

THE SCHOOL OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

In 1985, the School of Criminal Justice at Michigan State University will celebrate its 50th Anniversary. The history of the School's founding is interesting: events at the national level set into motion activity that eventually resulted in the establishment of the program at Michigan State. A few highlights worth noting are: a National Crime Commission under the leadership of George Wickersham was organized in 1925 and published its report in 1931. The Michigan Legislature had established a State Crime Commission in 1929. An U.S. Attorney General's Conference on Crime was held in 1934, attended by a delegation from Michigan. All these groups emphasized the need for better-trained police officers. In Michigan, the Crime Commission and the Michigan State Police spearheaded the movement for police professionalization.

Dr. Le Moyne Snyder unsuccessfully approached the University of Michigan with a proposal to establish a police-training program at the College level. He along with fellow members of the Crime Commission, especially Commissioner Oscar Olander of the Michigan State Police, then approached Michigan State College with the proposal. They worked with President Robert Shaw, and Deans Huston, Anthony, Dirks, Emmons, and Secretary John Hannah. All interested parties finally approved the program on 31 July 1935. In September, 1935, 23 freshmen, and 11 sophomores and juniors enrolled in the new program. The first 3 students were graduated in 1938: A.F. Brandstatter, Edgar Jones (Deceased), and Ralph Orcutt.

It is clear that in establishing the program, given the general national concern with crime and its attendant problems, Michigan State was fulfilling the land grant philosophy for which it had become so well known. This spirit continues today. WWII interrupted growth of the program, but enrollment jumped to 90 undergraduate majors in 1947. Peak enrollment was reached in 1975, with 1985's enrollment expected to be 600 undergraduates, 115 master's and 20 Ph.D. students.

In the beginning, the program focused entirely on law enforcement and its role in society. In 1948-51, areas of study emphasizing corrections, juvenile delinquency, traffic management and criminalistics were added. Industrial security was introduced in 1953. The master's degree program was approved in 1958, and the doctoral program was introduced in 1968. By adding breadth, the School of Criminal Justice evolved in 1970 from what was originally the School of Police Administration. Courses and course content have been altered as new developments and social needs have evolved. Faculty, once a lone person, has averaged 17 in recent years. Total number of graduates will be approaching 6,000 in 1985. Alumni of the program have enjoyed careers in all phases of the criminal justice system. Many have risen to highest levels of their chosen field as a result of distinguished effort.

Beginning with the West German police-training program in 1950, the school has enjoyed an international reputation and has graduates in many foreign countries. Motivated by the land grant philosophy of public service, the School started its first In-Service Training program for police officers of Michigan in 1950. In 1955, the National Institute on Police and Community Relations

was initiated as a joint effort of the School and the National Conference of Christians and Jews. The School continues to offer short course training in selected subjects.

In the early 1970s, a Criminal Justice Constituent Alumni Association was formed, assuming leadership in the organization of the School's Golden Jubilee Celebration, to be hosted in November 1985. A commemorative Jubilee Journal will be published and a fund raising campaign will be launched in order to establish a perpetual endowment in support of the School's graduate program.

The School of Criminal Justice - 50th Anniversary Jubilee - Author Unknown