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Swarthmore College

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for release Wednesday, July 17, 1968

Dr. Courtney Smith came to Swarthmore College in 1953, succeeding Dr. John Nason, as the College's ninth president. For fifteen years he has been building, not only in bricks and mortar but also in strength of faculty and student body.

College presidents point with pride--and rightly so--to the buildings that rose on campus during their terms of office. Dr. Smith can claim as lasting marks of his tenure the DuPont Science Building in 1959, and in the same year, the Willets Dormitory for women. Then, after the Centennial Year, the Philip T. Sharples Dining Hall, the Worth Health Center, the Charles A. Dana and the H. Thomas Hallowell dormitories for men, and the Thomas B. and Jeannette L. McCabe Library. But he likes to feel that his greatest accomplishment has been in the building of a strong faculty and student body.

In the last ten years Swarthmore students have received two Rhodes Scholarships, 28 Fulbrights, seven Danforths, 153 Woodrow Wilson, and 81 National Science Fellowships.

Four named professorships and three endowed Centennial Chairs have been established; and the Julien and Virginia Cornell Distinguished Visiting Professorship brings outstanding professors for one or two terms to the College from abroad.

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The Commission on Educational Policy with the Special Committee on Library Policy and another on Student Life, were appointed by President Smith in the summer of 1966, under a grant from the Danforth Foundation, to engage in three fundamental and interrelated studies. For a year the campus seethed with meetings of the committees studying the problems the President had set before them. The outcome of the studies was reported in the Critique of a College published in December of 1967. At the time of its publication, all classes were suspended for a week and students and faculty met in sessions and informal discussions that were carried on far into the night. "Super week," as it was known by the students, will go down in the history of the College as a time when students and faculty really engaged in dialogue.

"It is our feeling," President Smith said in the preface to the reports, "that if the independent liberal arts colleges are to remain strong and grow in strength, they must analyze their educational problems realistically, anticipate future developments, and take appropriate steps promptly. Some hard thinking about basic academic issues needs to be done now, to define prospects and goals for the years ahead." Certainly Swarthmore did this in its studies and is now implementing the recommendations made last year. President Smith leaves the College, as he says in his message to the faculty, "But I believe the College to be in good shape and have high hopes for what new leadership and fresh energies can now bring to it."

—President Courtney Smith, Centennial Alumni Dinner, 1964

—President Courtney Smith, Voice of America Broadcast, 1959

"A college is the place for the free exchange of ideas by responsible people who believe in the importance of seeking the truth and believe in the importance of living by what truth they believe they have discovered."

—President Courtney Smith, *The Dialogue*, Collection Address, 1962

"But the atmosphere is charged with something else too—a capacity of Swarthmore students to play hard as well as work hard, a margin, over and beyond the great talent, for fun, a delightful and exuberant vitality. I find my symbol for it in the Library clock, which strikes 22 of its hours with workmanlike efficiency, but then kicks up a bit, luxuriously and exuberantly, by striking 13 at one o'clock."

—President Courtney Smith, *President's Report* 1964-65

"I . . . believe that we gain strength from our Quaker tradition. Without imposing on us a creed that says 'this is true, and must be believed,' or 'this is untrue, and must not be believed,' it encourages us instead to keep our minds 'open to new light . . .'; it encourages us to resist every effort to suppress free thought or free speech. . . . It provides us with a guide at times of crisis. It encourages us to feel a deep concern for the individual student."

—President Courtney Smith, *President's Report*, 1961-62

December 1958

"I am sometimes inclined to think that if we bring together the right students with the right teachers in the right atmosphere we won't have to worry too much about what 'education' is."

—President Courtney Smith, Inaugural Address, 1953

"The Quaker tradition inheres in the sense of 'caring,' of caring very much, that characterizes this college. It is bound up with an insistence on the academically first-rate as against the merely passable, the intellectually 'fine' as against the intellectually spurious. It inheres in the belief that education should consist of the simultaneous cultivation of intellectual and moral powers."

—Courtney Smith, ninth president of Swarthmore

"My hope, as we begin our second century, is that Swarthmore . . . maintain its own particular 'bent,' its own inner drive, its own controlling spirit. There are other academic programs as strong . . . as ours, and there are other colleges and universities which have a strong impact on their students' values. But there are not many institutions which combine these two strains, these two forces, to such a marked degree."

—President Courtney Smith, Centennial Alumni Dinner, 1964

"The liberal arts and sciences are the studies that can be most conducive to making us men, and not just working men, most conducive to helping us realize ourselves fully as human beings."

—President Courtney Smith, Voice of America Broadcast, 1959

believe at Swarthmore that the separate liberal arts college is not a second in American education, that it is not just a small university. It is, instead, a special kind of commitment, and a special kind of opportunity. But we must show that we realize that its justification depends upon our taking advantage of the exciting opportunity to concentrate on the richest of all studies—the liberal arts and sciences . . .”

—President Courtney Smith, Centennial Alumni Dinner Address, 1964

“We are all too prone in the academic world . . . to think of a college as a place where teachers teach rather than as a place where students learn. Our focus at Swarthmore seems to me to be on the student: we unconsciously think of the college as a place where students learn.”

—President Courtney Smith, Report of the President, 1953-1954

“... the real drama [of the academic year] . . . is the individual's story of the sharpening and the toughening of the mind, the excitement of breaking through into many new fields of learning and the sense of developing powers in a few, the increase in sensitivity, the learning to live with other human beings, the increasing awareness of the possibilities of life, the finding of a few more of the values one wishes to live by.”

—President Courtney Smith, Commencement, 1963

“... the private institution — if it has the financial means — need only worry about its wisdom and its will. For it has freedom to select, freedom to experiment, freedom to determine by conscience rather than by nose-counts, freedom to go against the main stream when it thinks best . . . Not an absolute freedom, of course, for freedom is never absolute, but a . . . considerable freedom.”

—President Courtney Smith, President's Report, 1961-62

“We know that it is an impressive amount of talent with which we are privileged to work, and that the call on us to be wise and strong in guiding it and helping it to achieve its fullest development is very great.”

—President Courtney Smith, Alumni Day, 1962

“A free society depends not only on large numbers of educated people, since democracy must have a broad base, but on the highest possible quality of education — on the identification and development of talent wherever it is to be found.”

—President Courtney Smith, Alumni Day, 1962

“It seems to me appropriate that a student should strive for excellence in physical development, in sports, so long as he does so as a student, and as an amateur, and not with the time or intensity of a professional.”

—President Courtney Smith, Alumni Day Address, “Sports in American Colleges and Universities,” June 4, 1960

It is not enough to develop intellect, for intellect by itself is essentially amoral, capable of evil as well as of good. We must develop the character which makes intellect constructive, and the personality which makes it effective.”

—Courtney Smith, ninth president of Swarthmore

to said that reason should be the part of us that guides, because it is tipped to guide: It sees where it is going. Thus individuals who gain the gifts of educational opportunity carry the responsibility of bringing reason, judgment, and open-mindedness into social action.”

—President Courtney Smith, “The Academic Community and Social Change,” 1965