



Dr. Joe White

Dr. Joe E. White was raised in a small town in central Oklahoma where he developed a passion for education early in life. Upon his high school graduation, he pursued this passion to earn his bachelor's degree from Oklahoma State University. He went on to earn his master's degree from Southwestern State University then returned to Oklahoma State University to obtain his Educational Doctorate in 1974.

In the spring of 1975, at the age of 37, Dr. White began his presidency at Carl Albert Junior College. He immediately established goals for the college that would transform him from a young "visionary" to a legendary leader as he guided the college through a period of expansion and progress, physically and fiscally, greater than any other in the college's history.

Dr. White embraced the value of education and made it a goal to do his part to better the lives of those around him. He was a charter member of the CASC Development Foundation and instrumental in the establishment of residential housing and the success of the Scholars Program, having been inspired by Speaker Carl Albert. In addition, Dr. White and his wife, Melba Sue, provided many scholarships through the White-Curfman Family Scholarship. Their passion for student success led to the establishment of the Dr. Joe E. and Melba Sue White Academic Scholarship fund. As a tribute to Dr. White's legacy, the library at the Poteau campus bears the name "Joe E. White Library" and inside is an area dedicated to honor him.

Among his numerous accolades, he was awarded the Poteau Lifetime Achievement Award in 1996. He was named to the Murray State Distinguished Athlete Hall of Fame in 2003 and joined the Oklahoma Higher Education Hall of Fame in 2004. In addition to these prestigious accomplishments, Dr. White served on the Council for North Central Two-Year Colleges Executive Committee, Chair of the Council of Oklahoma College and University Presidents, Chair of the Council of Two-Year Presidents and was inducted into the Carl Albert State College Hall of Fame in 2013. He also served as a member of the Rotary International Club for 37 years.

Throughout his tenure at CASC, Dr. White established three sister institutions in Bern, Switzerland; Chalmette, Louisiana; and Sorrento, Louisiana. Dr. White worked closely with a prominent local family to establish the Hamilton Lecture Series, an annual event that features well-known individuals in education and government speaking on a series theme, "Excellence in Education and High Political Standards — America's Future at Stake." Prestigious speakers in the series have been former President Jimmy Carter, former President Gerald Ford, former President George Bush, Miss America Shawntel Smith, and many other distinguished leaders. With the blessing of the Hamilton family, the lecture series was renamed the Jimmy Carter Presidential Lecture Series.

The impact Dr. Joe E. White has made on the College, and its faculty, staff and students, and higher education in Oklahoma is insurmountable.