

DORR: The Great Physician

an interview by erwin cook

On July 1, 1978, Dr. Laurence Dorr assumed the position of Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs. He was chosen from among 429 applications in a year-long search for a replacement for Dr. Roy Riggs. Dr. Dorr has a master's degree in Philosophy, and will teach in that department. After receiving an S.T.L. degree in theology, he earned a doctorate at the University of Michigan in the Administration of Higher Education. Dr. Dorr is married to Joyce Dorr, who has a Ph.D. in music.

When I walked into his office Dr. Dorr was sitting with his back to the door, smoking his own mixture of pipe tobacco. He greeted me in an informal and friendly manner. There followed a pleasant discussion from which the following excerpts were taken.

ROLE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

(RR) What do you consider your role as Vice-Chancellor to be?

(Dorr) I will initiate the process of redefining and refining the objectives of UNC-A . . . and to develop a 'concept of community' on campus. My job is to create the conditions under which they (the students and teachers) can do their jobs.

(RR) So you will have an active role from the outset.

(Dorr) A modern organization can not tolerate an administrator who is just going 'to sit back and observe' for a year.

(RR) How will you initiate this 'redefinition' process?

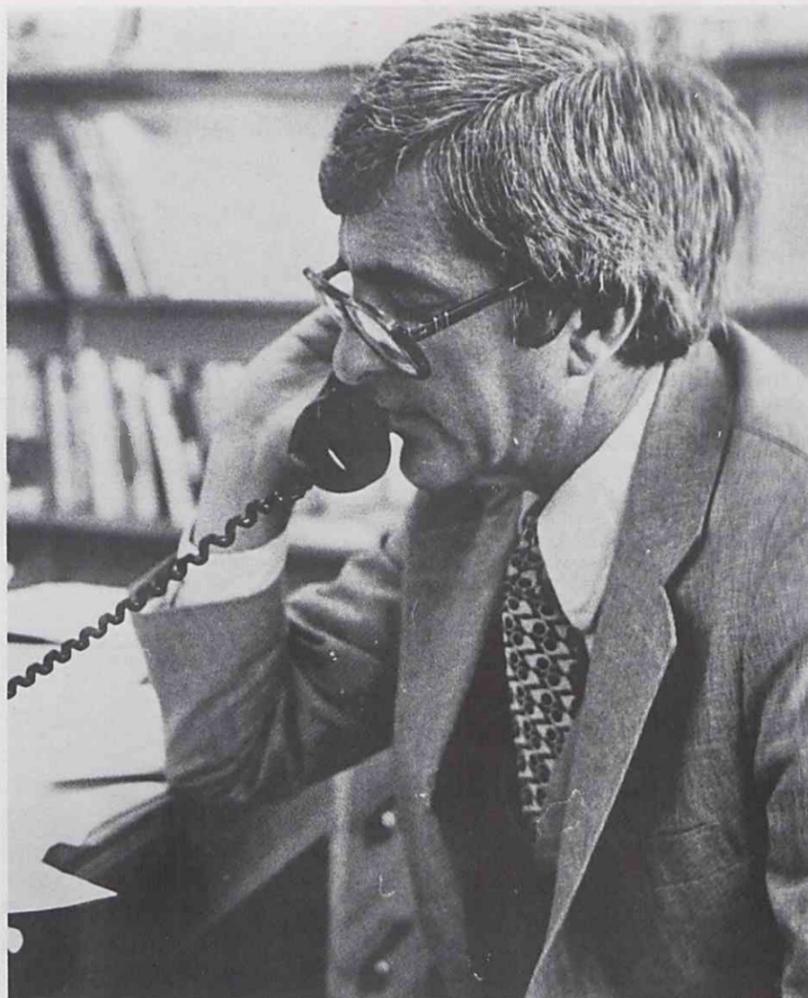
(Dorr) One way will be to analyze our procedures, from registration to graduation, from the student's point of view. I intend to work very closely with student affairs and to enlist the support of students to effect this.

(RR) Many students and faculty members look for you to bridge schisms which exist at UNC-A..

(Dorr) Those divisions have existed every place I've worked--it slows down the educational process and deprives the students of an atmosphere in which they can learn....I don't want to be put in the role of the 'answer man'--rather, I will try to bring the right people together at the right time.

(RR) To 'co-ordinate' a solution?

(Dorr) Yes...The perspective of things are different on a small campus--



DEASON RESIGNS POST

photograph and story by mark west

Thomas Deason, the UNC-A Dean of Students since July of 1970, is to return to full time teaching. Mr. Deason cited personal reasons as the cause for his desire to leave his administrative position.

"I look forward to working with students in the teaching of math," Deason said. He explained during an interview that although he enjoyed working with the students in his administrative position, he had always felt that teaching was what he was best suited to. Mr. Deason explained further that he will be UNC-A's Director of Mathematics Enrichment, a position in which he feels he can be of great use to both the University and the community.

Mr. Deason first worked with UNC-A in 1965-1966, when the college was known as Asheville-Biltmore College. He left his position as an instructor of mathematics for four years to serve as the Chairman of the Mathematics Department at Christ School in Arden, North Carolina.

He returned to UNC-A in July 1970 as Director of Institutional Research and Assistant professor of mathematics, a position he held until his appointment as Dean of Students in 1971. Mr. Deason says that he "appreciates deeply, as does my family, the Chancellor's understanding my request and acting on it as he did." Deason had petitioned on July 8 of this year that the Chancellor allow Deason to return to teaching.

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what is needed is a sense of proportion. On a large campus with departments of thirty or so men, an argument between two faculty members wouldn't have much impact. However, on a small campus, one can not escape it--perspective becomes a problem. Occasionally, we need to step back and take a look at what is really important and what isn't.

(RR) You left the Jesuit Order to become a full-time educator. Did you have any 'spiritual crisis'?

(Dorr) (smiling) No.

(RR) You are then still a Christian?

(Dorr) Yes, this is merely a second career decision.

SHORT RANGE GOALS

(RR) What are your immediate goals?

(Dorr) The number one problem that I have to deal with is that of the recruitment and retention of students. This has two corollaries--We must maintain the quality of the student body, and maintain the size of the institution. Across the US, enrollment in colleges is dropping--thus it is imperative to recruit.

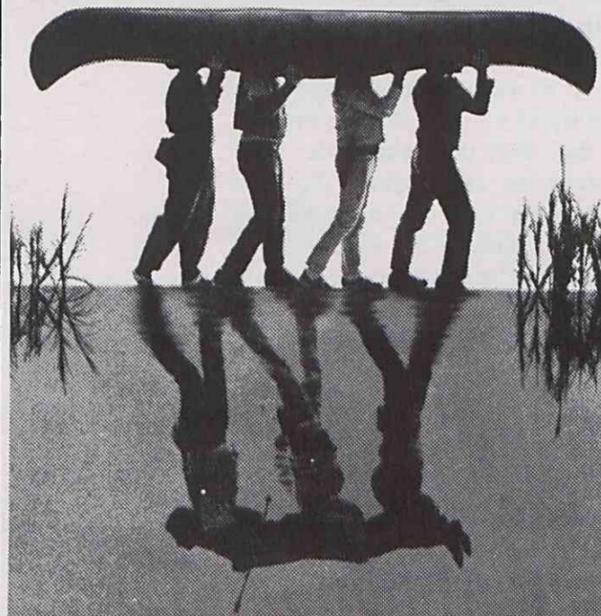
(RR) How will you help recruiting?

(Dorr) By broadening its base. We have to get away from the notion that recruiting is exclusively the job of Admissions. The campus community must work together to maintain the size and quality of the student body.

(RR) Do you have any programs aimed at this goal?

see DORR page three

Where does the camping trip end...
and the nightmare begin...?



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