

News

Blackburn accepts job at UVa. Wise

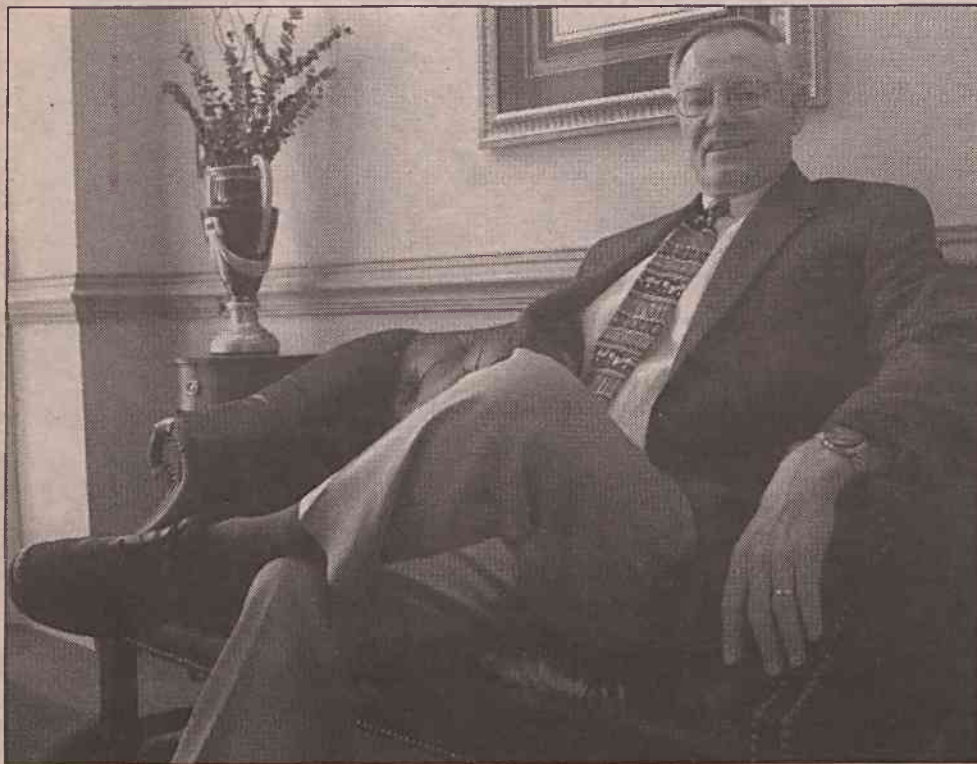


Photo by Scott Holstein

Gil Blackburn sits on coach in Hamrick, enjoying the rest of his time at GWU

Jennifer Menster
Pilot copy editor

Long time Gardner-Webb dean and faculty member Gil Blackburn will be leaving the university once the semester comes to close.

Blackburn, who was a graduate of GW and worked there for 36 years, has accepted a provost and senior vice chancellor position at the University of Virginia's College at Wise. He starts the position July 1.

"It's a time of mixed emotions for me," Blackburn said. "I just

decided that this was what I wanted to do."

At UVa. Wise, Blackburn will be performing some of the similar tasks that he did at GWU when he was vice president and dean of academic affairs such as hiring new faculty, evaluating faculty, developing new academic programs and dealing with academic problems. Blackburn will also act as chancellor when the chancellor is not available.

"I'm not ready to retire, but if I want to do what I was trained to do and have experience doing it, I

know I can't stay here," Blackburn said. "I feel that is my gift and calling. I have given a lot of pray into this and got direction that this is what I was supposed to do."

After the controversy of 2002 involving former president Christopher White and a grade change, Blackburn was demoted to a faculty position and then later became coordinator of special programs. Blackburn said since the position change, he has really missed working with faculty and helping resolve problems.

"I never thought I would leave Gardner-Webb," Blackburn said. "But with the events of the last couple years, I have thought a lot about things and if I want a meaningful role at a school, I have to leave."

In his 36 years at GWU, Blackburn has made numerous contributions to the institutions and touched hundreds of lives. Blackburn played a significant role in getting the core curriculum where it is today and developing the honor code, said David Yelton, professor of history.

Yelton was hired by Blackburn in 1990 as a temporary position. Yelton said he decided to stay because of Blackburn. "He's always been committed to trying to make this school academically stronger," Yelton said. "You can't sum up his contributions to the school."

Yelton said that Blackburn has always been reliable and a great leader. Yelton also described Blackburn as someone who was never selfish and always thought

about what was best for the school.

"I always relied on him for opinions that were informed and honest," Yelton said. "I really hate to see him go."

University President Frank Campbell said Blackburn was a pleasant man to work with and a gentleman. Campbell is confident that Blackburn will do a good job at UVa. Wise. "He's meant a lot to Gardner-Webb," Campbell said, "but he deserves this opportunity."

"If I could pick two words to describe him I would use wisdom and integrity - he is full of them," said Darlene Gravett, associate provost for schools and dean of the graduate school.

Blackburn served as a mentor and assisted Gravett on many issues in her 14 years working with him. She said Blackburn was always wonderful at resolving any problems that he was presented with.

"I just want to congratulate him on his new position," Gravett said. "I know he'll do a wonderful job because he has more than 30 years experience."

Blackburn and his wife, Martha, will move to the southwestern, mountainous area of Virginia by July. They will keep their house in Boiling Springs, however, where they raised their children and spent the majority of their married life.

"It's going to be traumatic because we are leaving a lot of memories and friends behind," Blackburn said. "But we're keeping the house here. I just can't get away from my roots."

Senior art minors display work in exhibit



Photo by Scott Holstein

Caleb Wyatt checks on one of his pottery pieces as it fires in the kiln. The art show, which exhibits paintings, drawings and pottery and will be on display in OMG until May 10.

Amanda Wood
Pilot Staff

Gardner-Webb University's department of fine arts will host a reception for senior artists Friday, April 23, in O. Max Gardner Hall from 3 p.m. until 8 p.m.

The reception, which is open to everyone, is part of the department's annual senior art show, which includes work by graduating art minors. This year's show features Emily Davis, Ellen McCraw, Jeannine McSwain, Eric Wince and Caleb Wyatt.

"What we want to do is give the students exposure, the program exposure," said art instructor Susan Bell. "It

really helps the artists a lot to have people come view their work and encourage them."

Ellen McCraw, a communications major, is excited about the show. "It's really good because this year they look really great," McCraw said.

"This is the first year we've actually had our work framed," said psychology major Emily Davis, who said she is looking forward to Friday's reception.

According to Jeannine McSwain, a communications major, the reception provides student artists exposure.

"It gives people a chance to see what you've

done and what you're capable of doing," McSwain said. "Knowing that my family and friends are going to be able to see what I've done and what some of my friends have done - that's probably the best thing."

For Eric Wince, a physical education major, the art show as a whole provides preparation for the future. "If I do any more shows down the road, it will kind of prep me for it," Wince said.

The art show, which began April 8, exhibits paintings, drawings and pottery and will be on display in O. Max Gardner Hall until May 10.