

Chancellor-Elect Aycock Is A Man Of Talented Versatility

By PETE IVEY
William Brantley Aycock is a man of talented versatility.

The 41-year old Chancellor-elect of the University of North Carolina is regarded by colleagues, students and neighbors as both a scholar and administrator, possessing a combination of well-balanced qualities. They cite instances to prove it.

"He's an early riser," said a fellow law professor in Manning Hall. "He gets to work sometimes, a couple of hours ahead of anyone else. I remember during one summer school when he was undertaking a new course. He got up at four or five o'clock in the morning to make sure he was well-prepared."

"He has an abundance of drive and determination," said another faculty member, "yet he is relaxed, friendly and has a quick smile and ready wit."

His students declare that in teaching law he is painstaking and lucid. He plunges deeply into the detailed work of his profession and does not spare himself. Yet he takes the time to be a good neighbor and to



Chancellor-elect And Mrs. William B. Aycock

Shown above is incoming chancellor William Aycock with his wife Grace. Aycock will replace Robert B. House as Chancellor of the University of North Carolina in July. The 41 year old chancellor-elect, in addition to being an established teacher of law and administrator, lists among his honors the Silver Star, Bronze Star and Legion of Merit for outstanding performance as an officer in World War II.

devote affectionate attention to his family. He has served as president of the PTA.

His brilliance as a student is testified to by his former teachers; his superior intellectual endowments are the first things mentioned in any conversation here about Bill Aycock.

His purely scholarship achievements are amplified by his practical side. For example, he did much of the actual construction work in building his house in Chapel Hill; he tends a garden in the summer.

Family Man

Once a friend noticed that the grass in the Aycock front yard was not doing so well because the children had been romping on the lawn. Perhaps if the children stayed off the lawn awhile, the grass would grow, the neighbor suggested.

Bill Aycock laughed. "Right now I'm raising children," he said. "When I get through raising children, I'll start raising grass."

His devoted family life, as shown by that remark, was reciprocated the day the Aycock family left home or Raleigh for the selection procedure by the board of trustees. It had been stressed to the children that their father might or might not be named Chancellor at Chapel Hill.

Nancy Aycock, 10 years old, said, "It makes no difference what they do. You will always be my Chancellor."

Judgment

Those who know Bill Aycock best stress his quiet courage and good judgment—these combined with ability to make quick decisions when necessary. As an illustration they point to his World War II record. As a training officer at Fort McClelland, Alabama, he helped prepare Japanese-American troops for combat, troops that later performed so notably in Italy.

Early in December 1944, he went to Germany, as a battalion commander in the 346th Regiment of the 87th Infantry Division.

His first combat experience came a few days after his arrival in Germany. On December 16, 1944, the German Army massed its troops and hurled them at the advancing Allies in the Battle of the Bulge. In the fighting from December 16 to December 23 when the Germans were finally repulsed, Lieutenant Colonel Aycock's performance was recognized by the Silver Star medal for bravery in action.

Later as an advance infantry unit of General George Patton's Army at the time of the March, 1945, break through of the Siegfried Line, orders were issued to Lieutenant Colonel Aycock's battalion to stop until everyone else could catch up. He also was decorated with the Bronze Star Medal and the Legion of Merit.

Grace Mewborn Aycock

When most Chapel Hill people mention Bill Aycock they add,

"Don't leave Grace out. She's an important part of the Bill Aycock story."

Mrs. Aycock is the former Grace Mewborn of Snow Hill. She attended Duke University a year and was graduated from Woman's College of the University in Greensboro. She was May Queen. The Aycocks were married in 1941. Their two children are William P. Aycock II and Nancy Aycock.

"The Aycocks are good neighbors," declared the professor who lives next door to them. "They don't pry into your business, but if you need them because of sickness or other emergency they are right there to help." Mrs. Aycock has been a den mother in the Cub Scouts and her work with the school library has been exceptional.

When he came back to school at Chapel Hill to study law after the war, the Aycocks lived at Victory Village, the temporary war-time wooden housing built near the campus. Many students expect the new Chancellor to be especially understanding of students housing problems, their self-help work and their scholarly as well as their extracurricular activities. For Bill Aycock has excelled in all of them.

A Hard Worker

From the time he was 12 years old he has always had a job to do. During his boyhood in Selma he worked in a grocery store, a filling station, in a drug store and on a livestock farm. At State College he earned a part of his expenses by working in the college book store. He was President of the Student Body at State, and was a member of Blue Key and of Golden Chain. He received his bachelor's degree in education at State in 1936. He was 21 years old. He entered the University at Chapel Hill that same year and in June of 1937 he received the master's degree in history and political science.

The next three years he taught history in Greensboro High School, and during the summers he attended Duke University at one time and Harvard University another. Later he was with the State Headquarters of the NYA in Raleigh, helping to set up vocational projects, and there he remained until he entered the Army in January, 1942.

It had always been Bill Aycock's ultimate goal to study law, and this he did when he was separated from the Army in 1945. He was editor of the Law Review, and was graduated in February 1948, with the degree of J. D.

What his professors thought of his ability was evident in their actions. He was invited to join the faculty, and he accepted in 1948. Previously, he had enjoyed a brief taste of teaching when one of his professors came down with laryngitis and couldn't talk. Aycock taught the class from the notes supplied by the professor. He liked the teaching experience. "I think teaching, more than anything else, gives a

man a chance to develop his own talent," he says. "You have more control over your success or failure. It's really up to the individual to be a good teacher or a bad teacher. Law is constantly changing and developing, and the teacher has to stay up to date. It is a constant challenge to keep up and improve."

Other Institutions

Aycock thinks it's a "good" idea to teach at other institutions, as well as at Chapel Hill. This year he's teaching at the University of Virginia. One recent summer he taught at the University of Texas. In Texas there is a certain unique custom of surprising the visiting professors on the final day of their tenure. On the last day in class at Austin, one of the students suddenly challenged Professor Aycock on a point of law.

"You say you are right," said the student, "but the book doesn't agree with you."

He read from the book. "Now are we to believe what you say, a visiting professor from North Carolina?" the student asked.

"Well, I believe I am right about it," said Aycock.

"Then," said the student angrily, "I suppose we may as well tear up the book and throw it away."

The student tore the book in two, and threw it on the floor.

Instantly there was a commotion in the class. Two other students arose and began shooting revolvers.

Then it dawned on Aycock that a joke was being pulled. He had been forewarned that something was going to happen, but he was not certain what it was to be. In further ceremony he was given a 10-gallon Texas hat.

Military Law

At Chapel Hill, Prof. Aycock teaches three main courses: federal law, property law and military law. Aycock himself installed the military law course at Chapel Hill. That is what he is teaching at Virginia this year. He is co-author of a book, "Military Law Under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, written in collaboration with Colonel Seymour W. Wurfel, now judge advocate of the Fifth Corps in Germany.

He has taught at Chapel Hill since 1948, and during one summer he was personal assistant to Dr.

Frank P. Graham, United Nation's representative to India and Pakistan. Last year during the absence of Dean of the Law School Henry Brandis, Aycock was Acting Dean of the Law School.

The Aycocks are members of the Community Church in Chapel Hill. He is a member of the N. C. State Bar, the North Carolina Bar Association and the American Bar Association. He has been a member of the Chapel Hill Zoning Board of Adjustment.

When the trustees of the University set out to find a man of balanced scholarly and administrative abilities, they hoped to discover a man with those qualities, and anything extra he possessed would be so much the better. In Chapel Hill today the consensus is that the President, selection committee and trustees have chosen well, for they have a scholar who has also proved his administrative capacity. Besides this, his thoroughness in teaching, his publications activity, his conscientious determination to work hard, his devoted family life, his

sense of humor, and his ability to make himself clear are the extras that assure the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill of new and vigorous leadership in the best tradition of the University.

William B. Aycock was born in Lucama, N. C. October 26, 1915, the son of the late William Preston Aycock and Mrs. Aycock. The family lived in Selma where W. P. Aycock was a lawyer and judge of recorders court. His mother still lives in Selma.

A further tribute to his judgment and ability was signified by a law school colleague who said, "Bill

Aycock is the kind of man who can be dropped into almost any kind of situation and land on his feet."

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