

Faculty of the Department of Recreation and Park Administration Clemson University

Narrative by:

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A family relationship involving the Lenoir-Rhyne College (now University), the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and Clemson College (now University) played an important role in recruiting some of the early faculty members of the Department, a faculty which laid the foundation and set the course for the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management to be the a premier professional development program, now recognized and respected throughout the world.

Finding the new department head and early faculty.

Dorothy Rhyne (d.2017) was the daughter of Orestes Pearl Rhyne [he preferred to be called "O.P."] (d.1979), a long-time professor of Modern Languages and the department head at Clemson College. Dr. Rhyne had a Master of Arts degree from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill [UNC-CH] - the important connection with Clemson, and a Doctor of Philosophy from Johns Hopkins University.

Dorothy Rhyne, Dr. Rhyne's daughter, attended Lenoir-Rhyne College and UNC-CH as a student, earning Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees. As Clemson was an all male college in those years, Dorothy had to go elsewhere for her higher education. Lenoir-Rhyne College, a family related institution, was a founded as a co-educational College.

In the years just before World War II, Carl S. Blyth of Pittsburgh, PA. (d.2000) received a football scholarship from Lenoir-Rhyne College where he met Dorothy Rhyne. Blyth joined the U.S. Navy, being stationed in the Pacific. In 1945, Dorothy Rhyne married Carl Blyth and they moved to Chapel Hill where Blyth became a professor of physical education in the School of Education. Several of Dr. Blyth's students became the basis for the faculty of the Department of Recreation and Park Administration.

When Clemson decided to offer a program in Recreation and Park Administration, Dr. Blyth learned of the department head search at Clemson through his father-in-law, Dr. O.P. Rhyne. At that time, Dr. Brantley was teaching at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, N.C.. Dr. Blyth contacted Dr. Brantley, telling him of the position. Brantley was hired in 1964(?) as the department head at the rank of Associate Professor.

The second faculty member to be hired [hire date unknown to me - 1965?], was Dr. Thomas Hatcher Johnson (d.2017), Assistant Professor, another graduate student from Dr. Blyth's department at UNC-CH and known to Dr. Brantley. He taught only in the 1966-1967 academic year at Clemson, then took a position at Eastern Carolina University where he spent the remainder of his career in the Health and Physical Education department.

From the start (Fall 1966), the Recreation and Park Administration (RPA) program was popular with students, attracting over 100 majors in its first year. In general there were two types of students, those who came to Clemson for the program and students transferring from other Clemson programs. The latter constituted the bulk of the first students.

Some of the students transferring from other majors came to Clemson as a result of the loyalty of their fathers to Clemson, and to dad's department (major). (Remember, dad went to an all male Clemson). Those students were not interested in or, perhaps, unsuited for dad's major. The Department of Recreation and Park Administration offered them a rewarding career path that suited their interests.

The flood of students into the program created a need for more faculty. In January, 1967, Marvin Owen Keith was hired as an Assistant Professor. Marvin Keith had been the Assistant Director of the Parks and Recreation Department at High Point, NC. Prior to coming to High Point, Mr. Keith was employed with the Greensboro, NC Parks and Recreation Department. While there, he worked with the Kennedy Foundation to establish Camp Joy, a camp for special needs children. (See Marvin Keith's efforts for Camp Hope and the Clemson Outdoor Laboratory discussion, elsewhere).

As Dr. Johnson left at the end of the Spring 1967 semester, and with the rapid growth in the number of majors and the support of President Edwards, Dr. Brantley secured three new positions. Those new faculty were: Revis Miller Frye (deceased), Assistant Professor; James Ray Sellers, a former student of Dr. Brantley's at North Carolina State University, Assistant Professor; and myself, Dr. Gordon E. Howard, Assistant Professor. We started in the Fall Semester, 1967.

I was an undergraduate and masters student at UNC-CH from 1959-1964. As I was proficient in human anatomy and physiology, Dr. Blyth hired me to work in his Laboratory of Applied Physiology. In 1964 I went to the University of Michigan to further my education in what was then called "exercise physiology" (now "exercise science"). In my final year there, 1966-1967, Dr. Blyth called me. He was in Ann Arbor to watch the UNC-University of Michigan football game. Through his link with Clemson University and Dr. Rhyne, and his relationship with Dr. Brantley, Dr. Blyth knew of a job opening in the Department of Recreation and Park Administration. He encouraged me to apply. Clearly, I did apply and was hired. I "officially" retired in May 2001 after 34 academic years of teaching, but continued for another four (4) academic years under the South Carolina TERI program (Teacher and Employee Retention Incentive), finally leaving service in the Spring of 2005.

Drs. Jack Lovett Stevenson (d.2016), Associate Professor, and Larry Willard Gahan, Assistant Professor, were hired the subsequent year (Fall 1968). Many others followed.

By about 1970 the department had over 500 majors.

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