

ASUO President Bill Wyatt

Newcomer serves as chief executive



Bill Wyatt

Photo by Jean O'Leary

By JOHN PIPER
Of the Emerald

ASUO President Bill Wyatt is a lot like many University students in several respects:

—His hair is a little too long—and it's usually hanging in his eyes;

—His attire usually consists of tennis shoes, jeans, a sweatshirt and an old, somewhat tattered dark sports coat;

—His attitude toward school and after is uncertain—"I'm not sure what I want to do when I get out. I just have no idea right now."

But Wyatt is different in a number of important ways. He is the student body president, chief executive of the ASUO.

And his father is Wendell Wyatt, Oregon's First District representative in the U.S. House.

Wyatt is a relative newcomer to the University, having spent two years at Willamette University in Salem before he "sorta dropped out" at the start of his junior year and moved to Eugene around Christmas of 1970. He "sorta actually just sat around, did a little work here and there," and went to school at Lane Community College for a term.

Then he "sorta decided I'd go to the University," which he entered in the fall of 1971. Most of his time was spent working on a voucher study, which is designed to restructure the financing of higher education.

It was University professor John Wish who suggested Wyatt apply for membership on the ad hoc committee on higher education, of which Wyatt was elected chairman during winter term 1972. Through working with the committee, he gained valuable experience in dealing with the state legislature.

He also picked up much of his knowledge of the ASUO at this time, as Jeff Jefferson wanted him to be the number two man on a Jefferson-Wyatt ticket for the ASUO executive office.

When Jefferson dropped out of the race, Wyatt found himself "sorta holding the bag."

At the advice of then ASUO President and Vice President, Iain More and Larry Salmony, Wyatt chose former ASUO Senator Fred Loveys as a running mate, and the bitter battle for the top spot between Wyatt-Loveys and Ben Merrill and John Stewart was underway.

Wyatt was definitely an unknown in the race, as few students really knew who he was.

"Nobody knew me, if we won or lost it would have been Fred's fault," he says, adding that Lovey's reapportionment plan probably helped their ticket to its narrow 58-vote victory.

And Wyatt feels the fact that he hadn't been involved in ASUO government previously may prove to be an asset.

"We really need a refreshing look at what's going on," he says. "There are so many rip-offs around here in ASUO programs, I'm scared to think of how many keggers we finance or how many chicken dinners we buy."

"When you grow up in a situation like this, as most ASUO politicians do, I think you tend to overlook things like that."

Although he is a political newcomer, Wyatt believes he has the knowledge and ability to run the ASUO.

"I have the knowledge of what's going on," he says, adding that there is "no doubt in my

mind that I have the capability to do the job."

Wyatt says his interest in the ASUO executive office first stemmed "from my work with Wish and what can be done by student government in terms of expediting legislation and that sort of thing."

"I'm really intrigued by all the things that go on" within student government, he says, digressing for a moment to discuss his first impressions of the ASUO executive:

"When I first came here, I thought of the ASUO president as some god-like figure, who won out in a battle of 15,000 students—got the majority of their votes. I thought wow—that's really something. As I got into it I really realized that of those 15,000 probably 200 actually knew who the president was in terms of actually recognizing him on sight."

Wyatt says he spends between 10 and 14 hours a day on the job, which leaves little time for such things as studies.

He is required by the ASUO Constitution to take 12 hours a term, but says "I have a nice understanding with my professors—they really don't mind, they think this is a pretty valuable experience and so do I really."

"This one year experience (as ASUO president) is as valuable as anything I could do in the University, I think. It already has been really, really worthwhile, very practical work experience."

Wyatt thinks he will eventually get a bachelor of science degree in political science, but doesn't know when.

It will definitely have to be a B.S., he says, as "I've taken first year Spanish for three years now and I think we've come to a mutual agreement that we'll leave each other alone."

Another hurdle to graduation is the science requirement, which Wyatt says he will complete sometime after his term in office ends.

"I don't like science," he says, adding that it is "quite ironic" that his third-floor EMU office overlooks the seemingly endless blob of science buildings.

Wyatt is uncertain if political science is what he wants to major in, but he's there.

"I'm not really sure I'm interested. I've just sorta accumulated more hours there than anywhere else. I have no real high special interest. When I started off in political science at Willamette, for some reason or another I simply assumed my role would be to graduate in four years with a bachelor in political science, go to law school, be a lawyer and then run for world king or whatever, and it hasn't really turned out that way and I'm really glad."

His future after college is also uncertain:

"I wouldn't mind working in Salem," he says, "in the legislature for a while as an administrative assistant or something of that nature. But it's really tough to say. I have no burning desire really at this point."

Wyatt isn't one for planning ahead, explaining that after his year in office ends "I'll start thinking about what else to do. This has already been a really good experience and will continue to be a good experience and after its over, you know, it's over."

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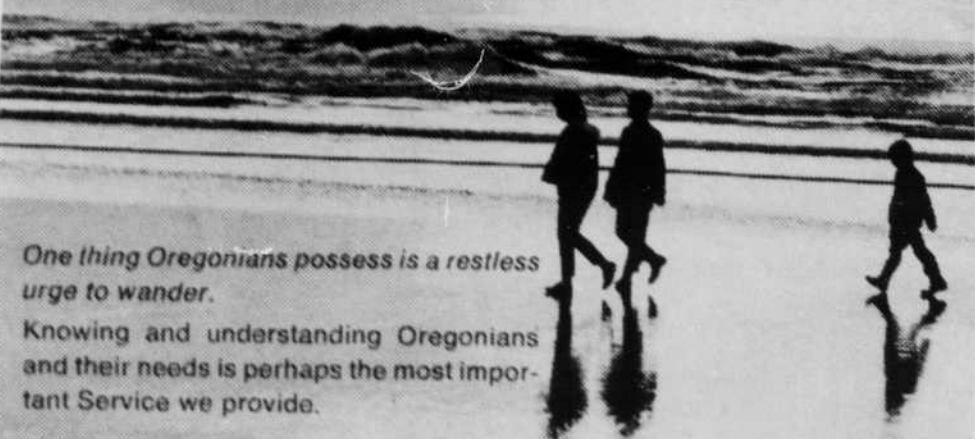
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