

FAMU Chief Hits HEW Standards

TALLAHASSEE IN — Florida A&M President Benjamin L. Perry Jr. Saturday accused the federal government of using a double standard in university desegregation demands.

"Is a 1 per cent enrollment of blacks at a predominantly white institution 'making strides' toward progress, while a similar number of whites at a predominantly black institution is a perpetuation of segregation?" Perry asked.

THE PRESIDENT of the predominantly black school joined University Chancellor Robert Mantz in taking issue with a U.S. Health, Education and Welfare Department let-

ter rejecting a Florida university system desegregation plan.

Mantz said FAMU must be allowed to retain its special role as a symbol of black achievement.

"This is not the time in our country's history to be terminating a symbol of pride for the black race," Mantz said.

Perry questioned why the letter from the HEW office for civil rights devoted so much attention to FAMU when its student black-white ratio is within 1 per cent of the ratio within the rest of the system — 2.8 per cent white at FAMU compared to 3.4 per cent

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black at the other eight universities.

HE ALSO pointed out that the FAMU faculty is 23 per cent white while the faculty in the rest of the system is 2.2 per cent black.

"We are the first to believe that desegregation is a correct social goal and the facts will show that we have taken the leadership in the attainment of this goal," Perry said.

He said a recent survey showed that 5,000 whites "could profit from an expanded curriculum and the historical expertise offered at FAMU."

"To some it does not matter that until recently we offered the only opportunities for blacks to receive a higher education in a state institution, that our thousands of graduates have distinguished themselves throughout the world," Perry said.

MAUTZ ALSO pointed to the school's past achievements and expertise brought by its history.

Blacks built the school despite denials during times of segregation, he said, "and it enables the black race to say, see, we can achieve intellectually."

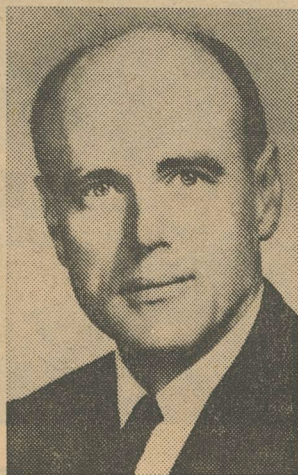
Rep. Gwen Cherry, D-Miami, an alumnus of the school, agreed with Mautz.

"It has been the history all through integration, we always had to lose ours and go over to the other side of the road," she said.

"We need an identity, A&M should be an institution that specializes in black accomplishments — the band, art, football, all across the board."

MRS. CHERRY said the university could become a storehouse for "the wealth of contributions" blacks have made to Florida.

She named educator Mary McLeod Bethune, sculptor Augustus Savage, labor and civil rights leader A. Philip Randolph and lawyer James Warren Johnson of Jacksonville who wrote the black national anthem. She also pointed out



ROBERT MAUTZ

... 'symbol of pride.'

that a majority of the 50 black elected officials in Florida are FAMU graduates.

Peter E. Holmes, office for civil rights director, told Mautz that a Board of Regents' integration plan submitted in April was unsatisfactory and Mautz should submit a new one by June 11, five days before a court deadline for plans from Florida and nine other states for higher education desegregation.

Most of Holmes' five-page letter was devoted to FAMU and the fact its student body is 97.2 per cent black. He said predominantly white universities also needed more integration but they were recruiting blacks while FAMU was not actively seeking whites.

FAMU STUDENT body president Alphonso McLean said he believed in the present program of "telling students what we have to offer and letting them make up their own minds.

"We shouldn't go out and twist arms," he said.

Holmes said the Regents' description of a role for FAMU to train "leadership in minority communities" will discourage white students from enrolling.

Mautz said he did not believe the role would have to be substantially changed to achieve HEW goals unless the



BENJAMIN L. PERRY JR.

... 'double standard.'

agency took an unrealistic approach to its desegregation demands.

"There are programs in the system which we can put at A&M which will build upon the special insights and skills of those who come from a disadvantaged background," he said.

THESE COULD include social welfare work, sociology, education for the disadvantaged, some technology courses and training for the small businessman who wants to operate in a disadvantaged neighborhood, he said.

Mautz said it was obvious that Holmes did not understand Florida's education thrust of the past six years of opening universities where the people live.

Holmes criticized the opening of new universities while not expanding FAMU, but Mautz said he believed the new universities serve blacks who cannot afford to travel to Tallahassee. He pointed out that the new universities of North Florida and Florida International had the highest percentage of blacks of all eight other universities at 7.5 and 6 per cent respectively.

Anyway, Mautz said, "it is a mistake to run around trying to make our society non-pluralistic, to make it monolithic. It isn't and it shouldn't be."