

# PROFESSIONAL

# R O F I L E S

*Putting a spotlight on 20 distinguished members of  
The University of North Carolina at Pembroke*



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Eric Porterfield

# PROFESSIONAL PROFILES

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*Professional Profiles* was reported and written during fall 2003 and spring 2004 by the students in JRN 305—Feature Writing:

Jeshannah Ayala	Zack May
Natalie Baker	Nicole McCorkle
Lauren Bell	Laura Mininno
Erin Berry	Tina L. Ray
Kelani Coakley	Chris Roberts
Jackie Colonel	Mark Salazar
McKenzie Cook	Mark Schulman
Tiffany Fields	Catharin Shepard
Curtis Henderson	Kiana Taylor
Sonia Jackson	Dr. Anthony Curtis,
Fallon Lord	Professor



*Front: Laura Mininno, Lauren Bell, Kelani Coakley, Fallon Lord; Middle: Kendra Wilson, Erin Berry, Amy Jacobs; Back: Mark Salazar, Dr. Anthony Curtis, Curtis Henderson*

The publication was designed and produced by the students in PRE 345—Computer-Assisted Editing and Publication Design:



Cotina Ames
Lauren Bell
Doris Berrer
Tiffany Fields
Diane Frech
Crystal Holston
Todd Luck
Sara Oswald,
Instructor

*Front: Lauren Bell, Cotina Ames, Crystal Holston; Back: Doris Berrer, Todd Luck, Diane Frech, Sara Oswald*

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# Coach Bolles: Running Is His Life

By Nicole McCorkle

Jeff Bolles is not any ordinary staff member at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke; running since he was 12 years old, he is the man behind all the strength in our athletic system. Originally from New York, Coach Bolles moved to North Carolina to receive his master's degree in exercise and sports science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Bolles had a very healthy undergraduate education as he is an exercise physiologist, fitness director and personal trainer. He helped UNC-Chapel Hill's athletics and was a fitness director with a N.C. fitness club chain.

Coming to Pembroke seemed to be an easy decision for Bolles. It was a "perfect opportunity," Bolles said. It was a brand new position. He was able to take a proactive role in de-

fining the position and establishing an environment that was different from the traditional strength and conditioning model at most universities. More importantly, he was immediately impressed with every aspect of UNC-Pembroke. Bolles was intrigued with the enthusiasm he felt from Golf Coach/Assistant Athletic Director John Haskins, Athletic Director Dan Kenney, Department Chairman Dr. Tommy Thompson and Chancellor Dr. Allen Meadors. Bolles is now in charge of training 14 athletic teams and some staff, faculty and the general student body. Bolles' future plans are to be a vital part of Peach Belt Conference Championship teams, winning NCAA National Championships. "This campus and this area have been my saving grace and I thank God each day for the opportunities provided for me here," Bolles said.

Bolles said the things that matter most to him in his life are his faith, his closest friends, siblings, his mother,

work and his dog Pre. Pre, named after former American distance runner Steve Prefontaine, plays a vital role in his life. He is a pet advocate and would recommend that anyone who can should own a pet. Pre makes his days easier and is always happy to see him walk in the door at home. After a long day of pushing people and running from appointment to appointment, he said it was a "great feeling to know that there is someone just happy to see you, simply because you are you." Pre is a great friend and often his running partner.

Bolles' proudest accomplishment in his life is winning the Yonkers, N.Y., Marathon in 1997, setting a record for the new course and being a Yonkers resident at the same time. He would love to go back to the Yonkers Marathon, win it again and

set a new lowest record. This will be a big challenge for Bolles as the training is vigorous. His training for the Disney Marathon race, which was on Jan. 11, 2004, started in late August. He had not run a competitive marathon since 1997; having knee and calf surgery back to back in 1999 and 2000 put an even bigger challenge on this race. He ran around 75-100 miles per week from October to the end of December, often consisting of double workouts per day. He set his goal to a mild pace at first since it had been such a long time since he had run a marathon, but as his training continued he felt more confident and kept lowering his time. At the end of the race, Bolles ended up finishing 17th overall and 3rd in his age group for the race that started nearly 16,000 runners.

Bolles said, "I have felt blessed by all of the support that the UNCP family has given me in my efforts and in the support of my home community in Lumberton." ■

*'This campus and this area have been my saving grace and I thank God each day for the opportunities provided for me here.'*



# So Full of Music

By Erin Berry

In a small office in the D.F. Lowry building, Dr. Janita Byars relentlessly works. Her office has a warm feeling to it. There's a vertical picture of flowers on her wall. Alongside the floral piece is her desk with stacks of neat papers and books on it. In front of the desk is a Yamaha keyboard, which seemingly has a glow of something that wants to be played. The influence of music is very obvious in the office and, for a small moment in time, it feels like we are in a different world.

Byars, who is an associate professor at UNCP, is in charge of writing and implementing the curriculum for UNCP's graduate program in music education. With a small clarinet dangling from her neck, she is by far not just any musician.

"When I was a child, my dream was to play in an orchestra," says Byars. And with a simple dream, Byars has done miraculous things.

Her professional career began as a solo clarinetist in the American Symphony Orchestra under Maestro

Leopold Stokowski, which has opened doors for her to play in solo recitals at Carnegie Recital Hall in New York and in community venues throughout New York State.

"I am inspired by anybody that cares," says Byars, when she talks about her inspirations. "I care about what I do." Undoubtedly, Byars herself is an inspiration to her students as well as her two sons who have both chosen to follow their mother's footsteps in the music business.

Her degrees come from institutions such as Indiana

University, Pace University and Manhattan School of Music. Along with several awards, including a Performer's Certificate from Indiana, Byars has held many positions as well.

Her career in education brought her to a high school administrative position in

New York State in Carthage and Jamestown. She has held the position of director of the arts for the Rochester City School District. When Byars is not busy performing, designing curriculum and teaching students, she says, "I always try to work ahead." ■



*'When I was a child, my dream was to play in an orchestra.'*

# Coleman Reaches Out to the Community

By Mark Schulman

Dr. Collie Coleman has led a life full of extraordinary accomplishments as a world traveler in the Peace Corps and president of an accredited university. These events have brought him to UNCP as Associate Vice Chancellor for Outreach. Coleman is selflessly dedicated to providing for Robeson County's future through educational services and the area's workforce. Coleman's ultimate goal is for the average citizen in the region to say, "I'm glad UNCP is in the county because I can appreciate what it has done for the academic and economic development of our region."

The people in the community need a man like Coleman who is committed to excellence. His selfless dedication is a direct result of many life lessons. Coleman sees life's experiences as an educational tool to teach that life is a continuing learning experience.

The achievement that pin-points Coleman's potential was his remarkable performance as the president of Allen University in Columbia, S.C. The doomed university was spiraling into inevitable failure of resources and finances before his arrival. The enrollment declined from 1,600 students to 110 students and the university was over \$4 million in debt with no credibility among alumni. The university sought someone who was capable of transforming the university into a success. Their prime candidate was Coleman and they offered him the president position.

The university looked to Coleman to prevent its inevitable demise when he arrived in 1984. "When I got there," Coleman said, "it was only a matter of days before the institution was going close its doors." Coleman brought about a drastic and successful change to Allen University over the following 10 years. The alumni went from raising \$10 thousand a year to \$210,000 each year totaling an impressive \$1.6 million, the enrollment tripled and the institution became accredited. "I credit my suc-

cess to my Peace Corps experience," Coleman said. "The secret is to learn to talk, more importantly, listen to people without judging them."

His learning began as a small town boy with aspirations that were broader than the county line of Nash County. He grew up in the small rural town of Bailey, N.C., graduated high school and earned his undergraduate degree from Shaw University. Coleman was still indecisive about his life's direction during his last year at Shaw in 1966. He talked to a Peace Corps recruiter out of pure curiosity and without any intention of joining.

Coleman continued the recruiting process and was selected to travel to Nigeria to work for two years. Once he made the difficult decision to join the Peace Corps, his father was astonished

at his son's decision. "My father called the principal of the university," Coleman said, "and asked, 'Did Collie take leave of his senses?'"

In Nigeria, he had an enormous responsibility to create a neighborhood atmosphere from large farm settlements owned by local farmers. This task gave the small town farm boy from Nash County a strong moral and ethical foundation for future achievements.

Coleman returned from Nigeria and earned a Ph.D. in higher education at Ohio State University. Years later, the opportunity to be president of Allen University would present itself to Coleman, changing his life forever. Following his illustrious decade at Allen, he was vice president for academic affairs at Shaw University and then served as executive vice president and chief academic officer for Voorhees College.

On Jan. 6, 2003, Coleman began heading the UNCP Outreach Program to rescue the region's struggling economy and lack of educational resources. The program is an extension of the university's resources providing for the county, region, state, national and interna-

*'The secret is to learn to talk, more importantly, listen to people without judging them.'*



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# Jack of Many Trades

By Jeshannah Sonia Ayala

Small in stature and emanating a rather gentle disposition, Dr. William G. Collier conveys a sense of modesty coupled with a peculiar aura of detachment. His unobtrusive nature allows him to be the probing and objective psychologist. Yet when he speaks, Collier articulately displays a man polished in more areas than one and possessing a mind cultivated with knowledge that stretches far beyond his academic focus.

Collier has been teaching since August of 2002 at UNCP where he is an assistant professor with the Department of Psychology and Counseling. He came here mainly because they offered him a long contract.

Collier attended college at Oklahoma Christian University where he majored in psychology. While there he was USAA National Collegiate

Academic Honorary, president of the Psychology Club and editor of Psychology Major Newsletter. In 1992 he received his Bachelor of Science degree and graduated Summa Cum Laude.

He continued his educational pursuits at the University of Central Oklahoma where he was a member of Psi Chi, the Psychology Honor Society. He studied experimental psychology in a terminal master's program but later switched to social cognitive psychology. In the spring of 1999 Collier earned his doctorate degree from Texas Christian University.

Amidst the stacks of papers and books that occupy the office of any college professor, a set of three charming Native American figurines sits along the shelf of his bookcase. Collier says he has been collecting them since he was a young boy when he and his friends would take trips to San Felipe de Nari, a Catholic missionary church outside of his hometown of Albuquerque. The figurines, called cochinas, are native to the Navajo tribes of the southwest.

Before coming to Pembroke, Collier taught at the

University of Texas for three years. Although he spent the better part of his life in the Southwest he says, "I like living in the South." Collier lives in Lumberton. Although he is alone here, he speaks rather fondly about the family that he left behind. Collier is the youngest, with three older sisters. He goes home on holidays and enjoys spending time with his two nephews.

His latest project combines music and psychology. He seeks to answer the question, "What is it about music that is emotional?"

Collier has an impressive track record of publications on the topic and has had several manuscripts published in the academic journal of *Psychomusicology*. His studies so far focus on the basic elements of music. Collier uses Western classical music to examine how pitch and tempo are

able to generate feelings as an auditory stimulus to listeners. Not surprisingly Collier has played the clarinet since elementary school and began playing the tenor sax as an undergraduate.

Aside from his professional objectives, Collier writes poetry. In November 2002, he received the International Poet of Merit Award. The plaque sits regally on the second shelf of his bookcase. He is a distinguished member of the International Society of Poets. He says, "I write about anything: life and feeling, love, pain."

In the following poem called "Elegant Dreaming," Collier poetically describes his love for music and its meaning in his life.

Sometimes it's good to just sit  
listening to elegant strings  
plucked by elegant fingers,  
and a gentle flute  
controlled by beautiful lips.  
Sitting still,  
yet enticed to feel deep in my soul,  
dreams take wing upon the tender notes  
and float into the world.



*'I write about anything: life and feeling, love, pain.'*

# A Librarian's Dedication

By Mark Salazar

While Carl Danis was in college, he joined a work-study program, which gave him the option of working in the school cafeteria or the library. "It was either the library or serving potatoes," Danis said smiling. He embraced the environment and realized that this is what he would pursue after college.

The library seems to be fitting for the calm and collected Danis. He is soft spoken with a peaceful demeanor. His co-worker, Michael Alewine, describes Carl as being "a dedicated professional." Not only is he a reference librarian, but he also works in instructional services teaching classes about the library.

Danis has a love for his work in the library. "If Pembroke wasn't here, I would probably be working at another college library somewhere else," he said. A former member of the United States Air Force, Danis chose to live in North Carolina because

it would allow him to move close to his family. It appears that moving to the Carolinas turned out better than he thought. Not only is he close to his family but Danis was also able to meet his wife here.

What was it that attracted Danis to his wife when the two first met? "It was her loving personality," Danis said. After meeting each other online and talking for a while, the two met up in Lumberton. Cupid seemed to work immediately. Four months later the couple married.

Danis follows a simple schedule and knows how to balance work and play. During the week he is either teaching library courses or behind the research desk eagerly waiting to answer questions. In his free time, Danis enjoys going out with his wife to the movies,

the beach, and church. Danis appears to be very content with his easy-going lifestyle and is living proof that nice guys don't always finish last. ■

*'It was either the library or serving potatoes.'*



# Producing Tomorrow's Leaders Today

By Curtis Henderson

Dr. Eric Dent, a tall, slender athletic-looking man, greets me as I knock on the door of an unknown office. He looks like he could double as a professional athlete, but his heart is in another place, educating the youth of America and aiding them at a critical point in their lives—the growth and development stage. Dent's office is filled with plenty of professional materials such as books, accolades, and papers to grade. All these things are necessary to train up-and-coming professionals growing into their full potential.

Dent came to UNCP in the fall of 2003 and is the dean of the School of Business. He chose UNCP as his next venture in life because “the school is in an entrepreneur life stage,”

a stage that excites him very much. He saw the university at a time that he could envision an even greater place in 10 years.

He received his undergraduate and graduate degrees at Emory University and his MBA and Ph.D. at George Washington. Dent also has held positions at University of Maryland University College.

Dent's biggest goal is to help students realize their full potential and grow from this potential into the person

they want to be. He wants mostly for UNCP students to realize there is an unlimited set of opportunities available. He also stresses that an undergraduate degree is a prerequisite for any successes and opportunities. He says that the biggest problem facing UNCP students is “finding time to make education more than just attending classes.” He would like to see all students take advantage of the speakers' series, networking opportunities, and faculty research opportunities. All these things are

necessary in a growth and development period.

Dr. Dent chose to teach after working in the corporate world. He has held numerous positions in the work force; for instance, he served as Vice President of Operations and General Manager of the Wash-

ington, D.C., office of the Todd Organization, a national executive compensation consulting firm. He feels his calling is to be with people when they are growing and developing. He calls this a “moving stage.” He wants to impact people's thinking.

If he could change UNCP in any way, Dent wishes that the entire community would be more proud of all the wonderful things that are happening at the university. ■



*‘The school is in an entrepreneur life stage.’*

# A Sage on Stage

By Kelani Coakley

As a 14-year-old boy playing with insects, Dr. Wm. Bruce Ezell knew that he wanted to be a professor. He chose biology because it is the “ultimate science” and said that it is the best time in history to be a biologist. “I thought it would be fun to be the sage on the stage,” said Ezell, a professor in the Biology Department here at UNCP.

Ezell said that he loves to share his knowledge while learning from his students. “I would like the students to take the learning process seriously. A good teacher is in the business of putting old heads on young shoulders,” said Ezell. He said he likes to “awaken in students a glimpse of their God-given potential” and wants students to use the opportunities that are around them to their benefit.

In Ezell’s office there are bookshelves lining two of the four walls. On those bookshelves there is a book on every type of insect and science known to man. “I find the host-seeking behavior of the horse and deer flies interesting because of how they locate us for blood,” said Ezell. Horse and deer flies follow the carbon dioxide flowing out of your nose and mouth. That is why those pesky things are always buzzing around your head. If you stop breathing for a minute they keep flying ahead as if you were still walking and then you can see them get disoriented and confused.

Sitting on a bookcase is a unique deer head figurine that Ezell won in South Carolina for “Conservation Educator of the Year.” On Ezell’s desk there is an enormous number of papers scattered around, but in an organized fashion where only he would know where to find something. Behind his desk there is a picture of a raven from a Northwestern Indian tribe. Little yellow sticky notes can be found in awkward places all around his office. If it’s not Bach playing over his computer speakers then it’s Handel or Mozart, as well as many other artists from the

Baroque period. As you can see Dr. Ezell is not an ordinary professor here at UNCP.

Ezell was born in Atlanta, Ga., and “reared” in Ninety Six, S.C. Where is Ninety Six? That is what I thought! Well, Ninety Six is a small town about the size of Pembroke located in the northeast part of South Carolina about 45 miles south of Greenville. He now lives in Maxton with his wife, Nancy.

Just because it seems like Ezell has a thing for small

towns doesn’t mean he hasn’t been out and traveled around. He has been to many places such as Oxford University in the U.K., El Salvador, and Newfoundland in Canada. “I long to travel. I enjoy being in different cultures and talking with scientists from other countries,” Ezell said.

Ezell earned his

undergraduate degree at Lander University in Greenwood, S.C. He was also awarded the M.S and Ph.D. degrees by Clemson University in Clemson, S.C. He has taught at many universities such as Winthrop University, The Citadel, Georgia Southern University, Erskine University, and the University of Maine, and last but definitely not least, Kutztown University in Pennsylvania.

Ezell is also the advisor of Beta Beta Beta (Tri Beta), an organization for biology majors. The organization’s service project is to teach science fair projects to middle school students, mostly females. “Females generally lose interest in the sciences in their middle school years,” he said. This project is done so that more females stay interested in science throughout their middle school years as well as their high school and even college careers.

Unless you are majoring in mass communications you might not know that Dr. Ezell even has a television show with topics ranging from crisis management to “who’s afraid of physics” to salt marsh ecology. He hopes that by having this television show it will illustrate to the general public that UNCP is a “multifaceted regional uni-

*‘A good teacher is in the business of putting old heads on young shoulders.’*



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# Not Your Average Professor

By Fallon Lord

In today's schools, teachers try to find different ways to reach out to the students and get them interested in the class. Professor Jeff Frederick uses famous people to get his point across. When Frederick spoke about different classes of wealth he used this example: "I mean you wouldn't see George Bush Senior hanging out with 50 Cent would you?" These are just a few of the comments that you might hear in History 101 with Jeff Frederick.

Jeff Frederick is not your average professor. If you were to see him walking on campus you might mistake him for a non-traditional student because of the way he dresses. His casual dress of blue jeans and a sweatshirt makes him more approachable for students.

Frederick was born in Southern Indiana. He has a brother and a sister. "My favorite childhood memories are of being with my family during the holidays," says Frederick with a smile. His biggest influence in his life is his wife. Frederick also has three sons, one of whom is in

the second grade. "He is so smart for his age," says Frederick.

Even though he teaches history now, he did not always want to teach. As a matter of fact he graduated with a business degree. "I got tired of school and so I graduated a business major." Frederick went back to school, however, to study a subject that he would not know everything about, and that is when he chose to work on history. "Out of all the time periods to live in this time

is the best to live in," says Frederick. "Things are so much better than they have been in the past."

When asked why he chose to come to UNCP Frederick said, "UNCP has a good history department, and the UNC is a good system to work in."

Some of Frederick's hobbies include playing basketball, reading and writing.

"The most rewarding thing about teaching is making a difference in the lives of young people," says Frederick. ■



*'The most rewarding thing about teaching is making a difference in the lives of young people.'*

# Connections, Comradship, Creativity

By McKenzie Cook

“Sweet Tea Country” is what Dr. Anita Guynn was looking for when she moved back to the south last year from Wisconsin. Originally, from Blacksburg, Va., Guynn refers to herself as a “real bookworm.” For as far back as she can remember, Guynn says that all of her childhood memories involved books.

“As a child I can remember my mom calling me to do chores and I was up in my room reading a book,” said Guynn. Guynn, who is a professor in the English, Theatre and Languages Department, said that she has always loved writing and reading and that is what led her to the profession. “I like to play with my dog, I like to bake, I also like to read and write,” said Guynn, “However, no one will pay me to play with my dog, I am not a famous baker, but someone will pay me to teach reading and writing,” she added with a warm smile.

Guynn received her undergraduate and master’s degrees from Virginia Tech and received her doctorate from the University of South Carolina. Guynn specializes in composition, rhetoric and writing groups. She said that she prefers to work in groups because they “build confidence through working with other students.” Guynn also says writing groups promote “connective thoughts, comradship and creativity.”

Guynn said that through the writing groups she is able to teach “dependence as well as interdependence” through teaching students how to write.

Guynn came to UNCP last year from Wisconsin,

where she lived for five years and was the Director of the Writing Center at Beloit College in Beloit. Guynn said that she likes the atmosphere of UNCP, and is used to the small campus. The college that Guynn taught at was even smaller than UNCP.

As well as teaching, Guynn also leads workshops and seminars on how students write and what are some effective skills to teach students how to write. Guynn said that one of her most memorable successes was when she

attended a poetry seminar at which a former student and published poet was speaking. Guynn said that this made her feel like she achieved a goal, which was to see one of her students succeed.

In her free time, Guynn said that she likes to read and work on her novel. Guynn

started working on her novel five years ago and admits that she can relate with the main character in her book. The novel discusses families and the different situations that they come into. “It is funny and sad, all the characteristics of a good novel,” Guynn said, “It is not along the styles of Hemingway or Faulkner, but I think that I am able to connect with the reader.”

Guynn lives in Laurinburg with her many dogs and cats. Her husband, who is still in Wisconsin, will join her now that they sold their house in Beloit. “I am quite happy for him to join me in Laurinburg,” said Guynn.

Guynn says that she has many plans for the future at UNCP and hopes to work more with the Writing Center on campus as well as other departments. ■

*‘I like to play with my dog, I like to bake, I also like to read and write.’*



# Experience Turns Into Education

By Chris Roberts

A bookshelf covering one entire wall of a new office slowly is filling up with books on public relations and marketing. Two new desks oppose each other. One has a computer and various papers on it. The other reveals an extremely friendly person with a great smile on his face, seated behind it, welcoming anyone to come in.

George Harrison is a new instructor of public relations in the Mass Communications Department at UNCP. With more than 20 years of experience in the field of journalism and public relations, Harrison brings with him a BA degree in English and an MBA in Business Administration.

George Harrison has heard all of the “Beatles” jokes and shares an interesting story of when his children were in elementary school and he attended a PTA dinner. Everyone was seated side by side in a line at a long conference table. When Harrison decided to turn to the man next to him and introduce himself as George Harrison, the man’s eyes widened and a smile crossed his face. The other man then introduced himself as John Lennon and everyone had quite a laugh. At the time, the coincidence was so talked about that the *Fayetteville Observer* used it in a story about people with famous names.

Harrison worked in the Army, as an editor for a newspaper, and in the insurance business before settling with the Hospital Corporation of America (HCA) as Public Relations Director. This is the job that led him to North Carolina and eventually UNCP.

Twelve years after coming to North Carolina and HCA, the hospital where Harrison worked for HCA was sold and his position was eliminated. Harrison had been doing some adjunct teaching for Fayetteville State University and Fayetteville Technical College. He re-discovered a love for teaching when he conducted seminars in Pennsylvania and Ohio through HCA three years before coming to UNCP.

Harrison decided to stay in Fayetteville after HCA. He started doing some consulting and PR work on his own and continued with adjunct teaching. He joined UNCP as an adjunct instructor in the spring of 2003 teaching Organizational Communication. He became a full-time instructor in the fall of 2003.

“One thing led to another, so here I am and I’m loving it,” Harrison said. “I had no idea in the spring that this would turn into a full-time position,” he said. “I enjoy

the academic freedom instructors have on campus. I have freedom to develop my courses to best benefit the students; that’s fun to me,” Harrison replied, when asked what he likes best about UNCP.

Harrison can see from the text what really works in the field and what doesn’t. He

also thinks it’s very important to establish a two-way dialogue in the classroom between the teacher and the students. “A better learning experience is a two-way dialogue,” Harrison said. Another thing about UNCP that Harrison likes is the potential of the Mass Communications department and the PR portion of the department. “I am glad to be a part of that,” Harrison said.

This is a new career for Harrison, and you can see and hear how much he really enjoys this new job and career choice by the gleam in his eyes when he speaks about it. Being able to bring twenty years of experience in the field of public relations, he can offer students a real understanding of what can be expected of them “out there.” “At this point I truly feel like I have the best of both worlds,” Harrison said. He plans to remain in the teaching field now and considers it his “second career calling.”

Harrison’s sons are both in college themselves, at Appalachian State and UNC-Chapel Hill. He spends most of his free time on the weekends preparing for class, but does find time to go out to dinner at least once a week



*‘I have freedom to develop my courses to best benefit the students; that’s fun to me.’*

# The Key Maker

By Tina L. Ray

Dr. Carol Higy, Director of Teaching Fellows, stands tall above the rest. Literally, she is nearly six feet tall. However, her height is not only physical, but indicative of her academic stature as well. Higy is well respected among her peers and students. With more than 25 years of teaching experience, Higy is a seasoned veteran. Yet, she is still intuitive enough to know that learning is, as she says, a “lifelong process.”

On a warm September day, Higy is found in her office, busy at her computer while classical music plays soothingly in the background. She blends into her surroundings because she is in her own space, created by the comfort that comes from a positive self-image.

The Teaching Fellows Program is one that brings to UNCP the best teacher recruits and gives them “on-the-job” training before entering the profession. “The Teaching Fellows Program is a move in the right direction,” Higy says. “For a younger person, that internship or student teaching becomes so important because of the support.”

Teachers have to adhere to the precepts of a state *Standard Course of Study*, the Bible of their profession which dictates the curriculum guidelines of each grade level. Higy insists that her pupils not only are aware of the standards, but that they also rise to meet and implement them. She is astute, genius enough to know that the effectiveness of a great teacher lies in the incorporation of his or her additional role as a student. The knowledge that Higy doles out is like a boomerang, for it goes to her students, then returns to her.

Higy explains that teaching and technology are merging inside the classroom. She points out that some teachers are providing web sites for parents and students. Still others are using PowerPoint in their instruction. Professionally, teachers must obtain at least three continuing education units in technology to meet re-certification cri-

teria. In addition, Higy thinks that all students are capable learners; all students have learning potential. “If we believe all students can learn, we just need to find the right key to unlock it,” Higy says.

Since Higy is the one who unlocks the key of learning for various students, she is a key maker of change in their lives. Furthermore, Higy ascertains that the future direction of education should spotlight international affairs. Educators should be responsible for giving students

a more global focus. “I think the school systems are doing a much better job in terms of multiculturalism. Even our institutions of higher learning have changed. They are more diverse,” Higy says.

Higy’s most memorable student was a young woman she taught who later

became a science teacher and coach. Higy witnessed her progression from pupil to teacher and coach. She glimpsed the “end-product,” though not fully because the woman who is now her colleague continues to make strides in education. Moreover, on being accessible to students, Higy advocates that she establishes a rapport with students, keeps an open door policy and is visible on campus. It’s important for students to know that she is available to them whenever they need her.

Outside of the classroom, fishing and snow skiing are two activities Higy enjoys. Higy says that she is “very much sports oriented” and also enjoys reading. Higy has an aura about her. She makes an indelible imprint which leaves one fascinated by who she is as a person. Her conversation is inviting and enchanting because one feels compelled to want more. She has a “song” for the world, as easy as the chords of classical music which played in the background upon entering her office.

Higy’s key philosophy iterates who she is as a human being and an educator. A plaque which hangs on her wall denotes how some people see a closed door and turn

*‘A rare few see a closed door, try the knob, if it doesn’t open, they find a key, if the key doesn’t fit...they make one.’*



Continued on page 23

# The Art of Teaching

By Kiana Taylor

Scotland County Literacy Council, Committee member of National Day of Prayer, and Vacation Bible School teacher, are just a few of the activities that Deana Johnson is involved in today. Being a wife and a new mother after 13 years of marriage also makes Johnson quite busy.

We know Deana Johnson as an instructor in the English Department, but she specializes in the College Opportunity Program (COP), which is located in the Business Administration Building. "COP is a program designed to make an effective transition from high school to college. The program helps students become successful in their college years," Johnson said.

Johnson grew up in Lumberton, but later moved to Laurinburg, N.C., in 1983. She graduated from Wingate University with a major in Communications and Public Relations. After working in Admissions at St. Andrews Presbyterian College in Laurinburg, Johnson decided to further her education here at UNCP. While studying to get her MA in English Education, she began working on campus in the Admissions office. Then, after graduating, Johnson moved across campus to the English Department in COP.

Johnson loves teaching because "it's different every day. It's the same concept, but there are new readings and new topics that lead us to write," she said. "Teaching is also important to me because it allows relationships with students. Relationship building is essential." "Teaching is rewarding when a student e-mails me, years after they have graduated just to say that they appreciated the concepts and the knowledge that I taught," she said.

Teaching isn't the only motivation for Johnson. "My faith in Christ motivates me to love, grow, and be a better person. The apostle Paul said, 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.' In my own life, I interpret

this to mean not that I can do anything, but rather, that everything I do requires me to be empowered by Christ's strength and wisdom."

One might feel that Johnson has accomplished her goals in life, but she feels differently. "I want to be the best teacher I can be. I am working daily to teach students to be responsible citizens as well as good writers."

In Johnson's life there have been many influential people that have crossed her paths. Sandy Stratil, Director of COP, has been

a mentor to Johnson in the field of COP. "She has mentored me by allowing me to observe her teaching methods as well as her individual conferences with students. Together we discuss assignments, grades, course modifications, and specific teaching strategies. She has always been open to

the new ideas that I have, and she helps me to implement those ideas while offering me the wisdom of more than twenty years of academic experience."

Dr. Pat Valenti, coordinator of the graduate program in English Education, and Dr. Monika Brown, Professor in the English, Theatre, and Language Department, have also had important roles in Johnson's life. "They modeled effective teaching methods and challenged me to be a more inventive writer, creative learner and competent teacher," she said.

When Johnson is not working, you can probably find her writing poems or short articles or baking. According to Mark, her husband, who is a warehouse manager for five-star foods, one of the reasons why he married her was because of her Red Velvet Cake. "Mark loves my Red Velvet Cake because of the rich cream cheese frosting. It is really a compilation of several recipes including one of my grandmother's."

Johnson can also be found at River of Life Ministries, where her parents are the Pastors. Here we'll hear her melodious voice singing, a gift that has been heard



*'Teaching is also important to me because it allows relationships with students. Relationship building is essential.'*

# A Real Work of Art

By Zack May

Teaching is definitely something Dr. Emily Long loves to do. “I can teach just about anything,” she says. This talented educator not only teaches pre-service teachers, but she can teach social studies methods, reading, administration; she even holds student teaching seminars.

Although she was born in New York, Long’s father was a mechanical engineer with itchy feet, which kept her moving around a lot. All the moving she did as a child came in useful

when her husband walked in one day and said, “Let’s move to the beach.” So she hopped on the Internet and started job hunting. Little did she or her husband realize she would find a job so quickly—just about two weeks after she started looking. She is now here

in Pembroke while he is still in Tennessee waiting for their house to sell. “It’s okay that he’s still there. My son is working on his MBA, and my daughter is battling a few health issues, so one of us needs to be there.”

One of the main reasons Long chose UNCP was because of its clear commitment to purpose. Once she got here it was the gentle ways of the people that really made her want to stay, she said. “Everyone here is so nice,” she said. “This school seems really committed to success. As a faculty member, there is a clear sense of purpose.” The beach being close by didn’t hurt, either.

After receiving her bachelor’s degree at the University of Maryland at College Park, Long went on to get her master’s at the University of Virginia. From there she went to the big, little city of Manhattan to get her doctorate. No, not the Big Apple, but Manhattan, Kansas at good old Kansas State University.

In her spare time Long loves to cross stitch. But it’s not a constant thing. Her hobbies change with the blowing of the wind. “One week it may be cross stitching, the

next cake baking. But I always seem to go back to stitching once I am done experimenting,” she said.

She’s very outgoing and very “Ka Pow, here I am.” Students who have had Dr. Long rave on how interesting her classes are. “She really knows how to keep

everyone’s attention,” says former student Tiffany Turner. “The basket of candy in her office doesn’t hurt either. Gives a good reason to stop by and see her on her office hours,” she said. Long describes her taste in music as eclectic. It ranges from Celtic tunes to bluegrass to even a little Kenny G, “even though I don’t always admit to it,” she said. Her favorite movie of all time is *Casablanca*. What she likes most about it is how it was a low budget film, but turned into a timeless treasure. This is probably what you could say she does everyday. Takes something simple and inspires it to become a real work of art. ■

*‘This school seems really committed to success. As a faculty member, there is a clear sense of purpose.’*



# Education At Its Best

By Lauren Bell

Rachel McBroom's love for science and teaching has her only steps away from a Ph.D. in science education. She is a professor in the Biology Department, but she is also working diligently as a student at NC State University earning her Ph.D. That's where she also earned her master's in science education. McBroom travels several days a week up to Raleigh to take classes as well as spending the remaining days of the week here at UNCP teaching and working as the Science Education Club advisor.

She is originally from Columbus County where she attended Southeastern Community College studying and working as a tutor. During her experience working with other students as a tutor, McBroom began to realize that education was the right field for her. "Through my required courses I continued to work with students and realized that I enjoyed helping others to better understand science and also really enjoy chemistry," McBroom said.

She soon transferred to UNCP where she began her major in science education. The summer before her senior year, she was offered an interesting job as a chemist in the Quality Assurance Lab of Cheseborough Ponds in Raeford. Her job was to write a manual for all of the protocols, which usually consisted of shampoos, body

wash and hairspray. "This experience is what led me to realize that teaching was definitely the best career for me, as it provides daily challenges. In teaching, you find a new challenge every single day," explained McBroom.

During her student teaching at South View High School, she met her husband Doug, who was a math teacher. Doug is a former military officer and currently works as an assistant principal.

As a 1997 UNCP graduate, she enjoys teaching at a smaller school because of the small feel and the one-on-one that students are able to have with their professors.

Although the past few years have been busy, she enjoys reading John Grisham's books and gardening. She grows anything from lilies, lantana

and hydrangeas to hibiscus, mums and pansies. She has two bulldogs, Bailey and Bridgette, that for the current time are her only "children." She also has a bulldog calendar and statues that she had in her office.

Most weekends she spends reading research articles in chemistry and science education journals or working on her dissertation. Her dissertation involves how to use technology to teach science. She also supervises student teachers in workshops in surrounding counties. ■



*'In teaching, you find a new challenge every single day.'*

# Leading the Way

By Sonia Jackson

The afternoon sunlight sifts through the windows of the office as Dr. David H. Nikkel, 51, sits comfortably in his chair behind his desk. Behind him three small figurines stand proudly on a steel drawer. To his right, two shelves filled with books on teaching resources for his classes line the wall.

Nikkel has always loved theology, philosophy and religion and was most happy to find an open position here at the University of North Carolina Pembroke when he came here last July. His enthusiasm shows in the brightness of his eyes and the bounce of his steps when he interacts with his students. Nikkel enjoys having good discussions with his students because it motivates both their intellect and his.

Though Nikkel loves to teach, his second love is to minister. Currently, he is not ministering at any churches, but he is involved with a program at UNCP called “Tomorrow’s Religious Leaders.” This is a program where students interested in ministering will be able to learn more about it here; there will be a workshop, planning for students in ministry, and even practice worship services.

The group meets every third Wednesday in the Education Building. Nikkel hopes the program will continue

to grow and draw interest from those interested in pursuing ministry. “It’s worth exploring; ministry is a way to help people, help people through issues of life,” Nikkel said concerning people interested in ministry.

Still, Nikkel needs downtime occasionally and during those times when he relaxes he is fond of listening to the native music of Louisiana, which includes Cajun and zydeco, a blend of Cajun and black blues. Nikkel also delights in going to the beach with his wife, Lorena, and

two daughters, Allison and Abigail.

Nikkel is from Youngstown, Ohio. He moved there at the age of 13 from Pennsylvania. Nikkel spent 27 years in Ohio with a brief interlude in Nebraska where he was a part-time professor and full-time faculty member at

*‘It’s worth exploring, ministry is a way to help people; help people through issues of life.’*



Hastings College.

Nikkel’s love for teaching would send him back to Ohio and later to North Carolina to the university. He enjoys the people in Pembroke, considers it a very helpful community, and he also delights in teaching here.

His experience at the university has “been really good,” he says with a warm smile on his face. Nikkel certainly brightens the campus with his presence and, with the “Tomorrow’s Religious Leaders” program, eagerly guides the way for those who wish to pursue ministry. ■

# A Dedication to Education

By Tiffeny Fields

It is not Cynthia W. Sumpter's day to be in class—all of her classes are on Tuesday and Thursday—but she is in her office working at her computer. Although it may look sparse, this math professor's lack of adornment in her office is really a testament of commitment to her work and students.

She works in her new office in the temporary modules while the science building is being renovated this year. And she simply has not had the time to completely transfer all the contents of her old office to her new one. She has been busy with teaching, tutoring and just being a role model for others.

With a husband and five kids, Sumpter leads a very busy life. Her two oldest daughters are out of the nest, but she still has an 11, 12 and 13-year-old to raise in addition to taking care of her grandmother and great aunt.

Her two greatest inspirations have been her late pastor and her grandmother. Her pastor always encouraged her and the other children at church to make something out of themselves, and her grandmother, whom she was raised by, used to tell her to get an education. "Once you get it in your head, no one can take it away from you," her grandmother always said. And her grandmother also used to tell Sumpter that she had "just asked the \$65,000 question," whenever she asked her anything. So, Sumpter told her grandmother that she was going to make \$65,000 one day, and off to school she went, never looking back.

Sumpter graduated from the University of North Carolina at Pembroke, when it was still called Pembroke State University, with a math degree in 1984, and she received her master's degree from Fayetteville State University in 2001, allowing her to teach at the college level. Her next big goal is to earn her Ph.D. in math, possibly BioStatistics.

"Math was the only thing I could do well in high school," Sumpter said. "That's the only thing that made sense." After graduating from Pembroke State, she spent several years teaching high school math at the Laurinburg Institute and Red Springs, Hoke and EE Smith High Schools.

At the end of each school year she discovered that she had been teaching learning disabled students. She's taught a hearing impaired student, as well as students with dyslexia and other disabilities that could pose a challenge to anyone trying to learn math.

Working with numbers can be challenging, but Sumpter finds that these students are really open-minded and can be very bright. She still has students who are learning disabled, as

well as nontraditional older students, and she finds that these are the students who work the hardest and do the best. "I have proven to myself that anyone can learn math," Sumpter said.

Now her sights are set toward the future. She wants to learn sign language and Spanish in order to communicate and teach those with a language barrier, as well as starting televised math tutoring sessions.

As far as earning her doctorate degree is concerned, Sumpter is considering several schools and is excited about being back in the classroom as a student again. She's even been called a "professional student" by a friend.

But for now she's content to be in front of the class as the instructor, and she will continue to believe and tell her students that "anyone can do math."

Maybe she'll find time to move her stuff over to her new office and unpack someday, when she's not teaching, tutoring or just being a mom. ■



*'I have proven to myself that anyone can learn math.'*

# Quality vs. Quantity

By Natalie Baker

If you have ever wanted a job in theater, where you come in contact with performers and theater stars but are not quite disciplined enough to be on center stage, then you could work with David Thaggard, Assistant Executive Director of Booking and Operations at the Givens Performing Arts Center.

When he was 16, he needed a job, like most 16-year-olds. He was hired at Leviners Florist as a delivery boy. He was surrounded by creative people at the flower shop, and that creativity began to rub off on him and his talents for art and design blossomed. He worked his way up from delivery boy to designing the floral arrangements and acted as a wedding planner.

Thaggard loved his job so much at the flower shop that he continued to work there for 18 years, even after graduating from UNCP with a BA in Arts Administration and starting his first job at GPAC as Assistant Box Office Manager in 1990. "Every day was different. One morning I would be planning a wedding and that afternoon I would be doing funeral arrangements," he said.

Thaggard also participates in designing, acting, and directing for Robeson Little Theater, Carolina Civic Center, and UNCP. He has done makeup and costume design, acting, and directing for plays such as *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *The Best Little Whore House in Texas*.

"I think you have to want to do—you have to believe in—what you do. It has to be an extreme challenge, and you have to surround yourself with creative people," he said about how he has been motivated to be a director, actor, and designer. About taking his many talents to New York and California where talented people flourish in theater arts, he said, "I could never leave my family

and close friends and I like being able to know the people I see on the street."

Thaggard was promoted from Assistant Box Office Manager to the Assistant Executive Director of Booking and Operations in 1994. His responsibilities include all the administration, development and marketing for GPAC.

Thaggard's job is far from being a normal administration job. Thaggard works with Broadway performers such as Lorna Luft, Judy Garland's daughter, and Mary

Wilson, a former Supreme. "Most of them are extremely nice and down to earth," Thaggard said about his impressions of the performers he has met.

Thaggard chooses the shows that will come to GPAC a year in advance. Thaggard has the pleasure of traveling to New York City,

to attend workshops, shows, and seminars. He chooses what shows will best work out for GPAC. "I would rather have quality shows here instead of a whole bunch of shows that some will attend and some will not. I enjoy finding performances where audiences will have a wonderful experience and they will take that experience home," he said on quality versus quantity.

On a show day at GPAC, Thaggard is up at the crack of dawn and leaves when the last person has left the building. Thaggard meets the show companies as they arrive and tries to fully accommodate their needs, run errands if something needs to be done before the show, makes sure the caterers are in place and ready for the dinner theaters, makes sure the performers are picked up on time from the airport, and ultimately makes sure everything is organized. His typical day is planning next season, plugging in events on the calendar, and managing the box office. "I love my job here, every day is different and that keeps me from being bored or burnt out," Thaggard said. ■

*'I enjoy finding performances where audiences will have a wonderful experience and they will take that experience home.'*



# Overcoming the Impossible

By Catharin Shepard

“We called it a ‘helitack’... I was the fire boss on my team. We had to get to the forest fire fast, before it spread,” Dr. Jay Vest recalled. “We didn’t just do fire fighting, we also rescued stranded hikers, canoeists and climbers. One time, a man had fallen while he was climbing and was stuck on a cliff that was too small for the helicopter to land on. So the pilot got as close to the mountain face as he could and set the skids down on the cliff. I had to climb out on the skids and get the injured man on a backboard. Then, with the guy inside the helicopter pulling and me pushing, we managed to get him in.”

In a time when many of his peers were off fighting in Vietnam, Vest was fighting a war on a different front. “It was very exciting, very challenging,” said the one-time smoke jumper. “You often had to test yourself, the way a warrior would go on a test.”

Vest, associate professor in UNCP’s Department of American Indian Studies and a Native American himself, was schooled from an early age in the oral tradition of his family. “For seven years or so, my grandparents were my daycare,” he said. “Every weekday was spent with them.” Vest’s grandparents would tell him narratives, both those passed down from their ancestors and stories from their own lives.

“My grandfather would tell me about the time he was coming back from a barn dance, a distance of about 20 or 30 miles. He would tell me how he stopped at a spring and encountered a panther. All along the way, he would encounter things and have to deal with them,” Vest said. “It involved a lot of dramatic presentation.”

Vest’s grandparents could only read at a third grade level. His father, a World War II veteran, was the first in his family to earn a high school degree. The difference between formal public schooling and the school of oral tradition used by many Native American families would

cause problems for Vest later in life.

“I’ll never forget my first day of school,” said Vest. “It was such a traumatic experience! A little boy in my class began climbing a support pole in the center of the room. He was clutched on it like a little monkey. The teacher grabbed a ruler and started whacking him with it.” His grandparents’ approach to discipline was to correct misbehavior and teach lessons through storytelling, not corporal punishment.

As a result of continued friction with the public school system, Vest dropped out of high school and moved to the state of Washington, where he worked as a fire fighter, took long walks in the woods and read Henry David Thoreau. “It was hard to find my place in the world,” Vest said.

However, partly because of his mother’s influence—she was a teacher and knew the value of education—and partly because of his own intellectual curiosity, Vest eventually began attending community college. After much work, he managed to earn his two-year technical degree. He then transferred to Washington State and undertook what was to become yet another struggle.

Vest knew that he wanted to pursue a degree that included philosophy, forestry and Native American cultural tradition and religion, but at the time, no such program existed. So he “designed his own path.” At the conclusion of his studies, undertaken at universities across the country, Vest had earned enough credits to have a whopping three Ph.D.s, even though all of that work only gained him one.

Vest came to UNCP because of its American Indian Studies program as well as the school’s proximity to his home state of Virginia. He often travels to different sites throughout Virginia for research purposes.

“I like to stay involved with the latest information and publications,” said Vest, a much-published author



*‘What I’m trying to show here when I’m teaching is the intellectual jujitsu behind these stories.’*

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# Where Everybody Knows Your Name

By Laura Mininno

Everyone knows her, or at least they should. Take a look at any class syllabus and there you'll find Mary Helen Walker, director of Disability Support Services. Hired in July of 2000 to develop the DSS office, which no one had previously done, the Hope Mills, N.C., native is not just a name, but witty, well traveled and a true philanthropist.

Walker lived in Cumberland County until the age of 19, then boasts traveling to many cities, including Virginia Beach, Annapolis and Ft. Lauderdale, as well as several countries in Europe.

"I first went to Germany because my husband worked for a company that contracted to the Army for battle simulations. He was sent there prior to Desert Storm and I followed six months later." During their stay in Germany, the Walkers lived in the small, 38-home town of St. Catherine, where they were the only Americans.

"I learned German from my neighbors and through the University of Maryland, which taught classes on army bases over there," Walker said of her journey, adding that she attended classes up to three hours away to continue her college education, ending up with about 45 semester hours from the University of Maryland.

"Germany was awesome," Walker proclaims, explaining some of the culture differences between Germany and the United States. "Everything closed at noon on Saturday and didn't open again 'til Monday morning," Walker explains. Going on, she says that this extended weekend of sorts is designated for family, festivals, rest and volksmarches, which are 10-kilometer organized walks through woods, fields and villages followed by a "mini fest" with German-American camaraderie, music and food.

With recycling being mandatory in Germany, and six different containers for garbage, Walker admits it was a

lifestyle difficult to get used to, but once she did, she didn't want to leave.

Although the way of life is vastly different, Walker does have one thing in common with Europeans, and that is Bruce Springsteen. "Okay, Bruce!" Walker declares enthusiastically, "I've been to see him many times since 1978. He's a poet who's known for his dynamic, live shows. I went with a friend the first time and have been hooked ever since." According to the Springsteen fan,

"Europeans enjoy his music very much; they stand and sing the entire concert."

Walker feels sorry for anyone who doesn't like Springsteen, but is married to a fan. Traveling and tickets can get quite expensive.

"This summer, a friend and I went to Giants Stadium in

New Jersey and saw him three times in one week. We also went to the Jersey shore to the Stone Pony where he and Bon Jovi started out. On his last tour, I saw him eight different times," Walker gushes, proving her point.

Not just a fan of the music, she sees the poetic beauty in the lyrics, urging others to "read some of them and see how poetic he can be." Through the concerts, traveling hours on end to see him, and "chasing" him around, literally, the world, Walker is dubbed a super-fan, proclaiming, "What can I say? Bruce is the boss!"

Aside from a life full of travel and adventure, Walker is very serious about and dedicated to her career. Walker is a firm believer that every person deserves an opportunity for higher education, and has done a wonderful job of making sure the DSS, which serves about 500 students, runs smoothly.

Her experience and training speaks for itself, not to mention her friendly personality and caring nature, which makes Walker a very smart choice for UNCP, and beneficial in so many ways to the students who look to her for assistance and guidance.

*'Do what you love,  
and the rest will come.'*



# A Complex Love

By Jackie Colonel

Some people love their job. But people like Dr. Guo Wei also respect it. “It’s about the choice for profession. Someone must do this,” Wei said. Wei has been at UNCP for almost five years as an associate professor. On the exterior, he seems to be a quite simple man with his bare office and a blue button-down shirt and light-colored khakis. But once you get to know him, it is easy to see that his love for teaching is extremely complex.

He believes that teaching statistics and computer science is what he should be doing, and his background completely reflects his love for math and teaching.

Wei received his first math degree from 1979-1981 at the Northwestern University of China, then went on to teach at the College of Geology in China. But Wei felt that he needed more, so he returned to the NWUC to receive his master’s degree in math by 1985.

After returning to the College of Geology as a professor until 1993, Wei realized that he wanted to come to America for advanced degree opportunities. He enrolled at the University of Texas to have his first experience with statistics and achieve his master’s in statistics. From 1995-1999, he taught at New Mexico University, while finishing his doctorate in statistics and master’s in computer science.

It is obvious that Wei has had a variety of intellectual learning experiences while gaining his education. He feels that his students should be entitled to the broadest education possible. He has been in the process of writing a proposal to the University for major funding to expand computer science and other topics programs so that students don’t have to go so far from campus to get the field experience that they need. This is how much he cares for his students and their education. He just looks at it as a

way to help them learn. At the same time, this helps with the students’ financial problems that they are already facing.

Wei’s passion for math falls right into his passion for teaching. “If you like science, you start with mathematics. You can expand to any sci-

ence area. I know how to learn, so I know how to teach students how to learn. It’s important work,” he said. That important work is the very reason that Wei enjoys teaching at UNCP. “The students here are willing to learn,” Wei said.

He added that teaching at a smaller university gives him the opportunity to interact very closely with his students, and one of his greatest achievements is having them thank him for what he has done for them when they graduate. ■



*‘I know how to learn, so I know how to teach students how to learn. It’s important work.’*

tional community. UNCP plays a very important role in meeting the needs of the people by connecting education and the workforce development. “The purpose of Outreach is exactly its inverse name—*Reach out*,” Coleman said.

Coleman’s educational plan is to discover a way for qualified regional high school graduates to be accepted to UNCP without any question. He also addresses the county’s drop out rate as a problem and teaches students to understand the value of gratification through higher education, not only in the present, but in the future, also.

The university’s tradition for being one of the most diverse in the system not only in ethnicity, but also in age, economic class and nationality is crucial to Coleman’s educational philosophy. “We can be the model of university diversity and see it as one of our greatest strengths,” Coleman said.

He is committed, also, to the economic development of the region. When Coleman arrived in Pembroke, he attended community functions and listened to what the people were saying. He realized the community looks to UNCP for support in addressing the region’s vast economic decay. “They constantly talked about jobs, jobs, jobs,” Coleman said.

Coleman and his Outreach program train people to be qualified for jobs at companies that want to locate to Robeson County. His desire to bring in big business opportunities is a primary aspect behind the mission of his program. His plan to certify the people for jobs in the local community is to ensure that when a major company *does* choose to build a plant in the county then the people are qualified to work there. Now, his goal he consistently strives to accomplish is “for the name of UNCP to be on the lips of people in major cities all over the world when they discuss higher education.” ■

In the world they sail above and around beauty,  
gentle caresses on a woman’s cheek,  
dew drops on a rose,  
tears in a waterfall.  
Dreams find beauty,  
or is it beauty finds dreams?

Some of Collier’s other interests include history and science fiction. He adamantly feels that teaching is rewarding, although he admits that there are times when it’s difficult to reach the students. He says, “Sometimes it’s a challenge, but the challenge is what makes it interesting.”

With the mind of a scholar and the heart of a poet Collier is a depiction of the contemporary Renaissance man. He has established himself as a true master in his field. Yet, as he seeks to explore the mysteries of the human mind he has also immersed his life in a constant quest to acquaint himself with disciplines that evoke his artistic spirit. When speaking of his life as a college professor, Collier assert, “It’s an interesting life to continually learn yourself.” ■

versity with a plethora of bright and dedicated faculty who graduated from some of the best graduate schools in the country.”

When Ezell is not busy with school work or his television show he enjoys other hobbies such as reading. He loves reading just about anything that deals with environmental biology, entomology, and animal behavior. “I am interested in conservation biology and the preservation of endangered species. I am also interested in history and promoting inter-religious understandings,” he said. Dr. Ezell’s students might not realize how diverse this individual is. He is very intelligent and has an answer for everything.

Some of Ezell’s other hobbies include language, attending Scottish heritage events, preservation of historic cemeteries, and he is also working for the National Park Service. While working at the National Park Service, he conducted research for the staff and personnel of the Ninety Six historic site. This mainly involved research of old diaries and letters that described the site in the 18th and 19th centuries. “A human is a drop of reason in a sea of motion,” said Ezell. ■

with his wife. When he does have free time away from work, Harrison enjoys tennis, backpacking, and other outdoor activities. He tries to get in at least one game of tennis in a week, when he can find a partner. ■

away; others see it and try a knob that doesn’t open it, so they turn away; others see a closed door, try the knob and use a key that doesn’t fit, so they turn away.

“A rare few see a closed door, try the knob, if it doesn’t open, they find a key, if the key doesn’t fit... they make one.” Dr. Carol Higy is a key maker. She is a master key maker who unlocks the door for lifelong learners. ■

**JOHNSON**

Continued from page 14

by others since she was five. “I enjoy singing because it offers me another outlet for creative expression and to use the ability God has given me to honor him. Really, it frees my soul. When I sing, I forget the worries over work, lessons, papers, and the other pressures of the day. I just become one with the music, its meaning, melody and my Creator.” ■

**VEST**

Continued from page 20

himself. Many of his writings have made it into various publications, and more are in the works. “I think I owe it to my students to stay up to date. Otherwise, how can I expect them to be at their best? If I’m a better scholar, then my students will be,” he said.

Vest said that he enjoys teaching and connecting with his students. His teaching philosophy is, unsurprisingly, much like that held by his grandparents and imparts a lesson that, judging from the story of his life, he has used many times over.

“What I’m trying to show here when I’m teaching is the intellectual jujitsu behind these stories,” he said. “You take a bad situation and flip it over. You take an impossible situation and overcome it.” ■

**WALKER**

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Walker was the Director of Counseling at St. Andrews in Laurinburg, NC where she was very involved with severely disabled students during their college transition.

Along with her time at the University of Maryland’s European Division, Walker attended Fayetteville Technical Community College and UNCP. “I graduated magna cum laude from UNCP with a BS in Psychology in 1994 and earned a MA in Counseling from UNCP in 1997.”

At the tender age of 34, Walker quit a successful career in business to earn a degree that she says would “al-

low me to give back to the world in a different and meaningful way. I hope I have achieved that at St. Andrews and, now, here at UNCP.”

Pondering the most rewarding aspect of her job, Walker tilts her head to one side and looks up with pride in her eyes, “When I see disabled students go across the stage, and knowing that they’ve made it through.”

Indeed Walker is passionate about all things in her life, from music and travel to her career. This behind-the-scenes woman has no doubt made a great impact on many lives.

Offering a tried-and-true bit of advice on life, Walker testifies, “Do what you love, and the rest will come.” ■

**PROVOST’S NOTE**

In this 23rd edition of *Professional Profiles*, we are pleased to feature twenty members of the UNCP family. These individuals from across the University campus all are dedicated to ensuring student success and represent the best this University has to offer.

*Professional Profiles* provides an opportunity to highlight the quality of faculty and staff that is the hallmark of The University of North Carolina at Pembroke’s personal approach to education. *Profiles* allows us a window into the professional activities of our colleagues. We learn of their career aspirations as well as their personal goals and ambitions.

After reviewing these Profiles, I have a deeper knowledge of and have a better appreciation for these outstanding members of the UNCP family. I’m sure you will also find this edition enlightening and entertaining.

Special thanks and appreciation are given to Dr. Anthony Curtis and Ms. Sara Oswald and their students who have worked so diligently to produce this publication. ■

