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Transcript of the first dean: Don Dobler, Dean 1966-1986

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BEGIN TRANSCRIPTION

[00:00:00]

(bombs exploding)

[00:00:03] DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.:

To rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path--

(rock music)

[00:00:12] VOICEOVER:

Anti-war protests, civil rights conflicts, the women's movement, environmentalism. In the 1960s, the establishment was under siege as the counterculture demanded a new agenda. High on that agenda was the perceived corruption and pollution of big business.

[00:00:28] DON DOBBLER:

It was terrible. It was not a good time to try to start a business school.

One day I got a letter from Dr. Bill Morgan, who was president of CSU or Colorado A&M at that point in time. And I got a letter from him that described what was going on here at CSU.

They were going to start a new business school and they were looking for a dean. And it turns out that in the long run, that they offered me the job as being being the first dean in College and Business.

[00:01:10] VOICEOVER:

Business schools struggling as unpopular in the '60s culture, were also bashed for their lack of academic quality and rigor.

[00:01:17] DON DOBBLER:

Well, before it became what they call now a college, the College of Business, it was kind of a place where you learned how to type.

[00:01:25] VOICEOVER:

The 1959 Ford Foundation study of the nation's business schools railed against the quality of the curricula, faculty, and students.

[00:01:33] DON DOBBLER:

They said the courses in most business schools are, have no analysis, no analytical work in them at all, are all descriptive. And they said they're nothing more than technical vocational schools. They said that they belong in a junior college, not in a university. So it was a time of turbulence and uncertainty and everything else to try to professionalize the business programs in the universities around the country.

[00:02:06] VOICEOVER:

January 1st, 1966, CSU's business department is officially designated as the College of Business. Housed in Johnson Hall, about a dozen faculty members and the new dean, with the support of CSU President Morgan, set out to build a college with a mission.

[00:02:22] DON DOBBLER:

So that was what we were trying to do, was to develop a program. My philosophy and his philosophy, and I think, you know a lot of people who were in management situations believe that the operation is never going to be any better than the people you put in it. And we're also looking for one rather vague thing, somebody who was compassionate enough and cared enough about the students so that they really would work genuinely with the students and try to help them get through the program. So that was what our mission was.

[00:03:04] VOICEOVER:

To attract the world-class faculty he needed, Dean Dobbler sought resources the university didn't have. Bob Everitt, a prominent Fort Collins businessman, was approached about raising funds among the business community.

[00:03:16] BOB EVERITT:

They asked me,

(Joyce chuckling)

And I didn't turn them down. I probably should have. But I kind of looked at it two different ways. One was to get exposure to the business school, to let people know what a great place it was and the great students that they were turning out.

[00:03:32] DON DOBBLER:

We wanted the program to be recognized for good high-quality analytical types of rigorous courses. That was the first thing. Second thing, we'd like to have somebody who had some practical experience. He'd put the practical and theoretical together and make it useful and interesting to the kids.

[00:03:54] VOICEOVER:

With the 40 faculty members, he needed and more than 1,500 business majors, Dobbler turned his attention to the business community.

[00:04:01] DON DOBBLER:

We wanted the business community to understand that we were trying to serve them as well as trying to do the students the job that they were paying their tuition for. We had one program that most of the people in the college were fairly proud of and that was, we called it our outreach program. We did about 40 or 50 seminars a year for people that worked in companies around here.

Bob Everitt and the Everitt Enterprise's organization was one.

[00:04:38] BOB EVERITT:

We ended up, our company ended up having the faculty put on seminars for our business. At that time, well we had a group of Lumberyards and I had managers that would come from all over Kansas and Oklahoma and Colorado and it was a fantastic experience for our managers and for me too. Learned how to solve problems that Joyce gave me all the time.

(laughing)

[00:05:07] DON DOBBLER:

The business community was, and I think probably still is, the primary advocate in the state for the College of Business here at CSU. And I don't think our two competitors can make that same statement.

(upbeat music)

[00:05:29] VOICEOVER:

Within four years, the College of Business, under the leadership of Don Dobbler, received full and unconditional accreditation. Such unrestricted and affirmative approval is unusual for a first-time applicant. The transformation to a College of Business was complete.

Today, this tree, dedicated to Don Dobbler is a reminder of the extraordinary leadership and values-based vision of the first dean. Don Dobbler planted the seed that was to become the College of Business at CSU. A bold venture that is now full-grown and thriving.

(upbeat music)

END TRANSCRIPTION