

Robert H. Wright, Chapel

January 30, 1926

For something over a week I have been holding in my mind and discussing with members of the student body and officers of the college a question that will be of interest to every student who lives in the dormitories. I believe you young women realize by now that the college authorities are trying to fix this college so as to be of the greatest possible service to you. I understand that it is pretty generally desired that the retiring hour on Saturday night be moved up to eleven o'clock and that the wink, wank, wunk (I believe that is what you call it) be shoved off another half hour. I think there are two very good reasons why this should not be done. I said that because you cheered as soon as you did. There are three very good reasons why it should be done, and, therefore, we are going to do it. Whether it becomes permanent or not will depend altogether upon you, but you may sit up tonight until eleven o'clock, if you want to. Young women, I hope you will not let this keep you from going to Sunday School and Church, and I had a little rather it would not keep you from going to breakfast. Of course, I gain every time you don't go, but I had rather you would eat just the same. If this helps you to form bad habits, then, of course, it ought not to be. If this causes you to break away from doing the things you ought to do, of course, it ought not to be. So it depends on you and your attitude toward it whether or not we are going to make ^{it} permanent.

Right along that line let me say to you that almost all the privileges of life are dependent upon the way we use those privileges. If we had a student body made up of perfect people (of course, you would have to get another president, I could not preside over such a student body) we would not need any kind of regulations at all. If human society was perfect, there would be no need for laws, but human society is not perfect and never will be as long as it is human, and therefore we must have certain laws and certain

regulations. The spirit of the public and in college that means the spirit of the teacher and the student and the officer determines to what extent we could do away with regulations. So in making this change we are really and truly throwing more responsibility on you, and we are going to see how you react toward it. I wish we could get along without any kind of regulations, but we can't do that and we all know that, and, after all, it is easier for human beings to have certain regulations that we can work by, but when we take our regulations to see just how far we can go and calculate that "I can have four unexcused absences the first month and four the second, let's see I will go home on Saturday, the 30th of February, and not come back until Tuesday. I think I can get by the second month that way." When we begin to reason that way we are putting the regulations in a dangerous place. We are not accepting the responsibility with the right attitude toward it. The way we accept the regulations that we have determines in a large measure what regulations the college must make now. I am not ^{saying} ~~talking~~ all of this about Saturday night extension of time. I really do not believe it is going to work any hardship or work to any real disadvantage. I just have that much faith in you young women, and I believe you are going to do it in the right way and that it is going to help you instead of hindering you, but it does give me this opportunity to talk about law and our attitude toward law. You girls are supposed to come to chapel every morning. I saw two students, I suppose they were students, they were young women, get into an automobile just before chapel bell rang and leave this place, as much as to say, "you go on with your old chapel, I don't care anything about it". When students take that attitude about a regulation (understand, I don't know for sure that these were students) but if they were, when they take that attitude toward a regulation it makes it imperative that the administration get harder on the students and we don't want to do that. I should like to make fewer and fewer regulations. I should like to take them away one

after the other and give you every single freedom that you can use, but it is your reaction toward these regulations that determines what we can do. You are going to find it that way when you begin to teach. You are going to find it that way all through life. It is a universal law. The regulations of the state of North Carolina, the public laws, are determined by the people who make up the citizenship of the state. For example, they are advocating now putting on a system of state police, state wide, to protect the public on the public highways, and that is being advocated because the men and women who drive automobiles are not considerate of the other man and the other woman who drive automobiles, or who walk, or who drive a horse. If the people of North Carolina would conduct themselves as they should on the public highways of our state, it would not be necessary to put on highway policemen throughout the state. If they will not conduct themselves aright, then the state of North Carolina will be forced to go to the expense of putting on road police. It is all determined by the attitude of the public toward any given proposition and it is just as true in college, our attitude toward the few regulations that the college has determines whether or not the college may remove some or be forced to put on others.

Now don't take this talk, young women, to be centered around the time for retiring on Saturday night. It refers to every regulation and your attitude toward everything in the college.