Crafts Center Director Jim Pressley Retires

With an eye on the stars...

The fall of 2007 will mark the end of an era for NC State’s Crafts Center, as director Jim Pressley retires after four decades of service to the University and Student Affairs. During his forty-two years with the program, Jim has seen the university’s small recreational Craft Shop develop into a large and comprehensive crafts program that is one of the finest of its kind in the country. When he steps down in December, he will enjoy the distinction of having occupied almost every position within the program, beginning as a student volunteer and ending as Administrative Director.

Jim began his career at NC State in 1965, when as a freshman he joined the student Gallery Committee that met at the campus Crafts Shop. This group of students selected and installed art exhibitions in the Erdahl-Cloyd College Union. Jim became an enthusiastic participant in College Union activities and discovered he truly enjoyed working with students and with the exceptional people he met in Student Affairs. After earning a BA in Psychology, Jim accepted a position as assistant director of arts and crafts. He studied photography, becoming an award winning photographer and photo instructor for The Crafts Center. An interest in astronomy led Jim to learn techniques of optical fabrication to make mirrors for his own telescopes. Telescope mirror making and design were added to The Crafts Center’s many programs: clay, wood, photography, fibers, lapidary, jewelry, art on paper and a host of other crafts.

As the crafts program grew and evolved, it set instructional standards, taught generations of new craftspersons and teachers, helped educate the public to the significance and value of both traditional and fine crafts and encouraged the production and collection of crafts of all kinds. Recognized for the quality of its instructors, a congenial atmosphere felt by students of all ages and featuring many large and well-equipped studios, The Craft Center is one of the delightful educational opportunities that help make NC State a truly special place. Today, The Crafts Center hosts an energetic community of creative people who share a love for crafts of all kinds. More than 1,000 students participate in crafts programs annually. NC State students can be proud of their Crafts Center and the rich opportunities it provides to themselves and to the entire community.

A major renovation of the Crafts Center is set to begin this year. When work is completed, NC State will have an extraordinary new crafts facility where students will continue to learn, produce and enjoy the creative process. Jim looks forward to this new era with great anticipation. He expects to continue his long affiliation with the program, but now as a member of the community of delightful artists who love crafts, take pleasure in working with their hands and who enjoy sharing their knowledge and skills with others. In the mean time, Jim will be looking toward the stars.