

He brought WPCC a long, long way

This is Dr. Gordon C. Blank's last day as president of Western Piedmont Community College.

The close of the business day marks the severance of a relationship which began in February 1965, and it means that tomorrow will be the first day in Western Piedmont's existence as an operating entity that it will be without this man's services.

It was in February 1965 that he became dean of instruction for an institution in the process being born. In April 1967 he was named acting president upon the resignation of Dr. Herbert F. Stallworth, and in August of that year he was named president.

That's the brief chronology, but it fails to depict the full extent that this Baltimore native has been "Mr. Western Piedmont."

He has held the office of the president for every graduation ceremony the community college has held in its history, which comes a step nearer emphasizing the drastic and traumatic effect of his departure to take over the presidency of Adirondack Community College at Glens Falls, N.Y.

Western Piedmont has literally grown up and come of age under his administration. It gained full accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in the shortest possible time under the procedure required.

WPCC has moved ahead with widening programs with due deference to the basic academics involving two-year college work without neglecting these technical and vocational features, along with continuing education and short courses and the like, which round out the meaning of a comprehensive community college.

Gordon Blank has meant a great deal to the institution he has headed and to the county and surrounding area which it and he have served. As long as Western Piedmont exists, it can expect to reflect in various ways the scholarship and leadership of this effective educator.

We have always liked Gordon Blank. He is a man of equable disposition, and he himself has termed his brand of leadership as a "low-key style." This does not mean that he has lacked the strength and firmness needed from time to time. It simply means that he has never felt that a successful institution with an able faculty and staff must have a frenetic, gung-ho president alternately beating his breast and the table-top.

His pleasant demeanor and his well-known sense of humor have added to his ease of relations with the public at large and helped to gain for him additional degrees of friendship and appreciation of the people who have been associated with him in matters of community interest.

All these things flash through memory in the closing hours of the Blank administration. With these thoughts, the community joins in good wishes for the continued happiness and effectiveness of President Blank and for the happiness of his wife, Joan, and their two sons, Jonathan and Dan.

In all of the varied group farewells, formal and casual, one central theme has run throughout — an insistence on visits in the future to keep alive the warm friendships the Blanks have established here. It seems prevalent everywhere in these parts, and the sincerity of the invitation isn't lessened by a layer of Southern ham-bone: "Y'all come back! Hear?"