

Professor Says Academics Should Be Activists Also

Academia should be explicitly linked to political activism, a Pulitzer-prize winning psychologist last night told a Kirkland House audience in this year's Atherton Lecture.

Dr. John E. Mack, a psychiatry professor at Harvard Medical School and academic director at the Center for Psychology Studies in the Nuclear Age, told forty people gathered in the Kirkland Junior Common Room, "I want to argue that the decision to commit non-violent civil disobedience is compatible with academic life."

Mack told the audience about his

own experience with civil disobedience—last June he was arrested for protesting at a nuclear test site in Mercury, Nevada.

Mack said he joined 600 other protestors at the site and was among the 149 taken away in handcuffs. Mack and his wife originally traveled to Mercury only to join in the support group for the activists, but by the morning of the protest they decided to take part along with their three sons. All five were arrested.

The psychologist spoke of a "dark side of humankind" that he said often affects scientists and their motives. "This dark side," he said, "is embodied in institutions which harness technology. Nationalism and the ideologies which support it are the vehicle for the dark side in the nuclear age."

Although the ideologies perpetuating nationalism can represent important values, Mack said, they are often "empty slogans, polarizing people from each other."

"Our whole society is geared toward anti-Sovietism," Mack said in his conclusion. "You've got to break through the ideology."