

Chester C. Travelstead —A Man of Courage, Vision and Dedication

Education's First-Ever Endowed Professorship/Chair

By Charlotte Bartlett

Courage, vision and dedication are often attributes of protagonists in literary works. In the non-fiction realm, they describe an individual who dedicated his career to the betterment of both the College of Education (COE) and UNM as a whole. In that regard, the COE is proud to announce the campaign for its first-ever endowed professorship/chair, named for *Dr. Chester C. Travelstead* who served as COE dean from 1956-1968.

"Endowments are the financial backbone of institutions of higher learning," explains *Dr. Jeff Hale*, COE director of development. "They are permanent funds...invested by the UNM Foundation, so that the institution can continue to draw upon them—literally to perpetuity. Endowments also function as an autoimmune system for universities like UNM, because the institution can rely upon this income in good times and bad,

regardless of the economic and/or legislative climates." Hale says that endowed professorships and chairs also provide a unique avenue for recognition of UNM's most influential educators and administrators.

Travelstead is a fitting namesake for the endowed professorship/chair because under his leadership, the COE "made enormous strides toward academic excellence and national prominence," says Hale. "In the history of the COE, few individuals have had such a positive and lasting impact as Dr. Travelstead." He is worthy of this recognition not only because of his accomplishments at UNM, but also because of the foresight, integrity and perseverance with which he achieved them.

In 1954 Travelstead was dean of the College of Education at the University of South Carolina (USC), the same year that the U.S. Supreme Court declared in *Brown vs. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kan.* that segregation in the public schools was unconstitutional. When Travelstead realized that USC was more interested in maintaining the status quo of segregation than in upholding the Supreme Court's decision, he delivered a speech that would change the direction of his life. On Aug. 2, 1955, Travelstead stated, "It is my firm conviction that enforced segregation of the races in our public schools can no longer be justified on any basis—and should, therefore, be abolished as soon as practicable. . . . I find nothing which requires, justifies or even allows a nation of second-class citizenship for any group." A few days later, USC officials informed him that they would not renew his contract.

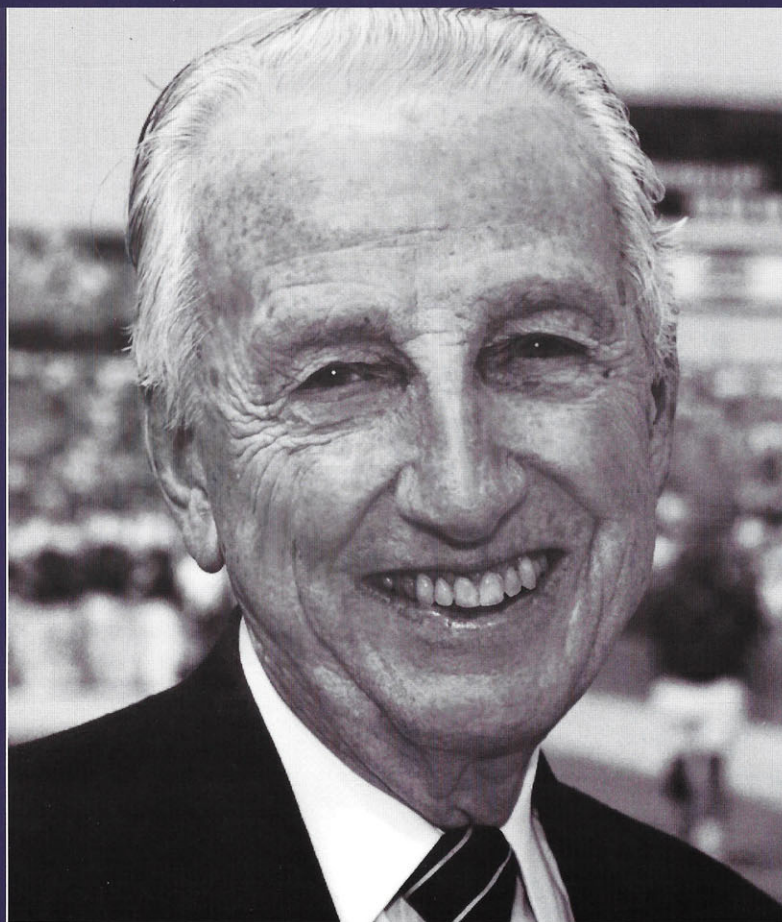
Dr. David W. Darling, COE dean emeritus and chair of the Board of Regents for Western New Mexico University, lauds Travelstead's actions. "President *Tom Popejoy* and the College faculty were very pleased to attract a dean who had the courage to lay the family's livelihood on the line, the vision to take such a strong stand on such an important issue, and the dedication to pursue the issue in such a hostile environment."

USC's decision was to UNM's benefit. In 1956, Travelstead moved his family to Albuquerque to begin his work as dean of the COE. Over the next two years, Travelstead launched a campaign to improve all facets of the COE, making several appeals to UNM administrators for new quarters. When Travelstead arrived, the COE had no doctoral program in place; indeed, only half the faculty held terminal degrees. Travelstead and the COE staff and faculty worked diligently to improve the college's overall education program. To that end, the COE acquired accreditation for its first doctoral programs, created a university-wide advisory council dedicated to improving the overall quality of teacher preparation, expanded its outreach and accountability to both the Albuquerque Public Schools and the New Mexico State Department of Education and implemented the first entrance exam requirements for second year undergraduate students.

Another significant achievement for Travelstead was the construction of a new COE complex. When he arrived at UNM's Hodgin Hall, Travelstead found that the aging building housing most of the COE's staff, faculty and classrooms was in desperate need of mainte-

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Chester Travelstead

Travelstead tirelessly petitioned President Popejoy and his staff for new facilities, but after about two years with no results, had almost given up hope. Sometime later, Travelstead and his colleague, *Wilson Ivins*, attended a Rotary Club luncheon meeting where President Popejoy made a surprise announcement that the University would erect a new COE facility. Travelstead laughs when he retells the story. "Astounded by hearing this declaration by the President, Wilson accidentally dropped his fork noisily and I nearly choked on a piece of chicken in my mouth!"

In 1963, the eight building COE complex was no longer a dream, but a reality. In subsequent years the building received national recognition and several awards. The November 1963 issue of *School and Society* devoted its front cover to an aerial photograph of the entire COE complex, and in 1967 the national publication *College and Business* selected the COE as "Building of the Month." In 1990 the New Mexico Society of Architects honored the COE complex with a 25-year award for its influence on state architects and architecture. The Albuquerque firm which constructed the COE complex was Flatow, Moore, Bryan and Fairburn.

The University honored Travelstead at a ceremony on Feb. 25, 2000, with the opening of a time capsule he buried 36 years earlier on Feb. 25, 1964. Travelstead delivered a factual and sometimes humorous account of the COE's progress over the past four decades, especially during his tenure as dean. More significantly for the future of the College, Hale explained the importance of the Chester C. Travelstead Professorship/Chair.

According to Hale, endowed professorships/chairs will increase the COE's ability to attract and retain the best and brightest professors, bringing national distinction to the College and further improving UNM's reputation and rankings, and will improve the College's overall academic quality, allowing the COE to attract more students.

The cost is \$500,000 to acquire an endowed professorship and \$1.5 million for the endowed chair. An anonymous gift of \$5,000 provided the initial investment. Hale stresses that no gift is too large or too small to support the COE endowment initiative.

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nance and repair. The roof leaked, the plumbing was virtually nonfunctioning and unusual odors occasionally arose from the damp basement. In addition, the third floor had been condemned as structurally dangerous.