

Thomas PSU presidency finalist

By MARC HARKNESS
Collegian Staff Writer

The Trustee Presidential Selection Committee announced yesterday that Joab L. Thomas, former president of the University of Alabama, is the finalist for the Penn State presidency.

The University Board of Trustees will vote on Thomas' candidacy Monday, said J. Lloyd Huck, board president and chairman of the selection committee. If approved by the board, Thomas will replace University President Bryce Jordan, who is scheduled to retire Aug. 31.

"We believe that Dr. Thomas has the experience and the ability to build on the fine record President Jordan and his administrative team have compiled," Huck said at a news conference.

Thomas was not present at the conference, but said he would accept the position in a prepared statement.

"I'm honored to have been recommended by the Trustee Selection Committee," Thomas said. "Penn State is a great university and it would be a privilege to work with that institution."

As president of Alabama from 1981-1988, Thomas was successful at bringing about rapid, positive change, said Robert Barfield, dean of Alabama's College of Engineering.

"Morale was at probably the lowest point in the history of the university," he said. "He came to the university and performed a miracle. He improved markedly not only the morale, but was able to persuade people from all walks



Joab L. Thomas



Bryce Jordan

of life to give the university a new level of support."

Thomas, who would be the 15th president of the University, would begin his tenure Sept. 1, Huck said. Jordan previously agreed to stay as president if a successor could not be found by that date.

The committee selected Thomas from a pool of about 12 candidates submitted by the Presidential Search and Screen Committee, consisting of staff, faculty and students. The pool contained

one woman and no minorities, Huck said.

The selection committee requested a second list of candidates in June when leading candidates on the first list were unable to commit to the University. Huck said one or two of the candidates on the first list were still considered.

Thomas' candidacy was announced to the full board last Friday during a closed-door session of the Penn State Board of Trustees meeting, Huck said. As president of Alabama, Thomas led

the university's first major fund raising campaign — similar to the recently completed Campaign for Penn State initiated by Jordan.

Jordan said he and Thomas share other similar goals for the future of Penn State and higher education in general.

"I've known Dr. Thomas for a long time, and I'm delighted to see him receive this appointment," Jordan said. "I believe that if we could measure our philosophies of where Penn State ought to go, they would line up about the same."

In a move resembling Jordan's five-year strategic planning process, Thomas guided Alabama according to a five-year master plan compiled by committee. Thomas' philosophy made a difference at Alabama, Barfield said.

"Any data you want to look at — I'm serious, any data — whether we're talking about number of scholarly papers published by faculty or number of students, or number of students receiving honors, or number of national merit students or research dollars or anything else of that sort, the upturn began coincidentally with his first year as president," he said.

The candidate, a native of Russellville, Ala., received bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees from Harvard University.

Thomas started at Alabama as an assistant professor of biology in 1961. In 1964 he became assistant dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and in 1969

was appointed dean for student development.

He left Alabama in 1976 to serve as chancellor of North Carolina State University, a position he held until he was named president of Alabama in 1981.

He stepped down from the Alabama presidency in 1988 to teach biology after a controversy over his appointment of Bill Curry as head football coach. Thomas said at the time his resignation was not related to the criticism he received.

"I want to see if I still have the intellectual horsepower to teach," he told *The Atlanta Constitution* after he announced his resignation.

A dispute with Chancellor Thomas Bartlett over how Alabama's Tuscaloosa campus should be run was the final straw for Thomas, Harry Knopke, Thomas' former assistant, told *The Associated Press*. Bartlett saw the Tuscaloosa campus as part of a trinity in the Alabama system, along with campuses at Birmingham and Huntsville. Thomas saw Tuscaloosa as the primary institution, with the other campuses as branches.

Jordan said Thomas will have to gain an understanding of Penn State's Commonwealth campuses to be an effective president.

Thomas will spend the remainder of July and August becoming acquainted with Penn State's campus, administration and with the state legislature, Huck said. One month should be sufficient time for transition, he said.

"He will be traveling back and forth within the next 30 days," Jordan said.

When Jordan was named in 1982, he spent nine months traveling between State College and Austin, where he was executive vice chancellor for academic affairs for the University of Texas system. Thomas will have to carry on his transition at a greater intensity, Jordan said.

Thomas toured the University Park campus two weeks ago, before he was designated the leading candidate, Huck said. Other candidates have done the same to get a feeling for the campus before deciding whether to commit to Penn State.

During that visit Thomas met with some faculty members, but no student groups. After the board votes Monday, he will meet members of the search committee, Huck said. Thomas has met only with Thomas Merritt, the committee's chairman.

Beginning next week, Thomas will meet with Jordan to begin the transition process. Huck said he has also made an appointment for Thomas to meet with Gov. Robert P. Casey next week after the board's vote.

Jordan said he anticipates Thomas will make some adjustments to the University's administrative structure to suit his management style. When Jordan took office in 1983, he implemented an executive vice president position which he combined with the office of the provost — the University's chief academic officer.

Weather

Hazy, hot and humid today, high 90. Warm and muggy tonight, low 66. Hot and humid again tomorrow with the chance of an afternoon thunderstorm, high 88.

— Mike Hopkins

the daily Collegian

25¢

Thursday, July 19, 1990
Vol. 91, No. 25 12 pages University Park, Pa. 16801
Published independently by students at Penn State
©1990 Collegian Inc.

Thomas highly committed to minority issues

By MARK E. JONES
and STACY NIEDECKER
Collegian Staff Writers

Joab L. Thomas, the finalist for Penn State's presidency, was committed to the concerns of underrepresented groups while president at the University of Alabama, said J. Lloyd Huck, chairman of the Trustee Presidential Selection Committee.

The selection committee reviewed Thomas' record on cultural diversity issues and received many strong recommendations, including one from Tuscaloosa's National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Huck said.

"I don't know whether or not Joab's resume shows this, but one of the reasons I knew (him) in earlier days was his active role in dealing with the civil rights unrest throughout the South and the active role he took as dean of students then," said Robert Barfield, dean of Alabama's College of Engineering.

Thomas, president at Alabama from 1981 to 1988, was dean of student affairs there from 1969 to 1974.

"More specifically, what Joab did as president here was make available a great deal of scholarship money and a lot of programs to support minority students," Barfield said. "Joab should be able to help in that area because he has a lot of experience."

Cordell Wynn, president of Stillman College and an Alabama trustee, told *The Associated Press*: "As a president of a historically black college and as an African American myself, I can say this man has no fears when it comes to dealing across the board with all social, racial and economic groups. He was one who really worked well with diversity."

But during Thomas' tenure, the percentage and number of black students who attended Thomas' Tuscaloosa campus fell, according to figures from the University of Alabama.

Black students made up 10.1 percent. Please see DIVERSITY, Page 5.

Thomas known for accessibility to student body

By MARK E. JONES
and STACY NIEDECKER
Collegian Staff Writers

If Joab L. Thomas is named Penn State's president, his hands-on management style might give students more access to Old Main.

"He has been known to get his coffee in the student union building," said J.P. Muir, president of Penn State's Undergraduate Student Government. "He's been known to stop and talk to a student on the street and drop them a note two days later to say how nice it was to talk."

Thomas, president of the University of Alabama from 1981 to 1988, has a reputation for meeting openly with student groups there.

"I can't say enough nice things about him as far as that goes, as far as dealing with students and appreciating students," said John Coleman, president of Alabama's student government. "As university president he's there to deal for students and I don't think he ever lost sight of that."

"When you see the university president come in and tell you how much you, as a student, mean to the university... it really means a lot. And it makes you want to work harder and it makes you really appreciate what you're doing and appreciate your institution a lot more," he added.

"He's been known to stop and talk to a student... and drop them a note two days later..."

— J.P. Muir
Penn State Undergraduate Student Government president

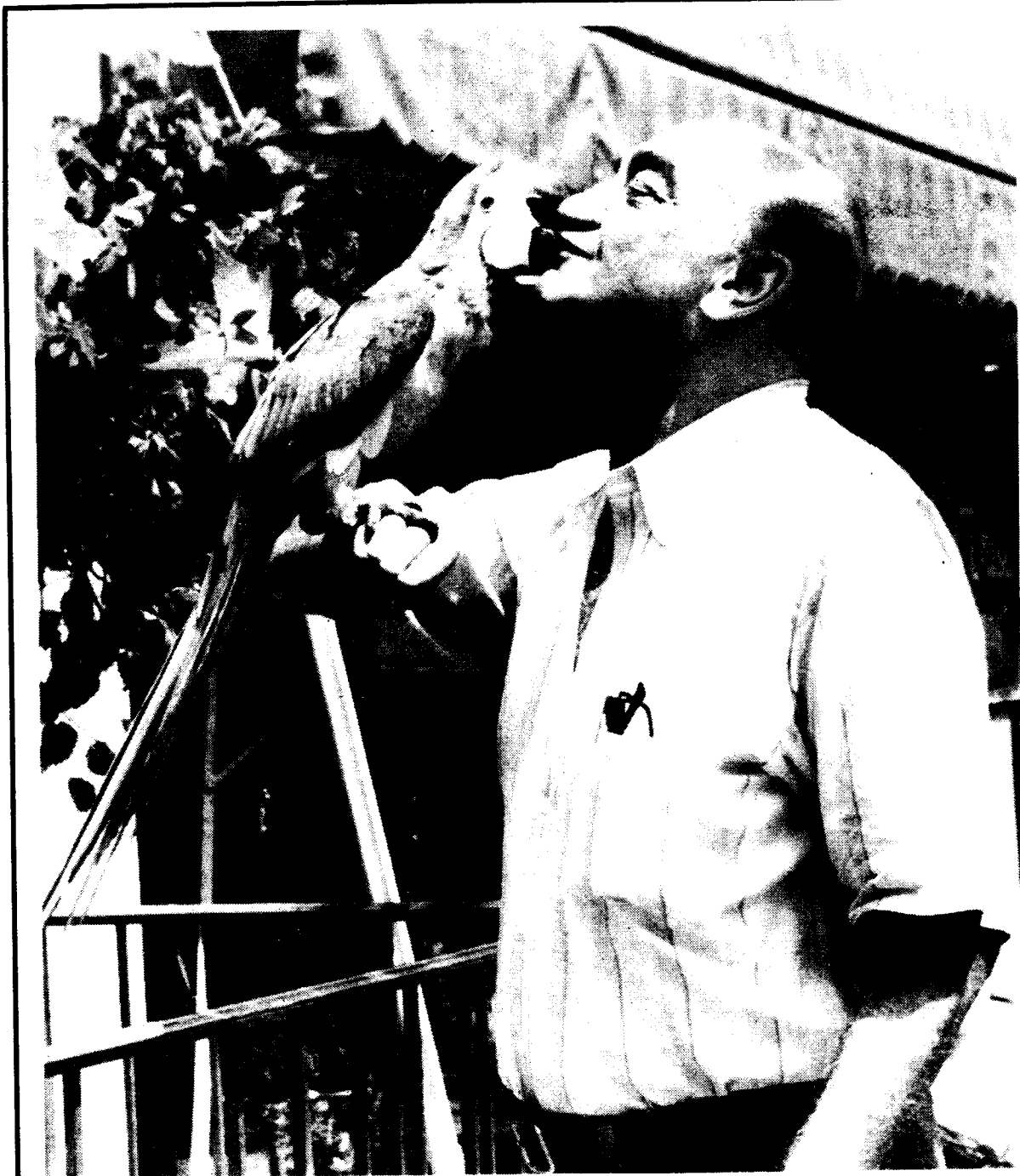
During the last few years, Penn State President Bryce Jordan has had little such contact with students and has been drawn more to Harrisburg to secure state appropriations. But a new president must go out and meet people, Muir said.

Jordan rarely walked around campus to speak with students, Graduate Student Association President Ken Martin said.

"Jordan, he's pretty much hard to talk to," said Nicole Batts, president of Black Caucus. "Maybe it's his style not to be real visible."

For instance, when black students held a sit-in in the Telecommunications Building in 1988, Jordan sent administrators to negotiate.

"But the students wanted to talk to Jordan," she said.



Collegian Photo/Michele Kana

Love at first sight

Pepe nibbles on her owner Robert Sahakian of State College at Plants by Suzanne, 105 E. Beaver Ave. Sahakian bought Pepe, who can whistle "Happy Birthday" and say a few words, in Florida and taught her all she knows. Sahakian and Pepe enjoyed the outdoors yesterday.

Thomas not concerned with victory

Former president stresses academics

Thomas hired Curry, who only won 31 of 78 games while head coach of Georgia Tech but had built a program on a reputation of integrity. This irritated many Tide fans.

By TOM ESTERLY
Collegian Sports Writer

As president of the University of Alabama, Joab L. Thomas hired Bill Curry, a football coach with a losing record but an emphasis on academics.

Thomas' commitment to academics may have made him unpopular with Alabama fans. But his academic integrity is one of the reasons he is the finalist for Penn State's presidency, said J. Lloyd Huck, president of the University's Board of Trustees.

Thomas' criteria for a football coach to replace Ray Perkins in 1986 did not emphasize winning, according to *The Atlanta Constitution*.

He said he was looking for "first a person whose integrity is above question, second someone who will be sincerely interested in helping improve the academic performance of our student-athletes, and third someone who can win."

Thomas hired Curry, who only won 31 of 78 games while head coach of Georgia Tech but had built a program on a reputation of integrity. This irritated many Tide fans used to the lead-

Please see ATHLETICS, Page 5.

Soviets, Hungarians to establish NATO ties

By SALLY JACOBSEN
Associated Press Writer

BRUSSELS, Belgium — In a sharp break with the past, the Soviet Union and Hungary have accepted NATO's offer to establish diplomatic ties with the Western military alliance, officials said yesterday.

The decisions — the first by Warsaw Pact nations — came less than two weeks after President Bush and other NATO leaders extended "the hand of friendship" to their former adversaries in Eastern Europe.

Hungarian Prime Minister Jozsef Antall announced his government's plans after paying a visit to the headquarters of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the first by a leader of a Warsaw Pact nation.

"With this, the official resumption of contacts has taken place," he told reporters.

Later, NATO Secretary-General Manfred Woerner, just back from a trip to Moscow, said the Soviet Union also intended to set up diplomatic exchanges.

"The Soviet Union and Hungary are the first two countries with which we are establishing a form of diplomatic contact," said NATO spokesman Robin Stafford.

NATO had not yet created a system for accrediting diplomats to the alliance, he said. No nations outside the 16 members have official status.

Antall, who met for nearly an hour with Woerner, said he had asked that Hungary's ambassador to Belgium also be accredited in the future to NATO.

"We agreed that if the Soviet Union and Hungary wish to make any contact... this is the way to do it — through the ambassador who is accredited to Belgium at the moment," Stafford said.

Earlier this month, Bush and the other NATO leaders wound up a critical summit in London by pledging to reduce their conventional and nuclear defenses in Europe and reassuring the East of their peaceful intentions.

They also invited Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev to address a NATO meeting and suggested Moscow and other governments in Eastern Europe establish "regular diplomatic liaison with NATO."

"This will make it possible for us to share with them our thinking and deliberations in this historic period of change," the leaders said in their final statement.

Woerner, who talked to Gorbachev on Saturday in Moscow, said Gorbachev did not give a date for his

visit but "he clearly accepted the invitation."

It was the first time in the 41-year history of the Western alliance that its top official had traveled to the Soviet Union.

"I think we opened the doors for a new era of cooperation," Woerner said.

"I explained to the Soviet leadership we wanted to have a sincere partnership in the future... not only with them but with all countries of Central and Eastern Europe," he said.

Antall's visit symbolized the new turn in relations, he said.

The Hungarian leader said he supported the "Atlantic idea," a reference to the political links drawing together the United States and Canada with nations in Europe.

"Two world wars and a cold war have proved that Europe and North America are inseparable," Antall said in brief remarks in the main lobby of the alliance headquarters.

He said NATO should form "a basis for European security and this is not directed against the Soviet Union."