Four join ECU Athletics Hall of Fame
Sunday, October 2, 2011

The newest class of the East Carolina Athletics Hall of Fame was inducted during a banquet Friday night and honored during halftime of Saturday’s North Carolina-East Carolina football game.

The induction class includes: Michelle Clayton (track & field, 1995-99), Tony Collins (football, 1977-80), Justin England (cross country/track & field, 1996-2000) and Stuart Tripp (football, 1940-41). Tripp is the eighth person to be elected posthumously.

Clayton was the first ECU female athlete to earn All-America honors in the hammer throw as she placed ninth in the event at the 1999 NCAA Outdoor Track & Field Championships. During that same season, she earned Athlete-of-the-Meet honors at the Colonial Athletic Association (CAA) Championships, winning the discus, shot put and hammer throw, and became just the second individual ECAC champion in school history. She collected multiple All-East Region accolades and was a three-time recipient of the team’s Most Outstanding Field Performer Award as well as the school’s Most Outstanding Female Scholar-Athlete in 1997, earning District III Second-Team Academic All-America honors.

Collins was a four-year letterman for coaches Pat Dye and Ed Emory and was the Pirates’ all-purpose yards leader for three consecutive seasons. As a
junior in 1979, he led the team in rushing with 1,130 yards, which helped him earn First-Team All-South Independent honors. That season he helped the Pirates set team records for rushing, rushing yards per game, total offense, total offense per game and points per game. He currently ranks ninth on the school’s single-season and career rushing charts and its career points scored list. His 100-yard kickoff return against Florida State in 1980 still ranks as the longest in school history. The New England Patriots selected Collins in the second round of the 1981 National Football League Draft.

England was the first athlete in school history to qualify for the NCAA Cross Country Championships in 2000 with a fourth-place finish at the Southeast Regional Championships. A two-time All-CAA cross country performer, England captured the conference track title in the 10,000-meter run in 1999. He set school cross country records in the 5K and 10K, while also establishing track and field marks in the indoor 5K and outdoor 10K. England was named ECU’s Male Scholar-Athlete-of-the-Year for the 1998-99 academic year, following a season in which he earned cross country all-district honors, won the individual title at the state championship cross country meet and was named to the NCAA Division I All-Academic Cross Country Team.

Tripp played two years of varsity football at East Carolina Teachers College (ECTC) in 1940 and `41 for coach John Christenbury, helping his team to 12 wins against three losses. Tripp was a member of the only undefeated team in school history as the Pirates posted a 7-0 record in 1941. Tripp, who played center, wasn’t afforded the opportunity to compete beyond 1941 due to the onset of World War II, which caused ECTC to drop its football program for four years. Tripp graduated from ECTC in 1944 and was elected to the North Carolina High School Athletic Association Hall of Fame in 2004 after a distinguished coaching record at Ayden High School that included two state basketball championships.
NCSU researchers develop 'Jell-O'-like memory implants

BY WHITNEY L.J. HOWELL - Correspondent

Electronic devices hold data just as the brain does, but until now that's been the only characteristic these hard, inflexible machines shared with the organ that stores memories. Two N.C. State engineers, however, are turning these rigid mechanisms into bendable, water-loving circuits.

By combining water-based gels with liquid metal, researchers Michael Dickey and Orlin Velev build computer chip-like devices that thrive in wet environments, such as the body.

"We're not trying to replace computer chips," Velev said. "We're turning soft matter into electrical circuits. These are memristors - information storage devices - that are similar to Jell-O."

Although the devices currently hold only a few bits of information, they could enhance medical monitoring equipment or biomedical research one day, Dickey said. They could be implanted in the human body without any function loss.

"Wet environments don't adversely affect these memristors, making them a good match for biological work," he said. "Plus, they're soft and easily squished."

To construct the devices, Dickey and Velev microwave a water-based gel and put it in an electrode-shaped mold to cool. By adding a layer of liquid
metal - a mixture of gallium and indium - on either side of the conductive gel, much like the bread on a sandwich, they create an electricity-conducting pathway.

The metal alloy layers are gatekeepers for electrical charges. They form oxidized skins that control whether positive or negative signals reach the gel. The thicker the skin, the more resistant it is to the charge. Gallium influences the thickness of the oxidized layer, Dickey said, preventing it from completely blocking an electrical signal. The constant signal flow creates the electronic memory.

Although these devices hold great potential for improving cardiac or neural monitoring equipment, they're too slow and too big to be truly useful now, said Chad Bossetti, biomedical engineering assistant professor at East Carolina University.

"The circuits need to move signals faster than every few seconds because the body transmits electric signals at about four times that rate," Bossetti said. "Miniaturization is also important. The technology is currently scaled up for development, but they must make it smaller for it to make a significant impact."

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Lance Lewis, in his second year at ECU, has continued to produce following last season's school-record 14 touchdown receptions.

**Pirates' not-so-secret weapon**

BY EDWARD G. ROBINSON III - erobinson@newsobserver.com

GREENVILLE There's little camouflage or deception involved with East Carolina's "Air Raid" spread offense. The Pirates place senior Lance Lewis at the outside wide receiver spot, send him deep and make defenses stop him.

If the Pirates (1-2) move inside the red zone, the 6-foot-3, 209 pound receiver becomes an even bigger threat. So, when North Carolina (3-1) visits ECU's sold-out Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium tonight for the 14th meeting between the programs, ECU senior quarterback Dominique Davis is certain to look for Lewis, who has become one of the most prolific receivers in school history.

"It's no big secret," Davis said. "When we get in the red zone, he's one of the guys I look forward to. If he gives me a certain look, where I know he can make a play, I'm going to go at him. ... Red zone is his zone."

A Concord native and transfer from East Mississippi Community College, Lewis arrived on campus last season and immediately started catching
touchdown passes. He finished the year with a single-season, school record 14 touchdown receptions.

Lewis' 89 receptions and 1,116 yards were somewhat overshadowed by the accomplishments of wideout Dwayne Harris. Now with the Dallas Cowboys, Harris wrapped up a college career that left him as ECU's career receptions leader and the first Pirate to reach the 3,000 receiving yards.

Lewis took it in stride.

"I'm just playing football," he said. "Last year, he had one side of the field locked down, I had the other side of the field. That's how it went."

This season, Lewis leads Conference USA and ranks ninth nationally with eight receptions per game.

In last week's 28-23 win over UAB, Lewis pulled in eight catches for 69 yards and two touchdowns. In ECU's season-opening loss to South Carolina, he hauled in 13 catches.

The Pirates use Lewis to stretch defenses downfield but often send him underneath for quick catch-and-go patterns. Lewis likens himself to his favorite professional receiver, the Washington Redskins' Santana Moss - a fast, sharp route-runner with the ability to slice through a secondary for game-changing plays.

Lewis also takes advantage of his physical prowess to win balls in the red zone.

"He's a big target down there," ECU offensive coordinator Lincoln Riley said. "It's hard to double-team people in our offense. If they do, they are giving up something big."

Migraine headaches sidelined Lewis for nearly two weeks of preseason practice, but he continued to work on his route-running, blocking and conditioning.

Headed into just his 17th game, Lewis has 18 career touchdowns and is third place on the school's all-time touchdown receptions list. Larry Shannon's record (1994-97) of 21 is within reach.

"It's not that I want to establish anything," Lewis said. "I just want to play football and win games. If I play my game, play football, it's going to showcase it automatically."

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A professor at East Carolina University turned a trip to a conference into an Alaskan adventure for he and his wife of 37 years.

Associate Professor of Engineering Gene Dixon attended an American Society of Engineering Education conference in Vancouver and brought his wife, Sally Dixon. After the conference, the couple set off on a seven-day cruise around Alaska and took every opportunity to go on excursions to see the state.

“Just so we could experience the vastness and the wilderness and the majesty that is Alaska,” said Gene.

The cruise made stops in Ketchikan, Juneau and Skagway and docked in Whittier. At each stop, the couple explored the town and took trips to the local attractions. Gene indulged in his hobby photographing wildlife, landscapes and anything that caught his eye.

In Ketchikan, they set sail on the Aleutian Ballad with seasoned crab fishermen.

“It was rainy and cold to us, and they said this is summer on the Bering Sea catching crab,” said Dixon.
One of the crew members, Derrick Ray, was on the Discovery Channel show “Deadliest Catch.” He first appeared on the show in February 2010 when he took over as captain of the Cornelia Marie after the death of it’s captain, Phil Harris.

“It’s interesting to hear their life stories,” said Sally.

“Their dance with danger and death is part of the Bering Sea experience,” added Gene.

While on the Aleutian Ballad, Gene and Sally were able to see first hand what it’s like fishing for the deadliest catch.

On the next stop in Juneau, they went on a whale-watching tour. The tour took them to areas where humpback whales normally feed. According to the National Marine Fisheries Service, tours cannot approach whales within 100 yards, but they were still able to see the whales and take pictures of their flukes or tails.

“Since whales are wild animals, they do unpredictable things. So they may be closer,” said Gene.

During the rest of their time in Juneau, they explored the city and photographed the unusual treasures in the area. There is no junk yard in Juneau, and it costs to have cars and other garbage hauled away.

“Junk just piles up,” said Gene.

The last stop on the cruise was in Skagway where they visited an Eagle Preserve.

“To hear eagles squeal and see them in stages of development. They were everywhere,” said Gene. “Hearing and seeing wildlife like that up close is just absolutely amazing.”

They also toured the College Fjord and Glacier Bay where Gene said they were looking straight in the faces of glaciers even from a distance.

“You could hear the ice cracking a mile away. It was just like canon fire,” he said.
The cruise docked in Whittier where they decided to take another day cruise on the Prince William Sound and saw groups of otters crossing the sound.

“They swim on their backs so they can keep their paws out and warm up in the sunshine,” said Gene.

They also visited a salmon hatchery where Gene had a chance to test his photography skills.

“When you catch a fish jumping out of water, you never know when they’re going to break water. You never know when they’re going to land,” he said.

This was Gene and Sally’s second trip to Alaska, and they hope to go back again. They have a simple piece of advice that they picked up on their travels.

“If you haven’t gone, you should go.”

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ECU Notes: Vaccine fears examined
Sunday, October 2, 2011

In movie theaters, the new film “Contagion” documents a fast-moving viral epidemic. Debate continues about HPV vaccine. Signs tout seasonal flu shots in local pharmacies.

East Carolina University English professor Andrea Kitta could not have picked a more fitting climate for release of her new book, “Vaccinations and Public Concern in History: Legend, Rumor, and Risk Perception.”

The bottom line drawn from Kitta’s research is the same as the answer she often gives to parents who seek advice on vaccinating children.

“You will have to make that decision for yourself,” she said.

But understanding what drives the vaccine controversy can help.

Kitta’s research on how personal narrative, rumor and urban legends sway vaccination choices can inform the decision-making process, while at the same time offering insight to help medical professionals provide more effective, more sensitive communication on vaccination.

Narratives, fear fuel beliefs
“Everyone has a good reason for believing what they believe,” Kitta said.
But personal narrative plays a major role in those beliefs. Her book is unique in that it examines narratives representing all sides of the vaccination issue — from both pro- and anti-vaccination groups, public health officials and members of the medical community.

Kitta said that vaccinations sometime do have negative effects, and people should report adverse reactions. But personal stories of adverse reactions will lead people to make assumptions about a vaccine’s safety, even when science indicates the percentages for side effects are small.

“If a doctor gives a vaccine to 100 people and only one has an adverse reaction, that’s a good percentage for the doctor … but not for the one person who got sick,” Kitta said. That one person’s personal narrative will affect other people’s decisions to accept or reject the vaccine.

When tragedy strikes, people want something or someone to blame, she said.

“If none exists, we will find it. It makes people feel better,” she said. This need drives the rumors and urban legends that rise regarding vaccinations.

Medical rumors and legends play into natural human fears, Kitta said. Anxiety about vaccinations stems in part from fear of needles, which cross a natural human boundary — the skin. Humans are overly conscious of anything that goes into the body, she said.

Kitta said that research shows that people are much more likely to accept an inhaled vaccine than one delivered through a needle.

“It takes away that fear,” she said.

Kitta’s research uncovered many reasons why people choose not to get vaccinations, including fear, cost, accessibility and concern about side effects. But she did find some surprises, including a large number of medical professionals who refused the flu vaccine. Their reasons were not cost or fear or accessibility, Kitta said. Instead the medical professionals assumed they had already developed immunity through exposure to sick patients.

Kitta concluded that effective counseling regarding vaccination decisions should be based on the “reality of what people believe, not what we think they believe.”
“We need to examine what people are really afraid of and negotiate solutions that take away that fear,” she said.

**Urban legends send messages**
Arguments against vaccines are practically the same today as the claims made when vaccines were first introduced. People have always questioned whether vaccines are dangerous, unnatural or risky.

But thanks to technology, these arguments now spread more rapidly and reach a larger audience. Rumors and urban legends provide an effective medium for communicating the message.

Kitta said urban legends can be identified through several classic characteristics: everything is explained, there are no loose ends; the story supposedly is repeated from a friend of a friend or someone who can be trusted; the stories are often localized geographically.

Most college campuses share the same legends, she said.

“There’s always a haunting, and nearly every college campus has a story that the library is sinking because the architect did not account for the weight of all the books.”

Even medical professionals have legends, she said. One story Kitta discovered in Canada tells of a Toronto physician who had children removed from their parents because the parents would not vaccinate. That never happened, Kitta said.

The important thing about urban legends is not so much its truth or fiction, but the message people are trying to deliver with the story, she said. The Toronto doctor story most likely reflected frustration from medical professionals whose patients did not trust their advice to vaccinate. The library story might reflect frustrated students expressing the concept that some smart people are not as smart as they think they are.

Whether based in truth or fiction, each urban legend serves to deliver a powerful message.
Personal experience trumps science
People tend to believe personal narrative rather than scientific fact, Kitta said. Multiple medical studies have proven that the flu shot does not cause mild flu symptoms. Yet nearly everyone expects to feel bad for a few days after receiving the shot, she said.

“It’s personal experience and sharing stories that we rely on, not the science,” Kitta said.

Parents choosing whether to give their children the MMR vaccine for Measles, Mumps and Rubella must consider personal narratives that link the vaccine to Autism. Most of those parents have never seen children suffering from Measles, Mumps or Rubella, but they see or hear stories about autistic children all the time.

Personal experience has more impact, Kitta said. Therefore medical professionals who wish to improve the rate of MMR vaccine compliance should use personal narrative in addition to quoted science. Sharing information about children who contracted the MMR diseases, or telling parents, “My children are vaccinated,” will be much more effective, Kitta said.

Immunization protects the ‘herd’
Vaccines do come with risks, Kitta said, but healthy individuals who choose vaccination are contributing to the common good by participating in what she termed “herd immunity.”

For a vaccine to be effective, approximately 94 to 96 percent of the population must be either vaccinated or immune, so they do not spread the disease to the small percentage of people who cannot tolerate the vaccine.

“It’s like a herd that keeps its weakest members protected in the center,” she said.

Establishing herd immunity drives the campaign for healthy individuals to get vaccinations. It’s not about pharmaceutical companies making money as some believe, Kitta said. Healthy individuals who can take the vaccine but choose not to are receiving all the benefits of herd immunity without undertaking any risk. Individuals who are vaccinated help protect the herd.
But mandatory vaccination is not the answer, Kitta said. Instead medical professionals should ascertain the fears and beliefs that drive each patient’s decision not to vaccinate and negotiate directly with that patient, using personal narrative to get the message across.

Kitta joined ECU in 2009. She holds a Ph.D. in folklore from Memorial University of Newfoundland, an M.A. in folk studies from Western Kentucky University and a B.A. in history from Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania.

Authors of “Picking Cotton” to visit ECU
On Tuesday, the authors of “Picking Cotton: Our Memoir of Injustice and Redemption,” Jennifer Thompson-Cannino and Ronald Cotton, will speak on campus. Erin Torneo is the non-fiction work’s co-author. The event is part of Pirate Summer Read’s special events this fall.

Campus events for Thompson-Cannino and Cotton include a presentation at 7 p.m. Tuesday in Wright Auditorium, which is free and open to the public. “Picking Cotton” chronicles how two people’s lives became intertwined through a case of misidentification and a prison sentence that followed. As the Pirate Summer Read, the book was to be read by first-year students before they arrived on campus for the fall semester and is being discussed in courses across campus.

Thompson-Cannino is a member of the N.C. Actual Innocence Commission and frequently speaks on the need for judicial reform. In 1984, she was a college student living in Burlington when a black man broke into her apartment and raped her. She identified her attacker in a lineup as Ronald Cotton, who insisted that she was mistaken, but he was found guilty and sentenced to life plus 50 years.

After 11 years, Cotton was allowed to take a DNA test that proved his innocence. He was released, after serving more than a decade in prison for a crime he never committed.

Two years later, Thompson-Cannino and Cotton met face-to-face and forged an unlikely friendship that changed both of their lives, the book’s cover states.
Today, Cotton, his wife and daughter live in North Carolina and he works at an insulation plant. He has spoken about his experience at multiple schools and conferences, including Georgetown Law School and Washington and Lee University.

Thompson-Cannino, Cotton and Torneo, who lives in Dublin, received the 2008 Soros Justice Media Fellowship. The Soros Justice Fellowships fund outstanding individuals to implement innovative projects that advance the efforts of the Open Society Foundations to reform the U.S. criminal justice system.

**Golf tournament to benefit foundation**

An ECU graduate killed while serving in the Army in Iraq will be honored with a fundraising event for the scholarship fund founded in his memory.

The third annual golf tournament to benefit the Capt. Christopher Cash Memorial Foundation of N.C., which funds college scholarships in the state, will be held Oct. 10 at the Brook Valley Country Club. Cash was a graduate of ECU’s Department of Kinesiology, formerly Exercise and Sport Science.

The event is organized by the ECU Department of Kinesiology Graduate Student Organization. Additional funds from the event will benefit Kinesiology graduate students with the expense of attending and presenting research at national conferences.

The golf tournament will begin at noon, with registration starting at 11 a.m. A $75 fee per person includes a catered lunch, 18 holes of golf with cart, beverages on the course and a chance to win prizes. Individual competitions such as closest to the pin and a putting contest will take place.

Individual hole sponsorships are available for $50, which includes an 18-by 24-inch sign at the tee box on tournament day.

To become a sponsor or to pre-register for the tournament, which is required, contact Jake Ernst at ernstja10@students.ecu.edu or 737-4682.

**Upcoming events:**

- **Monday:** Symposium on Monetary Policy, noon, Greenville Country Club. Several economics professors will speak; Randall Parker of ECU is the event organizer. Contact Parker at parker@ecu.edu for tickets.
- **Wednesday:** Sir Salman Rushdie will present “Public Events, Private Lives: Literature and Politics in the Modern World,” as part of the Voyages of Discovery Lecture Series, 7 p.m., Wright Auditorium.

  Tickets are free to ECU students, faculty and staff; $10 for the public through the Central Ticket Office, 328-4788.

*See [www.ecu.edu/cs-ecu/calendar.cfm](http://www.ecu.edu/cs-ecu/calendar.cfm) for times, places and more information on these events and other ECU upcoming activities.*
Cancer lab request headed for court

Appeals to Board of Adjustment decisions are uncommon. Six decisions have been taken to court since 2000, according to city files. Two of those were overturned.

By Kathryn Kennedy
The Daily Reflector
Sunday, October 2, 2011

A retired doctor who wants to conduct limited cancer research from a Memorial Drive residence is taking his case to superior court.

Dr. Farid Ahmed has twice requested a permit to operate a home occupation consulting and biological test lab from Greenville’s Board of Adjustment. Its members turned him down both times.

Ahmed, who previously worked for the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University and Duke University, accepts part-time consulting work that involves the dilution and examination of stool and blood samples in a lab setting. He describes his method as a cheaper and safer alternative to a colonoscopy. If his tests uncover the presence of irregular cells, additional measures can be taken by the patient.

The work isn’t regular enough to justify renting a lab space, Ahmed said, so he wants to establish a lab, a 12-foot space between the bricked garage and the house he owns at 2905 S. Memorial Drive.
The lab would occupy 2 percent of the residence’s space, falling under the 20 percent allowed with a special-use permit.

The first denial came in April, when the board argued the use of hazardous materials violated health and safety requirements. It was a unanimous decision.

Ahmed returned for a second hearing on July 28, accompanied by attorney Phil Dixon.

During more than three hours of witness testimony and board discussion, Dixon argued the chemicals used in the procedures were harmless.

A representative from the N.C. Department of Natural Resources testified the amount of waste the operation would produce is small enough that Ahmed would be exempt from state regulations.

The waste produced would measure approximately 3.1 milliliters per month, or about two-thirds of a tablespoon.

“Most of the things that we are talking about are things like fingernail polish remover, detergent, Lysol, vinegar, salt,” Dixon told the board. “Things that you would find in everybody’s home ... under the sink.”

Ahmed presented proof that he had hired a disposal company to remove the medical waste.

But seven members of the surrounding neighborhood spoke against his request, accompanied by attorney Jim Hopf.

Local developer Jon Day testified the addition of a medical lab in a residential neighborhood could have a negative effect on the marketability of nearby homes.

Dixon countered that Day was not a certified appraiser and argued that the appraiser he offered — Paul Cuomo — was better qualified.

Cuomo testified that the house sits in a neighborhood “going into decline and headed into the revitalization cycle.” Several residents bristled at that characterization.
Hopf also presented a witness who questioned the amount of waste that will be produced and expressed concerns about the storage and fumes produced by the chemicals.

“It’s kind of like, ‘I’m going to build some bombs in my house, but they’re only going to be little ones, so you don’t need to worry about it,’” Hopf told the board during his closing argument July 28.

The board again refused to issue Ahmed the requested permit.

This time, potential effects on the surrounding neighborhood were added to the grounds for denial.

Judge Clifton W. Everett Jr. has since accepted the case for appeal and the city supplied the record and evidence from the meetings for his review.

No new evidence will be presented in the course of the appeal. A hearing date has not yet been set.

Greenville Assistant City Attorney Bill Little will represent the board at the hearing and Dixon will continue to represent Ahmed.

Hopf has filed a motion to intervene so that neighborhood residents also may have a voice at the hearing.

Little has represented the Board of Adjustment since 2003 and said appeals are uncommon.

Six decisions have been taken to court since 2000, according to city files. Two of those were overturned.

“Generally, they do a very good job,” Dixon said of the quasi-judicial body.

But Dixon argued the decision to deny Ahmed’s request was based on “speculation and hysteria.”

Contact Kathryn Kennedy at k kennedy@reflector.com or 252-329-9566.
Football mirrors life in that it’s easy to get caught up in the what-ifs and lose sight of the just plain is.

East Carolina is 1-3 this season. The Pirates’ difficult first third of the regular season was littered with countless what-ifs that can make it tougher to accept the reality of the matter. The reality is that most of those possibilities of what might have been have ECU mistakes at their root.

The Pirates’ three losses have lots in common, most substantially that they all came against members of Bowl Championship Subdivision conferences, two of them ranked in the Top 25. But there is more to it than that.

All three games might have ended differently if the Pirates had done a little controlling of their own destiny. Saturday night’s hotly-anticipated showdown with North Carolina — played in front of a record crowd of 50,610 at Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium — quickly became the place not to be for ECU fans amid continued giveaways by the Pirates.

They derailed themselves almost immediately in an eventual 35-20 loss to the Tar Heels, committing a turnover on each of their first three drives and four total in the first half as the visitors quickly fashioned a 28-3 halftime lead. It erased a remarkable showing by the ECU defense in the second half.

UNC, South Carolina and Virginia Tech might all have had the talent to ultimately outlast ECU anyway, but the Pirates left that to question in each case by undoing their own progress and giving great teams an unneeded shot in the arm.

Most of the what-ifs relate to turnovers. There were five of them against the Gamecocks and a record-tying seven in ECU’s win over UAB. Although there was just one against the Hokies, the Pirate offense was lackluster in execution in a tight game that ECU was winning at halftime.
The problem against UNC wasn’t merely the same carelessness that nearly doomed the Pirates against the Blazers. On Saturday, the Pirates’ opponent went after the ball as much as the ball carrier because it saw a tendency in the Pirates to lose the handle, and that trend will continue.

As ECU (averaging 4.3 turnovers per game) heads to Houston this weekend, the 5-0 Cougars will have a litany of ECU fumbles and interceptions with which to help devise a defensive game plan, evidence that if they go after the ball there is a chance they’ll get it.

When Danny Webster lost a fumble on ECU’s opening drive against UNC, it marked six straight quarters the Pirates had given the ball away. When quarterback Dominique Davis — who dominated opposing defenses all last season — was picked off on the next drive, it was the seventh straight game he’s thrown an interception.

And when running back Reggie Bullock fumbled on the third drive, ECU had turned the ball over on five consecutive possessions outside of a kneel-down at the end of the UAB game.

Although the Pirates must now finish the regular season 5-3 or better in order to book a sixth bowl trip in six seasons, it’s not too late. ECU has endured the same start four times in the last seven seasons.

But the Pirates have proven that not all mistakes can be corrected in practice.

The solutions can be presented to players over and over again, but none of them will cement the ball into players’ hands or keep opponents from attacking the football instead of the football player until ECU can prove it’s learned one of the game’s most basic tenets.

Despite their best efforts, coaches can’t and never will be able to control what their players do when the stadium lights are on, the crowd is roaring and the other team wants the ball at all costs. The only defense is to protect it at all costs.

That being said, the Pirates have earned themselves a few days at the beach this week.
ECU strength coach Jeff Connors had a sand pit installed next to the team’s practice fields during the offseason, a place where legs can get strengthened, but also a place where punishment drills aim to remind players there is a price for their miscues.

The reason turnovers turn so many games around is because they cannot be controlled by anyone other than the person with the ball and the people trying to take the ball away. The best coaching in the world can’t overcome a careless carry.

Many Pirates will have their toes in the sand this week at practice, and they’ll have plenty to think about.

Contact Nathan Summers at nsummers@reflector.com or 252-329-9595.
Jeff Connors, assistant athletics director for strength and conditioning at ECU, leads the team in stretching drills before practice Tuesday afternoon. (Rhett Butler/The Daily Reflector)

**Emotions run high for ECU's Connors**

“He understands everything specific to that sport, whether it's football, basketball or whatever he has his hands on.”

Ruffin McNeill
ECU head coach

By Nathan Summers
The Daily Reflector
Saturday, October 1, 2011

Jeff Connors has made a career of knowing how and when to push the buttons on athletes that attain maximum performance.

The veteran strength and conditioning coach is all about thresholds, identifying them in any athlete in any sport and knowing how push the physical and mental limits of them without going overboard.

That means, to say the least, delivering tough love in large doses. It also means riding a very fine line between best friend and worst enemy when training student-athletes.

But even East Carolina’s guru of fitness and conditioning will have to put some extra effort into keeping his emotions on an even keel when the Pirates kick off against the North Carolina Tar Heels at 8 p.m. inside Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium.

Connors spent a decade at ECU, then took the head strength job at UNC for 10 years. As tough an exterior as he is required to maintain, Connors is not about to hide his happiness at being back in the place he feels most comfortable.
“Just being back in Greenville, being back around a lot of my friends, it’s just really a dream come true for me,” Connors said following an ECU football practice earlier this week. “Even just walking off the field today, I just kind of have to pinch myself.”

His day-to-day requires Connors to wield an uncompromising axe in order to attain the superior results he demands. But like many in the coaching profession, there is balance in the form of family for Connors.

The Pennsylvania native said he often felt disconnected from his family, which resides in Morehead City, as he spent most of his nights alone in Chapel Hill during his tenure at UNC.

Now Connors is a much more familiar face to his wife and two children. Though the house near the beach still isn’t an ideal location for a man working in Greenville, it affords Connors perhaps his two greatest passions.

“In today’s economy it’s hard to sell a house, and we still have a house in Morehead City,” said Connors, who returned to ECU to join second-year head coach Ruffin McNeill during the football offseason. “It’s much easier for me to get home, and I stay here during the week. My family has really enjoyed coming in to the games.”

Connors might be getting comfortable in Greenville again, but already his return is evident. A sand pit that was dug adjacent to the football practice fields for both conditioning and punishment drills is one of the more obvious Connors additions, but behind the scenes his mark is being made even more, like when he and McNeill watch every play of every game on film together.

The bond between the two could prove vital for an ECU athletic program that last week applied for membership in the Big East Conference.

“He takes meticulous notes when I talk,” McNeill said, describing Connors in the film room. “He’ll take those notes and adhere our workouts to what we’re trying to do and that’s the beauty of it. He understands everything specific to that sport, whether it’s football, basketball or whatever he has his hands on. So when we watch film, he’s jotting. We watch each player, each play, every player that plays at each position.”
All the emotions that accompany a clash between the Pirates and Tar Heels in front of 50,000 fans won’t be lost on Connors, who is rumored to have a UNC tattoo from his days in Chapel Hill.

In his non-stop push to make the Pirates the toughest team in the country mentally and physically, however, Connors hopes his players can corral their emotions and channel them into big plays.

“I think for us to be able to have an opportunity to win this game, we’re going to have to play with a high level of emotion, and I think not only the players have to have a high level of emotion but also the coaches,” he said.

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Carolina Ale House donates percentage of opening sales to hospitality department
Monday, October 3, 2011

The ECU Department of Hospitality Management received 10 percent of the first week’s food sales from the new Carolina Ale House, which opened Sept. 17 at 704 S.E. Greenville Blvd.

To celebrate the opening, Lou Moshakos, president and owner of the hospitality group that manages Carolina Ale House, announced the restaurant would donate 10 percent of its food sales for the week of Sept. 17-23 to the department.

Kathy Brown, major gifts officer at ECU, and Bob O’Halloran, chairman of the hospitality management department, accepted the donation.

“We are delighted to receive such a generous gift from the Carolina Ale House family,” O’Halloran said. “It’s wonderful when Greenville businesses understand the importance of supporting the students in its community. We look forward to the educational and career opportunities Carolina Ale House will provide for our students.”

Carolina Ale House, established in Raleigh in 1999, is a family-friendly, sports-themed restaurant concept. The group operates 15 other locations — six in the Triangle, one each in Wilmington and Fayetteville, a small outlet at RDU International Airport; three in South Carolina, one in Georgia and two in Florida.

The concept also is expanding to Charlotte this year and is slated to open a Jacksonville location and a second Greenville, S.C., location in 2012.

ECU’s Department of Hospitality Management program was established in 1987 and is the largest hospitality department of its kind in North Carolina and one of the largest in the Southeast. Enrollment is more than 450 students.
The program offers an undergraduate degree with three distinct concentrations — food and beverage management, lodging management, and meeting and convention management — and a minor and an MBA with the hospitality management option in only five years.

Student requirements include an externship (sophomore year) and an internship (prior to senior year), basic and advanced food laboratories, numerous student organizations and field trips.
A State Grooms Its Best Students to Be Good Teachers

By MICHAEL WINERIP

DURHAM, N.C. — When Mr. Williams means business, he is not kidding around. “He’s pretty quiet, pretty serious,” said Ashabur Rahman, a fifth grader at Glenn Elementary School who has him for math and science.

John Williams III, 36, is not some jokey teacher. “At the start of the year, some kids said he was going to be the meanest teacher in the school,” said Trajen Womack. Chelsea Parra, heard the same: “A lot of people were saying it.”

Nor is he easy about giving out 1’s, the top grade. “If we’re joking, he doesn’t say anything, but on the progress report, he’ll give you a 3,” Trajen said.

Still, the more time they spent with Mr. Williams, the smarter he seemed to get. In science, they made terrariums, growing rye, mustard and alfalfa. There is no running water in the trailer behind the school where Mr.
Williams teaches, so he carries it in, using jugs. This week, the students will add crickets and roly-pollies to their ecosystems.

He always calls them ladies and gentlemen, and speaks so softly that they must be quiet to hear him; even a little noise sounds loud in Mr. Williams’s room.

Last week, during a lesson on common denominators, a new boy began tapping on his desk. Mr. Williams ignored it and kept teaching. The boy sat on the floor, twirled a ruler and wandered around talking to other students. Mr. Williams kept teaching. When the boy could no longer be ignored — he knocked over a chair — Mr. Williams made eye contact with a special education teacher, who took over the class. Mr. Williams went and sat by the boy.

In a voice so quiet that Citlaly Reynoso, who was sitting next to them, could not hear, he talked to the boy for several minutes. Then Mr. Williams took over the class again, and the boy pulled out a workbook and started answering questions.

Later Mr. Williams, who has spent 14 years teaching poor children, said: “I want to do everything I can to keep that child in class. If he’s sitting in the principal’s office, he’s not learning.”

In 1993, when Mr. Williams graduated from high school in Goldsboro, N.C., with an A average and a 1,320 on his SATs, he had many options, but he chose the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program. The idea is simple: the state pays top academic students to attend a public college, and in return they spend at least four years teaching in a public school.

In the 20 years since the first fellows began teaching, the program has flourished. High school seniors selected for the program average about 1,200 on the SATs compared with a state average of 1,000. Of the 500 fellows chosen each year, about a quarter are black or Hispanic.

Mr. Williams said that once he was accepted, colleges competed for him. “They woo you like an athlete,” he said. “We got the star treatment.”

It is not enough for the smartest to become teachers; they have to stay teaching. Research has shown that experienced teachers perform far better than beginners. A Carolina Institute for Public Policy study by Gary T. Henry, Charles Thompson and Kevin Bastian in 2010 found that of a dozen training programs in the state, Teach for America had the best test results, with the Teaching Fellows Program second.
There is, however, a large difference in retention. Teach for American requires only a two-year commitment. After five years, 7 percent of the Teach for America participants were still at work in North Carolina, versus 73 percent of the fellows. Sixty percent of the fellows who started teaching 20 years ago still work in North Carolina public schools.

Representative David E. Price, Democrat of North Carolina, tried for years to get Congress to pass legislation using the Teaching Fellows Program as a national model, and finally succeeded a few years ago. But financing has been limited. New York, one of 12 states that won a grant, received enough money to prepare only 125 teachers over five years.

It is a pretty good bet that any program that treats teachers like star athletes is not going to last. A few months ago, as part of hundreds of millions of dollars in cuts, the North Carolina General Assembly voted to phase out the fellows program — which has a $13 million annual budget — over the next few years. (There have been reports that the House speaker, Thom Tillis, a Republican, is reconsidering; his office did not respond to several calls and e-mails.)

It may not matter. Budget cuts have been so severe, pretty soon no one is going to be able to afford to teach. Anthony White, 26, another fellow, has been a math teacher for five years at Southern High School here. Like Mr. Williams, he had his choice of jobs but chose a school that serves a poor black neighborhood, a place where he felt that his work would stand for more. “Coming up,” Mr. White said, “I never had a black male math teacher.”

When Mr. White started, he was making $35,000, and five years later he is still making $35,000.

It has been said before: no one goes into teaching for the money, and any glory is mighty modest.

Last spring, when Mr. Williams was named Teacher of the Week by WRAL-TV in the Raleigh-Durham area, the reporter referred to him as “a humble John Williams.”

Most of the great things that teachers do are not seen by adults, and are taken for granted by children.

The new boy in Mr. Williams’s class closed the workbook after a few minutes and put his head on the desk. A guidance counselor had warned Mr. Williams to be on guard; the boy’s father had died the week before. When everyone filed out for recess, Mr. Williams held him back and spoke to him
gently. The boy kept his back to him the entire time. When Mr. Williams told him to go play, the boy walked away backward, stopping at the bottom of a grassy hill that leads to the playground.

Mr. Williams moved up the hill a little and the boy followed, then stopped. Mr. Williams walked up a little more, the boy followed and stopped. From a distance, it looked like Mr. Williams was tugging him up the hill with an invisible rope.

Dressed in a bow tie, stylish shirt and creased pants, Mr. Williams looked thoroughly out of place on that hill. With one final tug, he got the boy to the top. For a while, the boy stood with his back to everyone, then for no apparent reason he ran off, disappearing into the crowd of excited, noisy children.

Mr. Williams made his way back down the hill slowly, so as not to trip. When he got to the bottom, he said, “Hopefully, he’s out there enjoying himself.”

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Perry Ennis receives a resolution of appreciation for his 30 years of service to ECU from A. Scott Buck, left, associate vice chancellor for administration and finance, and Kevin Carraway, right, director of the Department of Materials Management. Ennis retired on July 1.

Perry Ennis retires after 30-year career with Department of Materials Management
Monday, October 3, 2011
WorkWeek

Perry Ennis retired on July 1 after a 30-year career at East Carolina University. He was purchasing officer and assistant director for store operations in the ECU Department of Materials Management.

More than 50 friends, family, co-workers and business associates gathered at the East Carolina Heart Institute on June 30 for a reception to honor Ennis. Scott Buck, associate vice chancellor for Administration and Finance, described Ennis as a “talented individual with good judgment and common sense” and presented him a plaque of appreciation.

“Over my career there have been times I ran into challenges that went beyond my professional ability,” Buck said. “I could always go to Perry Ennis for help,” citing as an example the time Ennis helped Buck supply the
campus with drinking water during the aftermath of Hurricane Floyd in 1999.

Ennis began his career at ECU in October 1981 in materials management. He was hired to set up and manage the medical storeroom in the basement of the Brody School of Medicine. In 1993, he was promoted to Purchasing Officer III and moved to East Campus. Another promotion followed in 2001, when he became assistant director of store operations, providing administrative oversight to Central Stores and the medical storeroom.

As senior buyer for medical and research equipment, Ennis helped the medical school purchase a $4 million cyber knife in just a week’s time in 2006.

“The Health Sciences Division would not be what it is today without his help,” James Naves, chief medical dosimetrist with the ECU Department of Radiation Oncology, said, speaking on behalf of Gary Vanderpool, executive associate vice chancellor for Health Sciences.

Naves also mentioned Ennis’ work with the Leo Jenkins Cancer Center, where “thousands of people are seen every year. Every one of those people has benefitted from the work he has done.”

His most recent responsibilities included the administrative oversight of office supply, maintenance supply and medical supply stores, as well as fixed assets and state surplus property. Ennis was instrumental in setting up the new dental school, including purchasing major pieces of dental equipment and leasing the school’s temporary facilities.

Originally from Benson, Ennis is a 1970 graduate of South Johnston High School. He and his wife, Debbie, have two children and one grandson.
MacDonald joins staff at Physicians East
Monday, October 3, 2011
WorkWeek

Dr. Kenneth MacDonald has joined Physicians East PA at 1850 W. Arlington Blvd., where he will provide comprehensive care specializing in general surgery and bariatric and metabolic surgery. His primary interests include bariatric surgery for obesity, as well as gastrointestinal surgery for malignancy, including surgery for tumors of the stomach, liver, bile duct, pancreas and colon.

MacDonald joins Dr. Patrick Brillant and Dr. Timothy McGuire in practice at Physicians East. He spent more than 19 years at East Carolina University’s medical school, where he was professor of surgery and chief of gastrointestinal surgery and surgical endoscopy. MacDonald also was director of the ECU Department of Surgery’s obesity research program and primary investigator for ECU on four national multi-institutional studies.

MacDonald has served as president for the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery and chairs its ethics and advisory committee, which includes all past presidents of the society. He also was director of the essentials and advanced bariatric surgery courses for fellow physicians, was
governor to the American College of Surgeons for six years and is on the editorial board of the journal Surgery for Obesity and Related Diseases.

MacDonald has been co-investigator or collaborator on 11 funded research projects, has presented more than 150 professional lectures and research presentations, and published more than 50 referenced publications and book chapters. He was one of seven primary investigators in the United States in the original Food and Drug Administration trial for the “Lap-Band Adjustable Gastric Banding System,” a minimally-invasive obesity surgery system option, and he was chosen to present the conglomerate United States results to the FDA in 2000, in Washington, D.C.

He was a co-investigator for the National Institutes of Health Longitudinal Assessment of Bariatric Surgery, where he also chaired the adjudication committee. In addition, he developed and co-chaired the Bariatric Summit, a national meeting of surgeons and allied health professionals focused on the comprehensive management of severe obesity.

Every year since 2006, MacDonald has been named one of the “Best Doctors” in America by a survey of more than 30,000 physicians. As criterion for inclusion in the listing, physicians were asked whom they would choose to treat themselves or their families. Only 5 percent of physicians from all specialties earn the “Best Doctor” appellation.

MacDonald also has been selected to “Who’s Who in Medicine and Health Care” and “Who’s Who in America.”

MacDonald received his doctor of medicine from the West Virginia School of Medicine and his bachelor of science degree from Washington and Lee University. He completed residencies at Pitt County Memorial Hospital, the ECU medical school, and North Carolina Baptist Hospital, Bowman-Gray School of Medicine (now Wake Forest University School of Medicine).

He is a member of numerous professional societies. In addition to the American Society of Metabolic and Bariatric Surgeons, they include: American College of Surgeons, Southern Surgical Association, Society for Surgery of the Alimentary Tract, Society of American Gastrointestinal Endoscopic Surgeons, The Southeastern Surgical Congress, and North Carolina Surgical Association.
On an international level, MacDonald performed the first gastric bypass operations in the Republic of Moldova, where he also spoke at the state medical and pharmaceutical university in the capital of Chisinau. He was the first invited surgical presentation at the National Academy of Medicine in Mexico City (1998).
Constitutional law center proposal at NCCU withdrawn

BY ROB CHRISTENSEN - rcrhistensen@newsobserver.com

RALEIGH A proposal to create a constitutional law center at N.C. Central University in Durham has been withdrawn after generating controversy because it would have been financed by a foundation with close ties to Raleigh businessman Art Pope.

The project was the brain child of Robert Orr, a former N.C. Supreme Court justice and former GOP candidate for governor, who hoped to create one of the few centers in the country devoted to the study of state constitutional law. Orr's proposed source of funding for the center was $600,000 in grants from the John William Pope Foundation, the family foundation headed by Art Pope, who has overseen the expenditure of millions of dollars to finance conservative causes and Republican politics.

After a number of alumni of N.C. Central's law school objected to Pope's involvement, Orr said he decided to withdraw from the project.

"I'm disappointed," Orr said in an interview Friday. "I thought it was a really good proposal. I thought it was important for the law school and important for the state. There is really nothing out there that adequately addresses research on the state Constitution."

He added, "Some folks just don't like Art Pope. Art was simply trying to help."
Pope said Friday that even though Orr had withdrawn his proposal, he was still open to a proposal by the NCCU law school for a constitutional center.

"It was Bob Orr's decision to withdraw his role in the proposal," Pope said. "If N.C. Central wants to proceed with a proposal for a center on North Carolina constitutional law without Bob Orr, they are free to do so and submit it to the John William Pope Foundation. I would look forward to receiving such a proposal."

Raymond Pierce, the law school dean, said the constitutional center was Orr's project, and with the law school facing so many other needs, it was unlikely that officials would pursue it.

**Law school benefactors**

Pierce praised Orr and Pope, both of whom, he said have been benefactors of the law school. Orr is a longtime adjunct law professor there and a member of the Board of Visitors. As a Supreme Court justice, he hired interns from the school. Pope facilitated the visit of U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts, funded a speaker series and commissioned a mural celebrating the Constitution.

"We've had a relationship with Art Pope for three or four years," Pierce said. Pope, who heads a regional retail chain, has become a political lightening rod because he - through his family foundation - has poured tens of millions of dollars into a network of conservative organizations both in North Carolina and nationally. He also was the major financial backer of the Republican takeover of the legislature last year.

He has gained such prominence that he is scheduled to be the subject of a major profile in The New Yorker magazine next week - something usually reserved for national figures.

**A proposal at UNC-CH**

This is not the first time there has been controversy regarding a proposal by the Pope foundation. In 2005, the foundation offered to donate $4.9 million for the study of Western cultures at UNC-Chapel Hill. After faculty opposition the offer was withdrawn.

The Popes through their foundation have given a considerable amount of money over the years to UNC-CH, N.C. State University, Campbell University and other campuses, including $2.3 million to UNC-CH in 2006, most of which went to the sports program.
Orr, a student of the state Constitution, is executive director of the N.C. Institute for Constitutional Law, an organization funded in large part with Pope-foundation money, which has education projects but also has an advocacy role in filing litigation.

Orr said that for several years he has considered setting up a separate education center - with no advocacy function - that would be associated with a university and that would work in collaboration with the N.C. School of Government. He said the only similar organization is a center at Rutgers University in New Jersey.

The center as he envisioned it would have conducted scholarship research on the history and development of the N.C. Constitution and contemporary issues, provide educational programs for educators, lawyers and elected officials, and become a repository for historical information. Orr would have been the center's director.

Orr helped arrange for $200,000 per year or $600,000 over three years from the Pope Foundation. The proposal was pending before the law school's faculty curriculum committee when Orr sent his Sept. 27 letter withdrawing it.

Reaction from law school alumni was mixed, Pierce said.

"You had some alumni say it was a good idea for the law school," Pierce said. "And then you probably had more alumni expressing concern with some of the activity and affiliations of Art Pope. That gave some folks a cause for concern."

But Pierce said alumni pressure never entered into the faculty curriculum committee's deliberations.

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Patti McCarver, a nurse whose doctor of nursing practice degree entitles her to call herself “doctor,” meeting with a patient.

**When the Nurse Wants to Be Called ‘Doctor’**

By GARDINER HARRIS

NASHVILLE — With pain in her right ear, Sue Cassidy went to a clinic. The doctor, wearing a white lab coat with a stethoscope in one pocket, introduced herself.

“Hi. I’m Dr. Patti McCarver, and I’m your nurse,” she said. And with that, Dr. McCarver stuck a scope in Ms. Cassidy’s ear, noticed a buildup of fluid and prescribed an allergy medicine.

It was something that will become increasingly routine for patients: a someone who is not a physician using the title of doctor.

Dr. McCarver calls herself a doctor because she returned to school to earn a doctorate last year, one of thousands of nurses doing the same recently. Doctorates are popping up all over the health professions, and the result is a quiet battle over not only the title “doctor,” but also the money, power and prestige that often comes with it.

As more nurses, pharmacists and physical therapists claim this honorific, physicians are fighting back. For nurses, getting doctorates can help them land a top administrative job at a hospital, improve their standing at a university and win them more respect from colleagues and patients. But so
far, the new degrees have not brought higher fees from insurers for seeing patients or greater authority from states to prescribe medicines.

Nursing leaders say that their push to have more nurses earn doctorates has nothing to do with their fight of several decades in state legislatures to give nurses more autonomy, money and prescriptive power.

But many physicians are suspicious and say that once tens of thousands of nurses have doctorates, they will invariably seek more prescribing authority and more money. Otherwise, they ask, what is the point?

Dr. Roland Goertz, the board chairman of the American Academy of Family Physicians, says that physicians are worried that losing control over “doctor,” a word that has defined their profession for centuries, will be followed by the loss of control over the profession itself. He said that patients could be confused about the roles of various health professionals who all call themselves doctors.

“There is real concern that the use of the word ‘doctor’ will not be clear to patients,” he said.

So physicians and their allies are pushing legislative efforts to restrict who gets to use the title of doctor. A bill proposed in the New York State Senate would bar nurses from advertising themselves as doctors, no matter their degree. A law proposed in Congress would bar people from misrepresenting their education or license to practice. And laws already in effect in Arizona, Delaware and other states forbid nurses, pharmacists and others to use the title “doctor” unless they immediately identify their profession.

The deeper battle is over who gets to treat patients first. Pharmacists, physical therapists and nurses largely play secondary roles to physicians, since patients tend to go to them only after a prescription, a referral or instructions from a physician. By requiring doctorates of new entrants, leaders of the pharmacy and physical therapy professions hope their members will be able to treat patients directly and thereby get a larger share of money spent on patient care.

As demand for health care services has grown, physicians have stopped serving as the sole gatekeepers for their patients’ entry into the system. So physicians must increasingly share their patients — not only with one another but also with other professions. Teamwork is the new mantra of medicine, and nurse practitioners and physician assistants (sometimes known as midlevels or physician extenders) have become increasingly important care providers, particularly in rural areas.
But while all physician organizations support the idea of teamwork, not all physicians are willing to surrender the traditional understanding that they should be the ones to lead the team. Their training is so extensive, physicians argue, that they alone should diagnose illnesses. Nurses respond that they are perfectly capable of recognizing a vast majority of patient problems, and they have the studies to prove it. The battle over the title “doctor” is in many ways a proxy for this larger struggle.

For patients, the struggle has brought an increasing array of professionals trained to deal with their day-to-day health woes, but also at times confusion over who is responsible for their care and what sort of training they have.

Six to eight years of collegiate and graduate education generally earn pharmacists, physical therapists and nurses the right to call themselves “doctors,” compared with nearly twice that many years of training for most physicians. For decades, a bachelor’s degree was all that was required to become a pharmacist. That changed in 2004 when a doctorate replaced the bachelor’s degree as the minimum needed to practice. Physical therapists once needed only bachelor’s degrees, too, but the profession will require doctorates of all students by 2015 — the same year that nursing leaders intend to require doctorates of all those becoming nurse practitioners.

Dr. Kathleen Potempa, dean of the University of Michigan School of Nursing and the president of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, said that the profession’s new doctoral degree, called the doctor of nursing practice, was simply about remaining current. “Knowledge is exploding, and the doctor of nursing practice degree evolved out of a grassroots recognition that we need to continuously improve our curriculum,” she said.

Last year, 153 nursing schools gave doctor of nursing practice degrees to 7,037 nurses, compared with four schools that gave the degrees to 170 nurses in 2004, when the association of nursing schools voted to embrace the new degree. In 2008, there were 375,794 nurses with master’s degrees and 28,369 with doctorates, according to a recent government survey.

Dr. Potempa said that nurses with master’s degrees were every bit as capable of treating patients as those with doctorates.

Nursing is filled with multiple specialties requiring varying levels of education, from a high school equivalency degree for nursing assistants to a master’s degree for nurse practitioners. Those wishing to become nurse anesthetists will soon be required to earn doctorates, but otherwise there are
presently no practical or clinical differences between nurses who earn master’s degrees and those who get doctorates.

Nurse practitioners must generally graduate from college and take an additional 12 to 16 months of classes, which include months of treating patients for both mild and serious illnesses in clinics and hospitals under the watchful eyes of instructors. Those earning doctorates must generally take a further four semesters or 12 to 16 months of additional classes.

While instruction at each school varies, Dr. McCarver took classes in statistics, epidemiology and health care economics to earn her doctor of nursing practice degree. These additional classes, at Vanderbilt University, did not delve into how to treat specific illnesses, but taught Dr. McCarver the scientific and economic underpinnings of the care she was already providing and how they fit into the nation’s health care system. Studies have shown that nurses with master’s level training offer care in many primary care settings that is as good as and sometimes better than care given by physicians, who generally have far more extensive training. And patients often express higher satisfaction with care delivered by nurses, studies show. Physicians say they are better at recognizing rare problems, something studies have trouble measuring.

The benefits to patients of nurses receiving doctorates is unclear, since there is no evidence that nurses with doctoral degrees provide better care than those with master’s degrees do.

Given the proven effectiveness of nurses with master’s degrees, even some nursing leaders have asked why nurses should be required to get doctorates.

“If it ain’t broke, why fix it?” asked Dr. Afaf I. Meleis, dean of the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing.

Some health care economists say the push for clinical doctorates across health professions could be misguided. They argue that anything requiring students to spend more time and money getting trained will invariably result in longer waits and increased costs for patients, because fewer students will meet the increased requirements and those who do will eventually demand higher compensation.

“Everyone’s talking about improving patients’ access to care, bending the cost curve and creating team-based care,” said Erin Fraher, an assistant professor of surgery and family medicine at the University of North Carolina School of Medicine. “Where’s the evidence that moving to doctorates in pharmacy, physical therapy and nursing achieves any of these?”
Depending on their area of specialty, nurse practitioners earn a median salary of $86,000 to $90,000 annually, according to the Medical Group Management Association — a bit less than half of what primary care physicians earn. Nurses with doctorates generally earn the same salaries as those with master’s degrees since insurers pay the same rates to both. Physician groups fear that the real reason behind the creation of the doctor of nursing practice degree is to persuade more state legislatures to grant nurses the right to treat patients without supervision from doctors.

Twenty-three states allow nurses to practice without a physician’s supervision or collaboration, and most are in the mountain West and northern New England, areas that have trouble attracting enough physicians. Nursing groups have lobbied for years to increase that number. “This degree is just another step toward independent practice,” said Louis J. Goodman, chief executive of the Texas Medical Association.

Not true, Dr. Potempa said — the new degree simply ensures that nurses stay competent. “It’s not like a group of us woke up one day to create a degree as a way to compete with another profession,” she said. “Nurses are very proud of the fact that they’re nurses, and if nurses had wanted to be doctors, they would have gone to medical school.”