

Loyalty oath a state job must since 1941

by Bill Pope
Staff Writer

"I can't see how if a man is drawing a salary from the State, there can be anything worse than his engaging in subversive activities."

That was the summation by John Sprunt Hill of Durham at a meeting held by the UNC Board of Trustees in June, 1941—a meeting in which radicalism at the University was the main topic.

The trustees agreed something needed to be done about the "radical activities of 10 or 12 professors" at the University and adopted a resolution ordering all UNC employees to sign an oath of support to the North Carolina and United States Constitutions.

Today, almost 30 years later the oath is still required for all new UNC employees, including janitors, secretaries and administrative personnel.

"It's about like a student signing the pledge," said UNC registrar Dr. James Gaskin. It may mean it is done so casually it doesn't mean anything."

Foreign citizens who hold jobs with the University do not have to sign the oath.

All members of the General Assembly and anyone "chosen or appointed to hold any office of trust or profit" in the state have been required to sign the oath since 1791.

The motion to require the oath for UNC employees was made by J.E. Mills of High Point at the 1941 meeting.

Thurmond Chatham of Winston-Salem, who seconded the motion said he was amazed the oath had not been required in the past, according to the Associated Press story of the meeting.

Hill according to the story, "declared that the taking of the oath would quell the unrest" of the radical professors.

An editorial in the June 9, 1941 Raleigh News and Observer did not agree. "Unfortunately, the new rule seems more an expression of irritation than a plan for patriotism," the editorial said.

"Do the trustees actually think there are some dangerous subversive elements in the faculty at Chapel Hill? If they do they took measures so half-hearted as to be silly."

"Obviously the man who wants to stick around and sabotage the State or youth in it will be the first to swear and will swear the loudest," the editorial said.

No specification was made on whether the oath had to be renewed each school year or whether the taking of the oath one time would be considered binding for all future occasions, according to the AP story.

The first issue of The Daily Tar Heel for the fall term of 1941 announced in a

two-paragraph story that all employees had to sign the oath by Oct. 1.

The resolution says the president and the deans of administration must see to it that all faculty members comply with the oath. The comptroller and assistant comptroller have the same responsibility for other employees.

The first part of the oath says: "I (name) do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support the Constitution of the United States, so help me, God."

The second part of the oath states: "I (name) do solemnly and sincerely swear (or affirm) that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to the State of North Carolina, to the constitutional powers and authorities which are or may be established for the government thereof; and that I will endeavor to support, maintain and defend the Constitution of said state, not inconsistent with the Constitution of the United States, to the best of my knowledge and ability; so help me, God."

Until this semester, the personnel office handled the signing of the oath for all UNC employees. All new faculty members and administrators now take the oath in the newly organized registrar's office, while other University employees sign the oath at the personnel office.

A notary public is required to countersign the oath. If the oath is not signed, one cannot receive payment from the University, according to the resolution.

"As far as I know there have been no instances in which someone refused to sign the oath," says Gaskin, who handled the signing for five years as director of the summer session employment.

Gaskin said he received only two or three complaints about the oath while he was supervisor of the summer sessions.

"However, all those who expressed disapproval or concern with the oath signed it," he commented.

Gaskin believes such an oath is "widespread" among colleges and universities in the country.

"A faculty member from another college who was coming here once called up to ask if we had an oath and ask it to be read to him," Gaskin related.

"He expressed pleasure after I read it because it was not as strict as the oath at his college."

Gaskin said a visiting professor from New Jersey jokingly asked several years ago if he would lose his New Jersey citizenship if he signed the oath.

Dr. Dan Okun, chairman of the Faculty Council, compares the oath to the one students sign at the bottom of an exam.

"I'm opposed to both (oaths)," Okun said. "It doesn't have the effect intended for separating those who depart from the oath. A person will sign the oath even if he desires to disobey it."

"It is regrettable that this type of oath is necessary," Okun continued, "but I don't think it is important enough to make an issue out of it."

In a separate oath, the University required from 1949 to 1959 that all job applicants state whether they ever had any communist connections. The question was not on the application forms at the other state universities.

University administrators scratched the question in Jan., 1959, claiming it served no purpose.

First 'Sumus' released today

"Sumus No. 1" translated from Latin means literally "We are Number 1."

It also means the publication of a new series of literary works, graphics and photography which makes its debut on the University campus today.

"December 1970" first in the Sumus

series, will be on sale outside the Carolina Union, Y-Court and across from the Post Office on Franklin Street through Thursday.

The book will sell at a cost of 75 cents. Kip Ward, editor of the publication, said Sunday the book results from the

efforts of UNC students who decided to pool the talents of local writers with those of other college students across the nation.

He added that its purpose is to offer the opportunity for young people to be heard throughout the nation. "It is a young, honest and vital voice," Ward said. "A lot of it is shocking."

According to Ward, the material was selected from more than 400 manuscripts

collected from universities all over the country. About one-third of the book is composed of poetry and photography offered by UNC students.

The Sumus publication will appear three times a year with the next issue coming out in April. In March, a Sumus book of UNC student Timothy Daughtry's poetry will be published.

Ward said that "December 1970" will be sent to 200 university bookstores throughout the nation to be sold.

2 companies to recruit Jan. 7

The Placement Service has announced two companies will be recruiting on campus during the first week of January.

The Atlantic Richfield Company and the Division of Personnel and Retirement of the State of Florida will both appear on campus on Thursday, Jan. 7.

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