THE DAILY CLIPS

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ECU names attorney for university

By ECU News Bureau
Special to The Daily Reflector

Donna Gooden Payne, university counsel at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke, has been named university attorney at East Carolina University.

"I am delighted that Donna Payne has accepted our invitation to join ECU," Chancellor Steve Ballard said. "She is a talented, experienced and respected attorney, and she is well versed in higher education in North Carolina. We had an especially strong pool of candidates from all parts of the country, and she emerged at the top.

Payne said she is a long-time admirer of ECU.

"The university is the most influential institution in eastern North Carolina, and its faculty, students and alumni are important in many, many ways to the entire state as well as the nation," she said. "I look forward to sharing its opportunities and challenges. It's a great time to be a Pirate."

Her appointment is effective July 1.

A native of Bladen County, Payne is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she was a Morehead Scholar, and she holds a law degree from the University of Texas at Austin. Before joining UNCP in 2002, she was in private practice in Austin and Elizabeth towns.

Payne will succeed Kitty Wetherington, who resigned to join a law firm in the coming months.

ECU is No. 2 in family doctors

The Brody School of Medicine received a national award for its success in sending medical graduates into family medicine.

The American Academy of Family Physicians has given ECU an achievement award for sending 19.1 percent of its medical graduates into family medicine residency programs during the three-year period that ended in October. The Brody School of Medicine ranked behind only the University of Kansas School of Medicine, which sent 21 percent of its graduates into family medicine residencies.

ECU climbed from its ranking of eighth last year.

"This is national recognition and acknowledgement that the Brody School of Medicine faculty continue to support one of the fundamental missions that our medical school was founded on: an emphasis on primary care," said Dr. Kenneth Steinweg, interim chairman of the ECU Department of Family Medicine.

During the three-year period from 2005-07, 35 medical graduates entered family medicine residencies, the training doctors receive before they can practice on their own. Another 11 entered family medicine residencies this year.

ECU was formally recognized May 2 at the spring conference of the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine in Baltimore.

Panel cites work of professor

Gregg Givens, professor and chairman of the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders in the College of Allied Health Sciences, has been recognized by the national Joint Infant Hearing Committee for his work to establish early hearing detection and intervention programs. The committee has members from the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Speech-Language and Hearing Association, Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, American Academy of Audiology, American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery and Council of Education of the Deaf.
By Josh Humphries
The Daily Reflector

Joy Elizabeth Hewitt overcame several family tragedies, a year-and-a-half absence and a full-time job to graduate with honors from East Carolina University and get into Boston College Law School.

Hewitt, originally from Pinetown, graduated this weekend with a degree in political science and will attend Boston College this fall.

She said she chose to go into law, even though she is the first person to go to college in her family, because she despises injustice and wants to help people.

"My momma always said that the women in my family have always had the righteous indignation to get things done," she said. "I will probably go into criminal law or family law. I hate injustice. I don't see the point of wasting three years in law school for something frivolous."

It was that determination to make a difference that pushed Hewitt to graduate after her grandmother died and left her half of the family farm, which she had to learn to manage.

She also dealt with the death of her father while she was in college and an absence from school after her grandmother died. She also worked full time while attending school full time, first at WITN television station working in production, and later as a research assistant.

Taking over half of the family farm was a challenge Hewitt was not ready for at the age of 18, she said. But she made it work.

Now, she rents the land to another farmer, but would never sell. The land has been in her family for at least 100 years.

"When I was growing up, my grandmother ingrained it within me that if it ever became mine that I was not to sell it unless it was to someone in the family," she said. "I will keep it until I die or die trying."

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HEWITT

After inheriting the farm, Hewitt took time off from school to figure out how to manage it. Just as she started back at school, tragedy struck her family again. Just two weeks into the summer session after her return to ECU, Hewitt's father died. She was too determined to let it keep her from succeeding in school.

"I missed two days, and I was right back in class," she said.

After beginning as a communications major, Hewitt became fascinated by political science and switched majors.

"I became especially interested in injustice, the weak, people who can be easily taken advantage of," Hewitt said. "People who can be punished by the system — it makes me mad and that makes me interested."

Her senior honors thesis on media coverage of the institutional role change of the high court of Australia took her eight months to complete.

She is working with her professor, Rhonda Evans-Case, to get the paper published in an Australian political science journal.

Hewitt said her upbringing pushed her to get her degree and to continue her higher education.

"I had very good parents and a good grandmother. Beaufort County is economically devastated and they pushed education to help things," she said. "You have to have a least a four-year degree and preferably something beyond that. They always pushed the dream big thing and to work hard."

Hewitt doesn't take full credit for her success. Good professors, family and friends helped her along the way, she said.

"I have had so many great role models," she said. "There are so many people that have gone above and beyond, it is amazing to me."

Hewitt's friends, Amber Tate and Eric Collins, helped her along, she said. Making it through everything that happened to her in college would have been impossible without them, she said.

"You are the people that you love and the things that you are willing to lay your life on the line for," she said of her friends.

Hewitt is looking forward to the change of living in a major city.

Boston represents a big change from Greenville and the family farm in Pinetown.

"It is going to be great — different scenery and a chance to pursue a career that I am interested in," she said.

Hewitt has not decided whether she will return to eastern North Carolina. She is only 23 years old, with a lot behind her and a lot ahead of her.

"I would like to come back eventually," she said. "I would like to get involved in state government. It all depends on where life takes me."

Joy Hewitt waits to enter her departmental graduation ceremony Saturday at Mendenhall Student Center on the campus of ECU.

Josh Humphries can be contacted at jhumphries@coxnc.com and 339-9965.
Our Views

ABCs test

Change program for the better, carefully

Recent recommendations by a committee of the state Board of Education to revamp North Carolina’s public school testing program are encouraging, but perilous. This contradiction lies in the nature of this beast.

North Carolina’s ABCs of Education testing program, the state’s precedent-setting initiative, is now 15 years old, and in the words of the chairman of a state board-appointed study commission: “The system we have in place has plateaued.”

So where is the peril? It comes with the certainty that the demand for school accountability, cemented in the minds of legislators and the public over those 15 years, certainly is not going to go away — nor should it. But changes to a program as far reaching as this one needs to be handled carefully.

So far, though, so good. The observations and recommendations made by the state board’s panel and accepted by a committee of the board look to be appropriate ones. Among them:

- Too much time is now taken for testing;
- Writing tests in 4th, 7th and 10th grades should be eliminated;
- A version of state tests should be released to the public;
- Overhaul curriculum

It's doubtful many teachers would argue with that first one. Testing currently is the 800-pound gorilla in classrooms statewide, especially as the end of term approaches. There is time taken studying specifically for end-of-grade and other tests, time taken practicing the specific skills needed to take them and time getting psyched to do well on them — it really adds up. Over the 15 years of the ABCs, “teaching to the test” has increasingly become the reality.

As for the writing tests, they have had troubles for years. Trouble with the prompts used, the direction taken, the way they were graded. Good riddance.

And the public should welcome a better look at what all this fuss is about. The need for more help from the home front is always there in the classroom. Releasing more information on the tests could help parents share the burden with teachers.

As for the curriculum, well, we're getting onto thinner ice there. Once again, peril could lurk nearby in trying to change too much at once, but if the shoe needs refitting, then appropriate due diligence might be in order here as well.

The study made other recommendations, including dropping the eighth-grade computer test and other high school tests, but these did not garner widespread support.

Between now and a vote on the matter in June, the state board will be taking public comment on these and other proposals related to the state’s testing program. Everyone with a stake in public education should be concerned and involved with this process. There are few programs with more direct effects on our lives than this one.

So study for it — it’s a test the state needs to ace.
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The youngest of four sons of Minnie Turner Bond and John Cartwright Bell, he was born May 9, 1922. He was a graduate of Windsor High School, the University of North Carolina School of Journalism, the Graduate Institute of International Studies, University of Geneva, Switzerland, and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University.

Mr. Bell served in the U.S. Army from 1943-1946 in the American and European theaters. As a civilian he served as historian, Continental Base Section, War Department, Bad Nauheim, Germany, from 1947-1948.

He was a reporter for the Charlotte News, Editor-Manager of the Bertie Ledger-Advance and Associate Editor for the Greensboro Daily News.

Following his newspaper career he was employed by the U.S. Information Agency, serving as press attache at American Embassies in Santiago, Chile and Bogota, Colombia, as public affairs officer in Quito, Ecuador and Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. His Washington, D.C., assignments included chief of the European branch, International Press Services and chief of foreign media relations.

Mr. Bell was a lifelong advocate for historic preservation, serving on the Friends of Hope Committee, Historic Hope Foundation and the Board of Advisors, Preservation, North Carolina. Mr. Bell was appointed by former Governor Jim Hunt to the North Carolina Cultural Task Force and to the Historic Murfreesboro Commission.

He was a member of the North Carolina Literary and Historical Association, the North Carolina Art Society, the Museum of the Albemarle, the North Carolina Society and the Carolina Charter Corporation, serving on various committees in each. He was president of the Friends of Joyner Library at East Carolina University. He was a national member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

A member of the Episcopal Church, Mr. Bell served on vestries and as senior warden in parishes in his overseas assignments and in the United States. He was appointed historiographer of the Diocese of East Carolina in 1991, serving until his retirement in 2007 when he made historiographer emeritus.

Mr. Bell is survived by his wife, Clara Bond Bell, two daughters, Lisa Bell Lancellia and her husband Jim Lancellia of Johnston, Pa.; C.B. Guess and her husband Keith Guess of Summerville, S.C.; his son Holley Mack Bell III of Raleigh; two granddaughters, Meg Guess and Julia Bond Guess; and his grandson, Robert Holley Kintner of Chapel Hill.

A celebration of life service will be held at St. Thomas’ Episcopal Church on Wednesday at 11 a.m. followed by a reception at the home, 407 South King St.

The family requests in lieu of flowers that memorial contributions be made to St. Thomas’ Church Memorial Trust, P.O. Box 400, Windsor, N.C. 27988 or The Friends of Hope Endowment, 132 Hope House Road, Windsor, N.C. 27983 or to a charity of one’s choice.

Arrangements by Walker Funeral Homes.
Police trying a new system

Community-based plan divides city into four sections, each commanded by an officer who works with local residents.

By Michael Abramowitz
The Daily Reflector

Two weeks ago, when the Greenville Police Department faced eight armed robberies in less than three days, Chief William Anderson and his command officers knew it would be the first real test of their new community policing plan.

Although no suspects have been arrested for those crimes, Anderson said he has been pleased with the effectiveness of the system he calls the "Area Policing Plan."

While using the system to search for the robbery suspects, officers arrested a man for a break-in and larceny, along with three others for a separate strong-arm robbery in the area they were searching, Anderson said.

He and his commanders attributed those arrests to the new area policing system.
Anderson said the recent rash of armed robberies makes it a good time to talk about the way the department does its police work now.

"In March, we went to a different style of policing," Anderson said. "We divided the city into four sections. Each section is commanded by a lieutenant, who is given the responsibility of identifying problems, communicating and working with residents of the community and then directing resources to deal with crime in the area."

Capt. Tom Forrest, the bureau commander for patrol duty, oversees those lieutenants, and Forrest reports to Anderson.
The robberies illustrate how the system works, Forrest said.
"When the three East Carolina University students were robbed in one night, we spoke with the area supervisor, Lt. Ed Carson, first thing in the morning and asked what he plans to do — so the wheels were in motion by 10 a.m.," Forrest said. "We were able to discuss some strategies, come up with a plan and move some resources around."

Forrest said Greenville officers had a briefing with ECU police, who had already allocated additional resources.

By noon that day, additional officers were sent to the neighborhood, Forrest said, and, by 5 p.m., they made an arrest on a break-in, though it was not connected to the robberies.

"I don't think all that would have been possible without this..."
POLICE
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plan and the mindset to take the initiative and be proactive right off the bat," Forrest said.

"Before now, if a crime problem occurred, the chief would ask me what we're doing to address the issues," he said. "The problem with that was, it held me geographically responsible for the entire city.

"We realized the only way to improve accountability was to share it throughout the department, so we came up with the idea of area commanders."

The first phase was implemented in January. Lieutenants were assigned to their areas and given the opportunity to get a feel for the process, Forrest said.

In March, command-level planners took the existing 12 patrol districts divided them among the lieutenants, giving each a group of three.

"We tried to group the districts into an area that shares common problems," Forrest said. "For example, the Tar River area above the East Carolina University campus has common trails and problems. Hopefully, the problems become a little easier to manage."

Now, Forrest said, each area commander can focus on one segment of the city, keeping tabs on its trends and tendencies, rather than the whole of Greenville.

Anderson said he still expects each area commander to have citywide knowledge, "but now, I have someone I can go to who's working with the residents of that area, has knowledge of the conditions there and can designate resources to address the problems that the citizens face in a particular area.

"The department's information technicians are working to rebalance and refine the four areas' 12 districts so each has the same basic issues. That makes it easier to work the particular neighborhoods there, Forrest said.

Crime trends are fluid, he said, and a problem in one area may be in another tomorrow — so police must be ready to move among areas, readjusting plans from week to week, even day to day.

Anderson says the new system has inherent advantages.

"By having area policing, with officers and commanders permanently assigned to an area, the residents of a community can share information with them, and the lieutenant can work with them and attend community meetings, share e-mails with his officers and get information flowing back and forth, all geared toward problem-solving," Anderson said.

Lt. Ted Sauls, who supervises the area including west Greenville, has spent lots of time with citizens and property owners during that neighborhood's revitalization process. He said he wants them to share a sense of ownership of issues they face together.

Sauls said he spent a lot of time with one owner facing security problems with one of his properties. The owner explained the issues with which he needed police help, then listened as Sauls told him how to help police at some of his other properties.

"That is unprecedented in my career," Sauls said.

Many of the issues facing residents and owners are not tied directly to crime or police, Forrest said, but the partnership can address many quality-of-life issues and foster the sense of joint ownership.

That's just what Anderson wants between his officers and their communities, but he is quick to say that residents must take the initiative to get involved and share ownership with law enforcement, churches, schools and each other.

"That's the message we have to send across the board: we need help with all of the issues," Anderson said. "Whether it's 100 burglaries or eight robberies, we have to be aware of what's going on and work together."

Michael Abramowitz can be contacted at mAbramowitz@coxnc.com and 329-9571.
UNC frat holds a reunion

The Daily Reflector

The seventh annual reunion of the Epsilon chapter of Phi Gamma Delta Fraternity of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill recently was held in Greenville. Eighty-eight fraternity members attended, with one traveling from as far as Wisconsin.

The attendance was 80 more than the first reunion held in 2000, when eight fraternity brothers met for lunch with Bill Hedrick of Atlanta, who was traveling through Greenville on his way to a vacation at Wrightsville Beach.

"Bill Hedrick and I, preparing for the first reunion, never in the wildest dreamed we would see the affair taking on a life of its own and grow so rapidly," said Dixie "Dick" Greene of Greenville.

But the reunion has strong appeal, Greene said, because attendance is restricted, with a few exceptions, to those fraternity members who graduated from UNC between 1945 and 1955.

"We began with a strong focus on having brothers to attend who were contemporary with us at Chapel Hill over our undergraduate years. By all, the central theme was commonality. We ate meals at the house and had association with each other once, twice or maybe three times in 24 hours."
Hot weather, warm wishes at ECU graduation

By Josh Humphries
The Daily Reflector

A hot spring morning marked graduation at East Carolina University.

Graduates and their friends and families attended the ceremony at Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium by the thousands, despite the uncomfortable weather.

With temperatures around 80 degrees and only a light breeze for relief, many graduates and their families left the stadium before the ceremony was over.

But that happens every year, said John Durham, chief public affairs officer with the university. He said people usually begin to leave after the person they came to see is recognized.

Nearly 3,400 students graduated from ECU on Saturday, including approximately 2,400 undergraduates, 910 graduate/professional students and 73 medical students.

About half of the undergraduate students attended the ceremony Saturday, many choosing only to attend departmental ceremonies that occurred Friday and Saturday around Greenville.

Jonelle Conner, a communications major graduate, said she preferred the departmental graduation and left the large ceremony early.

"It was interesting that they put us into the stands," Conner said. "I thought we would be on the grass. It will be interesting to see if they change it next year."

Seth Stringer, also a communications major graduate, left early with Conner. He said most students left after their part of the ceremony was over.

Both graduates had family members in attendance that left early to get some barbecue and enjoy the day. The two-

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ECU
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hour ceremony drew more than 2,000 spectators.

The first three doctorate degrees in medical family therapy at ECU or any other university in the country were awarded to Ryan Anderson, Amy Blanchard and Patrick Meadors, a special occasion for the university, said Chancellor Steve Ballard.

Graduates heard from several speakers at the ceremony, including the commencement address from Thomas Spaulding, a 1992 ECU graduate and CEO of Up with People.

Spaulding told the crowd the story of how he, as an ECU graduate with a 2.0 grade-point-average, earned a prestigious Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship. He said he was competing against Harvard, Yale and Princeton graduates with perfect academic records. But his experience with his roommate in college who was paralyzed in their freshman year and his rejection from 35 law schools appealed to the scholarship committee and he got the chance to get an MBA from Bond University in Australia.

"The most important question is: what is your contribution going to be?" Spaulding said. "You don't think about it when you are 50, 60, 70. You think about it today."

Spaulding quoted Thomas Jefferson on volunteerism, saying that volunteering is the price you pay for democracy.

"Are you going to pay your rent?" Spaulding asked the graduates.

Walter Williams, who received an honorary doctor of letters degree Saturday from ECU, challenged the graduates to find something they love to do.

"I challenge you to enjoy what you do," he said. "You will not look forward to retiring. You will look forward to working every day."
ECU's School of Engineering graduates first class today

By Josh Humphries

The first class of engineering students will graduate from East Carolina University today—a day of genuine celebration for those who launched the program four years ago.
The department of engineering began with 42 freshmen students in 2004, and 22 students will pick up their degrees in a ceremony at 6 p.m. today.
Eighteen of the original students are included in this class; four others joined during the second semester of the program.
"It is gratifying to see those faces from way back when," said Paul Kauffmann, department chair. "When you think

CLASS
Continued from A1

about the entrepreneurial spirit of this group—they really put a lot of faith in the university to come here and try a brand new program."
Eddie Hoffman, of Raleigh, is one of the graduates in the first class. He will begin a job with CMC Steel in Columbia, S.C., in June.
"It was a great program," Hoffman said. "Very hands-on. We had small class sizes and a lot of personal interaction with the professors. All of the students are close-knit.
Hoffman said he would recommend the program at ECU to any high school student interested in engineering.
"You are at a large university, but it has a small university feel," he said. "Any program is what you make of it, but this one offers great opportunities for the students here."
The first class will graduate with a bachelor of science degree in engineering with a concentration in systems engineering.
The program now offers three other concentrations: engineering management, bio-process engineering and bio-medical engineering.
Next year's class will include students from systems engineering, bio-process engineering and engineering management, Kauffmann said.
"We think these are four solid fields for North Carolina's economy," Kauffmann said. "We expect to see long and successful careers here as they add to the kinds of jobs that eastern North Carolina can hire for."
The program was a long time coming and began in the planning phases in the mid-1990s. Kauffmann joined the university one year before the program began and helped create the documents required for a new degree program.
There are currently 13 faculty members and Kauffmann expects that number to grow to more than 20 in a decade. Eventually, he said, the program will have 400 students.
"One of the big pluses is that we have succeeded in developing a solid relationship between students and faculty," he said. "That gives ECU a competitive advantage over other programs that are very large."
There will be 125 freshman engineering students at ECU this fall.
"We are interested in tracking these students as they get out into the workplace," Kauffmann said.
"One of them needs to come back and build us a building," he joked.
Kauffmann is excited about the future of the program that he believes is very important for the economy of eastern North Carolina.
"It is exciting to think about when we will have 90 graduates in a year," Kauffmann said. "I am looking forward to the 25th anniversary to see where all of these students end up,"

Josh Humphries can be contacted at jhumphries@coxnc.com and 339-9565.
ECU graduation weekend brings in big bucks

Influx of people to keep local businesses busy

By Tom Marine
The Daily Reflector

The financial waves from graduation and Mother's Day are rippling through Greenville businesses, as nearly $1 million are estimated to be spent this weekend.

Debbie Vargas, executive director of the Greenville-Pitt County Convention & Visitors Bureau, calculated about $300,000 will be on lodging and an additional $600,000 for meals, gas and other purchases, such as souvenirs.

"All of our hotel rooms are full," Vargas said. "This is one of the biggest weekends of the year."

Mike Horton, general manager of Chico's Mexican Restaurant, said his restaurant has been busy all week long.

"This is the busiest week of the year for us," Horton said. "We're seeing a lot of people coming in here to say their goodbyes or to celebrate their grades."

Horton said Chico's had more than 100 people reserved spots for Friday night, spread

GRADUATES: Slideshows capture some of Friday's departmental graduations at East Carolina University. Check them out at reflector.com/scenarounds.

ECU MOMS: East Carolina students, graduates and their moms talk about gifts and wishes on campus Friday. Watch the video with this story on reflector.com. Also, vote in our poll on television moms on the home page.

See GRAD, A9

out through the day, and another 84 customers set to come eat on Saturday.

"It will be crazy in here," he said.

To help illustrate his point, Horton said the week leading up to this weekend also factors into the equation. He said Cinco de Mayo, last Monday, has become the restaurant's busiest day of the year.

The weather and downtown location, Horton said, are what drives customers to come out and enjoy themselves.

"It's just huge," Dawn Boyd-Cribari, general manager of Best Western Suites, said. "These parents come from all over the country to support their children."

Boyd-Cribari said the hotel started booking for this weekend almost one year ago and were full by September.

"We are very appreciative to be where we are and have the relationship that we do with the university," she said. "Without it, we wouldn't be busy."

Linus Martinez, co-owner of Professor O'Cool's Eating and Drinking Saloon, said they have a couple of parties scheduled in their banquet room. But other than that, he said graduation comes and goes.

"In the restaurant industry, Mother's Day is a huge day," Martinez said. "We have a sports bar mentality, so you would need to have a pretty cool mom to get her here."

Tom Marine can be contacted at tmarine@coxnc.com and 329-9557.
Laurels — To the receipt of a federal grant that has empowered the Pitt County public health department and East Carolina University’s Brody School of Medicine to more aggressively fight HIV and AIDS in this community. The hope is the partnership will be able to better locate local residents afflicted by the disease who are not receiving treatment. We should hope for their success in this endeavor.

Laurels — To the many campaign signs located along road signs that some candidates are likely to abandon following the Tuesday primary election. Those signs serve an important purpose prior to the election, but become little more than eyesores and trash in its aftermath. Thanks to the diligent and their supporters who collect their signs, and shame on those who leave them to yellow in the sun. Show some community pride and pick up after yourselves.

Laurels — To Mother’s Day, and the opportunity it affords to say a devoted thanks to your mom. While many will mark that Sunday by taking mom out to a special brunch or making sure she has a day for herself to relax and enjoy, mothers should be appreciated throughout the year for the many challenges they face. They deserve more than a single day set aside for them, so make sure this one is special.

Darts — To the crime spate that continues to sow fear in this community. At least eight criminal attacks, all of them brazen and repugnant, occurred the first week of May in Greenville. While law enforcement are working diligently to maintain public safety — and have made some arrests — these incidents have to be halted and those responsible punished.

Laurels, Darts — To the recovery of Captain Jack, the painted decorative pirate at University Book Exchange stolen on April 29. And darts to the theft of another pirate Thursday at Greenville’s city offices. The Cap’n, one of 16 statues placed around the city, was recovered from Elmhurst Elementary School following a tip from a passerby. The city’s pirate was recovered, slightly damaged, two blocks away. Avast there mateys. Enough already!

Compiled by Brian Colligan, editorial page editor of The Daily Reflector. Contact him at 329-9507 or via e-mail at bcolligan@coxnc.com
Wright photos found

Early flight images go on exhibit today

BY JIM NESBITT
STAFF WRITER

The definitive image of the Wright Brothers' world-first flight has been a sepia-toned photograph, faded by time, from those scant airborne seconds of December 17, 1903.

There is Orville Wright, supine and centered on the lower wing of the fragile heavier-than-air craft, gliding a few feet above the flat sands near Big Kill Devil Hill. His brother, Wilbur, is groundbound, a few feet from the right wing tip, frozen in chase. It is a famous frame, the inspiration for postage stamps and the silhouette forever in flight above the numbers of North Carolina license plates.

"We in North Carolina pay homage to that famous photograph of that first flight," said Larry Tise, the Orville and Wilbur Wright distinguished professor of history at East Carolina University, will present forgotten photos of a 1908 flight by the aviation pioneers that were the first published images of their feat.

WHERE: N.C. Museum of History, 5 Edenton St., Raleigh.

TO SEE MORE

To view both pictures of the historic flights of the Wright Brothers, go to www.worldofft.org.

IF YOU GO

WHAT: Larry Tise, Orville and Wilbur Wright distinguished professor of history at East Carolina University, will present forgotten photos of a 1908 flight by the aviation pioneers that were the first published images of their feat.

WHERE: N.C. Museum of History, 5 Edenton St., Raleigh.

WHEN: 11 a.m.

It was the first picture taken, but not the first published of the aviation pioneers in flight. That distinction belongs to an image captured May 14, 1908 — 100 years ago on Wednesday — by one of America's first photojournalists, James H. Hare, according to Tise's tireless research into all things involving the Wright Brothers.

Taken at long range — paparazzi-style but in an age before massive telephoto lenses — it shows a tiny image of a Wright machine, an airborne speck above the dark sand, with Big Kill Devil Hill rising ghostly gray in the distance.

There's a reason Hare didn't get a better shot from a shorter distance, said
WRIGHT
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

Tise, The secretive brothers, jealously guarding the technical key to their fragile success, weren’t ready for a worldwide close-up.

So, in classic tabloid style that would be easily recognized today, Hare and reporters from London, New York, Chicago and Norfolk, Va., staked out the Wrights at a distance to record photographs and a story the Wrights didn’t authorize, braving sand and biting insects that reached everywhere.

“That’s as close as they got, but that was enough to send the story around the world,” said Tise, who will present Hare’s images today at the N.C. Museum of History in Raleigh.

Hare took his glass-plate images. An enhanced and doctored image — typical of the times and a precursor of PhotoShopped alterations of today — ran in the New York Herald on May 20, 1908, said Tise. It appeared in Collier’s Weekly Magazine a week later.

Taken nearly five years after the first flight, Hare’s image went around the globe, said Tise, eclipsing the now-famous image of the Wright Brothers’ triumph snapped by local lifesaver John T. Daniels the moment it happened.

Daniels’ photograph of the Wright Flyer wasn’t published until September 1908, four months after Hare’s photograph — a fact that provided independent record that the brothers’ machine could fly, creating a global sensation. The lifesaver’s image — he was one of the locals employed by the brothers when they came to Kitty Hawk from Dayton, Ohio, to test their designs — didn’t rise to prominence until nearly 20 years later, in the midst of the acrimonious discussions about whether to credit the Wright Brothers for their first flight, let alone build them a monument.

As Daniels’ photograph became iconic, becoming both a piece of Americana and a source of chauvinistic North Carolina pride, Hare’s image faded into obscurity. Tise knew it existed but searched fruitlessly until he located an uncatalogued collection of Hare’s work at the Harry Ransom Center for the Humanities, a research library at the University of Texas specializing in the 20th century.

For two years, he exchanged letters and phone calls with library researchers, who were uncertain whether the Wright photos were in their collection because they hadn’t organized it.

Tise then bought a plane ticket to Austin, Texas. Within three hours of arriving at the library and poring through the Hare collection, he hit photographic paydirt.

“Sure enough, I found them, and they’re fabulous,” he said.

What Tise discovered were 31 small glass slides copied directly from the camera’s glass plate negatives. Dubbed lantern slides, Hare used these in a traveling lecture tour he called “On the Trail of the Wright Brothers.”

Of those, 18 slides were of the airborne Wright machine, a second-generation airplane much heavier and more sophisticated than the first-flight machine. It represented a bid to win military contracts in America and Europe. Different, too, was the position of the pilot and an added observer — seated upright rather than supine, steering the aircraft with a rudimentary control stick.

Tise’s discovery is now on display at the Wright Brothers National Memorial in Kill Devil Hills. Hare’s images resurrect how the world discovered the Wright Brothers could fly.

“Our great and famous photograph was kind of an afterthought,” he said.

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Rain commences, graduations go on

Rain dampened outdoor commencement ceremonies Sunday morning at UNC-Chapel Hill and Duke University and chased Meredith College graduates to exercise a drafty, bad-weather backup not far from campus — Dorton Arena at the State Fairgrounds in Raleigh.

Some Duke and UNC graduates wore makeshift garbage-bag ponchos and other plastic covering for their caps and gowns. Meredith graduates shivered in the indoor chill of an arena open to the damp outdoor breezes.

At Duke University, the mortarboard toss was accompanied by another celebratory flourish — the umbrella pump. Thousands of grads in soggy polyester gowns sat through commencement ceremonies at Wallace Wade Stadium while proud relatives huddled under umbrellas and used their commencement programs as seat cushions on wet bleachers.

At UNC, rain prompted university officials to ditch the commencement speeches of opera singer Jessye Norman and other speakers and move quickly to dispensing diplomas.

The result: a ceremony of about 20 minutes.

Eric Ferreri, Jane Stancill and Sue Stock
UNC-Chapel Hill

THE CEREMONY: UNC-Chapel Hill commencement at Kenan Stadium

BY THE NUMBERS: 5,509 graduates in all: 3,492 bachelor's degrees, 1,214 master's degrees, 204 doctoral and 599 professional degrees and certificates.

RAIN-DRIVEN DIPLOMAS: Retiring university chancellor James Moeser, presiding over his eighth and final commencement, elicited throaty cheers of joy and weighty sighs of relief with two simple sentences.

"We're going to go straight to the conferment of degrees," he announced at the outset of what turned out to be just a 20-minute ceremony. "This may be the shortest commencement exercise in the history of the university."

It was a soaked, bedraggled group that filed into the stadium. Several forward-thinking grads wore garbage bags over their gowns. A few young ladies, perhaps unprepared for the unexpectedly cool, damp weather, wore flip-flops on their feet and gloves on their hands.

One graduate resolutely tucked a forlorn-looking balloon declaring “Congratulations!” under her umbrella as she headed for her seat.

Said graduating senior David Cheshire of Greensboro: "I guess ... [the rain] makes it more memorable. But I do wish it was sunny."

TRADITIONS: The rain-shortened ceremony still included a couple of longtime Carolina standards. The Bell Tower outside Kenan Stadium chimed "Hark the Sound," as graduates approached. Once degrees were conferred, the exercise ended, as it always does, with the Clef Hangers, a student singing group, belting out James Taylor's "Carolina In My Mind." Eyes misted.

WHO SPOKE: The abbreviated ceremony featured just two speakers, Moeser and Ashley Shores — the senior class president.

"I share your sense of nostalgia and reluctance to let go," said Moeser, who will take a one-year sabbatical and return to teach, "I, too, am graduating."

The shadow of Eve Carson, the popular student body president whose killing earlier this year shook the campus, hung a bit over the ceremony. A university spokesman said Carson was awarded a bachelor's degree with highest distinction in her double majors, biology and political science. Many students wore buttons of remembrance bearing her name.

Shores, the senior class president, remembered her fondly and read from a statement Carson's father, Bob, had written to the UNC student body.

"Go! Be excited about the endless possibilities your diploma grants," Shores read. "Set forth today and go."

WHO DIDN'T SPEAK: Along with the usual avalanche of generic well wishes from dignitaries, graduates Sunday did not hear from opera singer Jessye Norman, who was scheduled to deliver the commencement address before the rain truncated the ceremony.

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Meredith College

THE CEREMONY: Meredith College commencement, held in the back-up facility, Dorton Arena, at the State Fairgrounds.

NUMBER OF GRADUATES: 379


WHAT SHE SAID: Under the theme of "Great Expectations," McCain told graduates they should be caring and compassionate, continue learning, be loyal to each other and their school, be leaders, be realistic, be enthusiastic and have faith.

"It's not going to be easy," she told the class, "It will require the best you have to offer."

And McCain showed a sense of humor about the last-minute change of venue, referencing this month’s Democratic Jefferson-Jackson Dinner at Dorton Arena, at which Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton and Sen. Barack Obama spoke.

"You may be the only graduating class in Meredith history who had two political candidates come nine days before their graduation as their warm-up act," she said.

YES, YES, OF COURSE YOU'RE PROUD OF THEM: Allen Page, vice president for academic programs, drew an appreciative chuckle from the crowd when he began the diploma presentation ceremony by saying, "We ask you to hold your applause until the end. However, there will be no effort to suppress spontaneous expressions of enthusiasm for individual students."

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HIGH FASHION: Nearly a third of the graduates decorated their caps as an expression of celebration and a way to help their loved ones pick them out of the crowd.

Students chose to adorn their caps with their initials, graduation year, messages to their parents and even messages in foreign languages (such as "J'ai tini," French for "I finished").

Raleigh resident Nikki Dublin Turner may have had the most unusual cap. Earning a degree in dance, Turner divided her cap into quarters and devoted one to her husband, who is serving in Iraq, one to her family, one to dance and one to God.

"I've been working on this degree for six years," she said. "I thought I should make it special."

BEST OVERHEARD CONVERSATION: Embracing her friend in a hug, St. Louis native Ashley Vaughan declared to Cary resident Preethi Srimur, "We're graduates!"

"I know!" Srimur cried back. "We're alumni now," concurred Jordy Featherston of Richmond, Va.

"Yeah, it's scary," Vaughan replied.

SUNNY SPIRITS: Graduates and their families seemed to take Sunday's rain in stride.

"It rained on my brother's graduation last year," said Kate Robinson, a Garner resident who got her child development degree Sunday. "We're pros at this."
Duke University


NUMBER OF DEGREES AWARDED: More than 4,000

COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER: Barbara Kingsolver, bestselling author of "The Poisonwood Bible."

WHAT SHE SAID: Kingsolver first gave permission for graduates to make an exit as the raindrops quickened. Then she gave a sobering 24-minute speech that focused on a degraded environment where people are becoming increasingly isolated and economic progress threatens the earth.

"And so we find ourselves in the chapter of history I would entitle: 'Isolation and Efficiency, and How They Came Around to Bite Us in the Backside.' Because it's looking that way. We're a world at war, ravaged by disagreements, a bizarrely globalized people in which the extravagant excesses of one culture wash up as famine or flood on the shores of another. Even the architecture of our planet is collapsing under the weight of our efficient productivity.... Previous generations rarely asked about the hidden costs. We put them on layaway. You don't get to do that. The bill has come due."

"In the last 30 years our material wealth has increased in this country, but our self-described happiness has steadily declined. Elsewhere, the people who consider themselves very happy are not in the very poorest nations, as you might guess, nor in the very richest. The winners are Mexico, Ireland, Puerto Rico, the kinds of places we identify with extended family, noisy villages, a lot of dancing. The happiest people are the ones with the most community. You can take that to the bank."

MUCH-NEEDED LIGHT MOMENT: Graduates Matt Zafirovski and Kyle Knight, who were freshman roommates, gave a two-man speech. The world has changed dramatically since the class of 2008 arrived at Duke. Zafirovski commented, "For example, Pluto is no longer a planet."

In a back-and-forth style comedy routine, Matt and Kyle talked about their trials and triumphs at Duke, including the time they went out for the men's basketball team.

Matt: "In truth, our paths were wildly different, but we remained friends and we found a way to play in Cameron after all."

Kyle: "We made the women's basketball practice team. Abby Waner: you can't stop Matt Zafirovski! You can only hope to contain him."

MUST-HAVE ACCESSORIES: Umbrella or trashbag raincoat.

ONE GRADUATE: Mia Bolling of Richmond, Va., is ready to move on to the next step, she said, which is a few years in the working world before applying to medical school. She was relieved when the ceremony was over. "I was wet and cold, fingers and toes all numb," she said, dripping but happy. "It would have been even better on a sunny and warm day."

Jane Stancill
NCSU ecologist receives honor

RALEIGH — JoAnn Burkholder, an ecologist at N.C. State University who did groundbreaking research on a marine microbe linked to fish kills in the Neuse River, has received River Network’s highest award, the James R. Compton River Achievement Award.

Burkholder endured criticism for her findings that an algae, *Pfiesteria piscicida*, found in North Carolina and Maryland waters was dangerous to people and fish. But federal researchers validated her work, announcing two species of *Pfiesteria* transform from harmless microbes into “toxic organisms that can cause estuarine fish kills.”

River Network is a national non-profit organization working for clean and healthy waters. “This award is to recognize Dr. Burkholder for her great work, but more importantly, let the public know her scientific discoveries have been validated,” said Don Elder, executive director of River Network.
Valedictorian unlikely ambassador for black school

BY ERIK HADEN
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATLANTA — From his first day at Morehouse College — the country’s only institution of higher learning dedicated specifically to the education of black men — Joshua Packwood has been a standout.

His popularity got him elected dorm president as a freshman. His looks and physique made him a fashion-show favorite. His intellect made him a Rhodes Scholar finalist. His work ethic landed him a job at the prestigious investment banking firm Goldman Sachs in New York City.

But it’s his skin that has made all of this an anomaly. This week, Packwood is set to take the stage and address his classmates as the first white valedictorian in Morehouse’s 141-year history.

The 22-year-old from Kansas City, Mo., will graduate Sunday with a perfect 4.0 GPA and a degree in economics.

He could have gone elsewhere, to a school like Columbia, Stanford or Yale, but his four-year journey through Morehouse has taught him a few things that they could not, and he makes it clear that he has no regrets.

“I’ve been forced to see the world in a different perspective, that I don’t think I could’ve gotten anywhere else,” he said. “None of the Ivies, no matter how large their enrollment is, no matter how many Nobel laureates they have on their faculty ... none of them could’ve provided me with the perspective I have now.”

When Packwood applied to Morehouse, he had frequent conversations with George Gray, an alumnus who was a recruiter at the school. Gray was impressed by Packwood’s credentials and spent months trying to talk the sought-

after senior into choosing Morehouse over other elite schools.

But after several conversations, Packwood began to suspect that Gray had no idea that he was white. His suspicions were confirmed when one of Gray’s calls caught Packwood in the middle of track practice.

“Don’t let the white kids walk you down,” Gray quipped.

“Wait,” Packwood responded. “You know I’m white, right?”


“The challenge was to get the best student that we could, and Josh definitely fit that,” Gray said.

And for Packwood, knowing that he had been picked on his merits, and not as a token white recruit, made the difference.

Packwood was among the few white students in his class at Grandview Senior High School in Kansas City. His mother was married to a black man and he has mixed-race siblings. Packwood’s experiences growing up have helped him navigate black culture while remaining comfortable with his own complexion.

Once, Packwood was asked to sit on a panel about interracial relationships. He spent the first hour of the panel getting warmed up, feeling out the crowd and trying to couch his thoughts.

“It was kind of heated, and there were very strong views on both sides,” he said. “But eventually I realized they put me on the panel not to just pander to the crowd, but to voice my opinion.”

Packwood said such exchanges taught him a lesson.

“Sometimes I kind of wanted to hold back,” he acknowledged. “A lot of the professors and students have been like, ‘No, don’t hold back. We want your perspective here. If we’re not going to get it from you, it’s going to be very difficult for us to get it somewhere else.’ ”

Being surrounded by black men for his undergraduate career has taught him more about diversity, Packwood said.

“I’ve been here for four years and yet, I cannot give you the definition of black,” he said. “I cannot tell you what a black man is. I really learned to look much deeper. It takes a lot of effort to know people.”
Grads fulfill hopes of covenant plan

Mentor devoted to UNC aid program

BY ERIC FERRERI
STAFF WRITER

CHAPEL HILL — To be a Carolina Covenant scholar at UNC-Chapel Hill is to have a guardian angel named Fred. Fred Clark, 64, is the angel — though he prefers the term "grandfather" — for nearly 1,400 low-income students going to school free under the university's covenant scholarship program. If you drop out, Clark will cajole you to return. If you have a toothache and no health insurance — one student's plight not long ago — he'll get you treatment at the dental school. No charge. And if you don't have plans for lunch, he'll take you out for a burger.

Since the program began four years ago, Clark has quietly cleared a path for these scholars from Day 1 to commencement. Today, the first group graduates. Jeremy Fulton of Morehead City, a member of the covenant

SEE COVENANT, PAGE 12A
program's first class who is graduating today, said of Clark. "He's always there and always wants to know how you're doing. It's really reassuring. You don't have to worry too much because you know if you have a question, you can just go to him."

The university is heavily invested in the success of these students, many the products of poor urban or rural school systems and some from single-parent homes, and he is committed to clearing obstacles from their paths.

The covenant program was unveiled to much fanfare in 2003, lauded locally and nationally as a shift in the way public universities administer scholarship dollars. It was politically popular in a state whose public university system is built on the belief that a college education should be broadly affordable and accessible. A capital campaign to underwrite its expenses, led by Tar Heel basketball coach Roy Williams, has raised $10 million and is aiming for twice that total.

Inspired by a program at Princeton, the covenant spawned more than 80 imitators, according to one of several UNC-Ch press releases issued last week trumpeting the program and its first graduates.

Although the precise number of scholars graduating today was not clear, more than 90 percent of the 224 scholars who enrolled in fall 2004 were still in school last week, officials said.

Plotting for success

Statistically, low-income college students are likely to come from high schools offering fewer advanced courses and less academic support. From the outset, university officials knew these students would need extra attention, said Shirley Ort, director of scholarships and student aid.

"We want to remove barriers to their academic success once they're here," she said. "It's not enough just to get them here."

Other universities preach a similar message. At N.C. State, the two-year-old Pack Promise — a scholarship program patterned after UNC-Ch's covenant — leans heavily on 48 academic coaches who work specifically with the program's students, many of whom are the first in their families to go to college.

"This is a new experience for many of these students and for their parents," said Julie Rice Mallette, N.C. State's director of scholarships and financial aid. "You can put all the money you want on the table, but if you don't have the academic and social support, you won't succeed."

In Chapel Hill, that's where Clark comes in. A professor of Portuguese who has worked at UNC-Ch for 41 years, Clark is an oasis of calm for students on a chaotic four-year journey. On a given day, he might counsel a covenant scholar on financial aid, mental health or grades. He might line up testing if he suspects a learning disability. Several times a week, he sends out blanket e-mail to his brood, advising them of the latest academic skills workshop he has lined up or letting them know he has free vouchers available to a concert or dance recital at the Carolina Performing Arts Series.

"We liken it to invisible fencing we put around these scholars," said Ort, who helped create the covenant program. "Even though they may not be aware, there are people conspiring for them to be successful."

What covenant offers

The program offers a full scholarship to students whose family incomes are below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. The scholars receive free tuition, fees, room, board and books. They pay part of their way through work-study jobs.

All this free education isn't free. This year, the full freight on 1,383 students cost about $10 million, paid through a combination of federal, state and local grants, scholarships and work-study funding. But the extras — support staff such as Clark, the daily lunches or dinners, receptions and trips — are financed privately with help from an endowment created soon after the covenant was created. This year, Ort said, the university spent about $200,000 on those extras.

Renatta Craven is appreciative. The Raleigh native, part of the first covenant class four years ago, was reared by her grandmother after her mother died when she was 2 and her father left the family. The duo somehow got by on Ida Craven's Social Security checks, and the covenant program prevented them from borrowing against their small brick home.

Today Renatta Craven graduates with honors. When she goes to work as a nurse at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center, she'll look back fondly on her years in Chapel Hill. She probably would have gone to UNC-Ch even without the covenant scholarship, but she knows her college experience would have been different if she had been saddled with a mountain of debt.

"I would have felt a step behind everyone else," she said. "The Carolina Covenant just made things more equal."

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Spoons at the ready

Frankly, I was astonished to read a quote attributed to UNC Chancellor James Moeser in your May 3 article “5 arrested at UNC-CH sit-in.”

While there is much hand-wringing about the “apathetic, self-centered” generation, we UNC-CH alums can be proud that UNC students have been steadfastly campaigning to build a better world. These students want UNC to join many other universities in the Designated Supplier Program, whose aim is to ensure that workers who make UNC trademark clothing earn a living wage and have some voice in their working conditions.

Moeser is quoted as saying, of the campaign: “It’s idealistic. It’s equivalent to trying to bail out the Pacific Ocean with a teaspoon.” Sound familiar? It’s almost exactly what was said of Mother Teresa when she picked up the first dying person off the street.

Is the suggestion that we should not bother to envision or work for peace, justice, human rights, if we can’t do it all at once? Are we to barricade ourselves in our homes, lock our teaspoons in the drawer and watch sit-coms?

Here’s an alternative suggestion: Ocean-bailers unite! Pass me a teaspoon, and let’s all keep working together to bail that ocean, one teaspoon at a time.

Jean Chapman
Bear Creek
Colleges, students pay recruiters

Practice raises ethical questions

BY TAMAR LEWIN
THE NEW YORK TIMES

ATHENS, Ohio — When Xiaoxi Li, a 20-year-old from Beijing, decided she should go to college in the United States, she applied only to Ohio University — not that she knew much about it.

"I heard of Ohio, of course," Li said. "I knew it was in the middle and has agriculture."

What brought her to Ohio was the recommendation of a Chinese recruiting agent, JLL Overseas Education Consulting and Service Co. For about $3,000, JLL helped Li choose a college, complete the application and prepare for the all-important visa interview.

Everyone I know used an agent," she said. "They are professionals. They suggested Ohio University might be the best for me. They have a good relationship with Ohio University."

Actually, JLL has more than a good relationship with Ohio University. Unknown to Li, it has a contract under which the agent gets a $1,000 commission for each undergraduate it sends.

British and Australian universities have for years paid commissions to overseas recruiting agents and have attracted a growing share of international students. Now the practice is spreading in the United States, especially at community colleges and public universities eager to enroll more international students, who may pay several times the in-state tuition. Many schools that use agents, including some small, private religious colleges, would have little hope of attracting students from around the world to diversify their campuses without the recruiters.

Ethics in question

But the use of agents is raising uncomfortable questions and strong feelings. Some education officials are uneasy about a system in which those who advise students on their college selection have a financial stake in the choice. They fear the approach could make the college-admissions process into a global bounty hunt.

"Putting recruiters on any kind of commission makes them out-and-out sales agents," said Barak Nassirian, associate executive director of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers. Like JLL, many agents collect hefty fees from both sides — the students they advise, and the universities they contract with — leaving some to question whose interest is being served. Even some advocates of recruiting agents see a need for an ethics code.

"We should be doing this, but we should be doing it right," said Mitch Leventhal, vice provost of international affairs at the University of Cincinnati, which has contracts with agents. "And I don't think it's right for students to have to pay a lot if the agent is also getting paid by the university. I don't think it's ethical."

Scouring the globe

Agents range from huge operations like JLL to mom-and-pop outfits — and from reputable to fly-by-night. No one keeps track of how many agents there are, how many receive commissions from universities or how many students they send to the United States. But those familiar with the flow of international students say thousands, mostly from Asia, use agents to come to American institutions, particularly community colleges with intensive English programs.

Some agents are paid mostly through commissions from universities; others are paid entirely by the students, with the university never knowing that an agent was involved. The State Department also operates hundreds of offices worldwide advising students on study in the United States.

Some win, some lose

Many colleges see contracts with overseas agents as a win-win proposition, helping to bring in far more tuition dollars than are paid out in commissions. They also see the foreign students as attractive both for their contributions to the local economy and the international bridges they help to build. Ohio, where many institutions are contracting with agents, recently adopted a strategic higher-education plan specifically calling for international recruiting.

But Nassirian argues that the process has invisible losers. "If there is a natural limit to the capacity of our educational system to take foreign students, isn't it better to get the best qualified rather than those with the ability to pay?" he asked.

'A lot of gouging'

Throughout Asia and other parts of the world, thousands of agents offer help to students seeking admission to an English-speaking university, charging them fees that may be a few hundred dollars or far more.

"Some agents charge as much as $30,000," said John Robert Cryan of the University of Toledo, which works with agents but pays no commissions. "There's a lot of gouging going on."

JLL, which is licensed by the Chinese government, sent about 2,000 students to American colleges over the past year, and many more to Australia and the United Kingdom. Li Zhen, the vice manager of JLL's U.S. department, said students paid fees ranging from about $2,000 to apply to a community college to about $5,000 for the most selective universities. JLL helps students apply anywhere they want, including universities that pay no commissions.

"My personal record, my best, was getting a student to UCLA," he said.

Just as agents vary, so do the commissions. Ohio University is on the low side, paying $1,000 for each undergraduate, or 10 percent of tuition for the English language program.

"The market range is anywhere from 10 to 25 percent of tuition," said Visakan Ganeson, director of international programs at Skagit Valley College in Mount Vernon, Wash., which gets about half of its 200 international students through commissioned agents. "How much you pay depends on your position in the market."

The most selective universities, deluged with applications, do not contract with agents.
Doctor wins UNC-CH faculty award

HIV researcher has global reach

FROM STAFF REPORTS

A UNC-Chapel Hill doctor has received the school’s highest faculty award.

Dr. Myron S. Cohen received the O. Max Gardner Award on Friday from the Board of Governors of the UNC system.

Cohen is recognized as one of the world’s leading authorities on the transmission and prevention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

He has been honored for his international leadership in advancing HIV research, treatment and prevention in countries around the world, according to a news release. The award was established in 1949 by the will of Gov. Oliver Max Gardner to recognize faculty who have “made the greatest contributions to the welfare of the human race.”

It is the only award for which all faculty members of all UNC campuses are eligible. Recipients are nominated by their chancellors and selected by the Board of Governors. The 2008 award carries a $20,000 cash prize.

Cohen joined the UNC-CH faculty in 1980 and has spent more than two decades building a multidisciplinary team of researchers devoted to studying the transmission and prevention of the virus responsible for AIDS.

He is the J. Herbert Bate Distinguished Professor of medicine, microbiology and public health and has served as director of the medical school’s Division of Infectious Diseases since 1989.

He and his colleagues have built and sustained research and medical training projects in resource-poor countries such as Malawi, China, the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Africa, and Russia, as well as the United States.

Cohen’s team of researchers at UNC-CH developed sensitive assays to measure the concentration of the HIV virus in bodily fluids and was among the first to demonstrate that the presence of other sexually transmitted diseases can increase the likelihood of HIV transmission.

Their research provided the scientific foundation for the Center for Disease Control’s 2005 strategic plan for HIV prevention and led the National Institutes of Health to tap UNC-CH to help develop a safe and effective vaccine against HIV/AIDS.
GREENVILLE – Knowing smiles and nods spread through the crowd at East Carolina University’s Williams Arena on Friday afternoon when the keynote speaker for a pre-graduation event acknowledged the sacrifices parents, husbands and wives had made so these 138 students could get through college.

"Without you,” said Dr. Phyllis Horns, a vice chancellor in the College of Allied Health Sciences, “some of them wouldn’t be here today.”

In the sea of purple gowns sat Ebele Achonu, who had made it this far in spite of her husband.

On Oct. 5, 2003, the man Ebele (eh-BELL-lay) had married 11 years before attacked her with a machete with such force he fractured her skull and nearly severed both her hands. The News & Observer told her story on its front page on Aug. 21, 2005.

Today, while Victor Achonu sits in Nash Correctional Institution serving a sentence for attempted first-degree murder, the woman he tried so hard to beat down will stand up and receive her bachelor’s degree.

“There were many times I didn’t think I would make it,” Ebele, 38, said Friday, referring not just to the ordeal of recovering from her injuries, including the loss of her right hand, but also to attending college while raising three children. “There were the challenges from what happened before, but also, this was just really hard work.”

Ebele’s degree in health services and information management qualifies her to work as a data analyst or a health information administrator at a hospital or doctor’s office.

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A POSITIVE OUTLOOK

See video of inspirational words from abuse victim Ebele Achonu at newsobserver.com

SEE EBELE, PAGE 18A

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A SHOWER OF DEGREES

Seven of the Triangle’s four-year colleges and universities will hold their commencements this weekend. There’s a slight chance of rain today, but forecasters say Sunday could be messier. Showers are expected to give way to afternoon thunderstorms, some severe, dampening prospects for graduation and Mother’s Day picnics.

Here’s a schedule of weekend graduations:

**TODAY**

N.C. STATE UNIVERSITY: 9:30 a.m., RBC Center
PEACE COLLEGE: 10 a.m., College Green
ST. AUGUSTINE’S COLLEGE: 10:30 a.m., on campus quadranople
SHAW UNIVERSITY: 11 a.m., J.S. Dorton Arena

**SUNDAY, MAY 11**

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL: 9:30 a.m., Kenan Stadium (in case of severe weather: Smith Center)
DUKE UNIVERSITY: 10 a.m., Wallace Wade Stadium
MERIDITH COLLEGE: 10 a.m., McVey Amphitheater (if it rains: J.S. Dorton Arena. Check www.meridith.edu for latest.)
be a nurse, but the loss of her hand forced a change of direction.

A difficult marriage

Ebele, a native of Nigeria, married Victor Achonu in 1992 when she was 22 and he was 40. A striking woman with a quick laugh, she had hoped to marry a man more her age, someone she loved. Her mother and a trusted great-uncle encouraged her to wed Achonu.

The marriage was difficult from the beginning, with Achonu obsessing over his wife's every move and accusing her of infidelities she says she never committed. After their wedding in Nigeria, Victor, who had moved to the United States in the early 1980s, returned to America. Ebele joined him in 1996, two years after their first child, a son they named Brian, was born.

In North Carolina, Victor drove a cab. Ebele managed the household finances. She made friends, enrolled in nursing classes. The couple had two more children, girls named Amarachi and Chinwendu. Victor continued to accuse his wife of being unfaithful, monitoring her cell phone calls and checking receipts for purchases. He made yelled threats, saying a man could be pushed to commit violence.

He attacked her on a Sunday as she talked on the phone in the bedroom with a female friend in Nigeria. Victor thought she was talking with a man.

Steering an obstacle course

After the attack, Ebele continued to take classes through Wake Tech and Johnston Community College and then transferred to ECU. She took most of her classes online, traveling to campus only when she needed to make a presentation. Again, not the way she would have chosen.

"I'm a people person," she said. "I like to be face to face. But with three children to take care of, this was the only way."

Even with a high-tech prosthetic right hand, small motor movements such as typing are arduous. Her left hand also was severely injured in the attack, leaving several fingers immobile.

So she did her homework on a voice-activated computer. She slept four to five hours a night.

She is graduating with honors. Her grade-point average was more than 3.9.

She walked out of Friday's event — the one at which all the graduates of her college were recognized — into bright sunshine and the arms of her mother, Miriam, her cousin and her daughters, now 10 and 7, who had taken the day off school for the first time ever. As a graduation gift, a friend is taking her to St. Martin for a few days. When she comes back, she has to study for a board exam and start looking for a job.

It looked like she was going to be all right.

She laughed.

"I am all right already," she said.

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Brittany Lauren Custer

WENDELL — Brittany Lauren Custer, 18, of 745 Mudham Road, died Thursday, May 8, 2008.

Brittany was born in Wake County on October 26, 1989 to Walter Craig and Wanda Creech Custer. She graduated from East Wake Academy in 2007 and had just completed her freshman year at East Carolina University. Brittany was an avid dancer, and attended Massey School of Dance for 12 years.

Funeral service 3:00 p.m. Sunday, May 11, 2008 at Baptist Tabernacle Church, 1599 NC Highway 231, Wendell, NC 27591. Burial, Baptist Tabernacle church cemetery.

Surviving are parents, Walter Craig and Wanda Creech Custer; sister, Brooke Ashley Custer; maternal grandmother, Rochell Creech of Wendell; paternal grandfather, Charles H. Custer of Ft. Lauderdale, FL; aunts, Debbie Kearn and husband, Alan of Youngsville, Sue Custer of Tampa, FL; uncles, Derwin Creech and wife, Faye of Wendell, Charles H. Custer, Jr. and wife, Lynn of Beaufort; cousins, Matthew, Russell, JoAnna, Emma, Ethan, Amanda, Amber, Veronica, Julie, Jeffrey.

Brittany was preceded in death by her maternal grandfather, L.Z. Creech and her paternal grandmother, Hazel Fulcher Custer.

The family will receive relatives and friends from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Saturday, May 10, 2008 at L. Harold Poole Funeral Service and Crematory, 944 Old Knight Road, Knightdale, NC 27545 and other times at home.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Baptist Tabernacle Church Building Fund, 1599 Highway 231, Wendell, NC 27591.

Condolences to the family may be made at www.poolefuneral.com under Obituaries.
UNCC student’s death unsolved
Triangle woman to be buried today

BY CLEVE R. WOOTSON JR.
AND DEBORAH HIRSCH
THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER

CHARLOTTE – Police said they had leads but had made no arrests Friday in the asphyxiation death of college student Irina “Ira” Yarmolenko, who will be buried today in Chapel Hill.

The body of the UNC-Charlotte student was found next to her car Monday on the banks of the Catawba River. Investigators are trying to figure out what happened between 10:50 a.m., when Yarmolenko was last seen at her job at a coffee shop near campus, and 1:15 p.m., when a woman riding a personal watercraft reported finding her body.

In a news conference Thursday, Mount Holly Police Chief David Belk wouldn’t reveal whether Yarmolenko had been strangled or smothered, saying only that she died from a lack of oxygen. Belk also would not say whether police had found marks or wounds on her body.

It was the latest in a string of high-profile killings of North Carolina college students this year. They include the slayings of UNC-Chapel Hill Student Body President Eve Carson and Duke University graduate student Abhijit Mahato.

Yarmolenko was born in Ukraine but grew up in Chapel Hill. Her brother, Pavel Yarmolenko, 25, said their family moved to North Carolina in the 1990s as refugees. Pavel, a graduate student in biomedical engineering at Duke University, described his sister as a dedicated student who loved to travel and learn about other cultures. She played piano and tennis.

“She was incredible,” he said.

“Tragic nothing had about her,”

STUDENT
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Helping others

Yarmolenko worked last spring as a server at the Paul J. Rizzo Conference Center at Meadowmount in Chapel Hill, and stayed with parent company Aramark that summer, working as a waitress in Denali National Park in Alaska.

She graduated from Chapel Hill High School in 2006 and began studying at UNC-Charlotte. There, she was a member of the Russian Club and, more recently, a photographer and occasional writer for the student newspaper.

Her brother said she had always talked about doing something to help people make their lives better.

“Everything that she’s ever done was to help people,” he said.

She had planned to transfer to UNC-Chapel Hill to major in public health after finishing this semester in Charlotte, he said.

Her friend Diana Carlton said Yarmolenko had just turned 20 last weekend and was excited about her summer plans.

“It’s so completely random,” Carlton said. “It’s hard for anybody to wrap their mind around.”

Carlton said Yarmolenko had talked about pursuing a career that would touch people.

“She was a beautiful person,” Carlton said. “She was really passionate about what she did, you could tell in her writing. Everything she did she put 100 percent into.”

Puzzles

Authorities said Yarmolenko didn’t appear to have a reason to drive to Mount Holly, where her body and blue Saturn sedan were found. She liked to hike and bike but was dressed in street clothes. The car appeared to have traveled down a steep embankment, where it struck a tree stump.

Yarmolenko was wearing a hooded sweatshirt, black skirt and athletic shoes, Belk said. In the hours before her death, she had been at a credit union and then at the coffee shop.

Belk said police had “some strong leads,” but he didn’t go into detail. He said that his department would let the public know if there was a suspect description but stressed that “there’s nothing to indicate there’s someone out there that’s stalking or chasing people.”

Remembrances

Why someone would kill Yarmolenko continued to puzzle the more than 300 people gathered Thursday around UNC-Charlotte’s Bell Tower. For two hours that night, an extended university family stood in a semicircle, telling stories about her.

The Ira (pronounced EE-ra) who left sticky notes with funny messages on sinks and above toilets to brighten her roommates’ day.

The Ira who spent half an hour in a cardboard “gingerbread” house built for kids, making statues out of Play-Doh.

The Ira who spent Sunday mornings sipping coffee and talking about how she would change the world.

“Ira you can’t describe in words,” her cousin, Natasha Deynega of Raleigh, told the crowd. “She was selfless and pure and amazing, and you can only describe her with superlatives. Any of you, if you had a bad day, she would be there with a bouquet of flowers and a hug for you.”

Pavel Yarmolenko had different messages for people who had been touched by his sister’s murder.

“The person who killed my sister, he’s in some ways a byproduct of the system that we live in, and we have to change it,” he said.

“You all have to make a difference now. I hope when you go home tonight, that you will tell everyone you love them. Because I didn’t get a chance at all. I didn’t get a chance to tell my sister that I loved her.”

Mount Holly police ask anyone who might have information to call (704) 627-4343.

News & Observer staff writer
Jesse James DeConto
contributed to this report.