

Professor's interests go beyond classes, assignments and Aggies

by Brigette Crossland
Battalion Reporter

Some of the most interesting things a professor does are outside of the classroom, said Dr. Robert D. Powell, professor of plant physiology.

"Outside of the classroom, I like to garden, do a little woodwork, and take care of children," Powell said.

Although Powell has four grown children of his own, the children he is referring to are foster children.

He cited the case of one boy

that he had taken care of for four years, the longest he ever cared for a single child. The boy was taken from Powell and put into a group home.

"He needed special psychological care that we couldn't give him at home," Powell said. "We hope that when we get the children we can help them, but sometimes they are better off at another place."

When asked what kinds of changes he has seen in College Station in 20 years he said, "Well, I used to live on the edge

of town, and now I live in the center of it."

"We began taking care of foster children about ten years ago," Powell said. "Now I never know when I will get a new child. If they need somewhere to place them, they call me up and I'm happy to take them."

It might seem that foster children would be hard to get close to, but Powell doesn't see it that way.

"The hard part is not getting close to them," Powell said. "The saddest part of it is giving them up, but sometimes they need special help that we can't give them."

He does see some advantages to this growth, however. "When we first came here, we had to go all the way to Houston to do any major shopping. Now we don't have to."

"When I first came here 20

years ago, there were only 8,000 students and all but a half a dozen of them were men, and all in the Corps," Powell said. "We have a lot more students now and a much larger campus, but I don't think that being large necessarily means being good."

Powell has one clear regret about the growth at Texas A&M, "We used to have so much more parking."

One change that Powell said he would like to see is better student-faculty relationships at Texas A&M.

"There is a tendency for people here to feel like the faculty is trying to get the students and students are trying to get by with what they can, instead of working together," Powell said.

He said he is trying to do something about that problem. Powell is a member of the Texas A&M Mentors, a program in

which faculty members volunteer to counsel students about academic and personal problems.

"The Mentors would be an excellent program, if only the students would use it more," Powell said.

Powell taught at the University of Florida for 14 years before coming here. When he was teaching at Florida, there were

about 17,000 students there.

"There are some advantages to going to a smaller college," Powell said. "Student-faculty relationships were much better there. We had a central meeting place where the faculty and students got together to drink coffee and talk. It was right outside my office."

All four of Powell's own children attended college.

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Louisiana trial begins in slayings of couple

shootings of a north Louisiana couple. Newton and Erlene Brown were killed as they lay bound and gagged in the bed at their rural home near Dixie Inn.

The former Oil City police officer has pleaded innocent to two counts of first-degree murder. Prosecutors have said they will seek the death penalty if Wingo is convicted.

Retired Circuit Court of Appeals Judge G. William Swift of Lake Charles, who was named by the state supreme court to preside at the trial, rejected several defense motions Monday, including one asking that the charges be dismissed.

The trials were moved to Lafayette because of intense publicity on the case in north-west Louisiana. Attorneys said they did not think it would be hard to seat a jury in Lafayette, despite news accounts of Glass' trial there.

"I am sure it will be a little more difficult than it was with the Glass case, but I don't think we'll have any trouble," said

Webster-Bossier District Attorney Henry Brown.

Jimmy Glass, 20, was found guilty of the murders earlier this year and ordered to die in the state's electric chair.

Glass, whose case is under appeal, implicated Wingo in the slayings during his trial and has been subpoenaed by Wingo's attorney.

Wingo has told authorities he was hiding with Glass in a storage room at the Browns' home, but he left when he realized Glass was going to burglarize the house.

The two men were making holiday telephone calls at the Webster Parish Jail in Minden Dec. 24 when a jailer was distracted by a disturbance in a nearby cell block. They used the opportunity to jump into an elevator and escape.

Glass testified at his trial that the pair broke into the Brown's home to rob the couple and tied the Browns up with electrical cord. After rummaging through the house, Glass climbed into the

bed between them and bludgeoned each in the head with a .38-caliber handgun.

Glass testified he killed the couple only after Wingo threatened to shoot him with a shotgun if he did not do Wingo's bidding.

"I said, 'No man, I ain't going to kill them,'" he told a Lafayette jury. He said Wingo then told him, "Yeah, you're going to do them or I'm going to splatter your brains all over this room."

The men took \$1,800 from the house and split up after they fled. A massive manhunt was launched as residents of Webster Parish in north Louisiana bolted their doors and feared the two would return.

Wingo was arrested Jan. 5 in a wooded area near Atlanta, Texas, along with his girlfriend, Gwen Hill. Glass was picked up the next day in a San Diego, Calif., airport.

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Dallas	Austin	Houston
Sept. 9-11	Sept. 16-18	Sept. 23-25

Police beat

The following incidents were reported to the University Police Department on Monday.

THEFTS:

- A blue 10-speed Sears bicycle, from the patio area between the Memorial Student Center and Rudder Tower.
- A gold 10-speed Hawa bicycle, from the Schumann Hall bike rack.
- A maroon 10-speed Nish bicycle, from Ramp J of Patton Hall.
- A wallet, from 104 Le Ford Architecture Center. The wallet contained \$100.
- A maroon 1980 Honda CX500 motorcycle, from the building of the Civil Engineering Building.

HARASSMENT:

• A resident of Underwood Hall received a harassing phone call from an unidentified male caller.



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