The Change at Centenary

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Dr. Joe Mickle’s 19 years as president of Centenary College were perhaps the most productive and creative span in the institution’s history, and certainly he was the mainspring in this progress. Physical plant expansion, standards of curriculum, and calibre of the faculty all were stepped up.

But perhaps the greatest asset Centenary gained during these years was the increased recognition publicly of the value to education itself and to the local community of the tuition-type of small liberal arts college; this together with realization that such a college must have private financial support far beyond its own revenue from students in order to succeed—even to exist. There is today an understanding of Centenary, with resulting benefit to the school, that was non-existent in earlier years. That was one of the purposes in bringing Dr. Mickle here—to provide a president who could sell the school as a sound business operation as well as an educational asset. It was in such efforts that Dr. Mickle met his greatest success.

Dr. Jack Stauffer Wilkes, who soon will be Centenary’s president, brings with him a reputation for educational improvement at Oklahoma City University when he was its president. The respect in which he is held in Oklahoma City is shown in part by the fact that the people swept him into office as mayor when they became dissatisfied with their local government. He combines his educational and administrative experience with a long background in the Methodist ministry. Thus, his selection marks a return to the minister-president at the local college.

It is our understanding that Dr. Mickle and his gracious wife, Maida Mickle, who have contributed much to the culture of the city entirely outside the Centenary campus, will make their home here after his retirement. That will bring satisfaction to their many friends. And all will welcome Dr. Wilkes. He can feel assured of the entire community’s full support in his efforts in behalf of Centenary.