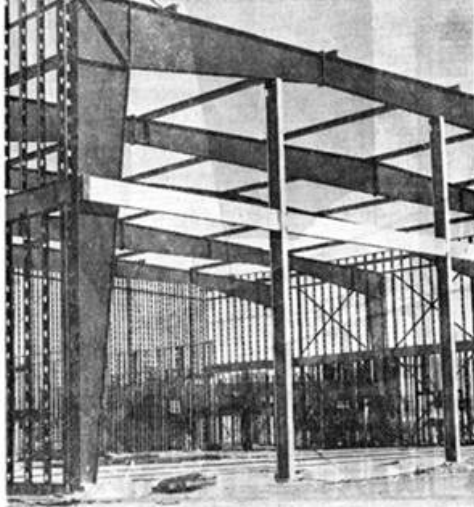




Greetings, Cougar Historians....as we celebrated the "Topping Off" of our new Library structure this week, we thought it would be a good time to look back 29 years, to when our college gym was at the same point in its development. The genesis of our Athletics Department is featured as well, in this story from the *Arizona Republic*, 3-25-81.....and a recent shot of the new library is included at the bottom, to compare and contrast.

# South Mountain College hires coaches



Rick Martinez/Republic  
Construction on the 1,200-seat gymnasium is well under way.

By Rick Martinez  
Republic Staff

Men's and women's basketball, men's and women's track and baseball will be the sports offered next fall on the intercollegiate level by South Mountain Community College, college President Raul Cardenas said.

Last week, Cardenas announced the hiring of State Rep. Earl Wilcox as athletic director, former Arizona State University and professional basketball star Joe Caldwell as basketball coach and Janet Denton as women's basketball coach.

Dean of Students Wil Counts said softball will also be offered, but competition will be on a club basis. Counts said that if interest warrants it, South Mountain will petition the Arizona Community College Athletic Conference for intercollegiate play in softball for the 1983 season.

Cardenas said he eventually would like for the college to field a football team, but added that the high cost of starting a football program rules out that possibility for a few years.

The focal point of the college's athletic facilities will be a 1,200-seat gymnasium which also will have a weight room and a modern-dance room in it. Cardenas said the gym will be similar to the gym at Scottsdale Community College.

Also under construction are tennis and racketball courts. The courts will be available for community use.

Currently, the college's facilities, such as the library, classrooms and administrative offices, are

housed in trailerlike buildings. Some classes are conducted in a nearby church.

Cardenas said he hopes to move into the permanent campus, which is still under construction, by July 15, and he said that he expects all facilities, including athletic facilities, to be ready for the opening of classes next fall. The campus, which is just north of 24th Street and Vineyard Avenue, will have 13 buildings.

Last fall, 800 students enrolled at South Mountain, Cardenas said. The school draws high school graduates primarily from Phoenix Union, East, Trevor Browne, Tempe Marcos de Niza, Tempe Corona del Sol and South Mountain high schools. Cardenas said he expected South, Phoenix Union and East to be the college's main feeder schools.

Cardenas said he will allow his athletic staff to recruit from throughout Maricopa County, in accordance with Maricopa County Community College District rules, but added he will tell his coaches to recruit athletes residing in South Mountain's service area first.

Cardenas said the college's service area is north to Van Buren Street, east to Guadalupe Road, west to 59th Avenue and south to South Mountain Park. The towns of Laveen, Avondale and Tolleson also are in the service area, Cardenas said.

"Our No. 1 priority will be to do a good job with what we have," Counts said. "We have some excellent athletes in south Phoenix and we want to

give them first chance to compete."

Cardenas said the school will be striving for academic excellence before athletic dominance. But he also said that he expected South Mountain's intercollegiate teams to be very competitive as soon as next year, mainly because "the area is blessed with many good athletes."

Although stressing the importance of academics in serving the community, Cardenas feels that the college's athletic teams also will be a focal point of community involvement within south Phoenix.

Cardenas said that because of budget restraints, the college's athletic department and physical education departments would be manned by visiting staff, the term the district uses to describe part-time instructors.

But Counts said that if student demand warrants it, some physical education positions may become full time.

Cardenas said he is about a month behind in selecting coaches for the athletic department, and said he will try to select the rest of the athletic staff as soon as possible in order to recruit good student-athletes.

Cardenas is confident that the coaches will not have to recruit hard to attract students to South Mountain next year.

"Another reason I have to get my coaches named soon is because we're already getting calls from athletes who want to come here next year and I have to have someone to turn them over to," Cardenas said.

