

# Search continues, Candidates for OTC President narrowed

By MARK BIVENS  
Staff Writer

The search goes on. Dewey Stiles, chairman of the committee to select and hire a president at Ouachita Technical College, says following Saturday's executive session, the naming of the president isn't much closer, but the schedule is not behind.

"No, nothing yet," Stiles said this morning of progress in naming a president. "We've interviewed one candidate but there's been no decision. We're trying to start interviewing to see what they look like. Hopefully, we'll interview more in two or three weeks. That's the process. It's just time consuming."

The committee began with 105 applications after having an ad published in *The Chronicle*, a nationally circulated magazine directed at colleges and universities. Stiles said that number had been narrowed down to five finalists. Stiles said of the five, one has apparently elected not to pur-

sue the position.

Mandatory background checks of the candidates has been one of the major hurdles and Stiles said that and the interviews should be completed "before long."

"We haven't scheduled any more (interviews) mostly because other background checks are going on," Stiles said. "I'd say in a week or 10 days we'll have those (background checks) back."

The committee has hoped to have a president named before the end of the summer to assist in OTC's transition from a vocational school to college status.

Of the applicants, almost all regions of the country were represented, with several seeking the position having experience in top levels of administration in community colleges. One of the requirements for applicants was for the individual having either a doctorate or five years experience in the top level of administration in a community college.



OTC students (left to right) Alicia McNeely, Carrie McAdoo and Candi Bray pose with ProMed vice president Terry Bracy. (See story on Page 1)



# OTC finally breaks ground

## Learning/Resource Center due to be complete by year's end

By KARON GREGORY  
Daily Record Staff Writer

Ground breaking ceremonies were held Tuesday at Ouachita Technical College for the \$2.8 million Learning/Resource Center Complex, to be completed within the next year.

The new center, funded in part by a special sales tax approved by voters, will allow the school to keep up with the ever increasing enrollment, OTC President Ken Martin said.

The building will hold a student service area, combine the school's business offices and administrative offices into one building, provide two science labs and a new library, a lecture hall and a conference room, which will be open for city residents' use.

The ground breaking was more than two years behind

schedule as the school wrestled with complicated funding laws, the Malvern City Council and an ever increasing price tag for the construction.

When the sales tax was approved by city taxpayers in 1994 the cost of the building was projected to cost \$1.6 million.

The tax expired in June 1997.

In remarks at the ceremony, Martin said the school's enrollment has grown steadily over the past seven years. From its opening in 1972 as Ouachita Vocational-Technical School, it has served 292 students in 11 programs annually. Enrollment in technical colleges across the state has increased 300 percent in the past seven years.

In 1991, the state Legislature passed Act 1244, the Two-

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Daily Record photo by Karon Gregory

Ouachita Technical College officials, along with Mayor Bill Scrimshire and Rep. Steve Faris break ground on the \$2.8 million Learning Resource Center. The building will contain additional offices and instructional areas. The building is scheduled to be completed by the end of this year.



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GRHS's Davies  
wins medal

# Daily Record

## Prosecutors unsure of Martin's fate

By **SHIRA KELLEY**  
Daily Record News Editor

Prosecutors haven't yet determined whether criminal charges will be filed against Dr. Ken Martin on the basis of an audit of Ouachita Technical College.

Seventh Judicial District Prosecutor Eddy Easley received a copy of the Legislative Joint Auditing Committee's report late Tuesday. Martin was terminated as OTC president at an executive session of the board of trustees Tuesday evening.

The audit findings said the auditors and Martin reviewed Martin's time record for August 1992 through February 2001. The review found 790.5 hours of annual/sick leave "that should have been charged to Dr. Martin's annual/sick leave accounts," the audit said.

The dollar equivalent of those hours was calculated at \$33,525.10, using Martin's salary rate for fiscal year 2000. The audit said posting the additional hours to his annual/sick leave accounts results in no leave time as of February 2001.

"Also, an accounts receivable from Dr. Martin in the amount of \$17,451 will be established," the audit said.

The report also said Martin "has agreed to reimburse OTC for an automobile engine belonging to the College

**Ken Martin**

which was installed in his wife's automobile in 1994 ... The College's automotive instructor estimated the value of the engine to be approximately \$600."

Easley said he must further review the audit and meet with both the auditors and the board of trustees before determining what charges, if any, will be filed.

Martin said Wednesday that the 790 hours annual/sick leave was calculated by the auditors' study of his day planners since he was hired nine years ago.

"They used that as the Bible" and considered the planners a precise record of his workdays, Martin said.

"None of my explanations meant anything" to the auditors, he said. He said his contract does not specify what time frames he was to work and he frequently arrived at

OTC at 5 a.m.

"If I wasn't in the hospital (because of severe health problems), I worked 50, 60, even 70 hours a week. ... I couldn't have done my job in less than 40 hours a week," Martin said.

He said the audit's mention of an engine was an engine the college was going to throw away. "I didn't know they put it in my wife's car until after the fact," he said. When he learned about it, he went to a self-pull garage, bought an identical engine and gave that to OTC, he said.

Martin believes the decision to terminate his employment was made before Tuesday's meeting, when the board of trustees voted. "The board had already decided to fire me before the board meeting ever happened last night," he said Wednesday.

Martin said he plans to retain an attorney to advise

him of what action to take. He said he had previously filed an Americans with Disabilities Act accommodation requesting flexible work hours because of his doctor's recommendation of frequent rest.

He denied all allegations. "I am not a crook; I am not a thief. I didn't do those things," he said.

Other than Martin's time records and the automobile engine, the audit said OTC complied "in all material aspects" with requirements "that are applicable to each of its major federal programs for the year ended June 30, 2000."

Lacy Landers of Benton, president of the OTC Board of Trustees, said he could not comment extensively on Martin's termination. He said the termination was related only to the audit's findings.

An interim president for OTC has not been named yet.



Mar 31, 2001

## Dear editor

# In defense of Dr. Martin

School enrollment has grown steadily from its opening in 1972 as Ouachita Vocation Technical School.

Dr. Ken Martin came here in August of 1992 as the first President of same, and over the past nine years, under the excellent leadership of Dr. Martin, Ouachita Technical College was first in the state to receive accreditation by the North Central Association which serves as the accrediting agency for all colleges and universities in the state. A self-survey conducted by OTC has been displayed as a guideline for other schools at annual North Central Association Conferences. OTC was first to gain access to the Internet and first to offer classes via the Internet.

OTC was first to boast a fully equipped and staffed computer manufacturing class.

When OTC showed off its finest at awards ceremonies held during the Arkansas Association of two year College Annual Conference in Little Rock, Dr. Martin was honored with the Outstanding Staff Award.

On July 22, 1998, OTC officials broke ground on the \$2.8 million Learning Resource Center. The new building, much of which was planned and designed by Dr. Martin, contains the much needed additional offices and instructional areas. The new center was funded in part by a special sales tax approved by voters, who felt the need for such a facility for our county and also because of the confidence they had in the excellent leadership and ability of Dr. Martin.

Recently a ten year accreditation was awarded to OTC even without a progress report, saying they were accepted for the next ten years. Someone in authority must have been doing something or everything right.

Dr. Martin was very instrumental in helping Malvern secure the prison by his proposal and presentation of it to the Department of Correction Board on August 19, 1999. He felt that this was a golden opportunity to really boost the economy and job market, and he jumped at the chance to be a part of bringing this about. It would bring 225 jobs and an \$11 to \$13 million boost to the economy besides the economic shove that will come during construction of the \$29 million facility.

Dr. Martin was always an active member of the Malvern Chamber of Commerce and served as President last year, during which he worked diligently towards making Malvern an ACE Community

(Arkansas Community of Excellence).

He was largely responsible in securing the new home for Adult Education and also in helping to plan, renovate and work to get the building in top shape.

He served on the Board of the American Heart Association—always giving of his time and talents and offering his facilities for meetings. He is a faithful member of the Malvern Rotary Club.

He served as President of the Hot Spring County Amateur Radio Club for three years and was on the By-Laws Committee and Board of Directors. This group is a non-profit organization dedicated to public service. He volunteered to establish an amateur radio station at OTC to be used in times of emergency. He attended Weather Spotter classes and is a certified weather Spotter for the National Weather Service. He holds an Extra Class license for the Federal Communication Commission.

Dr. Martin is a self-taught talented musician, and played mandolin with a local group when his health permitted. The group always gave of their time and talents to others, playing at a local nursing home, Open House at the Hot Spring County Medical Center during Hospital Week, at St. John's Catholic Church, at First United Methodist Church's Wednesday evening Soul Food and service, at Open House at the Opening of Hot Spring County annex, for the American Heart Association, at Keith Memorial Methodist Men's Fellowship Meeting, and at Open House for the Hot Spring County Medical Center Annex and other occasions.

He is a member of the First United Methodist Church and has served on various boards. He has also volunteered his services to cook, set-up and clean up for the Wednesday evening "Soul Food."

Dr. Martin was most always in his office by 5 and at times he has worked all night, almost every Saturday and Sunday and a lot of evenings.

Even through all his surgeries and pain it has never affected his performance or duties as President of OTC. He never lost his love of OTC or his desire to serve in any way that he could, for he always wanted to help make it the best that it could possibly be. And most of all he never lost sight of his dream to do everything he could to better OTC and also Malvern and Hot Spring County

Mary Anna Green



Wednesday

March 21, 2001

# OTC's Martin terminated

By **MARK BIVENS**  
Daily Record Editor

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Dr. Ken Martin, president of Ouachita Technical College, has been dismissed from his position.

Lacy Landers, of Benton, president of the OTC Board of Trustees, said by telephone after an executive session Tuesday night that Martin was no longer employed by the

school.

"The board voted to terminate his employment," Landers said. "It was a hard decision for the board."

Landers said the termination was effective immediately, but that Martin would be permitted to return today to collect his personal belongings.

Martin has served as OTC president for nine years, Landers said.