

Black Dean Closson Seeks Two-Way Counsel Benefits

by Martha Black

"Getting to know all Swarthmore students" on a personal as well as a professional level is the goal of David Closson, Swarthmore's newly appointed Assistant Dean of Students and Black counselor, who will begin his duties here on February 18.



DAVID CLOSSON

A native of West Chester and once there participant in a working college exchange program at Swarthmore while he was a student at Lincoln University, Mr. Closson is already aware of the "many possibilities and benefits" the college has to offer its community. "I've always known a lot about Swarthmore," he says. "When I spent a week here during an exchange program, I was very impressed by the students, although I didn't get a chance to talk with

many of them extensively because they were always in the books. The general makeup of the student body is very interesting."

EXPERIENCE

For the past year Mr. Closson has been teaching English at John Coolidge High School in Washington, D.C., where he also resides. He comes to Swarthmore making a new perspective on American education.

The fact that Swarthmore stresses freedom is one of the particular factors about the school that attracted him, for he says, "I'm tired of being surrounded by conformity."

Now he will be paying special attention to the problem of blacks at Swarthmore. Mr. Chason will be instrumental in the success of its black support program. He is "quite impressed" by Mr. Butler's plan for preparing "unconventionally qualified" students for the rigors of Swarthmore academic life. "It's just these Swarthmore values that led me here, and there are many schools 'unconventionally qualified,' and for years they have been neglected. An increase in the black enrollment at Swarthmore will be a very thing, with advantages everywhere. The College will benefit from black students, and they in turn will benefit from the Swarthmore of other Swarthmore students."

While a sophomore at Lincoln, Mass. which he graduated in 1966 with a B.A. in English, Mr. Chason spent several months in Ethiopia. He participated in Operation Crossroads to Africa. After finishing his three years, he decided to enter the Peace Corps "as a means of going back to Africa," and spent a year three months training in Somalia.

As a member of the Peace Corps, Mr. Chason served as assistant instructor at Addis College in "one of the most traditional and isolated parts of Uganda, East Africa." For three months following his discharge he searched for the Peace Corps at several predominantly black schools in the South.

Mr. Chason then entered the United States Teacher Corps, a precursor of the National Teacher Corps which gave returning Peace Corps and other volunteers in inner city schools, a means of continuing traditional teaching techniques.

Mr. Chason has been completing his requirements for a Master's degree at Georgetown University, and he is continuing his work at the University of Pennsylvania after he graduates. As a member of the United Negro College Fund, he also intends to become involved in the activities of the United Negro College Fund.

He and his wife and six-month-old son will temporarily reside in the Lincoln, Mass. area.