

Arelia Adams Retires After 18 Years As Chowan Bursar

When Miss Arelia Ruth Adams came to Chowan College as bursar, business manager and secretary to the president she came with the intention to settle down after living in 17 different locations in North Carolina. That was in 1952 and in September she retires after 18 years of service to Chowan and two presidents.

Miss Adams brought with her 21 years experience as executive secretary-treasurer of the American Legion Auxiliary of North Carolina. During that time the membership expanded

from 3,000 to 15,000. One requirement of this job was to locate her office in the hometown of the president, elected annually.

A native of Holly Springs, Miss Adams graduated from Fuquay Springs High School, attended Wingate, and graduated from Hardbarger's Secretarial School in Raleigh. During her last six years of association with the Legion Auxiliary, Miss Adams resided in Raleigh where she was a member of Tabernacle Baptist Church, pastored by Dr. F. Orion Mixon.

In 1951 Mixon was called as

the second president of Chowan since its reopening in 1949 after being closed during World War II. He faced many challenges and obstacles, one being a shortage of personnel. He desperately needed a "girl Friday" and Miss Adams received the invitation.

After the great expenditure of time and energy devoted to developing the Legion Auxiliary, Miss Adams had vowed that she would never again become associated with a fledgling endeavor. But Mixon was compelling and she finally agreed to

move to Murfreesboro.

Although her yen for travel had been well satisfied, when she came she had no idea her stay would stretch out 18 years. Only two Chowan personnel have longer service, Eugene Williams, chairman of the department of foreign languages, who has been at Chowan since its reopening, and Mrs. Mixon, chairman of the religion department.

The quiet Miss Adams, who possesses a sparkle in her eyes and a warmth that generates communication, listed the duties assigned her by Dr. Mixon during a lunch hour interview at her desk in the business office. She was bursar, business manager, secretary to the faculty, secretary to the president, secretary to the associate to the president, and secretary to the board of trustees. She commented laughingly that she had also served as maid and janitor and added, "I've done a little bit of everything."

Miss Adams arrived at a time when Chowan was struggling for its existence. "No credit had been established. But the citizens of Murfreesboro rallied to support the college. If they hadn't, the college wouldn't have made it," she declared. The small staff was forced to double or even triple an ordinary work load. But there was a clear sense of mission, Miss Adams explains, that made all the work worthwhile.

"Dr. Mixon had the faith to believe that an institution of Christian higher education could be built here. Some of his faith rubbed off on me and I began to believe it too."

Miss Adams believes that Chowan's progress throughout her 18 years of service is evidence that God has provided. Gifts to the college in the early years included donations for the purchase of concrete blocks to aid in the construction of buildings, a critical need. During Dr. Mixon's administration five buildings were added: Mixon Dormitory, Green Science Building, Askew Student Union, the gymnasium and the first phase of the graphic arts building, now named McSweeney Hall.

In summarizing her early years of service she said: "I received great satisfaction to see something built out of nothing."

Following the death of Dr. Mixon on October 10, 1956, Miss Adams began her association with the present president of Chowan, Dr. Bruce E. Whitaker, who arrived in March, 1957. For three years she continued her many duties.

As Chowan continued to expand, relief was provided Miss Adams who had been accustomed to working days of 10-13 hours. This came in the form of two new staff members, a secretary to the president and business manager, as well as a part-time secretary for the associate to the president, The Reverend Oscar Creech.

But at the same time the work of the bursar, or treasurer, increased in scope due to the unparalleled growth and stature Chowan was experiencing under the administration of Dr. Whitaker.

Under his leadership a new building has been added approx-



ARELIA ADAMS

imately each year. The enrollment has increased from under 400 to over 1,300 and the faculty has increased from 20 to 70.

Concerning Dr. Whitaker, Miss Adams believes, as was the case with Dr. Mixon, that he was the right man at the right moment for Chowan. She terms Chowan's growth during the two administrations, a "miracle." She said: "This college has had God's blessing on it because it's a miracle — a plain miracle — how far we've come."

While she takes pride in the college she says her greatest satisfaction throughout the years has been to have a part in helping the students. "But for Chowan many young people who come from families of moderate means would not have received an education," she said.

She is facing her approaching retirement with mixed emotions. "I have loved my work at Chowan and I am grateful for all the courtesies that have been extended to me through the years. I have the kindest feelings for everyone as I leave. I hate to leave my many friends here at the college and Murfreesboro, but I am looking forward to a rest."

She has three sisters living in the Raleigh area and plans to visit with them. Beyond that she has made no definite plans, but hopes to visit the many friends she made while working with the Legion Auxiliary who are located throughout the United States.

"Perhaps I'll become involved in some part-time work," she said. "But first I'm going to rest."

Praising Miss Adams, Dr. Whitaker noted: "Few colleges can boast of an employee in terms of tenure of office, ability, dedication and devotion to service as can Chowan in the person of Miss Arelia Adams. For 18 years she has served well and effectively."

"When my family and I came to Chowan in May of 1957, Miss Adams was 'my right hand.' Without her, or someone like her, I simply could not have carried the heavy responsibilities which were mine. Even after we grew in size and stature and were able to bring in additional personnel, she was both able to 'adjust' and to continue to provide devoted, loyal and effective service."

He continued, "Miss Adams merits and deserves a rest from her arduous tasks at Chowan. All of us who comprise the Chowan College Family both salute her and extend our best wishes. May God grant her joy, peace and continued service to her fellowman following her retirement from 'her' beloved Chowan College."



A Token of Appreciation

Miss Arelia Adams beings to open a gift from the Chowan College Family upon her retirement as Bursar, as Dr. Bruce E. Whitaker, President, looks on. The gift, an AM-FM stereo radio, was present at the annual President's Banquet which marked the opening of Chowan's 123rd academic session.

W. J. Parker New Bursar



WILLIAM J. PARKER

William J. Parker of Murfreesboro has assumed duties as Bursar at Chowan College. He replaces Miss Arelia Adams who recently retired after 17 years of service.

Parker's wife, Edith, is the switchboard operator and receptionist in McDowell Columns.

He is a graduate of Murfreesboro High School and Richmond Business College. Parker attended Chowan for one year. He served in the Armed Forces during World War II.

Parker has taken an active part in civic affairs. He is a member and past president of the Exchange Club and is a member

and past master of American George Lodge No. 17 of Murfreesboro.

He is presently serving as chairman of the Board of Deacons of the Meherrin Baptist Church.

Parker came to Chowan from Georgia-Pacific Corp., where he served as assistant office manager and was with the firm, formerly known as Riverside Manufacturing Co., for 24 years.

The Parkers have three children. Billy, 24, is married and is serving in the military services at Ft. Hodd, Texas. Kenny, 21, is working at Farmer's Chemical and Cindy, 15, is in the 10th grade at Murfreesboro High School.