

Dr. Frank Porter Graham — Secretary

By Bucky Harward

SEVERAL TIMES last winter rumors floated about Chapel Hill that Frank Graham might be appointed Secretary of Labor. Late one night we phoned him in Washington to confirm or deny the rumor.

We phoned the Mayflower Hotel, the Wardman Park Hotel, the Shoreham Hotel, and other leading hostelries in the city. No Frank Graham.

Finally, we rang quiet, inexpensive Hotel Washington. "I'm sorry," droned the night clerk, "but President Graham is not here. We have only an 'F. Graham' from Chapel Hill, North Carolina."

Dr. Frank told us that he had not been offered the post. But that was only incidental except for our relief. The student body and faculty and Board of Trustees would not trade Frank Graham for any other educator in the nation. The above incident alone should explain that.

But there are other reasons.

Dr. Frank is the most accessible of all the administrative officers. A student or visitor has a two-to-one advantage over any professor or department head for a chat or an interview. Whenever he can sneak from his office and heavy administrative duties, he's much harder to find. He might be down at the track meet or baseball game sitting with his students, cheering as if he were 15 instead of 55. He might be just walking bareheaded about the campus, stopping to chat with everyone he knows—that means almost everybody from the yardmen on up.

For Frank Graham probably has more friends than any other man in North Carolina. He's friendly, not with the unctuous veneer of a politician or a Dale Carnegie disciple, but with an honest-to-God love for and interest in everybody he can meet and talk to. It makes no difference to him whether a man is a janitor or a manufacturing magnate. To Frank Graham, both are men—individual, free, human—from whom he can learn something.

His memory for names and faces is phenomenal. If you met him five, ten, fifteen years ago and then walked into his office tomorrow, he would grab your hand, look steadily at you with those blue eyes of his, and with boyish pleasure call you by your first name and ask about his friends in your hometown. A few years ago, an old classmate whom he had not seen in twenty-nine years strolled in to see him. Dr. Frank immediately called him by his first name, then rattled off his old dormitory and room number, ended up by reminding the astonished alumnus that he had won the math prize his sophomore year.

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The accusations that Frank Graham is a radical, a Communist, a Socialist or that he deserves any of the many other epithets that have so long been pitched at him by his enemies in the State and South are stupid and absurd. Frank Graham is Frank Graham. He follows no set creed or ism but his own conscience in any situation. It makes no difference whether the crisis or problem is financial, economic, administrative or personal, he always manages to translate it into ethics and makes up his own mind regardless of what anyone—professor or President—thinks.

And his ethics are profoundly and sincerely Christian. Hardbitten, completely utilitarian businessmen and alumni swear by Frank Graham as the most Christlike man they have ever known even when he takes an unshakable stand contrary to their own, and often he does.

He isn't much to look at. If he dressed himself in overalls instead of his dark conservative suit and let his beard grow for a day, he'd easily pass for a Cumberland County farmer coming into Fayetteville for Saturday shopping. Short and slight with thinning gray hair, he has the plain calm features that would not attract even the first glance in a crowd.

He isn't a great orator either. His voice is distinct but soft, his gestures few and simple. But if once you hear him, you will never forget. It might be before the State Budget Commission when the University's biennial budget stands in grave danger. It might be before the Board of Trustees when some members have become rather irate about alleged Communists on the faculty. It might be before the student body when Dr. Frank has been asked to talk on the Carolina honor system. He would speak without formal preparation, without the advantage of an impressive appearance, perhaps even running his words and thoughts together a bit. But you would listen and so would those with you whether they

number two or 2000. You would listen because for a while you could not hear a man, but a cause that is bigger than any Commission or Board of Trustees or student body—to the ideal of democratic living as Frank Graham sees and knows and profoundly feels it.

Here at Chapel Hill, where 4000 students work and play over several square miles, it is next to impossible to attract a major part of them to hear anyone. But let the word be announced that Dr. Frank will speak at chapel period and those same students who the week before passed up Nye or Leon Henderson will stand in the aisles and sit in the windows of old Memorial Hall to hear their president speak for 30 minutes.

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Carolina students respect Frank Graham with a veneration that almost approaches worship. A great deal of that sentiment has sprung from the complete friendliness and accessibility that he perpetually exhibits. Every Sunday night when he is home, he and Mrs. Graham hold open house for any students who want to drop by for an hour or so at the white-columned home just off the campus. Last Christmas Eve, Dr. Frank walked about the campus asking all the students he saw—those who did not have the time or money to go home for the holidays—to come eat Christmas dinner at his home.

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The faith that the student body has in Dr. Frank is reciprocated in full. Unshakable believer in democracy, Frank Graham always respects the considered opinion of the student body because he believes that on important issues it will think and do what is right. Fall before last, complaints from a few faculty members and alumni that Carolina's new coed cheerleaders were disgracing the University by appearing before the stands caused administrative officials to prohibit women students from cheerleading. The student body rebelled, sent a committee of leaders to Frank Graham's office to request that the girls be allowed to continue. Formerly skeptical, the president listened with respect to the arguments, ruled that the girls were not to be discriminated against.

Frank Graham can see the student viewpoint because, unlike many middle-aged men, he is still young enough in spirit to remember his undergraduate days of over three decades ago. Then he was an ideal student, not only in the classroom but in the outside campus activities that the Carolina student so dotes on.

Student body president, president of the YMCA, head cheerleader, editor of the campus paper—all these jobs and more Frank Graham held when he was a student in Chapel Hill. The valedictory prize he lost by one fiftieth of one point.

It was while he was still a student that Frank Graham developed his love for athletics and sportsmanship. Many persons throughout the State and South still bristle when his name is mentioned because they inevitably associate it with the Graham Plan of a few years ago. Apparently none of the prejudiced realize that Frank Graham was not the originator and sole backer of the plan but only one of its propopents, that the plan itself asked mainly that college athletes in the Southern Conference meet the scholastic standards required of other students. They would refuse to believe that the backer of what they consider an insidious menace to the great god football once took during his own college days castoffs too scrawny to make the varsity and coached them himself until they beat the first string.

Francis Bradshaw, dean of students, still tells how he met Frank Graham and simultaneously got an insight into the now famous Carolina Spirit. Bradshaw was a freshman, Frank Graham a senior. At a baseball game one day, the first-year man was engaged in the popular pastime of booing the opposing pitcher. Someone tapped him lightly on the shoulder. "We don't razz pitchers around here," a slight, undersized fellow said quietly. Bradshaw



Democracy in Shirtsleeves

lina does not fly so high and mighty as to forget its obligation inaugural address, Frank Graham asserted: "The State Unive people. The intellectual life of the University should be quick have a common destiny in the adventure of building a nobler co

shut up, was somewhat nettled until he learned who the little fellow was.

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But even many of the students and alumni who revere Frank Graham have failed to appreciate his work as president of the Greater University because it has become a much-mouthed cliché to say automatically that Carolina is the greatest state university in the nation, that Chapel Hill is the center of liberality in the whole South.

Nowhere in the United States is there an institution of comparable size where the faculty and student body have so completely and unreservedly the freedoms of thought and expression. Responsibility for preserving those freedoms has fallen to and been admirably shouldered by Frank Graham.

The preservation of these same freedoms is the excuse most frequently used when Graham's enemies want to