



Tandy Beal (front, center) inspired her dance students at Cabrillo College.

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On the Shoulders of Giants

On the eve of a new era and the opening of new facility, Cabrillo College looks back at the faculty that built its reputation for excellence in the fine arts

Cabrillo College - 2000

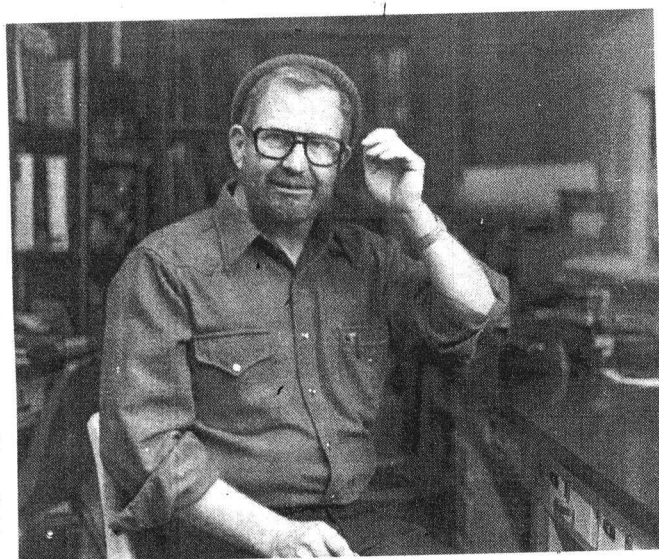
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By WALLACE BAINE

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The first jazz band at Cabrillo, circa 1959. The jazz program went on to become one of the finest in Northern California. Photo courtesy of Cabrillo College.



Fifty-year anniversaries and enormous, spanking-new facilities will, more times than not, cause an institution to engage in a bit of nostalgia. And such is the case this week at Cabrillo College.

Cabrillo is marking its half-century mark in a grand way with this weekend's official opening of the college's \$70-million, five-building fine arts complex that will house Cabrillo's visual arts, theater, dance and music programs. On Friday, the ribbon will be cut for the dazzling new 45,000-square-foot Crocker Theater. That will be followed by the theater's maiden performance, a smorgasbord of dance, theater and live music, designed to show off the new theater space. On Saturday, there's an all-day open house for the public, with countless demonstrations and workshops, followed by an encore performance of Friday's show. On Sunday afternoon, a third performance is planned. The tickets are free to the public, but all three performances have already been sold out.

The vast complex took 11 years and two bond measures to fund and to build, and no one can blame Cabrillo for wanting to show it off. The visual arts studios features state-of-the-art facilities for drawing, painting, printmaking, metalwork, ceramics, photography and jew-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Dolores Abrams leads the first drama class at Cabrillo College in 1959. Photo courtesy of Cabrillo College.

CABRILLO

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elry. The performing arts have the Crocker, along with a new black-box theater and music recital space with new recording studios, practice and classroom facilities.

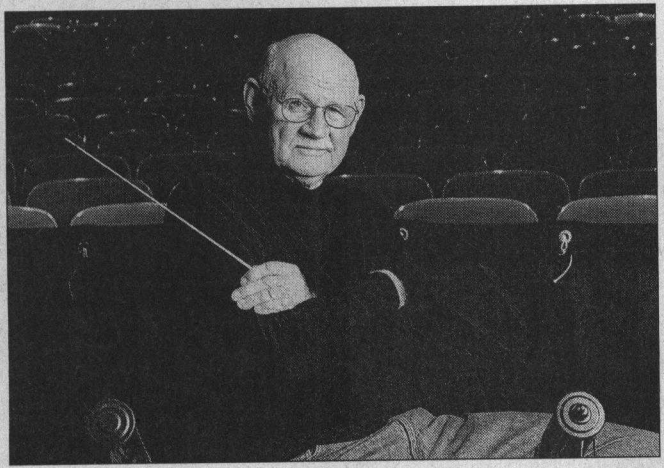
The programs that move into the new "VAPA" complex, as it's being called (for "Visual and Performing Arts") already have a deep history and sterling reputation. This weekend's activity on the Cabrillo campus serves as an ideal opportunity to look back on some of those programs and what they've offered their students and the community over the years.

"From the beginning, we've had the best, the most committed and the most passionate arts faculty you could get," said Dan Martinez, a longtime former ceramics instructor at Cabrillo who now serves as dean of the Visual, Applied and Performing Arts. "To have the passion and the foresight to build programs like we have here is really rare, and as we're celebrating 50 years of passion and dedication to the arts, we're all walking on the shoulders of giants."

Who are those giants? Cabrillo has been remarkably lucky with continuity over the years. Many of the arts instructors first brought onto campus when the college established programs committed to artistic excellence. And throughout the 1960s and '70s, new faculty members were brought in and stuck around, creating the programs in their own images.

In the visual arts, artist Dave McGuire was one of the early proponents of offering a wide range of artistic disciplines on campus. The late Holt Murray came in soon after and established a bronze sculpture program that attracted fierce loyalty among generations of students. They were followed by a fruitful second wave of faculty artists including Howard Ikemoto, Don Thompson, Jane Gregorius and Lynda Watson.

In music, the establishment of the college in Aptos helped inspire Lou Harrison to begin what became



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Lile Cruse remains a seminal figure in establishing the music program at Cabrillo College and founding Cabrillo Stage.

IF YOU GO

CABRILLO
COLLEGE'S GALA
PERFORMANCE

WHEN: Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m.; Sunday at 3 p.m.

WHERE: The Crocker Theater, on the campus of Cabrillo College

COST: Free

DETAILS: www.cabrillovapa.com or 479-6464

NOTE: Saturday will feature a full day of workshops and demonstrations in the visual arts complex from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Check the Web site for the schedule.

the now internationally celebrated Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music. Lile Cruse arrived about a decade after the college opened and, with current faculty member Ray Brown, built a world-class jazz program, before the establishment of the Kuumbwa Jazz Center. The Cabrillo music department has worked in conjunction with Kuumbwa to create several generations of fine young musicians. John Orlando brought expert musicians to campus from all over the world as part of the Distinguished Artists series. Cheryl Anderson has created a vibrant and multi-hued choral program, Michael Strunk began a percussion program, and such prominent musicians as Philip Collins, Don Adkins, Stephanie Gelman-Peck and Michael McGushin have contributed as adjunct faculty.

Dolores Abrams is widely credited with being the first major player at the Cabrillo

Theater Department, directing the first production and overseeing the building of what was until this weekend, the principal space for theater productions on campus. James Brewer was also instrumental in widening the scope of the department. In the 1970s, Wilma Marcus Chandler, having come over from the dance department, became what Martinez called "the rock of the theater department. It was later that the department expanded to include Sarah Albertson, Ian McRae, Robin Aronson, award-winning set designer Skip Epperson and, most recently, Joseph Ribiero.

The marriage of theater and music took place when Lile Cruse established Cabrillo Stage in 1981, which quickly spun off into an independent professional musical theater company. Cabrillo Stage, with the help of Epperson, theater designer Maria Crush and Cruse's successor Jon Nordgren, continues to produce acclaimed musical theater every summer.

And then, there's the Dance Department, where Roberta Bristol steered the emphasis away from fitness and toward artistic expression. It was at Cabrillo where students could learn from the modern dance pioneer Tandy Beal, and where artists such as Janet Johns, Cid Pearlman, David King and Regina DeCosse continue to pursue a wide variety of disciplines.

"There is a reputation among these programs that go well beyond the borders of Santa Cruz County," said Martinez. "We are so fortunate to have this kind of legacy to build on."