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TROTTER REFLECTS ON 28 YEARS AT SOUTHEASTERN

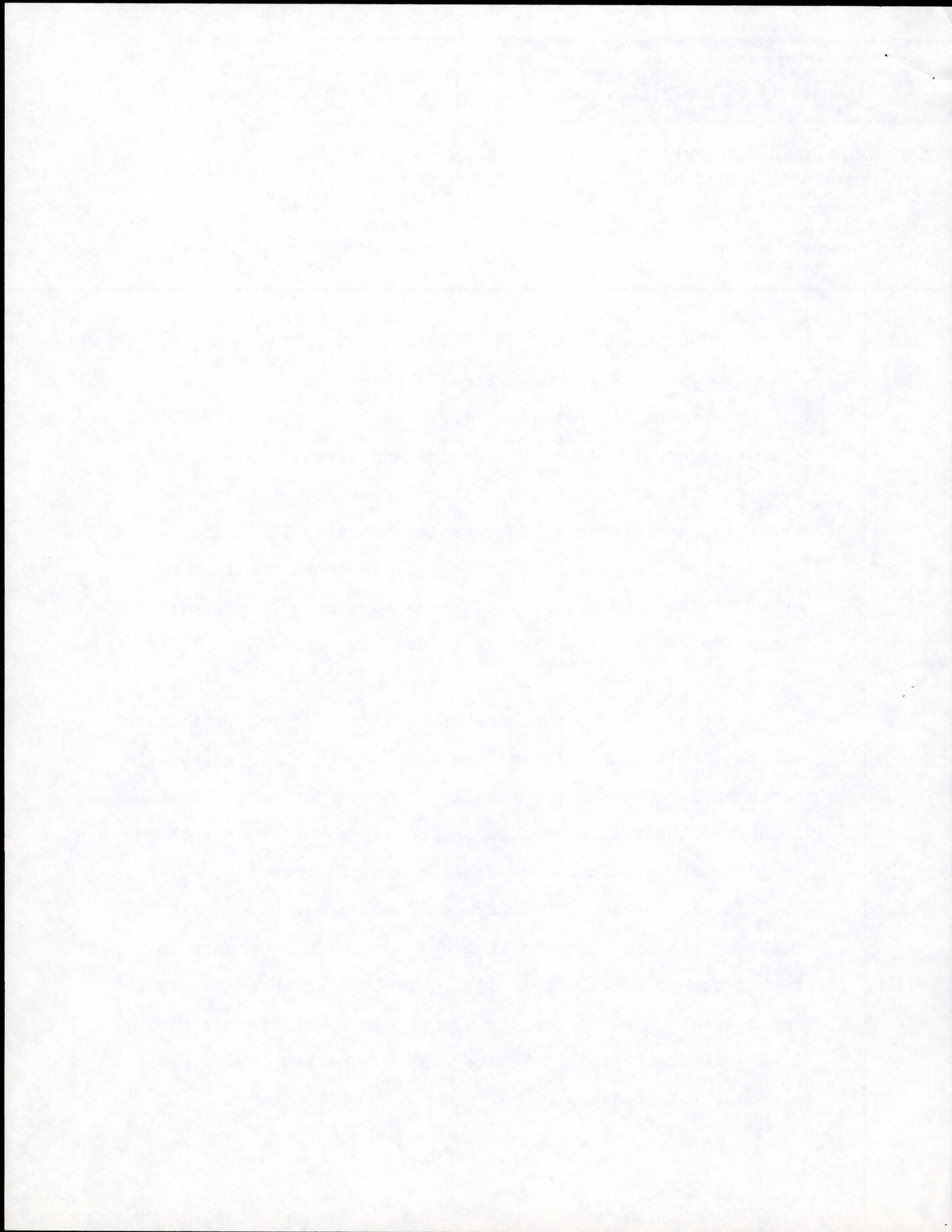
By Student Newswriter Bob Stainback

Twenty-eight years is a large part of anyone's life to devote to one institution. As the end of the 1982-83 academic year swiftly approaches, J. Carroll Trotter, Professor of Preaching and Speech at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N. C., will reach that milestone. He will also complete his full-time service to Southeastern. Since 1955 he has seen the seminary grow from 300 to 1,100 students and go through some tremendous changes.

Trotter came to Southeastern Seminary at the invitation of the institution's first President, Sydnor L. Stealey, who had been a member of the faculty at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., when Trotter was a student there. In 1955 they ran into each other again at a meeting.

Stealey asked if Trotter would be interested in filling a teaching position in preaching and speech at Southeastern, where he had become President in 1950. Trotter accepted and their relationship grew. "Stealey was almost like a father to me, like a kindred spirit," Trotter says. "We had a very close personal relationship."

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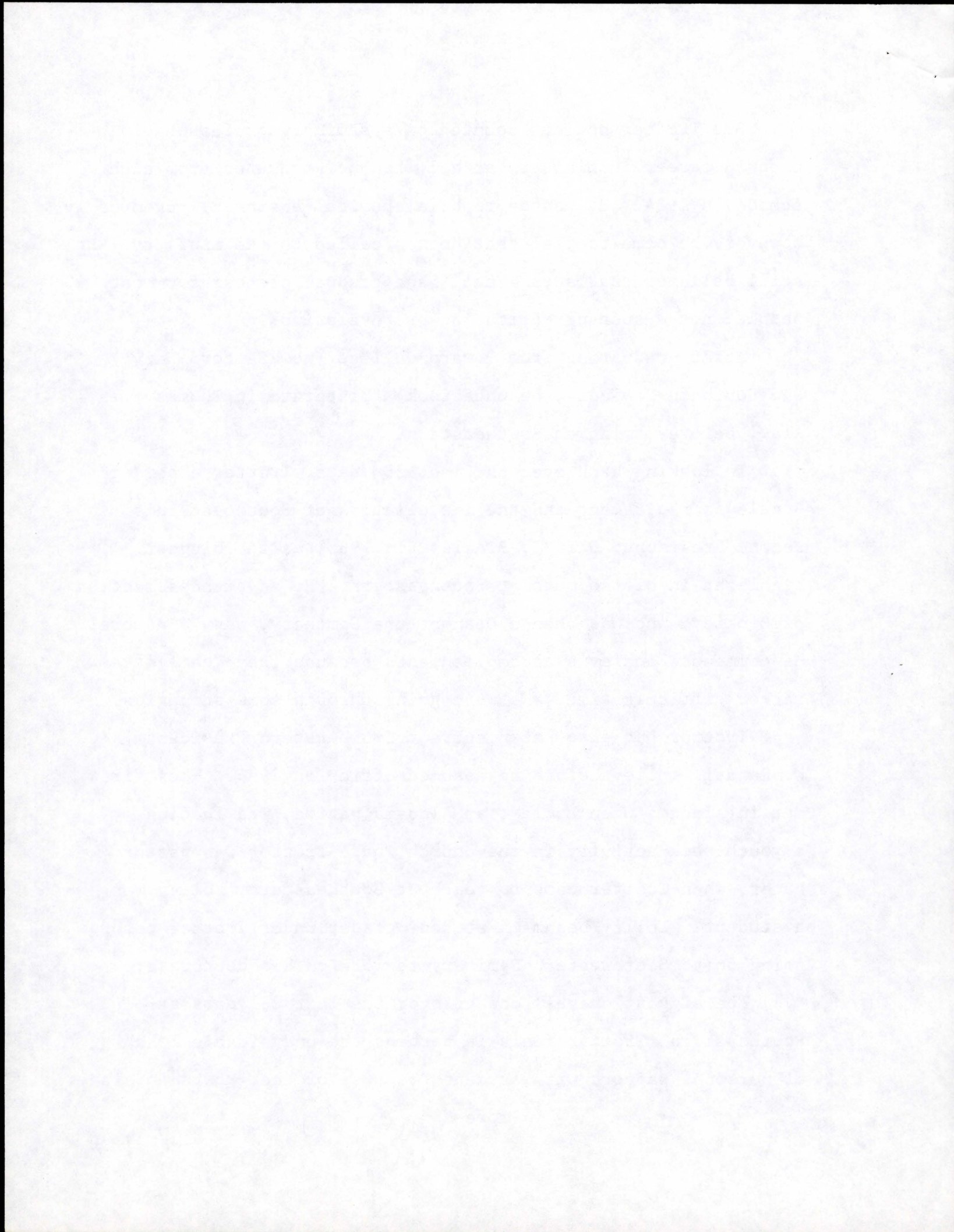
But Trotter had not counted on a seminary professorship or on a career in ministry at all when he graduated from high school in 1934. He wanted to be a chemical engineer. Eventually, however, he came to feel that he was called to the ministry. He still believes that such a call is a gradual process for most people, not a sudden realization or revelation.

After graduating from Howard College (now Samford Univ.) and Southern Seminary, he undertook a pastorate in Thomasville, Ala., before coming to Southeastern.

In looking back over the last 28 years, Trotter considers Stealey's retirement and the installation of Southeastern's second President, Olin T. Binkley, in 1963, as the biggest highlight in his sojourn at Southeastern. He says the selection of Binkley, who was then a Dean at the Seminary, was "a natural". He commends Binkley's accomplishments because they "came at a rather difficult time. We were going through some struggles."

Trotter had also known current Southeastern President W. Randall Lolley before he assumed office in 1974. They first met in Alabama when Lolley, an Alabama native, was leading a youth week activity in the church where Trotter was pastor. Later, when Trotter came to teach at Southeastern, Lolley was a student. Lolley became a student grader under Trotter before going on to Southwestern Seminary to work on his doctorate.

The biggest overall change over the last 28 years at Southeastern, Trotter feels is perhaps the unavoidable loss of personal rapport with students because of the growth in size.



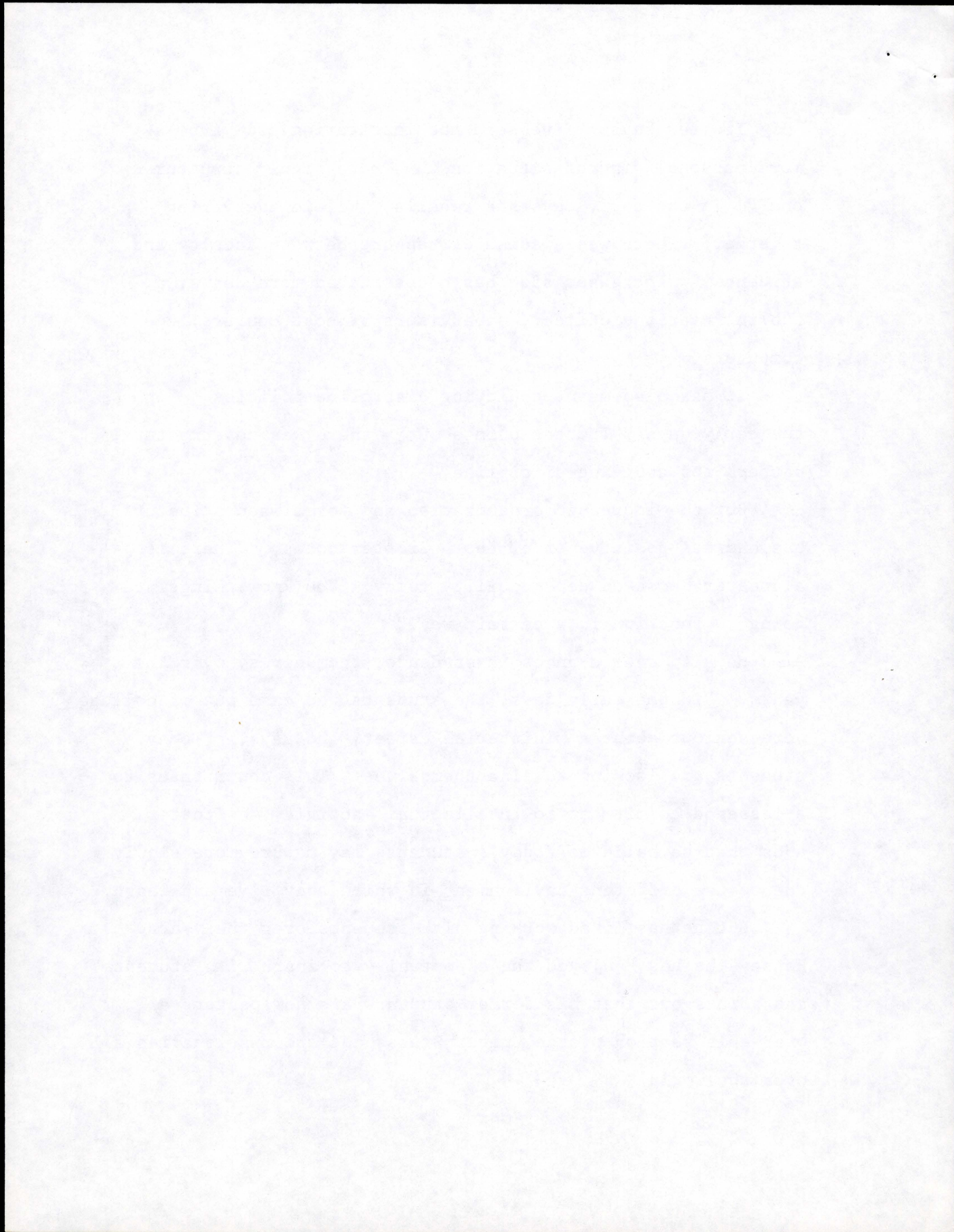
Trotter says, "I've seen the institution grow from a more personal kind of situation to a more highly structured one." In the early days, he recalls, "We did everything together. There was a sense of rapport between faculty and students." Increased size has necessitated more deans, a public relations officer, supervisors of cost centers, and computers.

It has also meant codifying discipline policies. "In the early days," Trotter points out, "there was no structural pattern for applying discipline."

But the increased organization and formalized structure has had its positive side, too. Trotter notes, "There is a greater sense of dependability today. You know things are going to function in a certain way."

He also sees changes in students, themselves, over the years. "In the early days, the students who came out of college were serious about a ministerial career," he says. "Today students are looking to find themselves. This contributes to a lessened commitment to intellectual activity." Trotter adds that he believes today's students may mature more slowly due to the different environment in which they live and learn.

But he has liked working with students over the years. He says he has "enjoyed the opportunity to share with students" and points out that his former students are now pastors all over this section of the United States and are missionaries all over the world.

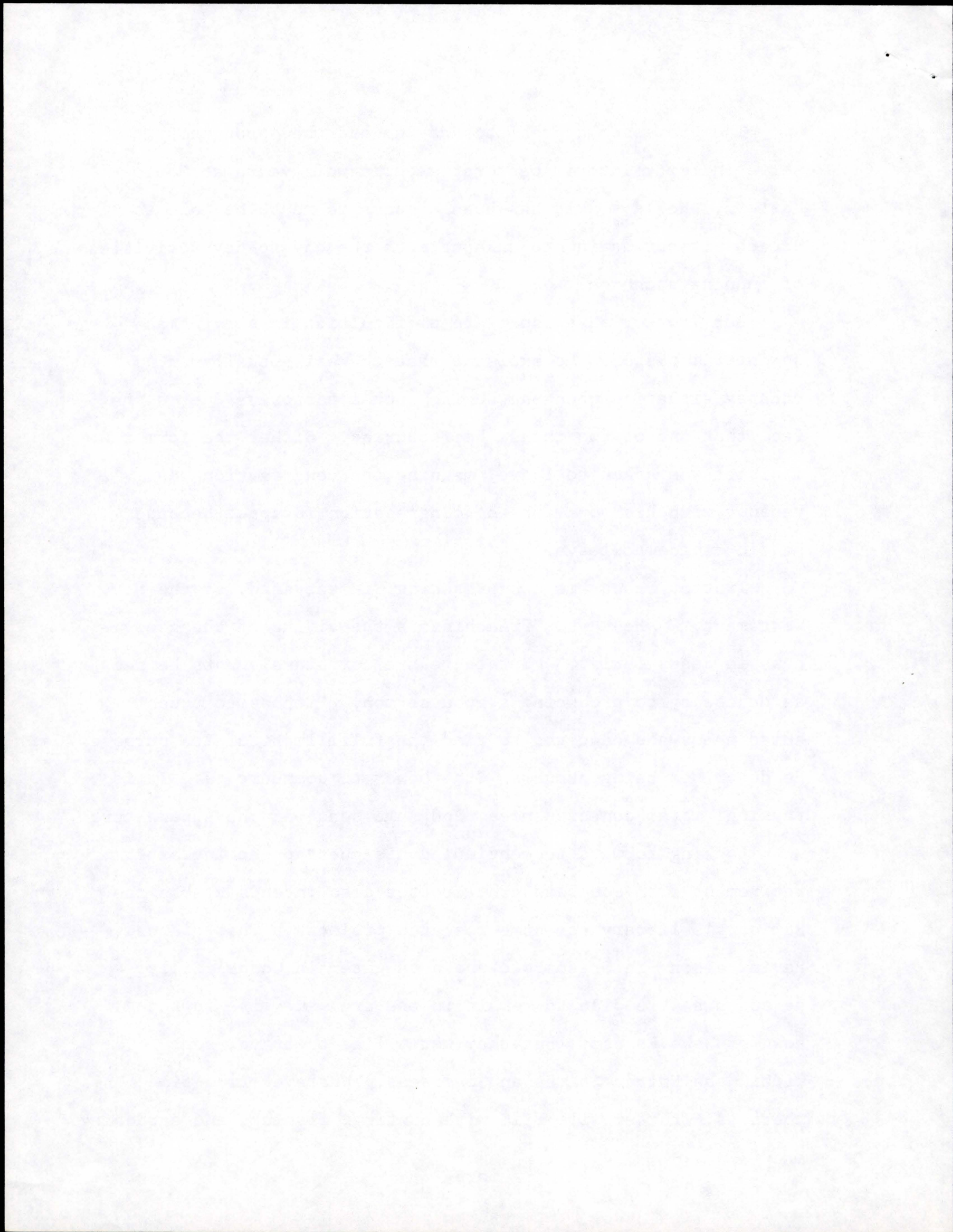


The professor appreciates having had the opportunity to serve in forty interim pastorates during his years at Southeastern. He says, "It has been a bonus to me to be able to preach without having to take care of the day-to-day activities of running a church."

But Trotter says there are difficulties in serving as an interim pastor. He explains that there is usually an unhappy situation when one begins such a pastorate due to the fact that one of two things has occurred. Either the former minister was asked to leave, meaning the congregation was unhappy with his work, or the congregation is upset because he did decide to leave.

Trotter bases his own preaching "in the study of the New Testament." He says, "Preaching is the giving of the good news in Jesus Christ." But there are certain elements he sees as necessary to producing a good sermon. "It has to touch human needs and concerns to find the fulfillment of its purpose." He describes being human as "the power to communicate. It is talking, moral consciousness, and some sense of the supernatural."

Looking forward to continuing his guest preaching after retirement from Southeastern, Trotter also intends to use the Seminary's library for some research projects he has planned. Having a son in Greensboro and a daughter in Chapel Hill, he and his wife plan to remain in the area and live in the town of Wake Forest. But they would like to travel some within the United States and overseas. Whatever free time there is, Trotter will fill with hunting, fishing, and gardening.



Calling it "a trust," Trotter summarized his feelings about life at a recent Seminary chapel program. He said, "Life is a commitment of skills that is to be used as an investment." Later he added, "Life to me is the relationships that have been built through the years that can never end. I treasure the friendships I have had.

Every individual whom we know or whom we have known has contributed something to us."

Carroll Trotter is a teacher who has contributed tremendously to a great many people in a great many places.

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