

TIME CAPSULE: 1984

A peek into lives of Penguins past



Photos by STEVEN LANE/The Columbian

From left, former Clark College teacher, dean and interim president Ellis Dunn, spokeswoman Barbara Kerr and current President Bob Knight check contents of a time capsule assembled for Clark's 50th anniversary in 1983-84.

Time capsule yields Clark College relics, mementos

By HOWARD BUCK
Columbian staff writer

No Michael Jackson albums.

No Ronald Reagan campaign buttons.

Not even a tiny, stuffed Penguin, circa 1983-84.

But plenty other historical items and evidence of dreams and dedication were found tucked inside a 25-year Clark College time capsule cracked open Tuesday afternoon by school leaders.

The artifacts were a gift from those who marked Clark's 50th birthday in spring 1984 to those celebrating its 75th anniversary this school year.

Inside the tapered steel cone were well-preserved Clark yearbooks, graduation and dance programs, class catalogs, old Columbian and student newspapers, photographs of school luminaries, and more.

Most items, in fact, came from Clark's earliest days in the 1930s, after it opened in 1933. They included initial paid student Larry Rakestraw's first sketch of a small penguin, which would soon morph into Oswald, the school mascot.



Newspaper pages from the past were among items tucked into a 25-year time capsule opened at Clark College.

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There also was Clark memorabilia from 1958-59 (25 years in) and from the early Eighties — like today, recession-racked.

But, the underlying theme was, in fact, timeless: A campus driven to serve local students pursuing higher education, whatever the whims of commerce or pop culture.

“Tomorrow’s college will be a legacy of our belief in a bright future, for the next 75 years and beyond,” predicted Bob Knight, Clark president.

Knight shared the Gaiser Hall limelight with Ellis Dunn, 30-year Clark instructor, dean and one-time interim president who retired in 1989.

Dunn, 77, said he can’t recall much of the 1984 birthday — aside from an 800 pound cake baked by Clark students. He cracked, “it’s new to me,” as items were shown and described to about 75 Clark employees and other onlookers gathered.

What truly is new is a bronze-and-stainless steel sculpture crafted by noted artist and part-time Clark instructor Beth Heron, titled, “Scend.”

The shiny work installed outside Gaiser Hall’s north doors represents woven waves of energy carrying the hopes of students and the community forward — a metaphor for Clark educators and support staff — much like a bottled message in the sea, she said.

Also displayed Tuesday were likely current items for use in a new Clark 25-year time capsule,

soon to be secured in the sculpture’s sturdy pedestal.

They include, yes, a stuffed Oswald; some fresh newspapers; CD recordings of Clark student jazz and orchestra musicians; and plenty of new Clark literature and memorabilia.

There also will be a written message from Knight, plus a special letter from Washington Gov. Chris Gregoire, to be kept under wraps until 2034.

Meanwhile, 75th anniversary organizers and other boosters raised money to pay for two new \$3,000 tuition scholarships for Clark students (plus \$750 for books and supplies).

Joseph Matter, now a Fort Vancouver High School senior, earned a new-student scholarship; Kellie Rusk, a Clark nursing program candidate, earned a continuing-student scholarship.