

Man Behind the Music

Chancellor-Elect Proves Master Of Many Tunes

By LAUREN BEAL
Assistant University Editor

Ask Donald Greiner about his experiences with James Moeser, and he'll tell stories of singing parties and Academy Award contests.

The current associate provost for undergraduate studies at the University of South Carolina was chairman of the provost search committee that brought Moeser to USC in 1992.

But in addition to reviewing Moeser's academic and administrative accomplishments, Greiner was witness to the UNC chancellor-elect's ideas of fun - many of which involved his love of music.

Moeser once entertained the prestigious deans of the university during a formal dinner at the president's house.

"He sat down at the piano and started banging out songs," Greiner remembered. "He had us singing songs like 'Danny Boy.' And our voices were just terrible."

Moeser's musical talents, though, go far beyond sing-alongs over wine and cheese, as UNC's ninth chancellor has also built an international reputation as a concert organist.

In Nebraska, South Carolina, Kansas and Pennsylvania, he's also known for his energy and high principles as a university administrator.

The transition from musical performer to higher education leader has taken UNC's next chancellor through high positions in four states - a trip that began 61 years ago in Texas.

Born April 3, 1939, in Lubbock, Texas, Moeser was raised by a mother who taught music and a father who worked as a bank clerk and sold advertising and cottonseed.

While Moeser's father did not go to college, he raised two sons who went on to hold high posts in different universities - Moeser's brother, John, is a political science professor at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Va.

Moeser graduated from Monterey Senior High School in Lubbock in 1957. From there, he went on to the University of Texas, where he earned a bachelor's degree in music with honors in 1961.

Greiner remembers tales Moeser used to tell of his days as an undergraduate.

"He told stories about playing the piano - in the fraternities or the common room - someone would yell out a hymn and tell him to play it as a Methodist would play it, then as a Baptist."

Moeser would play the songs slower, faster, solemnly or raucously depending on the religion that was "ordered" by the crowd.

After four years of playing and studying music at Texas, he was off to Berlin and Paris for a year of advanced study on a Fulbright Scholarship.

Moeser returned to Texas after studying and performing abroad for a master's degree in musicology in 1964. He received his doctorate in musical arts in 1967 from the University of Michigan.

It was at the University of Kansas, where he worked from 1966 to 1986, that Moeser met his future wife, Susan Dickerson, a fellow concert organist.

Moeser has two children, now grown, from a previous marriage. His son, Chris, works as a reporter for The Arizona Republic, while his daughter, Carter, is a doctoral candidate in physical therapy at the Arizona School of Health Sciences.

Moeser began his work in Kansas as an assistant organ professor and played as the university organist. His future wife was one of his graduate students.

But he soon rose to serve as dean of the School of Fine Arts in 1975 and was named a distinguished professor of music in 1984.

Moeser took a bigger jump into the administrative side of university life when he accepted a position at Pennsylvania State University in 1986.

He served as dean of the College of Arts and Architecture and executive director of University Arts Services in State College, Pa., before moving to a new position at a third state university.

Moeser had his first taste of the South when he worked as vice president of academic affairs and provost at the University of South Carolina from 1992 to 1996. But he continued to bring his love of music to the job.

Moeser was in his second year in the post and Greiner had just been named associate provost when Moeser hosted an Academy Awards party for about two dozen administrators.

Those taking part had to mark their choices for each category. The winners were awarded with chocolates and movie tickets, Greiner said.

"The first few were pretty easy, like best picture, but how was I supposed to know who the best microphone holder was?" he said.

"It was funny because most of us missed 90 percent of them."

"He's one of the funniest people I know. But he has a dry wit."

Moeser took his humor and creativity with him to Nebraska when he accepted the chancellorship at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the flagship of the four-school system.

In addition to their musical backgrounds, the Moesers are known for the parties they occasionally host, some similar to the Oscar-themed celebration in South Carolina.

The two are routinely seen walking through their Lincoln neighborhood and are planning several trips to Chapel Hill and a vacation before Moeser officially assumes the chancellorship at UNC on Aug. 15.

We'll be the best public university in America ... in any measurable way that you can measure a university's reputation.

— Chancellor-elect James Moeser

Search for a Leader

One committee's nine-month search for UNC's ninth chancellor ended April 14.

June 29, 1999: Chancellor Michael Hooker dies.



July 9, 1999: Bill McCoy named interim chancellor.

July 29,

1999: Fourteen-member Chancellor Search Committee has first meeting. UNC-system President Molly Broad sets deadline of May Commencement to select the new chancellor.

August 1999: Committee sets December deadline to have two or more names to the Board of Trustees.

Aug. 26, 1999: Committee holds open forum, allowing students, faculty and staff to put forth qualities they want in the new chancellor.

Aug. 26, 1999: North Carolina journalists gather to push for an open search process.

Sept. 16, 1999: Student Body President Nic Heinke presents his recommendations to the committee of the most important qualities students want to see in the chancellor.

Late September 1999: Broad decides the next chancellor will represent UNC to the Association of American Universities.

Oct. 7, 1999: Search committee adopts a finalized job description for the incoming chancellor.

Oct. 7, 1999: Search committee rejects a proposal to give students a greater voice in the search.

Nov. 16, 1999: Committee member Bill Jordan said the committee might not reach its December deadline and the search could extend well into the new year.

Dec. 7, 1999: December deadline could still be met by Chancellor Search Committee.

Dec. 11, 1999: Local media leak the names of four top candidates in the search:

■ Former Executive Vice Chancellor **Elson Floyd**, president of Western Michigan University.
■ University of Alabama President **Andrew Sorensen**.
Two of the candidates end their candidacies immediately.



■ Jeffrey Houpt, dean of the UNC School of Medicine
■ Carol Christ, vice provost at the University of California-Berkeley

March 6, 2000: University of Alabama President Andrew Sorensen officially removes his name from the search.

March 9, 2000: Donna Shalala, U.S. secretary of health and human services, is rumored to take the chancellor's post. She later says she turned down the position months ago.

March 2000: Committee Chairman Richard Stevens schedules meetings through May 25, past Broad's May Commencement deadline.

April 5, 2000: The University of Florida releases a list of finalists for its president search. **James Moeser**, chancellor of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, is among the six finalists.



April 13, 2000: The Board of Trustees calls an emergency meeting to discuss personnel matters.

April 14, 2000: The Board of Governors officially approves James Moeser as UNC's ninth chancellor.

SOURCE: DTH ARCHIVES

DTH/DANA CRAIG

any ways, I see myself as a continua-
It was his vision that we be the best
y in the nation. It was his vision that
I commit myself to public service. I
concepts.
new initiatives or what new tweaks
ust you bring to the table?
tweaks, I think, will come in the
strategic planning and an attempt to
what the academic strengths of the
o that as we raise money we'll know
o put it.
icism of Chancellor Hooker was that,
erspective in terms of visibility on cam-
ion with students, he was lacking. How
ats see you outside the office?
a terrible manager of administrative
I think it is important. At the same
alance the need for presence on cam-
ed for presence off campus. Woody
0 percent of success is showing up. So
mise you is I will not hide in my office.
your biggest weakness as a leader?
a terrible manager of administrative
be a terrible chief of staff.
art don't you like?
don't like trivia. For example, my wife
manager at our house. She pays the
rack of all that stuff and relieves me of
I'm very grateful for that.

DTH: Did you want this job, or did you have to be somewhat courted?

Moeser: No one ever had to court me. I had to be convinced that they were really seriously interested. I knew that I was nominated, but I thought 'My gosh, that's the best job in America. That's like being nominated for king.'

DTH: What were the main negotiating points along the way?

Moeser: I didn't even ask the salary. That was not an issue. The issue was whether it was really a good bid. And so when it came to the point when they said, 'Do you want to come to Chapel Hill?' I just said yes.

DTH: Do you consider this a professional step up?

Moeser: There is no step above this one.

DTH: Hooker came in and restructured his Cabinet somewhat. Do you have any kinds of plans to restructure the University hierarchy?

Moeser: I don't know enough about the structure to be able to answer that question. That's a possibility, but at this point I don't know. But I can tell you that it won't be my intention to come in and make any changes in the first year.

DTH: There have been some questions about your age in terms of what that means about how long you'll be here. What kind of time commitment are you prepared to make to Carolina?

Moeser: I've said, assuming the University wants me this long and assuming there are no changes to my health, I think realizing the goals I've laid out will take

us to the end of this decade. That's nine years. And that takes me to my 70th birthday, which is the Constitutional limit for my service.

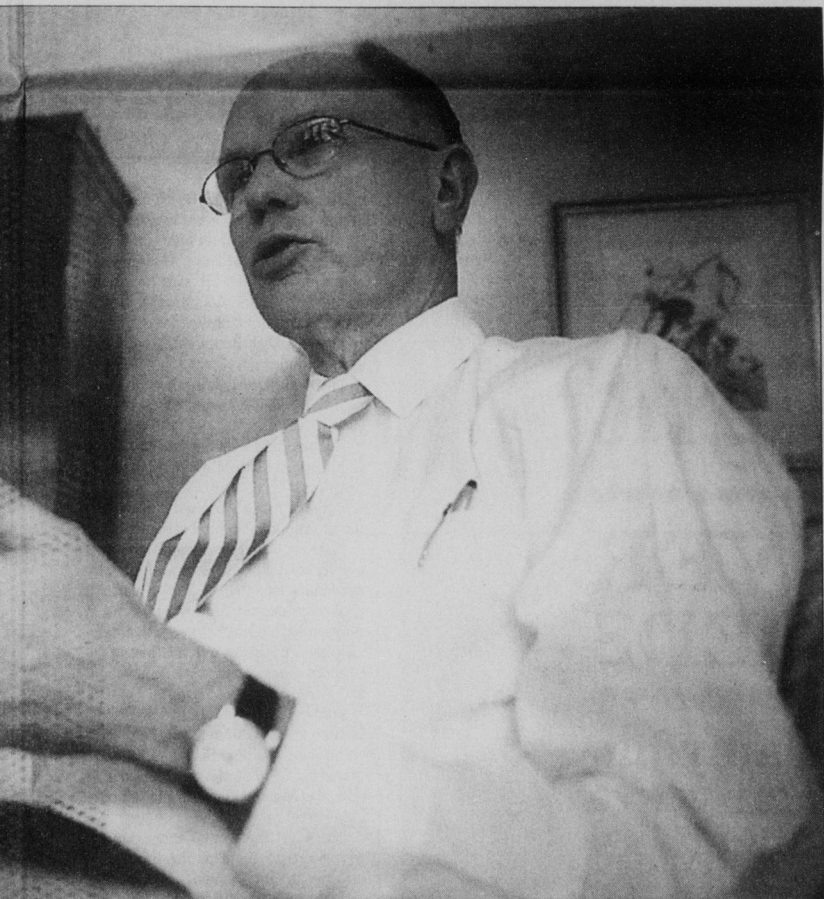
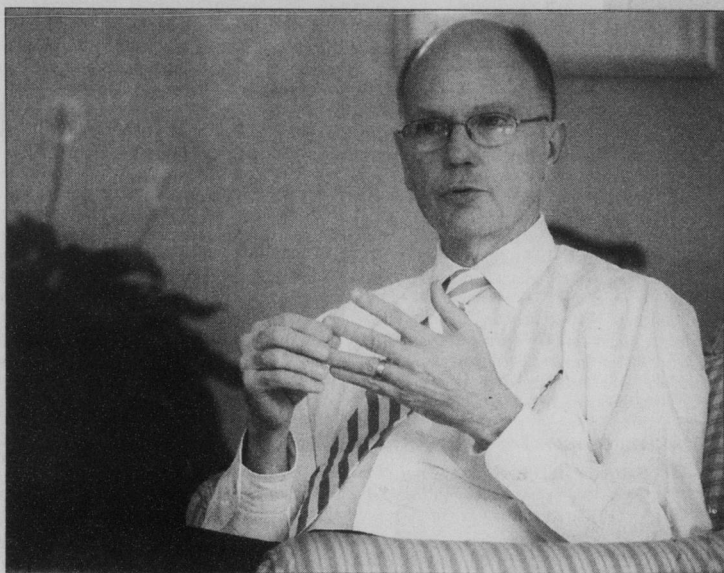
DTH: Would you rank the following roles for a chancellor at this University in order of importance: Administrator, spokesman, fund-raiser, scholar?

Moeser: I don't like the term administrator. I like the term leader. I'd put leader at No. 1, spokesman No. 2 and fund raising No. 3. My scholarship, which was the prerequisite for my position, I'd now put last. I don't really use it any more other than the fact that I have credibility with the faculty that I've earned my stripes as a scholar and demonstrated that I can do something well. I think it's critical that I have that in my background, but it's not now as important.

DTH: Some say that it's important that the leader of the flagship university have ties to North Carolina. You dispelled that theory yesterday. Can you explain the rationale why you don't think that's critical?

Moeser: As special as North Carolina is, it doesn't require a degree from this institution or a history of having lived in this state to understand what the issues are and to provide the critical leadership that this institution needs. In fact, I would argue that one of my strengths is that all of my education has been in two major flagship universities in other states, and that all my academic career has been in other flagships. So I bring multiple perspectives into North Carolina.

DTH: You're going from a four-campus system to a 16-campus system. Explain the team player component



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