



Joel Smith

Not Lacking In Guts

A few weeks before the Christmas break I wrote a column saying it takes "guts" to run a university in today's troubled society. I indicated in the column that President Jamrich lacked this important ingredient in directing the operation of Northern Michigan University.

At the time I wrote the column I firmly believed he lacked "the guts" to stand up and fight the small minority of students which were determined to disrupt this campus. And for this reason I will not retract the statements I made at that time.

But today I have somewhat of a different opinion of Dr. Jamrich. It stems from my witnessing his actions throughout the night of the sit-in by Black students in Kaye Hall two days before Christmas break.

That night will be remembered for a long time for many different reasons. The press will probably remember it for the long hours of waiting in the News Bureau for something to happen.

The Deans won't easily forget the shambles in which their offices were found shortly after the Blacks vacated the premises. And the Student-Faculty Judiciary Committee won't forget the lengthy meeting which broke up about 3:30 a.m. Thursday morning.

But I remember the night for something completely different. For the first time, I saw Dr. Jamrich stand up and fight for the rights of 7,700 students which were sleeping and couldn't possibly know what was taking place, and for the protection of a vice-president of this university.

Sometime around 3 a.m. that morning, Harry Campbell and myself reported to Dr. Niemi and Dr. Kafer that the sound of breaking glass was heard in the occupied rooms. Dr. Niemi immediately went into the offices to investigate, but didn't return.

Fifteen minutes later, with still no sign of Dr.

Niemi, Dr. Kafer tried to enter the room, but was shoved out repeatedly by Black students. He also tried unsuccessfully to phone into the offices.

Fearing the worst, Dr. Kafer then asked that we call the President and inform him of the situation. Campbell placed the call to the President's home awakening him after only ten minutes of sleep.

Within five minutes Dr. Jamrich met us in Kaye Hall and the three of us proceeded to the occupied offices. After checking with Dr. Kafer to see if the situation was still the same, the President opened the door and tried to walk in.

He was shoved out. He again tried to enter the room this time demanding the release of Dr. Niemi, but was shoved out. A third time he tried to enter he stuck his foot in the door, but again was pushed into the outer office.

A last try at a different door demanding to speak to the Black Student Association President, Pat Williams, proved unsuccessful, too. The President then proceeded to the Security Office to notify the local police.

And like a fairy tale, the verdict was reached only a few short minutes before the police were to arrive and the building was vacated.

What kind of man does it take to repeatedly enter a room only to be thrown out? What kind of man does it take to attempt to enter a room blocked by a person twice his size?

It takes a man with guts. And from what I saw that night, President Jamrich does not lack in this ingredient.

I'm not quite sure what is going to happen to the students which occupied the offices. But I do feel quite certain that action will be taken against the students.

But, whether it is or not, I don't think it will be determined by the amount of guts of President Jamrich.