

UNF, with Mathews, Schultz, merges campus with history

The idea of the University of North Florida survived to become reality primarily because of the tenacious sponsorship of two powerful citizens of Jacksonville. One was the late John E. Mathews Jr., the legislator's legislator, a cinch for the presidency of the Florida Senate. The other was Frederick H. Schultz, already well along on his meteoric rise to the speakership of the House of Representatives.

There was opposition from existing universities, both public and private. There was a veto of planning funds by the governor and his comment about "Chamber of Commerce universities on every street corner." Meanwhile, the window of opportunity was closing rapidly. It was generally acknowledged that if this opportunity were lost, it would be at least 20 years before there would be another such chance.

While the university's fate was in doubt in Tallahassee, the ferment of

major change was bubbling in Jacksonville. Duval County citizens were deciding whether to scrap city and county governments and merge them into one consolidated government.

Now, Jacksonville's government is consolidated and the university is operating without ever having lost sight of its precarious beginning. Several years ago, it named a building after Mathews and last week it named one after Schultz.

The two merited such recognition even outside their work on behalf of the establishment of the university. They were the state's top legislative leaders during Florida's productive and exciting years of 1969 and 1970.

When students of the future become curious about those campus names — Schultz and Mathews — their research will uncover solid reasons for the designations.