

art@hendrix! 1990s

When Dr. Joe B. Hatcher resigned in 1991, Dr. Ann Die accepted a position as Hendrix's ninth President. Die officially took over in July of 1992 and raised Hendrix's national reputation through her involvement with organizations like the National Merit Scholarship Corporation and the National Association of Schools and Colleges of the United Methodist Church.

Hendrix-Murphy events were central to student life during the 1990s. In April of 1993, the program hosted a three-week Victorian Festival, which included a gala banquet for dinner and dancing. Students could also attend theatre performances, public lectures, and exhibitions designed to increase their understanding of the era. In 1994, Hendrix-Murphy and the college's Special Events Committee cosponsored a Delta Blues Festival, featuring Arkansas musicians CeDell Davis and John Weston.

Student-run activities similarly represented a central tenant of Hendrix culture during the 1990s. Student Senate sponsored a yearly music festival called Hendrix-Palooza, a day of festivities on top of the old Bailey Library. In 1994, the event featured free food, soccer, and bands like Beef Jerkey and Deep Blue Something. In 1995, students celebrated Hendrix's 50th year without sororities or fraternities by hosting the Hendrix Olympix, a parody of the Olympic games designed to mock Greek Life. Participating teams entered the competition under a homemade banner and competed in tricycle races and tug-of-war. The event was so popular that it became an annual tradition.

Perhaps the most popular student events each year were tied to Hendrix's annual Homecoming celebration. Student organized a week of activities, typically surrounding a basketball game against Rhodes College, Hendrix's biggest athletic rival. In 1997, these events included a student-faculty basketball game called Space Jam, a virtual reality ride called the Illusion Infusion, and a dorm decorating contest. Every year, however, the week's final event was a campus-wide bonfire.

In addition to originating campus traditions still practiced today, Hendrix students of the 1990s made another enduring contribution to the college. Early in the decade, Robert Meriwether – Emeritus Professor of American History, Political Science, and Education – purchased a bell which was previously installed in the three-story brick building at the Central Collegiate Institute in Altus, Arkansas. This institute would later be reestablished as Hendrix College and moved to Conway, Arkansas.

The senior class of 1994 hosted a carwash behind Couch Hall to raise funds for a bell stand, so that the Altus Bell could permanently reside on the new campus. It still sits in the middle of the Hendrix grounds, educating contemporary students on the history of their college.