

# The Hilltop



MARS HILL, N.C. 28754

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## "Heritage" Mural To Be Unveiled

The unveiling and formal dedication of Douglas Ferguson's ceramic mural, "Heritage," will be held on Saturday, September 8, which has been designated "Doug Ferguson Day" by the college.

Ceremonies will begin at 3 p.m. and will include early American, traditional, and string band music by the Appalachian Folk, a group composed of Lou Therrell on banjo, Byard Ray on fiddle, Vivian Hartsoe on guitar and Craig BuBose on base fiddle. Dr. David Smith, campus minister, will give the invocation, and college president, Dr. Fred B. Bentley, will address the assembly in a tribute to the artist. The dedicational prayer will be given by Dr. Hoyt Blackwell, president emeritus of Mars Hill and namesake of the building where the mural was placed.

Ferguson is a native of Yancey County, born on "Possum Trot," a small settlement near Bald Creek. He grew up there and attended grammar and high school at Bald Creek. He enrolled in Mars Hill and completed his studies in art in 1933. He worked for Tennessee Valley Authority until 1946, gaining invaluable training and experience in the ceramic research laboratory at Norris. Together with his father-in-law, Ernest Wilson, he founded the Pigeon Forge Pottery on the banks of the Little Pigeon River about five miles northwest of Gatlinburg.

Since then, Ferguson has become renowned as a potter, artist, and designer. His business has drawn tourists from all over the world; and he has been commissioned to create special pieces for



such dignitaries as Queen Elizabeth; and he has lectured all over the world.

Ferguson began thinking of a gift for the college when he visited the campus last year at the invitation of Dr. Bentley. He originally thought of a mural on a long, low wall, but Dr. Bentley directed his attention to the major entrance of the school's new \$1.3 million administration building, Blackwell Hall. That entrance features a glass front which intersects with a brick wall and rises for three stories.

At the juncture of the east wall grows Ferguson's "Heritage," a ceramic tree of Appalachian life that spreads its branches inside and out, and bears the symbols and artifacts of life in this region. The mural reaches a total height of 32'8", weighs 5,090 pounds, and has a surface area of 323 square feet. To mount the mural, Ferguson cast it in 496 pieces, putting it together like a giant jig-saw puzzle.

Ferguson spent a total of 15 months on the project, filling book after book with sketches before finalizing a design that set everything at an angle. Then piece by piece, he created the mural at his Pigeon Forge Pottery. "It became a spiritual thing with me," he notes, and admits that he let business go for the 15 months it took to finish his largest work.

The public is invited to attend the unveiling, and Ferguson will be available to answer questions about the work and sign autographs during a reception following the ceremonies in the Peterson Conference Center of Blackwell Hall.

## Charles "Pug" Ravenel to Visit MHC

In an attempt to add a new dimension to the intellectual life of Mars Hill College, the Mellon Scholars program will be initiated this year with the theme of "The Future of the South." The first lecture and seminars will be given on September 18 and 19. Charles "Pug" Ravenel, political and economic leader from South Carolina, will be the keynote speaker. Carolyn Thompson, instructor in the social work program, is the coordinator of the first seminars. The format for the two-day conference includes, in addition to the lecture by Mr. Ravenel, a dinner meeting involving faculty, students, and community persons, small group discussions, and seminars which will be designed to encourage involvement of all participants.

In October the Mellon Scholars program will sponsor a second set of seminars under the subtheme of "Growing Up in

the South." Smith Goodrum will coordinate these sessions to be held on October 24 and 25. Speakers and seminar leaders will be announced later this month.

Ray Rapp, Assistant Director of CEP, will coordinate the January term seminars which include Professor George B. Tindall of the history department of UNC-Chapel Hill and seven Mars Hill faculty offering courses around the theme.

Other seminars and film presentations will be held in February, March, and April of 1980. The Mellon Scholars program will continue through 1983 with a general theme for each year to be announced in the previous spring.

The Community Life Committee has announced three Community Meetings for the fall of 1979. President Bentley will conduct the first Community Meet-

ing on Wednesday, September 12, at 10:00 a.m. in Moore Auditorium on the general theme of faith. There will be opportunities to discuss President Bentley's speech in small groups following his address.

On October 17, John Claypool, who will also be delivering the Staley lecture, will lead the Community Meeting on the general theme of hope. Grady Nutt, a nationally known entertainer and lecturer, will conduct the Community Meeting on November 14. He will also hold a concert the night before.

Dr. Douglas Heath, professor of psychology at Haverford College, will be on campus September 28 to hold seminars throughout the day related to his research on the impact of liberal education on adult maturity. Dr. Heath has also written widely on the whole concept of unity of faith and reason in the learning

process. All members of the community will be invited to participate in these seminars.

NOTE: Rural Life Center

Mars Hill College is enjoying access to a farm of 800 plus acres owned by Mrs. Mildred Bruce Pendergrass, a member of our Board of Trustees. A Steering Committee consisting of faculty, students, and community persons is presently drawing up a five year plan for utilization of the farm as an educational, recreational, cultural, and demonstration resource. There are four subcommittees dealing with each of the above areas, plus a farm operations committee. If you are interested in becoming involved in the farm program or its operation, please contact Dr. Richard Hoffman, Steering Committee Coordinator.