Officials Claim Wilkins News Not Suppressed

By HUGH RICE KELLY
Thresher Editor

A story printed in the March 4 edition of the Thresher reporting a news "blackout" on the scheduled appearance of NAACP executive secretary Roy Wilkins was hotly denied by University Director of Development Howard A. Thompson.

Wiese College Program Director Jack Beaird, however, countered with a statement charging Thompson with "devious dealings with a student who sought his advice," and which reasserted his understanding that the University had indeed expressed a desire that a lid be kept on the news of the Negro civil rights leader's visit.

Escape Responsibility
Wiese Executive Vice President Charles Upton said this afternoon, "It is my understanding that Howard Thompson whether explicitly or implicitly gave the impression that the University wanted a blackout," on Wilkins' visit, "and now that the blackout is lifted he apparently wants to escape his responsibility for his part in imposing the blackout."

Mr. Thompson said Tuesday, "We did not black that thing out," referring to Wilkins' scheduled appearance.

"We were consulted as to whether we ourselves would publicize it." Thompson went on to explain that he had not the personnel in the Development Office to handle publicity for the colleges as well as the University, and that he followed a standard policy for all the colleges of asking them to handle their own publicity. He pointed out that he has only one full-time publicity agent, Lee Estes, "who is overworked as it is."

Claim No Request
Beaird countered by stating, "Howard Thompson claims that he did not ever order a news blackout. And he refuses to allow that it be said that he ever did so."

"It may be that I did misunderstand him," the Wiese Program Director continued.

"For he now says that in my two conversations with him, he most carefully chose his words to avoid coming right out and either requesting or demanding

that this news be kept from the press.

"Nonetheless, I came away with the clear impression that Mr. Thompson did not want this story printed," referring to Wilkins' visit.

"If he never said so explicitly," Beaird said, "he most certainly gave the impression that this was his wish, and I was naive enough to think that Uni-

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(Continued from Page 1) University official of his high rank would not be devious in his dealings with a student who sought his advice."

Statement Read

Beaird read his statement to the Thresher Wednesday night after speaking at some length with Mr. Thompson by telephone.

Beaird reported earlier that his principal dealings had been with Wiess College Master Roy V. Talmage and Thompson.

Dr. Talmage, who dealt with Dr. Pitzer concerning the civil rights leader’s visit, reported Wednesday that he had regarded the event as a college affair and that he had expected it to be handled in the routine manner for a college-sponsored speech.

"It's a college event and as all college events all the colleges will be invited as well as interested faculty," Dr. Talmage emphasized. "When the time comes we shall make the appropriate invitations and furnish the appropriate publicity."

'Don't Remember'

President Pitzer said Wednesday night that "I frankly don't remember what I may have said," with reference to publicity on the Wilkins visit. "I probably said something to the effect that the publicity should be directed to the campus community. I may well have made some further remarks referring them to Mr. Thompson's Office."

"I certainly have not been consulted recently about this at all," Dr. Pitzer continued.

"Clearly, there was no recent instruction in the manner of a news blackout on it."

The president added, "I had in mind that some consideration should be given to the court situation when the occasion came close," with reference to the established University policy of generally going slow on such things as matters dealing with rackete as long as the Trustees' charter-change suit is still in the courts.

'Triple Guess'

Development Office publicity agent Lee Estes said Tuesday that he thought the whole affair was no more complicated than a misunderstanding between Thompson and the student involved.

"Students try to triple-guess these things, creating nothing but confusion," Estes said.

Meanwhile one reliable SA official expressed the opinion that he believed "Wiess College was left holding the bag when the going got tough. It's a pity that Beaird had to take the sort of punishment he took when he, rightly or wrongly, was working in what he believed the best interests of the University."