

Presidential Leadership At North Carolina College

By HELEN G. EDMONDS

It is exceedingly revealing that North Carolina College at Durham, in so short a college-life time as fifty years, has witnessed such phenomenal growth. The institution has had two presidents: The Founder, Dr. James E. Shepard, 1910-1947, and Dr. Alfonso Elder, since 1948.

The physical expansion of the College, the enlargement of its curricular offerings, the numerical increase of its faculty and staff, and the astronomical increase in student enrollment have marked one phase of the history of North Carolina College. Tragically enough, many educators and laymen have regarded these categories of growth as the most significant milestones. A more sober realization evinces very quickly that these are quantitative criteria — and a kind which will make charts and graphs very imposing — but may or may not be indicative of the real significance and contribution of any institution.

The true heart and soul of an institution of higher learning may be gauged, in part, by its presidential leadership. Dr. James E. Shepard, by birth, family, education and circumstances was destined to be a leader. He was one of North Carolina's eminent sons and educators. The Founder stated in 1910 the purpose of the College: "The development in young men and women of that fine character and sound academic training requisite for real service to the nation." He fitted the aspirations of the College to the pressing needs of the decades of 1910, 1920, 1930, and 1940. He conceived a liberal arts program as indispensable to race and state advancement.

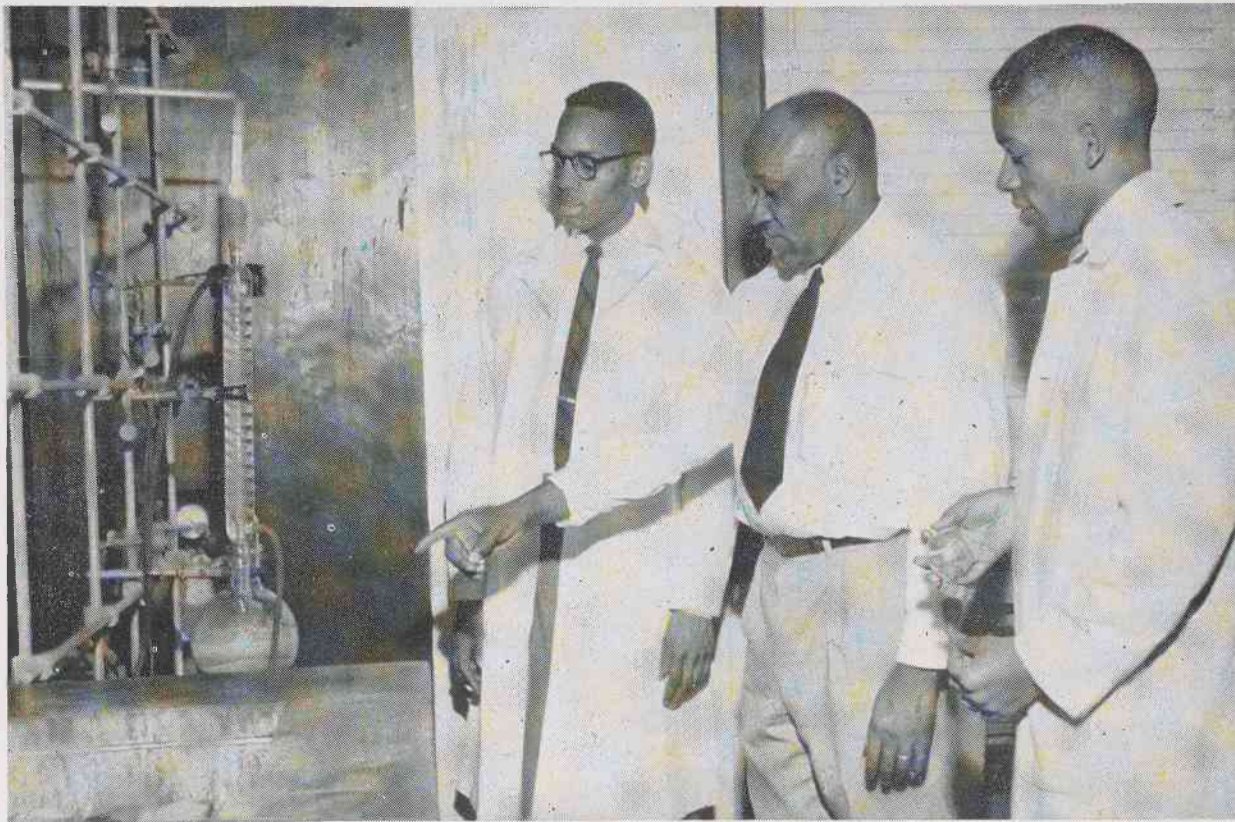
The personality of a college administrator at work must reflect itself with and upon a variety of persons in the course of human experience. With Dr. Shepard this social intercourse was forever at work with individuals, religious denominational organizations, educational associations, fraternal orders, and even in politics. No single figure in North Carolina was more adept on that high level of human relations — where races, groups, classes and masses work for the over-all good of the State, Region, and Nation — than was Dr. James E. Shepard. He counted among his personal friends and warm supporters Presidents of the United States, Congressmen, Governors, Legislators of many states — the Governors and Legislators of North Carolina in particular. These leadership and personality dividends set in motion chains of reactions which permitted the College to achieve the quantitative criteria already mentioned.

Dr. Alfonso Elder assumed the presidency in 1948, bringing to this task of educational leadership a rich family tradition in education, classroom experience by the way of professorship, administrative techniques derived from formal training and actual deanship for more than twenty years, a doctorate from Columbia University, research talent manifested in reputable publications, a harvest of goodwill from hundreds of students who received their inspiration from him as professor and dean, and, a wealth of academic respect from a faculty who were associated with him as a dean, and later, as president.

His task in the new day has required newer approaches to the College's internal organization, a continuously more improved faculty, expanding and intensifying the curriculum to meet the new changes demanded of education at this midpoint in the twentieth century, increasing library facilities to meet the needs of new course offerings, increasing research facilities, effecting a new sense of direction for student guidance compelled by the forces in the new day, bringing into fruition the building program blueprint of his predecessor, purchasing additional land, erecting new buildings, adding new features to buildings already erected, renovating extensively many aspects of the physical plant, and in addition, keeping open the avenues of good human relations in the State and Region. Dr. Alfonso Elder has, and is continuously doing these things.

He realizes that the size of the enrollment should never be the aim of the College's energy, nor the measure of its success. He is expanding professional depth and adding new dimensions of scholarship. His administration has set a new high in employment policy — a policy designed to augment the tradition of scholarship by searching for and securing men and women with professional competence from every part of these United States and abroad. He is achieving this faculty professional competence, and not at the expense of good teaching. A sound educational philosophy undergirds the past twelve years of his leadership:

"Probably the most outstanding demand made upon colleges by powerful forces in life is the demand for a high level of training necessary for effective living in the modern world . . . This need for high level training is not to be thought of in terms of the traditional objective to aid an individual in his pursuit of knowledge in order to become a cultured person, however worthy this aim may be. It should not be thought of in terms of the customary desire to continuously improve the quality of instruction provided by the college so that those who happen to have the urge to extend their knowledge might do so. This need we speak of is new in the sense that it involves a demand rather than a preference for increased intellectual competence, if the work of the modern world is to be done. This need does not invalidate in any way the worthy objective of the college to provide experiences designed to assist in the student in formulating value judgments, in realizing moral purposes, and in developing



Professor Ezra Totton discusses equipment and chemical reactions with two of his students in the chemistry laboratory. They are Wade Kornegay, an honor graduate who is now a candidate for the doctorate in chemistry at the University of California (Berkeley), and Harold Powell, also pursuing an advanced degree.

Scholarship Funds Assist Many Talented Students Here

In June of 1960, Wade Kornegay, a 1956 NCC graduate, expects to receive the Doctor of Philosophy degree in physical chemistry at the University of California at Berkeley.

Wade was a Fulbright Scholar at Bonn University in Bonn, Germany in 1957 and a Danforth Foundation Fellow at California last year. He is a research assistant at UC.

At the same time Kornegay receives his degree, James Atwater, a 1953 NCC graduate, may be awarded the doctorate in English at the University of Pennsylvania. Atwater entered Penn on a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship.

These two brilliant NCC graduates, one in science and the other in the humanities, first entered college here where their superior talents were recognized, with the assistance of scholarship contributions.

Graduating at the top of their high school classes, Kornegay in Mt. Olive and Atwater in Chapel Hill, these two students were fortunate in that funds were available for them when the time came to enter college.

Unfortunately, this is not the case with even the majority of students graduating in the first ten per cent of their high school classes in North Carolina. For every high school graduate given scholarship assistance at NCC each year, it is estimated

that an additional five deserving students must be turned down because of limited funds. Undoubtedly, many of these, despite their recognized ability, never get to college.

In the cases of Wade and Jimmy, money to assist them had been made available through the generosity of friends of the College, principally faculty members and alumni, whose annual giving comes to approximately \$5,000. Having entered and established brilliant records at NCC, both of these students were later recognized by national foundations and given additional assistance for graduate study - Wade the Fulbright and Danforth and Jimmy the Woodrow Wilson Foundation. It is safe to assume that both are now better able to live useful and productive lives for society and for themselves.

But North Carolina College is equally concerned about Wade and Jimmy's classmates for whom financial assistance was not available. Chances are that some few of them made their way into other colleges. The majority, however, no doubt drifted into menial jobs, thereby wasting their God-given talents.

In a day when ability counts, this is a needless and dangerous waste, one which America can ill afford. It is for this reason that NCC is launching its \$50,000 scholarship campaign and is ur-

ging all friends of the College and of education generally to contribute.

Pledges and/or contributions may be addressed to President Alfonso Elder, Chairman of the Scholarship Drive, or to: Fiftieth Anniversary Scholarship Campaign, North Carolina College at Durham, Durham, North Carolina.

Editor's Note

This special Golden Anniversary publication, the **Golden Echo**, has been produced under the editorship of Horace G. Dawson, Jr., a member of the English Department faculty,



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with the assistance of Dr. C. A. Ray, professor of English and director of the News Bureau.

Numerous members of the NCC faculty and staff have made contributions in terms of research, writing, and the supplying of information upon which some of the stories are based.

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For invaluable technical assistance and advice, the editors are grateful to the personnel of Service Printing Company, who extended themselves in printing this Anniversary newspaper. In this connection, N. B. White, President, Walter S w a n n, George White, Day Reed, Moses Norwood, and Clarence Wilson merit special mention.

desirable social competences."

When one reflects on the graduate and professional schools which North Carolina College encompasses, and the variety of academic degrees it awards annually, one readily recognizes that Dr. Elder is operating a university, and is operating it with appropriations less than what universities normally receive, and is keeping all of its schools up to standard.

Successful college administrations reflect in large part the spirit and interest of cooperative, well informed, and energetic Boards of Trustees. The Founder and his successor have been abundantly blessed with men and women of high calibre. The Board of Trustees today represents leaders versed in the educational philosophy and needs of higher education, financiers versed in the techniques of business administration, architects and engineers versed in institutional building planning, state legislators versed in governmental programs and planning and accomplished citizens from other professions which have been undergirded by sound liberal arts training.

There has been absolutely no difference between the Founder's and his successor's sense of devotion and dedication to the ideals for which North Carolina College stands. The differences in their techniques and approach to the specific problems which each faced were differences born of the new day with its new challenges and its new demands. Colleges are most fortunate when presidential leadership resides in the hands of sound educators.