

Gregory: No More Nightclub Dates

By Hollie I. West

Anyone interested in hearing Dick Gregory work his political satire in a night club is advised to go to the Cellar Door this week. His engagement there through Saturday is one of his last nightclub appearances.

After 15 years in show business, Gregory, satirist, social activist and health food proselytizer, is going to concentrate on speaking to college students. "I have two more nightclub dates," he told the audience of about 75 persons in the 199-seat club Monday night. "I finish up in Boston on Aug. 5."

Gregory, who has marched for civil rights, fasted for peace and sat-in for American Indians, says he is leaving nightclub work because he feels a conflict between suggesting that college students not smoke or drink liquor and appearing in places where people are expected to smoke and drink.

"I won't do dates where alcohol is involved," he said.

He also said the late hours of nightclub work prevent him from getting up early in the day and involving himself in the social causes that interest him.

Gregory currently averages about 300 college dates a year.

Gregory, who is on a fruit juice and vitamin diet, is in his third year of fasting in protest of the conflict in Southeast Asia. He directed most of his comments Monday night to the Watergate

affair. Referring to the White House "enemies list," he said, "It seems like Nixon would have had at least one Vietcong on it after fighting a war with those people for all these years."

He also said: "All them cats keep logs of everything they do. A dude looks in his book and says, 'Yes, on June 22, 1972, I was with my wife. I didn't want to be there, but I was with her.'"

Gregory also had some remarks about the recent conflagration at the Army's Military Personnel Records Center in Overland, Mo. "Can you imagine all the Army's records back to the Spanish-American War burning?" he said. "They won't know what to believe about what people did in the service. When I finish this gig, I'm going in and tell them I was a lieutenant colonel and apply for my benefits."

In discussing slavery, Gregory turned humor against his blackness to poke fun at himself and whites. "You didn't want to bring us over here," he told the predominantly young, white audience. "We jumped on the ships and you asked us what we wanted. And we said, 'Work.'"

One of his favorite targets is still Lyndon Johnson. The late President, Gregory said, "would have admitted Watergate. He would have said, 'Yeah, I did it. Now what about it?' Standing there with barbecue sauce dripping from his mouth."