

Employee works for USC 42 years

'Students have changed with the times'

By ELIZABETH LYNCH
Staff Writer

Think of how the world has change over the past 42 years. Man has gone to the moon, the world has been at war, Vietnam was fought and bell-bottoms barely scratched the surface of modernization.

However, one thing has not changed over the past 42 years: the dedication and work that Lillian Mixon has given to USC.

Lillian (or Sis, as she is called by everyone) is the longest-employed person at USC. Mixon, 64, has worked here since 1947.

She graduated from USC in 1945 and began working for the university two years later. Mixon works in the University Campuses and Continuing Education Division as an office manager and bookkeeper.

"I've seen a great deal of changes in my time. The first thing that comes to mind is that the students keep looking younger and younger every year," she said.

When Mixon attended USC and first started working, the university was much smaller and she knew virtually every student, she said.

"Now there's no way I could meet everyone. I think it's great that it's expanded, it's just that the faculty does not know the students individually. That's one of the negative changes that's happened in my 42 years."

"Today I think the students are more mature. When I first came to school a lot of the students were veterans who had a different look on education," Mixon said.

However, Mixon feels today's students are more serious and

"I think students now are more serious. They know what they want out of life and how to work for it . . ."

Lillian Mixon

seemingly more in control of their lives, she said.

"Students back then liked to party. I think students now are more serious," she said. "They know what they want out of life and how to work for it with the help of counselors and advisers to guide them along the path."

Mixon said the 1960s were a time of great change for USC. "I remember very clearly the protests over racial integration and Vietnam. It seems to me there were more protests over the Vietnam War than anything else. We, the staff for the extension program, were told not to get involved and to ignore the protests," she said.

"A student is a student. I think they had a right to protest over integration. When the students charged into the administrative offices during the early '60s it was a very uncertain and unsettling time."

During August 1988 Mixon had a stroke and returned back to work six weeks later while continuing her speech therapy. "They would have to keep me in an insane asylum to keep me home."

Having not had any children of her own, Mixon thinks it is always a little sad at graduation time to say goodbye to the students, especially



Lillian Mixon has worked for USC for 42 years.

those who worked with her at the office. "It's like saying goodbye to my own child."

"I think it's great there are so many student organizations — a lot more than when I was younger. I think that says a lot for our university."

"I've worked for five university presidents, and I can honestly say that President Holderman has done

the most for the university than any other president I've worked under," Mixon said.

"I love this university and I love my work," Mixon said. "I've seen all of the changes — the raising of new buildings, new trends and new students."

"I think if there is one thing I would change, it would be the parking," she said.

'North and South' writer says history necessary

By REBECCA ODAM
Staff Writer

The "godfather of the historical novel" spoke at Gambrell Hall Auditorium Thursday.

Author John Jakes, whose latest book is *California Gold*, spoke on the importance and necessity of a knowledge of history.

Dr. Thomas Terrill, who arranged the lecture presented by the history department, introduced Jakes and credited him with "communicating the past to the present."

Jakes said he considers himself a "staunch ally" of professional historians seeing the goal of historians and historical writers as the same.

Jakes' love of history goes back to his childhood, he said. His parents were movie fans and he watched many historical films as a child.

A Chicago native, Jakes graduated from DePauw University with a degree in creative writing and from Ohio State with a master's in American literature. Jakes said he has a love for academics and originally wanted to be a teacher, but went into advertising for economic reasons.

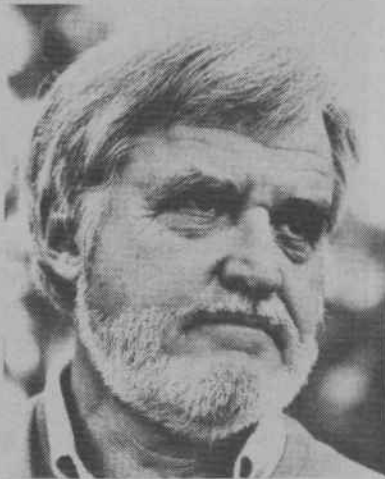
Jakes' work always involved writing, and he even wrote after work to help finance his children's education. He began his career with science fiction, western and mystery novels.

In the early 1970s he began *The Kent Family Chronicles*. This eight-volume series began his intense research in history as a topic for writing.

The next project for Jakes was the *North and South* trilogy that was later turned into two television miniseries. Though there were many changes in the novel, Jakes said the series helped attract readers, so the effort wasn't all bad.

The latest product of Jakes' historical research and creative hand is *California Gold*, which follows the growth of several industries and leading characters through turn-of-the-century California.

Like his other projects, Jakes spent time in the location of the setting while researching the novel. He spends at least half of the pro-



John Jakes

ject time doing research. He said he "weighs and recreates history" on an imaginary blank slate.

This "blank slate" analogy often leads him to what he terms "the serendipity of research."

"I am amazed over and over again at how entertaining history is, and I always feel like I get an education out of each book I write," he said.

One of his aims in writing is to challenge the reader to delve more deeply into history. He said he often receives calls from people suspecting they may be related to a character he's mentioned and want to research it further.

"Today's primary and secondary education systems have failed to place enough importance on the history of the country and world we live in," he said. He also expressed concern for the neglect of libraries where history lives on the shelves.

"I never knowingly falsify history, but sometimes I take advantage of it," Jakes said. He gave the example of placing a character in the role of a person unidentified in history.

Jakes has been named a research associate at USC, which gives him access to the university's information facilities and an office here when he needs it.

His current novel is keeping him busy with book tours, but he has other projects in mind. He mentioned a project concerning South Carolina, but said his writer's superstitions keep him from exposing more.



Richard Jeni

Young comedian to perform for CPU

By STEVE FLOYD
Staff Writer

Comedian Richard Jeni will perform here Tuesday in a program sponsored by the Carolina Program Union's Special Programs Committee.

Jeni is an up-and-coming name who's getting more and more popular. CPU Special Programs Chair Stephanie LaBella said.

"He's the only comedian to ever have four Showtime specials (in one year)," LaBella said. "He's also been on HBO, Carson and Letterman, and next he's starring at Carolina Program Union," she said.

Jeni was honored as "best club comedian" in the country in a recent survey taken by *Comedy U.S.A.* magazine.

The event is part of the Alcohol and Drug Awareness Week sponsored by the USC Office of Alcohol and Drug Programs. "Mock-tails" and refreshments will be served.

The show will begin at 7:30 p.m. in the Russell House Ballroom. Tickets are \$1 for students and \$3 for the general public.

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