By KENT MORRISON  
Baker College President

It would be more than mildly surprising if one could, at this ten-year juncture, stand back and analyze a finished product neatly labeled "Rice's Residential College System."

No surprise, though, for if any terms can catch the state and spirit of the colleges today, then those terms are "growth" and "evolution." Physically the campus veritably shouts the college's growth. Inestimably more important, however, is that evolution in spirit which has marked the college system's short history, a "spiritual" development which has resulted in a deepening and widening of the college's place within the University community.

Provide Vitality

The direction of this evolution was well phrased by 1964-65 Baker President, Jeff Winningham, as the colleges' movement toward providing a "vitality in the educational process."

The specifics of the institution of this vitality are numerous and have far surpassed in importance the housekeeping functions that originally dominated residential college life.

The rapid increase in college programs designed to provide a stage for creative activity, to attract outstanding scholars from outside the University, and to offer a forum for constant reevaluation of the educational process at Rice are that evolution's manifestations.

Set Tone

As important as the direction of the colleges' growth, however, is the growth process itself. There is some advantage, to be sure, in being a part of a well-established and longfunctioning educational pattern, but it cannot match the challenge and opportunity offered by the present residential college system.

This is the challenge in large part to set the tone of our own educational experience and, furthermore, to leave behind a structure of continuing value.

It seems to me more than justifiable to contend that the benefits derivable from this creative process are at least on a par with the more or less passive reception of the benefits of a pre-established organization.

Rice Must Help

To say that the real essence and excitement of the colleges is in experimentation and growth, however, is not to say that the colleges are not already sufficiently far removed from their initial status to merit a greater commitment of University support and an expansion of their realm of authority.

In fact, this response on the part of the University must be forthcoming if the development of the colleges is to continue. The process of growth of a child is, after all, very much dependent upon a corresponding parental change in attitude and actions.

This is a change which, if lacking, can only prove stifling, and a change which it seems might at times be profitably offered autonomously as a developmental stimulus.

The challenge of the residential colleges is two-fold. The colleges have the exciting task of maintaining and extending their role within the University; the University has the challenge to recognize this developing force and to effectively foster its continued growth.

Success is dependent upon both, and in that success or failure will be written the story of education at Rice.