THE DAILY CLIPS

January 12, 2011

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Editorial: East Carolina looks to new ally
Wednesday, January 12, 2011

The University of North Carolina Board of Governors' 2005 appointment of Erskine Bowles as system president won mixed reviews from the East Carolina University faithful. While his experience and qualification were unquestioned, some feared his ties to Chapel Hill would cause his administration to be singular in its focus on the University of North Carolina flagship school at the expense of all else.

Those concerns were proven to be without merit as Bowles tirelessly advocated on behalf East Carolina until his retirement at the end of 2010. The university should hope to be as fortunate under the leadership of Thomas W. Ross, who took the helm of the UNC system on Jan. 1 seeking to build on Bowles' success and navigate the turmoil of the darkest budget year in memory.

There were doubts about Bowles when he was selected by the UNC board to run the system in October 2005. Less than a year earlier, he was defeated in a bid for U.S. Senate, his second, and some whispered that the appointment was little more than a political award for his career in public service. Some worried that his experience in Washington, as a chief of staff to President Bill Clinton, would lead to back-room deals rather than the openness the state needs. And there were, of course, the ties to UNC that gave some East Carolina supporters pause.

Those all proved groundless. In his time as UNC president, Bowles provided the type of long-term vision and leadership needed for a 17-campus university system. He focused on getting new programs and ample resources beyond UNC Chapel Hill and N.C. State to places like Greenville, Asheville and Charlotte. He backed the School of Dentistry and fought for funding during difficult budget years.

His retirement at the end of 2010 meant the loss of an ally for East Carolina. But that should not mean the university is without a friend at the top.
Time will tell how Ross, who began work on Jan. 1, operates in that role. His 17-year career on the N.C. Superior Court bench should make him a reasoned voice in that post and his time as executive director of the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation suggests he knows how important schools like East Carolina are to improving the lives of residents in North Carolina's rural corners.

The UNC system will have a tough battle for funding next year, as will all state agencies. Ross must meet that challenge as his predecessor did.
Dr. Mark M. Brinson, 67, passed away unexpectedly on Monday, 3 January 2011. Many wetland and coastal ecologists lost a friend that day. We also lost a thoughtful, hardworking and creative wetland ecologist, who not only advanced wetland science but also provided important links between science and environmental management. Mark started as an assistant professor at East Carolina University (ECU) in 1973, after completing his doctoral degree from the University of Florida. He achieved the University honors of both Board of Trustees Lifetime Achievement Award and Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Professorship. Mark retired in September with the title of Distinguished Research Professor and remained active in research and service.

Many of us have a feeling of admiration for the naturalist who can walk through a habitat and identify the various species, give information on their adaptive physiology and anatomy, and discuss co-dependence and co-evolution with other species. Mark could do
this, especially in coastal and riparian wetlands; but he also was a naturalist of ecosystems. He had a unique perspective on the interrelationships between their physical, chemical and biological components. He could intuit the manner in which materials could be processed and relate these processes to hydrology. This perspective guided his research, teaching and contributions to environmental management. It was central to his organizing principles of how wetlands function.

Mark’s graduate students recited a mantra of “characterize and classify.” This was at the heart of many of their theses and the basis for his very significant contributions to the Hydrogeomorphic Classification of wetlands (HGM). HGM in turn associates with functional assessment and mitigation procedures based on functional loss. This approach greatly changed the environmental management of wetlands within the USA and beyond. Mark spent much of the past two decades leading efforts in the use of HGM and functional assessment.

But Mark felt that the most important contribution of HGM was the use of reference. He posited that for wetland mitigation one needs to know the variability of both minimally impacted and impacted ecosystems within a regional hydrogeomorphic class. Restoration decisions can then be based on differences between conditions within this context. His interest in the use of reference extended beyond wetland management, however, to other areas—from landscape management to scoring faculty productivity for annual raises. Evaluating variability of ecosystems generally involves considerable effort, and Mark never backed down from expending the necessary effort. He was known by some as “mad dog” for his tenacity. As an example, few others would have established a 1600 m transect through a Juncus roemerianus marsh to be sampled weekly for over 3 years. Mark did! As most older academic ecologists know, the more senior you are, the less time you have to be in the field. Mark cherished his time in the field and managed to leave the computer and desk as often as he could. Sample collection on a project was as likely to be done by him as any student or colleague. He was a model of how one can preserve that enthusiasm for nature that is so easily lost with inside obligations.

Mark’s legacy can be found in various arenas. He taught numerous courses and workshops on wetlands and ecosystem ecology at ECU, nationally and internationally. He co-authored and edited publications on wetlands with a who’s who of wetland ecology. Further, he served as a technical consultant to the US Environmental Protection Agency, the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Smithsonian Institute. He also was elected President of the Society of Wetland Scientists and served on its Board of Directors for several years. Mark’s national honors included the National Wetlands Award for Science Research (co-sponsored by the Environmental Law Institute and the Environmental Protection Agency) and Fellow of the Society of Wetland Scientists. Also, he used a Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Award at the University of Buenos Aires to aid in the development of the environmental management of wetlands within Argentina.

Mark is survived by his wife of 40 years, Leslie Brinson, of Greenville, NC; his son, Peter Brinson and wife, Suzanne; and his granddaughter, Sylvie, all of Pasadena, CA.
In lieu of flowers, please send a contribution toward scholarships for ECU Biology students. Checks should be made out to “ECU Foundation, Inc., Biology Scholarship Fund” and include “In memory of Mark Brinson” on the memo line. Please send to Tammy Garris, ECU Director of Gift Records, Greenville Centre, 2200 S. Charles Blvd., Greenville, NC 27858.

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East Carolina football coach Ruffin McNeill, center, walks on to the field at Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium during his first game as head coach with strength and conditioning coach Mike Golden, left, and other members of his coaching staff in Greenville, N.C. on Sunday, September 4, 2010. (Rhett Butler/The Daily Reflector/AP)

ECU's Golden leaves for USF
By Nathan Summers
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Each day during the football season, Mike Golden strides authoritatively onto the practice field, usually in the latter stages of the workout and always wearing a black T-shirt with a slogan on the back, something like, “We put the laughter in manslaughter.”

Flanked by an equally imposing posse of henchmen in the same shirts, it seems only natural to give him a wide berth. When he raises his voice, no one within a half mile of the football field has any choice but to listen to him.

And when it comes to whipping football players into shape, nobody does it quite like Golden. But there is a slightly softer side to the husband and father of five, beyond his proclivity for delivering tough love to athletes.

After six seasons as the director of strength and conditioning with East Carolina's sports programs, in which he helped to push Pirate football to new heights, the Golden age is over.

He is following friend, long-time colleague and former ECU head football coach Skip Holtz to South Florida, creating a difficult vacancy to fill. Much like the choice of Holtz to head for the Tampa school a year ago, Golden said his choice was rooted in family.
“There is familiarity (with Holtz), and that's good, but it really was one of the hardest
decisions that I've made,” said Golden, who was unveiled as USF's new director of
strength in an announcement Tuesday. “Mostly, I was outvoted 6-1 by my wife and my
kids. I really wanted to stay, but her entire family is 45 minutes away (from Tampa).”

The 2010 football season was the challenge of a career for Golden, who was charged with
resetting the Pirates' entire training regimen in order to adapt to the ideals of first-year
coach Ruffin McNeill.

To say the least, the two made memorable impressions on one another in their 12 months
together.

“The strength and conditioning guys are around your team more than anyone else,” said
McNeill, 6-7 in his first season with the Pirates. “I'm sure the main reason why Skip
came after Mike is that Mike and his staff were very important in their championship
runs.”

McNeill said Golden did a great job of adjusting to the often frantically up-tempo offense
of coordinator Lincoln Riley, but also noted that he adopted some of Golden's training
ideals.

“It was a total different philosophy that they brought in, in terms of conditioning and
what they wanted the kids to be able to do,” Golden said of McNeill. “So me and my staff
had to step outside of our comfort zone to get the result they wanted. It made us look at
things from a different direction.”

As tough as the past year might have been, nothing could likely trump the feat of Golden
and his staff back in 2005.
When he came to ECU after Holtz's hire, Golden not only had to retool an entire team
physically, but also had to help program a winning mentality into the players.

“They were at square one. I will never forget that first day,” Golden said of his first time
in front of the ECU team, saying he and the coaching staff conducted a few simple warm-
up exercises and could not believe the results. “We went out there and did that, and they
thought that was the workout. They were tired, guys were throwing up.
“It was a shock to me. You couldn't tell a walk-on from a scholarship player. It was a
challenge, but I'd rather be challenged than keep the status quo.”

Golden might live up to a football stereotype with his demeanor on the field and in the
weight room.
But both he and McNeill agree there is a proper way to motivate through tough love, and
that is to mix in a measure of fairness.
“IThink love is the key,” Golden said. “You can get on a kid a little harder when the
players trust you and know that you have their best interest in mind.”

Contact Nathan Summers at nsummers@reflector.com or (252)329-9595.
ECU student Vanessa Buonopane works to scrap the ice from the rear window of her car as she prepares to head out to the post office from her house in Hyde Park Tuesday, Jan. 11, 2011. (Justin Falls/The Daily Reflector)

Weather causes no major issues
By Jackie Drake
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A wintry mix of freezing precipitation Monday night prompted some delays but no major issues Tuesday.

Pitt County Schools will operate on a two-hour delay again today, according to local officials.
Greenville Utilities reported just 0.02 inches of precipitation as of midnight Monday — readings are taken once a day at midnight.

“Greenville got very little,” said meteorologist Lara Pagano with the National Weather Service, which coordinates data with Greenville Utilities. Tuesday's precipitation total was not available before presstime.

The State Highway Patrol responded to 24 calls in Pitt County between midnight and 10 a.m. Tuesday according to traffic safety information Trooper Jeff Collins. By 4:30 p.m., only one more had occurred.
No fatalities were reported.

The Greenville Police Department reported 13 crashes in the city between midnight and 3:30 p.m. Tuesday, according to traffic safety officer Robert Brewington.
Roads generally remained open, though some bridges were reported closed early Tuesday morning.

Both sides of the Greene Street bridge over the Tar River to downtown Greenville were closed shortly before 8 a.m. until about 9 a.m. due to ice, according to Brewington.
Other bridges over the river on Memorial Drive and Greenville Boulevard were not closed, but a patrol car with flashing lights was posted to alert drivers to the slippery conditions, Brewington said.

Four wrecks occurred Tuesday in the area of Short Bridge Road near Falkland with injuries reported, Collins said.

Greenville Utilities reported no outages or interruptions of service Monday night and Tuesday, according to public information officer Sue Hatch. “It was a quiet night,” she said Tuesday morning.

Pitt County public schools opened on a two-hour delay Tuesday. No issues were reported during arrival, Public Information Officer Heather Mayo said.

East Carolina University and Pitt Community College opened at 10 a.m. Tuesday. An alert posted on ECU's website stated that normal hours of operation would be in place today.

Tuesday night's low was expected to reach 25 degrees, according to the National Weather Service. Today is forecast to be sunny with a high near 41.

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Beaufort County’s nonprofit arts presenters are looking to build on the momentum they sustained throughout 2010.

These presenters have their eyes on making 2011 a more successful year as the slow economic recovery necessitates finding creative ways to bring the arts to the public.

The Beaufort County Traditional Music Association had a successful year in 2010, staging 46 performances at the Union Alley Coffeehouse in the back of the Inner Banks Artisans’ Center in Washington, said Rob Cuthrell, BCTMA president.

The group’s concerts reached around 1,500 people and generated more than $12,000 in revenues, with most of that money being used to compensate performers, Cuthrell related.

“We had some really outstanding groups that we were able to bring in,” he said.

BCTMA also is partnering with the Beaufort County Arts Council and the Turnage Theater to hold a music workshop Saturday at the theater.

This workshop will run in connection with a Friday performance by the April Verch Band.

Beyond the workshop, BCTMA will continue holding concerts at the coffeehouse and elsewhere, Cuthrell said.

“We will continue to have weekly jam sessions at the Union Alley Coffeehouse, located in the Inner Banks Artisans’ Center each week,” he said. “We won’t have as busy a schedule of performances this year as we did last.”

At one point, BCTMA was averaging six to nine performances a month, Cuthrell said, adding, “For a volunteer organization, that was a lot.”

In Belhaven, the Way Off Broadway Players is looking forward to two plays, one to be
staged near the end of March or the first of April and the other to be performed in June or July, said George Wahab, director.

The first play of the year likely will be the comedy “Whose Wives Are They Anyway?” by Michael Parker, Wahab shared.

Wahab said he orders up to 20 plays at a time, and usually culls all but two or three that might fit the players’ comedic milieu.

“I read the synopses and, if a synopsis sounds good, I order it and read it, and if we like it we’ll do it,” he said.

Among the fresh ideas on the arts council’s pallet is a painting exhibition featuring the work of East Carolina University faculty and graduate students, said Joey Toler, BCAC executive director.

The arts council unveiled its first cooperative exhibit with ECU nearly two years ago, Toler said. This exhibit was a graphic-arts exhibition, he added.

This year’s show “should feature some young, good talent,” Toler observed of the latest ECU show.

“It should be somewhat challenging for our arts patrons,” he said.

BCAC also plans to conduct “an intense workshop” Jan. 22 to discuss the entity’s role in the arts, Toler said.

Asked whether he projects 2011 will be a better year for the arts than 2010, Toler responded with, “On a local level, I think it will just because our arts infrastructure is growing. We have more arts-related businesses going on downtown (in Washington), so I think it will be a good year on that level. I think some of our state funding may be a little less than it has in the past because of the deficit they’re looking at.”

Toler predicted the arts council will overcome funding shortfalls because its staff has prepared for reduced funding by crafting leaner budgets in recent years.

“We’re always creative in our fundraising, and we continue to be creative in our fundraising,” he said.

Cooperative ventures in the arts — such as the Verch concert pairing BCAC and the Turnage — will be essential in the future, indicated Scotty Henley, executive director of the Turnage.

“It’s going to be a necessity to make as many cooperative presentations as we can, either with the arts council or ECU bringing their performances here,” Henley said.
In all probability, financial pressures will lead the Turnage to schedule no more than 15 shows this year, and perhaps a minimum of 12 shows, according to Henley.

With this reality in mind, Toler said, “I certainly do think it behooves us all in the arts community to work together or side by side whenever possible.”

Henley made it known he concurred with that sentiment.
Siblings give back: Each purchase from Half United yields meal for those in need

By Brian Tucker  
StarNews Correspondent

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"I remember you calling me from the road saying, 'I have this idea,'" Christian Black said, interrupting his sister, Carmin, like a voice in the dark. "‘When I get home, we're starting a business.'"

The siblings complement each other, both in temperament and personality, finishing each other's sentences as though mentally connected.

They started the clothing and jewelry company Half United in Wilmington in 2009. Half United is based on the "one-for-one" business model where, for each product purchased, something of equal value is donated to charity. The one-for-one business model was made famous by Blake Mycoskie of TOMS Shoes, an entrepreneur who implores others to embrace it. Carmin was one of them.

Christian, four years younger than Carmin, is relatively quiet, more of a thinker than extrovert. He's passionate, but expresses himself through design and by playing drums in Wilmington rock band Rio Bravo. He's content to let Carmin tell their story, and she speaks with an energy and confidence sometimes found in politicians. And while she isn't a politician, she has interviewed them – Hillary Clinton and Nancy Pelosi to name two – something rare for an intern at ABC News in Washington, D.C.
"I loved the storytelling part (at ABC), being on camera and writing the script," Carmin said. "From that vantage point it was awesome."
She returned to Wilmington and worked for WECT TV-6, where she took on more tasks. "In local TV you're filming your own stuff, editing, laying in voiceovers," she said. "There were so many things I had to do I had no interest in. I just wanted to share stories."

Before long, she left WECT.

"Reporters can get really desensitized," Carmin said. "Reporters will talk to the officers, shoot the video and go. I started to do a really bad job. There was nothing I could do to help the people whose house burned down or the kids whose father just got shot, because it was time to move on."

She found herself viewing a career in journalism very differently than she did growing up. In high school, Carmin was accepted to the American Musical and Dramatic Academy in New York but chose to attend Appalachian State and, later, East Carolina University, where she majoring in broadcast journalism. Initially enamored with a career in the field, she grew to enjoy it less the longer she worked in it.

"I think it wasn't the outlet for you," Christian said. "If it was theater or film, I think you would excel in that."

Carmin comes off as self-assured and determined, a person who wants to do something to affect her surroundings, and the one-for-one business model Half United uses not only sells products but also exercises goodwill. Christian said he sees it as a "pulling of the heart strings" in that customers feel good about a purchase knowing that they're helping in some way.

"The name came from, half of what you're doing is buying a product, the other half is you're feeding somebody," Christian said. "Every time we sell a product we set aside money to feed children in Wilmington and overseas. We do that through nonprofits – the What If Foundation in California and, locally, Vigilant Hope."

For every shirt sold, they can provide 19 meals. For every sweatshirt, 30 meals. For each necklace sold – their signature item made from expended bullet shells – 17 meals are provided.

Carmin's phone call from the road about starting a business was not impulsive. The idea began years before when she attended a conference with her church and heard TOMS Shoes owner Blake Mycoskie speak. His one-for-one idea, and a desire for people to mimic it, inspired her to contact him as a journalist, inquiring about traveling with TOMS to Africa and reporting on what they were doing. That didn't happen, but something else in his speech inspired her further.
"He said that if someone wanted to start a one-for-one business, the first thing (to) do is get to TOMS Shoes, come and intern," she said. "You learn to run this company by being on the inside and seeing how it really works."

And that's what she did. Mycoskie is a serial entrepreneur. He and his sister participated in the CBS show "The Amazing Race" and, while traveling, saw kids in Argentina without shoes. He decided to start a company where instead of people needing charities to send shoes and sporadically providing handouts, every time the company sold a pair of shoes, kids in need were given them.

Carmin applied for a program with TOMS that selected only 13 people from around the world. In the program, participants were trained for three months at TOMS headquarters in Los Angeles and then sent out in a 15-passenger van around the country to tell people about the one-for-one business model.

"The idea of combining humanitarian work and business absolutely intrigued me because I could still kind of report on people's issues and tell their stories but I could continue to help them," she said.

Christian, off and on, had been thinking of starting a T-shirt business where he would create the designs. Carmin knew this, and when she returned home she brought knowledge to get the business side of things moving.

"She learned a lot about the industry and how a business is run at that scale," Christian said. "We teamed up immediately and got the thing rolling with $200. We started buying T-shirts."

Recently they opened an office on Third Street and have been selling products through stores locally (Hallelu on Wrightsville Beach, Life Community Church in Independence Mall, Surf House in Carolina Beach) and at their online store, HalfUnited.com. Screen printing for the clothing line is done locally by A&M screen printers and expended bullet shells for necklaces are provided by Shooter's Choice. Their main seller is the Fighting Hunger necklace, a chain necklace with an expended shell painted in a variety of colors. The necklace was Carmin's idea, and signifies peaceful protest against hunger.

"We've given away 25,000 meals in terms of how much money we've given so far," Christian said.

Half United has four staff members and, so far, everyone donates their time. "No one's getting paid to do this right now," Carmin said. "We've been able to accomplish a lot by selling products and giving away the money that we promised and then putting what we've made back into the business."

Half United has partnerships with organizations that have a sound history of feeding children. They found Northern Christian Alliance in Fiji through family friends. In Haiti, they work with the What If Foundation. They give money to an orphanage in Indonesia.
where a Half United staff member, Rachel Apple, worked. In Wilmington they work with Vigilant Hope. Half United is focused on selling a movement, not just products. They're selling a philosophy that when you buy something you're helping people. It's an idea that sells itself, but one that has to be spread.

"It's appealing to customers who want to give back and don't have thousands of dollars to donate to a charity. They can just buy a T-shirt," Carmin said. "(Products have) to be appealing, cutting edge and interesting. We want to appeal to people's hearts and feel confident every time they buy something that they have probably changed a child's life."

The siblings' empathy is hard earned. As children of divorce, their parents lived far apart and struggled to provide. Their father is a contractor and was a minister; their mother a designer. Half United is a logical offshoot of parental influence.

"What the U.S. Department of Agriculture describes as being ‘food insecure,’ there was a time when our parents divorced we lived in a home that was food insecure," Carmin said. "I remember we would go to the grocery store, where we made a game of $20 for the week. We lived with our dad in Charlotte and he'd say, ‘What can we buy with this $20?’ I started the one-for-one business because of TOMS, but I know what these kids are facing."

Last summer Half United worked with Vigilant Hope every other weekend. Carmin recalled going to the Jervay community and helping with a project called Pancakes in the Park. The sojourn to Jervay every other Saturday morning sought to feed children. Since kids were not in school over the summer some may not eat properly because school lunch wasn't available to them.

"I looked out at everyone on this day thinking that everybody in this town, because of their purchases, is the reason these kids are eating today," Carmin said. "They are literally providing the meals for these kids. I looked at the people, the volunteers, and thought, ‘We are doing this. We are really doing this.'"

Features: 343-2343
Grading the Ivory Towers

There's a memorable scene in the movie "Ghostbusters" when Dan Akroyd says in horror to Bill Murray after they lose their jobs at a university: "I've worked in the private sector. They expect results."

The same can't always be said of universities, where costs are rising faster even than health care. Now, a growing number of states are demanding that their taxpayer-funded universities show evidence of improvement in student performance. Perhaps the most aggressive school is Texas A&M, which is trying to measure professor productivity and performance. Given the reaction from some in the faculty lounges, you'd think Texas had banned football.

Since 1978 college costs have risen by more than tenfold, about three times the rate of inflation, according to an American Enterprise Institute study. Four years of college now cost as much as $200,000 at some private institutions, making this perhaps the only industry in America that has recorded negative productivity gains. In 2009 tuitions rose by 6%, four times overall prices. With rising tuition comes rising indebtedness, and for the first time student loan debt of $850 billion now exceeds credit card debt of $830 billion. State subsidies keep rising but are swallowed up in higher university costs and thus haven't lowered tuitions.

Professors' salaries and benefits make up about 60% to 70% of university noncapital costs. So Texas A&M is starting to ask such basic questions as: Is that psychology or engineering professor worth his $125,000 salary?

The school is trying to answer this question by applying a cost-benefit analysis of how much each professor earns in salary per student taught. The school also uses such metrics of value added as research dollars brought in by a professor and student evaluations of how well a teacher performs in a classroom. For high-achieving professors, the new pay-for-performance standards offer bonuses of up to $10,000 a year.

Texas A&M shocks the professorate with cost-benefit analysis.

The academic reaction to the plan has been furious. Nationally, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) calls the system of "balancing revenues and costs" both "simplistic and very dangerous." Peter Hugill, a professor of geology and the head of the AAUP chapter at Texas A&M, has denounced the new analysis as "a weapon" to hang over the head of professors that is making "Texas a laughing stock." The faculty is pressuring the university to lower the bonuses to $1,500 and spread the money to more teachers.

Frank Ashley, the vice president for academic affairs at A&M, replies that the reforms are about accountability: "We're being held accountable for the money the state gives us, and we want to show that we're not throwing the money away."

What a concept. Given that Texas faces a $12 billion deficit and every year writes a nine-figure check to Texas A&M (and to the University of Texas), taxpayers deserve more transparency and cost containment. A pay system that requires middle and lower income families to take on enormous debt to subsidize universities is unfair.

No doubt the Texas A&M system is a work in progress and will be tweaked as it gains experience in evaluating its professors' classroom performance and contributions to the university. Perhaps the professors would reply that too many students think they're on a subsidized, four-year party. But we hope the school's regents persist with this effort and that the reformers succeed in their efforts to spread pay-for-performance accountability to other public universities.