Brown Forum Looks At Rice's Role In Morals

By MORAG FULLILove

The question of University's responsibility for standards of morality among Rice students is a question of competence in making judgments," according to Dr. Paul Pfeiffer, Dean of Students.

Speaking at Brown College Tuesday evening with Dean of Women Alma Lowe and Dean M. V. McEnany of Undergraduate Affairs, Dean Pfeiffer said, "An act is immoral if it results in harm to an individual or a group." Dr. Pfeiffer felt that the question of the University's responsibility was not what should be done to insure right behavior, but what can be done to help students to work through their problems and prevent them from making what might be serious mistakes.

"If the University sees something which is dangerous and ignores it, it is denying its understanding of itself as a community of individuals," according to Dean Pfeiffer. Dean McEnany agreed that "we are all in this together."

Experience Wanted

"The University is assisting in the development of a large number of young people, who are grown up, but not yet mature," he continued. "During their four years at Rice they become mature adults, but are not yet experienced. To Dean McEnany this makes all the difference. "Being experienced means one has seen the consequences of many acts and can bring new data to the analysis."

Thus to Dean McEnany the biggest difficulty in trusting students lies in the difference in point of view. The administration's outlook has developed over a period of time and has been influenced by past experience. Yet he realizes that there exists a difference between the present society and that of the past. "We must bring these together in a middle view."

Equal Concern

Dean Lowe felt students and faculty were probably not as far apart in their views as might be thought. She felt the academic community ought to set up "social standards which it could uphold with honor. . . The same concern should be shown for morals as for academics."

Dean McEnany felt there should be some kind of rules for the University, but these should be kept to a minimum. "The University can furnish a climate of opinion by basic rules consistent with the desire of those in the University. When these rules go against a large segment of the community they must be reviewed."

Patterns Necessary

Dean Pfeiffer pointed out that "We are part of a society which must be regulated by certain standards. If we did not hold a line a great many people would be hurt. At certain times we must deal with all people alike. Some pattern is necessary for group living, whether parking or petting."

All the Deans saw the problem as one of the individual in the community; of reconciling individual freedom with concern for the group. Dean Lowe felt "the individual must give up certain personal rights to live in the community or there would be chaos."

Freedom

Dean Pfeiffer reminded the audience that the question was not so much the limitations that were placed on the students as individuals, but how much freedom they still had. He felt the rules were all right as long as they "didn't prevent people from achieving their purposes."

There was a discussion as to which organization should be See MORALS on Page 5.
responsible for setting up these rules. Dean McEnany thought peer judgments were always at work. The Deans felt the colleges were very important in this respect. But Dean McEnany felt the University could not be divided. “There must be a general standard of what is right.” Dean Pfeiffer added to this that “the University can only react as any other group in society. It cannot solve cases by rules, but must remember that each problem is an individual problem.”