

12-11-1985

UA3/7/4/2 Press Conference

Kern Alexander

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Western Kentucky University
UA3/7 Kern Alexander Papers
Series 4 Interviews / Oral History
Item 2 Press Conference Recording Transcript

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Biographical/Historical Note:

The president's office was created in 1906. From Donald Zacharias's 1985 summer resignation to the end of the year Paul Cook served as interim president while the Regents searched for the next president. On December 14 Kern Alexander was elected president but because of contract with the University of Florida he would not officially begin his WKU tenure until May 15, 1986. He would serve a brief two years as WKU's president resigning April 11, 1988.

Description: Segment of press conference during the search process for new president. Kern Alexander fielding unidentified reporters' questions. On tape with Board of Regents meeting.

Dates: December 11, 1985

Formats: 1 audiotape, 1 wav file, 1 mp3 file

Subject Analytics:

Alexander, S. Kern, Jr. b. 1939
Audio recording
Press conferences
Western Kentucky University

Accession Information: These records were transferred to the WKU Archives from the President's Office in accordance with the records retention schedule.

Access Restrictions: none

Preferred Citation: UA3/7/4/2 Press Conference Transcription, WKU Archives, Bowling Green, Kentucky, USA.

Processing Information: Transcription by Suellyn Lathrop, 2013.

Oral History Recording List

UA3.7.4.2 ~ Records

07/08/2013

Media ID	Side	Start time	Subject
Tape 1	1	00:00:23	<i>Kern Alexander: Watched the football team, I was always on campus. I haunted the campus as little kids do. Football, basketball players, swimmers, those were my heroes. Western is a special place to me.</i>
Tape 1	1	00:00:36	<i>Reporter: I don't know if the other reporters know this or not. I don't. I was in San Diego. What happened then? Do you know why you weren't chosen? Did you withdraw?</i> <i>Kern Alexander: I withdrew in '78.</i> <i>Reporter: Is that all?</i> <i>Kern Alexander: Well, there was a combination of reasons, many reasons. But the process, the search process went on quite a long time and many things began to happen which started to cloud the questions. It didn't become an issue of whether or not a person was qualified, but got more and more involved in externalities and because of those externalities I decided for the betterment of Western because there seemed to be some split occurring here on campus for the betterment of Western that I should step aside, and so I did. By the way, I think Western was probably better off. I think Dr. Zacharias did a fine job and I'm better prepared now than I was in '78.</i>
Tape 1	1	00:01:50	<i>Reporter: You said a lot about higher education this morning in the _____ part including Western's position in that. Do you really think that you and coming from Florida can have an impact on that now as higher education is so prominent, so in need, seems like university presidents _____ today for more funding?</i> <i>Kern Alexander: The impact I would hope to have would be twofold. One would be to increase the importance in the public's eye, in the legislative eye of education generally and higher education in particular. Beyond that, for Western to take initiative and to go beyond the boundaries that may be prescribed for Western in the present centralized system. So I think a president of Western is in an important position, one of the most important positions in this state to advocate education. The president of Western must be an advocate and as I look around the state at these other presidents they are advocates and Western. [drop out] There are areas in which Western could exploit because of its present strengths of faculty. Western needs to recruit and retain students as you well know and all the candidates have discussed this. Western needs to influence the statutes under which higher education operates in the state of Kentucky. And influence the decisions which are made before the Council on Higher Education. Through those and other means Western can be strengthened in spite of the fact that the state of Kentucky is looking forward to fewer graduates to 1992.</i>
Tape 1	1	00:04:14	<i>Unknown: We have time for one more question.</i> <i>Reporter: Western has sometimes been characterized at various times as a regional university. Sometimes it's not the way it wants to be pictured. How do you picture Western? Is that an appropriate description? Can you [cough]</i> <i>Kern Alexander: I categorically reject that notion of Western as a regional institution. Western should not be defined as a regional institution. The persons here should never refer to themselves as a regional institution. And the state of Kentucky has not said that Western is a regional institution except by implication. The statutes of Kentucky do not say Western is a regional institution. And they will never say it. Or they should never say it and Western has to guard against that. Western has some things that it can sell and convey to all the students of this state. And not only this state, but this region, Southern Indiana, Tennessee.</i>