

# The Day

March 1, 2011

## Connecticut College honors New London for century of support

By Leo I. Higdon, Jr.

It's no accident that Connecticut College is in New London.

More than 100 years ago, Wesleyan University's decision to stop admitting women after 1909 left Connecticut women with very few options to pursue higher education. Elizabeth Wright, a Hartford schoolteacher and Wesleyan alumna, convinced members of the Hartford College Club to explore the idea of founding a college in Connecticut. Towns across the state recognized the cultural and economic benefit a college would bring to their communities and began offering sites and supporting funds for the new college.

Local business leaders identified a beautiful hilltop site in New London, a city already acutely aware of the need for a women's college because local high school Principal Colin S. Buell had been seeking such an institution for years. In early 1911, the new college's site committee unanimously recommended the New London hilltop and the city began a fundraising drive in support of the new college.

That fundraising drive ended on March 1 exactly one century ago, exceeding its target by thousands of dollars. There was a citywide celebration that day and an impromptu parade through downtown New London.

Today, as Connecticut College celebrates its Centennial, the college and the city continue to enjoy a strong and mutually beneficial relationship that contributes to the economy, improves the quality of life and deepens the college's educational excellence.

Connecticut College recognizes and appreciates New London's support, and strives to reciprocate, particularly in ways related to the college's educational mission. Every year, more than 600 Connecticut College students do internships, course work, work-study placements and volunteer placements in local schools, agencies and other nonprofits.



A scene from Connecticut College's opening ceremony on Oct. 9, 1915.

These students help important local organizations extend their reach into the community. But as much as I know our students give, it is matched or exceeded by what they receive in return. New London schools and organizations are our partners in educating students to be active and responsible citizens. Through the work of these important partners, our students develop skills and values related to citizenship, cross-cultural communication, democracy in action and social responsibility.

Today, Connecticut College will celebrate the vision and generosity of the city of New London at an event in the Harris Building Atrium on State Street. Please join me and members of the Connecticut College community between 4:30 and 6:30 p.m. as we honor the people of this city for 100 years of support.

I am proud to be the Connecticut College president as we celebrate our 100th birthday. And I deeply appreciate the people of New London for their enduring support. I look forward to extending this positive relationship into the college's second century and beyond.

*Leo I. Higdon Jr. is president of Connecticut College*