

Hood professor seeks new JFK facts

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Assassination class studies documents

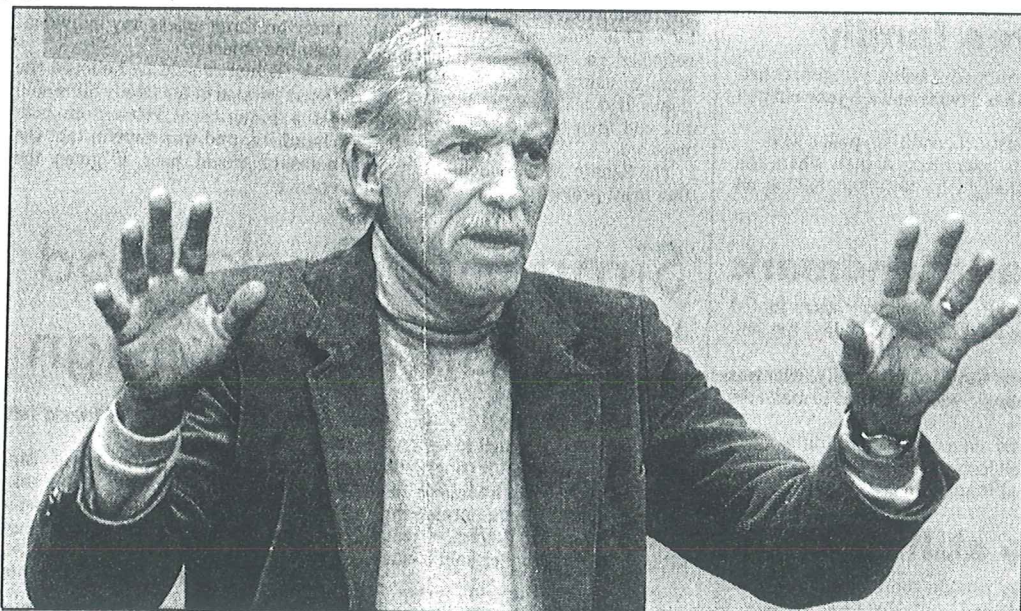
Three decades after the assassination of President Kennedy, Hood College history professor Gerald McKnight believes the trail has grown too cold to figure out exactly what happened in Dallas Nov. 22, 1963.

But that doesn't mean there aren't some interesting facts yet to be uncovered, said Dr. McKnight, who teaches the college's "Politics of Assassination" course. With 900,000 pages of information recently released by the government, and another 136,000 pages the CIA plans to release for public study, there are bound to be some new facts, he said.

"That's more than a million pages. There very well has to be some new stuff in there. Who will find it and how, will be by guess and by golly," Dr. McKnight said recently, puffing on a pipe as he sat in his Frederick home.

"Someone may stumble over some interesting stuff. When you get to that volume, the bureaucracy screws up," sometimes with the result of releasing information that was in-

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Staff photo by Bill Green

Hood College history professor Gerald McKnight believes more facts will come to light regarding the assassination of President Kennedy.

JFK

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tended to be inked out, he said.

Such information very well could show up in Dr. McKnight's course, which covers both the JFK and Martin Luther King Jr. slayings. Offered for the past 17 or 18 years, the course is always filled with students, sometimes so many that it has to be divided into two sections, he said.

"It's gratifying" to see so much interest, he said, adding that the enrollment increased notably after the 25th anniversary of Kennedy's assassination.

Rather than sitting through lectures, students get a chance to delve into documents produced by the Warren Commission, as well as CIA and FBI papers.

Frederick resident Harold Weisberg, who has written seven

books on the Kennedy assassination, donated materials to Hood. Using the Freedom of Information Act, he worked for years to get the files. A federal judge once called Mr. Weisberg the last of a dying breed of investigative reporters.

"Without a doubt Harold Weisberg knows more than anybody about the case," Dr. McKnight said.

Unlike Mr. Weisberg, who became intrigued from the beginning with the assassination and the way it was being investigated, Dr. McKnight

became interested after he began teaching at Hood and his friendship with Mr. Weisberg grew.

"I didn't have a sense (at the beginning) like Harold did," he said. "I was critical of the foreign policy, but I was pretty naive about what is possible in this country."

Dr. McKnight has written about the assassination for the op-ed pages of several newspapers and said he is not surprised at all the books and films which continue to be produced decades later.