



Excellence in Teaching award

William B. Sowell, right, professor in the Department of Graphic Communications, received the Excellence in Teaching Award from President Bruce E. Whitaker during the 1986 Commencement Exercises. Sowell, who was selected for the award by vote of the faculty, has completed 31 years of teaching at Chowan and also serves as coach of the golf team.

Degrees, diplomas conferred; two awards presented

Chowan College closed its 138th year May 18 with commencement exercises in the Helms Center honoring 144 graduates.

The students received their diplomas and degrees from President Bruce E. Whitaker, assisted by Dean of the College B. Franklin Lowe, Jr., and Registrar Darrell Nicholson, during the commencement program. Professor Harden gave the invocation for the ceremonies.

Dr. Whitaker presented two awards. William Sowell, professor in the Department of Graphic Communications since 1955, received the Excellence in Teaching Award. The Distinguished Alumni Award was presented posthumously to Mrs. Julian W. Porter of Severn and received by her son, Julian P. Porter, Jr., of Richmond, Va.

One of the Associate in Science degrees, cum laude, was also presented posthumously and received by Mr. and Mrs. Johnny Byrum of Murfreesboro. Their son, William Jeffrey, was the victim of an April 29 plane crash that also claimed the lives of three other Murfreesboro men.

Moment of Silence

As a commencement marshal presented the degree to Mrs. Joyce Byrum, sitting on the front row with family members in the spectator's section, first the faculty and staff, then the graduates, followed by the entire audience, stood for a moment of silence to honor Jeffrey Byrum.

The commencement speaker, Dr. John E. Johns, president of Furman University, Greenville, S. C., spoke on "Crabgrass is Forever." He said, "I am using the symbol of crabgrass to represent

all of those activities which we fight daily and which have to be done over and over again, whether we want to or not. And so it is with all human activities—we must strive constantly and forever to keep our lives ordered and to keep our bearings straight."

"Don't Pass the Buck"

He continued, "One of the ways to train yourself to do your best is to not pass the buck because the world does not need even one more buck passer. Don't make excuses to yourself or to others. If you can't blame anyone else then this has to be the surest way to learn to take responsibility for your own actions."

Dr. Johns told the graduates they have choices as to how they will live and what they will do with their lives. "For better or for worse you have that control. It is your burden, your challenge and your opportunity."

In concluding he said, "Yes, I can assure you that the crabgrass is in your yard and in mine. Sometimes I think I can even hear it growing! It is your problem and my problem. The question is what shall we each do about it? I believe God's purpose is that we should not let the jungle consume us but that we should build a city—and so—I wish for each you a glorious life in a beautiful city."

"Live in the Present"

"You would be quite a class and long remembered in this world if each of you decided today that you would live your life in the present and not in the past or future, that you would use your uncommon talents to the best of your ability and that you would do good with your life. The crabgrass is forever in our lives but each of you

represents added value in mankind's effort to overcome it.

"Good luck, and may God bless each of you."

The baccalaureate address was delivered by the Rev. Rowland S. Pruette, who retired at the end of the current school year as chairman of the Department of Religion and Philosophy.

Speaking on a "Well-Rounded Life" based on Luke 2:40-52, Pruette challenged the graduates "to continue your life of growth and maturity."

He told them to pattern their growth after Jesus who grew intellectually, physically, spiritually and socially.

The speaker said the word best used to describe spiritual growth is faith, "for it is through faith, a most powerful force for life, that we respond to God." He answered the objection that faith can not be proven. "If you love another person deeply you would be incensed if someone said that love was not real because it could not be seen or experienced by one of the four other senses.

Social growth is also important, Pruette said. In thinking of Jesus we should "remember a joyful side of his life, one of his reaching out to other people positively and joyfully . . . He brightened every scene he entered with his love and acceptance of people."

Added Pruette, "True religion does not demand of us today sad, anti-social withdrawal from life, but a reaching out in love and joy to people all around us."

He concluded by wishing the graduates that "your lives be rich, useful, and abundant as you grow in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man."

Provides music for graduation exercises

The Commencement Ensemble, under the direction of Professor Robert W. Brown, performed at both ceremonies on graduation day. The music provided by the ensemble, comprised of the Ridgecroft School orchestra and several musicians from the community, is one of the highlights of the exercises.

