

Two teachers retire from city-county school system

By CHERYL WILLIAMS
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Mary L. O'Neill says that from now on, she won't do anything before 9 a.m. And she doesn't have to.

Jean A. Watson says that she wants to travel extensively. And now she can.

Effective July 1, both women will retire from the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School System.

Last Friday the two retiring educators were honored with a reception attended by more than 50 people. The audience was made up of relatives, associates and close friends of the two.

In addressing the audience of well-wishers, Miss O'Neill was lighthearted and full of wit.

"If the world is not ready for us, we're ready for it," she said. "Jean and I have been involved in the retirements of a lot of people, some of them right here in this room. Now it's our turn."

Miss O'Neill gave answers to a few questions that she said people have asked upon hearing about her retirement.

When asked what she will do now, Miss O'Neill replied, "Whatever it is, it won't be before 9 in the morning."

Are you going to take a cruise? "If you have ever seen 'The Poseidon Adventure,' no way," she said.

What will you do when the school buses start running? "I probably won't be awake when they're running," she said.

In an interview during the reception, Miss O'Neill said that she has enjoyed her career as an educator.

During her career with the school system, she has had the opportunity to work with children as well as adults, she said.

"I've seen a lot of changes -- desegregation, consolidation of the school system, and some society changes," she said. "Some things were improvements for the school system, some were not," she said.

Miss O'Neill said that her philosophy through the years has been that the children are the future. If we teach them well, then it means a better future for us.

"We need good teachers, and we need to have them come in with good ideas to make the world better for us," she said.

In discussing her retirement, Miss O'Neill, who has spent more than 30 years in the field of education, said that she never thought the day would come. "Now I can sleep late," she said.

Although Miss O'Neill repeated her determination that



Jean Watson, left, and Mary O'Neill plan to relax when they retire on July 1 (photo by James Parker).

whatever she does during her retirement will not be before 9 a.m., she did say that she wants to get more involved with church activities and community work.

"I have met many people," she said, summing up her career. "I have grown professionally as well as personally. I hope I have helped someone else along the way."

Miss O'Neill's and Miss Watson's retirement plans have one common element: They both want to sleep late.

In discussing her retirement, Miss Watson told the reception audience that she has made a retirement plan. This plan lists her objectives and a timetable.

"One of my objectives is to sleep later in the morning," she said. "I also plan to get out my sewing machine and make a wardrobe for Hawaii."

Miss Watson plans to do a lot of traveling. She said that her first trip will be to the beach with her sister and brother-in-law.

"I will miss working, and I will miss you," she told the audience.

Miss O'Neill, a native of Charleston, W. Va., received her undergraduate degree from Winston-Salem State University and her master's degree in education from Temple University in Philadelphia.

She has done post-graduate work at Wake Forest University, N.C. A&T State University, the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Miss O'Neill has held a variety of positions in the school system.

After teaching for 14 years in Pender County, she came here to become an elementary school teacher. She has also served as general elementary supervisor.

She has held her present position of Chapter I supervisor since 1979.

Miss Watson is a native of Greenwood, S.C. She received her undergraduate degree from

UNC-Greensboro and her master's degree from Appalachian State University.

She has done post-graduate work at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and at UNC-Charlotte.

She has served as a teacher, an elementary supervisor and a coordinator of Chapter I programs.

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Public works official

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for two and a half years before becoming the head of institutional services and security at Salem College.

Upshaw joined the city as its assistant to the director of public works last July 15.

According to the police report, Upshaw is scheduled to stand trial in District Court on June 24. He was released on a \$500 unsecured bond.

Hill said Wednesday morning that no decision has been made concerning who will succeed Upshaw or when a successor will be named.

The position pays between \$24,337 and \$33,384 a year. Upshaw's salary was \$25,833.60 annually. He helped prepare budgets and heard employee grievances, Hill said.

According to a job description from the city personnel department, the assistant to the public works director helps the director manage and plan within the department and runs the department in the director's absence.

He or she also "gives particular counseling and supervision" to the city's sanitation,

buildings and grounds, and streets and garage divisions.

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