Ralph Fuchs is Retiring at IU

"If I had it all to do over again, I would still choose an academic career," said Dr. Ralph F. Fuchs, Professor of Law at Indiana University, former president of the American Association of University Professors, and an official of the American Civil Liberties Union, who is retiring this year from the IU law faculty after a long and distinguished career as practicing lawyer, educator, consultant, and civil liberties advocate.

"The thought of replacing Dr. Fuchs does not occur," said Dean William B. Harvey of the IU School of Law at Bloomington. "I have the highest personal and professional regard for him."

Dean Harvey; Chancellor Herman B. Wells; Bertram Davis, current general secretary of the national AAUP; and Dr. Philip D. Applem an, IU professor of English and current president of the Bloomington chapter of the AAUP, were among dignitaries honoring Dr. Fuchs at a retirement dinner Tuesday in Bloomington.

After Dr. Fuchs finishes out the current academic semester, he will have completed his 47th year as a college teacher. "I hope Dr. Fuchs will have an active, if informal role on the law faculty for a long time to come," said Dean Harvey. "In the current stage of our history, when we are undertaking to build a top quality faculty of primarily young people, we can give us solid support and counsel. He is a man of absolute integrity."

Dr. Fuchs himself looked to the future, not the past, in discussing the "national movement" toward greater faculty and student participation in the university decision-making process, and greater participation of the disadvantaged in the political decision-making process. "We are continually seeking," said the former AAUP president, "to enlarge the concept of personal freedom by democratic means. For example, we want the poor to have a voice in what happens to them, and this is new. Also, the faculty is more responsive to what students want."

"Dr. Fuchs believes Indiana University is ahead of most comparable institutions in its response to social change."

"The Faculty Council," he said, "is very strong at IU, and its strength came about internally, not as a result of pressure from the outside."

Dr. Fuchs feels the greatest threat to freedom comes "not from those who would entangle it but from those who would cut it down." He feels the apparent increased willingness of the government to use electronic surveillance (wire tapping) to gather criminal evidence against individuals is "new in the area of repression."

Dr. Fuchs worries that universities fail to adequately communicate to the public the "real nature" of education, the concept of academic freedom. "We of the faculty," he said, "need to draft a definitive statement of academic freedom in terms of one's right to be completely free to express honest views, even if they are different from the majority. We need to do it in language the layman can understand. Academicians and professional people can understand what we mean by academic freedom, but the man in the street often can not."

Dr. Fuchs feels that IU's Presidents (he has known personally every one since William Lowe Bryan, including Dr. Joseph L. Sutton, the current president) have, on the whole, been true to academic freedom, even under pressure.

"I have enormous affection for and pride in Indiana University," he said. "Through such programs as the current Focus: Black America, IU has done much to make knowledge available and effective in society. And that is what a good university is all about."

Dr. Fuchs came to IU in 1945, after 18 years as professor of law at Washington University of St. Louis, his native city. He holds degrees from Washington University, Robert Brookings Graduate School, and Yale University.