

Constitutional Issues Seminar set to begin Tuesday

By KEVIN ELLIS
News Herald Staff Writer

The Second Annual Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr. Constitutional Issues Seminar begins its 20-year retrospective look on Tuesday at one of the most infamous political scandals in United States history.

The four-day forum will focus on Watergate and examine issues such as executive privilege, presidential conduct and the separation of powers.

The subject may be 20-years-old, but the issues each night's speaker

will raise remain relevant today, says Grady Pitts, dean of development at Western Piedmont Community College, the seminar's host.

"The questions of confidentiality for the president and whether the president can withhold information from the public could be seen in the Iran-Contra Affair," Pitts said. "And another speaker will deal with ethics and I think all of us need to look at our standards of ethics in our professional lives."

Western Piedmont Community College chose each speaker because of his or her expertise, said Pitts, but



LaRue

Dash

also set the seminar format to encourage audience participation.

Various local discussants will

join the headline speaker on stage to help move along the flow of questions and answers.

"The speakers are all well qualified to speak on these issues and the discussants are there mainly to get the ball rolling in the question and answer period," Pitts said.

The following is a list of each night's program.

Tuesday

L.H. LaRue, a professor of law at Washington and Lee University and the author of "Political Discourse: A

Case Study of the Watergate Affair," will lead a discussion looking at presidential standards of conduct.

A widely published author-professor, LaRue is a former attorney in the U.S. Justice Department. He has taught law since 1967 at Washington and Lee.

Discussants will include Roanoke, Va., attorney Manley Caldwell Butler, who represented the 6th District in Virginia in the U.S. House of Representatives for

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six terms. He was a member of the House Judiciary Committee.

Butler will be joined by James Robert Mann, an attorney in South Carolina, who served five terms in the U.S. House from 1968 to 1979. He also served on the House Judiciary Committee.

Local discussants include: Morganton attorney Jimmy Ervin, the grandson of Sen. Ervin, and Morganton attorney Robert Thompson.

The moderator will be Superior Court Judge Claude Sitton, a Morganton resident who has served in the 25th District since 1980.

Wednesday

Howard Ball, the dean of arts at the University of Vermont and the author of "We Have a Duty," will

lead a discussion on presidential confidentiality and the legal case of the United States v. Richard M. Nixon.

Discussants include Morganton attorney Robert Gage, a former member

of the Morganton City Council; Morganton attorney Martha McMurray-Russ; News Herald Managing Editor Bill Potat; and Freedom High School social studies teacher Mary Choate.

The moderator will be Chris Clackum, co-anchor of WBTV News' Weekend Report.



Butler



Mann



Ball

The program will begin at 7:15 p.m. and end at 9 p.m. It will be held in Studio 99 of the Phifer Learning Resources Center on the WPCC campus.

Thursday

Public Broadcasting System's documentary "Senator Sam" will be shown from noon until 1 p.m. in



Powell



McDonald

Moore Auditorium.

Friday

Samuel Dash, the former chief legal counsel for the Senate Watergate Committee, will lead a discussion on separation of powers and the function of a congressional government committee.

Dash, now a professor at

Georgetown University Law Center, also was the author of "The Eavesdroppers" and "Chief Counsel: Inside the Ervin Committee-The Untold Story of Watergate."

The discussants include Mary Charlotte Safford, a history instructor at Western Piedmont Community College; H. Jefferson Powell, a professor of law at Duke University Law School and special counsel to the North Carolina Attorney General's office; Burke County commissioner Tom McCurry; and Elizabeth Cooper, the advertising manager of WMNC Radio.

The moderator will be Hickory Daily Record Assistant Editor Monica McGee.

The program will be from 11:30 a.m. until 1 p.m. It will be held in Studio 99 of the Phifer Learning Resources Center.

Friday

Forrest McDonald, a professor of history at the University of Alabama and a distinguished senior fellow at the Center of the Study of Southern History and Culture, will lead a discussion on the executive branch and the requirements and realities of the office.

The discussants include: Jimmy Ervin; Morganton attorney James Reid Simpson; Morganton physician James D. Melton; McGee from the Hickory Daily Record; Dash; and Marion attorney and N.C. Rep. Bob Hunter.

The moderator will be Ed Williams, editorial page editor of The Charlotte Observer.

The program will begin at 7:15 p.m. and end at 9 p.m. It will be held in Studio 99 of the Phifer Learning Resources Center.