

Martin Sokoloff, Number Two Man, Calls the Issues As He Sees Them

By MARSHALL THOMAS
Essay Staff Reporter

Martin Sokoloff, dressed in a white shirt, business-like tie and gray trousers greeted a reporter with a smile and asked for the questions to begin.

"I was born in Cleveland, Ohio. My father was the founder and the first conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra," he said. The statement served as the first indication of the life-long history of association with the arts from the school's number two man.

In an hour-long interview the 51-year-old former violin and viola player gave his views on funding, faculty, life at NCSA and his classic gripe.

Sokoloff graduated from the Manhattan School of Music but never played professionally. "After the Manhattan School I worked with Columbia Artists Management. I was the tour manager for the British pianist, Clifford Curzon and for Heifetz. I was also a representative for Community Concerts, Inc."

He returned to his alma mater as head of public relations and eventually became that school's administrative director. He credits his many years at Manhattan with preparing him for his current job.

He came to the School of the Arts as administrative director at the invitation of Robert Ward. He is responsible for the administration and business operation of the school. "I also have been delegated certain responsibilities by the chancellor," Sokoloff said, and I work very closely with him, supplementing some of the duties of the chancellor. In general, I'm responsible for the day-to-day operation of the institution."

Sokoloff believes that the major problem that the school faces is money. In spite of the fact that this is the highest cost-per-student institution in the UNC system, we still need money to upgrade faculty salaries and money to support new programs currently under consideration.

"New programs include the Institute for Creative Arts and the honors program in the creative arts (submitted during the Three Days in January) and a film and TV program.

Sokoloff pointed out that the amount of funds that can be obtained from the state is limited but added, "we are currently asking for \$100,000 in new positions and new programs. Among our requests is a registrar, we don't have one, as such, and a new security guard. You never get everything you ask for, though. It depends on how much money the legislature gives the UNC system."

The administrative director, speaking openly and easily commented on the faculty at NCSA. Asked how the school afforded to pay some of its more well-known faculty, he said, "One of the reasons is the dedication of those people to teaching. Also many have outside work, such as concertizing or other teaching assignments. To keep the quality of teaching that we currently have and to get that quality in new positions, we are going to have to find new sources of money."

On the subject of flying in visiting teachers, he said "There is a certain advantage to that, and in certain cases I think we will always continue that. But we are trying to build and keep a permanent faculty here because the contribution they can make to the community and to the school, in addition to their teaching, is a substantial one if



Martin Sokoloff: At work, at play

Essay Photo By Brandt Clark

they're really living here and are part of the school family."

He used the example of William Vachiano to illustrate the exception. "It made more sense," he explained, "to have Mr. Vachiano as a visiting teacher here on a permanent basis than to find someone of lesser talents, as he is perhaps the world's best trumpet teacher. We probably could have gotten someone younger and less experienced to move down here, but they wouldn't have had the ability to draw high caliber students that Mr. Vachiano has."

On faculty in general he said, "I am constantly impressed with the overall excellence that this faculty has in this institution on every level. I will stress the academic as well as the arts. I think we are very fortunate to have the quality of faculty in the academic school that we have, and to have people who, although they themselves are not in an arts area, are so dedicated to the concept of this school. I think sometimes people don't realize that, or don't appreciate it."

Comparing life as administrative director of NCSA with the same position at Manhattan, Sokoloff said, "For me, I have found life down here infinitely superior to that in New York. I've never been in a situation with so many gifted young people in one place. There were a lot of talented kids at Manhattan but they were all in music. Everytime I see a production at this school, whether it be drama, dance, opera, the orchestra, or what (the work that the Design & Production people do is amazing), it is almost unbelievable to me that this much talent could be in one place. I think, by-and-large, most of the students are nice people."

"If there is a drawback that I've found," he continued, "it's that in this position that I hold I find far less opportunity to know students and to deal with students than I had at Manhattan where I personally knew 300 kids. I was with the kids constantly and knew them on a first name basis."

Pollock Plans Replacements

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Replacements for Hotton and Jaeger will be selected in accordance with changes in the drama program now being considered for next year.

Pollock said, "There is a good possibility that there will be a junior year in England. In that case, we will not need

as large a faculty as we presently have. As soon as it is clear what positions we do need to fill, we will set about looking for the very best replacements we can find. This will be complicated by the fact that we have to follow elaborate procedures required of us by the Equal Opportunities office of HEW and will take a good deal of time."

When asked if either of the resignations were the result of the faculty evaluation forms filled out by drama majors at the end of the first term, Pollock said, "In neither case was it a direct result of the students' evaluation forms."

Pollock added, "I think I have some understanding of their reasons for resigning, but neither said I am resigning for this or that reason."

Asked if he felt the department was the cause of their leaving, Pollock stated, "I think each has his own reason for leaving and no comment."

Hotton explained his reason for resigning, "It was made very clear to me by the superiors of the school that I wasn't wanted here."

Dr. Jaeger had no comment on his reasons for leaving.

Chancellor List At Ten Names

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people in the arts for suggestions and recommendations.

The committee was formed following the resignation of Robert Ward, a precisely orchestrated move almost as much of a surprise in Chapel Hill as it was in Winston-Salem.

The process of giving the private word to close friends, of holding a meeting with the deans, of notifying President Friday by official letter and of making it public took less than a week.

The school community was told in an open convocation at the exact time Friday issued a press release announcing Ward's decision.

Carroll, is on the school's board of trustees and is the same man who headed the committee that found Ward. Other members of the committee are Philip Hanes, chairman of the board of Hanes Dye and Finishing Co.; James Clark and James Semans, both of the NCSA Board of Trustees, Clifton Matthews, Duncan Noble, Marion Fitz-Simons, Lesley Hunt, and John Kavelin, all of the NCSA faculty; Susan Summers, student body president; and John Williams, NCSA alumnus.

Over 100 Names

According to interviews with some members of the committee, the group began its work by drawing up a list of names of possible candidates, including suggestions from all parts of the school community. This first list contained well over 100 names. The committee held several meetings to trim the list down. Considerations focused on several major factors, those interviewed said.

One of the most important questions asked about a name on the list is the general availability of the candidate, committee members said.

Mrs. Fitz-Simons said that coming to head the School of the Arts would mean leaving a career somewhere else. Will the dean of a prestigious music school or a successful theatrical producer leave a large metropolitan area to move to and work in Winston-Salem?

It's a major decision, the turning point in a career, Mrs. Fitz-Simons said. Taking the job as chancellor could mean a substantial cut in salary (the chancellor is paid about \$31,000 a year), said Kavelin.

It would mean a commitment of at least several years duration to the school, said Carroll.

No Dilettante

Search committee members said additional questions before them include: Do we want an administrator or an educator? A performer or a critic?

"A new chancellor must be interested in training artists. He can't be a dilettante in any way," said Kavelin.

"Unfortunately, Jesus Christ isn't available," said Mrs. Fitz-Simons.

Search committee members said they are also asking: Does he get along with people? Is he basically open and honest? What is his family life like?

There is no question that Robert Ward's sophistication and personality have helped the school, Carroll said. He gets along well with legislators and other important people like foundation presidents and corporation executives, Carroll said.

Because of his stature, Mrs. Fitz-Simons said, Ward has a reputation for being able to persuade the most creative and influential personalities in the arts to add their talents to the school. And she added, he can do it on a first name basis.

Discreet Inquiries

The list changes as names are added and removed, Carroll said. At this point Carroll and Hanes are making discreet inquiries about the candidates all over the country. Often they'll ask one candidate for information on another when neither know they're on the list, Carroll said.

Hanes and Carroll are interviewing and reporting back to the committee, Carroll said. Eventually the list will be cut to four names then to two by March. The final two names will be submitted to our Board of Trustees, then to President William Friday and the University of North Carolina Board of Governors for the final decision, Carroll said.

Deans Bow Out

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like Mrs. Fitz-Simons, worked in drama. She has acted with the American Art Theater, Chicago, Ill., and The Lost Colony. She was director for the Community Arts Theater in Urbana, Ill., and has worked as company manager for Unto These Hills, Cherokee, N.C.

Dr. Janet Joyner and Mrs. Jane Van Hoven of the academic faculty will be taking over the duties of Mrs. Fitz-Simons and Mrs. Young on a temporary, part-time basis beginning in September.

(Watch for a more personal view of Mrs. Fitz-Simons and Mrs. Young in an upcoming issue of the Essay.)



Mrs. Fitz-Simons, Mrs. Young (sitting)