



EDITORIALS

Scholars deserve respect

It is the instructor's role to encourage free discussion, inquiry, and expression among his students in their quest for knowledge.

--Academic Freedom Report

The controversy surrounding the decision to recommend that the contracts of three ATL instructors not be renewed is likely to go on for as long as the University employs non-tenured faculty.

The rightness or wrongness of the decision to release Gary Groat, J. Kenneth Lawless and Roger S. Fogarty hinges completely on their ability as teachers and academicians.

As numerous professors have pointed out, if the three were not making sufficient progress towards their Ph.D's or if their contributions in the classroom were inadequate, then the recommendation from the ATL Advisory Committee was perfectly just.

As nearly as we can determine, however, the three were not delinquent or inadequate in their academic work. With the possible exception of Groat whose Ph.D. work has slowed considerably, all were doing a sufficient if not good job.

Trouble-makers?

Other reasons outside the realm of the academic have been offered. Some say the three are dissenters and trouble-makers, persons who rock the boat of the otherwise tranquil ATL department.

Others say the activity of Groat and Lawless with *Zeitgeist* magazine detracted from their work as academicians and caused them their jobs. Fogarty, they say, was thrown into the plot to make the script more believable.

If, indeed, the latter factors were involved, then the ATL Advisory Committee acted unwisely and the Board of Trustees should turn down their recommendation.

A bulwark of our society is the freedom of speech, expression and press handed down in the Constitution and its Amendments. Should we only pay lip service to this bulwark while chastising persons who disagree with our opinions or publish something which we find distasteful?

Most disturbing

The University has long been the place where these freedoms are most staunchly supported. In a community of minds, disagreement and dissension are bound to arise. But disagreement and dissent are essential. They are factors that stimulate and enlighten others' minds.

Banishment of these elements is a sacrilege.

What is most disturbing is that the three professors do not know the reasons why their rehiring was discouraged. For this reason all the questioning, wondering and fighting now being waged is, necessarily, being aimed at something very intangible.

And this, of course, is the way the rules read. No explanation need be given non-tenured faculty for their dismissal or failure to renew their contracts. They are out on a limb and the limb can be chopped off without anyone knowing why the ax was used.

This unsure ground that a non-tenured faculty member lives on is an academic way of life. But the failure to supply reasons for an axed faculty member is an abomination. Non-tenured faculty members should be told why they are being fired. They should be given a chance to explain their side of the story or to realize the factors so they won't lose their job at the next university.

A professor recently pointed out that speakers' graduation exercises like

