



**Dr. Bess Jenkins**

A recipient of the El Reno Junior College Student Forum's Excellence in Teaching Award, Dr. Bess Jenkins served El Reno Junior College in a variety of capacities from 1971 until her retirement in 1996. She began as an instructor of Speech and Reading Improvement, developing and teaching classes in speech and reading, and establishing the reading laboratory which later became the communications laboratory. In 1981, Dr. Jenkins was named Chairperson of the Communicative Arts Division, and for a brief period in the mid-80's, she supervised faculty in Behavioral and Social Sciences, Communicative Arts, Health, Physical Education, and Recreation. She retired as Division Director of Communicative Arts, teaching speech and reading improvement classes, and advising all pre-education majors.

Dr. Jenkins was awarded the Outstanding Woman Educator Award from the American Association of University Women, El Reno Chapter, in 1988 and was inducted into the National Phi Theta Kappa Hall of Honor for Advisors in 1981.

She held several leadership positions throughout her career, including President and Past-President of the Oklahoma Association of Community and Junior College. As Chairperson of the El Reno Junior College Standing Institutional Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics, Dr. Jenkins developed a mentoring program for athletes. She served as State Director of the Oklahoma State Western College Reading and Learning Association, and was a member of the Board of Directors for Chisholm Trail Mental Health Inc. and Canadian County Democratic Women's Club.

Dr. Jenkins left a great legacy at Redlands via the students and staff she assisted along the way. She mentored students to achieve more than they thought they could, and she helped mentor young faculty and staff who have now become seasoned professionals at Redlands and elsewhere. She loved to help and fight for the underdog, making sure everyone was treated fairly and given equal opportunities.

Dr. Jenkins attended the University of Oklahoma, earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in Speech in 1954, a Master of Education in Elementary Education in 1962 and a Doctor of Philosophy in Reading Education.