

The Acting President

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Pete Kyle McCarter

On September 1 Dr. Pete Kyle McCarter will step into a job that probably he never wanted in the first place. The conditions under which he is assuming the presidency are less than optimum, and the tasks he faces are not easy ones.

Being president of a college or university these days is not the soft prestigious job it once was. There was a time when a president was a ranking dignitary, aloof, consorting only with other high officials, running his institution from a quiet sanctum in some ivy covered building. But that job has disappeared and in its place is a post that requires the president to be fund raiser, diplomat, queller of disorder, keeper of the peace, politician, academician, mentor of youth and general good guy to the watchful public. There aren't many people waiting in line for the job.

McCarter is a gentle, soft spoken man who came to OU in 1953 from Mississippi. He is an English teacher. He was a vice president of the University under George Cross, became academic vice president under Hollomon and last January was named provost, the man in charge of all academic programs and budgeting.

A wry wit and an innate capacity for kindness have made McCarter many friends. He has strong support in the faculty, and although he is not well known by the students there is little doubt they will get along fine together.

Born July 15, 1910, in Batesville, Mississippi, McCarter attended the University of Mississippi where he received a bachelor of arts degree in 1931. He then enrolled at the University of Wisconsin where he was awarded a master of arts degree in 1933 and a doctor of philosophy degree in American literature in 1939.

He served on the University of Mississippi faculty from 1935 until he came to OU in 1953. At Mississippi his various responsibilities included teaching English courses, directing the news bureau, and serving as head of the English department, administrative assistant to the chancellor and dean of the faculty.

Now McCarter is stepping into the president's office. He hopes he won't be there long.

"I plan to be president only as long as it takes to find a replacement for Dr. Hollomon," he said.