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25 Volumes

FIRST EDITION — Dr. Fred Bentley, (left), Mars Hill College president, is presented with one volume of a complete set of first edition books by Asheville author Thomas Wolfe. The 25 volume set was presented as a

gift to the college Thursday by Mr. and Mrs. Refford Cate of Reidsville, (center and right). Looking on at the presentation ceremony is Lewis Miller, director of the MHC library.

Mars Hill Gets Wolfe Collection

MARS HILL — Mars Hill College has received a complete set of first editions of the works of Thomas Wolfe from a Reidsville couple, Mr. and Mrs. Refford Cates.

The gift is in the form of a long term loan with the intention of making them a gift to the college at an appropriate time in memory of Mrs. Cate's brother, Alfred B. Webster Jr., an alumnus of the college (Class of 1937) who died in 1973.

The Cates gained first hand acquaintance with Mars Hill this summer when they attended the first session of the college's Elderhostel program. Elderhostel is a nationwide program based on the youth hostels of Europe and provides a low cost alternative vacation plan at college campus where older persons can study non-credit classes of interest and live on campus for a week.

The Cates took a class on the life and works of Thomas Wolfe taught by Dr. Mary Inrig, professor of English at the college, and were impressed by the quality of the program, the campus, and the college's archives.

Mrs. Cates recently retired

as librarian of the Rockingham (County) Community College and continued to do volunteer work with that school's newly established archives. Mr. Cate is the owner-operator of a laundry service in Reidsville. Both of the Cates are avid collectors, having collected at one time or another, first edition books, coins, stamps, and oriental jade. They earlier made a gift of their jade collection to Duke University.

Mrs. Cate's Brother, Alfred Wester Jr., graduated from Mars Hill in 1937 and remained for a year as a laboratory assistant. He continued his education at North Carolina State University, where he graduated with honors, and spent his professional life with Dupont Chemical Company as a research chemist.

The gift to Mars Hill College is significant, according to college librarian Lewis Miller. "As separate books, their value is significant, however, their real value is as a complete set," Miller notes. "This may be the only complete set of Thomas Wolfe's first editions in Western North Carolina."

The books will be evaluated during the coming few weeks and will not be placed in the circulating collection but will be displayed in a prominent place in the library.

Ball Found 'Not Guilty'

Forest Manor Restaurant owner Phillip Ball, accused of setting the fire that destroyed his business last year, was found not guilty by a Buncombe County Superior Court jury late Friday afternoon.

Closing arguments were given by the attorneys for Ball and for the state after lunch Friday and the jury returned with the verdict at 4:45 p.m.

After testimony Friday from a number of character witnesses in Ball's behalf, Judge C. Walter Allen denied separate motions by defense attorney Robert Long for a mistrial and to dismiss the state's case against the Mars Hill businessman.

The state contends that Ball burned the Hendersonville Road restaurant on Dec. 3, 1980, because he was in severe financial trouble. The defense argued that Ball had no motive to burn the profitable establishment and that the fire was an accident.

Long asked for a mistrial because in Thursday's testimony District Attorney Ronald C. Brown was allowed to direct in front of the jury a line of questioning that centered on a 1978 fire that gutted an Asheville bakery owned by Ball. Allen allowed that questioning.

And Long asked for dismissal of the case because he said the state had failed to provide sufficient evidence of a motive connecting Ball to the fire. The defense denies that Ball was in financial trouble.

Most of Friday's testimony was taken up with a succession of character witnesses — several of whom are county officials or county commissioners — who said Ball has a good reputation both in Asheville and Mars Hill.

On Thursday, Ball took the witness stand and denied setting the blaze at the Forest Manor, saying that the fire destroyed his primary source of income.

"It was a financial disaster for me," Ball told the court.

'The Front Porch' Premieres

"We want to portray the people of Southern Appalachia as something other than the cliché characters in Snuffy Smith," says Jim Thomas, managing director of the Southern Appalachian Repertory Theatre and creator/director of SART's 1981 World Premiere, "The Front Porch."

Thomas is combining two one-act plays, Robert Anderson's "I'm Herbert" and Romulus Linney's "Tennessee," with poetry and music to create what he calls "a patchwork celebrating the traditions and folklore of this region." "The Front Porch" also features two artists who are natives of this area, Sheila Rice Barnhill of Marshall and Jo Carson of Johnson City.

Sheila Rice Barnhill started playing mountain banjo in 1972, when the Ford Foundation sponsored an old-time music festival in the Sodom Community and sent four men

there to organize it. One of those four men, Dwight Diller, taught Sheila the "claw hammer" style of picking the banjo, a style that originated when farmers who had spent the day in the field would come home and play with their stiff hands positioned as if still resting on the plow.

Sheila wanted to learn so that her children could learn the oral tradition of passing songs from generation to generation. She explains, "They can learn the songs from written music and words, but they can't learn the vocal inflections. That's the thrill of mountain music." Sheila also plays guitar, which she picked up four years ago, inspired by the Eagles' hit "Lynin' Eyes."

In "The Front Porch," Sheila plays traditional ballads, along with her original music and music by Si Kahn. With her low, clear

voice, she leads the rest of the cast in songs like "I Never Will Marry" and "A Tribute to my Home."

Jo Carson is a poet and playwright from Johnson City, where she has performed with the Road Company on and off since 1976. In "The Front Porch" Jo will perform her "People Pieces," characterizations that have evolved from her encounters with people in the area; the pieces are also part of her one-woman show. She describes them as "a combination of Spoon River Anthology monologues and Studs Terkel." Her people talk about "not earth-moving things, but about life and their perceptions."

Jo believes combining her poetry with drama is a "fairly natural progression" that is interesting and dynamic. She is concerned that many people have a Victorian concept of poetry because of their condi-

tioning. Jo wants to make the art form more entertaining. "I'm making slow and living in-roads into getting people to rethink poetry." Her greatest fear is that an audience will be bored. "They can dislike me intensely; that's o.k. as long as it holds their interest."

One part of the "patchwork" section of "The Front Porch" makes a statement about employment in textile mills. Jo, her strong voice cracking with fear and bitterness, recites "The Mill Worker," an original piece about a sole survivor of the legacy of the loom. Sheila follows her by singing Si Kahn's ballad "Aragon Mill."

The lights dim and there is silence in the rehearsal hall, the rest of the cast transfixed by the performance by the two women. Jim Thomas smiles and nods. "That's real; that's here. That's Appalachian."

Scheduled Friday

Hendon, Watt Plan Area Tour

Congressman Bill Hendon and Interior Secretary James G. Watt will be in Asheville Friday, July 24 and tour the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Watt, the featured speaker at the annual Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce Dinner at 7:30 p.m. Friday at the Grove Park Inn, is scheduled to hold a press conference upon his arrival at 9:30 a.m. Friday at the Asheville Regional Airport. Hendon will join Watt at the press conference.

Following the planeside press conference, Hendon and Watt will tour the Blue Ridge Parkway by airplane and visit the headquarters of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in Gatlinburg, Tenn., before returning to Asheville in the afternoon.

Hendon serves on the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, which has jurisdiction over the public lands in Western North Carolina.

House Speaker Liston Ramsey Assesses Accomplishments

General Assembly Session Represents Solid Achievement

By REP. LISTON B. RAMSEY
44th HOUSE DISTRICT
Speaker of the
North Carolina House

RALEIGH — The North Carolina General Assembly adjourned July 16, leaving behind it a record that, in my judgment, represents solid achievement.

This session met and overcame one of the toughest budget problems our State has faced in a number of years. We were not able to do everything we would have liked to have done so far as services to the people is concerned. But, on balance, the budget we finally adopted will meet the essential needs of the people and will keep North Carolina moving forward.

As Speaker of the House of Representatives, I had the privilege of presiding over the day-to-day operations of the House these last six months. I can personally vouch for the fact that this was a hard-working group of legislators who took their responsibilities seriously from the day they convened back on Jan. 14. In my opinion, they deserve good marks.

The demands on the State treasury were great due to inflation, the ever-increasing cost of goods and services, and cutbacks in Washington that reduced the amount of federal funds coming to us. For example, we had to put an additional \$66.4 million into the Medicaid program over the next two years. We also had to add \$1.7 million to the hospital and medical insurance program for State employees, retirees and teachers to help meet a whopping increase in the insurance rate.

We appropriated an additional \$1.2 million to help our counties meet the steadily increasing cost of energy to operate our

public school buildings over the next two years. This will provide approximately the following increases to the county commissioners in this area of the State: Haywood County \$96,240; Jackson County \$51,156; Madison County \$37,644; Swain County \$13,040. This money is allotted to the counties based on the number of students in each county.

Although a general salary increase for teachers and State employees was deferred until this Fall, they are by no means overlooked in the budget we adopted. The budget contains \$333.4 million to give them merit pay increments and longevity payments over the next two years — \$286.3 million for merit increases and \$47.1 million for longevity.

Furthermore, a salary increase for teachers and state employees will receive first priority in the Fall when the Legislature reconvenes for a short session to make adjustments in the budget. The pay raise will be the first order of business.

We have reserved more than \$100 million as a starting point for the pay raise and will add additional funds to that based on the additional revenues that will come in to us between now and then. When you are talking about a pay raise, you are talking large sums of money. To give teachers and State employees a one percent raise in pay costs \$28 million per year.

As tight as our budget was, I am pleased that we managed to avoid any major reduction in State support for our public schools. We did not have to take a single teacher or teacher's aide out of the schools. Those affected are those paid with federal funds, not State funds, so it is obvious that the cutbacks made by the Reagan administration bear the responsibility.

Our counties and municipalities stood to gain considerable sums of money under two bills passed by the House, but unfortunately the Senate did not act on the bills. The first would raise the tax on alcoholic beverages. This would have given Haywood County and its cities and towns an additional \$53,451, Jackson County an additional \$35,315 and Swain County an additional \$13,802.

The second bill would enable the people of the various counties of the State to vote on whether to increase their local sales tax by another penny on the dollar. If the people voted this tax on themselves this would have produced an additional \$1.6 million a year for Haywood, \$745,524 for Jackson, \$300,781 for Swain and \$271,944 for Madison.

Hopefully, the Senate will take up these two House-passed bills during the Fall legislative session. It is well known that our counties and towns are short on money to meet the service needs of their citizens.

Historically, the State devotes a small percentage of the total budget for capital construction, and this year was no exception. Out of a total budget of almost \$12 billion, we appropriated \$66.7 million for buildings and facilities.

The capital construction items are varied, including such things as construction of buildings in the University of North Carolina System, \$48.3 million; renovations at our mental institutions, \$3.9 million; construction of a State office building in Charlotte, \$4.1; completion of the new Central Prison, \$3.5 million; and erosion control at beaches on the coast, \$3.4 million.

Still another item approved for construction is one of particular interest and value to Western North Carolina — a horse

and livestock facility to be built near Asheville at a cost of \$1.6 million.

Some people doubt the wisdom of building the horse/livestock facility. However, those of us representing Western North Carolina feel that since we were to have a capital construction budget, then Western North Carolina should receive its fair share. After all, the people in our area will have to help pay for all the other approved projects, including efforts to stop beach erosion down on the coast.

Horses are a big business in North Carolina. The information we received was that there are 200,000 head of horses and 53,000 horse farms in the State, with a total value of \$200 million. There are over 7,000 4-H horse projects in which young people participate. Experience in other states having a first-class horse/livestock facility indicate that the presence of such a facility generates millions of dollars annually for the tourist industry.

Another major issue of the session was redistricting to meet the requirements of the 1980 Census. The State Senate and State House districts in the counties I represent were not changed in any respect. The counties I represent will remain the same — Haywood, Jackson, Madison and Swain.

It has been a great privilege to serve as Speaker of the House, for I believe it reflects credit on Western North Carolina. My service is a continuing thing, and I stand ready to be of assistance to my constituents in any way I can, in person or out. My office address is: Room 217, State Legislative Building, Raleigh, N.C. 27611. The telephone number is 378-7272 or 727-3471.