

FEATURES HILLTOP

Up Close and Personal - Dean O'Brien



PHOTO BY JOHN BARTON

BY PAM BROWN
CO-EDITOR

Often seen walking across campus wearing a british tweed driving cap, or running diligent laps on Mears Stadium's track is the brilliant as well as charming Dean of Student Development, Dr. Michael O'Brien. Directly and sensitive involvement with students is this statesman's specialty, spright wit, his charm, Dean O'Brien heads the office of Student Development on the third floor of the Wren College Union where student's needs are the center of focus in the areas of housing, academics, career counseling, special interest, and activities.

Dean O'Brien grew up in what was then, the small town of Chattanooga, Tennessee. His love for the town compelled him to remain there for the beginning of his education. He earned his B.A. Degree at the University of Chattanooga, his B.D. and S.T.M. Degrees, he earned at Southern Methodist University and his Ed.D. at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. He served as pastor for a church in Knoxville, then he served two years as chaplain at Tennessee Wesleyan College. He later served there as the Dean of Students.

It has now been seven years since Dean O'Brien's arrival at Mars Hill College in 1979. He regards his experience here as "Super". He says, "There are no finer faculty folks or students anywhere." MHC's most prominent assets are its sense of community and its geographic beauty according to the dean. The man's love for our college is no less than obvious as he describes with sincerity relationships of warmth and caring that exist on campus and also he praises the "Breath Taking" view from Gibson Dormitory's balcony, "I'm high on this place," he says, "Mars Hill offers a first class college experience."

Dean O'Brien has the ability to relate to students on a personal level, for his college experiences are still very real to him. He recalls that football and baseball were the most important aspects of college, academics were secondary. "My parents harped on me! But, all I wanted to do was squeak by, somewhere in my sophomore year, though, I got hit with it, I became a bookworm and discovered that becoming and educated person can be fun."

Subscribing to the idea that the college experience should not only consist of academic challenges, the

dean maintains that physical and social activities are crucial, positive components of college life, as well. As the Director of the Intramural Program, Dean O'Brien is aware of the need for student involvement in many areas of campus activity. The Intramural Program provides a wide range of activities from innertube waterpolo to the Snopaws Ski Club. "There is something for everyone," he says with enthusiasm. Students can participate in teams, or set individual goals for themselves. The Dean's goal is to be able to say that three out of every four students at MHC are involved in at least one activity.

Describing himself as "one of the original joggers," Dean O'Brien has been running regularly since 1971. He recommends that students choose at least one activity and carry it throughout college and beyond. "You'll regret, it if you don't."

Dr. O'Brien runs three miles a day, five days a week, keeping acute records of his times. His personal goal is to run his three miles in twenty-one minutes. His determination and love of the sport will surely drive him to success. "I'm a fanatic," he says with a blush. Grinning, he continues, "But I love it."

The Floating Hat

Generally Appalachia is given credit for being a good storytelling region, not only because the oral tradition has remained strong here but presumably because the gaps in work time...particularly in winter...have provided the leisure for both telling and listening.

Undoubtedly both ideas are sound, but I'm of a mind that the good storyteller is an artist who, no matter how busy, will find time to tell his stories. And he usually has no trouble in finding an audience.

Dr. Cratis Williams was such a raconteur. Through ostensibly retired from Appalachian State University for a number of years before his death, he still managed to put in more hours of productive work as a special assistant to the Chancellor than most fulltime professors or administrators.

Nevertheless he always found an opportune moment in the day to pass on a story. Colleagues who met him in a hallway or on a trek across the campus were drawn to him as hypnotically as the Wedding Guest to the Ancient Mariner. And the resulting story left them much happier than the belated Wedding Guest.

A visit to his office inevitably began or ended with a story, often one of his Grandfather tales (whiskey-making Grandpa Williams of Kentucky, that is) or a traditional story reworked for the occasion.

Sometimes the reworking had to do with changing the characters, the physical setting, or the historical period. Whatever the case, the result was solid laughter.

A case in point involves an old chestnut brought up to date by way of a preface to remakes made several years back at a Watauga County historical meeting. It was a rainy evening and he knew that an already wet and snowy season was raising flood thoughts in the minds of his audience.

"This reminds me," he began, "of a predicament that a visiting lowlander got into over in Yancy County a short time back. He was looking to buy some timber land over beyond Burnsville and he got off in an area that could be reached only two bridges, one in the north and one in the south."

"It began to rain pitchforks shortly after he crossed the south bridge, and when he tried to turn back he found the water up over the bridge. At this he drove on to the north bridge, only to find it in the same condition. So he began looking for higher ground."

"As he drove along looking for a place that might offer shelter and safety, he noted a farm house set back from the road and the river. Driving up to the porch, he spotted the owner calmly surveying the rising water.

"Excuse me," he said to the farmer, "but I'm wondering if you'd give me shelter till the bridges are clear?"

Diversions

By John Anderson
Staff Writer



Imagine-deep, lush greenery under a towering ceiling of hard and soft wood.

Imagine-lying on fresh, soft long grass with the taste of freshpicked wild strawberries still lingering.

Imagine-mountain ranges-bold and majestic-standing watch over the progression of time.

Imagine-and it is within your grasp, what has just been relayed to you, the reader, by imagery is a fact that can be experienced within a few minutes and miles of campus. These images can be realized first hand in the form of the Appalachian Trail.

The Appalachian Trail is a 2,100 mile national scenic trail that travels the crest of the Appalachian chain. It is the world's most famous hiking trail and traverses fourteen different states from Maine to Georgia. The first section of the trail was opened in 1922 and has continued to grow with the help of many clubs and trail organizations. The trail is protected by the National Trails Systems Act of 1968 but maintenance is managed by volunteers and hiking clubs.

North Carolina has 239 miles of the Appalachian Trail, part of which passes through Madison County. One of the interesting points where the trail crosses

through the county is at Laurel. At this point the trail is enlightened by the natural beauty of "Old Baldy." Standing 100 feet above sea level, Baldy Mountain gives an incredible view surrounding area. And like its smaller brother, Little Baldy (3,643 ft.), it is a naturally bald mountain that presents long grasses and small shrubs as its inhabitants. Baldy is on milepoint 234.59 A.T.

Another example of a panoramic view can be found farther west at Hot Springs. From the Rich Mountain Firetower (3,643 ft.) one can see the Great Smokies and the Mountains as well as enjoy the view through a beautiful valley area. From Rich Mountain (3,643 ft.) one can hike to the Spring Mountain Shelter (3,643 ft.) point 198.19). The hike through this area is along the crest of the mountains and offers a view that is not to be missed.

The Appalachian Trail is a great nature lover. Along with the beauty of nature, one also gets the advantage of an escape from the busy world. So Mars Hill is an escape into the realm of solitude - visit the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.

Bantam Chef

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"Why I'd be plumb proud to have you," was the reply. "Come on up and draw up a cheer."

"The visitor proceeded to do so but watched anxiously as the water continued to rise and threaten to engulf the house itself.

"Suddenly he turned to the owner with a note of bewilderment in his voice. 'Do you see what I see? That's the strangest current I've ever seen. See that old black hat floating along? First it floats north fifty yards or so; then it reverses itself and floats south. I can't believe what I'm seeing!'"

"Oh, I would'nt let that worry me too much," was the reply. "That's just Grandpaw. He swore that in spite of hell and high water he was going to mow the lawn today."

COMING TO MOORE

How much love, sex, friendship can a person...



THE BIG CHILL

In a cold world you need friends to keep you warm.

R

AXN SAYS GOOD LUCK TO PLEDGES OF:

Lambda Chi Omega

Delta Phi Zeta

Alpha Phi Omega

Delta Kappa Theta

Omega Kappa Alpha

Iota Alpha Omega

Iota Chi Alpha

Kappa Alpha Psi

Epsilon Alpha Chi

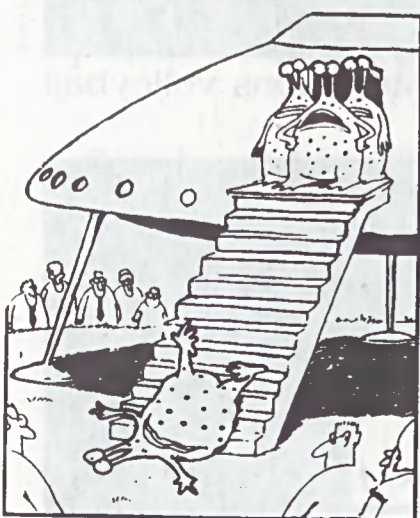
Fullbright Grant

Mars Hill College has been selected to receive a \$19,000 grant for a Fulbright Scholars Program for 1985-86, according to Dr. Jon Crawford, director of the college's Center for International Education.

The grant will fund a Scholar in Residence program at the college for the 1985-86 academic year. Dr. Mustapha Jar, chairman of the Department of Anthropology and Sociology of the National University of Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur, will be the visiting scholar.

The Imperials

On December 1, the Imperials will appear in Moore Auditorium, tickets will go on sale Monday, September 30. Students are urged to get their tickets as soon as possible. After October 4, tickets will be open to the general public. Ticket prices are \$5 for students and faculty with a valid I.D. All the proceeds from the concert will go into the concert fund to help present further entertainment at MHC.



"Wonderful! Just wonderful! ... So much for instilling them with a sense of awe."

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