

# THE DECREE

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November 15, 2013

NORTH CAROLINA WESLEYAN COLLEGE, ROCKY MOUNT, NORTH CAROLINA 27804

## President Gray To Retire at End of Year

James Gray has announced that he will retire as full-time president of NC Wesleyan at the end of the academic year in May.

Board of Trustees Chairman Dewey Clark said the board is launching a national search for the college's seventh president. "The board feels confident that it will find a quality candidate," he said. "We are committed to spending whatever time and resources it will take to find the right individual to be Wesleyan's next president."

Gray will continue to work part-time during the 2014-15 academic year to help Wesleyan and the City of Rocky Mount move forward on some current initiatives.

"I have decided to slow down a bit after almost five years as president," Gray said in making his formal announcement to the college's Board of Trustees at its annual fall meeting October 4. "The average tenure of a college president is about five to six years, and I know now that to do the job right takes full physical and emotional immersion 24/7/365. My seven grandkids call me 'Chief,' and I need to spend more time with them in my chief's head dress than in my president's academic cap."

The president said the college is headed in the right direction.

"I believe the school is on a sustained and sustainable upward trajectory, which was my personal goal when I came to Wesleyan," he said. "It has been the signature honor of my life to serve as Wesleyan's sixth president."

Gray indicated that recent improvements have resulted from a collaborative effort by his administration and trustees, faculty, staff, alumni, and supporters. "We've moved Wesleyan forward in our mission to transition from a good school to a great school."

During the president's tenure the college has increased its overall enrollment on the strength of the ASPIRE adult-degree program. The college has expanded its presence throughout eastern North Carolina in recent years, growing to nine locations while raising ASPIRE enrollment from 692 students in 2009 to its current level of 937. In the process, the college's total enrollment has risen to 1,587, its highest since 2006, according to the president.

While traditional enrollment has risen the past two years, Gray acknowledged that more work needs to be done for the college to reach its goal of 350 new students. "I'm disappointed over that but determined to make our goal," he said.

Over the summer, the college completed \$3.5 million in renovations to Edgecombe Residence Hall and the Hartness Student Center and construction of the Southern Bank Green.

Clark thanked Gray for his efforts over the past five years. "All of the board members and I are grateful to Jim for the positive contributions he has made at the college," Clark said. "He and his wife, Beth, have meaningfully contributed to Wesleyan as well as to the Rocky Mount community, and they have brought the city and Wesleyan

closer together. Jim and Beth both have made a lasting impact at the college, and both will be greatly missed."

The board chairman added that he's pleased that Gray will continue to work part-time on special projects in 2014-15. "That way, he can continue helping Wesleyan become an even better college for our students across Eastern North Carolina and the Wesleyan community."

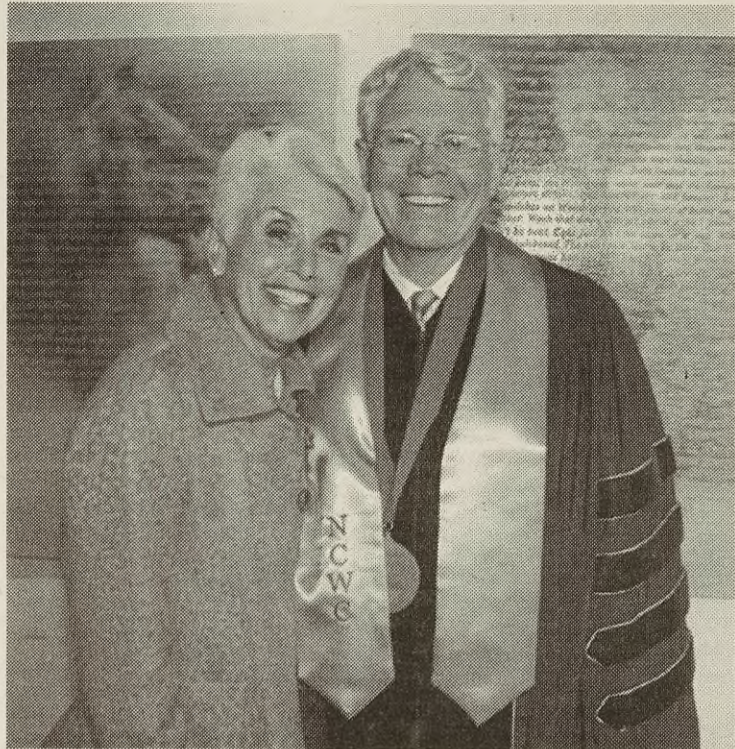
Gray said next year he'll be working on three projects that are very important to him. One is the Eastern North Carolina Center for Business & Entrepreneurship, launched in August. The center will expand Wesleyan's business administration program through a new concentration in entrepreneurship and promote job creation in Eastern North Carolina by strengthening small business development. Gray will serve as non-executive chairman of the center's advisory board.

A second project will involve fundraising for Wesleyan's "Strength of Heart" capital campaign, which already has received more than \$6 million in commitments toward a goal of \$20 million, Gray said. Funds will be used to renovate Wesleyan's four original residence halls and student center, construct a new classroom building to house the Business & Entrepreneurship Center, and increase funding for student scholarships and grants.

Gray will remain chairman of the Rocky Mount Organizing Committee, which brought the USA South Spring Sports Festival to the city last spring. The committee is working to bring that athletic event, with its thousands of participants and supporters, back to the area again next year.

"Wesleyan is proud and grateful over our enhanced relationship with the City of Rocky Mount and the wonderful people here," Gray said.

(Article courtesy of NC Wesleyan PR)



President Jim Gray and wife Beth on the day of his inauguration. The president has announced his retirement at the end of the school year.

PR photo

## Books-in-Tuition Still Draws Mixed Reactions

By Katie Beaman  
Decree Staff Writer

Mixed reviews still surround NC Wesleyan's books-in-tuition program, now in its third year.

In 2011 President James Gray announced that the college would be implementing the program whereby the costs of textbooks were included in the student's tuition. At the time, the administration said that \$325 would be added to one semester's tuition to cover the costs of books, according to a report in the May 16, 2011 issue of The Decree. Under the program, students return their books at the end of each semester.

Interviewed in recent weeks, students offered different opinions about the program, regardless of their major.

Matthew Richardson, Alex Cane, Erinn Richardson, and Frank Willis all would rather be able to sell their books back at the end of the semester for money or some form of bookstore credit.

Willis, a senior, believes the school should revert to the old system, where students were responsible for getting the textbooks, because it allowed more financial autonomy. "The new system is just a way for the school to control more of our money," said the criminal justice and sociology major. "Plus, selling the books back at the end of the semester put more money in my pocket. That's gas money."

But business major Edwardo Ugalde thinks that the program is a good idea. "Other schools make you buy your books and sometimes you don't use them," he said. "And since it's in the tuition, you don't feel like you're paying for it."

Connor Wright agrees that the program is sound. "It's awesome not having to shell out \$500 for books," she said, adding that since the fee is in the tuition, it doesn't feel like she's spending money.

Apil Gurung, Kendra Hoes, Kayla Burr, Chavonne Jones, Samba Candine, and Alex Andretti all had similar opinions.

Akeen Bangurah is one who likes the convenience of the existing program. He said that at his previous school he had to go to the financial aid department to get a book voucher. "The whole thing was just a pain," he said.

Salsa Andretti also went to a different school before attending Wesleyan. He didn't like buying his books either. "I hated it at the community college," he said. "They don't give you back enough money and sometimes you bought the book and the teacher didn't even use them."

Trevour Huber, a graduate returning to finish a math degree, stated that having the cost embedded in tuition doesn't worry him. "Yeah, the tuition goes up, but the tuition goes up every year anyways."

Dr. Vivienne Anderson, an English professor, stated that it's hard to balance

the positive and negatives. Science books tend to be very expensive while literature books don't cost as much. Also professors can only change their book selections every three years. "It's hard to keep contemporary literature when you have to wait three years," said Dr. Anderson. "A lot can happen in three years." She went on to say that it's a benefit knowing that all the students in her classes will have their books.

Math Professor Bill Yankosky said he didn't have a strong opinion regarding books-in-tuition. But he acknowledged that students no longer have an excuse for not having their books. "I'm not really sure how the program works in terms of students wanting to keep books," he said. "I think it's fine, as long as there's a system in place so that any student who wants to keep a text for a particular class is allowed to do so."

Under the current program, in most cases, books are ordered from a supplier for a three-year period. When it comes to the three-year rule, the mathematics faculty has no problems with it, Dr. Yankosky said. "I realize that our situation is different from many other areas because most of the content we teach hasn't been changed for hundreds of years," he explained. "Because of that, it's not a big deal that we've had to use the same textbook for three years."

Dr. Michael Brown, the NCWC Provost, thinks that there are advantages to books-in-tuition. "One, it's more economical for students and two, it solves the problem of students getting their books late or not picking them up at all."

Dr. Brown explained that some depart-

ments—exercise science is one example—get a waiver so that they can get new books each year, to reflect the latest research and other changes in particular fields.

In fall 2014 the college is switching to a different books-in-tuition program. It will include a new book provider that will allow professors to change their book choices more frequently. The new provider will also have a larger selection of books, according to Brown.

It's worth noting that students can buy their books back at the end of the year for 60 percent off the used price, a policy that is currently in place.

## Wesleyan Faculty, Staff Recall Day Kennedy Died

By Jonathan Winchester  
Decree Staff Writer

Three bullets brought the nation to a screeching halt that day in 1963, but recalling the event continues to elicit strong memories and opinions in 2013. November 22 marks the 50th anniversary of one of the greatest tragedies in American history—the assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, 35th President of the United States.

"I remember where I was that day; I was upstate in a bar" (lyrics from "The Day John Kennedy Died"—Lou Reed)

Retired English professor Terry Smith had just walked in to his uncle's house when his aunt received a phone call informing her that the president had been shot. Now working as a part-time tutor in Wesleyan's Writing Center, Dr. Smith remembers the fall of 1963 vividly due to personal tragedy. "My father

died three weeks prior, and I had been visiting my mother at the hospital. She was in critical condition," he recalled. "I wasn't involved in all the hysteria, as I was already out-to-lunch mentally."

Before the assassination, Dr. Smith was not impressed with the politician. "At that time, in New York at least, it was the Republicans who were the reformers," he said. Also, when John Kennedy attended the Choate School (in Connecticut) in the early 1930's, Dr. Smith's father was one of the future president's teachers. "My father disliked Jack. He was an offensive teenager," said Dr. Smith. "I didn't vote for him in 1960. Maybe part of that was what my father told me about him."

## Costs To Exceed \$36K For New NCWC Students

Students will see the price of an NC Wesleyan education increase 2.9 percent next year, raising the total annual cost for incoming students to \$36,182, the administration has announced.

The increase covers tuition, room, and board and it will help fund construction and renovation projects in the residence halls and the Hartness Center, said Jason Edwards, vice president of NCWC Finance & Administration.

"From what we can gather we have instituted an increase that is lower relative to our competitor institutions," Edwards said.

Edwards explained that the college is announcing the hike months earlier than usual. "This will allow our current students to know the impact now," he said, "and it permits our admissions team to get ahead of our competitors in recruiting new students."

Students can expect to see a number of campus improvements in coming years. Changes will include:

\*More renovations to the residence halls. One project was completed at

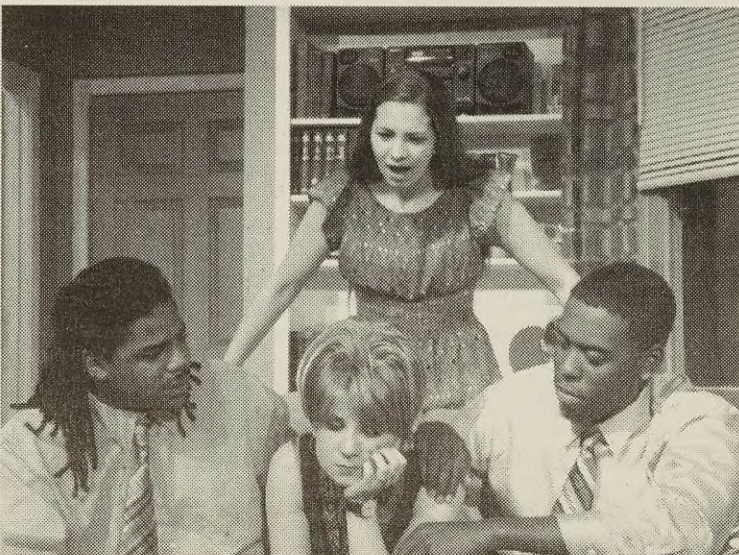
Edgecombe over the summer, and the college plans to continue with the remaining halls during upcoming breaks.

\*Phase two of renovations at the Hartness Center. Edwards noted that the second phase will involve expansion on the north side of the building, upgrades to existing kitchen equipment, and paving the parking lot, among other improvements.

\*Other capital needs such as roof replacement on several campus buildings, improvements to parking lot islands, and sidewalk and curb repairs.

According to the college's web site, the 2013-14 costs are: Full-time tuition: \$26,482; Housing (double-room): \$4,160; and Meal Plan: \$4,520

Edwards pointed out that the figures indicated on the web site were for new Wesleyan students and that the college had frozen last year's costs for returning students. As a result, the 2.9 percent increase will mean that new students pay \$1,020 more next year, while the hike will be \$998 for students who were enrolled in 2012-2013, Edwards said.



Wesleyan staged the "female version" of Neil Simon's "The Odd Couple" in October at Powers Recital Hall. Katherine Crickmore (standing) is shown here with, from left, Delon Wicks, Rachel Jones-Grooms and Jerome Little. See play review on page 4.

Drake photo