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Geren To Leave Stetson;
Faculty "Lacks Confidence"

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DeLAND, Fla., (BP)--Stetson University President Paul Geren, interviewed after the school's trustees had taken no action on his resignation and the faculty had voted "no confidence" in his administrative leadership, said he plans to leave Stetson.

After a two-day meeting, the trustees of the Baptist school "declined to take action on the resignation" which Geren submitted a month earlier. At the time, Gereon gave no public reason for his action.

The trustees voted to commend Geren for his work, especially in establishing a splendid relationship with the Florida Baptist Convention, said Earl B. Edington, chairman of the board and pastor of First Baptist Church, St. Petersburg, Fla.

Immediately after the trustee meeting, however, the faculty voted unanimously (93-0) on a resolution stating that "the faculty lacks confidence in President Geren to lead the university constructively."

The faculty also voted to ask the trustees to reconsider a plan "to establish trustee and faculty control and guidelines for the president's administrative pattern." Trustees had earlier voted to create a trustee committee to work with a committee from the faculty in supervising administrative problems at the university. A part of the recommendation was to appoint an academic dean for the university.

A third resolution was adopted by the faculty by a 59-25 margin, "recognizing that the trustees are sovereign and with no wish of challenging the authority, and pledging the faculty to "work with the trustees in implementing their resolution."

On the week-end following the trustee and faculty action, the graduating seniors boycotted and picketed a reception given in their honor by the president.

The students carried signs saying "GROG" meaning "Get rid of Geren," and "944 students Can't Be Wrong," and "We Love Our School, We Love Our Faculty." Only about 30 of the 300 graduating seniors attended the reception.

Earlier, 944 students had signed a petition requesting the board of trustees to accept Geren's resignation.

Geren, contacted by telephone, said he would have an official statement to release later, but that he planned to leave Stetson probably at the end of the summer.

Geren said that in the light of the faculty and student body reactions, any significant degree of usefulness he could serve as president has ended.

Several persons, who wished not to be quoted, said that Geren's earlier resignation had been announced primarily to stave off a faculty revolt and a vote of no confidence by the faculty. No one seemed willing, however, to identify publicly the issues involved in the faculty-administration squabble.

A 22-page "Bill of Particulars" spelling out the issues had reportedly been prepared by the faculty and submitted to the trustees, but the document was not released publicly.

The Florida Times-Union in Jacksonville quoted several faculty members at the university, all of whom wished to remain anonymous, as saying the main issue was the administrative ability of the president.

One faculty member said the central complaint was "the president's inability to work effectively with his colleagues and the faculty."

Another was quoted as citing the trend towards changing the philosophy of the university away from the traditions of a quality institution.

Another said it came to a head after a position paper was presented concerning plans for expansion of the school's Brevard County campus, when Geren reportedly told the faculty, "If you don't like it, you can leave."

Faculty members reportedly had been unhappy because they had not been consulted by the president in several key administrative decisions and appointments of staff members.

In a statement issued following the faculty meeting and trustee action, Faculty Senate Chairman Harold J. Schultz said that the three resolutions were adopted "with reluctance and regret after every effort was made after many months...to prevent the issue from resolving itself in this fashion."

Schultz, chairman of the history department, said that "the faculty-student erosion of confidence in the president in no way reflected criticism of Stetson's relations with the Florida Baptist Convention.

"To the contrary, the faculty commended Dr. Geren for his distinguished work in church-university relations," added Schultz. "The faculty only regrets that the president's obvious talents in this one field are not matched by the necessary talents in other essential areas of presidential administration.

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Fuller Named Missions
Director For Florida

6/2/69

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JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (BP)--The Florida Baptist Convention has employed J. Woodrow Fuller, currently assistant superintendent of missions for the Dallas Baptist Association in Texas, as its director of the Florida convention's missions division.

A native of Mississippi, Fuller had held numerous Texas Baptist key positions, and was associate pastor of the 15,000 member First Baptist Church of Dallas before assuming the Dallas Baptist post.

Previously, he was secretary of the State Missions Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, coordinating the total mission program within the state, largest of the Baptist state conventions in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Fuller has also been assistant executive secretary of the Texas convention, and was director of the stewardship and direct missions department of the Texas convention for several years.

His election to the Florida Baptist post was announced by Harold Bennett, executive secretary of the Florida convention, who was director of the missions division for the Texas convention before coming to Florida. The missions division is one of four divisions under the State Missions Commission of the Texas convention.

Before entering denominational work in Texas, Fuller was a pastor in Tennessee, Kentucky, and Texas. He was a major in the U. S. Air Force during World War II. His wife has been a member, and second vice-president of the Foreign Mission Board.

Fuller will begin his new duties in late summer, Bennett said.

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