

NORTH HARRIS COUNTY COLLEGE UNITED FACULTY

2700 W. W. THORNE DRIVE • SUITE A-217 • HOUSTON, TEXAS 77073

THE ADVOCATE

MARCH, 1992

Edited by Steve Davis

THE AFT ON THE STATE OF THE DISTRICT

When the President addresses the joint houses of Congress with his State of the Union Address, it is customary for the loyal opposition to follow with their view on the condition of the country. Since I was invited to hear Dr. Pickelman's "State of the District" speech, it seems appropriate that I make a few remarks.

As Dr. Pickelman finished his first semester with the District last spring, we were invited by the Board to May's graduation to witness the "investiture of the position of Chancellor" upon him. Having worked for the District some seventeen years myself, I tried to recall if I had ever experienced "investiture" of my position, and I had not. I checked with a number of my colleagues, hard-working professionals all, and none of them had experienced it either. We simply signed on with the District, rolled up our sleeves, and went to work. None of us could figure out exactly what investiture means. However, I think I'm beginning to catch on--but first a review of the year.

Some good things have happened. Thanks to Dr. Pickelman's recommendation, the Board approved a raise for all employees, ensuring that those people who had hit the top of their pay categories would not, once again, face another year without a noticeable adjustment to their income. Dr. Pickelman hired Steve Head and Sandy Shugart as college presidents, both excellent choices. He has also approved 41 sorely needed new faculty positions for next year. In recognition of the importance of instruction, he has invited three faculty members to speak at this year's graduation ceremony, an idea long overdue. The Board has finally approved outreach programs for southern Aldine, something the union has been advocating for over ten years. It was gratifying to me to be present at a Board meeting to hear Dr. Pickelman admit publicly that this area has been "underserved" and to see the members of the Board nod their heads in assent. This last year also saw the appointment of the first black to the Board, again a long term

"Education for Democracy — Democracy for Education"

Counting administrative positions at the District Office, the total number of administrators will rise to 60-64. Of the 9 to 13 new positions, how many of them deal with instruction? What will the costs be? I will agree that some of these positions may, in fact, be necessary. Only time will tell in some cases. But I remain troubled at what is clearly proliferation of administration on the one hand while on the other hand claiming to cut bureaucratic fat. As an interesting side note, one of Dr. Pickelman's listed priorities is to include faculty and staff in the decision-making process, and his chart with students and faculty at the top looked pretty slick. How many of you were involved in the "decision-making process" of this major reorganization? The answer is only three--the Senate presidents.

Let's look at the Chancellor's position. Joe Airola left the District making \$ 98,302. John Pickelman came in making \$ 125,000. He likes the term CEO, and talks a bit about corporate modeling in the District. He is surrounding himself with lots of fancily-titled folks. If people haven't noticed, corporations are trimming back on administrative positions. He has a nice, large office. His vice-chancellors have appropriately down-scaled offices. I suppose we'll have to work that principle on down the chain and include office space and staff for the 9-13 new positions as well. I don't think we need a CEO. What we need is an educational leader who is devoted to quality instruction and demonstrates that devotion through support and funding. The niceties of power are a given, but let's not get carried away, especially in the face of threatened cuts in state funding. Let's make sure that our dollars are spent on substance. Let's have a leader who rolls up his sleeves and joins other education professionals dedicated to teaching--not one who needs "investiture," which I have decided must be a cross between inauguration and coronation. Let's stop showboating and involve faculty and staff in productive, meaningful, substantive decision-making.

Everywhere I have gone lately, faculty and staff have been pulling me aside to talk about all of these changes. They share many of the concerns I have named. A lot of non-members of the union have asked me, "When are you guys going to jump all over this?" Let me turn the question around. When are you going to do something? The union has been functioning well for eleven years now. A lot of you give us encouragement and are pleased, anxious, sometimes delighted for us to step into the arena. Isn't it time you did something? If your concerns match ours, join the AFT. Individually, we have little power. Collectively, we can make a difference.

Alan Hall

GRADUATION SPEAKERS

The union offers congratulations to the faculty members chosen to speak at this year's graduation ceremony. Ivy Martino from Tomball College, Scott Nelson from Kingwood College, and AFT member Michael McFarland

point of union advocacy. Randy Bates is a fine Board member.

It is here, however, that my pleasure over change begins to diminish. The District's improved presence in minority locations and a black on the Board pale when we look at the number of minority faculty the District employs. The Fall 1990 Higher Education Coordinating Board Report lists NHMCCD with a total of 672 faculty, only 29 of whom are minorities (blacks, Hispanics, and Asians). Those are abysmal figures for a District that touts itself as multicultural. At a time of dramatic proliferation of administrative positions (more on this later), Dr. Pickelman has mentioned concerns about summer pay for faculty, indicating that cuts might be appropriate. He also continues to push for a range system for faculty salaries, ignoring the fact that the faculty at all three colleges voted overwhelmingly for a modified step system. I also have major concerns about what is going to happen to health care for us next year. I already hear grave rumblings from the Benefits Committee. I am also deeply troubled about support staff salaries. We have a number of employees who can not afford to provide health insurance for their children on their salaries. Staff are vital to instruction, and more must be done for them. I also have a concern about childcare facilities being offered at instructional sites. A Kingwood College student, Mariane Gooch, has made several presentations to the Board lobbying for childcare facilities, a program Dr. Darla Miller has been advocating for years. Ms. Gooch secured a commitment from the Board to investigate such a program and a promise from Dr. Pickelman to appoint a task force to look into the issue. To date, no task force has been created, and as I reviewed Dr. Pickelman's 23 goals for next year, I was astonished to find no reference to childcare. Perhaps it was replaced by number 23--"have fun".

It is here that my pleasure over change diminishes even more. In fact, I look on in horror at highly questionable decisions and behavior that might be interpreted as showboating--a concern more with flashy image than real substance.

I'll start with the logo change. The District's sites all have their own color coordinated stars now. We see a lot of "star" this and "star" that; we are told that we are "stars". When the District recently advertised position openings in the Houston Chronicle, they were headlined with this caption: **STAR SEARCH**. Frankly, I was embarrassed by this caption.

Before the "State of the District" speech, the District had 51 administrative positions, with a salary cost of \$ 2.8 million. In that speech, Dr. Pickelman announced his goal to reduce administrative bureaucracy. When he finished, the levels may have been reduced, but the net number of administrative positions increased 9 to 13 slots (depending on which chart you consult) with fancy titles. In addition to the three vice-chancellor positions (\$ 75,000 apiece) that he created this year, Dr. Pickelman provided the following administrative reorganization in his speech:

North Harris College: President, 3 Vice-Presidents, 8 Directors, 3 Deans, 12 (not the 14 he reported) Division Chairs

Kingwood College: President, 3 Vice-Presidents, 4 Directors, 2 Deans, 4 Division Heads

from North Harris College have been selected for this honor. These are outstanding faculty members well deserving this nod of recognition. Our especial thanks to Michael, who has helped demonstrate the caliber of the AFT membership.

FACULTY AUTHORS

We call the attention of our readers to the following ads from the Spring, 1992 catalogue of Texas A&M University Press. North Harris College historians James Moore and Marilyn Rhinehart (a charter member of AFT) have books scheduled for publication later this year. Is there another community college in this state that can boast two faculty members in one department having monographs published in the same season by a prestigious university press? We congratulate these dear colleagues for this outstanding achievement.

A Way of Work and a Way of Life

Coal Mining in Thurber, Texas, 1888-1926

Marilyn D. Rhinehart

Thin veins of bituminous coal lay under the ground in Erath County, Texas, for cons. In 1888 Robert D. Hunter and his investors bought out the owners of a small mine there and established a company and a town whose sole purpose was to remove the coal. In Thurber, Texas, coal was life. Its residents lived and breathed it, and when coal's importance as a fuel quickly declined, so did the town and the life its residents had known.

Marilyn D. Rhinehart gives the full picture of a culture and community formed by one type of work done for one employer. For almost forty years, the Texas & Pacific Coal Company was the focus of Thurber. Like most coal towns, Thurber experienced labor problems, and in 1903 the United Mine Workers organized all of Thurber's miners. Unlike other towns, however, Thurber was unionized without violence. The author also discusses Thurber's heavily immigrant population and the benefits and constraints of life in a company town that by 1910 had three thousand residents and by 1940, fewer than two hundred.

MARILYN D. RHINEHART is professor of history at North Harris College in Houston.

Number Nine: Texas A&M Southwestern Studies

ISBN 0-89096-499-8 \$39.50s
LC 91-35907 6x9 256 pp. 17 b&w
photos. 11 tables. Bib. Index.

June

Labor History. Texas History.

Through Fire and Flood

The Catholic Church in Frontier Texas, 1836-1900

James Talmadge Moore

The upheavals of 1836 left Catholics north of the Nueces River cut off from ordinary ties to religious institutions and ushered in an era of evangelization and change unprecedented in the North American Catholic church. James Talmadge Moore begins his engaging chronicle of the Catholic church in nineteenth-century Texas from shortly after this point in time, and where Carlos E. Castañeda ended his celebrated account.

Moore integrates events after the Revolution into the larger social and political history of the young nation and state and shows their relationship to ecclesiastical and philosophical movements occurring elsewhere. Moreover, he shows the character of the people who did the work of the church—members of various orders and lay persons alike, some courageous and compassionate, others less admirable.



Photo courtesy Catholic Archives of Texas

JAMES TALMADGE MOORE teaches history at the University of St. Thomas in Houston and at North Harris College. He is the author of *Indian and Jesuit: A Seventeenth-Century Encounter*.

Number Forty-two: The Centennial Series of the Association of Former Students, Texas A&M University

ISBN 0-89096-504-8 \$39.50s
LC 91-34327 6x9 336 pp. 27 b&w
photos. Bib. Index.

May

Religious History. Texas History.

Photo courtesy Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University

