

BY STATE BOARD

Blank Confirmed WPCC President

By DOROTHY CABLE

The North Carolina Board of Education, meeting today in Raleigh, confirmed Dr. Gordon C. Blank as president of Western Piedmont Community College.

Dr. Blank, acting president of the college since the resignation of Dr. Herbert F. Stallworth last March, had received unanimous approval of the WPCC board of trustees for the position of president.

Dr. Blank came to Morganton in February of 1965 as dean of instruction, a post which he filled until Dr. Stallworth left to become president of a community college in LaMarque, Tex.

Trustees chose Dr. Blank on the basis of his established reputation in the field of education and because of his close association from the start with the college's instructional and administrative work.

He was recommended by the board's special committee on selection of a president. Serving were W. Stanley Moore, committee chairman, Frank C. Patton, G. Maruice Hill, and Dr. E.W. Phifer Jr., chairman of the board.

Dr. Blank, a native of Baltimore Md., received his bachelor's degree in science from Towson State College in 1952, after which he served as a Naval officer in the Far East during the Korean War.

After his release from active duty, he taught in the Baltimore School system, and then went to the University of Miami, where he received his master's degree in education in 1956.

He taught a year with the American Dependent School program in Mildenhall, England. From 1958 to 1962 he worked as instructor and program supervisor at Indiana University from which he received his doctor's degree in education in 1962.

Dr. Blank then served as professor at Indiana State University until he came to Morganton.

He is the author of a number of professional journal articles, a textbook chapter and other publications, and is a member of various national level committees and commissions.

His doctoral specialization was technology with concentration in communications theory and research. His dissertation involved experimental research of psychophysical variables of perception in an effort to ascertain the feasibility of a modified approach to programmed instruction.

See BLANK Page 6-A

Blank Confirmed

(Continued from page one)

Also he had done some additional graduate study at Loyola College, the University of Maryland, and Cambridge University in England.

Dr. Blank is a member of Phi Delta Kappa, Kappa Delta Pi, NEA and other professional organizations, a director of the Burke County Kiwanis Club, and trustee of the Regional Health Council of Eastern Appalachia, Inc.

He is married to the former Joan L. Bevirt of O'Fallon, Ill., and they have two sons, Jon, seven, and Dan, four. Mrs. Blank is a former high school speech and English teacher. She received her AB degree from McMurray College in Illinois and did her master's degree work at the University of Colorado and St. Louis University.

Now Dr. Blank is looking forward to the second full year of operation of Western Piedmont Community College. He expects it to grow and develop and to contribute much to this region as it fulfills its missions as a comprehensive community college.

"We're still a growing institution and there are a number of things we will concentrate our efforts on in order to evolve into an institution of which the citizens of this region can be proud," said Dr. Blank.

He noted that broadened educational opportunities are expected to materially contribute to the over all growth and development of the region.

Dr. Blank is looking forward to the time when the college will occupy its new campus at U.S. 64 and I-40 highways. This will probably be in late winter.

"Up to now we have had adequate facilities but these are temporary only and we are looking forward to moving into our first buildings.

These are a three-story main building to house the library, classrooms, offices and to provide service spaces; a two-story technology buildings where science and technology laboratories will be located and a one-story vocational building which will contain shop type facilities.

Last fall the college opened with 22 full-time instructional faculty members. This fall there will be 35 of them plus additional part-time instructors.

"We also have other full-time instructional personnel who are working with the specially funded federal programs," said Dr. Blank. These include the Manpower Development and Train-

ing Act courses in stenography and other occupational subjects and the Henredon project, a cooperative program offered by the industry and the college to upgrade the competence of existing and new employees.

"We look back on this past year as one which gave us a good start. With the continued support of local citizens we have every reason to believe this will evolve into a top-flight community college," he said.

Dr. Blank spoke of a new curriculum approved in industrial engineering technology and other programs he and his staff hope to have approved by the state.

"We are expanding in all areas — college parallel, technical, vocational, and adult education. This coming year there will be more course offerings in all areas of the college.

"We're very proud of the competence and dedication of the faculty we have and we look forward to another highly successful year of operation," he said.

Dr. Blank commented on how interesting it has been to him to see the whole evolution of an institution from point zero.

He recalls when there was just Dr. Stallworth; himself; Miss Betty Claywell, bookkeeper; Paul Bagley, dean of student personnel services; Mrs. Margaret Fulk, head librarian; Harold Olsen, director of vocational technical education; and H. D. Moretz, director of adult education and community services.

"It was just about a blank slate to be written on and this has been an interesting process. We had the benefit of very wonderful community support and the benefit of the competent leadership of what I feel to be an outstanding board of trustees," he said appreciatively.

"We opened last fall with approximately 430 students in curriculum courses, those leading to a degree or diploma. In adult education we had many more, for typically a student would enroll for one or two courses on a part-time basis. So we actually reached over 1,000 students in every area," he said.

"In this coming year we are in the process of admitting many new students to the college. We expect an enrollment in curriculum programs in excess of 700 plus additional part-time education students in a variety of program areas."

Dr. Blank smiled eagerly.

"I'm looking forward to serving as president of a growing Western Piedmont Community College. I think one of the things that will make my job easier than it otherwise would be, is the competence and dedication of our staff and faculty. They are hard working and capable people. There in lies the strength of the institution.

"It is an unique opportunity because so many institutions are so solidly steeped in traditions that they are too set to be able to reconstruct their efforts to meet changing conditions. A relatively new institution is continually looking at itself under a microscope and can make changes," said Dr. Blank.



Dr. Gordon C. Blank