

THE DECREE

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NORTH CAROLINA WESLEYAN COLLEGE, ROCKY MOUNT, NORTH CAROLINA 27804

Wesleyan Grad Dewey Clark To Become College's Seventh President

North Carolina Wesleyan College's Board of Trustees has announced that Dr. Dewey G. Clark, a 1982 Wesleyan graduate and chairman of the college's Board of Trustees, will succeed James A. Gray III as president of the college.

Gray recently announced plans to retire at the end of the 2013-14 academic year in May. He came to Wesleyan as its sixth president in June 2009 and will remain involved with the college to concentrate on several ongoing initiatives.

In announcing the selection of Clark as the college's next president, Will Lassiter, vice chairman of Wesleyan's Board of Trustees, said, "As we explored the leadership requirements of the college at this time, our discussions led us to conclude that the obvious choice is Dr. Clark. In our opinion, he has a unique set of skills and experience that perfectly equip him to handle the task at hand."

Thomas A. Betts, former chairman of Wesleyan's Board of Trustees and chairman of the presidential search committee, said, "Not only does he bring a fresh set of eyes to old and tired problems, but his management style is inclusive and decisive. He is a proven visionary and strategic leader who is results-driven. Those strengths, coupled with his undeniable devotion to Wesleyan, are what put a smile on our faces and reinforced that we had made the correct call. We are confident in our decision."

Clark earned his bachelor's degree at Wesleyan in business administration and history and his master's degree in business administration from Campbell University. He completed his doctor of business administration with a concentration in management from Argosy University.

Since 1990 he has held executive positions at MBM Corporation in Rocky Mount. During the past 10 years he has served as executive director of strategic planning. "I am humbled and honored by this opportunity to return to my alma mater as president," Clark said. "With 32 years of experience in business and education, I feel I am uniquely qualified to lead Wesleyan to the next level. I will approach this challenge with the same passion and dedication that I have given MBM throughout my career."

Clark said that, given President Gray's May retirement and his current obligations, he will transition to the role of president sometime next year, yet to be determined. "Wesleyan has been blessed with exceptional faculty, staff, and students," Clark said. "I look forward to partnering with them in the coming years."

Clark came to Wesleyan in the fall of 1978 as a first-generation college student. Since then he has continually been associated with the college in various ways. After graduating from Wesleyan, he went to work in the Admissions Office. In addition, Clark has taught a course in operations management at Wesleyan more than 20 times. Recently he began his fourth term on the Board of Trustees, where he has served as vice-chairman and chairman of the finance committee.

A member of Englewood Baptist Church, Clark has been active in the community in many organizations and has been recognized with numerous service awards. He lives in Wilson with his wife, Suzanne, and children, Blakely and Nicholas. (Article courtesy of NCWC PR)

The Decree conducted a recent email interview with Dr. Clark.

Q: At what point did you think that you'd like to become a college president?

A: The rumor about me being Wesleyan's next president had been going around Rocky Mount for some time. Having the best job in Rocky



Dr. Dewey Clark, a Wesleyan grad and MBM executive, has been named the college's next president, succeeding James Gray, who has announced that he will retire in May after five years. Wesleyan PR Photo

Mount, I had no plans to leave until Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway bought MBM in the summer of 2012. MBM is still a great company and I will always cherish my time there, but I felt like this was a great opportunity to make a real difference in something about which I care deeply. Being a college president has never been a career goal, but looking back on my career, it's something I have been preparing for all of my life. Anyone can look at my résumé and see that I would not be as "uniquely qualified" to be president of any other college. Education and background aside, the three over-riding characteristics I possess are a passion for the college, a deep knowledge base of the inner workings of the college, and being an area resident for 36 years. Coming from humble agricultural beginnings, and being a first-generation college student, I have listened to critics every step of the way. Fortunately, through hard work, and God's grace I have succeeded in every undertaking. Being a college president will be a tremendous challenge, but I'm very excited about this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Q: There had been initial discussion about conducting a national search for a new president, but that idea was soon abandoned. Describe the deliberations and discussion that led to your appointment.

A: As Chairman of the Board, I had every intention of conducting a national search. Obviously, a national search can be done with hiring a search firm by placing ads in national publications such as the Chronicle of Higher Education. We had written the ad to be placed in the publications when General Hugh Shelton, our Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees, nominated me for the Presidency. When asked, I had stated all along that I would not apply for the position unless I was nominated and encouraged by the Board. When I was nominated for the Presidency I resigned from the Search Committee and was excluded from any further deliberations.

Q: How will your experiences at MBM help you in your new post as college president?

A: MBM has helped prepare me in many ways to be a college president. A college president must be a visionary, one that can envision a clear direction or path in which the college must head. At MBM I've been in a role to help establish direction through a collaborative vision. When I arrived at MBM in 1990, we were a \$150 million company with five distribution centers. This year we're a \$7 billion company with 36 distribution centers. We achieved this

phenomenal growth through a daily culture of continuous improvement and a commitment to quality. Looking back at my career at MBM, I would say basically everything I've done has prepared me for the President's position. I have experience in human resources, which will help with hiring and personnel issues. I have experience in accounting and finance, which will be invaluable for understanding income statements and the balance sheet. The experiences in operations, marketing, and strategic planning will be by far the most beneficial.

My current position, Executive Director of Strategic Planning, is very similar in many ways to the president position. I examine every area of MBM, including all its subsidiaries, to find ways to increase profits and improve efficiencies. The same will be true at Wesleyan, where the greatest emphasis will be the troubled areas such as enrollment and fund raising.

Q: Describe your leadership and management style.

A: My style is very proactive, as I want to influence events as opposed to reacting to problems. Wesleyan has been in a reactionary mode for some time now, and has not focused enough time on strategic planning. I prefer short-term plans backed by specific measurable goals that are used to develop the long-term vision. There is absolutely no substitution for preparation, an area where I will spend a lot of my time. Hard work is engrained in me. Ideas become stale and momentum is lost with time away from critical areas. Leadership deals with influence. When employees see that the leader has a passionate vision, they are more likely to follow. Integrity has always been very important to me. I believe that people want to know the truth regardless of the situation. Lastly, being respectful to all people is important to me. There are some individuals on campus that may not have been in agreement on my selection as Wesleyan's next president. I am very respectful of their opinion, and I look forward to working with them to make Wesleyan a better place.

Q: What kind of fund-raising experience do you bring to the job?

A: Successful fund raising requires a specific skill set that is partly God-given and partly learned. The fund raiser has to be able to communicate a need and a vision for a specific project. This must be done in such a way that the potential donor feels a connection to the project and sees the long-term benefit. In my role at MBM I have been presenting projects and opportunities to the shareholders for over 20 years. The message must be concise and clear. The biggest advantage of hiring an alumni and resident of Rocky Mount is the instant connection with these groups. Our alumni base is around 12,000, but nearly half are ASPIRE students that feel little connection to the college. We must increase alumni giving by reconnecting with them. There are many creative ways that we can establish a more solid connection to the Rocky Mount region, which will enhance fundraising. As a matter of reference, Wesleyan has never been ultra-successful at fund raising. After the initial gift of the 200 acres and the \$2 million to build our first buildings, the majority of our expansion efforts have been through borrowed funds. The college still owes nearly \$3 million on the Dunn center, and the recent Edgecombe renovation is all borrowed funds. Even though it is less than 5 percent of our annual budget, fund raising is the second most important function for Wesleyan's president after admissions. We need to keep in mind that a dollar generated from a freshman's tuition has an economic impact of more than five times that of a dollar donated because of the continuous revenue stream it generates over time. This potential revenue stream continues for the entire lifetime of the student.

Q: You've been a Wesleyan student, an admissions counselor, an ASPIRE instructor and a trustee. In what specific ways will this varied background help you as president?

Dean Williams To Leave in May

Dr. Randy Williams will leave NC Wesleyan in May after five years as the college's Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students.

He will become a Presidential Fellow and Special Assistant to the President/Dean of Multicultural Affairs, according to NCWC President James Gray, who announced Williams' departure in an email.

Elon University, located between Greensboro and the Raleigh-Durham area, is a

private college with more than 5,000 students. US News & World Report ranks it number one among regional universities in the South.

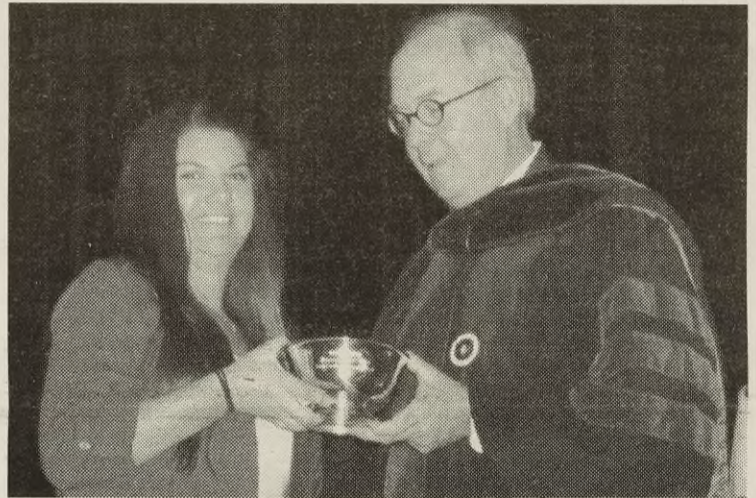
In his email, President Gray praised Williams for his accomplishments over the past five years, citing everything from his management of the Honor Code and Code of Student Conduct, to establishment of a viable Greek system, to improvements in the Student Success Center, to stronger campus security.

A: With my 36 years of continuous affiliation with Wesleyan, I've been afforded the opportunity to see the college from many different angles. Since I arrived in 1978 as a student, the traditional day program has changed very little. Back then our resident capacity was 450 students, and today it is 550. Wesleyan still faces financial challenges, lack of student activities, and an imbalance of athletes vs. non-athletes. Working for the college as a staff employee for eight years allowed me to experience how an educational organization functions. In 1990, I was on several accreditation committees. Having eight years of admissions experience will be extremely valuable in dealing with our current enrollment issues. Some of the most beneficial experience will be the 12 years as an adjunct professor in our ASPIRE program. I've taught our Operations Management Business class 21 times. This class has averaged 15 students each semester, so I have taught over 300 students. Each time I teach this class I'm re-energized in my commitment to make a difference in the students' lives. Each semester, I hired the best student in my class, and created a position for them at MBM. These students have become some of MBM's finest employees.

Q: One might well argue that, given the challenges faced by Wesleyan, it would be better for the college to hire an "outsider," a leader who can view the college with more detachment and objectivity. How do you respond to that view?

A: I could not more strongly disagree with the opinion to hire an outsider. Wesleyan is at a very crucial time in its history, and given our current financial position, we do not have the luxury of bringing in an outsider. An outsider would spend two to three years trying to discern the unique problems facing the college, meeting the key players, and acclimating themselves to the Rocky Mount area. Just like businesses vary one from another within their segment, Wesleyan is vastly different from other private, four-year liberal arts colleges. With my experiences, I understand our problems of low traditional enrollment, distressed finances, the imbalance of athletes, our disconnection with alumni and community, dependence on ASPIRE, and under-funding of key areas that have led to Wesleyan starving the liberal arts side of the college. According to historians, "those that know no history are fated to repeat it." An outsider would not be able to immediately understand that, even though our facilities are basically debt-free, we're not

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Katie Farrell directs ASPIRE's new Wilmington, Whiteville and Brunswick campuses. Seen here with Provost Michael Brown, Farrell received a Distinguished Staff Award last fall during Founders Day ceremonies. S. Best Photo

ASPIRE Program Sees Continued Growth

On February 1, Dr. Evan Duff will enter his fourth year at NC Wesleyan, having overseen dramatic growth in the college's adult degree program, known as ASPIRE.

When he joined the college administration from Mt. Olive, Wesleyan operated three campuses and enrolled a total of 650 students. Under Dr. Duff's leadership, the ASPIRE program has expanded to nine campuses. Classes have already begun in Wilmington, Greenville, Washington and Whiteville, while the Manteo campus will begin classes this semester, with Brunswick to follow in May. As of fall 2013, total ASPIRE enrollment had risen to 976, far exceeding enrollment in the traditional day program.

Dr. Duff, whose title is Vice President of Adult & Professional Studies, was interviewed about the ASPIRE program.

Q: Wesleyan just held another graduation ceremony. What are you thinking as you watch ASPIRE students walk across the stage to receive their diploma?

A: It is so gratifying to work for a college that understands the importance of education for all demographics and age groups. Wesleyan provides such an important service to adults throughout eastern North Carolina, who for many reasons could not go or finish their college degree between the ages of 18-22.

Q: Describe the typical ASPIRE student.

A: We have students who range in age of 22 to 62 with an average age of 34. Our students are typically working adults that are mid-career professionals who have a family. We also have many single parents who have more than one job.

Q: What are the current enrollment figures for each of the satellite campuses?

A: This was at the end of fall 2013: Raleigh 215, Wilmington 99, Rocky Mt. 293, Goldsboro 282, Greenville 59, Washington 15, Whiteville 13.

Q: What have been recent enrollment trends in the three oldest campuses—Raleigh-Durham, Goldsboro, Rocky Mount?

A: Goldsboro has seen the highest increases in enrollment (credit hours taken by students) and has had close to 10-12 percent increases since 2011 each year. Rocky Mount has had more significant increases in enrollment within the last two years and has about an 8 percent average increase per year. Raleigh-Durham has experienced increases and decreases since 2011. From 2011-2012 there was a 5 percent increase in Raleigh-Durham and over the last year and half we have seen a slight decrease. Reassigning our long-term admissions officer (John Dismukes) to our Wilmington offices had some impact on this.

Q: We imagine that the Raleigh-Durham campus faces the most competition. Identify the main competitors in the Triangle area. What's Wesleyan's niche in that market? What steps can the college take to better compete?

A: Some of our competitors in Raleigh-Durham include Mount Olive College, DeVry, Strayer University, and ECPI. Wesleyan does a lot of things well compared to these other colleges. Our tuition is more cost effective, we offer a range of course structures to include 8-week, hybrid, and online classes, and we offer more variety in our majors such as teacher education, organizational administration, and marketing. Our biggest weakness is lack of advertising and awareness. The competitors listed above spend well over \$1 million a year just on advertising and it is very difficult to compete with that.

Q: Let's turn to the recent expansion into new markets in eastern North Carolina. Under your direction, the college has established several new sites. How do you account for the growth in ASPIRE? Is the college entering under-served markets, or has the 2008 recession motivated more adults to earn their degrees?

A: The nation has seen a trend over the last 10 years of more working adults going back to school to start or finish a bachelor's degree that they did not finish in their early 20's. The evolving job market also requires more and more employees to have a bachelor's degree. Combine this with adults who are geographically bound

See ASPIRE pg 4



Kenyata Harris has already made an impact in her first year on the Bishops hoops team. See sports page 3. SI photo