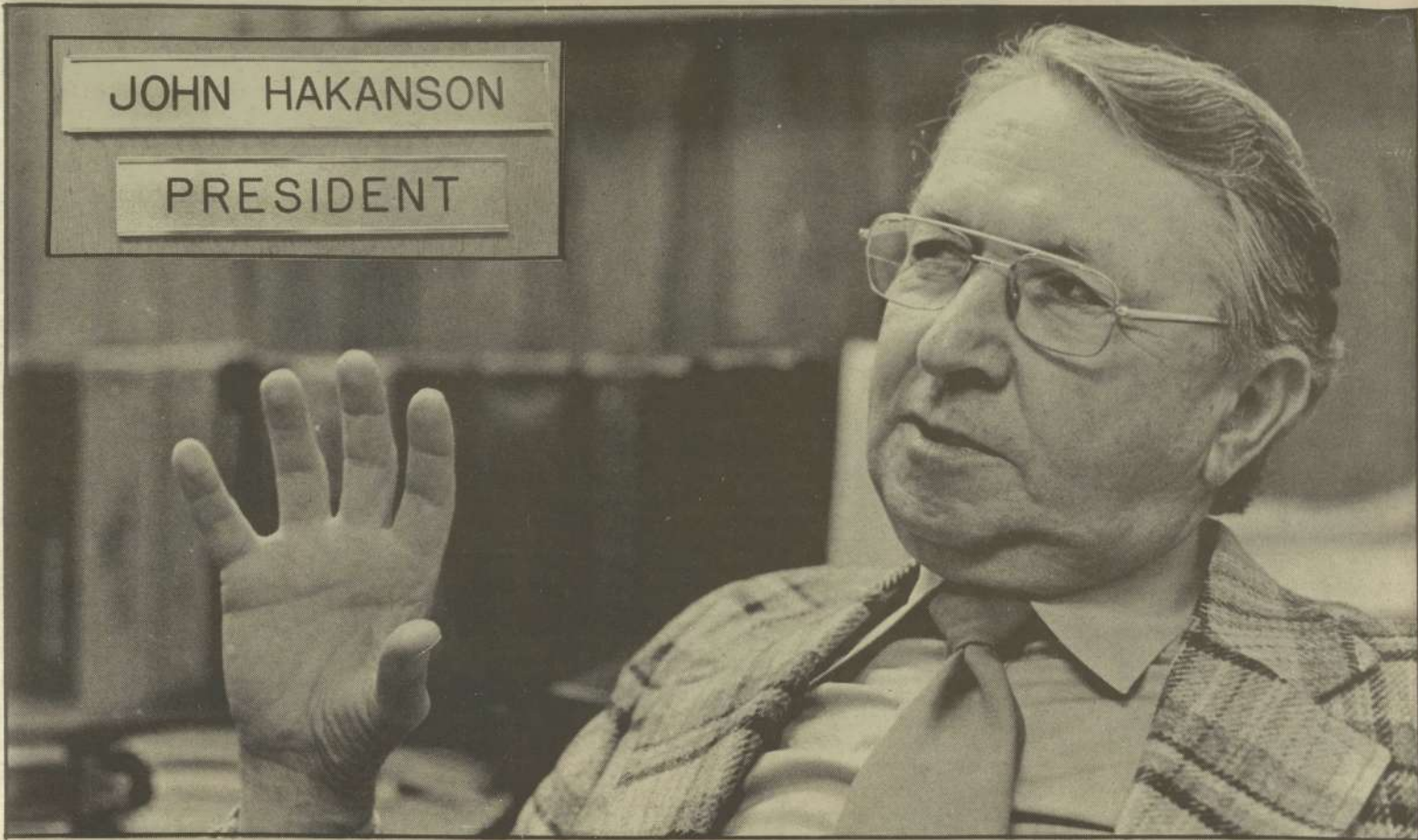


JOHN HAKANSON

PRESIDENT



A good man, a good job, and a good life

As he walks by, one could imagine him as the president of almost any large company. And, indeed, as the president of Clackamas Community College, Dr. John Hakanson is just that.

The College is one of the larger employers in Clackamas county and has a budget of over \$5 million a year. As president, Dr. Hakanson is the person in charge of the day-to-day operation of the College.

A native of Oregon, Dr. Hakanson was born May 21, 1920. His father was a road contractor and an immigrant from Sweden.

During his youth Dr. Hakanson lived in Southern Oregon. He started working at 12 years old and at 13, began working in a hardware store owned by a relative.

After working at the hardware store, Dr. Hakanson worked at a variety of jobs. First as a saw mill worker, and later as a construction worker.

Graduating from Oakland High School in 1937, he went on to study at Southern Oregon College, Oregon State University and Vanport College from 1938 to 1941.

"I was drafted late in 1941," he said. "And because I'd taken a term of ROTC at Southern Oregon College, I was made an officer in the field artillery." He served in the Army for four years being stationed in Oklahoma, California, Ft. Lewis, Washington, the Mojave Desert, Hawaii, New Guinea, The Philipines and Japan.

After leaving the Army Dr. Hakanson enrolled at Willamette University. He graduated with a BA in Political Science and Economics in 1950.

During 1951 he learned of a program the federal government was running called the National Campaign for Young Men of High Potential. Out of 22,000 people taking the test 1,800 went on to the interviewing stage. After being interviewed, 700 of the finalists were then given lifetime civil service commissions.

Dr. Hakanson, being one of the 700, began working for the Bureau of Reclamation in Boise, Idaho. After two years he was transferred to the Salem office. "I was the office manager there," he continued. "Then I started to become disenchanted with what the Eisenhower Administration was doing with the Bureau. I began to realize that no matter how long I was there I would never be making the important decisions."

Shortly after that Dr. Hakanson resigned and made the decision to return to college.

"I enjoyed going to school so much that I decided that I wanted a career in education or business management," he said. "It seemed like the right choice so I decided to give it a try."

He enrolled at the University of Oregon, and graduated in 1957 with a MS in Political Science and Economics. After graduating he became the principal at Canyonville High School and later at Harrisburg High School.

In 1963 he left to enroll at the University of California. "It was one of 10 universities with a program for community college educators, Hakanson commented. "I was able to talk my way into the program."

"I'd come to the decision that I wanted to get involved with community colleges through observations," he continued. "There were many people who weren't being served by the Universities. At one time over a third of students at the University of Oregon were dropping failing. There aren't that many young people who are incapable."

A short time after he left the University of California, Dr. Hakanson began working at the College. "The College passed its first levy in June of 1966, which later turned out to be illegal, and I accepted the position of Dean of Instruction," Hakanson said. "At the time there was only four people working for the College; the President, his secretary, an instructor and myself."

At this time, the College began its first classes at the then new Gladstone High School. After two years Hakanson became president of the College. And, for the last ten years has been the person in charge at the College. Some of the programs that he's been involved with include food delivery to charities, the gleaming program and Handicapped access, a program in which community colleges in the Portland area combine their resources to meet the needs of the Handicapped.

"I'm a person who likes to stay at home in the evenings," he said. "My family is a large part of my life. "Dr. Hakanson has a wife, three sons, a daughter and a grandchild. "I belong to my wife and the College."

One of Dr. Hakanson's hobbies is singing. "I started singing in High School," he said. Since then he's been involved with radio performances, a barber shop group and most recently the Area Metro Lutheran Choir.

Although Dr. Hakanson is 61 years old, he sees retirement at least a ways off. "But, it has been 1942 since I've known when quitting time was," he continued.

Surprisingly enough, Dr. Hakanson sees the College basically the way he did when he first came here. "I think the College is going to experience an amazing amount of growth," he commented. "Community Colleges are going to take a larger and larger number of the students who would have gone to universities."

"In the next ten years I see the College doubling in size," he concluded.

Story by David J. Hayden

Photos by Duffy Coffman

