

Crown College marks 20 years

Panel remembers UCSC's beginnings

By MARIA GAURA
Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — The opening Crown College at UC Santa Cruz 20 years ago was a heady experience for administrators and students alike. The college represented a break with American academic tradition that seemed in synch with the turbulent times.

"The '60s could be the best and the worst of all times," former Crown administrator Max Levin said Saturday. "There was the violence and the assassinations ... and the boredom of middle-class suburbia."

Levin joined a panel of former and current Crown provosts to celebrate the college's past, and speculate a bit on its future. The panel discussion was part of a daylong anniversary celebration for the college, and was presided over by Chancellor Emeritus Dean E. McHenry, UCSC's founding chancellor.

Twenty years ago, Crown's predominantly science- and math-oriented student body had the reputation of being the most conservative on campus.

"Our students seemed to be more traditional" than the other two colleges on campus at the time, Levin said. "Those at Cowell College were more hippie-ish, while those at Stevenson were very much the politicians."

But in the late '60s, even comparatively staid technical students seemed more radical, activist and daring than they are today, panelists recalled.

"Students were very challenging," Levin said. "There was a significant ... international youth movement, and a student revolution. There was also a romantic element, with an emphasis on love, feelings and passions."

"There was a search for alternatives, and that's why Santa Cruz was so popular," Levin said. "It wasn't just the redwoods, or the (notion of) Uncle Charlie's Summer Camp," as UCSC was often called by critics of the university's casual atmosphere.

The students' search for alternatives sometimes produced embarrassing or regrettable results, as when a female student held a naked protest in Provost Kenneth Thimann's office, or when students lost their way following "false prophets" such as LSD guru Timothy Leary, panelists said.

But much of the high energy of the times was spent on innovative studies,



Dan Coyro/Sentinel

Max Levin, ex-Chancellor Dean McHenry and Sig Pucknat helped shape UCSC'S third college.

hard work and large-scale pranks.

In honor of the celebration, former provost Ed Landesman unearthed an enormous cardboard caricature of himself that students had installed on the Crown courtyard clock. A hole in the caricature's head allowed the hands of the clock to poke through.

"I shared that clock with other notables, including Mickey Mouse, and Lenin," Landesman said.

Though much of the morning's talk centered on the college's innovative and experimental basis, only one of the distinguished panelists was a woman, and that all of them were white.

"It's amazing that I'm the first woman provost" at Crown College, panelist Peggy Musgrave said. A professor at UC Santa Cruz since 1979, Musgrave was appointed provost in 1986.

Musgrave spoke of problems facing the college in the future, such as the need to expand and the difficulty of providing services and housing for hundreds of new students.

But despite the pressures, Musgrave said, the college's unique system is "alive and kicking," and likely to thrive in the future.



Peggy Musgrave is the first woman provost at Crown.