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March memories: Holland recalls chasing the dream

By Ronnie Woodward
The Daily Reflector

Wednesday, March 18, 2009

Terry Holland has plenty of fond NCAA tournament memories, but the one that still sticks with him today is an unpleasant one.

As an assistant basketball coach at Davidson College, Holland watched from the sideline as North Carolina's Charlie Scott drained a jumper at the buzzer of a 1969 Eastern Regional championship game, sending the Tar Heels to the Final Four and the Wildcats home.

Holland, now athletics director at East Carolina University, says the worst part about that game was that Scott originally committed to Davidson before signing with North Carolina.

"We had led pretty much the whole game, and then they tied it up near the end, and Charlie Scott made that shot," Holland said of the 87-85 thriller in College Park, Md., which marked the second year in a row Davidson was ousted by UNC one round before the Final Four. "What really made it tough was that he had committed to us prior to his senior year (of high school) but ended up playing against us for the right to get to the Final Four."

Holland crossed paths with North Carolina years later, this time while with the Virginia Cavaliers.

Playing in the same regional as the top-seeded and Michael Jordan-led Tar Heels, Holland's Cavaliers advanced to the Final Four as a No. 7 seed.

Virginia defeated Indiana 50-48 in the regional final, one round after the Hoosiers ended Jordan's collegiate career.

UVA's improbable run to the Final Four was its second under Holland, who still stands as the winningest basketball coach in Cavalier history. Holland also took UVa to the Final Four in 1981, which he now cherishes as his favorite NCAA tournament memory.

Holland is still proud of his team's third-place finish in the 1981 Final Four, but making it that far without winning the national title still stings.

"Nobody is more disappointed than the teams that make the Final Four and don't win the tournament," Holland said from his ECU office Wednesday afternoon. "Once you get there, you think, 'Hey we're here and let's win it because we may never be here again.'"

"I know that teams appreciate it later in life, but the immediate response is always, 'Gosh, we should've won.'"

Holland, who was head coach at Davidson from 1969-74 and at Virginia from 1974-90, participated in 13 NCAA tournaments. Nine of those tournament berths came when he was at Virginia, one more came as the head coach at Davidson, and the other three were as an assistant to Lefty Driesell at Davidson.

From 1981-90, Holland led Virginia to eight NCAA tournament appearances, including the two Final Four trips.

Holland's 1981 team — which was led by Ralph Sampson and former ECU basketball coach Ricky Stokes — lost to North Carolina 78-65 in the national semifinal.

No bracket entry

Despite his ability to coach teams to and through the NCAA tournament, Holland is not one to predict how
teams will do.

While most basketball fans have been busy this week filling out brackets for the tournament that begins today, Holland has gone about his everyday routine, opting not to fill out a bracket.

"I don't fill one out," said Holland, who was on the NCAA tournament selection committee from 1992-98. "All of my family members do, and it seems like everyone around me does, but I've never really tried to do it.

"Even when I was on the selection committee, we would seed the teams and set up the bracket, but I would stop there."

Holland also tries to avoid attending tournament games, citing his current obligation to East Carolina.

The ECU AD said he doesn't plan on traveling to Greensboro this weekend, despite the fact that Ralph Sampson's son will be playing on a Minnesota team that will be trying to advance from Greensboro into the Sweet 16.

Holland also didn't attend any of his alma mater's games last season, as Stephen Curry led Davidson to a magical run in the Big Dance.

"It could've been a little distracting for Davidson, and it certainly would've been distracting for the East Carolina fans," Holland said. "Obviously, my first duty is here and I've always tried to make sure that I approach things in a professional way."

A different approach

While talk of expanding the 65-team field has picked up in recent years, Holland takes an alternative approach.

Holland believes the tournament is too large, rather than too small.

"It's too big now, to be honest," he says. "When you look at the teams that are selected — particularly at the bottom end of the at-large pool — they are fairly talented teams, but they had mediocre seasons and a lot of them had losing records in their own conference. ...We have these tremendous arguments about which teams should've gotten in and my argument wouldn't be who didn't get in, but why are we including those last 10 or 12 or 14 (teams)?"

But Holland admits that reducing the field of 65 is unrealistic. Because of this, Holland said he would support expanding the field as an attempt to create more at-large spots for teams from non-power conferences, such as Conference USA.

"If we're going to have this many, why not have a few more," Holland said. "I'm interested in expanding the field to give a lot more teams an opportunity, because who knows who can get hot at tournament time and we need to give them a chance."

Only four teams from non-power conferences received at-large bids in this year's tournament, none of which came from C-USA. This number is down significantly from the 12 that reached the 2004 tournament.

ECU has only participated in one NCAA tournament in the program's history.

In 1993, the 16th-seeded Pirates lost in the first round to North Carolina after a dramatic run to the Colonial Athletic Association tournament championship.

Holland says the Pirates need to reach the top echelon of C-USA to be in postseason contention.

"You have to be in the top three or four in Conference USA on a regular basis," he said. "You have to establish yourself as a regular that gets looked at every year."

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SHANNON BAIRD JENKINS

Shannon Baird Jenkins, 37, died at her residence Monday, March 16, 2009 after a prolonged illness. Born July 27, 1971 in Sanford, she was the oldest daughter of Carlton Edward and Gloria Norris Baird of Wake Forest. Shannon graduated from Ashland High School (Ohio) in 1989. Following high school she returned to North Carolina to attend UNC-Asheville where she was a member of the Alpha Xi Delta sorority and earned a BA in Biology in 1994. She was married in July, 1995. She then matriculated to East Carolina University School of Medicine in Greenville, NC, where she earned her medical degree in 1999. She remained at ECU / Pitt County Memorial Hospital completing a Family Medicine residency in 2001 and then joined the staff of the Department of Family Medicine as a module leader/attending physician. In 2004, she left the residency division to join the staff of MedDirect in the Department of Emergency Medicine (ECU). From there she went to the University of Massachusetts Medical School / UMass Memorial Hospital in Worcester, MA in 2005 where she was the Director of Family Medicine Hospitalists and Associate Chief of Hospital Medicine. In her relatively brief career as a physician, her achievements were many. She served on / chaired several hospital committees, was a member of numerous state and national medical societies, lectured nationally and internationally and published widely within the field of Hospital Medicine. She was awarded teacher of the year by the Family Medicine residency at UMass in 2006 and had a scholarship named in her honor.

Shannon was a member of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Hickory, NC and was actively involved in community outreach and service everywhere she lived.

She was a devoted and loving mother and wife who enjoyed spending time with her family and friends, watching her sons play sports, playing golf and running. She loved to laugh and was the best storyteller. In the constant pursuit of knowledge, she read daily and was never still. Shannon was a woman of vision and action, responsibility and generosity, determination and gentleness.

She lived her short life to the fullest and will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

Shannon was preceded in death by her maternal grandparents, Roy Edward and Virginia Smith Norris and paternal grandparents, Reginald Davis and Eunice Gay Baird.

In addition to her parents, she is survived by her husband, Nelson Lee Jenkins of the home; two sons, Keegan Matthew Jenkins (9) and Cooper Lee Jenkins (5) of the home; a sister, Amy Kamm and husband, Jeremy of Fuquay-Varina; a brother, Eddie Baird of Raleigh; five nieces, Megan, Hannah, Caroline and Ashton Jenkins of Vale and Abigail Kamm of Fuquay-Varina; two nephews, Ben and Eli Kamm, both of Fuquay-Varina; three uncles and four aunts, Ray and Ellen Baird of Winston-Salem, Jerry and Sherri Baird of Fuquay-Varina, Reggie and Brenda Baird of Roanoke Rapids and Linda Holdford of Roanoke Rapids; father and mother-in-law, Harry and Dorothy Jenkins of Vale; two brothers and sisters-in-law, Charles and Janet Jenkins, Patrick and Melanie Jenkins of Vale.

A memorial service will be held 2:00 p.m. Saturday, March 28, 2009 at Bethlehem Lutheran Church with Pastor Ken Tonnesen officiating. The family will receive friends immediately following the service at a reception to be held at the Mosteller Mansion, 1998 21st Street SE, Hickory, NC 28602.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 1686 6th Street SE, Hickory, NC 28602.

The family wishes to thank the staff of UMass Memorial Hospital, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Catawba Valley Medical Center, Northwestern Carolina Oncology & Hematology and Hospice of Lincoln County for all of your love, kindness and gentle care.

On-line condolences may be left for the Jenkins family at www.bass-smithfuneralhome.com
Budget view: Long-term approach needed for state

Wednesday, March 18, 2009

North Carolina Gov. Beverly Perdue's first budget reflects the grim economic reality in which the state finds itself, using cuts and some tax increases to reduce overall spending. Funds provided by the federal government through the Economic Recovery Act represent a critical component of her proposal, and may help the state to slightly increase per-pupil spending in public schools.

However, as the General Assembly begins its work on the budget, lawmakers should consider House Speaker Joe Hackney's warning that the budget has no margin for error. The state should not gamble on the prospects for a quick economic recovery and must be careful to limit the risk of doing long-term harm.

On Tuesday, Perdue unveiled a $21 billion spending plan for the 2009-10 fiscal year, a budget that attempts to close a revenue gap estimated at $3.4 billion. It reflects an overall spending reduction of $1.3 billion versus the current fiscal year, and uses $1.7 billion in federal stimulus money to help cover the shortfall.

The remaining difference in spending and revenue would be addressed through program cuts, work force reductions and higher sin taxes. The governor would end 20 programs, centered mainly in health and human services and the Department of Corrections. It would eliminate 1,400 positions, but by axing unfilled positions and reassigning other employees, only about 270 state workers would be out of their jobs. And the governor proposed a $1 per pack tax on cigarettes and a 5 percent tax on alcohol to generate additional revenue.

These are fairly straightforward measures to balance the budget as the N.C. Constitution requires. Reduced spending was necessary, though the governor does propose to raise per-pupil spending by $139, and could result in a more efficient, streamlined state government. And sin taxes are always a popular target in a tough economic year, though lawmakers expressed doubt regarding the prospects for passage.

However, as Hackney said following the budget's release, the real concern is the razor-thin margin of error it leaves North Carolina should the economy remain sour. The governor relies on across-the-board spending cuts rather than targeted measures that continue investment in all stages of education. And absent is the much-needed comprehensive tax reform that would modernize revenue generation for the state.

Perdue's budget proposal does reflect the challenges and difficult choices ahead for the Legislature and is a good starting point for debate. But lawmakers should adopt a long-term view for the health of the state rather than focusing on making it through another year.

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Letter: Bill to alter state health plan wrong

Wednesday, March 18, 2009

All state employees in North Carolina need to be concerned about coming changes to the state health plan. Legislation is currently under way in the state senate that will require employees to use a mail-order pharmacy for prescriptions. It is said that this move will save taxpayers $100 million.

The truth is that this service will be provided by Medco, which has been sued by the federal government and nearly every state in the union. This move will cripple community pharmacies, sending otherwise local business and money to other states. Not only is mail-order pharmacy unreliable and in many cases unsafe, it is an assault on the right of patients to choose their health care providers. The service you count on from your personal, reliable pharmacist will be replaced by a cardboard box in the mail.

The chief sponsor of this legislation is N.C. Sen. Tony Rand, a Democrat. As a Democrat myself, I find this unacceptable. He has taken tens of thousands of dollars in campaign contributions from drug and insurance companies in the last half of 2008 alone, not including individual contributions from the corporate executives. I encourage all state employees to contact Rand and N.C. Sen. Marc Basnight, as well as your district’s senator, and oppose this measure.

PHILLIP DURRENCE
Greenville SpgB

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Tuition going up; so is financial aid

Colleges try to hold line on costs

BY JUSTIN POPE, The Associated Press

Comment on this story

True, it's not a great time financially to be going to college or sending a kid there. But from the success of a bailout to the federal student loan system, to the tuition deals some colleges are offering, there's more good news out there on college costs and financial aid than some families recognize.

Here's a look at the good and the bad for the college-bound:

Tuition

Bad: State budgets are still in flux, but when they're done, many public universities are likely to impose sharp tuition increases. During the last decade, tuition at public colleges has been rising at a rate of 4 percent per year -- above overall inflation.

Good: With help from federal stimulus money, some public colleges will manage more modest price increases as they drastically cut spending.

Many private colleges have announced their smallest increases in years.

Bad: The average college endowment is down about one-fourth. Many colleges, particularly regional universities, will be unable to offer as much scholarship support.

Good: The National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities says more than 90 percent of private colleges will increase aid next year. The group recently surveyed about 200 institutions and found they planned average tuition increases of 4 percent, but aid increases of 9.8 percent.

In recent years, some of the priciest colleges have announced significant increases in aid.

Bad: State budget cuts will hit a range of programs that support students at both public and private colleges. Criteria for merit scholarships in some states have already tightened.

Good: The federal government is expanding college aid, particularly for low-income students. The stimulus package raises the maximum Pell Grant from $4,731 to $5,350 starting July 1, and $5,550 in 2010-2011. An extra 800,000 students are expected to get Pell funding.

Federal Student Loans

Bad: There are two major components of the giant federal loan program -- direct lending by the government and the Federal Family Education Loan Program. Under the latter, lenders, including banks and nonprofits, provide student loans that are guaranteed by the federal government. But hundreds of lenders have dropped out.

Good: Considering the upheaval in the family loan program, the flow of federal loans has
held up remarkably well. In fact, if the system that lends money to businesses, homes and automobiles had held up half as well as the one that provides government-backed loans to students, the economy might not be in such a mess.

Since last year, the federal government has bought up nearly $25 billion in student loan securities to provide lenders with capital for new loans. The direct lending program has picked up slack with an additional $7 billion in lending so far this academic year as more colleges sign up.

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UNC system sets 'value' guidelines

STAFF WRITER ERIC FERRERI
Comment on this story

CHAPEL HILL - UNC’s governing board will consider adopting a "value statement" today making clear some of the public university system’s strategies for lean economic times.

The statement says the main value is to "Protect UNC's commitment to teaching, research and public service." Two parts, however, send a message to the system’s 17 campuses.

One directs campuses to consider across-the-board cuts only as a last resort. Cutting every division equally might be easier, but administrators say that doing so makes little sense because not every division, department, class and function is of equal value.

The second speaks to the desire of UNC system officials to have campuses act more as a cohesive unit rather than as 17 separate parts.

"Where feasible and appropriate, face-to-face courses that are eliminated should be made available through high-quality on-line instruction via UNC online," the statement says.

That means that if one UNC system campus has a mediocre academic program that costs a lot of money, it should be scrapped and the students sent to an Internet-based course from another campus.

"You're sending it to the UNC system," Hannah Gage, chairwoman of the UNC Board of Governors said this week, "It does involve a deeper degree of education from the people who guide students. And it is cross-promotion. But we are a system."

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Tar Heels are No. 1 -- in hoops revenue

From Staff Reports
Comment on this story

CHAPEL HILL - Here's a little extra March Madness: The UNC Tar Heels are the nation's most valuable basketball team.

So says Forbes, the financial magazine that ranks the nation's top hoops programs on revenue.

The Heels generate nearly $26 million for the university, including $16.4 million in operating revenue, making the university one of the few in the nation that make more money from basketball than football, according to the story.

Duke's basketball program ranks eighth, while N.C. State and Wake Forest tie for 18th in the Top 20.

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Interest in becoming a teacher surges

A growing number of people are deciding to retrain to become educators

The Associated Press
updated 5:14 a.m. ET, Tues., March 17, 2009

SILVER SPRING, Md. - Plenty of people dream of leaving their jobs to become teachers. Today, more people are actually doing it.

Peter Vos ran an Internet startup. Now he teaches computer science to middle school kids in Maryland.

Jaime McLaughlin used to do people's taxes. Now he teaches math to sixth graders in Chicago.

Alisa Salvars was a makeup artist at Saks department store. Now she teaches high school chemistry in suburban Dallas.

These teachers, with real-life experience and often with deep knowledge of their subjects, are answering a call to service that is part of a strategy to dramatically boost the size and quality of the teaching work force.

Career switchers make up about one-third of the ranks of new teachers, and that number has jumped in the past decade. Now, as the recession deepens, even more people are deciding to become teachers.

Started with Dr. Seuss

For Vos, the Maryland teacher, it started with Dr. Seuss and "Winnie the Pooh." He would read to kids at his children's school — dramatic readings, with different character voices — and he loved the feeling he was making a difference. The children cried when he finished "Stuart Little."

"I actually enjoyed it a lot more than I expected, and the kids really took to it," Vos said. "The kids who really looked forward to this the most, the ones who were giving me big hugs when I showed up, were struggling readers."

Vos, 50, was hooked. His background was not in reading but in science and computers; he was a neuroscientist before starting his Internet company. He wound up at Argyle Middle School, an information technology magnet school in the Maryland suburbs of Washington.

Like Vos, McLaughlin is motivated by that "touchy-feely camaraderie" he has with his students. He teaches math at Albert R. Sabin Magnet School, a Spanish-language school in Chicago.

He dealt with people in his old job, as an accountant with two big firms. But it was always about money.

Teaching is different. "Those kids really are pretty much your family six, seven, eight hours a day," he said. "You're helping raise them."

McLaughlin, 38, had practical motivations, too. He had always wanted to be a teacher — his father and uncles are in education — but he didn't think it paid enough. Once he got married and had a son, there was a second income that would let him take a pay cut. And there was a little boy he could spend more time with, if his workday ended with the school bell.

"We have that much more time to spend together," McLaughlin said.

Helping switch careers

Interest has surged in becoming a teacher, and more pathways are emerging to get people there quickly.

The New Teacher Project, which helps people switch from other careers to the classroom, said 29,576 people have applied to its teaching fellows programs this year, a 44 percent increase over last year. The group was founded in 1997 by Michelle Rhee, now the schools superintendent in the District of Columbia.

There has been similar interest in Teach For America, which recruits new college graduates, although not career-switchers. The organization has received more than 35,000 applications, 42 percent more than last year.
Not everyone who applies will make it into the classroom. But the avalanche of applications is encouraging to the Obama administration, which has a plan to dramatically increase the number of teachers. Career-changers are an important part of the plan.

"One of the only benefits of living in such tough economic times now is that you have folks getting laid off and looking for work," Arne Duncan, President Barack Obama's education secretary, said in an interview with The Associated Press.

"There are great folks out there who are passionate, who care a lot about children, who often have great content knowledge — math, science, humanities, whatever it might be — who just didn't happen to major in education. We want to help get them into the classroom," Duncan said.

In his old job as chief executive of Chicago Public Schools, Duncan brought hundreds of career-changers, including McLaughlin, into the classroom. They went through a highly selective program that puts them through intensive summer training, then starts them full time in the fall while they keep doing evening coursework.

Duncan, together with the New Teacher Project, began the Chicago Teaching Fellows program with the help of federal grants. The economic stimulus bill signed by Obama provides even more money for getting career-changers into the classroom.

Programs such as Chicago's can be the answer for people who don't have the time or money to earn another college degree.

That is what Salvans, now a chemistry teacher at Richardson High School in suburban Dallas, was looking for when she decided to become a teacher. She had put herself through college as a makeup artist, which wound up paying more than entry-level jobs when she graduated with an environmental chemistry degree.

Salvans, 39, stuck with makeup until her second daughter was born. Then she decided her schedule managing a counter at Saks, combined with her husband's as a restaurant manager, was just too hectic for two kids.

Friends had always said she would make a good teacher, and Salvans thought they were right. She applied to Texas Teaching Fellows, a program like Chicago's that trains teachers in the summertime and lets them teach full time in the fall.

She had to go through a rigorous, six-hour interview.

"Part of the interview was that you had to do a teaching session for five to 10 minutes," Salvans said. "I thought, 'Well, I haven't taught science.' But what I would do all the time is teach women about makeup and their faces.

"So I got pencils and toothbrushes at the dollar store and taught everybody how to measure out and find the best eyebrow shape," she said.

Not all programs are as selective as those in Texas and Chicago. Of the 600 or so alternate teacher certification programs in the 50 states, many have low standards, admitting most of the people who apply.

Sandi Jacobs, vice president for policy at the National Council on Teacher Quality, said only the most qualified — those with very strong subject knowledge and high academic standing — should have a streamlined path to the classroom.

"We've seen those road markers sort of disappear; most states do not require the admission standards to be higher," Jacobs said.

At the other end of the spectrum, some require so much coursework — 30 hours, in some cases — they may as well be college degree programs. That discourages some very attractive candidates from applying, Jacobs said.

There is less dispute about the teachers themselves. A study released last month by the Education Department found students did just as well whether their teachers came through alternate routes or traditional ones.
High-needs schools add to challenge
All three teachers found jobs in schools with high numbers of poor and minority students. That is no accident. Teaching shortages are most acute in these schools, especially in math, science and special education. Shortages are the main reason why programs such as those in Chicago and Texas began.

Being a new teacher is hard enough, but working in high-needs schools can add to the challenge.

Vos has Spanish-speaking kids who speak little if any English. While he once lived in Puerto Rico and his Spanish is good, he sometimes turns to a worn Spanish-English dictionary at the front of his classroom.

"How do you say 'slides' in Spanish?" Vos asks a couple of bilingual boys as he tries to help a Spanish-speaking girl use Microsoft PowerPoint. They shrug and shake their heads as Vos thumbs through the dictionary.

McLaughlin says his students, even in elementary school, are constantly lured by gangs and drugs. Some transfer from tough neighborhood schools where they’re used to fighting: "We have to acclimate them to a situation where they don’t have to fight and defend themselves every day," McLaughlin said.

Maturity of career changers
Despite the challenges of teaching, career-changers tend to stay on the job longer than other new teachers, said Emily Feistritzer, who heads the National Center for Alternative Certification.

Their maturity makes them more prepared for teaching — they are older and wiser and often have children of their own. Their life experience is also relevant to the classroom, she said.

"It’s not just theoretical knowledge," Feistritzer said. "They can bring in how it’s used and use examples from the real world."

All three teachers say they are here to stay.

McLaughlin, after only two years in the classroom, can’t imagine another career change. "I’m a lifer now. I’m going to be in this till the end," he said.

Neither can Vos.

"I get to play with technology all day. I’m surrounded by potential. I have a tremendous amount of latitude, because we’re on the cutting edge," Vos said. "And they pay me."

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Duke grads celebrate higher pay

They're champs when compared with rivals in the NCAA tournament

By Del Jones
USA TODAY

Duke University may not have a No. 1 seed in the NCAA men's basketball tournament, but it comes in first in a way that all of its students can appreciate: Duke graduates are paid more than the graduates of the 64 other schools in the competition.

The median annual salary of Duke alumni who graduated five to 15 years ago is $102,000, according to PayScale, which says it has the world's largest salary database of more than 16 million.

Duke is a runaway champion in USA TODAY's March Madness salary bracket, which uses PayScale data and can be found online at money.usatoday.com. Runner-up universities are Cornell ($91,700), Southern California ($91,600) and California ($91,400), although Michigan ($84,000) and not California advances to the salary Final Four out of a weaker bracket.

Who are the worst-paid graduates five to 15 years out of college? Alabama State's at $41,800 followed by Morehead State's at $40,400, the last two seeds in the basketball tournament and scheduled to play in the tournament's first game today to get the field down to an even 64.

Last year, Duke had the third-highest median salary among March Madness contestants. Neither of the 2008 salary finalists, Stanford and Notre Dame, advanced into the basketball tournament this year. Stanford grads remain the best paid among all universities at $115,000 a year, PayScale says.

The Duke alumni office does not track statistics that measure the incomes of its graduates, university spokesman Keith Lawrence says.

"We are proud of the financial success, but we measure our graduates' accomplishments in a lot more ways than the size of a paycheck," says William Wright-Swadel, executive director of Duke's career center.

Al Lee, PayScale's director of quantitative analysis, says PayScale has more data from some schools than it does others. For example, it has 5,000 salaries from graduates of the University of Washington and slightly more than 100 from Alabama State, but says the Alabama State data still are statistically valid.

Lee said the data include those with graduate degrees such as law and medicine, but the salaries of those graduates typically skewed to the upper end and have minimal influence on the median salary, which is the middle point where half of the graduates earn more and half of them earn less.

Nationwide, median salaries are flat to slightly down, Lee says.

Those with college degrees typically earn more as they gain experience, but those with five to 15 years' experience today are doing no better than those with five to 15 years' experience in previous years, Lee says.