In the fall of 1961, a mud road, open fields, orange and walnut groves, tool sheds and chicken coops greeted the first students to the new California Lutheran College. On a hill overlooking the wide valley was the Pederson ranch house, then the college office, and behind it, a giant oak tree and bigger dreams.

Thirty faculty members were on hand to welcome students to the first academic semester at the new college. They were joined by a handful of staff and administrators who shared the vision that CLC someday would become an institution that would draw students from around the globe. All that was needed was hard work and dedication.

By fall 1965, the first class of 60 students had graduated, and the faculty had grown to 65 men and women from across the nation. Of those 65, more than half would remain for a decade or more, serving as pioneers in their divisions and leaving an indelible mark on the history of the University.

It has been said that only the steadfast find success in their ventures and only the dedicated stand strong through the storm. The same holds true for our founding faculty who, in their own humble and sometimes quiet way, helped build the dream of California Lutheran University, leaving a legacy of excellence for those who would follow.