Yankton College Still Nurtures A Rich Legacy

Dakota’s First Institute Of Higher Learning Didn’t Vanish Into Oblivion When Its Doors Closed In 1984

BY NATHAN JOHNSON

Yankton College suffered an unexpected and painful close in December 1984, and its absence is still felt in the heart of this community. But surprisingly, so is its continued presence, offering a unique glimpse into the impact the campus that once housed Yankton College had on the future of the college and Yankton culture.

Yankton College, as seen on the sparse South Dakota prairie in 1895, was the first college in South Dakota to offer a liberal arts degree combined with professional training. It was founded in 1868 by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, and was named for the Yankton Sioux Tribe.

In October, the Yankton College football team, named “The Greyhounds,” played its final game. The team was led by coach Carl Youngworth, who had been at Yankton College for over 20 years. The team finished the season with a record of 5-5.

On Dec. 30, the Rev. Joseph and Mrs. Sarah (Woods) Ward opened their home, the first building on the campus, to serve as the entire college for those pioneer students. Later that year, they arrived on Nov. 6 to assume pastorate of the recently organized Yankton College School of Theology.

The campus of Yankton College, as seen on the Yankton College Mall • 605-260-8362 • purseonalities@live.com