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OXENDINE SAYS HE EXPECTS PSU FACULTY TO BECOME INVOLVED

Addressing the full faculty of Pembroke State University for the first time since becoming chancellor of PSU July 1, Dr. Joseph B. Oxendine, speaking in his customary style without notes, said Monday that he "expects faculty to become involved and to make their marks in the community it serves."

Toward that end, Chancellor Oxendine added: "I am a very positive individual and will try to open doors and help you do better in the areas of which I speak."

He said a university should be involved in teaching, research and scholarship, and service.

Of the latter, Oxendine spoke of helping the public schools of the area. "The public schools are not what they ought to be in this area. I told the teachers and administrators of the Public Schools of Robeson County recently in this very auditorium (Performing Arts Center) that Pembroke State University is going to be involved in helping the quality of their public schools."

Oxendine, who taught at Temple University in Philadelphia for 30 years, said he has every reason "to believe the children of Robeson County are as bright as those where I was in Philadelphia."

But he also said "adult literacy is something which we ought to be concerned about." Oxendine told how a fourth grade teacher from Red Springs had informed him of seeking help for students by sending their spelling books home with them. The purpose was for the parents to help the students with their spelling words. "However, that teacher found out that a large percentage of the parents cannot read," said Oxendine.

Oxendine said he has told the superintendents of the public schools he "wants us to get together and talk in substantive ways" about combating this problem.

The PSU chancellor spoke of other issues in which he wants PSU to become involved: health issues, economic problems and political concerns. "Our new Office of Economic Development at PSU is going to help us to upgrade the economic base of this community. Concerning human relations, I read about the problem here on the front page of the Philadelphia newspaper. And I have addressed the Human Relations and Unity Commission. Pembroke State University ought to be



Chancellor and Mrs. Joseph Oxendine (left) greeted faculty members at a reception held in their honor. They are shown here with Dr. Gilbert Sampson, chairman of the PSU Mathematics and Computer Science Department.

involved in upgrading the quality of life here. There are things we can do something about. We ought to make a difference."

Oxendine, who is a strong believer of rewarding professors according to merit, said the beginning of a new academic year is always an exciting time. He said last year's class was last year's class, and one should be

creative every year. He said it is good to feel nervous and excited about the start of a new year. "You do your best when you are a little bit on edge," Oxendine claimed. He said any professor who is flat and doesn't feel excited has problems in his chosen profession.

Oxendine, who was a dean during part of his tenure at Temple University, said he loved teaching and added,

"Perhaps I'll have an opportunity to do some of that here." He said he came from a family of teachers and returned to teaching at Temple after being a dean.

He also emphasized to the PSU faculty the importance he places on scholarship and research. "It is absolutely essential that we do that if we are to be called a university," he said, adding: "We are not a teacher's college." He said he feels PSU should be in the business of publishing. "Those who don't get turned down (by publishing companies) are those who don't publish or don't try." (Oxendine has authored three books and contributed chapters to several others.)

Oxendine said he is also going to make use of his contacts in Washington, D.C., and elsewhere to help gain funding for research by PSU professors.

Having been very active in faculty governance at Temple University, the PSU chancellor committed himself to work with the PSU faculty in shared governance.

Oxendine, who said the university "is my life really," emphasized that a university is a unit, not a place of separate departments.

"I am very excited about being here, and I look forward to getting to know each of you personally," the PSU chancellor said in conclusion.

Afterwards, Oxendine and his wife, Adrienne, were guests at a reception by the faculty in the lobby of the Performing Arts Center.

Dr. Charles Jenkins, PSU vice chancellor for academic affairs, announced at the faculty meeting that as far as pay increases are concerned, PSU has been given a six percent increase in faculty salaries to allocate. "No money has been given to the institution for across-the-board raises," Jenkins said. "The allocations will be made on the basis of merit, on the basis of recognizing promotions, and on the basis of recognizing and trying to do something about faculty inequities."

Chancellor Oxendine also said the pay raises will be discretionary and not across the board.

PSU has received \$5,865,737 for faculty salaries for the 1989-90 academic year. Of that amount, \$765,965 is "new" money with \$433,042 being for new positions and the remaining \$332,023 for faculty salary increases.

ROBESON INDIAN PRAISED AS SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE

By HAYES CLEMENT

Judge Dexter Brooks listened in silence as an attorney tried to explain why his client, a convicted marijuana dealer caught dealing again, shouldn't have his probation revoked. This time, the attorney argued, there were only accusations against the 23-year-old man. The plastic bags, postage scales and \$1,100 in cash found at his house didn't prove anything.

"Well, the problem was severe enough for a concerned citizen to call the sheriff," Brooks noted.

"You and I both know, your honor," the defense attorney responded, "that a 'concerned citizen' is just shorthand for someone who calls up the sheriff and says, 'Gee, I think someone's selling marijuana over here...'"

"And in this case they turned out to be right," interjected Brooks, a slight smile coming over his brown, bespectacled face. His ruling, delivered evenly and without a lecture: the man would have to serve his four-year prison term.

Anyone expecting a soft touch for defendants from the state's first Native American Superior Court judge should think again, say those who know Dexter Brooks. The engineer-turned-jurist, as they describe him, is a compassionate political reformer who doesn't let sympathy sideline a scholarly devotion to the rules of law and logic.

"He will hammer people when they need it," said Randy Carroll, an assistant district attorney who prosecuted cases before Brooks during the judge's five-day stint last week — his second — in Guilford Superior Court. "He's right down the middle. We've been generally pleased."

Says Brooks of his still-emerging style on the bench: "So far I see myself as a person who lets the attorneys try the cases. I try not to interject myself into the trial — just make rulings based on the evidence."

Brooks, a 46-year-old Lumbee Indian from Robeson County, gave up his four-man law practice in Pembroke and joined the bench last January after Gov. Jim Martin picked him to fill a new judgeship born of political turmoil in the tri-racial county. The Superior Court seat, Robeson County's second, was created after the original went by default to the controversial Joe Freeman Britt in the 1988 election. Britt's only opponent for the seat, Indian activist Julian Pierce, was murdered five weeks before the Democratic primary in what has been described as a domestic dispute involving two other Indians.

The anguish of Pierce's supporters was compounded by a law that prohibited the substitution of another challenger to Britt, a district attorney with a reputation for putting scores of convicts on death row but often at the expense of civil rights.

Martin and the General Assembly agreed to create the new judgeship, and Martin vowed to appoint an Indian to it, as a healing gesture.

Brooks, a soft-spoken bachelor known to work as many as 18 hours a day and six days a week on cases, was the near-unanimous choice for the appointment among Robeson County's Indian lawyers, a group that numbers about 12.

"He's been recognized as our best legal mind," said Lonnie Revels, a Lumbee native of Pembroke and a former Greensboro City Council member. "When we were lobbying the governor for his appointment, I don't know of one Indian who went against him."

"It was basically the obvious choice," said



Judge Dexter Brooks is the first Indian judge in the state

Arnold Locklear, one of Brooks' former law partners. "He realizes the spotlight is on him. It's not a stress, though, because of his ability."

The son of two Pembroke schoolteachers, Brooks originally set out to be an engineer, not a lawyer. After graduating with high honors from N.C. State University with a degree in electrical engineering, he worked for Westinghouse a year, then spent two years in the Army—one of them in Vietnam—before returning to NCSU to do graduate studies in math. He dropped out halfway toward his doctorate, however, when he realized he was more interested in "people problems than abstract problems."

While teaching math at Robeson Technical Institute, he became involved in a campaign to preserve a historic classroom building at predominately Indian Pembroke State University. The effort succeeded, largely because a lawyer found a means to challenge the planned razing in court.

Impressed, Brooks enrolled in law school at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He graduated in 1976 and joined Locklear's law firm in Pembroke, a town of 10,000 about 12 miles west of Lumberton, where he specialized in personal-injury lawsuits.

He also became a respected behind-the-scenes power in the county, laying the groundwork for legal strategies that ended discriminatory voting practices in Robeson County and merged the county's six racially segregated school systems into one countywide system.

"Obviously, there's been a lot of discord in Robeson County but the situation is improving, principally because Indians and blacks are getting more access to the political system," Brooks said recently during an interview in the Guilford Superior Court judges' chambers. He is currently serving a six-month stint as the presiding judge in Columbus County but was called to Guilford County last week and to Mecklenburg County next week as a fill-in judge. Colleagues describe Brooks as a voracious

reader, a teetotaler and a fervent convert to fit eating and exercise following the heart-attack death of a younger brother. He's also known for preferring topics such as judicial temperament and population demographics even in social conversation.

"Dexter is a unique person. When other people are talking, Dexter is thinking," said Christine Griffin, administrator of a Robeson County legal-services clinic for which Brooks has worked for free. "In carrying on a conversation, it's almost as if you can see the wheels turning in his brain. He's analyzing everything you're saying. And at the end, he'll summarize it. He gives you a synopsis."

"He is very organized and very thorough—to the extent that when he does make a decision it's one that's very calculated," Locklear said.

"He's not the type of individual to agonize." Brooks said that while he strives to treat all defendants with respect and give their arguments thorough consideration, he finds it difficult to be lenient with anyone convicted of sexually abusing children or dealing drugs.

"I feel very strongly about the drug problem," he said. "It's destroying this country."

He also holds views—such as support of a Constitutional amendment requiring a balanced federal budget and sympathy for one that would ban flag burning—that might surprise critics who warned that Brooks as a judge would pursue a left-wing political agenda.

"I've never considered myself a radical," he said. "I've only considered myself a person who believes in the American dream to the extent that it should be available to all persons, regardless of race."

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This was the scene at Pembroke State University this week as students arrive for the start of the fall semester.

COMMUNITY

VOYAGER II FLY-BY OF NEPTUNE OBSERVED AT PLANETARIUM

The Science and Technology Center, located in the Planetarium at the Board of Education of Public Schools of Robeson County, Lumberton, NC, will offer to the public a unique experience.

The public is invited to be on location at the Science and Technology Center for the Voyager II fly-by of the planet Neptune on August 24-25 from 9 a.m.-11 p.m. Daily press conferences will be coming in through satellite on Voyager II's findings, with the possibility of being present to see new discoveries being made. There will be several sites available for this event.

For further information, call Mr. James A. Hooks, Director, Science and Technology Center at 789-3302.

WOMEN'S SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT SEPTEMBER 8-10

Robeson County Recreation and Park Commission will hold a Women's Double Elimination Softball Tournament at Maggie Oxendine Park in Pembroke September 8-10. Entry fee is \$75 per team. Deadline for entering the tournament will be Friday, September 1 at 12 noon. A roster of 15 players is permitted. For more information, call Robeson County Recreation Department at 671-3090.

MEN'S SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT SEPTEMBER 16-17

Robeson County Recreation and Park Commission will hold a Men's One Pitch Double Elimination Softball Tournament at Maggie Oxendine Park in Pembroke September 16-17. Entry fee is \$75 per team. Deadline for entering the tournament will be Friday, September 8 at 12 noon. A roster of 15 players is permitted. For more information, call Robeson County Recreation Department at 671-3090.

LAUBACH TUTOR TRAINING WORKSHOP SEPTEMBER 12-14

The Scotland County Literacy Council is sponsoring a free Laubach Tutor Training Workshop Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, September 12-14 from 6 p.m.-9:30 p.m. The workshop will be held at the Scotland County Literacy Council Office at 401 N. Main Street in Lumberton, NC. To pre-register or for further information, please call (919)276-7007.

PEMBROKE KIWANIS REPORT

BY KEN JOHNSON

Larry Chavis, program chairman, presented Dr. Joseph Oxendine, PSU's new chancellor in the weekly meeting held at the Town and Country Restaurant. Dr. Oxendine comes from a long line of educators, and truly puts his emphasis on teaching, service and research as a true part of academics and scholarship. He says the University can, does and will uplift its impact on the community, students and the tri-racial area. The University has changed, coming from a teaching normal school for Indians to one with a mission for all people. We need a lot of people to serve the people of this area. Their needs can be met by the expertise of a great faculty, trained in the modern era, waiting to be unleashed through service to the community. I am looking forward to the challenge. I want a closer relationship between the college and the county school system. I believe the children can grow up in a much better educational climate than when we were growing up. We are off to a good start. The enrollment figures will be out in a few days and it is just good to be back with family, friends, and students. Dr. Oxendine said, "I no longer have to go back to Temple after all these years except to sell my house, and of course my son knows the area up there better than this area. I have never left this area psychologically and spiritually, as this is my home. I grew up here. We need to apply our trade resources in the areas of farming and economic research. We need to know about our underground water, our lumber, our catfish farming. We can learn about these things through seminars, conferences, and workshops. Our adults need literacy classes. How can children grow up properly if their parents can't read? They are no less bright than other children, they just haven't had the opportunity. The college will be making an impact on this."

The Pembroke Kiwanis sure welcome Dr. Oxendine back home.

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