

9 Professors Resign From Divinity School

NASHVILLE, Tenn., May 31 (AP) — A race issue has virtually stripped the faculty from Vanderbilt University's new million-dollar school of divinity.

Dean J. Robert Nelson, Assistant Dean James D. Sellers and eight other members of the faculty resigned yesterday to Chancellor Harvie J. Branscomb. They protested Vanderbilt's failure to readmit the Rev. James M. Lawson Jr., a dismissed Negro student, to summer classes.

Lawson was dismissed last March for his role in lunch counter sit-in demonstrations here. Several members of the divinity school faculty protested his dismissal at that time and had been working quietly, they said, to gain his readmission this summer.

The divinity school has 16 faculty members. Two of them had resigned earlier. Two of the remaining members have indicated they plan to remain at Vanderbilt.

Fourteen divinity school students said they had quit school and three who graduated Sunday said they were returning their diplomas.

Chancellor Branscomb said he had refused to authorize the return of Lawson unless the matter was referred to the university trustees.

Lawson, meantime, has indicated he may accept an invitation to enter Boston University's School of Divinity.

In Boston, a spokesman said Lawson's application has been airtailed and was expected tomorrow. It would be acted on later.

Dean Nelson, who came here in 1957, said his resignation will be effective Aug. 31. The others said they were willing to remain until the end of the next school year, in June, 1961.

There was no immediate indication when Vanderbilt authorities would act on the resignations.