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Expansion goes on. While students walk to and from their various classes, the building of the new Earth-Life Sciences Building goes on.

journal photo by ben barnes

## Witherspoon Resigns As Religious Studies Chairman

by lori mcowen

September 3, 1974, Loy Witherspoon resigned his position as Chairman of the UNCC Religious Studies Department. Dr. Witherspoon served as chairman of the Philosophy and Religion department for eight years and became chairman of the Religious Studies Department when it formed three years ago. After ten years of service why did Dr. Witherspoon resign? When asked this question Dr. Witherspoon replied, "I have chosen not to discuss the reasons for my resignation though it is my understanding that some of the faculty have. At any rate I would not be able to classify them according to classifications".

Dr. Jeff Meyer of the Religious Studies Department says, "Dr. Witherspoon's resignation did not center around one incident. Over the last few years many incidents have occurred that conflicted with Dr. Witherspoon's administration." Dr. Meyer further stated that the conclusion that Dr. Witherspoon was forced to resign by a majority of the professors because of his opposition to allow a class on religion and sexuality is incorrect. Dr. Meyer expressed the fact that Dr. Witherspoon had a practice of opposing such courses, but since the class in question was not even proposed for this semester we can not attribute any opposition on Dr. Witherspoon's part as a major factor in his resignation..

Dr. Donald Capps, who just recently came to the University from the University of Chicago, has been appointed acting chairman of the Religious Studies Department. Dr. Capps says that the reason he has been chosen as acting chairman of the department is because being just recently hired he would not have been involved in any of the controversies over the past two and one-half years with Dr. Witherspoon and the department. He stated that Dr. Witherspoon's resignation had not been a surprise to the department or Dean Mathis.

Dr. Capps made the observation that UNCC is a young institution. Over half of the professors are under thirty-five and have never taught at any other institution. Under these circumstances we find that the chairman in a department has usually grown with the department and finds himself in a stable position. At older and larger universities a resignation by a chairman would not be so rare and would not cause so much alarm. Since this occurrence has happened perhaps once before in the history of UNCC, the situation has been overemphasized..

Student concern and interest has arisen over Dr. Witherspoon's resignation. This interest is not just within the Religious Studies majors but also within many students doing related studies in religion. The classes offered in religion and culture, including literature, art and psychology have attracted

many students never before interested in religious studies.

The issue that has alarmed these students is the question of whether the direction of the Religious Studies Department is affected by Dr. Witherspoon's resignation. In similar remarks by Dr. Meyer, Dr. St. Clair and Dr. Witherspoon himself, the answer is no. His resignation will not affect the direction of the department.

Dr. Witherspoon stated that the Religious Studies Department has tried to maintain a "well-rounded" curriculum. He explains that there are three major areas that a student may pursue: Judaeo-Christian tradition, which includes much of the basis of Western culture; Religion and Culture, which includes literature, art and psychology; and the History of Religion, which involves study of other religions in Japan, India, etc.

Dr. St. Clair, Dr. Gestwicki and Dr. Meyer find the area of conflict within the department a bureaucratic one with Dr. Witherspoon's administrative policies. They state that certain incidents involving Dr. Witherspoon's administration have been brewing over the years. Dr. Meyer suggested that in any situation where six men and a chairman discuss issues that affect them, emotions will be evidenced and personality conflicts will be apparent.

Dr. St. Clair and Dr. Meyer both agreed that the quality of a professor does not dictate the

## Power Fails Again

by mike evans

The latest of UNCC's power failures occurred last Wednesday at approximately 3:45 p.m. Power was off in the dormitories, the dorm cafeteria, the library, the health center, the gym and the Rowe Arts Building. Ed Ayers, director of the Physical Plant, provided the Journal with information on the freak occurrence..

A cable going directly from the campus conglomerate to the dorms bored a hole in itself. Another break in a cable which had occurred earlier Wednesday, but had gone unnoticed by the majority of people on campus, was being repaired at the time of the second break. Both breaks caused the power to be shorted in the greater part of the campus.

The university has a two unit system for power. There is a 15,000 volt system which includes all the buildings which were affected by the shortage, and a 4,000 volt system which includes the rest of the buildings on campus.

Many of the cables on campus have been tested and are definitely faulty. The cables were purchased three to five years ago, and were made before the company changed the style

and quality of the cables. However, the company from which the cables were purchased has agreed to reimburse the school with cables. The average life of a cable is at most twenty years and they are expected to last at least fifteen. The cables are certainly supposed to last longer than three years. When the new cable is installed there will be a major shutdown, but it will be arranged during class vacations.

These occasional blackouts are a form of relief from the pressure of classes for many students but they do present many unfortunate problems (the heating of refrigerated goods, kills fish in aquariums, etc.). The end or at least a reduction of the school's power problems may occur in the near future.

A new backfeeding system is now being built to the library and one is in the planning for the dorms. These systems would help prevent power shortages by providing two possible outlets to each building on campus. The backfeeding system for the dorms will cost between \$100,000 and \$120,000, and the money has not yet been set aside by the university..

professor's capabilities as an administrator. In another light, it does not mean that a certain administrator's policies are rejected because they are wrong, but perhaps because they do not meet the needs of the department at that time.

Dr. St. Clair stated that Dr. Witherspoon's resignation will mean that Dr. Witherspoon will be able to fulfill his desire to devote more time and energy to his classes and students. Dr. St. Clair said that the area of conflict is one of administration.

Jon Young, one of the two student representatives for the Religious Studies Department, stated that the meeting for the Religious Studies majors, last Wednesday, September 18, 1974, was designed to explain Dr. Witherspoon's decision to resign and its effect on the direction of the department. The comment was made by Mr. Young that although Dr. Capps did make it clear that the resignation arose out of conflict within the administrative policies of Dr. Witherspoon, Dr. Capps left the impression with the students

that there was more behind the situation than what was said. Mr. Young expressed the feeling that perhaps further clarification will be needed.

An all-day conference was held Friday, September 20, by the Religious Studies Department faculty to discuss such things as new class proposals, the direction of the department and the all important issue of selecting a new chairman. Most of the professors felt that a chairman will be brought in from outside the department.

whether his resignation was forced and why did he resign at the beginning of a term rather than at the end of the semester. Dr. Witherspoon replied that he preferred not to respond to these questions at the time. He did say that he did not have plans to leave the university, but quite to the contrary, it is Dr. Witherspoon's hope that he has several years of service which he can render to students and the University. Similar expressions have been made to Dr. Witherspoon by the Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs.