



NOW IN THE NORTH

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Wood Presidency Draws To Close

As Dr. William Ransom Wood prepares to step down from the presidency of the University of Alaska, he has just one regret: "Time runs out too fast."

"At some point you come to realize how brief a time you've got to accomplish all the things you can conceive, and finally you come to the full realization you're not going to get all of them done," said the educator.

Dr. Wood, fourth president of the state university, after Charles E. Bunnell, Terris Moore, and Ernest N. Patty, has guided the institution for 13 years. Since he assumed office on July 1, 1960, the university has undergone unprecedented growth and development, made possible by statehood and strong public support.

In 1960, the university consisted of the original main campus at Fairbanks and four community colleges. Since then, major campuses have been developed in Anchorage and Juneau, the number of community colleges has grown to eight, 20 extension and public service centers have been established, and research facilities have proliferated on the Fairbanks campus, greatly enhancing the university's national and international reputation as a center for research and advanced study.

This development was part of a plan adopted by the Board of Regents in 1964 to decentralize the university—to take education to the people. A single campus could not meet the needs of the vast state.

The growth of a university is measured in more than buildings. In 1960, the Alaska institution's total full-time enrollment was 921 students. Nearly that number will be receiving degrees from it this year. More than 10,000 students were enrolled in academic programs last fall.

It is estimated that nearly 30,000 Alaskans—some 10 per cent of the 49th State's population—have some direct instructional contact with their university each year.

"Each time I reflect on the progress of the University of Alaska during its relatively brief history, I am overwhelmed by the tremendous job the people of the state have done for themselves," said Dr. Wood.

One of his great satisfactions is the support the voters have given the university. All the bond issues for university construction that have gone on the ballot since statehood have been overwhelmingly approved.

Other satisfactions have been "our success in attracting some extraordinary professional talent to the

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Alaskans Pay Tribute

Prominent, long-time Alaskans familiar with Dr. Wood's achievements in higher education and contributions as a citizen of the state are paying tribute to him as he prepares to leave the university.

Said *Anchorage banker Elmer Rasmuson*, a member of the university's Board of Regents for 19 years and its president for 12:

"Dr. Wood's tenure as fourth president of the University of Alaska is part of the history of Alaska. It marks our passage in time towards the realization of higher educational opportunities for all Alaskans. The campus is the entire state and the concern of the university is from the depths of the seas to the tops of our mountains and beyond to other lands.

"It was my privilege as a regent to be closely associated with Dr. Wood. My respect for these academic achievements is surpassed only by my admiration of the character and warmth of personality of my good friend, Bill Wood. He has given generously of his time to community projects. He is a kindly man with gentle thoughts. I never heard him speak meanly of anyone. With good humor he appreciates the world. Because of his soaring spirit and sensitive imagery, he is a gifted poet. He is part of an ideal family team. Bill Wood is truly a man for all seasons."

Said *Governor William A. Egan*: "Doctor Wood's accomplishments as the university's president during its most dramatic period of expansion will attest down through the years to

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'You Cannot Neglect Facilities'

When he accepted the presidency of the university, Dr. Wood knew one of his major tasks would be to promote its physical expansion.

Little construction was possible in territorial days for lack of funds, but with statehood and the demands of Alaskans for greater educational opportunity at home, a new day was at hand.

The university's total physical plant in 1960 was valued at about \$10.5 million. At the close of the 1972 fiscal year, the university owned facilities with a value of nearly \$102 million.

The voters have approved every university general obligation bond issue since statehood, including an \$18 million issue placed on the general election ballot last November, which assures continued expansion and improvement of the statewide system in the near future.

"You can't assemble a good faculty without adequate facilities," says Dr. Wood. "This is especially true at 65 degrees north latitude where winter temperatures can drop to 55 below zero.

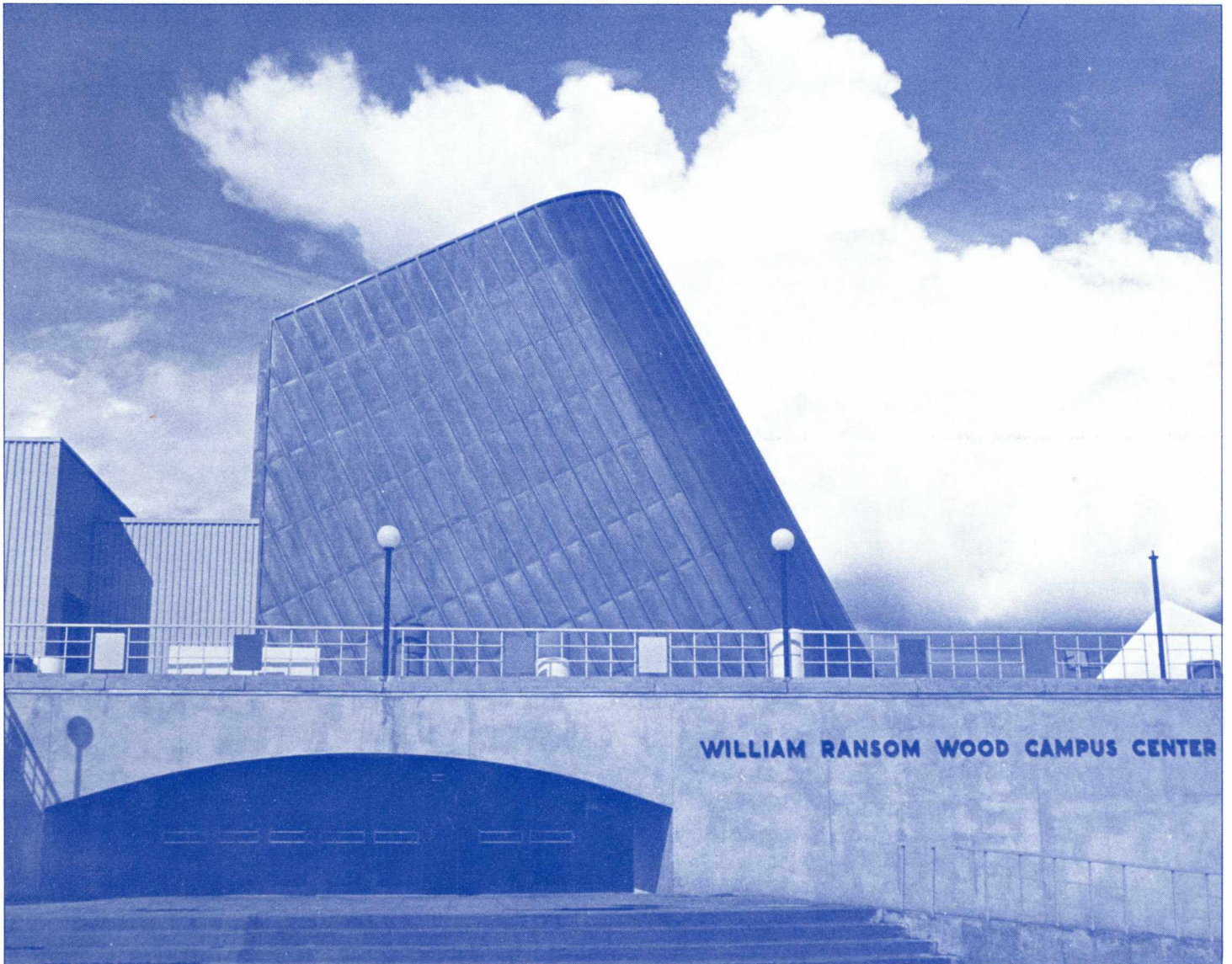
"You can overbuild. There are times when you've got to shift your emphasis

and spend on other things, maybe supporting services and the other things that are part of the condition of employment.

"But you cannot neglect the facilities, the equipment and the materials of instruction and expect to assemble and retain a competent faculty. It's impossible. There's no amount of money you can pay that would assure your getting top people.

"They don't come just for the facilities, of course. They come more for what they see as a live and developing situation in which they can see a role for themselves to play that is meaningful to them. If they came only for money, they probably wouldn't be worth having."

Adequate salaries for faculty "have been our top priority since I've been here," says the educator. "We haven't been able to move on this as far as we would have liked. The problem has been inadequacy of funding. But we have done rather well. In the last dozen years I think we've tripled the average income of the people working at this university."



his guiding presence. As well as the addition of various facilities at Fairbanks, the expansion of university and community college campuses to cities and towns across Alaska will stand as a lasting monument to Doctor Wood as a builder of the university. I know all Alaskans join me in wishing him and his family the very best for the future."

U.S. Senator Ted Stevens: "While it saddens me deeply to know Bill Wood is stepping down from the University of Alaska leadership, I have only positive feelings about the trends and goals he has set for the university. Bill has steered our university through a period of great growth and development.

"I could point to any one of the numerous contributions Bill has made, but one example sums it all up for me: At a time when students on other campuses were protesting and rebelling against their administrators, the University of Alaska students voted — on their own initiative — to name the new student union building for President Wood."

U.S. Congressman Don Young: "Everyone knows Dr. Wood as a builder, the man who transformed the University of Alaska from a small, northern college into a major arctic university that now enjoys a worldwide reputation for excellence. Under his leadership, education is being made available to all Alaskans across the state. From a community college in Ketchikan to an arctic research laboratory at Barrow, the University of Alaska has expanded to serve the specialized needs of Alaska and the nation.

"As a former teacher, I can appreciate Bill Wood's commitment to education and his dedication, proven over 13 years, to Alaska. Though his name is already chiseled into stone on the campus he built, Bill Wood's greatest testimonial will come from the university's alumni, the Alaskans who benefitted from his dedication, the people who will develop our great state wisely and with care."

Anchorage engineer William A. O'Neill, member of the Board of Regents for 25 years and president of the board from 1969 until his recent retirement:

"Dr. Wood is a man of vision, of action. He was ahead of his time with his concept of higher education for all the people. Dr. Wood has shown exceptional talent in his direction of the uni-

versity and has expanded the meaning of our statewide system. He has charted a clear course for the future, to the benefit of the state and all its people."

Dr. Laurence Irving, pioneering Alaska scientist now advisory scientific director at the university's Institute of Arctic Biology: "I met William R. Wood in Anchorage soon after his assumption of the presidency of the University of Alaska. I was at once attracted by his enthusiasm for development of research, and we proceeded from there on steps that would establish a laboratory of zoophysiology in 1961, which soon became the Institute of Arctic Biology.

"In many ways I have appreciated his warm friendliness and his strong and persistent influence in support of the institute's research. The support of new lines of academic research does not proceed without shrewd evaluation of their prospects, timely presentation of advantages and overcoming obstacles. For this support and William Wood's friendship, I am grateful."

Harry (Red) Porter, businessman, former Fairbanks mayor, and a member with Dr. Wood of the Fairbanks Borough Hospital board of directors:

"Many kind and gracious words will be showered upon Dr. Wood at this mo-

ment of departure from the university. Many of the words will relate to his vast accomplishments in glass and cement which will stand as their own testimony for years to come.

"Having been involved closely with Dr. Wood in some of that effort, I appreciate him for it; but I respect and value his friendship for different reasons. To me he is 'Bill,' a warm, intelligent friend who I happen to know is a fine husband and a good father, a loving son to an aged mother. To me I don't care if Bill is president of the University of Alaska or just next-door Fairbanks neighbor Bill. I am proud to count him a friend."

Dr. Don M. Dajoe, the University of Alaska's vice president for public service: "It has been a rich personal and professional experience to work with and to work for Dr. Wood. As superintendent of schools in Anchorage from 1961-66 there were many occasions when we conferred and interreacted, particularly in connection with the development of the Anchorage Community College. His insights of the total educational needs of Alaska have been keen and his support for all programs noteworthy.

"In 1966 I accepted the invitation

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Presidency Draws To Close

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university" and the "very fine relationship I've enjoyed with the university's Board of Regents." The regents, he said, "have been very hard taskmasters at times but they have always been fair and have supported good effort."

Peering at the university's future, Dr. Wood sees it as "excellent in the long range but close to the traumatic in the short range." So in the near future "we're simply going to have to curb development to fit the availability of funds," which means that "a great many educational demands — legitimate requests that come from the people for educational opportunity and services—will not be met."

The educator adds: "Once Alaska is permitted to develop its resources, it is in an extraordinarily advantageous position, for it has resources far in excess of population. And if the rate of development of these resources can proceed in advance of the rate of population growth, we have a very, very healthy future ahead of us."

When Dr. Wood steps down from the presidency on June 30, he will have spent 45 years in edu-

cation. He has been a public school teacher and coach, public school administrator, university teacher and community college director. He has served in the U.S. Office of Education as a specialist in higher education planning. He was a University of Nevada vice president from 1954-60 and in his last two years at that institution was also director of its Desert Research Institute.

A professor of English, he holds B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. degrees. He has an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Illinois College, where he did his undergraduate work. He has been an educational consultant to a number of foreign nations, including South Vietnam, and been honored for his work. He is a poet and author of many publications. He served with the U.S. Navy during World War II and retired from the U.S. Naval Reserve in 1970 with the rank of captain.

Dr. Wood is an honorary member of the Pioneers of Alaska and has been elected to the Forty-Niner Hall of Fame. Students of the university voted to name the new student union building on the Fairbanks campus for the educator.

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Looking Ahead -And Back

to join the university staff largely because of the regard I hold for Dr. Wood. His capacity for work and his broad knowledge of the field of higher education have served as an example and inspiration to me. The charm and grace with which Mrs. Wood serves the university and its constituency as his helpmate have endeared her to all of us."

Fairbanks attorney Edward A. Merdes, a former state senator:

"There was standing room only in Schaible Auditorium some 13 years ago when Dr. Wood—with his mother standing at his side—was formally installed as the fourth president of the University of Alaska. His accomplishments as president and those as an outstanding citizen of the Fairbanks community and the state at large are known by all Alaskans. I would rather pass on my observations of Dr. Wood as a genuinely warm and inspiring human being.

"We all know Dr. Wood as an outgoing, generous and compassionate person, serious in all vital matters, but with an underlying sense of humor that enables him to solve even the most exasperating problems. His family life is exemplary and his wife is a talented woman with a competence in her own right. His children have followed their father's scholarly footsteps and in their years in Alaska have placed their roots here.

"As a friend, attorney, and as a legislator, I have observed him in action as a 'persuader,' seen him occasionally go down to defeat and rise again to do battle, all with tolerance and humor.

"As Dr. Wood leaves the university scene, we can all be assured he will continue to dedicate his considerable talents and seemingly endless energy for the betterment of his beloved Alaska and his country, which he loves so much."

Their life on the Fairbanks campus drawing to a close, Dr. and Mrs. Wood are making plans for the future and recalling good times and happy associations.

The couple will remain in Fairbanks. They had planned to build a home but with "times a little uncertain" they now are considering renting or buying a "modest" existing home, said Dr. Wood.

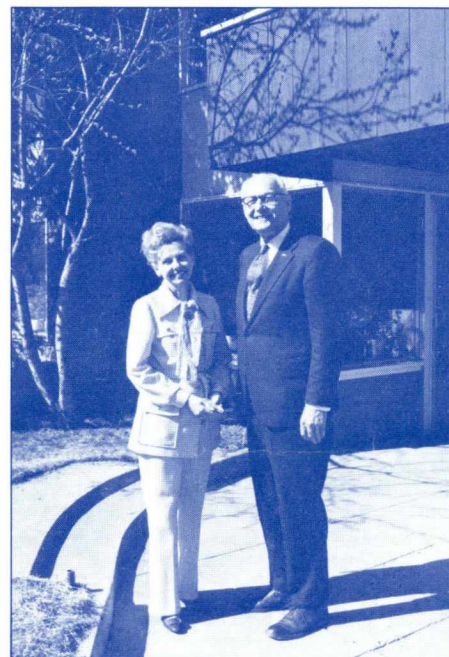
He will probably continue to do educational consulting work, most likely in developing countries around the world, dealing directly with the countries concerned or working through the U.S. Agency for International Development or private foundations. He anticipates returning to South Vietnam in the fall for two months to lend further assistance to that nation's effort to improve its higher education system.

The educator would also like to help raise funds—on a voluntary basis—"for good Alaskan causes," such as a new museum for the university and the next phase of the Greater Fairbanks Memorial Hospital. The author of a number of textbooks, he has been asked to do further writing in this field.

"You've got to keep yourself from rusting," he says.

Dr. Wood has been president of the Greater Fairbanks Memorial Hospital Foundation from the beginning. Organized to raise funds for the building and equipping of the hospital, the foundation's efforts came to a successful close with the opening of the facility in 1972.

"Our 13 years here have been most stimulating and challenging to both of us and I've enjoyed living on campus," says Mrs. Wood. Their children grew up in that time and consequently many young people frequented the Wood home.



Mrs. Wood has worked closely with the University Women's Association, seen it grow from a small group of faculty wives interested in helping newcomers to an organization open to any woman affiliated with the university. She is honorary president of the association.

She is an accomplished violinist and plays with the University-Fairbanks Symphony. The Woods enjoy long walks and berry-picking. They have traveled extensively in Alaska and abroad and entertained distinguished visitors, occasionally at the request of the governor.

One of their first plans after retirement: a leisurely tour of the state, visiting places they've never seen before.

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