Dillard University's Centennial Celebration

Dillard University will celebrate its centennial, retire its president of 23 years and inaugurate a new president, all in 1969. The 1968-69 school year also saw the introduction of a new freshman program and the beginning of the university's new Health and Physical Education building.

Dillard traces its origin back to two schools, both of which were established in the summer of 1869. These were New Orleans University and Straight University, which later changed its name to Straight College. The two merged in 1930 with Dillard as their successor.

According to Dr. Albert W. Dent, president of Dillard, a special centennial convocation will be held at the university Sunday, June 28.

Dr. Dent, who will be retiring in June after 23 years as president, says that a committee of faculty members, students, trustees and alumni will assist him in planning the events for that day.

"It was an alumni committee that originally initiated the idea of a centennial celebration," he says. "Adding to that enthusiasm was the desire to raise a centennial fund.

Construction on the university's new Health and Physical Education Building officially got underway in November. Located at the rear of the Dillard campus, the new edifice and equipment will cost an estimated $1,500,000, according to Dr. Dent. It is slated for completion in the summer of 1970, he says.

Besides classrooms and offices, it will have a standard collegiate-size swimming pool, a regulation basketball court, a three-lane bowling alley, and several special-purpose rooms, including a physical/therapy room, an audio-visual room, and a room for training of the physically handicapped and a room for instruction in modern and ethnic dancing.

The building will be air conditioned and will also have three basketball practice courts, a small court for volleyball and indoor tennis courts and separate locker and shower facilities for men and women.

Formal approval of an $820,000 loan for additions to two existing dormitories was also recently announced by Sen. Allen J. Ellender and Rep. F. Edward Hebert of Louisiana. One dormitory addition will house 86 men students; the other approximately 70 women students.

A new curriculum for freshmen was introduced by Dillard in September, 1965. It is not quite duplicated elsewhere, Dr. Dent says. "The program is a big break in tradition and emphasizes freedom and flexibility. The freshman class is broken down into three units, each of which has faculty members specially elected and assigned to it," says Dr. Dent.