

Ed Davis to leave A&M for NTSU vice presidency



Ed Davis, associate vice president for business affairs.

By LIZ NEWLIN
Battalion Staff

Like any good second banana, Ed Davis presents a contrasting picture to his boss.

Howard Vestal, Texas A&M University's vice president for business affairs, can appear gruff and serious. Davis comes off easy-going and open.

But Davis won't be second banana much longer.

He will become the vice president for financial affairs at North Texas State University on Oct. 13.

And Vestal says his associate vice president will be hard to replace. "I have no idea what I'm going to do to replace him," Vestal said.

For a while, he said, he'll assume part of Davis' responsibilities and distribute other duties around his department.

"I talked him into coming here eight years ago," Vestal said. "We've rotated him around (the department) and developed his administrative skills."

"I have a lot invested in him," said Texas A&M's top financial officer.

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Davis said the decision was a tough one.

"I'm kinda laughing through my tears," he said, smiling slightly. "The decision was made with a great deal of anguish."

Davis has spent his professional career in college administration at Texas A&M, coming here after four years in the Army and some work at Harvard Business School. He was graduated from Texas A&M with a degree in agricultural journalism in 1967 and was commander of the Corps of Cadets.

"It's an opportunity that's difficult for me to pass up," Davis said.

North Texas has changed most of its top administration since last year, when the liberal arts school was hit

with a scandal involving its independent development fund. The business affairs division Davis will run was not affected.

The head of that division, John Carter, served as interim president.

"He was unscathed in the whole thing," Davis said. Carter, 65, is retiring.

Davis is confident the university can recover its image under the leadership of the new president of North Texas, Dr. Frank Vandiver.

"It's a clean sweep and a new start," he said. "In Vandiver they have a president who's a nationally recognized academician. He combines that with very good common sense."

Vestal agreed that Vandiver, a his-

torian and former provost at Rice University, can rebuild North Texas' image.

"With what I know of Dr. Vandiver — and with an Ed Davis or two around — that place will recover rapidly," Vestal said. "They won't tolerate mediocrity. They'll make North Texas a fine school again."

Davis said the biggest challenge at the school will be the falling enrollment that's expected throughout American universities.

"Enrollment is flattening out," he said. "The problem is the commitment to funding is tied to formulas based on enrollments."

Basically, as the enrollment falls,

so does the level of state funding. But the costs stay about the same, he said.

"North Texas has to exist on appropriated funds," he said, unlike Texas A&M, which draws interest from the \$1 billion endowed Permanent University Fund. "So the challenge to build a quality program may be even more difficult there."

He thinks North Texas, located at the northern edge of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex, can still grow.

"It still is sitting in a fertile area," Davis said. "I see at North Texas, despite all the problems, a lot of fundamental good things to build on."

Steam engines riding rails of romance

Retired railroadmen maintain 1919 rain

United Press International
ATLANTA — "Hear that," Richard Hobson shouted above the thundering, rhythmic clacking of the steam engine on the tracks. "That's music to your ears."

Hobson and four other old-time railroad men are examples of how even the near-extinction of the steam engine can't stop them. They simply find an alternative — keeping a 1919 steam engine running at Stone Mountain, a park east of Atlanta.

The 62-year-old Hobson along with Brunell Barker, T.H. Buddy Lewis, Charles Meinsen and Robert Wingard have about 2½ centuries of railroading experience behind them, most on steam engines.

"There's nothing like sitting and listening to a steam engine talk to you," said Hobson, sticking his head out the window of the engine for a better look. "You can make a trip of hundreds of miles, and it'll never talk to you the same way."

"This is love and romance — the steam engine," Hobson, who was wearing blue striped overalls, a cap and a red kerchief tied around his neck, said as he ran the chugging engine around the base of the granite mountain. "When they did away with the steam engine, they did away with love and romance."

Hobson, unlike the other four men, has not passed his retirement age yet. However, he was forced to retire to Southern Railway's dispatch office for after an on-the-job accident cost him his left leg. He had been responsible for fueling the huge boilers on the engines before the accident.

Brunell Barker, the feisty 72-year-old railroad veteran who almost single-handedly maintains the engines, has worked on steam engines for 47 years.

Barker, whose white sideburns and white pencil-thin mustache are the only hints of his age, said when "they got rid of those old steam engines, they like to took the spirit out of the railroad."

"I don't even pay attention to the freight trains now, though I live right near the tracks," he said. "What they got today ain't nothing like steam. I'd rather have steam 2-to-1 than diesel."

Barker, who says he knows every detail of the imposing black engines, had been a boilermaker with the Georgia West Point line 28 years when he was laid off in 1958.

Boilermakers were the hardest hit when the diesel engine came on the scene. Diesel locomotives were first used for passenger service in 1934

and for freight service in 1941. By 1955 more than 50 major railroads had done away with all their steam engines and no new steam engines were being bought.

"I can take them apart and put them back together again," he said, sitting in the depot at the park. "Being around these steam engines is the best thing I've ever done. I don't really like any job but working on the railroad."

Just outside Barker's shop, which was converted from a cell block of the defunct Stone Mountain prison, sat two steam engines.

Bob Wingard, who is nearing his 80th birthday, is a frail man. He seems even smaller as he waved the locomotive thundering past him to a stop. He began helping passengers off the train with the old-fashioned gallantry he has polished in his 65 years of railroading.

Buddy Lewis and Charles "Amtrak" Meinsen said they weren't ready to quit when they were forced to retire.

"I always wanted to be a railroad man," said 76-year-old Meinsen. "If I had just sat down in the living room and not turned my hand for nothing, I'd have been gone long ago."

"I work because I like to," he said as he turned his black conductor's

hat in his hand. "Ever since I was 12 years old, I've worked and I'm not going to quit until I have to."

Meinsen said he spent 47 years with the Chicago-Burlington-Quincey Railroad and couldn't face retirement.

The face of 78-year-old Lewis, leaning back in a chair inside a former railroad car, brightened as he recalled his early days on the rails.

When asked did he want to retire after 47 years with the railroads, Lewis said "never — I don't want to go home and do nothing."

Lewis saunters over to the depot to begin helping passengers get on

the train when he hears a distant muffled sound.

As the silhouette of the steam locomotive appears around the curve, Hobson, behind the controls clangs the bell and gives an ear-splitting blast of his whistle, announcing his arrival.

"Every engineer on the steam railroad had his own way of blowing the whistle," Hobson said, proudly giving a visitor an example.

Hobson pulls smoothly into the depot, looking at the controls in the sizzling engine with respect, Hobson smiles and says, "I love working on this railroad."



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