

A History of the Office of the Registrar

The Office of the Registrar at North Carolina Central University dates back to archived records of 1912 which state that Miss Pearl M. Whitted served as the official recordkeeper of the university. Prior to her appointment, it is believed that Dr. James E. Shepard personally maintained the records as it was the registrar's responsibility to implement the procedures of the university which included providing the previous year's statistics for publication. Essentially, the office was a one person operation with multiple responsibilities to include admissions (until 1976), bursar (1920s), and registration and recordkeeping.

Following the June 30, 1909, incorporation of the National Religious Training School and Chautauqua for the Colored Race, preparation began for recruiting and enrolling its freshman class of trailblazers. A year later, July 5, 1910, a summer session was held under the Chautauqua concept, enrolling a total of 86 students. Eighty five percent of the students were North Carolina residents while the remaining 15% ventured onto "the sloping hills and verdant green" representing both neighboring and northeastern states.

In addition to residential statistics, the female population on the campus out numbered males by a ratio of approximately 7:1 with 10 males and 76 females. The first regular session registration in October 1910 was 114 students of whom 90% were North Carolina residents. The male female ratio was approximately 1:1 with 55 males and 59 females represented.

Since that time the office has operated under the leadership of distinguished pioneers, philanthropists, alumni, educators and historians who have upheld the integrity of recording, maintaining and safekeeping the academic records entrusted to them. Each Registrar's tenure provided leadership skills that were necessary for progressive development of the office. From its early years of labor intensive and manually driven (pencil and paper) processes through keypunch cards and data processing labels to telephonic and web-based registration, the Office of the Registrar continues to evolve in the spirit of "Truth and Service" to provide record verifications to students, alumni, faculty, staff and the community.

Research revealed no indications of other sites for the Office of the Registrar than its present location in the Dr. James E. Shepard Administration Building. At one point, the University Registrar and the Bursar shared office and vault space in the building. Although Dr. James E. Shepard Administration Building serves as the official home, semester registration procedures and functions, increased enrollment and course offerings mandated the use of satellite registration operations stations. Massive satellite registrations have successfully operated out of the Women's Gym (now Student Services Building), Farrison-Newton Communication Building and H.M. Michaux, Jr. School of Education Building. Enrollment growth and global technological advances have provided an avenue for the Registrar's Office to cease satellite registration operations and manual validations while providing accountability for our students.

To date, academic transcripts are maintained and produced via manual and technological media as some original records were meticulously recorded to perfection with the stroke of pens. Preservation of these historical documents necessitated the use of a file imaging and record storage system in the mid 1990s to ensure legible and timely access to transcript files and other academic records.

At some point in their careers at North Carolina Central University, six of the twelve university registrars served under the leadership of our founder, Dr. James E. Shepard. Their appointments and tenure varied as the university expanded and transformed to become the nation's first state-supported liberal arts college for African-American students and a viable constituent institution of the University of North Carolina System. The foundation that they laid continues to be the driving force that perpetuates integrity and accountability of services rendered to the university and community. Honorable mention for more than thirty years of continuous service to the Office of the Registrar on behalf of the leadership of Mrs. Frances M. Eagleson (English teacher, dietitian, school historian) and Mrs. Mildred Mundine-Lyon (Office of the Registrar's work-study student and records clerk) are in order. Accolades are also duly noted to Mr. Brooklyn T. McMillon (hired by Dr. Shepard, Office of the Registrar's work-study student, Health Education Department Chair, instructor, donor of personal historical collection, archivist, volunteer and university servant) for his many years of "soaring on the legacy" of Dr. James E. Shepard and North Carolina Central University. A complete listing of the University Registrars follows:

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| Miss Pearl M. Whitted | 1912-1920 |
| Ms. Alice J. Houston | 1920-1926 |
| Mrs. Mable W. Johnson | 1926-1927 |
| Ms. Albertine Theora Edmondson | 1927-1928 |
| Mrs. Frances M. Eagleson | 1928-1964 |
| Mr. Willie Bryant | 1964-1966 |
| Mr. Brooklyn T. McMillon | 1966-1982 |

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| Dr. Bernell Jones | 1982-1986 |
| Dr. James Pierce | 1986-1992 |
| Mrs. Mildred Mundine Lyon | 1992-2002 |
| Mrs. Alice Jones Mayer (Interim) | 2002-2003 |
| Mrs. B. Vernelle Massey Webb (Acting) | 2003 |
| Mrs. Cheryl Bowman-Medhin | 2003-2006 |
| Dr. Jerome Goodwin | 2006- Present |

Through the years, as the Office of the Registrar took on more and more responsibilities, additional staff were required to handle the workload. Today, the Office of the Registrar is staffed with fourteen professionals of whom 13 hold bachelor's degree and above. Each staff member performs highly specialized tasks that require strong intellectual capacity and broad experience to effectively work with students, faculty, alumni and administrators.

In conclusion, the registrar's calling is an ancient one that dates back to the medieval university nearly 700 years ago. The Office of the Registrar's staff will continue to enhance its work, while remaining dedicated to the legacy of our founder Dr. James E. Shepard, and preserving the academic records of our institution in his spirit of "Truth and Service."

Prepared by Jerome Goodwin, Ed.D.

Mrs. Vernell Massey

Resources: Brooklyn T. McMillon, M.S.P.H., Retired, University Registrar

NCCU Archives, Records, Catalogs and History Center