Felton Grandison Clark Activity Center  
(MINI DOME)

The activity center is 96,000 square feet, multi-purpose facility that will accommodate many university programs. The main arena has four configurations. One of these can accommodate general assemblies, using upper level, lower concourse seating, roll out platform seating and movable chairs on the main floor. Other arrangements are for athletic contests, livestock shows and sales, and the theatre configuration. The latter is equipped with full stage and automatic lighting controls for proscenium type setting or theatre in the round. The public address system has been designed to accommodate each of the configurations with maximum sound fidelity. Lighting has been designed to meet the high demands of action/color photography of athletic contests as well as the multi-functional requirements of the theatre.

In addition to the main arena, the building has the following: general storage areas, press room, exercise/weight room, athletic training room with sauna and whirlpool baths, athletic lockers and athletic equipment storage, twenty-nine (29) offices, five (5) classrooms, a catering kitchen, two (2) first-aid rooms, lobby areas, theatre dressing rooms, exhibit rooms, film library and film viewing.

The activity center will seat 10,000 persons during university related activities and 8,500 persons during athletic events. Telescopic seats are placed on the main floor-level; aluminum benches with backrests are placed on the top level and cushioned seats are placed on the second level.

The upper concourse area has four (4) concession areas, ticket offices and seven (7) large trophy cases. The upper level has a radio and television broadcasting booth, T.V. platform and lighting control panels. This area is serviced by an elevator. The dome is also equipped with two first-aid rooms for student use.

In 1974 Walter Banks Sr., was the first director of the Activity Center. Banks, a former assistant principal of Baker High School, teacher and track coach at Scotlandville High School, was elected on a 12-2 vote by the Southern University Board of Supervisors. A native of New Orleans, he received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Industrial Arts Education from Southern University in 1948, and received his Masters of Arts degree in Administration and Supervision from Louisiana State University in 1956. Banks, was married and is the father of four children and the former president of the Southern University Quarterback Club.

Works of Art

The sculpture titled: AWAKENING by Albert Lavergne, is located at the south entrance to the building. There are three (3) murals in the building, all painted by Jean Paul Hubbard. The mural on the south-side, upper concourse includes outstanding athletes past and present. On the upper concourse, north
side, is a mural illustrating historical place events and individuals in the history and development of Southern University at Baton Rouge. The subject of the third mural located on lower level (north) is the four presidents of Southern University from 1914 to 1979—Dr. Joseph S. Clark, Dr. Felton G. Clark, Dr. George L. Netterville, Jr., and Dr. Jesse N. Stone, Jr.

The site is fully landscaped and has parking for 900 vehicles.

Equipment items purchased especially for use of the center is a concert grand piano, a Baldwin theatre organ, portable stage 30' X 48' with multi-levels settings from 18” to 72”, portable choir stands and an auxiliary lighting control and sound console for theatre.

The planning and equipping of the building involved the following colleges and departments coordinated by the University Office of Facility Planning under the Office of the President of Southern University System, the College of Agriculture, Agriculture Extension Service, Livestock Poultry Show Executive and Staff, Athletic Department, Media Department, Speech and Theatre Department, the Office of Student Affairs, Office of Public Contacts, Department of Health Services, the Business Office, Department of Health, and Physical Education and Recreation, the Department of Physical Plant and Intramural Sports.

The project budget was $9,000,000. Project costs have not exceeded the project budget during the nine years of planning and construction.

Financing was by the appropriation of the Louisiana State Legislature under Act 15 of 1969, with the assistance of an Annual Interest Subsidy Grant under Title III of Higher Education Facilities Act of 1963.

Architects
August Perez and Associates, Architects of New Orleans, Louisiana

Contractor
Elliot Construction Company of Jackson, Mississippi

Director
Walter Banks, Sr., Felton G. Clark Activity Center

Southern University and Agriculture and Mechanical College. Dedication of Felton Grandison Clark Activity Center. November 19, 1976, Southern University and A&M College [SUBR], Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Courtesy of: Archives & Manuscripts Department, John B. Cade Library, Southern University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.