



Dr. Hansford Johnson, retiring Christianity professor and Dean of the Chapel, studies in his new office for one of the last times. —Photo by Robinson

## More Religious Interests Now, Says Dr. Johnson

by Mary Leonard

"There is definitely more religious interest on campus than when I was a student at Mercer."

Such is the observation of Dr. Hansford Johnson, who graduated from Mercer in 1913. He went on to say that "students are probably better orientated, religiously, than when I came here as a teacher."

Dr. Johnson joined the faculty 19 years ago. He will retire in June of this year.

Formerly Dean of the Roberts School of Christianity and, at present, Dean of the Chapel, Dr. Johnson came to Mercer in 1939, having served as pastor of the Broadway Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky, for nine years.

During his 19 years at Mercer, Dr. Johnson has seen many changes in the attitudes of students toward the school and education in general. Arriving on campus just as the depression '30's were leaving, he found that many students could not worry about their studies for

worrying about their stomachs.

As economic conditions became better, there was more food and more time for leisure, thus allowing the students to be in "better shape" for studying.

### Semester System Comes

Dr. Johnson remembers that the war brought many changes—including, to accommodate the Navy, changing to the semester system. "We managed to have 3/2 in one whole," he said, "by cutting out vacations and almost all holidays." This change proved to be too much "drudgery" for everyone.

After the war, came the GI's—some "anxious to show their independence after being under military discipline," and some possessing the "finest minds I have ever known."

Today's college student belongs to the "settling-down period," according to Dr. Johnson. Economically secure, he has leisure, food, and opportunities that past students have not had.

However, the retiring dean believes that today's colleges face the problem of the "presence of too many students not prepared to do college work." High-schools are not always giving students "sufficient basic study habits to enable them to have the freedom a Liberal Arts College offers."

### Asks Chapel Respect

In closing, Dr. Johnson commented about chapel programs. "I realize," he said, "that people treat chapel as a drudgery, but I believe there is enough gentlemanliness in the boys and ladylikeness in the girls for them to be respectful to speakers."

"Actually," he commented, "I am greatly pleased with the responsiveness most people give to chapel."

Dr. Johnson also pointed out that students who are so quick to criticize Chapel programs should remember that there is no fund for financing speakers. "Considering that all speakers are contributing their time to help us, we have fine chapel programs."

## Bates...

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lams and Amherst in their mid-March tour.)

"We developed the idea," Bates continued, "that we must have a different atmosphere in the South before there is a change in racial status."

They also emphasized, Bates added, that there can be no changes until the South is ready. He asked for a "middle road of sensibility."

He said the South needs an atmosphere where "free discussion" is possible. Bates said he meant, specifically, academic freedom, freedom of the pulpit, and freedom of the press.

In their debates, Bates said, they proposed that the NAACP stop pushing test cases in Southern courts.

Layfield spoke on the Northern opinion of the segregation issue and the reception the pair received.

"People we met in the North were surprised," Layfield said. "They expected rabble rousing..."

He added he and Bates "presented a sane approach that they had not anticipated."

Layfield said he had received these impressions about Northern opinion:

1. That the North has an international point of view.

2. That "the North also has an economic argument against the racial situation in the South." The economic question is concerned with race problems holding back industries.

3. That the Northerner doesn't believe that the South will take a step on its own.

It is hard to convince the Northern people, Layfield said, that there are Southern people who are concerned with the problem besides extremists.

The general Northern attitude, he said, "was one of interest, seeking knowledge of the situation, a realization that they don't know the situation in the South and an open mindedness."

Also, Layfield commented, "They don't try to hide their own problems." And, he said, the Northern students did not ask baiting questions.

Concluding, he said, "If we accept the fact that it (the racial issue) is our responsibility then all other things (such as "free discussion") will follow.

"Our own leadership is telling us we can maintain the status quo. This is not true."  
"The burden is ours."

The Mercer pair's debate trip was widely publicized throughout the country. Many Georgia papers carried accounts of it as did Time Magazine and the New York Times

## Mercer 3 Attend Inter-Frat Meet

Dr. H. L. McManus, faculty advisor on fraternities, Tommy Holland, Sigma Nu, and Doug Skelton, SAE, attended the second annual meeting of the Southeastern Interfraternity Council at the University of Florida, April 12.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss Mercer's Interfraternity Council and the fraternity system as a whole. The discussions were led by Al Miller and Layton Mark, president and vice-president of SEIC.

The principal speaker was J. Wayne Rietz, president of the University of Florida, who gave an interesting and challenging talk, outlining the growth of the University of Florida and the parallel development of the fraternity system as an integral part of the institution.

The convention was attended by representatives from approximately 25 schools in the Southeast.

## ONE ON THE AISLE

by Haywood Ellis

It's a shame some of the English classes didn't inject a day into their schedule some time before the presentation of "The Beautiful People" to explain the idea Saroyan was attempting to get across in his play. If this had been done, maybe a great many more people would have enjoyed the play more than they did. As it was, the audience was receptive to the satisfactory presentation of a complicatedly simple play.

This was a tough chore for the Mercer Players to take on, but they fought through it admirably, even shining in some parts. The presentation was extremely well-rehearsed, and if there were any fluffed lines, they were covered expertly Friday night. None could be detected.

Except for Ha Kidd, who came through with one of the better performances seen in a student production this year, the players in the smaller roles were more effective than those in the leads. In the attention-getting opening scene, Jo Bess Smith displayed just the right combination of confusion and fascination at the rather unusual ideas being offered by Jimmy Prescott.

Doug Bailey came through with flying colors, putting over with relatively few lines a deep characterization of Max Croft's pathetically well-meaning drinking buddy. Merritt Alexander was satisfactorily unobtrusive as the rather lenient priest who was listening to the story of the drunkard's life for the "nth" time. Some awfully hilarious scenes were injected by Bobby Brown who played a sluesman who had once taken a trip to Mexico, "The most memorable event of his life!"

The program seemed incomplete, as it didn't list the floral mice who were the friends of St. Agnes. They stole the show, and deserved some recognition. But, such is the plight of a mouse: to go through life unrecognized and unloved. Anybody wants to contribute to the fund? Let's see what we can do about this terrible injustice to mousedom.

It was a shame that a few people in the audience who saw some things that others didn't had to feel embarrassed when they laughed. This was the kind of play in which each person has to associate himself and find his own story line. What's funny in one person's plot may be the major tragedy of another's.

The trumpet (excuse me, cornet) was used effectively throughout the production. (Although I thought it should be playing progressive jazz rather than a Wayne King-styled waltz, but I guess when you're putting on a play you have to take what you can get.)

The lighting was carried off effectively, and the set (what I could see of it through the forest of lighting poles) seemed nice enough. I still can't figure out, though, how a rose-trellis casts a shadow against the sky. That's a pretty ambitious project for a rose-trellis, but we were confronted with a brave one.

All-in-all, it was a continually satisfactory and sometimes shining from "The Beautiful People." —Photo by Robinson.



Bobby Brown, left, and Douglas Bailey, right, thrash out a scene in "The Beautiful People." —Photo by Robinson.

## Phi Delt's Give Blood En Mass For Special Day

The actives and pledges of Phi Delta Theta gave blood en mass last week as their project for their National Fraternity's Community Service Day.

The blood was given to the Mason Hospital and the chapter drive began April 12 which was designated as Community Service Day.

The program is one initiated by Phi Delta Theta on a nationwide scale. Almost 120 chapters over the United States and in Canada will be working to improve their community in some way.

The program was begun after National officers saw the need to replace the old "hell week" which once typified social fraternities with a more responsible and constructive program. The program also has as its purpose the improvement of fraternity-community relations.

Charlie Keaton was the chairman of the Phi Delt blood donation program.