

Droze named WPCC president

By SUSAN USHER
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Dr. Wilmon H. Droze, provost of Texas Woman's University, assumes the presidency of Western Piedmont Community College July 1.

The college board of trustees announced his appointment at a Monday afternoon press conference. A Charleston, S.C., native, Droze was the first and unanimous choice of the presidential search committee led by W. Stanley Moore, and the entire board, Chairman E.W. Phifer Jr. said.

Search committee members consisted of Moore, Phifer, D. Holmon Sigmon, Thad M. Poteat and Robert Carr.

Phifer described Droze as a man capable of

bringing WPCC to the forefront of the state's community colleges.

Droze, 54, fills the post vacated eight months ago by Dr. Gordon C. Blank, who took a similar position in upstate New York.

The new president will receive a salary of \$45,000. The figure includes a local supplement of \$17,142, the highest paid in the state. However, Droze will not be the highest paid community college president. The top figure goes over \$50,000. His appointment is subject to concurrence by the State Board of Education.

"We feel that Dr. Droze has the self-assurance, the maturity, the vigor and the expertise to revitalize and redirect the college so that it will become the leading institution of its type in the

state of North Carolina," Phifer said in a written statement.

Droze is a historical researcher and writer as well as educational administrator.

Speaking briefly at the press conference, Droze listed the people and location of the community among his reasons for re-locating in Morganton. Saying that "dollars is not the whole thing," he noted that after a second visit to the area he "couldn't say no."

"For me, this is coming home," he added, noting past ties with the Carolinas.

"I will probably end up taking a small cut in pay," he added, saying that while his North Carolina pay envelope would be fatter, he would have to pay state income tax and his share of

social security taxes in North Carolina. He didn't pay either in Texas.

In addition, he called the community college "the people's college, a live, viable thing. More and more we can provide education for the people," he continued. "Education has always been a vehicle for social and economic mobility."

Droze described himself as "eager, anxious to get on with it."

"I think we will strive toward quality in all programs," he said. "It is just as important for us to turn out quality plumbers as it is future Ph.D.'s. The budgeting and the system will reflect this in the future."

Droze's comments about across-the-board

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quality may offset WPCC faculty concerns about the possibility of elimination or cutting-back of some programs.

"I believe I gave the faculty adequate assurance that I did not come here to liquidate any programs," Droze said, noting he anticipates the expansion or strengthening of programs "if anything."

Droze outlined future directions which can be expected at the college. First, he said, efforts will be made to effect a smooth transition to new leadership.

In addition, he expressed interest in expanding private-sector support of the school to maintain flexibility needed to meet community needs.

Also, Droze said the community college "needs to be heard in Raleigh."

Future interests include assessing community needs and working with community groups and community leaders. Droze also expressed interest in cultural areas.

A look will be taken at WPCC programs, Droze said, to identify any changes needed to meet community needs.

"Down the road apiece," he added, the college

will examine the suitability of its organizational structure.

Droze has an academic concentration in American history and government, with additional work in educational administration and engineering.

He holds a Ph.D. from Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tenn., an M.S. degree in American history from North Texas State University and a B.S. degree in secondary education. He graduated from North Texas after attending Appalachian State University in Boone and Clemson University.

As provost, a title held since 1974, Droze is responsible for undergraduate programs, with supervisory duties in budgeting, personnel, long-range planning and program development. He serves also as compliance officer for numerous federal regulations.

Before taking the provost's job, he served as acting assistant to the university president. Earlier posts included that of librarian and archivist for the state of Tennessee, resident scholar for the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors, Washington, D.C., associate professorships at state universities in Louisiana, Texas and

Oklahoma, and an assistant professorship in history at East Carolina University at Greenville.

He has published a number of books and articles about his research on resource management and conservation activities of the Tennessee Valley Authority, the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors and the Forest Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

His latest book (1977) is "Trees, Prairies, and People: Tree Planting in the Plains States." Droze is currently working on three research projects.

He has held numerous professional memberships and honors, as well as a number of community and professional leadership positions.

The educator-historian lists among his hobbies gardening, fishing, reading in the fields of history, political science and economics, and travel.

He and his wife, Carolyn, have two sons, one in high school and one in junior high.

Mrs. Droze has a B.S. degree from Texas Woman's University, with a major in music education and a minor in elementary education. A former public school teacher, she is now a full-time homemaker. Her hobbies include painting, music and needlepoint.

They will visit Morganton again in late May.