THE DAILY CLIPS

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ECU quarterback will face DWI charges in January

The Daily Reflector

A Superior Court judge continued the underage drunk driving case involving an East Carolina University quarterback until January.

Sophomore Robert Kass faces one count of driving while impaired and driving after consuming by a person under 21. The charges stem from an Aug. 25 police checkpoint where he registered a .19 blood alcohol level when stopped — twice the legal limit.

Kass' attorney, Myron Hill Jr., requested Tuesday that the case be continued and Pitt County Superior Court Judge Charles Vincent compiled. Kass will return to court Jan. 7.

Hill did not comment on the reason behind rescheduling.

Following his arrest, Kass was suspended for the team's opening game of the season, against Virginia Tech, in Blacksburg, Va. He has played in each game since, sharing time with fellow quarterback Patrick Pinkney.
Man charged in August shooting of teenage girl

The suspect was in police custody Tuesday evening in connection with a recent shooting of an ECU student. Police also are seeking a second suspect.

By Kathryn Kennedy
The Daily Reflector

The suspected shooter of an East Carolina University student is now charged with the August shooting of a 13-year-old girl, according to the Greenville Police Department.

Keyvon Semej Clifton, 17, 110-B Paul Circle, was charged with attempted murder, assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill and assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill inflicting serious injury. The charges stem from the Aug. 14 shooting of Brittany Teel, 13, near South Greene Street. Teel was shot twice in the back but made a full recovery.

Clifton faces numerous charges in an Oct. 23 armed robbery and shooting near ECU. He was in Pitt Co. Detention Center on Tuesday on a $4.5 million bond.

Police are still seeking Dontavious Devon Roberts for his role in Teel's shooting, according to a department news release. Warrants are on file for attempted first-degree murder and assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill inflicting serious injury.

Roberts should be considered armed and dangerous, the release added. Anyone with information is asked to contact the Greenville Police Department at 329-4360 or Crime Stoppers at 758-7777.

Kathryn Kennedy can be reached at kkennedy@coxnc.com or 329-9566.
Former medical school dean heading to Va. Tech

By Jimmy Ryals
The Daily Reflector

A former dean of the Brody School of Medicine is leaving East Carolina University to lead a new medical school in Virginia.

Dr. Cynda Ann Johnson, currently senior associate vice chancellor for clinical and translational research, will be the first dean of a medical school being launched by Virginia Tech and the private Carilion Clinic.

The new medical school will open in 2010 in Roanoke, Va.

Johnson, who will assume her new position in January 2006, said she's looking forward to the challenge of starting a new school.

"I've been in academic medicine for 30 years, and the whole idea that I can take what I've learned and all the things that I always thought that a medical school should be like and use that for the team up there to start a brand-new school is pretty exciting," she said.

Virginia Tech and Carilion officials touted Johnson's experience.

"Dr. Johnson brings a broad and distinguished career as a physician leader, educator, academician, and national leader in health care and medical education," said Carilion President and CEO Dr. Edward G. Murphy in a news release.

"Her experience and strengths will complement the strong faculty at Carilion Clinic and Virginia Tech and further provide the leadership and vision needed to successfully develop and launch our new medical school."

Virginia Tech President Charles Steger called the hiring "another step in our journey toward a successful medical school and enhanced translational research programs."

Johnson was dean of medicine at ECU from 2003 to November 2006. Last year, Chancellor Steve Ballard moved Johnson and former Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences Dr. Michael Lewis to other administrative positions. The moves were part of a reorganization aimed at reversing Brody's financial woes.

Between 2002 and 2006, the medical school had run $25 million in deficits, and the 2006-07 budget called for another multimillion-dollar shortfall.

For the last year, Johnson has worked on launching a center to study health disparities. The center opened last month.

"I miss being a part of the medical school," she said when asked to reflect on being reassigned. "I like very much the fact that this medical school is mission-based and really focuses on its mission. So that's what brought me here and I think that makes it a very special place. And I'll leave it at that."

Prior to joining ECU, Johnson led the family medicine department at the University of Kansas. She has degrees from Stanford University and the University of California at Los Angeles.

University administrators are considering whether and how to fill Johnson's position, said spokesman John Durham.

"We have a commitment to both translational research and health disparities, and those were two focuses of Dr. Johnson's work in the research division," he said. "We want to make sure that we effectively maintain our activities in those arenas."

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Letter: Yield to bicyclists, add more safe lanes

Monday, November 12, 2007

As a colleague of a young woman, wife and mother in the early phases of a long recuperation following a recent car-bicycle accident on MacGregor Downs Road, I would like to address some long-standing concerns.

This woman's life was no doubt saved by wearing a helmet which provided significant protection. However, I am deeply concerned about the larger issues of bicycle and pedestrian safety. On moving here, I had hoped to ride my bicycle more, but I quickly found that it is extremely dangerous. A Leo Jenkins Cancer Center staff member was killed in front of her children last year by a hit-and-run driver when she stopped to drag a bicyclist off the road who had just been hit by another hit-and-run driver. Periodically we see that pedestrians are hit on Memorial Drive.

While significant progress has been made in installing sidewalks in Greenville, we desperately need bicycle lanes or paths for all major streets, not just in a few areas. In a town with few hills and an obesity epidemic, wouldn't good pedestrian and bicycle lanes make a lot of sense? We are constantly bombarded by the media with the need to decrease carbon dioxide emissions.

We need to provide a safe environment so that people can ride bicycles to work yielding the added benefits of less crowded streets and decreased demand for parking.

I would hope that newly elected council members might begin addressing these issues. Safe lanes on Memorial Drive, Evans Street and Charles Boulevard might be places to start.

As drivers, we must also be vigilant and aware of the admonition to "Share the Road." The safety of bicyclists and pedestrians in this town should have high priority and it is only too sad that this has not been addressed sooner.

LILLIAN BURKE, M.D.

Greenville
Our Views

A new trust

ECU works to overcome aid misdeeds

As the cost of attending college continues to spiral upward, the availability of financial aid becomes an increasingly important factor on whether a promising student can seek a higher education. That is especially important at East Carolina University, which serves a region with a high rate of poverty. More than half of incoming freshman receive some form of financial assistance.

The integrity of the system awarding that aid must be sound. That makes East Carolina’s effort to address criminal misbehavior in the Office of Financial Aid of vital importance as the school restores confidence in the administration of that critical lifeline for students.

More than a year ago, Pitt County District Attorney Clark Everett confirmed his office was investigating misdeeds in East Carolina’s financial aid office. That followed a two-year probe by the State Bureau of Investigation into a host of problems in the administration of that office and in the system of awarding funds to students.

Everett’s office secured three indictments and convictions as a result. An assistant director and two others pleaded guilty earlier this year to diverting financial aid to unauthorized students in exchange for cash payments between June 2002 and December 2004.

The episode was a black eye for the school, and the SBI investigation revealed a host of additional problems, including shoddy record-keeping and an inattention to detail that is unacceptable given the importance of the office’s work.

Last week, East Carolina was ordered to repay the federal government the staggering sum of $935,000 over three years for its failure to adhere to guidelines governing the administration of financial aid. Director Rose Mary Stelma left the university in the summer, and the school expects to begin a search for a new director in the spring.

Such profound problems do more than confirm that some students are not receiving the aid to which they are entitled. They represent a breach of trust between the school and the young men and women it is expected to educate. Restoring confidence in the financial aid system promises to take considerable effort.

East Carolina has already begun that effort in earnest, and with reassuring results. It has implemented a new record keeping system for financial aid awards which, after some glitches early in the semester, appears to be on track. It is working to make restitution for misdeeds, such as repaying money to Washington, D.C. And one expects the next director will be exceptionally qualified and able, so as to avoid another mishap.

Still, the financial aid office must operate flawlessly in the years to come to overcome this ugly episode. So many students in this region need a helping hand in order to attend college, and it is vital that the system charged with its administration is above reproach.
Public Forum

Adding sidewalks, bike lanes critical

I couldn't agree more with Lillian Burke's Nov. 12 letter calling for more sidewalks and bike lanes in Greenville. This is a crucial safety and environmental issue for our community, not only for those who choose to travel in these ways, but also for those who have no other choice. Some people can't afford or can't drive cars, and prefer not to rely on public transportation (which can cost money, is often highly inconvenient and uses fossil fuels).

All of Burke's reasons for more bike lanes and sidewalks are sound.

We are a community and nation plagued by high obesity rates, environmental destruction, stressful and tedious car-crammed commutes (down Greenville Boulevard, etc.) and parking problems (especially around ECU). Add to this the high costs for gasoline, car purchase, repair and insurance and the aesthetic cost to Uptown and other areas from all of the ugly parking lots that have replaced homes and businesses.

As Greenville and ECU grow rapidly, these problems are only going to grow worse without a radical rethinking of how we transport and live amongst ourselves.

Don't forget that when you get out of your car and take a walk somewhere you're far more likely to meet a neighbor and feel connected to where you live, in a positive way. Extremely hazardous roadways are the norm for those smart, energetic and courageous people who brave them on foot or on bicycle.

This is an extremely sad situation given Greenville's great potential as a vibrant, beautiful and friendly university town.

Please support our mayor, Friends of Greenville Greenways and City Council members as they try to improve the lives of everyone with more bicycle lanes and sidewalks in our community.

THOMAS HERRON
Greenville
Landscape architect makes gift to NCSU

BY SARAH LINDENFELD HALL    STAFF WRITER

RALEIGH — With the gloved care usually reserved for rare books and ancient scrolls, librarians carefully unrolled dozens of working blueprints Tuesday, searching for evidence of bugs and mold in the lifetime work of one of North Carolina’s pioneering landscape architects.

In the North Raleigh office of Dick Bell, the librarians started cataloging his blueprints of parks and brick-lined public spaces to become part of N.C. State University library’s special collections.

Bell, who designed Raleigh’s Pullen Park, the Brickyard at N.C. State, the amphitheater at Meredith College, and other landmarks across the state, helped found the profession of landscape architecture in North Carolina.

He will move from Raleigh to his Atlantic Beach condominium today with wife Mary Jo, a departure that marks the end of an era in the state’s landscape architecture community he helped create.

“His collection of records is extraordinary, and his work over the last decades is really, really important to the state,” said Catherine Bishir, an architectural historian who works with NCSU’s Special Collections Research Center.

Many of North Carolina’s successful landscape architects got their start by working with Bell at his Water Garden, a forested 11 acres in North Raleigh with a handful of squat contemporary buildings. The Bells lived and worked at the award-winning complex for more than five decades. Mary Jo Bell ran a successful art gallery there.

Bell is considered a pioneer in the use of native plants in his designs, introducing now-popular plants such as wax myrtle and river birch. And he is credited with helping to found the profession in North Carolina, playing a key role in getting landscape architecture registration recognized in the state nearly 40 years ago.

Now, 753 landscape architects are licensed in the state. They are the people who design neighborhoods, parks, shopping centers and other spaces, integrating the natural landscape with what people make.

Last month, Bell sold the once-isolated Water Garden property, which now is bounded by development and Glenwood Avenue, to an acquisition and development firm. The firm has plans to build a retirement community there but maintain some of the trees and the name, the Water Garden. It’s uncertain whether Bell’s home will remain.

Library officials learned of Bell’s plans to leave after reading an article in The News & Observer on Nov. 5, Greg Raschke, associate director for collections and scholarly communication, said he heard from a half-dozen architectural historians and others urging him to preserve the collection.

Bishir contacted Bell, an NCSU graduate, to find out if he was interested in donating his collection. He was.

“It’s just marvelous all the way around,” Bell said. “It just didn’t make sense to throw away all these drawings.”

Last week, officials surveyed the collection and photographed the Water Garden.

Lisa Carter, head of the Special Collections Research Center, said it is important to the collection to document the Water Garden as it is.

“If people didn’t get a sense of what the place looked like, they wouldn’t really understand the work that he did,” she said.

Students, historians, practicing landscape architects and others are expected to use the collection for study and ideas. It will take a couple of years to archive the collection.

The library already has a large archive of architects, many who designed buildings at the same time that Bell was designing landscapes, starting around the mid-20th century. Now, librarians are trying to fill gaps in their landscape architecture collection.

Raschke said a growing environmental movement has helped build interest in the profession.

On Tuesday, Bell leafed through drawings in a back room. He’ll keep some drawings as he works on three books but will give those to the library once he’s done with them.

“I didn’t know what to do,” he said of the drawings. “It’s terribly gratifying because it is a history of the state.”

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Baptist convention starts severs ties to colleges

By Yonat Shimron
Staff Writer

GREENSBORO — In a historic vote, delegates to the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina voted to cut ties to five Baptist colleges and universities they birthed years ago.

The debate, at Greensboro Coliseum's Special Events Center, was stormy. Many expressed their opposition to the measure, which will allow the five institutions to begin charting their futures by electing their own trustees and forgoing annual contributions of about $1.2 million each. For the change to take effect, it requires a second reading at next year's session.

Delegates were sharply critical of the severance plan and skeptical that the schools would maintain their Christian character.

"If we're going to separate... we shouldn't give them the privilege of saying they're Baptist," said Tom McLean of Summerville Baptist Church in Denton. About 2,400 delegates attended the session.

All five presidents of the colleges, however, said they planned to honor the historic Baptist and Christian principles on which their schools were founded.

"To assume we'll go wayward is a false assumption," said Jerry Wallace, president of Campbell University in Buies Creek. He added that he hoped to continue voluntary ties.

"We want to come to this convention. We want to recruit students from Baptist churches."

The five colleges cutting their ties are Campbell, Chowan University in Murfreesboro; Gardner-Webb University in Boiling Springs; Mars Hill College and Wingate University.

Many of these colleges have become too big and cumbersome to be controlled by increasingly meager denominational resources.

Brian Davis, a convention executive who worked with the college presidents, said the money the colleges receive from the convention amounts to less than 4 percent of each institution's annual budget — a miniscule amount compared to the early days when church support helped keep the colleges afloat.

In addition, the colleges are also eager to recruit trustees from among alumni who no longer live in North Carolina and may not be Baptist. Theological controversies are also a factor in the institutions' desire to go solo.

Under the proposed plan, the five would be allowed to start choosing trustees in 2009. Meanwhile, the state convention will begin phasing out its contributions, eliminating them by 2013.

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UNC study shows African Americans add $44.7 billion to state's economy

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT
Tuesday, November 13, 2007

CHAPEL HILL - North Carolina’s growing African American population contributes more than $44.7 billion to the state’s economy through its purchases and taxes, while costing the state $4.5 billion for health care, education and corrections, according to a new report by researchers at UNC Chapel Hill.

The study details the impact of African American spending and employment, state government costs for services, and ways North Carolina can better capitalize economically on its significant African American population.

If recent growth trends continue, the total economic impact of black spending in the state could increase to $60 billion by 2009.

"This study shows that clear opportunities exist for financial institutions and other businesses to capitalize on this growing market," said Andrea Harris, president of the N.C. Institute of Minority Economic Development, major funder of the study. "It also offers recommendations for expanding economic opportunity and impact."

Among the study’s other findings was that blacks accounted for 1.8 million, or 21.8 percent of the state's total population, and accounted for 20.4 percent of the state population growth from 1980 to 2004.

The study was conducted by the Frank Hawkins Kenan Institute of Private Enterprise, part of UNC’s Kenan-Flagler Business School. It follows the institute’s January 2006 report on the economic impact of the state’s Hispanic population. The report is available online at www.kenaninstitute.unc.edu.