

Hubert-Miller conflict was key to firing

by DILLARD STONE
Battalion Editor

Hubert greeted the announcement Thursday that Jarvis Miller had been relieved as Texas A&M University president. Board of Regents Chairman Clyde Wells told reporters that "problems" in working with System Chancellor Dr. Frank W.R. Hubert and "complaints" from state residents keyed reassignment of Miller from the presidency to a new job as special assistant to the chancellor. Shock, shock, shock," was the reaction at all levels of the University administration, one vice president said. No one had any indication that the board was considering such a major personnel change, he said. Lack of harmony in the working relationship between Miller and Hubert was the reason for the president's action, Wells said. There needs to be a harmony that would be maintained involving these two levels of administration," Wells said in referring to the relationship between the offices of the System chancellor and University president. "Because of the problems that have been brought to us, we felt like there was a need for some adjustment that needed to be made," the chairman said. Wells refused to comment on exactly what problems or complaints led the regents to make their decision. Student leaders, alumni leaders and several

administrators all said they were unaware of any major complaints against Miller's handling of the University.

One regent hinted that there may have been less to the complaints than was made to appear. We get complaints about everything, he said. Just because

No explanation was given to Miller for the action, and Miller was not given the opportunity to present a defense before the Board, a source said.

there are letters of complaint does not mean they were a criterion for getting Miller fired, he added.

In the past, regents had been critical of Miller's handling of former football coach Emory Bellard's dismissal and his refusal to shake the hand of female cadet Melanie Zentgraf at graduation after Zentgraf had filed a sex discrimination suit against Miller and the University.

Hubert and Miller were known to have had differences over Hubert's reorganization of the Sys-

tem in February. Miller resisted Hubert's attempts to strip the System agencies out from under the control of the president, which gave control of them to the chancellor.

"I guess you could say it just didn't work out," a System official said. "I guess they were seeking to stabilize the organization. You can't get anything done when you have to worry about politics in the organization."

Both Hubert and Wells did not say who it was who had brought the administrative conflicts to the attention of the Board.

"I can only say that the decision was made by the regents and I'll leave it at that," Hubert said. Asked if he had any differences with Miller, Hubert responded, "I have none."

Just eighteen months ago, Chancellor Jack K. Williams resigned his position after working conflicts with the regents and Miller over the role of the chancellor in University affairs. Wells performed the duties of acting chancellor until Hubert's appointment in October.

Regents meeting in committees throughout the morning gave no indication that they felt anything was amiss in the University. Nor did Miller or any of those close to him appear to have any feel for the impending decision.

Miller was notified shortly before 6 p.m. Wednesday evening that the Board's executive committee had voted unanimously to relieve him as

president. The Board had been meeting in closed session of the Executive Committee since about 2:30 that afternoon.

Miller was called into the closed session and informed of the regents' decision by Wells, a source said. No explanation was given to Miller for the action, and Miller was not given the opportunity to present a defense before the Board, the source said.

The "long and careful deliberation" Wells mentioned in his statement took place between the 2:30

"Because of the problems that have been brought to us, we felt like there was a need for some adjustment that needed to be made."

beginning of the Executive Committee executive session and the 6 p.m. contact of Miller.

Dr. Perry Adkisson, deputy chancellor for agriculture, and Dr. Fred Benson, deputy chancellor for engineering, appeared before the Board for about one hour each after the 2:30 session began. Both apparently discussed how the System agencies under them were operating after several

months under Hubert's reorganization plan. Miller did not appear before the Board prior to being notified of his dismissal.

After being in the Board room for the short announcement, Miller went home and began calling friends and associates, informing them of the decision. The University vice presidents and aides met soon after at the Miller home on campus.

Miller has declined to speak with reporters since the dismissal, but his office did issue a prepared statement Thursday:

"The President of Texas A&M University serves at the pleasure of the Board of Regents. I was informed yesterday by the Board that I was to be reassigned to other duties. I am extremely proud of my record as President of Texas A&M University. I leave the position with a deep sense of pride and gratitude for the opportunity to have served this great University during these exciting years. I am confident that an extremely strong base has been laid for even greater achievements in the future. I look forward to the new assignment and the opportunity to continue to serve the University in a new capacity."

Hubert said he did not know yet what specific duties Miller would have as special assistant. "In collaboration with Dr. Miller will determine the nature of his duties next week," Hubert said.

Miller vacated his office Monday morning. No indication has been given as to how long the Millers can remain in the president's home on campus.

THE BATTALION

Serving the Texas A&M University community

Vol. 73 No. 175
8 Pages

Tuesday, July 15, 1980
College Station, Texas

USPS 045 360
Phone 845-2611

Former students blast regents

by DILLARD STONE
Battalion Editor

The Texas A&M University Association of Former Students sharply criticized the Board of Regents' firing of President Jarvis Miller with a statement released Monday. The statement, released in the morning

in Dallas, was read to an afternoon press conference at Texas A&M by Raul Fernandez, association president.

"We regret and unqualifiedly disagree with the manner and method of termination of Dr. Miller as President of Texas A&M University," the statement said.

The statement termed the board's action "ill-timed, ill-conceived and effectuated without any planning or thought of the consequences or the future."

The statement was drafted during an emergency session of the association's board of directors, held Sunday in Dallas.

Fernandez said the purpose of the statement was twofold. First, he said, the statement was intended to make public the feelings of the association's board of directors. The second purpose was to inform the public that the former students had no role in the reassignment of Miller.

"People read newspapers and they understand. Former students did it again. That's not the case here. It's something that shouldn't be allowed to happen to a University as great as this one," Fernandez said.

However, Fernandez said that former students have the right "as former students and as citizens of this state" to offer comments and criticism of University administration.

"I believe that the regents should be aware that this is a public institution of higher learning, and that there are many, many people that are affected and care about this University," he said.

Fernandez said the board's action had angered many former students.

Thursday, Fernandez had expressed his concern over the "volatile nature" of the decision, fearing that a "severe backlash" might in some way affect the amount of money the association contributes to the University.

Monday, Fernandez pledged the association's continued support to the University and its programs.

"We're committed and we always have been."

Fernandez expressed a hope that a search committee, including prominent former students, would be established to recommend a new president to the regents.

Board Chairman Clyde Wells has indicated such plans do not currently exist.

Other prominent former students were upset with the board's action.

"I think you'll find that these things have hurt the University when you have this much turmoil, this much change, it will be difficult to find a responsible person who would replace him," he continued.

"It would be desirable to have continuity in leadership," he said from Dallas. "It was evidently a very hasty action, evidently done without much deliberation. Given our recent history, this is a time when we particularly need stability."

Texas delegates don't want Bush

by DILLARD STONE
Battalion Editor

DETROIT — A majority of Texas delegates to the Republican National Convention have made it clear they prefer that Ronald Reagan choose a more conservative running mate than their Texas colleague George Bush.

In a preference poll conducted by alternate delegate Jerry Smith — against the wishes of delegation chairman Ernest Angelo — 55 of the 107 Texans questioned said they preferred Rep. Jack Kemp of New York for the vice presidential nomination, and 38 favored Bush.

Smith also asked the delegates who they would most prefer that Reagan avoid in choosing a running mate. Forty-three said they would advise Reagan against picking Bush and 27 said they would recommend against the selection of Sen. Howard Baker of Tennessee.

Gov. Bill Clements said Monday he has no preference for the vice presidential nominee, but he said Reagan should make the choice with an eye toward how his decision will influence the November election.

Miller a victim of System politics

Removal is final step in chancellor's consolidation of power

by DILLARD STONE
Battalion Editor

The heat was on outside and inside the Board of Regents Annex Thursday. Outside, the temperature was climbing to over 100 degrees; inside, the regents introduced, considered and approved unanimously the ouster of Texas A&M President Dr. Jarvis E. Miller.

Miller's dismissal as University president appears to be the final move in a series of maneuvers which have stripped the University president of his authority first over the agencies of the System, and now over the University itself.

In contrast to the stated beliefs of the regents that managing the University and the System are jobs too big for one man to handle, the Miller shuffle now puts virtually all the cards in the hand of one man.

Complete control of the University and its System agencies now rests in the hands of System Chancellor Dr. Frank W.R. Hubert, who was appointed to fill that post in late 1979.

Since being appointed to the post and given carte blanche powers over the System, Hubert has gradually eroded the powers of the University president. Hubert has the blessing of the regents, who say management of the University and the System is too much for one man to handle.

University sources are unsure whether the regents are going against their stated intentions of trying to split the duties of System management, or whether Hubert is now a creation they can no longer control. For whatever reason, the sources say there appears to be an inconsistency in trying to decentralize the System and then investing control of the University in the chancellor.

Miller's philosophy of the role of the land-grant institution was evidently a major factor in the "lack of harmony" which Board Chairman Clyde Wells said existed between Miller and Hubert.

Miller believes that the mandated services agencies which accompany a land-grant school are so inextricably intertwined with the school that separating the agencies from direct University control is unworkable and unproductive. Most researchers involved in the services are also instructors at the University.

The primary service agencies of the Texas A&M University System are the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, headed by Miller prior to his acceptance of the presidency, the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, the Texas Engineering Experiment Station and the Texas Engineering Extension Service. These programs comprise roughly half of the budget and half the employees of the System.

So Miller was upset earlier this year when Hubert unveiled a plan to reorganize the System into the form it

Miller's dismissal appears to be the final of a series of maneuvers which have stripped the University president of his authority.

now has. Hubert's proposal took the University vice presidents for agriculture and engineering and gave them the title of deputy chancellors. No areas of responsibility were changed; the major change was in to whom the officers reported. Vice presidents report to University presidents; deputy chancellors report to System chancellors. Miller, amid reports that the proposal was being intentionally hidden from him before it was sent to the Board for approval, resisted the reorganization. Therein is the root of the "lack of harmony."

Wells also made reference to many "complaints" received from people throughout the state about the way

Analysis

things were being run at Texas A&M. Wells would not elaborate on any of the "complaints."

However, one of the more interesting comments to emerge from the meeting was from one regent who alluded to Wells' "complaints" statement. The regent said that just because there are letters of complaint does not mean they were a criterion for getting rid of Miller.

So why did the regents reassign Miller as an assistant to the chancellor they said he couldn't get along with? University sources agree that the regents couldn't fire Miller outright and leave him jobless; the special assistant is a purely cosmetic device to be nice to Miller and keep him on the payroll until he finds another job.

It's the same measure that the regents used when they forced out Chancellor Jack K. Williams. Williams was given the title of special consultant to the Board, then given leave to accept the directorship of the Texas Medical Center.

One of the factor's hastening Miller's demise apparently was the absence of Regent Joe Reynolds, a Houston attorney, who was one of Miller's best supporters on the Board.

Reynolds, who is also one of the more vocal Board members and more powerful regents, missed this session of the Board due to business requirements in Houston. University sources say the other regents would have had a

harder time in getting rid of Miller so hastily had Reynolds been at the meeting.

Reynolds himself has been extensively involved in legal matters over the last week, a source in his office said, and has not been available for comment. However, reports have indicated that the other regents did not inform Reynolds of their decision, that he learned through the media of Miller's removal and that Reynolds was distressed by the regents' action.

One of the most recent controversies surrounding Miller was his refusal to shake the hand of female cadet Melanie Zentgraf at the University's commencement exercises in May. Zentgraf has filed a suit against the University charging sex discrimination in the Aggie Band, the Ross Volunteers and other military organizations.

Students at the University haven't forgotten the action, and many attribute Miller's removal to that incident. Most University officials, though, dismiss the idea and concentrate their analysis of the issue on the power struggle between the System and University levels.

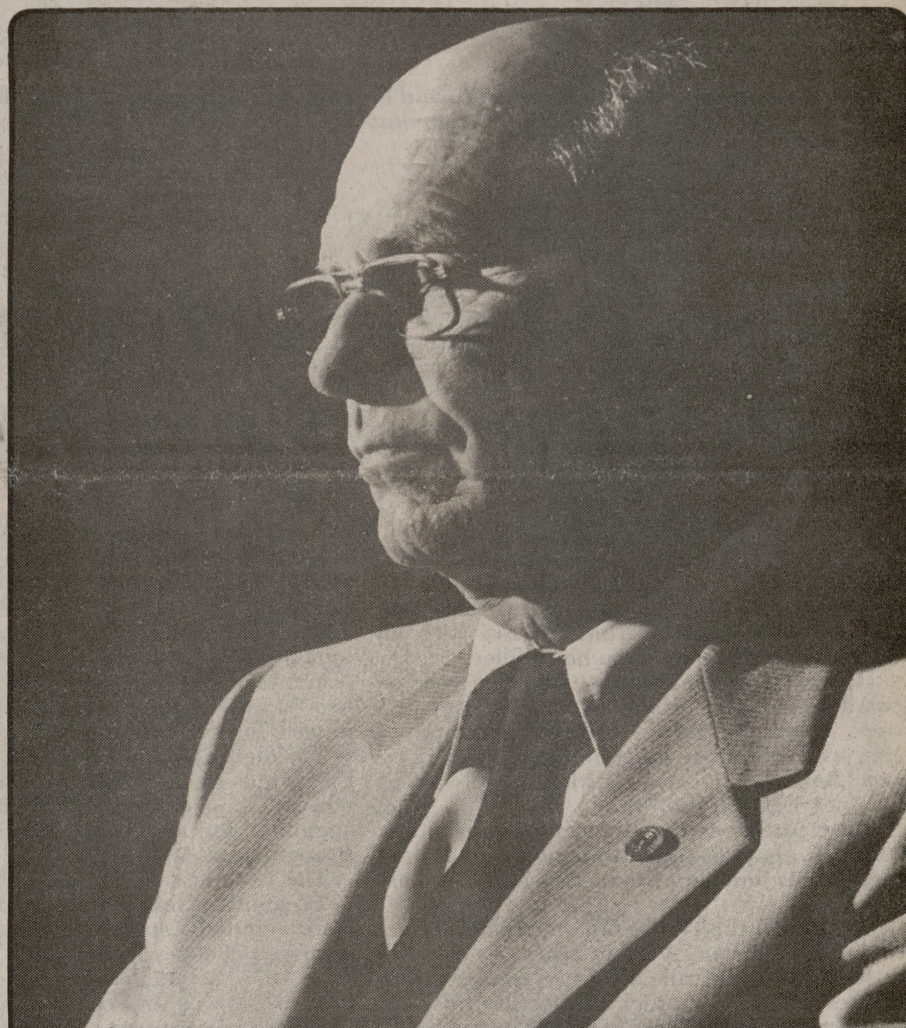
Yet another element in the scenario was the Association of Former Students' position against Hubert's reorganization of the System. Association Past President Bob Smith of Dallas drafted a position paper which was presented last month to each of the regents. The paper used the name of the association to protest the reorganization of the system, and termed the move a reinventing the wheel" type idea.

One theory holds that the regents hastily used Miller as a pawn, in order to tell the former students that they should keep their noses out of the administration of the University.

Association President Raul Fernandez disagrees with the idea, but maintains that former students have every right as citizens, taxpayers and as former students to make their feelings known about how a state university should be administered.

No one can guess at how state politics will enter into the regents' action. The boards of regents of the University of Texas and Texas A&M Systems are two of the most-sought-after appointive Boards in the state. Three regents' terms — those of Reynolds, Alfred I. Davies of Dallas, and Royce Watkins of Uvalde — expire in January, and Texas Gov. Bill Clements, a Republican, will have the chance to appoint replacements as he sees fit. All of the current regents were appointed by Democratic governors.

Miller and Clements developed close personal ties during a 1979 trip to Europe which concentrated on agricultural programs. Clements is in Detroit, attending the GOP National Convention. An aide in Austin said the governor was aware of the regents' action, but that he had not issued a statement.



Dr. Charles H. Samson Jr. appears before the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents to accept the job of University acting president. The regents reassigned Dr. Jarvis Miller to other duties at their Thursday meeting. Staff photo by Bob Sebrece

Acting president 'getting feet wet'

by DILLARD STONE
Battalion Editor

Texas A&M University's acting president says the board's action in naming him to the position "came as a complete surprise to me."

Dr. Charles H. Samson Jr. was named Thursday to be acting president after the Board of Regents reassigned Dr. Jarvis Miller to other duties.

Samson's selection met with approval from several administrators. "The regents could have done a lot worse than Chuck Samson," one said. Another indicated his feelings that Samson was an excellent choice to ease the transition between Miller and a new permanent president.

No changes were planned for the immediate future, Samson said.

"The thing I need to do is get in, get my feet wet and go from there," Samson, 55, said Thursday.

Samson is already doing just that. He met with the University vice presidents Thursday afternoon to begin the transition period.

The acting president also asked the members of Miller's staff to stay on to ease the burden of transition. Most apparently will.

And the University's new head continued Miller's practice of having Monday morning meetings with staff and vice presidents.

One vice president said Samson was adapting quickly to his new duties.

"The water's still a little bit muddy, but it's beginning to clear," he said.

Samson said he had no idea he was being considered for his new job.

"I didn't have any idea that I would be considered, or what was taking place really until last night," he said Thursday.

Samson said he had been notified at about 9 p.m. of the board's decision concerning Miller, and that the regents were considering him as an interim replacement. The regents notified Samson of their selection at about 10:30 p.m. Wednesday, Samson said.

Samson serves as the chairman of Texas A&M's Athletic Council, and as president of the Southwest Conference. He said he had given no thought to how his new duties would affect his old ones.

Samson is a professor of civil engineering at Texas A&M. He served as department head from 1964-79, relinquishing the position to devote more time to intercollegiate athletics.

After receiving his bachelor's degree in civil engineering in 1947 from Notre Dame, Samson obtained his master's there in 1948. He received a Ph.D. from the University of Missouri in 1953.

He joined the Texas A&M faculty in 1960 as a professor of civil and aerospace engineering.