

University Mourns Loss of Two Professors

Federico Guillermo Gil and Blyden Jackson were two distinguished UNC professors who recently died.

By MICHAEL ABEL
Staff Writer

This spring, the University community lost two former faculty members, Federico Guillermo Gil and Blyden Jackson.

Gil, Kenan professor emeritus of political science, died April 22 of a pulmonary embolism. He was 85.

Gil was a faculty member for 37 years, serving as director of the Institute of Latin American Studies for 25 of those years. During Gil's tenure as director, the institute's undergraduate curriculum was ranked first in the nation twice.

Jonathan Hartlyn, current director of the institute and professor of political science, said Gil was devoted to his work and to the students.

"Dr. Gil was an extraordinarily prominent scholar, a devoted mentor to his graduate students, an award-winning undergraduate teacher and a brilliant

administrator," Hartlyn said. "We will all miss him terribly."

After his retirement in 1980, Gil remained involved with University affairs, heading the Latin American institute's Spanish exchange program.

In 1988 Gil was recognized by the College of Arts and Sciences with an endowed chair bearing his name. In 1991, he was awarded an honorary degree from the University.

"But above all, he was a gentleman and a gentle man," Hartlyn said.

The University also mourns the loss of Professor Blyden Jackson on April 28 at the age of 89.

Jackson, the first black professor at the University, taught African-American literature from 1969 until his retirement in 1981. During part of this time, he also served as associate dean of the graduate school.

Jackson taught English in the Louisville public schools, before departing to become a professor at Fisk University. In 1969, after serving as dean of Southern University's graduate school, Jackson became a member of the UNC faculty.

Evelyn Dove-Coleman, Jackson's goddaughter, said he was a talented educator.

"He had a way of capturing young people's attention and keeping it," she said. "He was my favorite teacher, but thousands of UNC students would say that."

Jackson was awarded with an Honorary Doctoral degree from the University in 1985. In 1992 the University named the admissions building in honor of Jackson and his wife, Roberta.

Coleman said, "He was short, but he was a giant in terms of personality."

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Lobbying Underway for Bond

University officials now turn efforts towards convincing voters to approve the bond referendum this November.

By KATHLEEN HUNTER
Senior Writer

University advocates are laboring to coordinate the fledgling stages of a massive lobbying effort aimed at encouraging N.C. voters to approve the largest bond in state history.

The N.C. General Assembly voted unanimously last week to send the \$3.1 billion bond package to voters for approval in November.

The package would fund building renovation and expansion at the state's public universities and community colleges, where enrollment is projected to rise dramatically in the coming decade.

Last week's unanimous approval marks a sharp contrast to the legislature's action last summer, when Democrats and Republicans were unable to agree on a package before the legislature adjourned in July.

The UNC system will now turn its attention to the general public to ensure November's referendum is successful, said J.B. Miliken, UNC-system vice president for university advancement.

"The challenge is to make sure that the information about the enrollment explosion this state faces gets out," Miliken said.

UNC-system officials enlisted N.C. Citizens for Business and Industry, a Raleigh-based advocacy group, in January to help garner legislative support.

"Our hope is that between now and November this partnership between the universities, the community colleges and NCCBI will work to communicate the needs of the University," Miliken said.

NCCBI President Phil Kirk said the General Assembly's unanimous support would give the lobbying effort momentum in coming months. "We worked really hard to get (the proposal) through the legislature," Kirk said. "Now we have to sell it to the public."

He said a committee, comprised of UNC and community college representatives and members of the business community, would be named to organize the lobbying campaign and educate the public about the bond.

The committee will work to raise advertising funds and also help organize local and regional lobbying committees.

"We have our work cut out for us, but it will certainly be easier because the universities and community colleges have a very strong following in our state," Kirk said.

The massive lobbying effort will be officially set in motion during the coming weeks, despite some lingering reservations about the package's fate.

UNC political science professor Thad Beyle said the package's supporters would likely face an uphill battle this year in their attempt to educate the public about the system's needs.

Beyle said this fall's election season could overshadow the bond referendum. "It's going to be hard work to break through the noise," Beyle said.

But Miliken said he was confident the NCCBI-led lobbying effort would succeed, in part because NCCBI successfully led a \$2.7 billion bond campaign in 1996.

Miliken said, "Whenever the state has had serious financial needs, the people have always stepped up and made the investment."

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Collapse Injures Over 100

The cause of the walkway collapse at the Charlotte Motor Speedway Saturday is something of a mystery.

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE - The investigation by Lowe's Motor Speedway into what caused steel cables inside a collapsed footbridge to corrode and snap may be made public before the track hosts this weekend's Coca-Cola 600 NASCAR race.

"Hopefully, we'll do that here in the next 48 hours," speedway spokesman Jerry Gappens said Tuesday.

More than 100 people were injured Saturday night when an 80-foot section of the walkway, owned by the speedway, broke in half as race fans headed for parking lots. They plunged 17 feet onto U.S. Highway 29.

Speedway crews began tearing down the rest of the ruined walkway Tuesday. A second speedway footbridge was closed Monday after an inspection revealed signs of corrosion on the four-year-old walkway.

The state Department of Transportation said Tuesday that it will inspect North Carolina's eight other private walkways over public roads and close any spans that are dangerous.

The state also will require owners or privately owned bridges to have them inspected every two years at their own expense, DOT officials said.

Speedway president H.A. "Humpy" Wheeler spent most of the day Tuesday meeting with engineers employed by the track.

Corrosion is suspected as the cause of the failure, but engineers are puzzled that rust could have weakened a bridge that was just five years old.

"We don't believe there was anything in the design or manufacture of the double-T itself that in any way contributed to the cause of the failure," Lowndes said. "We don't know exactly what did, but we are fairly confident that that was not a cause."

"I have never heard of a double-T cracking in the middle like that," said Dan Falconer, engineering manager at the American Concrete Institute in Farmington Hills, Mich. "It is one of the most bizarre things I have ever seen."

Graduates Flock Uptown to Celebrate

By KATE HARTIG
Staff Writer

A rainy night did not keep UNC graduates and their families and friends from packing local restaurants and bars this weekend.

As well-wishers piled into Chapel Hill for Sunday morning's commencement ceremony, restaurants were busy taking reservations and bars were gearing up for a busy weekend.

"We were booked for dinner two weeks before graduation," Tiger Posey said, server and bartender at Top of the Hill Restaurant and Bar. "We were really crowded all weekend."

On Saturday night, lines to get into Top of the Hill, located at 100 E. Franklin St., stretched all the way from

the outside door to the corner of Franklin and Columbia Streets.

"The line to Top of the Hill was ridiculous," graduating senior Martha Hoelzer said. "Other bars had lines, too. He's Not Here had a line almost all the way to Copytron. Uptown was definitely a lot more crowded than a regular Thursday night."

Lindsay Kofke, also a graduating senior, agreed that "uptown" bars were busier than most weekends.

"Lines for bars Friday and Saturday were Halloween-night ridiculous," she said. "We tried to get into Top of the Hill and He's Not, but ended up going to other bars whose lines weren't as bad."

Mark Burnett, manager of He's Not Here, located at 112 1/2 W. Franklin St., said graduation weekend is one of their

busiest times.

He said a lot of people also came out to hear bands that played both Friday and Saturday nights.

"Moms and dads came in with their kids and bought t-shirts and got Blue Cups," he said. "It is one of those times where students take their parents out."

Hoelzer said she had never seen that many people at He's Not Here.

"I couldn't get over how many people were in He's Not Saturday night," she said. "It was person-to-person, sandwiched in that place. It was crazy."

Burnett also said that even though it rained Sunday night, patrons still filled the inside of the bar.

"The rain stopped some people from coming out," he said. "But we piled as many people as we could into the inside

of the bar."

Posey said that when it started storming Sunday night, people began to flow into Top of the Hill.

"All those people that wanted to go to He's Not ended up coming here," he said. "Once it started raining, we got slammed."

He also added that the graduation crowd was much more upbeat than the regular crowds.

"The crowd was a little more rowdy," Posey said.

"People were trying to leave their last marks, carving their names into tables and taking things from the bar. It was definitely celebration time."

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time for voters to show their support."

Lee Conner, president of the Graduate and Professional Student Federation, said the placement of the bond on the ballot is a crucial investment in the UNC system.

"I think it's one of the most critical things to be on the ballot in North Carolina in a long time," he said.

Some UNC-CH facilities are among the "woefully outmoded buildings" with "mounting deferred maintenance" said a March 15 UNC-system press release referring to consultant Eva Klein's 1999 examination of facilities at the state's public universities.

Many of the University's aging classrooms, laboratories, libraries and residence halls need repairs and present problems to students and faculty.

Venable Hall, which was built in the 1920s, houses the chemistry department and is plagued by cramped conditions and outdated laboratory and classroom facilities. The press release described it as "an inappropriate facility."

The press release also mentions "sub-standard lab space housing millions of dollars worth of sophisticated research equipment." Plastic tubs catch water dripping from the ceiling in one room

and repairs are underway on one of the computer labs' decaying walls, which rains chips of paint and plaster on the floor and passersby.

The University has planned to eventually demolish Venable Hall because continued renovations were found not to be worth their cost.

Susan Chung, a junior biochemistry major, said plans for the Hall's eventual destruction are worth it.

"I personally don't like the condition of it," she said.

Similar problems also plague other campus buildings. In the Medical Science and Research Building, age and deteriorating facilities prevent faculty from controlling temperatures and force them to conduct research in conditions that could ruin experiments.

Hill Hall, which houses the music department, faces a frequently flooded basement while a lack of humidity control pose a serious threat to library materials. Library users must negotiate their way through steam pipes that crisscross the library at about shoulder level.

Students must also deal with outdated classroom facilities and poorly air-conditioned classrooms, and store musical instruments in broken lockers.

Ian Zook, a senior music major said Hill Hall is in need of renovations. Zook also works in the Music Library.

"Most of the music is in peril of water

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UNC political science professor Thad Beyle said that by putting the vote up to the people, they could decide how to spend their tax money. "The bond is paid off by taxes," Beyle said. "So (the referendum) seems to make sense."

Because the amount of the bond is so large and taxpayers' money is used, UNC-system President Molly Broad said the legislators put their confidence in the voters.

Broad said the challenge now lies in convincing the voters to support the bond in November.

"We are pleased to have the opportunity to bring our case to the citizens," Broad said. "We are quite optimistic of the likelihood citizens of North Carolina will support the bond."

She said the UNC General Administration, with the guidance of N.C. Citizens for Business and Industry, will campaign in support of the bond

during the summer and into the fall.

"The campaign is still in the process of being developed," Broad said. "Overall campaigning will be developed over the coming weeks."

The campaigning will focus on the importance of the bond to the state and its institutions of higher education.

Rand said the future of the state's economic viability depended on the bond because of the state's reputation of valuing higher education.

For the UNC system, with outdated buildings and an expected enrollment increase of 50,000 over the next 10 years, Broad said, "Securing funding (for renovations and additions) is critically

important to the ability of the university (system) to serve students pursuing 21st century careers."

According to the UNC Office of the President, 36 percent of the bond funding will go toward the modernization of existing buildings, 25 percent for the replacement of facilities and 24 percent for the construction of new buildings.

While the majority of the money will go toward facilities' needs, some UNC schools will receive significantly more than others. Almost \$1 billion is slated for UNC-Chapel Hill and N.C. State University, while some smaller schools and historically black colleges will only get around \$50 million each.

But since legislators have already voted to put the bond to a referendum, Rand said the allocation of the money to the different schools could not change. He said the public would have to decide on the package as it stands.

"It will be a challenge," Rand said. "But it's an opportunity to acquaint the people of North Carolina with the issues and let them understand what we hold so dear."

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