

By JEFF WILSON
News Editor

What A Decade

Remembering USC through the '80s

For USC, the 1980s could be referred to as a remake of the old western movie *The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly*.

The 1984 football season with all its "Black Magic" was good, the shocking death of Coach Joe Morrison and alleged steroid use by some members of the athletic program was bad, and the dormitory visitation policy changes that divided the campus were ugly.



James Holderman

The '80s brought USC such memorable figures as Pope John Paul II and presidents Ronald Reagan and George Bush.

The campus felt the fire of Sparky, while Mike Fair emerged as the man students "loved to hate."

In the '80s, the Caribbean came to Carolina. Technology was given the name Swearingen, and art was called Koger.

"(In the '80s) USC has become more of a research institution. It has become more of a graduate institution. We've got extraordinary new facilities for the arts and extraordinary new facilities in engineering," USC President James Holderman said.

"We have a more competitive list from which to choose for admissions," he said. "We've got eight other campuses that are flourishing. The system is emerging as a tremendous influence in South Carolina higher education."

The 1980s began with USC's George Rogers receiving college football's most coveted individual honor, the Heisman Trophy.

"The main thing on my mind all season was winning (games)," Rogers said. "I wasn't thinking about the Heisman Trophy. I just tried to play as hard as I could."

After becoming the 1 draft pick in the NFL, Rogers went to play for the New Orleans Saints and later for the Washington Redskins.

But cocaine use made the superstar a fallen star, and his football career was over before the decade ended.

Even with achievements, USC's athletic department sustained several blows during the decade.

USC Athletic Director Jim Carlen, who was also head football coach, was fired in 1981 by the USC Board of Trustees after a five-year career with the university.

Neither the board nor Holderman would say why Carlen was fired but insiders said it was a combination of Carlen's 6-6 football finish in 1981, his proud, aggressive attitude and moral problems related to his private life.

Carlen was the first of four head football coaches the university would have during the 1980s.

During the reign of Pam Parsons as USC women's basketball coach, there was more than just basketball involved, a 1982 edition of *Sports Illustrated* said.

Not only did Parsons turn off players with tyrannical and ambitious motives, but also with rumors of lesbianism, the attempted set-up of one player in a drug incident, the tampering of academic and transfer records and money provided for players.

Later in 1985, Parsons and former player Tina Buck were sentenced to five years in prison, suspended to four months service and five years probation, for perjury themselves in federal court during a failed \$75 million lawsuit trial against Time, Inc.



Ronald Reagan



The Koger Center

In 1982, head football coach Richard Bell, who replaced Carlen, was fired by Athletic Director Bob Marcum when he refused to fire four assistant coaches. The Gamecocks under Bell posted a losing 4-7 record.

"I advised Coach Bell of the need to make certain staff changes, as well as non-personnel changes. Coach Bell declined to make the changes that I requested involving the coaching staff," Marcum said at the time.

USC students' reactions to the firing of Bell were overwhelmingly negative.

Typical was Jennifer Woodlaw's reaction.

"I don't really think it's fair. He really didn't have a chance. You have to have room to improve," the 1982 journalism sophomore said.

After losing a \$50,000-a-year salary, Bell received \$178,000 in judgment and legal expenses from the university.

Three years later, basketball coach Bill Foster resigned under pressure. He settled for a payment of \$241,660 to pay off the remaining two years of his contract.

Along with disappointments and scandals came praise.

In the summer of 1984, USC hosted a three-day conference of the Caribbean heads of government.

Back in 1984, President Holderman said the conference would have an effect on the university "for decades."

President Reagan met with the Caribbean leaders in Russell House, USC's student union.

The conference concentrated mainly on the Caribbean Basin Initiative, a measure designed to give duty-free access to Caribbean exports.

The three-day event also focused on the economic problems and political security in an area with limited resources.

Reagan said the U.S. has a moral responsibility to support countries who aspire to live in a true democracy, free from communist interference.

"If the democratic people do not stand together, we certainly will be unable to stand alone. What we do together, as a family of free men and women, will determine what the future will be like for our children," Reagan said.

While he was meeting with Caribbean leaders in the Russell House, Reagan couldn't hear the chants of protestors gathered at the corner of Greene and Sumter streets to oppose the U.S. foreign policy and USC's role in the conference.

The Caribbean conference, hailed as a monumental achievement for USC, was only one of the major events to take place in 1984. The 1984 football season still remains unforgettable.

It started in late September with a victory against Georgia. Some students camped out all night to get tickets to the spectacle, and others found tickets gone barely more than a day after distribution began.

On Saturday night, Sept. 24, 1984, the Gamecocks gave fans thrill number one, a seven-point win over the Bulldogs, the first win over the rivals from Athens in five years.

Wire services and other raters picked the USC team as one of the nation's 20 best. With defeats of lesser opponents — including Pittsburgh — higher rankings came.

The Florida State game was a fitting end to a glorious home season. Some say it was the biggest game in Carolina's history. A possible undefeated season, a New Year's bowl bid on the line, a record William-



Joe Morrison

Brice Stadium attendance and a national television audience were all fitting together like a jigsaw puzzle.

The Gamecocks beat Florida State 38-36.

With a 9-0 winning streak, USC climbed to second place in the Associated Press football poll.

People were beginning to wonder if it could really be done — an undefeated season and even a national championship.

Then on Nov. 17, the balloon burst in Annapolis, Md. Navy defeated the Gamecocks, 38-21. Gamecock fans still talk about what might have been.

Cameras flashed, and students cheered. People sat on each other's shoulders and ran across the The Horseshoe just to get glimpses of him.

"John Paul II, we love you," chanted almost 13,000 USC students, faculty and staff on a steamy, hot Friday in September, 1987.

"It is true. John Paul II, he loves you," the pontiff replied in front of the President's house.

One spectator said, "Whether it was the Holy Spirit or papal spirit or human spirit, I don't know; but it was very moving. It was very exciting."

A small monument now stands on The Horseshoe commemorating the papal visit.

The future of USC and the accomplishments of John Swearingen were recognized by business and political leaders as they spoke during the dedication of USC's \$20.1 million John E. Swearingen Center in October, 1987.

The center is "probably the most high-tech teaching and research facilities in the Southeast," said Len McNair of McNair Johnson Associates of Columbia, the architectural firm that designed the center.

The center required an investment of more than \$30 million split between federal and private funds.

At the dedication ceremony, Sen. Strom Thurmond (R-SC) said, "This center with its 210,110 square feet of laboratories and additional 165,000 square feet with the renovation of the old SCE&G building, will help this state and the entire nation."

The Swearingen Center did not turn out to be the only building to make the state and nation stand up and take notice.

When January 1989 rolled around, USC's Ira and

Nancy Koger Center for the Arts was ready for the grand gala opening.

The \$15 million arts center opened with a performance by the London Philharmonic Orchestra on Jan. 14, 1989.

Since then, the Koger Center has turned out to be one of the premiere facilities in the Southeast.

Students, faculty and staff wore "Black Magic" sweatshirts, while others put Gamecock flags on their cars in honor of the late USC head football coach Joe Morrison.

On Feb. 5, 1989 Morrison collapsed in a shower in William-Brice Stadium. He died of a heart attack.

He had been playing racquetball for about half an hour with his friend and attorney Ed "Punky" Holler and defensive coordinator Joe Lee Dunn before the collapse. Morrison, who was alive but unconscious, was taken to Providence Hospital.

He never woke up.

Morrison came to USC in 1983 and was the third football coach since 1980.

"It was a tragedy he died. It always is when a vital person dies, but I'm very pleased with Sparky," President Holderman said. "I think Sparky's doing a fantastic job, and I think Joe Morrison would be pleased with Sparky Woods."

When the USC Board of Trustees passed an Ecology Committee proposal that would phase-out overnight, opposite sex visitation, the campus was divided and battle lines were drawn.

When the smoke cleared, Douglas and Burney residence halls found themselves without opposite-sex visitation.

The board received petitions and more than 400 letters opposing Rep. Mike Fair's proposed visitation policy.

"My opinion is pretty strong and deep, and the petition does not change my mind," Fair said.

Eventually traditional, limited opposite-sex visitation was given to the dorms with space made available for students desiring no opposite-sex visitation. But the issue of visitation is far from over.

In 1989, when former USC football player Tommy Chaikin told *Sports Illustrated* of his own four-year battle with steroids and alleged widespread drug use by other Gamecock football players, shock waves went through the athletic department.

Three USC assistant football coaches were fired and indicted in federal court for allegedly setting up a program to provide illegal steroids to Gamecock players from 1984 to 1986.

Former athletic director Bob Marcum would find himself without a job and in court seeking back pay from USC.

Marcum ended up with a \$234,425 jury award along with \$8,720 in incidental costs.

When Hurricane Hugo hit the coast of South Carolina in September 1989, the USC community responded.

Evacuees who poured off I-26 from Charleston found the Carolina Coliseum and the Roost a haven during the eye of the storm.

After the hurricane passed and the state was licking its wounds, volunteers from USC's College of Social Work went to Charleston to help. Clothes and other provisions were boxed up in the Elephant Room of the coliseum and sent to the ravaged areas of the state.

S.C. Governor Carroll Campbell called Hugo "the worst storm, the worst disaster I've ever seen anywhere."

In an interview about the '80s, Holderman said, "research has increased tremendously. In 1980 we probably did \$12 million in research a year. Now we're up to \$40 million a year. We've still got a long way to go. Our endowment 10 years ago was \$3 million. Now it's \$50 million."

"I think what happened in the '80s was a setting of our sights for perhaps the first time in a long, long time. Our goals are very high, but they are achievable."

Holderman said he did not know what hasn't changed about USC, "except its charm."

"We've been through a lot of bumps together. You get attached to a place by going down a bumpy road together," Holderman said.



Pope John Paul II

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