

Ceremony marks new Bulliner-Clayton Center

By Ed Farrell / Staff Writer
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Among the dignitaries present at the ground-breaking ceremony for the new Bulliner-Clayton Visual Arts Center were, from left to right, Dr. Milton Sewell, FHU president; Jim Clayton; Jack Bulliner and Patsy Bulliner. (Photo by Ed Farrell, Independent)

With all the pomp and circumstance it could muster, Freed-Hardeman University broke ground for the new Bulliner-Clayton Visual Arts Center last Wednesday.

The 11,550 square foot Center, which was named for Jack and Patsy Bulliner of Henderson and Jim and Kay Clayton of Knoxville, is scheduled to be open in May 2007.

Clayton, the founder of Clayton Mobile Homes, among other business entities, including First State Bank in Henderson, is a native of Finger.

Bulliner is a former president of First State Bank, where he worked for more than 50 years.

The Claytons donated \$1 million for the project in Oct. 2005, and insisted that the Center be named after their longtime friends and colleagues, the Bulliners.

“These four individuals are beloved in the Henderson community, and we consider them important members of the Freed-Hardeman family,” said Dr. Milton Sewell, FHU president. “It is a privilege to honor them with this new academic center.”

The new Center will be erected across Main Street from the FHU dining hall, at the

location of the former Milan-Sitka building. It will replace a ramshackle white house that has served as a studio for the school's art students.

Among the speakers were two current FHU art majors, Amanda Scott and Ryan Logan, who said they eagerly awaited the chance to practice their craft in the new facility.

"From a student's perspective, this is important for our future," Scott said.

The Bulliner-Clayton Center will include studio and lab classrooms specially designed for printmaking, painting, drawing and graphic arts. Areas will be equipped for film development and printing, woodwork, and sculpture. A state-of-the-art gallery will be available to display works by students, faculty and visiting artists.

The center will also offer a children's art lab, equipped with such features as small desks, low countertops and cork wall areas for displaying children's art. FHU hosts after-school and summer art programs for local school children.

Dr. Barbara England, chairwoman of the FHU Department of Fine Arts, said the lack of such a center has long been a burden on both students and staff, particularly for art majors who have had to share space with non-art majors.

"We currently share space with non-messy people," England said. "We've longed to have our own facility."

The Center is but one of several on-going projects detailed in the University's Beyond Believe Campaign, which has already earned more than \$62 million of its targeted \$80 million fund-raising goal.

Other goals include a new library, a renovation and expansion to the university's Associates Science Center, and several building and renovation projects for student living.