

the CAMPUS echo

North Carolina Central University

Durham, North Carolina

March
1988

Who is David Stith? And why is he so unpopular?

An interview with NCCU's "champion of the underdog"

By Greg Childress

What does North Carolina Central University trustee David Stith want, and why is he always, in his words, "on the unpopular side of issues"?

Stith, an NCCU alumnus who earned an undergraduate degree and took graduate and law classes, was appointed to the Board of Trustees by Gov. Jim Martin in July 1985. Since that appointment, Stith, to the dismay of his colleagues and many others, has been outspoken on issues concerning student life at NCCU—particularly the infirmary, security and student access to buildings.

A self-proclaimed "champion of the underdog," Stith said he wants to change the "antiquated and repressive" policies he claims have been around since he entered NCCU as an undergraduate in 1947.

The quality of service at the often criticized student infirmary is on the top of Stith's list for change. "The infirmary is life threatening," said Stith. "I get repeated reports from students, staff and from my own observations. (The chief problem is) no supplies."

Stith alleges that a few months ago, during the height of the flu season, he received information from a source,

whom he refused to identify, that the infirmary was out of Tylenol and antibiotics.

Dr. Marcono R. Hines, director of Student Health, rejected Stith's allegations. "We have many antibiotics," said Hines. "You wouldn't use antibiotics to treat the flu anyhow."

Hines could not confirm whether the infirmary was out of Tylenol during that period.

Stith is also wary of the allocation of funds received by the infirmary from student medical fees. "What happens to the over half-million dollars a year collected for medical fees when 90 percent of the students are sent over to Durham County General?" said Stith. "All (the infirmary personnel) are doing is providing transportation through Security."

Stith alleges Dr. Russell Harrell resigned from his post at the infirmary because it posed a threat to his medical liability insurance. Now the infirmary is operating with one doctor (Dr. Hines) instead of two.

The much maligned campus security is also on Stith's list. "You don't have to argue with me about campus security," said Stith. "Just ask the family of (Anthony Wayne

Bullock) who was killed (in an NCCU dormitory)."

Bullock was killed Aug. 30, 1986 in a stairwell at Chidley Hall. The murder is still unsolved and Bullock's family has since filed a lawsuit against NCCU.

Stith is also unhappy with the deployment of security officers. "Many are used for duties other than security—like taking people to the hospital, picking up visitors from the airport and running to the bank," he said.

Stith is also critical of Security's policy of posting a guard at the street entrance to the Administration Building. "What do you need with a man sitting there when someone across campus is stealing your stereo?" said Stith.

J.W. Smith, head of Security, disagrees with Stith's assessment. "We've gotten nothing but praise from visitors about the guard in that booth," said Smith. "He helps them with directions, helps them find parking places and gives out visitor parking passes."

Stith would like to see more foot patrols on campus. He said he has seen no evidence of the 10 additional security guards hired in the fall working on a regular basis.



David Stith, Champion of the underdog

The infirmary and Security are not Stith's only complaints. According to Stith, students were denied the use of the Health Science Building for a club meeting and were not allowed to use McDougald Gym for a dance following a basketball game.

NCCU athletic director, Christopher Fisher, explained that the gym could not be used for dances because he does not have a covering necessary to protect the floor. Fisher said a protective covering will be furnished by Fall 88.

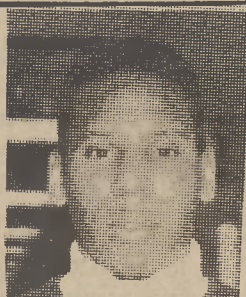
Stith has been criticized by

other board members for "airing dirty laundry" in public and bringing negative press to the university. However, Stith feels that sometimes methods such as "airing dirty laundry in public" are necessary in order to bring about change.

According to Stith, the local media has focused too much on him rather than on the issues, and he fears being misunderstood, especially since he attended a board meeting flanked by two armed security guards not long after his altercation with Director of

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