

art@hendrix! 1960s

President Dr. Marshall T. Steel led Hendrix College through most of the 1960s. Steel had a knack for fundraising, and by the time he retired in 1969, all but four buildings on campus had either been built or remodeled during his tenure. Trieschmann opened in 1962 and provided a house for the college's Art, Music, and Theatre Departments. Steel was also responsible for constructing Hardin Hall, Veasey Hall, and the underground Bailey Library designed by New York architect Philip Johnson. Some students called Johnson's library "the Hendrix Hilton" and speculated that it could explain the recent increase of their tuition from \$420 to \$520 a year.

One of Steel's most controversial decisions came early in his career. In December of 1960, he disbanded the varsity football team. After the announcement, the *Profile* reported rumors of class boycotts and a march on the president's home, but these threats never actually manifested. Other of Steel's decisions proved more popular, including the discontinuation of compulsory chapel and the easing of dress code requirements.

The most important change throughout the decade was the decision to accept Black students into Hendrix's student body. In 1965, after 80 years as an all-white institution, the college admitted its first two Black students: Linda Pondexter and Emily Johnson. Linda Pondexter, now Arkansas State Senator Linda Chesterfield, became Hendrix's first Black graduate in spring of 1969.

As the 1960s ended, Hendrix students demonstrated discontent with both administrative and governmental authority. Though still largely conservative, most Hendrix students of the late 1960s opposed the Vietnam War and attended campus lectures by off-campus peace advocates. The students also protested in favor of the Civil Rights Movement and against the emerging depersonalization of American education programs.