change his prediction expressed over two decades earlier; there would one day be a university in Boise.

Five scholars with grades averaging almost four-point or straight "A," were recognized during commencement, and student body president Roderick Walston was the winner of an essay contest sponsored by the Association of International Relations Clubs. Walston was awarded a two-month European tour after reading, in Philadelphia, his paper regarding America's Chinese diplomacy. Waiting for him upon his return was a Columbia University scholarship. Graduates had received grants since 1937 from Occidental College in Los Angeles and Whitman College in Walla Walla when student body president George Meffan went to Occidental (his brother Gilbert the next year), and Charles Fisher accepted Whitman's award. Valborg Kjosness did so well at Stanford that she received another scholarship for her senior year, graduating Phi Beta Kappa in June, 1940. Grants were also offered by nearby College of Idaho during the 1950s, and several students would one day receive prestigious Rhodes scholarships.11
In a survey conducted while writing his 1956 thesis, an evaluation of BJC’s academic program, Acel Chatburn (named dean when Conan Mathews left that year), found that seventy-two percent of the graduates responding to his questionnaire continued their education. Thirty-nine percent had completed a baccalaureate degree, and since 1934 they had attended well over a hundred colleges and universities with Moscow receiving a majority. Most of them had all of their credits accepted, while some graduates had more than enough. The problem was, one alumnus reported, “I had too many credits . . . we picked the best.”

Asked to identify improvements needed at their alma mater, most of the respondents urged expansion to a four-year college. However, a member of the class of 1941 was negative because Idaho could not afford another full-term college, while a 1946 graduate preferred the preservation of the junior college experience, but their views were exceptional. Only twelve of the nearly one thousand alumni who answered this section of Chatburn’s inquiry were absolutely opposed to upper-division studies at Boise. GI’s were more enthusiastic than graduates without military experience, despite the skepticism expressed by the trustees before Chatburn’s survey was completed.

Meeting reluctantly with a citizen’s committee, formed in 1953 to promote four-year status for BJC, Ed Baird told the petitioners the trustees felt that their first and only obligation was to give the community a first-class junior college. Baird believed the board was doing this, thus the expansionists would have to wait until legislators agreed to amend the 1939 junior college law, which limited the Boise and Coeur d’Alene schools to two years. Some agitation surfaced downtown occasionally, while campus officials preferred a low-key stance until audible approval heightened on an influential level. Chaffee privately felt two additional years were inevitable, thus pushing the issue was unwise and unnecessary.12