

ention of his interest in Bronco
otball.
"I'm a football nut!"

He's still angry at the thought that he
ad choice seats, as usual, for the 1975
ronco season. But a year-long illness
forced him to miss every game, almost
he first time he has not been on the
idelines for a home contest.

The Men Who 'Pitched In'

All told, four key bond elections that
esulted in the buildings and facilities
hat still underpin Boise State Univer-
sity's physical facts of life came and
passed with wide success margins under
Baird's board stewardship.

His last building bond hurrah was, he
says, the toughest. That built the BJC
gymnasium, considered Idaho's finest in
1952. Still a sturdy structure, it is slated
for use as an auxiliary gym by boosters
of a campus all-activities pavilion for
major basketball and student recreation
uses of the future.

Along the way, some warm memories
still trigger compliments from Baird for
fellow Boiseans who "pitched in."

There was Harry Morrison, who
listened to his fellow board members
fuss about dust and mud in the ad build-
ing parking lot without open comment.
But "one day, there in front of the ad
building were scrapers and black-top
carts and trucks and we had a fine,
paved parking area at our college's front
door and never a word or bill from
Morrison-Knudsen."

One Was Worried About Water

He was Harry Yost, pioneer Boisean
and legislative leader who saw the law-
makers starting to generate an idea to
put a junior college in Coeur d'Alene.
Yost watched that North Idaho bill fail a
couple of sessions, then grabbed some
friends and strongarmed chamber leader
Baird into leading Boise's junior college
drive as a State Senator.

Baird remembers that his opponent
was "a rancher out of Kuna... he had no
use for being bothered about a junior
college, all he wanted to do was look
after the water in the irrigation
district." Baird was among the most
surprised when, as a Democrat in a
district that has only elected two
Democrats to the Senate in history, he
won by a wide margin.

With their man in place, the Boise
junior college boosters got what looked
to Baird like a "very voluminous thing"
drawn up by Attorney Oliver Haga. "I

didn't know exactly what it was all
about" admits Baird now with usual
honesty, but he trudged from lawmaker
to lawmaker after poring over "the
thing," to become its best spokesman.



TELLING IT LIKE IT WAS, BSU pioneer Ed Baird had President John Barnes closely attentive as he described the legislative maneuvers that led to Idaho's first junior college district law, paving way for creation of BSU in early thirties.

The Search For A Site

Baird is proud to recall that, in the
final landslide of support, "all of North
Idaho pretty much joined with us except
Latah county... but they didn't object
too much because they said the thing will
never amount to much anyway."

There remained some nervous mo-
ments as the Governor held back his
signature and talk of a veto developed.

"Well," recalls Baird, "we kept
putting him off from any action and we
kept sending delegates up... but Lynn
Driscoll, a powerhouse on the original
committee to create this school, was a
friend of the Governor and so finally he
smiled and said "Well, maybe I'll cut my
throat but I'll sign the bill."

It was 1939. Baird was promptly
named to the college board of directors
and that board promptly started gather-
ing forces for the district's first bond
campaign that would halt, forever, the
total reliance of the school on downtown
charity drives. But one problem raised
another. A bond plan to build college
buildings certainly needed a site on
which those buildings could be located.

It just so happened, in 1939, that
Mayor Austin Walker, a fellow business-
man with Baird, could see growing prob-
lems with continued growth of noisy,
dust-churning aircraft traffic at the
Boise City Airport.

That ex-city refuse lot had become
airport by convenience in the early
thirties. Now, the beginnings of South
Boise's vast suburban sprawl ringed it.
The drums of World War II were in
steady beat as military aircraft experts
began laying out unimaginably huge
landing strips at Gowen Field, far off on
the desert edge of the valley's second
"bench".

The Silver Dollar Campus

Mayor Walker could see advantage to
the military-city alliance at Gowen Field.
Baird and his board could see all kinds of
potential—at the right price—for the
riverside airport as a campus.

For the token price of one silver
dollar, the Boise Junior College district
bought the whole airport, from Broad-
way Boulevard to Capitol Boulevard.
They took that land, raised \$1500 in cam-
paign sales money, and carried the
district's first bond election by an
impressive 80 percent plurality.

Architects Tertelot and Hummel con-
ceived two beginning buildings that
used, ironically, red brick from a kiln
near Moscow, Idaho, where bricks for
the similarly gothic gracefulness at the
University of Idaho had been fired for
years.

Late in 1940, the square, central spire
of the administration building first
greeted a junior college student body
now at home on their own campus. At
carefully-planned intervals around the
airport grounds, in months to follow, the
school's Music Auditorium, Student
Union Building and Central Heating
Plant all came into function.