

# Friday denies jilting Scott

*Scott: If Friday hadn't changed, trustees 'would have fired him'*

by Lynn Smith, Staff Writer

Consolidated University President William C. Friday flatly denies reports that he originally supported Governor Bob Scott's deconsolidation plan for N.C. higher education.

Friday said Tuesday that he had supported the trustee system from the start and would continue to do so. He pointed out that he did not agree with the majority report of the Warren Commission on Higher Education when it came out.

Alleged pressure from University Trustees was denied. Friday said his opposition to the deconsolidation plan was a personal conviction.

Questions about Friday's stand on the deconsolidation issue were raised Saturday when statements by Gov. Scott and Sen. Ralph Scott indicated that Friday had originally supported the new plan, but had been silenced by trustee pressure.

Sen. Scott (D-Alamance) recalled a casual conversation in which the Governor said it was Friday who gave him the idea of setting up a regents system to control the state's public universities.

"He said Bill Friday was the one who led him into it," Scott reported. "Then he said 'he (Friday) left me'."

The senator, also a U.N.C. trustee, charged that Friday had changed his position because of strong pressure from four members of the UNC Board of Trustees executive committee. He identified the four as Archie Davis of Winston Salem, Watts Hill of Durham, Tom White of Kinston, and Victor Bryant of Durham.

Sen. Scott said "They were afraid that they'd lose their power, and they backed off from it (the plan for deconsolidation)." He feels the trustees forced Friday to do the same.

"There is no doubt in my mind that they would have fired him if he didn't change his position on the matter," he said.



William C. Friday

Gov. Scott confirmed his uncle's statements. The governor said he had the support of Friday when he called for the restructuring of higher education, but Friday changed his position on the issue. He said that the UNC president "Is not free to speak his true feelings on the issue."

"And I am convinced," Scott added, "after watching all of the pressure applied to him by the trustee power bloc that he would have to resign if he revealed how he really feels."

Archie K. Davis, one of the trustees name by Sen. Scott, joined Friday in denying the charges of executive committee pressure.

Davis called Scott's statements "absurd" and "regrettable." "President Friday has always stood for the preservation of the Consolidated University," Davis said. "I don't know why Sen. Scott singled us out as having put pressure on him."

The General Assembly will return to Raleigh Oct. 26 for a special session to consider the governor's plan for reorganization of the state's system of higher education. Scott wants to abolish the 100-member Board of Trustees and form a state board of regents that would have budget authority over all the 16 state universities.

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