

College mascot

Foothill owl collection doesn't hoot

By JOANNE ELDERS

Foothill College President Calvin Flint shares his office with 69 owls.

And not one of the owls gives a hoot.

"They're quite a silent bunch," declares Dr. Flint, who displays the owl potpourri in a large cabinet in his office at the new Los Altos Hills campus.

Dr. Flint's collection was started shortly after Foothill students elected an owl as their college mascot in the fall of 1958.

"Any time you open a college the students want to pick a mascot," Dr. Flint explained. "They wanted something that was indigenous to the area and had a short name so it would be easy to spell out for school yells."

At that time Foothill was housed in an old Mountain View Elementary School on El Camino Real.

When the school opened, Dr. Flint ordered a 300-pound cement owl taken down from the top of a campus tower.

"Most of the students thought this would be a good mascot," Dr. Flint recalled. "They found that no school, probably no college in California has an owl for mascot."

BALLOT

The "Owl" went on the ballot, together with "Prancers" and "Condor" in a student body election.

"The vote was overwhelmingly for the owl," Dr. Flint declared. "Right after that a teacher brought back a wooden owl and gave it to me. Then my wife



Dr. Flint and friends

Foothill College President surveys part of his owl collection.

bought me a stuffed owl and sewed glasses on it."

Since then, the junior college president's collection has grown by leaps and bounds.

"Soon our faculty was bringing owls back to me from wherever they traveled," he said.

To date, he has been given owls by 57 persons, and some have two or three owls to a set.

An inventory of the owls is kept by Miss Lorraine Anderson whom Dr. Flint calls his "chief owl custodian."

Few of the owls have been duplicated, but many are singularly unusual.

COLLECTION

- The owl collection includes:
- An owl cookoo clock
- An owl bank
- Owl bookends
- An owl ashtray
- An owl candle

- An owl wooden whistle
- Owl salt and pepper shakers
- An owl bottle opener
- An owl vase;
- Plus:

- Owls sitting on limbs, reading books, wearing glasses and scholarly looks;
- And made of:

- Weeds, feathers, pottery, wax, wood and marble.

As if that weren't enough, the outer lobby by Dr. Flint's office is decorated by two owl mosaics. One features five owls of all shapes and sizes sitting on a limb in a stark white background.

"That one was made by my

wife," Dr. Flint proudly points out.

When Foothill's Los Altos Hills campus opened in September, Dr. Flint made sure there was a special case in his office for the owls.

"Only trouble," he laughs, "is that it's crowded already."

That 300-pound owl that was the inspiration for Foothill's mascot now holds a place of honor in an ultra-modern campus center.

PAINTED GOLD

Located some 25 feet above the floor, the owl nevertheless has a beak and toes painted gold. Recently by some students at the rival college," Dr. Flint laughs.

The new campus, in fact, is virtually loaded with reminders that Footsie the owl is the mascot.

"I don't know why the students started calling it 'Footsie,'" Dr. Flint puzzled, "unless it's because this is Foothill College."

A freshman orientation booklet entitled "Owl-deas" instead of "Ideas" and the daily bulletin called "Footprints."

In the campus center students hang out in a comfortable lounge fountain called "The Owl's Nest."

And the French Club names itself "Les Hibous" (the owls).

Come Football season, on campus, a hill student is chosen by the college rally committee to put on an owl-like costume and try to promote spirit with a few hoots.

As to the growth of his collection, Dr. Flint declares he had not intended at first to collect the miniature owls, "but I do now."

"I've found it's a lot of fun