Masterson Takes Post As Chattanooga Head

By TOM BERTRAND

Thresher Reporter

The University of Chattanooga has announced the election of Dr. William H. Masterson as president and professor of history effective July 1.

A native of Houston and Rice alumus, Dr. Masterson has been on the Rice faculty since 1948, as professor of history since 1955 and Master of Hanszen College since 1957.

Dr. Kenneth S. Fitzar, President of Rice, stated Saturday: "Professor Masterson has my warmest congratulations on his new appointment as President of the University of Chattanooga. We greatly appreciate the fine contributions he has made to Rice during the past 18 years.

"He served Rice University in many capacities, all with distinction. He was the first professor to be named a Master when Rice organized the residential college system in 1957. His thoughtful counsel and advice to the students of Hanszen College in the formative years, while they gained experience in student community living, demonstrated his leadership capacity in an academic environment.

"He became the first Chairman of the College Masters and is the only professor to hold this chairmanship twice. He served an important role in the formation of Rice's administrative policy as Assistant to then President William V. Houston from 1951 to 1955. The combined talents which he exhibited in teaching administration and counseling led quite naturally to his being named Dean of Humanities at Rice from 1959 to 1964.

Excellent Teacher

"Professor Masterson is an excellent teacher. His introduction to American History has served to inspire many students to continue the serious study of history. The popularity of his undergraduate courses has accounted for the large number of able graduate students in his advanced courses.

"The University of Chattanooga is fortunate to acquire a man of such academic stature."

As professor of history, Dr. Masterson has also served as editor of the 'Journal of Southern History,' which he was instrumental in bringing to Rice from the University of Kentucky. His special field of interest is early 19th Century America. To his credit is a biography of William Blount, Tennessee's territorial governor and first U.S. Senator, and the first volume of collected family papers of British Ministers of the period, which he is editing for the state of North Carolina, as well as numerous historical reviews and articles.

In 1963, Dr. Masterson resigned his deanship to devote full time to teaching, to his research on an early history of Washington, D.C., and to further development of the college system.

Return To Chattanooga

In moving to Chattanooga, the Mastersons will be returning to a city which they left in 1948.

Dr. Masterson taught history at Baylor School, a prep academy, from 1935 to 1940, when he took a leave of absence to begin graduate study at the University of Pennsylvania.

In 1941 he entered the army and served in Europe and Africa during the war, rising to the rank of captain.

After discharge he returned to the University of Pennsylvania to complete his resident graduate studies, receiving his master of arts degree in 1946.

In 1945 he married Orvetta Talbott Weston of Mathews, Virginia, and the Mastersons
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DR. WILLIAM MASTERTON
Leaving Rice

Cloudman Photo
MASTERSO 

(Continued From Page 1) returned to Baylor School where Dr. Masterson taught until he came to Rice in 1948. He was awarded the PhD at the University of Pennsylvania in 1956.

Election Announced

Announcing the election Friday, William F. Brock, Jr., chairman of the faculty of the school, commented: “We consider ourselves most fortunate in being able to bring to the University of Chattanooga, as its new president, a man with the outstanding qualifications of Dr. Masterson—an experienced educator, administrator, spiritual leader.”

Though finding it difficult to leave Texas and Dr. Masterson feels the challenge offered him by the University’s board irresistible.

“It is very challenging and gratifying,” he said on being informed of the board’s action, “to be asked to plan and act with trustees and faculty at this really crucial point in the history of the University of Chattanooga.”

Growing Area

“The growth in this area of the South, the increasing number of both state and private institutions of higher education, and the changing demands on formal education all make this an extremely important time of decision for the University and those devoted to its success.”

Dr. Masterson, a private university with an annual enrollment of 3200 is embarking on an ambitious program of curriculum and faculty rejuvenation, seeking, Dr. Masterson feels, a shift from the broad based curriculum of a specialized university into a new emphasis upon undergraduate and academic goals.

In an era of rapid expansion in higher education, he foresees U.C.'s transition to a quality liberal arts university without any significant increase in enrollment. He has indicated that his first objectives at Chattanooga will be to improve the library and institutes, and to expand the opportunities of the faculty to pursue their research and their intellectual interests.

Chosen For Experience

In becoming the 11th president of the University of Chattanooga, Dr. Masterson succeeds Dr. Martin May, president for seven years, who will become chancellor. He believes the UNC Board of Trustees became interested in him because of administrative experience, his basis in the humanities, and his acquaintance with Chattanooga. He emphasizes his determination to continue teaching.

Dr. and Mrs. Masterson and their two daughters, Amanda and Ann, are expected to join eight residents of Hanszen House, will remain through the rest of the academic year.