

SOUTHERN ARKANSAS UNIVERSITY
1976-1985
INTRODUCTION

Southern State College became Southern Arkansas University on June 3, 1976, when the Board of Trustees formally requested approval of the name change by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education at its meeting on July 9, 1976. Dr. Harold T. Brinson, the ninth administrative head of the institution who assumed the presidency July 1, 1976, from Dr. Imon E. Bruce, was subsequently notified that the following resolution was adopted by the State Board on July 9, 1976:

RESOLVED, That the President and Chairman of the Board of Trustees at Southern State College be notified that the State Board of Higher Education has recommended the name change from Southern State College to Southern Arkansas University.

With this name change and a new administrative head, also an alumnus of the institution (A.A., 1949), a new chapter in the history of in the institution began.

There are a number of striking accomplishments that highlight the Brinson years from 1976 through 1985. Faculty salaries have been greatly improved and have reached competitive levels with similar sized institutions in the southcentral and southeastern parts of the U.S. An SAU Foundation has been established as a separate non-profit corporation with the purpose of soliciting contributions for the support of the university academic and scholarship programs from alumni and friends of the university. From a scholarship fund balance of &175,442.00 in 1976 the SAU Foundation's resources which are designated for a broad-based support effort have grown to \$1,977,195.00 in 1985. The headcount enrollment that was predicted to decline significantly as a result of lower birth rate and school attendance statistics both within the state and nation has instead increased 8.4 percent from 1975 through the fall semester, 1984. Finally, faculty and staff participation in short and long range planning, budgeting, and management have become more evident as the university has adopted school-wide computerized recordkeeping. This has permitted a more comprehensive

and timely flow of information to be shared with all departments thus enabling them to respond to needs and trends more quickly than ever before possible.

Construction on campus between 1976-1985 includes the Vocational Agriculture Shop and Classroom building completed in 1980, and the remodeling of Overstreet Hall completed in 1981. Several minor construction and remodeling projects including several farm buildings, the activities building (old armory), a fitness trail, bells for the tower, an entrance plaza for Overstreet Hall with an art cube, a kiosk, expansion of the intramural fields and an extensive campus landscaping and planning were completed during this period.

This fourth section of the Statistical and Informational Report updates the history of the institution that Dr. Imon E. Bruce began in the first three sections covering the years from 1909 to 1976.

[Editorial note: The date of June 3 declared in this document as the day Southern State College became Southern Arkansas University reflects a continuing debate about the extent to which Arkansas's Constitutional Amendment 33 conferred autonomy on the state's colleges and thus makes merely a formality actions of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education governing the institutions. An alternative interpretation of Amendment 33 and the powers the Arkansas legislature conferred on the Arkansas Department of Higher Education would assert that July 9, 1976, is the date of the name change.]