

PVCC Celebrates 50th Anniversary

William Hubbard, staff writer

To the common observer, student or otherwise, administrative celebrations may appear mundane. Similar to how one may dismiss community college as a whole, administrative events are seldom viewed as moving or constructive. PVCC subverts both these dismissals. In attending the 50th anniversary celebration, held Tuesday Sept. 27 in the Bolick Student Center, I was treated to a moving series of eye opening public remarks by notable former and current staff members such as Student Government Association (SGA) President Hadrien Padilla; Bruce Robinson, Evylen Edson, Virginia delegate Sally Hudson; and, perhaps most impressively, the first student to attend PVCC, Wanda Farrar.

Upon entering the Bolick Center, I was treated to the beats of Earth, Wind and Fire playing on a continuous playlist of celebratory funk hits. The Bolick Center was decorated with gold and white balloons surrounded by various depictions of the number 50. Even Pouncer, the Piedmont Panther, the college's fur-suited mascot was there and available for pictures. The atmosphere was the right mix of formal and casual with marks of dressed-down hospitality PVCC is known for, but the real attraction was the variety of speakers who were about to begin their remarks.

Both Robinson and Edson provided heartfelt and humorous takes on their history with the school and why they have been associated with the institution for many years. Robinson's story depicting his early years in relation to the school was poignant and timely. He painted a picture of a young man trying to succeed using the universality of PVCC as a vehicle to that success. It's a picture that fits many students and faculty today. Following him, Evelyn Edson's upbeat remarks regarding the span of the school's existence complemented the tone of the event's purpose: celebrating the school that celebrates us.

The true heart of the event was the speech by Farrar, the first person to ever attend class on campus. In just a few minutes behind the podium, she illustrated her journey to PVCC and what it meant to her. While her story of finding the college and the college finding her happened 50 years ago, it is remarkably relevant to the entire

student body today. The journey of many of the college's current, former, and future student population is emulated in her: an ambitious youth, looking for an alternative higher education option. Her academic journey

and the characterizations of the college made the notion of 50 years of PVCC quite astounding. Decades have gone by, but it still seems to be the student-centered institution it's always been.

The flow between speakers was natural, and the gaps in remarks were always used as a time to advertise the photo booth, free cake, and raffle-ticket items. As the speaking session was closed by remarks from college president, Dr. Jean Runyon, the attendees were free to mingle, celebrate, and meet the speakers. I had the pleasure of briefly speaking with former staff in attendance and Farrar herself. Their candid enthusiasm about the school and appreciation of its longevity on a one-on-one level was a moving way to end the celebration.

When attending an event such as the anniversary of a community college, it is understandable to expect a level of administrative tedium in celebration of the longevity of said administration. At the celebration, students and staff alike enjoyed themselves in their own way. Some students just stopped by for some cake and to listen to the upbeat music, many of them ended up staying as the remarks began and the insights and anecdotes flowed.

As an event, it was similar to PVCC as an institution: upbeat, friendly, informative, and full of helpful staff members and magnetic teachers. That detail of an appropriate, casual but driven attitude is what made the event as special and important as the school it was celebrating. It's been 50 years of quality education in a flourishing student society, so let's make this milestone of a year a good one.



Decoration at event
Photography by
William Hubbard