

Former Business Manager

Leon Spencer returns for college service as member of Advisors



President Bruce E. Whitaker, right, welcomed former Business Manager Leon P. Spencer to his first meeting as a member of the college's Board of Advisors.

Alumni Happenings

Class of 1959

Mildred Ferguson Sullivan of Huntington, West Virginia received Meritorious Honor Award by U.S. Department of State, Washington, D. C. in March 1980 and Superior Performance Award by U.S. Veterans Administration Medical Center, Huntington, West Virginia in June 1983.

Class of 1963

John P. Upton, Jr. of Hillsboro, NC was named Sanitarian of the Year by North Central Environmental Health District which includes 13 Piedmont Counties.

Class of 1969

Paul Davis Shirley, Jr. and Nancy Transou of Tarboro, NC were married on September 24, 1983. He is employed by S & J Automobile Sales. She is employed by Tarboro Savings and Loan.

Class of 1971

Regina M. Richardson of Richmond, VA was promoted to Trust Officer with Bank of Virginia in Richmond.

1971 Nursing Class Information

Jennifer Forrest Ament of Poquoson, Va., is employed by Riverside Hospital.

Priscilla Renn Brewer and her husband Douglas reside in Elm City, NC with their two children. He is a physician and she is employed by Acosform, Inc., a computer billing program for physicians.

Eleen Matthews Glover and her husband reside in Seaboard, NC

with their two children. He is self employed with a Sow Hog Operation.

Judy Boyd Holland and her husband, Waverly, reside in Port Hueneme, CA. He is an electrician with the U.S. Navy. She is employed by Port Hueneme Adventist Hospital as Operating Room Charge Nurse.

Betty Sowers Long and her husband, E.J., reside in Winston-Salem, NC with their two children. He is a computer programmer for Hames Corporation. She is an office nurse for Drs. Earnhardt, Sayers & Rogers.

Gail Melchiorre Parker and her husband, Carey, reside in Virginia Beach, VA with their daughter. He is assistant Vice President of Home Federal Savings and Loan Association. She is an office nurse for Virginia Beach Pediatric Center.

Joan Annet Clark Parker of Durham, NC is employed with Durham Technical Institute as a clinical and classroom instructor and parttime nurse at John Umstead Hospital in Butner.

Dunya Barakey Setfanick and her husband, Andy, reside in Sterling, VA with their son. She is employed by Loydoun Memorial Hospital as Night Shift Charge Nurse for labor and delivery.

Sydney Graves Zuraw and her husband, Kenny, of Chesapeake, VA have two children. She is employed by Portsmouth General Hospital and he is employed by Tidewater Yacht Agency, Inc.

After an absence of 33 years, former Chowan College business manager, Leon P. Spencer, of Raleigh, is again associated with the college, this time in a volunteer position.

Spencer served as Chowan's business manager during the crucial period from 1948-50. He has currently accepted an appointment to the Board of Advisors.

In April, 1948, Spencer was charged with the responsibility of directing efforts to prepare the facilities and grounds for the re-opening of the college. Chowan had been closed in May, 1943, during World War II.

Spencer was a natural choice for the job. His background included education and business. After graduating from Wake Forest College in 1927, he taught school at Knightdale for two years and Franklinton for five years. He served as an official of Farmers Bank of Seaboard from 1934 to 1948.

Family Ties

Spencer also had family ties to Chowan. His wife, the former Jane Brooks graduated in 1932. His sister, Mrs. Gertrude Spencer Barnes of Jackson, also is a 1932 graduate.

When the trustees acted in the face of opposition to reopen the college, chairman Dr. Raleigh Parker of Woodland, handpicked Spencer for the job.

"He talked me into leaving my job with the bank and coming to Chowan," Spencer who loves a challenge, remembers. "Some of the people at the bank thought I had lost my mind."

Little wonder. Spencer faced a monumental task. "Weeds had grown up everywhere. The Columns building was badly in need of repairs. The entire physical plant was in a run-down condition. And on top of that, new buildings were needed."

When Spencer was hired, the college didn't have a president. The overall responsibility for preparing the campus and facilities for a new day in the life of the college rested solely with Spencer.

The friendly, energetic Spencer plunged headfirst into his work. He directed the plumbing, electrical and carpentry work. The grounds were cleared. The Columns' roof was repaired.

The progress encouraged the trustees and other supporters to double their efforts to raise the funds for the renovation and prepare the college for its reopening. The tireless Spencer was a man in perpetual motion. He worked far into the night many times.

He tackled the task of preparing the antiquated heating plant for

the students. Construction of the new president's home and four cottages to house men students was begun.

Spencer is generous in his praise of area residents who assisted. "We couldn't have made it without their help," he insists. He said those who helped included Ed and Dorothy Brown, Oscar Creech and Lonnie Sasser, all now deceased, and Elwood Parker, who remains a close friend of Spencer. Spencer visited with Parker following the recent joint meeting of the trustees and advisors.

The campus transformation amazed even the critics who had called the reopening plans a folly and argued that the college property should be sold.

Yearbook Dedicated

Chowan opened on schedule in September, 1949, to a class of 130 students. At the end of the school year, the students dedicated their

comptroller-business manager. Spencer served until reaching the mandatory retirement age of 68 in 1973.

But he had no intent of resting back and enjoying life from the vantage point of a rocking chair. He accepted his present position of treasurer of the Baptist Employees Credit Union. At the age of 78, he continues to report to work each day in his office in the new Baptist Building in Cary.

Spencer has other interests that keep him busy. He is active in Hayes Barton Baptist Church in Raleigh where he has served a number of terms as a deacon and is assistant treasurer and chairman of the budget committee.

He is also continuing his activities on behalf of the Lions Club. He was a charter member of the Seaboard Lions Club and helped to organize the Murfreesboro Lions Club when he served at Chowan.

"He came when the weeds had thickly covered the campus and dust had settled upon the interior. He met the problems and absorbed the worries . . ."

—Quotation from 1949 CHOWANOKA

yearbook to Spencer. They praised him for his leadership and devotion. He wrote, "He came when the weeds had thickly covered the campus and the dust had settled upon the interior. As the sickle met the weeds and the cloth absorbed the dust, so he met the problems and absorbed the worries in a warm and friendly manner magnanimously giving his valuable services toward Christian Education."

Spencer was lured from Chowan in 1950 by another challenge when he accepted the position of county accountant and tax supervisor in his native Northampton County. Under his leadership, a tax re-evaluation he called "long overdue", was accomplished.

In 1953, Spencer accepted an invitation from Dr. M. A. Huggins, executive secretary-treasurer, to serve as comptroller of the Baptist State Convention. Spencer said his background and experiences, to include his days as Chowan's business manager, helped prepare him for the position.

Retired as Comptroller

The title was later changed to