

Voces Novae: Chapman University Historical Review, Vol 2, No 2 (2011)

[HOME](#) [ABOUT](#) [LOG IN](#) [REGISTER](#) [SEARCH](#) [CURRENT](#) [ARCHIVES](#) [PHI ALPHA THETA](#)

Home > Vol 2, No 2 (2011) > **Chapman Through the Generations**

Chapman Through the Generations

From its origins in Woodland, California as Hesperian College to its present form, Chapman University has undergone many changes, with its community persevering through difficult times to preserve the close-knit relationships that characterize the Chapman experience. The College moved to Los Angeles in 1920, largely through the campaigning and leadership efforts of Charles C. Chapman, becoming the college for the Southern California Disciples of Christ community. The Great Depression severely drained the school's finances, but Chapman, Board of Trustee member J.E. Wilkinson, and others kept the institution afloat. Once men left to fight World War II, the school faced another financial crisis, eventually moving to the Whittier campus and leasing out its buildings for a period in the 40s. California Christian College, named for Charles Chapman in 1934, found its way to Orange where it began to thrive. Although the World Campus Afloat program, also known as Semester at Sea, nearly bankrupted the College in the late 60s, President G.T. Buck Smith, George Argyros, and the rest of the trustees reorganized the College's finances to survive another near disaster. Now, under President Jim Doti, Chapman University has grown and expanded to become a nationally and internationally known institution. However, even Jim Doti recognizes that he is "standing on the shoulders of giants."

Chapman has changed so much, yet retains many of its core values of ethics and fellowship. Board Member and Chapman alumna [Karen Wilkinson](#) ('69), daughter of Harmon and Nadine Wilkinson and granddaughter of J.E. Wilkinson, knows that Chapman not only shaped her parents' pacifist beliefs, but shaped her own identity as well: "I could see how my life has just never been anything other than affected by Chapman College." Like Karen Wilkinson, History Professor [William Cumiford](#) ('63) attended Chapman as a Disciples of Christ student. However, as he recalls, the institution was never a Bible college, but simply a liberal arts college that attracted the Disciples community and many international students. The [Brown extended family](#), also a part of the Disciples of Christ, has been part of the school for many generations, dating all the way back to 1921. They all fondly remember the closeness of the people at the institution, a closeness that led to marriage for many of them. They recognize how much of a role Chapman played in the course of their lives and how much it has maintained this influence over the years.

Interview with Alumna and Board of Trustee Member Karen Wilkinson ('69)



Interview with Alumnus and Professor of History William Cumiford ('63)



Interview with Multiple Generations of the Brown Extended Family

