

Thorp opens term as UNC's 10th chancellor

Was former dean of Arts and Sciences

BY KEVIN KILEY
SENIOR WRITER

MAY 8 — Holden Thorp, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, was elected unanimously by the UNC-system Board of Governors to serve as UNC's next chancellor.

"This is an incredible day," Thorp said. "I'm so grateful to lead the University of North Carolina."

UNC-system President Erskine Bowles enthusiastically supported

the choice and said Thorp fit the position. "He's the right man at the right time to lead Chapel Hill today and UNC tomorrow," Bowles said.

Thorp's selection marked the end of a 9-month national search process that solicited 104 applicants.

Bowles cited Thorp's passion and enthusiasm for the job as one of his biggest strengths. "He has a passion you can feel," Bowles said at the BOG election meeting. "It's absolutely contagious, and I have caught the disease."

Thorp, who graduated from UNC in 1986, returned in 1993 as a chemistry professor, doing research

in the electromagnetic properties of DNA and RNA.

Prior to being named dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Thorp served as chairman of the department of chemistry and director of the Morehead Planetarium and Science Center.

Last year, Thorp was selected to replace Provost Bernadette Gray-Little as arts and sciences dean after another national search.

"He's risen so quickly in such a short time," former Chancellor James Moeser said, "and the only way to accurately describe that is to say that he's a supernova."

The search for Moeser's replacement began in October when Moeser announced that he would be stepping down June 30.

The UNC Board of Trustees convened a 21-member committee of trustees, alumni, students and staff.

The search committee hired William R. Funk and Associates, a consulting firm, to help solicit applicants, which the committee did during November and December. The firm was paid about \$100,000.

Chairman Nelson Schwab said the search committee pared down the applicants to six finalists, including two African-American males and

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ERSKINE BOWLES

two white females.

They proposed four names to the BOG on March 26, which approved them the following day.

Thorp said Bowles offered him the position at a gas station in Greensboro.

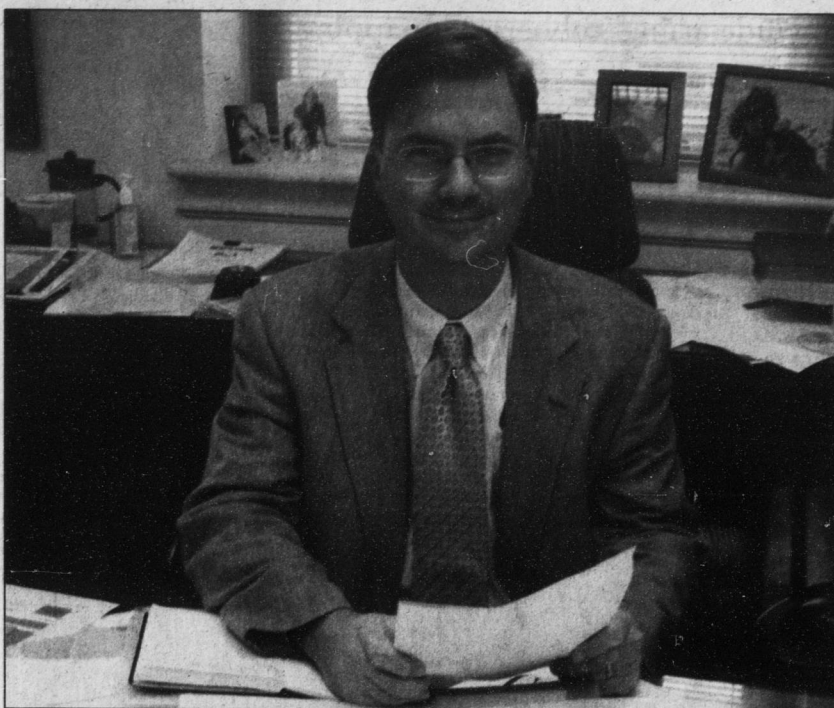
"I will never forget the Exxon on Wendover Avenue," Thorp said. "I guess it's a good thing I didn't run in to get Nabs."

The search was conducted almost entirely behind closed doors, with search committee members required to sign confidentiality agreements and meetings being held in closed session.

But UNC President Emeritus Bill Friday called Thorp an obvious candidate.

"He's the type of talent people look for all over the United States," Friday said.

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.



DTH FILE/ RACHEL RODEMANN

Holden Thorp, then dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, works at his desk in May, attempting to tie up loose ends before taking the reins as chancellor. Thorp took over his new post July 1 from James Moeser.

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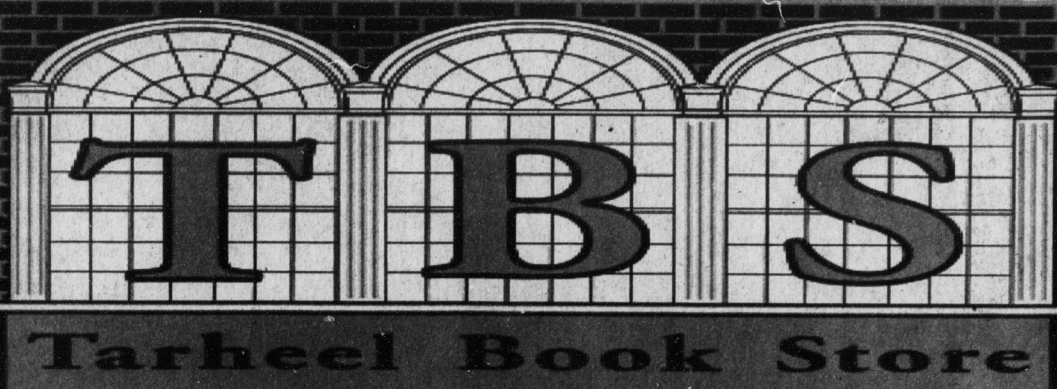
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