

**Otto C. Olsen Vocational Arts Building**

The Vocational Arts Building was the first new classroom building to be built on the campus of the Nebraska State Teachers College in over 25 years. Its construction was authorized in 1953 and it was completed in 1955 at a cost of \$770,000, with an additional \$50,000 appropriated for the purchase of new industrial arts equipment.

Architects were Letenger & Son, and the contractor was Phillip Assenmacher. The cornerstone was laid at ceremonies on July 9, 1954. The main speaker was Everett L. Randall, a member of Nebraska’s Board of Education of State Normal Schools.

The building was dedicated at ceremonies at a special convocation held at 2:30 PM on September 30, 1955. Everett L. Randall, then President of the Board of Education of State Normal Schools, was the Master of Ceremonies, and the main speaker was Dr. Verne C. Fryklund, President of Stout State College in Menomonie, Wisconsin.

The building became the home of the College’s Home Economics, Business, and Industrial Arts Departments. It included a large food laboratory, a textile room, a blueprint room, vocational shops, a preschool lab for the Child Development Program, and a small auditorium. When the Industrial Arts Department moved to the Vocational Arts Building from the Administration Building, the Library expanded to occupy the space it had used.

According to Dr. Philip S. Holmgren’s **Kearney State College 1905-1980: A History of the First Seventy-Five Years**, the Vocational Arts Building was renamed the Otto C. Olsen Building in 1961.

Otto C. Olsen was a native of Lilley, Michigan, and a graduate of the Nebraska State Normal School at Kearney. He joined the staff in 1919, and retired in 1957. Mr. Olsen was Chairman of the Vocational Arts Division from 1939 until his retirement. He had also served as Chairman of the Industrial Arts Department before the academic reorganization of the college in 1939. Professor Olsen was a pioneer in the field of driver education. Under his leadership the college at Kearney was one of the first in the nation to offer instruction to those who would go on to teach driver education.

The Wilma A Larsen Child Development Laboratory, located in Otto Olsen, was dedicated on May 13, 1987.

The Larry Ludden Technology Center, located in Otto Olsen, was dedicated on April 28, 1989.

Otto Olsen now (2009) houses the Family Studies and Interior Design Department, the Industrial Technology Department, the Computer Science and Information Systems Department, Information Technology Services, and the UNK Child Development Center.

Otto Olsen is built in the shape of an “L”. The shorter upright portion of the “L” runs north and south. At the extreme southern end is the Wilma A Larsen Child Development Laboratory. This portion of the “L” also houses FSID, CSIS, and ITS. The angle of the “L” is on the building’s far northeast. The longer portion runs west from the angle and houses computer labs and Industrial Technology.

# Building Is First New One Here In 29 Years

The first completely new classroom building to be built on the Kearney State Teacher College in 29 years was dedicated at cornerstone laying ceremonies here Friday.

The Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. conducted the traditional Masonic rites for the placing of the limestone cornerstone of the new Vocational Arts building. Members of Kearney Rob Morris Lodge No. 42 and the Knights Templar of Kearney also participated in the rites.

## FIRST SINCE 1925

The new \$750,000 Vocational Arts building on the campus was begun in 1904. The north wing of the structure was added in 1910 and the south wing in 1912. The auditorium portion of the administration building was built in 1916, and the college gymnasium went up in 1917.

Everett L. Randall, of Kearney, member of the Normal Board, was the speaker for the ceremony.

Mr. Randall traced the growth of educational institutions in Nebraska and called attention to the continuing needs of the state in keeping up with growing school population.

Noting the tradition of free edu-

cation to all children in the state, Mr. Randall said that the first of the four Teachers Colleges, Peru, was established at the same time that Nebraska became a state in 1867. He said that the principle of free education for all children led to the establishment of the four colleges to train teachers to teach the public schools of the state.

## EXPLAINS TAX LEVY

The speaker explained the authorization of a one-mill tax levy in 1947 to provide funds for new construction on the college campuses and state institutions. The levy produces about \$2½ million per year and is divided among the three institutional administrative bodies. The Board of Control with 17 state institutions under its control receives 45 per cent of the total. The University of Nebraska Board of Regents receives 40 per cent and the Normal Board received 15 per cent.

The Normal Board's share of the funds amounts to about \$400,000 each year, Mr. Randall said. He observed that the board's share of the money has been used since

1950 to build a new heating plant far beyond the realm of this on the Kearney campus, a new campus. He has played a great part athletic building and gymnasium at in the advancement and education Peru, a stadium at Wayne, an auditorium at Chadron and the states," he said.

The needs of the schools have not been entirely met even yet, Mr. Randall declared. He observed that the special one mill levy is due to expire in 1957 and called for extension of the measure for another 10 years.

## OTHER NEEDS

He cited the needs for a new library, a new athletic building and new student union building on the Kearney campus alone and said that the other colleges have similar needs.

Continuation of the one mill levy for another 10 years is a must, if we want our boys and girls to have the advantages of adequate and modern facilities and maintain high standards of education to which they are entitled, he concluded.

Mr. Randall paid tribute to President H. L. Cushing of the local college as "one of Nebraska's great educators." "The long shadows of his personality and influence pro-

Clipping from Kearney Daily Hub, July 10, 1954

Cornerstone Had Been Laid July 9, 1954

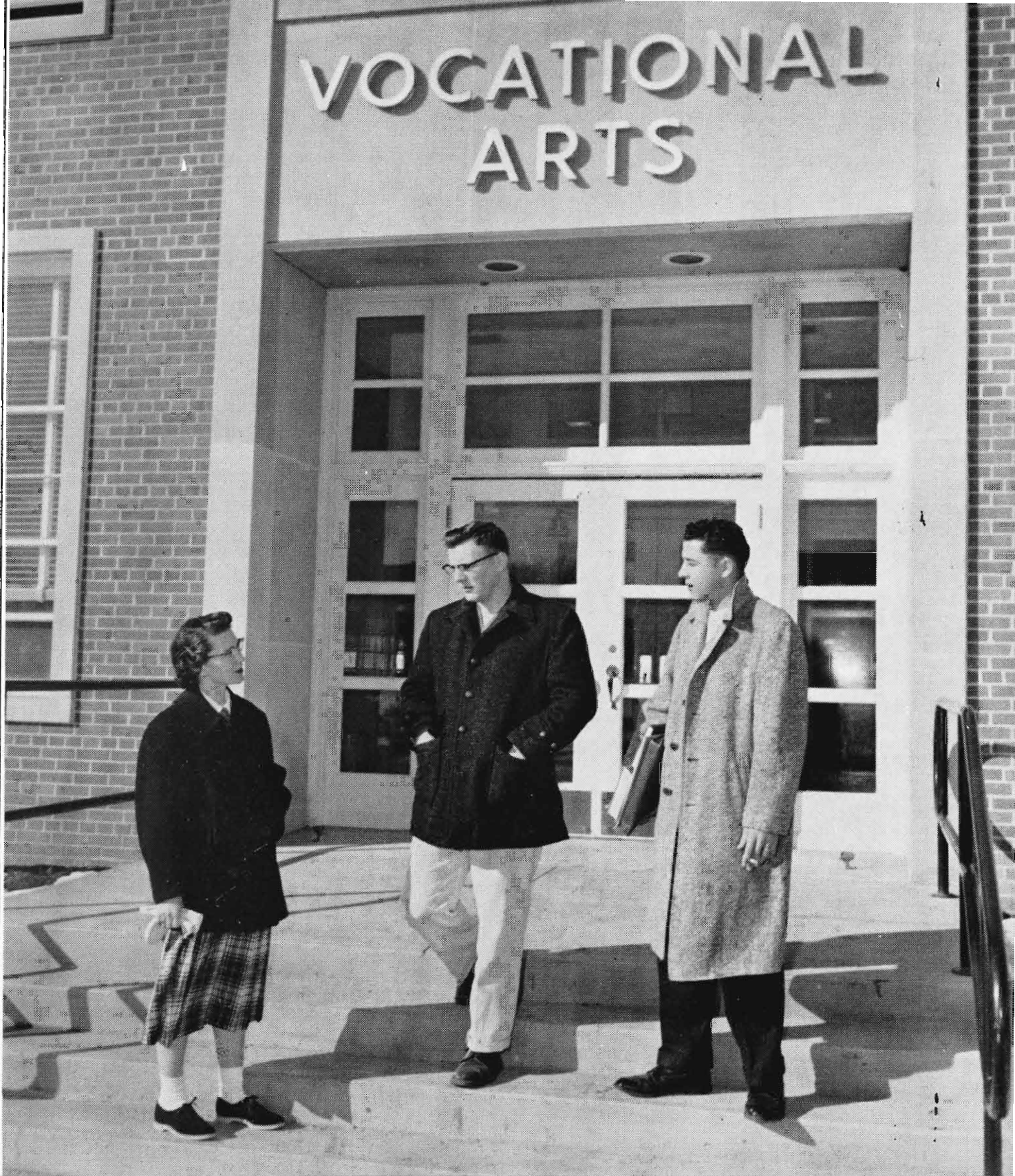


Vocational Arts Building under construction, 1954

**Vocational Arts Building under construction,  
as seen from the east, 1955  
This photo appeared in the 1955 Blue and Gold.**







**Students at main (east) entrance to Vocational Arts Building  
This photo appeared in the 1956 Blue and Gold**



Home Economics Kitchen, Vocational Arts Building, 1957



Vocational Arts Building as seen from the southeast, about 1957



## **DEDICATION**

### **WILMA A. LARSEN CHILD DEVELOPMENT LABORATORY**

**Otto Olsen Vocational Arts**

**Kearney State College**

**May 13, 1987**

**1:00 p.m.**

## **PROGRAM**

**President William R. Nester, Presiding**

**Dr. Gene Koepke**

**Mrs. Helen Redden**

**Mrs. Pat Denison**

# PROGRAM OF DEDICATION



LARRY LUDDEN

TECHNOLOGY CENTER

OTTO OLSEN BUILDING  
KEARNEY STATE COLLEGE  
KEARNEY, NE

April 28, 1989  
1:30 p.m.

ARCHIVES  
CALVIN T. RYAN LIBRARY  
U. OF NEBRASKA AT KEARNEY



**Otto C Olsen Vocational Arts Building from the southeast, 2002**  
**Single-story southern section is occupied by the**  
**Wilma A. Larsen Child Development Laboratory**





**Otto Olsen Building from the Southeast, 2009.**  
**Child Development Center is nearest the camera.**  
**North Wing runs from the north end of East Wing to the left.**  
**East Wing runs to the right.**





**Child Development Center from the Southeast, 2009.  
Southernmost point of Otto Olsen Building.**





**Otto Olsen Building, east elevation, from the Southeast, 2009.**





**Otto Olsen Building, western part of north elevation  
From the Northeast, 2009.**





**Otto Olsen Building, south side, from the West, 2009.**



**Otto Olsen Building, East Wing, from the Southwest, 2009**





**Otto Olsen Building, Child Development Center  
From the Southwest, 2009**





**Otto Olsen Building, Child Development Center**  
**From the South, 2009**





**Otto Olsen Building, East Wing, first floor corridor  
Child Development Center at end of corridor  
Looking south, 2009**





**Otto Olsen Building, North Wing, first floor corridor  
Looking west, 2009**





**Otto Olsen Building, computer lab, 2009**