Clark offers lesson in longevity

College's growth over 75 years astounds those who remember its early days

By HOWARD RUCK
Columbian staff writer

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eight block walk in the 1930s. At a special breakfast Wednesday in the historic Hidden Home — that's where Clark's founding dean, Lewis Carroll, and five other adults lived in high-classed times the following day, Oct. 2, 1933, thanks largely to one student's advance payment of a full year's tuition — Farr treated Knight and a few other Clark insiders to vivid memories of his college days and life in vintage Vancouver.

"I came for fun," said Farr, who arrived at Clark Junior College in 1937, at age 25, to join two dozen other students.

"It was a nice, friendly little college. Everyone knew each other," Farr said. "But he wasn't the most admired student, he concedes, but still found a sense of purpose as America clawed out of the Great Depression.

"The best thing, I thought then, I'm learning something, and I'm doing something to more than just a hard worker, and a laborer. That eventually this is going to amount to something." Handle, "I didn't know for sure," said Farr, who then spent 25 years as a firefighter.

Fast forward to 2008 years.

Students pour into Clark College from the thousands — more than 12,500 students are enrolled in this quarter — mostly with better results, but still finding a sense of purpose as America clawed out of the Great Depression.

"Amazing. It's almost an impossibility to think it could have been that in this time, and yet to have so many students," said Farr, who remembers the current campus site as a thick forest of fir trees. "Here they come from, I have no idea."

Later on Wednesday, Clark leaders dashed out birthday cake to students, staff members and visitors. They also gathered to dedicate a new meeting room in the remodeled Gaiser Hall as the Ellis D. Dunn Community Room, to honor longtime Clark administrator and one-time interim president Ellis Dunn.

As dusk fell, action returned to the chime tower. Congratulations messages and speeches accompanied the introduction of newly enhanced nighttime lighting of the tower.