

WPCC Host At Open House

Dedication Speaker Urges Community College Support

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Two buildings were dedicated and the entire campus toured at Western Piedmont Community College Sunday afternoon. The

sun shone hot as the formal dedication got under way.

Dr. William C. Archie, executive director of the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, told of North Carolina's late

effort in extending public education to thousands by way of community colleges and technical institutes. And he went on to cite the growth of WPCC from its beginning in 1966 with 484 curricular students to 1,076 this fall — and matriculation not yet over.

It was a cap and gown affair for faculty members who sat in assigned places. Some of the others in the crowd picked up their chairs and moved them into the shade. But it didn't rain.

Loren C. Tice, musician-in-residence, played the prelude. There was the processional, the invocation by Rev. Albert Ambrose, pastor of Drexel First Baptist Church and a WPCC student. Mrs. Jayne Wilkins directed the college choir.

W. Stanley Moore, chairman of the board of trustees, rose to welcome the approximately 200 faculty members and visitors. "tropical storm Edith has proved a more cooperative wench than anyone has expected. She's enabled us to

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extend to you a warm, warm, warm, warm welcome."

The crowd chuckled softly as Moore went on to speak of this day as a milestone in the history and development of WPCC. He invited people to take advantage of open house to see new facilities and changes in original construction. Moore noted the old-home week spirit of the occasion as many there had been associated with Western Piedmont from the time it had been conceived as an idea. He recalled Dr. Archie's original presentation as to what a community college could mean to Burke County and to this area.

Dr. Gordon C. Blank, WPCC president, spoke briefly of changes in the times and order being provided by the college. "We avoid the dead hand of a static institution. . . To progress we pledge the best our faculty can provide. We expect community support," he said.

Dr. Blank invited everyone to tour the college and later to attend the reception for faculty and staff members at the First Presbyterian Fellowship Hall.

"We are very proud of Western Piedmont Community College and what it means to us," said Dave Woody, president of the Student Government Association.

"The college could not have existed were it not for the overwhelming support of taxpayers. If it were not for WPCC, I as well as others would not have been able to have received so much education. With community support we will continue to grow," he said.

Woody said more people need to be aware of the "fabulous opportunity" offered by the college. "With your support it will continue to be the finest

Arthur H. Nelson, chairman, brought greetings from the Faculty Senate. He said he believed the dedication of buildings and facilities began long ago — in the hearts and ideals of community leaders who helped make the dream of the college come true. "We the faculty celebrate this milestone. We are pleased at the improved capability of the facilities that are enabling us to do a better job

of teaching your sons and daughters," he said.

"Thank you on behalf of the faculty," he added.

Frank DiSanto, president of the Western Piedmont Foundation, said it was great not only to see buildings being dedicated and to review progress, but said the foundation would be asking community help before long so that WPCC could continue to grow.

DiSanto noted that WPCC has now exhausted all federal grants.

"As president of the foundation we are concerned about the future." DiSanto asked continuing support and praised Dr. Blank, Dr. E. W. Phifer, former chairman, and Moore, for the work they have done.

Ernest M. White, superintendent of Caldwell County Schools and WPCC trustee, brought greetings from the Building and Grounds Committee of the Board of Trustees. He spoke in the absence of Robert P. Carr, chairman. He cited the invaluable contributions of Carr to the committee successes.

John M. Reynolds of the State Board of Education spoke briefly. He noted he was here four or five years ago, made the briefest speech of anyone, and was the only one of those speakers invited back. Reynolds, chairman of the State Board's Community College committee, said this speech would be similarly brief.

He noted there are 54 institutions (community colleges and technical institutes) having 30,000 full time equivalent students as compared to 32,000 students in the university system of the state. There are more students in the community college system (including those going part time) than in all other state supported schools, he said.

Dr. Phifer introduced Dr. Archie as the man in the vanguard of the program that was given its thrust by Gov. Terry Sanford.

Dr. Archie remembered there was nothing but a dream in 1964 when he met here with Dr. Phifer, Dr. J. B. Helms, Moore, and other community leaders.

"The Development of the community college and technical institute program stemmed from the realization of the many who were not going to the four year colleges," said Dr. Archie.

He spoke of the extension of public education from grades one through 12 and then into the college and technical programs.

Governor Hodges and the current chairman of the State Board of Education, Dallas Herring, are really the patron saints of this entire system. . . . Until we had industrial education centers in this state, the only industrial and trade education available was a handful of proprietary institutions, and a host of in-service training programs conducted by the trades and industries themselves. In any event, in 1963, the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina established the community College and Technical Institute Department of the State Department of Education in North Carolina.

He told of the new colleges at Wilmington and Charlotte that were later to become universities, the development of the community college in Elizabeth City.

The real growth of the community colleges can be seen right here at WPCC he said.

He reviewed the growth from 1966 — 484 the first year in curricular programs. "the second year you were in business you had 684." In 1970 curricular students numbered 1,033, and now 1,076. "Besides you have had from 1,000 to 3,000 individuals per quarter in your several adult education programs."

Dr. Archie spoke of the growth on the state level. Full time equivalent students this year will be at least 72,000. In 1962-63 there were 16 institutions in the state and this year there are 54.

He spoke of the flexibility of the programs in these two year schools and their futures.

There followed another number by the college choir. Then Rev. John H. Sigmon Jr., pastor of Calvary Lutheran Church, spoke the benediction.



At Western Piedmont Community College Dedication

Dr. William C. Archie, executive director of the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation and principal speaker Sunday afternoon at the dedication of two new buildings at Western Piedmont Community College, outlined the history of the community college and technical institutes in North Carolina. He challenged the

people of Burke and the surrounding areas to continue the support of the college. "You're making it possible for untold thousands to have an education. If you don't continue your support, you ought to be thrown off a mountain — a high mountain," he said. (Staff photo by Andy Hern)