

## ***History of Joliet Junior College***

Joliet Junior College, America's oldest public community college, began in 1901 as an experimental postgraduate high school program. It was the "brain child" of J. Stanley Brown, Superintendent of Joliet Township High School, and William Rainey Harper, President of the University of Chicago. The college's initial enrollment was six students. Today, JJC serves more than 12,000 students in credit classes and 21,000 students in noncredit courses.

Brown and Harper's innovation created a junior college that academically paralleled the first two years of a four-year college or university. It was designed to accommodate students who desired to remain within the community and still pursue a college education. Within a few years, the concept of the community college had grown to include students outside the existing high school district. By 1920, students living outside the existing high school district comprised one-fifth of the student population.

The growth continued, and one significant event in this expanding pattern was the enactment of the Illinois Junior College Act in 1965 by the Illinois Legislature, creating specific districts that various community colleges were to serve. Today, the 1,442-square mile district serves a population of more than 400,000 in Will, Grundy, Kendall, LaSalle, Kankakee, Livingston and Cook counties.

To better serve people throughout the district, Joliet Junior College now maintains extended campuses in downtown Joliet, Romeoville, Morris, and Frankfort. Additional satellite off-campus instructional sites have been established at many high schools in the college district. Both day and evening classes meet in these locations. Joliet Junior College, in perceiving itself as an institution of possibilities, now serves over 12,000 students within its district.