

College Names 23-Year-Old President

By ANDREW H. MALCOLM

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Twenty-three-year-old Leon Botstein, who was a student until a year ago, yesterday was named president of Franconia College, a small experimental school in northern New Hampshire, making him what is thought to be the youngest college head in the country.

An honors graduate of the University of Chicago and Harvard, the tousle-haired Mr. Botstein has spent the last year as a special assistant to Joseph Monserrat, president of the New York City Board of Education. The announcement of Mr. Botstein's appointment to the college presidency was made by Mr. Monserrat in his office at 110 Livingston Street.

On Aug. 1, Mr. Botstein will assume his new \$16,000-a-year post at the loosely structured coeducational college of 250 students in the White Mountains near Franconia, N. H. He succeeds Larry Lemmel, 36, who has resigned.

Mr. Botstein said he expected his present occupational deferment to keep him free of the military draft during his work at the nine-year-old college.

'Age Is Irrelevant'

"We're not taking Leon because he's 23," said the Rev. Paul W. Rahmeier, president of Franconia's board of trustees and chaplain at Dartmouth University. "Nor would we avoid him because he's 23. Age here

is irrelevant. What is important is the quality and brilliance of the man."

Born in Zurich, Switzerland, the son of Polish immigrants, who are both physicians, Mr. Botstein grew up in the Bronx and graduated in 1963 from the High School of Music and Art, where he studied violin and viola. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree with special honors from the University of Chicago in 1967 and a master's degree in history from Harvard in 1968.

He has worked on his doctorate at Harvard and lectured at Boston University. He has also received a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship and for the last year had a Sloan Foundation Fellowship to work for Mr. Monserrat. He was married this spring to the former Jill Lundquist.

He Will Also Teach

In Washington, officials at the American Council on Education and the American Association of University Professors said that age records were not kept but that Mr. Botstein was by far the youngest college president they knew of.

Dressed in a conservative dark suit, shirt and tie and gesturing energetically, Mr. Botstein said yesterday he hoped to play down his title and would be on a first-name basis with students, as are all faculty members and administrators at Franconia. He will

also teach history.

Fund raising, a crucial element for the debt-ridden school, which depends heavily on its \$3,800 tuition fee, will be left to the 20 trustees, whose average age is 45.

At Franconia, students screen prospective faculty members, students and administrators (three students were part of the 10-member committee that chose Mr. Botstein). Formal grades are frowned on, and classes are loosely organized to allow students and teachers to follow whatever interests them on any given day.

In its first nine years, the nonsectarian college has granted 20 bachelor of arts and 400 associate of arts degrees. Its faculty now numbers 22, and three more are to be added in the fall.

Mr. Botstein said he anticipated instituting a much more structured, though still innovative, curriculum. "You don't have to be kooky to be experimental," he said. Students will also spend more time out in the community "learning through doing," he added.

As for his future, Mr. Botstein said a college presidency should not be a lifetime career. "One advantage to my age," he said, "is that I'm part of a generation that's not hung up on status." He expects to rebase himself from the bottom somewhere else.



The New York Times
COLLEGE HEAD AT 23:
Leon Botstein after he was named president of Franconia College yesterday.