

Dedication Ceremony

*The John E. Mathews, Jr.,
Computer & Information Sciences Building*

University of North Florida
Monday, November 7, 1988
9:00 a.m.

Welcome and Remarks

Dr. Roy E. McTarnaghan
Interim President

Comments

Regent Cecilia Bryant
Florida Board of Regents

Comments

Dr. Kenneth E. Martin
Director
Division of Computer & Information Sciences

Comments and Introduction

William A. Hightower
President
AT&T American Transtech

Dedication Address

Robert M. Kavner
President, Data System Group
American Telephone & Telegraph

Response

Mrs. John E. Mathews, Jr. (Gwen)

John E. Mathews, Jr.

That the University of North Florida's new computer and information sciences building is named in memory of the late John E. Mathews, Jr., is a fitting tribute to the man whose vision and determination is credited by many state and area leaders as responsible for UNF's creation almost a quarter of a century ago.

Jack Mathews was a freshman senator when he surveyed the educational landscape in his home district and found it to be "the most educationally starved community of its size in the nation."

Such a situation was untenable for Senator Mathews, who had compiled an outstanding record in Duval County public schools, winning many scholastic and athletic honors, among them valedictorian and president of his class at Robert E. Lee Senior High School.

He attended Emory University in Atlanta on scholarship, graduating first in his class in 1942. At Emory, Senator Mathews presided over the student body, honor society and Sigma Chi fraternity, and chaired the Phi Beta Kappa rules committee.

Upon graduation, he was commissioned into the U.S. Navy and, during World War II, spent 26 months overseas aboard the USS Kidd. He assumed command of the Kidd after the ship's captain was killed during a Japanese kamikaze attack and earned a Bronze Star for bringing the badly damaged ship safely into port.

Senator Mathews entered Harvard Law School shortly after his discharge in 1946 and received his degree two years later. He joined the Jacksonville law practice of his father, John E. Mathews, Sr., in 1948. The senior Mathews, for whom the Mathews Bridge is named, was a successful attorney and former chief justice of the state supreme court.

The younger Mathews' public service career began in 1956 with his election to the Florida House of Representatives. He was re-elected twice before winning a seat in the Florida Senate in 1962. Re-elected to the senate twice, he was selected by his colleagues as senate president for two consecutive terms in 1969 and 1970. Senator Mathews was honored repeatedly for his service in both the house and senate and was voted each body's outstanding member.

Senator Mathews' campaign for what eventually would become the University of North Florida began with the introduction of a senate bill to authorize a four-year college in Duval County.

In 1968, during a special legislative session on education, his quest was rewarded when a bill authorizing planning money for the new university was passed and signed into law.

Jack Mathews' active political career ended on an ironic note in 1970, when he resigned his senate seat – in compliance with legislation he helped create – to seek the Democratic nomination for governor. It was his second unsuccessful gubernatorial bid. He returned to law practice in Jacksonville until 1979, when he was stricken with cryptococcal meningitis and was hospitalized in Gainesville.

When Senator Mathews died in January 1988, all Floridians and the University of North Florida experienced the loss of a friend who, truly, was "the father of public higher education in Jacksonville."

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Robert M. Kavner

Robert M. Kavner, a native New Yorker, joined AT&T as chief financial officer in May 1984. He was named to his present position in April 1988.

Born in Franklin Square, Long Island, Mr. Kavner graduated in 1965 from Adelphi University and joined Coopers & Lybrand, an international accounting and consulting firm, where he spent nearly 20 years. He attended the advanced Management Program at the Tuck School at Dartmouth College. He became a general practice partner in 1975 and co-chairman of the firm's Information Industry Practice in 1983. His clients at Coopers & Lybrand included AT&T, CBS, Columbia University, Dun & Bradstreet, New York Telephone Co., the Metropolitan Museum and Pan American World Airways, among others.

Mr. Kavner's responsibilities as chief financial officer for AT&T had included finance, treasury and controller operations, information systems, business planning and tax planning.

He is a member of the board of directors of Ing. C. Olivetti & c., S.p.A.; Sun Microsystems, Inc.; and Fleet/Norstar Financial Group, in addition to membership on several AT&T internal boards of directors.

Mr. Kavner also is involved in cultural and community affairs in New York. He is currently vice chairman of the board of the Children's Museum of Manhattan, and formerly served as chairman of the board of the Merce Cunningham Dance Foundation. He enjoys a morning run before work and golf with his wife and friends on weekends.

Father of two daughters and a son, Mr. Kavner and his wife, Allyson, live in Summit, New Jersey.

John E. Mathews, Jr., Endowment for Computer Science Donors

Contributions to this memorial endowment provide perpetual support for computer software and equipment enhancements within the Division of Computer and Information Sciences.

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