

Interim Chancellor Mickey Burnim is committed to working for ECSU

by Latisha Edwards

ECSU's Interim Chancellor, Dr. Mickey L. Burnim, believes in the power of education to make the world a better place to live.

"I have chosen to make my contribution to the world through education," said Burnim, a soft-spoken man with a quiet, dignified manner.

Burnim was appointed Interim Chancellor by UNC-System President C. D. Spangler following the August resignation of Dr. Jimmy Jenkins.

At ECSU Burnim quickly demonstrated his priorities regarding education by refusing to cancel afternoon classes for Jamfest/Chill-out Day.

Activities such as Jamfest should be attended "between classes," said Burnim, who says he is determined to take a "non-nonsense, caring, and committed approach" to running this University.

"I don't want anyone to be confused about our mission and what our priorities are," he adds. "Students need to go to class and teachers need to teach. Students are here to get an education, and the primary way to do that is in the classroom. Our business is the business of education."

A native of Teague, Texas, Burnim earned undergraduate and master's degrees in economics from North Texas State University. He received his doctorate in economics from the University of Wisconsin in 1977.

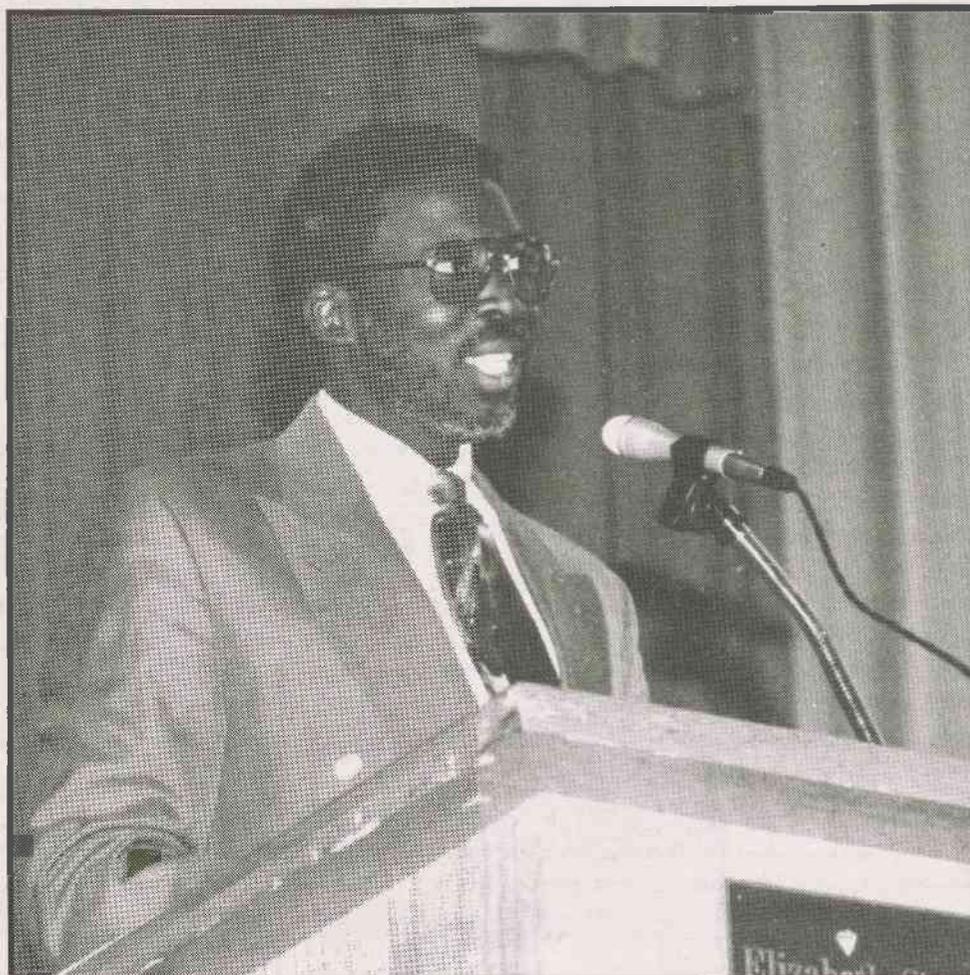
After teaching economics at Florida State University for five years, Burnim worked as assistant vice president for academic affairs at the University of North Carolina system. In 1986, he became North Carolina Central University's chief academic officer. He was appointed Provost of N.C. Central in 1990, and remained in both positions until coming to ECSU.

President Spangler offered Burnim the position of interim chancellor around two p.m. on Aug. 28, recalls Burnim. Two days later, he reported for work at ECSU's administration building—before 8 a.m.

Burnim says he doesn't know why he was chosen as interim chancellor but feels his academic achievements, integrity and experience played a major role in the selection.

"I take advantage of opportunities I feel are worthwhile," he says, adding that he accepted the position only after consulting with his family.

Burnim praised his wife, LaVera, a fellow Teague Texan, with helping in



Dr. Mickey Burnim address ECSU during the University Meeting held September 20 in Moore Hall Auditorium. Chancellor Burnim promised to provide "strong leadership" and expressed his willingness "to work with everyone, no matter how long I'm here."

Photo courtesy of University Relations

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the transition to his new position. "Her support and encouragement meant a lot."

The Burnims' daughter, Cinnamon, 25, is a staff writer for *The Catholic Standard* in Washington, DC. Their son Adrian, 19, is a sophomore at the University of Virginia and a defensive back for the university football team.

LaVera Burnim works as the budget director for Durham County.

"Family is important," said Burnim, who tries to attend as many of his son's football games as possible at UVA.

"My daughter coaches volleyball part-time," he adds. "I want to see her team play, too."

Burnim is not certain how long he will serve as interim chancellor of ECSU, but he is determined to work hard on behalf of the University while he is here. His number one priority is

too boost enrollment.

"We need to work together on this," he says. "The success or failure of this enterprise rests on all our shoulders. All of us have a stake in meeting our enrollment challenge."

Burnim is equally determined to ensure the quality of the University's academic programs. "We need to work toward the qualitative improvement of academic programs and ensure faculty members have appropriate credentials."

Although he is not planning to apply for the position of Chancellor of ECSU, Burnim added that he would be "inclined to seriously consider accepting the position" if he is nominated.

At this point he is not concerning himself with the permanent position, however. "I am mainly concerned about doing a good job as interim

chancellor," he said.

The position of chancellor will be advertised nationally and potential candidates will be evaluated by a search committee appointed by the ECSU's Board of Trustees, according to Joni Worthington, public relations director for the UNC system. The committee will submit the names of at least two finalists to UNC Systems President C. D. Spangler. The UNC Board of Governors will make the final decision.

Burnim said he is grateful for the warm acceptance he has received from the ECSU campus and local community. He has also been impressed with ECSU students whom he describes as being "better behaved and more mannerly than those of many institutions. Obviously there are some very good students here who will do well and make their mark on the world."

Burnim encourages students "to go beyond what's required in class" and to set high goals.

"Work hard to graduate in four years with the highest GPA you can," he advises. "This will open doors for you later on. Rather than being passive, ask yourself, 'What do I need to know? What do I need to be exposed to?'"

ECSU's new interim chancellor also had words of praise for faculty and alumni, and he looks forward to working with alumni, whom he feels have "a great deal of concern for this University."

For leisure, Chancellor Burnim enjoys reading espionage and science fiction novels. He also plays golf and has a serious program of exercise, including jogging, racquet ball and other cardiovascular exercises. "I take my health seriously," he says.

A relaxing day for Mickey Burnim would include exercising, playing golf, working a couple of hours, driving to the Outer Banks with his wife, and watching a football game.

Burnim, who describes himself as "goal-oriented, time conscious, systems-oriented and straightforward," believes he has much to offer ECSU.

"I share the concerns of the people," he said. "I'll make decisions based on what I feel is best for the University."

In announcing Burnim's appointment President Spangler praised him for his "impressive academic qualifications, extensive administrative experience, and the qualities of character required to shepherd this important northeastern constituent of the University of North Carolina."