

Ethics Scholar Richard Hull to Head Texas Council

TCH has announced the appointment of Richard T. Hull as executive director effective September 1, 1997.

Hull, a philosopher by training and university professor for thirty years, recently commented on his motives for leaving a tenured professorship to assume the duties of executive director. "This is a time of reshaping lives in America. Much of this reshaping is involuntary—for example with the downsizing of corporations and forced lifestyle changes that result. At the same time, many people are reshaping their lives out of a different kind of necessity: the need for self-realization, growth, challenge—particularly women in mid-life who are entering professional schools in record numbers to embark on new careers.

"Since my decision to retire early from my university and seek a new career was not forced, it was a response to a deeply felt set of personal needs. I chose to make the transition because I have long felt a pull to bring the humanities out of the classroom.

"After thirty years of teaching and research, it is time to take whatever I have learned in the classroom back onto Main Street, to join others who bring the extraordinary visions of the humanities to the general public through programs of lifelong learning. It is also time for me to continue my own lifelong learning. TCH—through all of its exemplary programs and initiatives—resonates with the challenges and opportunities I seek."

Hull returns to Texas for the third time. Born and reared in Oklahoma, he completed his undergraduate education at Sherman's Austin College in 1963, a year also marked by his marriage to Elaine Mangelsdorf of Houston, who was completing majors in religion and psychology.

Graduate study at Indiana University was followed by an appointment to the philosophy department at the State University of New York at Buffalo, where he developed the university's first bioethics courses for



RICHARD HULL

year working for M. David Lowe Personnel Services in Houston.

"The experiences on psychiatric rounds showed me both the complexities of the patient-physician relationship and the passion Texas doctors and nurses feel for their work.

The experiences with Lowe broadened my appreciation of the ways people's work and character express values acquired from family and cultural identity. Those two years were very important experiences inclining me to return to this great state."

In 1983 Hull took over the position of headmaster at

Austin College. We paired these discussions, often of current events or an essay or newspaper opinion piece, with a weekly essay assignment. Although they complained mightily at the time, students have later come back to tell me that the writing assignment was the most important thing they did to prepare them for college," Hull said.

"Our other enormously successful experiment was to introduce children in the Early Childhood Program, kindergarten, and first grade to five foreign languages. Spanish, French, German, Chinese, and Russian were taught in rotating units by native speakers. By their kindergarten year, we had children who could order from a Chinese menu at local restaurants—without an English accent. All graduates who completed the full fourteen years emerged fluent in at least two languages besides English."

Hull's third excursion came in 1986, when he spent seven months as scholar-in-residence at Buffalo General Hospital. "I was involved in hospital operations from top to bottom—from working on policy statements to going on rounds in the intensive care units, to standing in on surgeries to discuss with doctors and nurses ethical dilemmas they deal with on a daily basis. Their deliberations often reflected their appreciation for the lessons of history, religion, and philosophy; their sensitivity to their patients' cultural backgrounds; and their appreciation of the potential for the economic

***I am eager to begin to
work on these many initiatives,
all aiming to secure
and increase the public's access
to the humanities.***

more than 3,000 students planning careers in health care. His excellence as a teacher was recognized by the Chancellor's Award for Outstanding Teaching.

Three times in his three decades at the university, Hull left to explore other fields.

In 1978, he and his wife moved to Galveston for an internship in psychiatric ethics at John Sealey Hospital, the next

Calasactius School in Buffalo, providing educational services to gifted and talented children ages three through eighteen. "Calasactius is devoted to developing the most challenging educational program imaginable. During my three years there, we introduced innovative group discussion techniques developed by Bethel Laboratories in Maine, techniques I first learned at

Continued on page 7

Hull _____ *Continued from page 2*

transformation of medicine—for both great good and great evil.”

Commenting on the recent years of congressional turmoil over public support of the humanities, Hull said: “TCH has emerged essentially intact from the clash of opinions over the issue of public versus private support of the humanities. I think there are elements of wisdom on both sides of the debate.

“I see the future of TCH to involve relatively level support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, increased state support of such programs as the Texas Academy of Foreign Languages and Cultures, and increased corporate, foundation, and private support of such programs as the Outstanding Teaching Awards and programs and services of the Texas Humanities Resource Center. I am eager to begin to work on these many initiatives, all aiming to secure and increase the public’s access to the humanities.” ♦