

Ervin speaks at WPCC

U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Sam J. Ervin III spoke at Western Piedmont Community College's Moore Auditorium recently to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the U.S. Constitution.

Ervin's lecture concerned the history of the Constitution, which is the topic of WPCC's Fall Speaker's Forum.

Ervin opened his presentation by reminding the audience that "the Constitution was not written on a clean slate;" its roots are based firmly in Britain's Magna Carta.

He added that the founding fathers borrowed greatly from the British system of fundamental law, and supported this statement with such examples as trial by jury, and due process by law, both of which were borrowed from the Magna Carta.

He further stated that ideas were also taken from the Declaration of Independence. By remembering the origins of the Constitution, Ervin noted that we should not only thank the framers of the Constitution, but also free thinkers from many different centuries, and across many national boundaries.

The main ideal that Ervin stressed is that the Constitution assured all Americans the inherent right to pursue happiness by guarding five freedoms.

These five freedoms are economic, personal, political, intellectual and religious. He elaborated that happiness means many things to many people, and that the great advantage and strength of our 200-year-old document is that it is flexible enough to allow for tremendous variation.

Another advantage lies in its "un-absoluteness," in that it can be amended to keep pace with advancing technology and society.

Ervin expressed opposition to a movement which is currently attempting to call a third constitutional convention in order to re-write the Constitution. This movement is only a few states short of being passed.

Ervin feels that the movement is being pushed by single-issue groups.

To conclude his presentation, Ervin reminded us that in 1987 we Americans are not celebrating the Constitution's origin 200 years ago but rather America's ability to maintain the integrity of the spirit of such a document.

He closed by stating strongly that while freedom is hard to acquire and hard to maintain, it is very easy to lose.

Other speakers for the fall speakers' forum include Charles Waldrup, who will speak on Monday, Oct. 19.

He will be followed on Thursday, Oct. 22, by Dr. Dennis Dorin, Professor of Political Science at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Both of these presentations will take place at 7:30 p.m. in WPCC's Moore Auditorium.

