



Clovis Unified School District

Doc Buchanan
Leadership Academy

50 UNIFIED YEARS

*Building a Tradition of Excellence in Clovis
Unified Before, During and After Unification*

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With Kelly Avants

Foreword

Fifty years ago, we had no idea where the dream of a unified public school system would take us. We knew we wanted to create an educational program that would equip every child in our community to succeed, not just in school, but in life. We knew we wanted to help build a district that would become a lighthouse in education for our entire nation. And we knew that we wanted to help students become givers, not takers, in society.

But as we and thousands of others cast a 'yes' vote on our unification ballot in December of 1959 we had no idea where the journey toward that dream would take us.

Today, we know it has led Clovis Unified to a position of national recognition as a place where the community enjoys great pride of ownership in its schools; and where kids receive a high-quality, well-rounded education in mind, body and spirit. The District's story is about a team of people coming together to build a world-class educational destination; and chances are if you've picked this book up, this story has touched your life in some way.

The District's roots stretch far deeper than 50 years. Instead, they start in the Central Valley's pioneering history. Many of the schools and the school names you know today trace their beginnings back to tiny schoolhouses built by families who invested their own money, time and talent to help bring public education to the area. These families offered room and board to the first teachers who came to instruct their children, and who were willing to make sacrifices in order that their children would be able to learn.

The history of Clovis Unified, and therefore this book, is filled with examples of dedication to a goal. Today, our community and our students benefit from high quality, successful schools staffed with outstanding educators. But today's success comes only because of the battles that were fought and won over the past 50 years.

The first battle was unification itself. The elementary school districts spread across the area were good school districts but lacked uniformity and common goals. Even so, there was a lot of contention around the idea of individual school districts giving up their independence and autonomy over the hope that education could improve if everyone worked together. Not everyone agreed with the idea, and several neighborhoods chose to go their own way or join with a neighboring school district rather than buy into our dream.



Maybe you lived during these years of debate and dispute, and your memories of Clovis Unified include the battle over unification, the battles over which members of seven different school boards would come together to serve as one Governing Board; or the knock-down drag-out fight over who would be the leader of this new district. These fights didn't really end until the 1964 recall election, organized by those opposed to the District's leadership and the direction the schools were headed, failed by a 70 percent majority. Only then could we move forward toward our dream.

Clovis Unified began as a group of diverse communities coming together in order to get better, and our community has won many battles by holding on to that attitude. We set goals that 90 percent of students would be able to reach grade level in reading and math (at the time the numbers in our district were closer to 30 to 40 percent) and worked together to get it done. We set goals to compete, with ourselves and with others, that led to the District's first Valley Championship football title in 1970 and many, many more championships to follow. And we set a goal to be a team and to stick together through tough economic times, like those following the 1978 passage of Prop 13 and its revolutionary change in funding to public schools, and those facing public schools today. A commitment to keeping the team together without laying anyone off created a unified group of employees dedicated to Clovis Unified and its students.

You may remember these building years, when Clovis Unified was a good school district heading toward greatness. In fact, you may have been one of the employees who fought these battles, or one of the students who were the real winners. Or your interest in this book may be as a local history buff or as a new or current parent, employee or community member building the future story of Clovis Unified.

Whatever your reason, something about this book caught your eye, and we're glad it did. Education is about building the future, and you can't do that until you understand the past. So, hold onto this book. Read it cover to cover or jump back and forth between the stories of each individual school as you see fit. You'll find a story reflective of our very community itself; filled with courage, care and compassion for the young people who walk through the doors of our schools and, too soon, exit as the next generation of our great American society.

Floyd "Doc" Buchanan, Ed.D.
First Superintendent of Schools
President

Everett "Bud" Rank
First Governing Board