

(Statement made to the Board of Regents of Western Kentucky University by Kelly Thompson, President, May 21, 1969)

It is with much regret that I submit to the Board of Regents my resignation as President of Western Kentucky University, effective with the opening of the 1969-70 school year in September.

It is my conviction that for its future best interests Western should have at the helm a younger man who, with all of the other necessary attributes, has the physical reserve to provide the vigorous and dynamic leadership which the presidency requires and which Western deserves. For some time I have been dissatisfied with my physical condition and gradually have become convinced that I no longer have what I consider to be the necessary physical stamina.

My wife and I both will enter the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, next week. The timing of this statement with our visit there is coincidental, however, as arrangements for our complete but normal clinical investigations were made several weeks ago by our family physician, Dr. W. R. McCormack.

All major decisions which I have made as president have been based upon a formula in which all possible evidence is analyzed in the light of all possible perspectives of the problem. Over many past months I have used and reused this same formula in arriving at this decision, which, as you might suspect, has been the most difficult of my career.

This decision was made partially last fall when I determined that I would take this action either this year or next, depending upon the progress toward top-priority university objectives with which my colleagues and I were involved. Through the hard work of these colleagues and with the cooperation of many friends, practically all of these objectives have become, or soon will become, realities. The following examples in four of the main categories are illustrative:

1. The academic picture at Western is now in its all-time sharpest focus. Today's agenda includes new proposals for academic progress, and additional academic strengthening will be completed between now and September through the Council of Deans and the Academic Council. The machinery is in existence for representative deliberation and action to provide for continuing review and updating in this all-important area.

2. The Associated Students, Western's student government organization, is completing its most successful year. I am confident that its future can be one of continuing effectiveness in contributing to student welfare within the institution.

3. The most comprehensive and the best budget in the history of Western has been completed and is ready to go into effect July 1.

4. An impressive number of advances in physical facilities during the year has now placed Western in a highly strengthened position for the future:

- Academic Complex, housing home economics,
health clinic, nursing, and television- - - - - completed
- Van Meter Hall Renovation- - - - - nearing completion
- Old Library Renovation
(Gordon Wilson Hall)- - - - - nearing completion
- Subsurface Master Plan Investigation- - - - - nearing completion

Laboratory School- - - - -	nearing completion
Education Complex - - - - -	nearing completion
University Center - - - - -	under construction
27-Story Dormitory - - - - -	under construction
Beautification of campus summit, including old fort, and the addition of upper- and lower-level plazas - - - - -	under construction
1,000-Unit Parking Structure- - - - -	contract being prepared
Graduate Center - - - - -	plans out for bids
Expansion of Alumni Center and Placement Bureau, including home for College Heights Foundation - - - - -	scheduled for bids
Fine Arts Center - - - - -	plans in final stage
Supply-Services Building - - - - -	plans in final stage

The school year now drawing to a close has climaxed an extended period of progress, and Westerners everywhere have a right to be proud. I know better than anyone else that such progress could not have been made had it not been for the cooperative efforts of many groups and individuals.

The Regents who have served during this period of unprecedented expansion have had one continuing characteristic, that of vision. Without such vision, together with the wise counsel and leadership which have come from the Board, such progress would have been impossible.

Hundreds of members of the faculty and staff have given freely of their extra time and efforts and deserve unlimited credit for the advancements.

Thousands of students have made personal contributions over and above that which might have been expected, and their efforts have been a major force in Western's achievements.

Alumni in many places by providing support and cooperation have had great influence on the developments which have taken place.

The administrative staff leaders at Western have worked long and hard and deserve more credit than could ever be adequately expressed in words. I know of no other university president who has been more blessed with competent, responsible, and dedicated co-workers.

Countless friends of Western in all walks of life also have contributed significantly.

To each of you now serving on the Board of Regents, I express my deep and abiding appreciation. Western is most fortunate in having you as members of its governing board. You are not only an exceedingly capable governing body, but all of us who work with you know of your complete dedication. The spirit with which you have directed me and the many personal kindnesses that you have shown to me and to my wife magnify my gratitude as I submit this request to be relieved of the duties and responsibilities of the presidency.

I wish to mention one important agency within the university which needs attention. The College Heights Foundation since 1923 has been most valuable in the life of Western through its student loan program, its custodianship of scholarship funds, and its administration of other gifts for Western's benefit. While it continues to serve well, it is very much in need of redesign and updating so that it may render an even greater service in the future. The officers and Directors of the Foundation Board, of which I am chairman, fully recognize this need.

During the unexpired portion of my present term, I would be happy to remain active on a part-time basis for this purpose, if you should so desire.

At the same time, should you so direct, I would try to complete a project that would enable Western to be prepared for orderly expansion beyond its present Master Plan. You will recall that such a project is a recommendation in the President's Report of 1965. I regret that since 1965 I have not had the time to develop this additional long-range planning. Before undertaking these responsibilities, however, we would want to be away for a sufficient period of time to have a complete rest.

In a few days it will have been forty years since Dr. H. H. Cherry employed me and started my career at Western. In a few months I will have completed fourteen years as president of Western. Throughout all of these years and in every capacity in which I have served, it has been my privilege to have been associated with the finest people I could have ever known---- I have indeed been a fortunate man.