

# Dean Copple makes smooth transition into new position

By Jamie Bishop

R. Neale Copple, dean of the School of Journalism and now the temporary vice chancellor for academic affairs, says he isn't overcome by the duties of his new position.

"But I'm doing a lot of running just to stand in one place," he said.

"We have a great big university here, with all the wonderful variety that's supposed to be in a big university," he said.

Copple said he deals with many problems similar to those he dealt with in the School of Journalism, but on a much larger scale.

"People problems are people problems," he said, "no matter where you're dealing with them. If I have any management principle it is: Management is dealing with people."

"Budget problems multiplied several times are still budget problems. Deficits multiplied several times are still deficits," he added.

The 59-year-old dean said he's found the work load somewhat heavier in his six-month stint as a replacement for vice chancellor John Strong than as the dean of the School of Journalism.

"I certainly am not at this point doing better than just almost keeping up," Copple said.

### No. 2 man

According to the Regents' bylaws, the vice chancellor for academic affairs is the No. 2 position on campus. Some 22 deans and department directors report to that office. The vice chancellor for academic affairs reports to the chancellor of the university, Martin Messengale.

Copple said he's expecting to "do my best to deal with the academic problems that come into the office and try to provide some direction where that's possible within six months — and I'm not sure how much direction is possible in 6 months."

Strong and Copple had little time to prepare for the transition.

"John and I had a week's time, and not full time, in that week, for him to try to get me comfortable in this job. We finally both admitted there was no way he could give me all the information I needed. We got to about 5 or 6 p.m. the last day he was supposed to be here and I said; 'John, I think you had better go. I'll just have to deal with it as it comes in the door.'"

But despite the lack of time to prepare and the heavy work load, Copple said, "Obviously, I'm kind of enjoying this. It's been fun to be vice chancellor a bit. I'm really enjoying working with the people here."

### Conflict of interest

On a stickier subject, Copple said it's unlikely he'll find himself in a conflict of interest. He said he will ask Messengale to handle any problem he thinks is a conflict of interest.

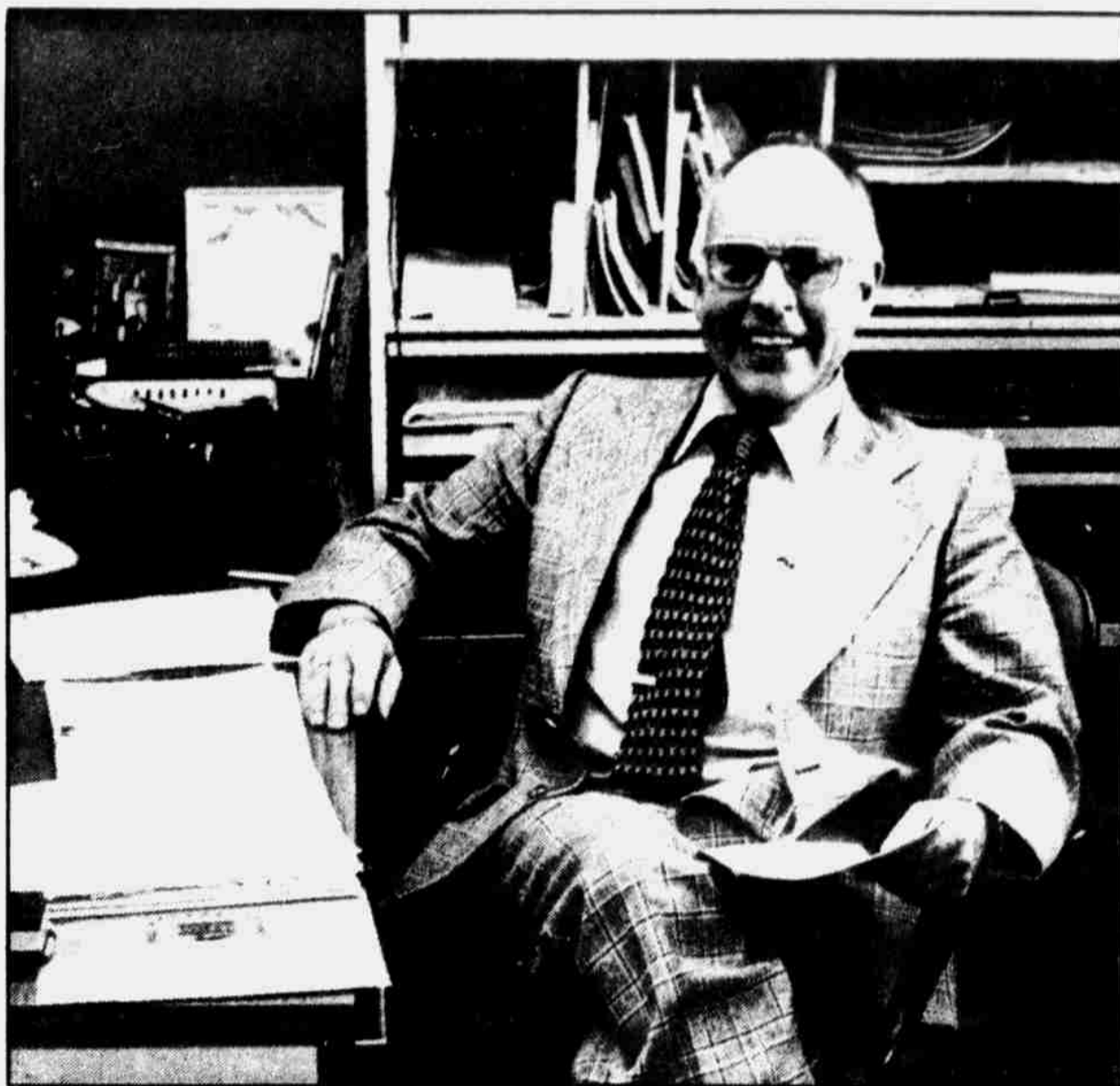
The most obvious occasion for such a conflict would be budgeting, he said, and he'll miss the Legislature's budget-making next spring.

Copple also said he told his replacement at the School of Journalism, Dr. Wilma Crumley, associate dean for graduate studies there, that she could expect little, if any, money.

"I told her she was probably going to be largely ignored in requests for money," he said. "Frankly, as far as the School of Journalism and additional money help over the next six months are concerned, they just aren't going to get it. That'll take care of one conflict of interest," he said, chuckling.

Copple didn't seem too worried about his replacement at the School of Journalism.


In a way, Crumley has already made her mark on the dean's office. On the many plaques and awards on Copple's office walls, written on masking tape across the glass frames read the letters: W-I-L-M-A C-R-U-M-L-E-Y.



R. Neale Copple

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