Middleton Jr., Dr. David J. "Jack"

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Middleton Jr., Dr. David John

Dr. David John "Jack" Middleton, Jr. 79, died Wednesday, November 12, 2008 at Sunny Brook Rehabilitation Center in Raleigh.

Dr. Middleton was born in Norfolk, VA to the late David John and Carrie Chadwick Middleton.

Dr. Middleton was a graduate of Warsaw High School. He later graduated from Duke University and was a lifetime Duke fan. He received his Ph.D in Public Administration from UNCG-Chapel Hill. He became Director of Continuing Education at Appalachian State and went on to serve as Dean of Continuing Education at East Carolina University from 1962-1980.

After retiring, he lived on the North Carolina coast he loved, in Gloucester, where he served on several boards and commissions including 40 years of service on the North Carolina Rural Fund for Development.

Dr. Middleton is survived by a son, David John Middleton, III of Raleigh, and a daughter, Anne Middleton Johnson and husband, Stewart Lewis Johnson of Raleigh; granddaughters, Caroline Brooks Middleton, Victoria Tucker Middleton, Mary Landis Middleton, Tyler Middleton Johnson, and Kendall Middleton Johnson.

A funeral service will be held at 11:00 a.m., Saturday, November 15, 2008 at Warsaw Methodist Church, Warsaw.

Visitation will begin at 10:00 a.m. at Warsaw Methodist Church. Following the service, burial will be in Devotional Gardens.

A service of Community Funeral Home of Warsaw, Inc.
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ECU Physicians, Eastern Neurological and Spine Associates complete merger

The Daily Reflector

ECU Physicians and a private neurosurgery practice have completed a merger, bringing brain and spine surgery to the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University and paving the way for the region’s first neuroscience institute.

Eastern Neurosurgical and Spine Associates, a six-physician group established in 1968, has joined the medical school. Its physicians are full-time clinical faculty of the new division of neurosurgery within the Department of Surgery. They also have joined ECU Physicians, the group medical practice of the medical school, and will see patients at the ECU Neurosurgical & Spine Center at the corner of Arlington Boulevard and Stantonsburg Road.

“This merger of a successful and unique service in the community with the academic family is the culmination of a strategic thought process and plan,” Dr. Paul Cunningham, dean of the medical school, said. “The value of the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University, when combined with the talent and expertise of a dedicated group of physicians, will allow the future development of programs that will enhance the mission of the school.”

ECU and Eastern Neurosurgical representatives have talked for years about a more formal alliance. They believe the time is right to combine their clinical programs and begin to develop multidisciplinary centers that will ultimately join other research and academic programs in the neurosciences at ECU to form an institute.

“We look forward to the merger as it will allow us to further develop our efforts to expand neurosurgical services for this area, hopefully adding some services in the very near future,” Dr. F. Douglas Jones of ENSA said. Possible new subspecialties include neuro-oncology and endovascular surgery.

Jones, Dr. K. Stuart Lee, Dr. Keith Tucci, Dr. Barbara Lazio and Dr. Michael C. Sharts are now faculty members at the Brody School of Medicine. ENSA staff members were offered permanent positions at ECU.
Medical care should address spirit, mind and body, Navajo surgeon says

By Josh Humphries
The Daily Reflector

Thursday, November 13, 2008

Dr. Lori Alvord, a Navajo surgeon, wants to see more traditional approaches to healing in modern medicine.

Alvord, the nation’s first female Navajo surgeon, gave a lecture Thursday at East Carolina University on the benefits of a spiritual approach to healing.

Her talk, presented to an audience of about 40 people, was part of ECU’s celebration of Native American Heritage Month.

“As I was training in medicine, it occurred to me that Western medicine has reached great heights,” she said, “but it does not have the corner market on all healing.”

Treatment for illness should address the spirit, the mind and the body, she said, sharing examples of traditional Navajo healing ceremonies that involved the entire community coming together to help a sick member of the tribe.

Alvord said she was treating a woman with cancer when she decided to attend a traditional night ceremony for a young woman in the Navajo community, just out of curiosity.

She shared her impressions of that ceremony by reading a selection from her book “The Scalpel and the Silver Bear.”

The ceremony places the sick person in the middle of a crowd which sends healing and positive energy to the person, a common practice in Navajo life, Alvord said.

“Everyone that attends benefits from the ceremonies healing power,” she said.

The same kind of ceremony is held for girls who are entering womanhood, she said. They are offered blessings and given the secrets of becoming a good woman, Alvord said. This gives them purpose and a strong self image in a culture that relied heavily on strength for survival in the days before other cultures exerted their influence.

That strength, which focused on the mind, the spirit and the body, was necessary for survival at one time, she said.

Alvord said natives had to be physically strong to make it during earlier times. They had to be able to hunt, grow food and chop wood to stay alive, she said, and were close to the spiritual world to strengthen the mind to be able to make it in a harsh environment.

This heartiness and spiritual strength could help modern Americans, who are too often overweight and lacking spiritual direction, Alvord said, adding that this approach to medicine is called a “systems approach.”

“A systems approach to healing would try to understand everything in a human’s environment,” she said.

Alvord said that she knows her ideas about healing are not generally accepted by the medical community, but being an activist for change is nothing new to her.

Her profession and level of education was practically unheard of where she grew in Crownpoint, N.M.
Today, she is associate dean of student and multicultural affairs at Dartmouth Medical School as well as professor of surgery and psychiatry, and she considers her choice of profession a form of social activism.

“My whole life has been one of quiet activism, because you are not supposed to be a woman ad a surgeon, and you are not supposed to be a native person and a surgeon,” she said.

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Pitt children have day in court

By Brock Letchworth
The Daily Reflector

Thursday, November 13, 2008

A hands-on project designed to teach students about legal conflict played out in a Pitt County courtroom Thursday morning much like an actual trial.

Nearly 80 students from the academically gifted program at E.B. Aycock Middle School traveled to the courthouse for a mock trial focused on a hypothetical assault claim involving a pair of golfers.

Every student participated in the trial, with some playing more active roles than others. They played the parts of the plaintiff, defendant, witnesses, attorneys, bailiffs and the jury.

East Carolina University Communications Professor Michael Cavanagh served as the trial judge, while a pair of local lawyers, Mary Cavanagh and Christine Russell, helped the student legal teams.

Paige Ballance and Tricia Briley, teachers of the academically gifted program at E.B. Aycock, say they organized the event to help students better understand their curriculum.

“They are studying conflict this year, and that includes all types such as personal, political or legal,” Ballance said. “This really gives them good exposure to the way legal conflicts play out in court.

“They have been very excited about this, because it is real,” she said. “They love doing simulations and participating in something where they have to think on their feet. This challenges them, and that is what they need.”

The mock trial was the last of several the students have participated in during the last couple of weeks, but the first outside the classroom.

Cavanagh said he also uses mock trials with his media law students at East Carolina, because he believes it shows them how to apply theoretical knowledge learned in class to real-world situations. It is beneficial for them to be introduced to the practice of law, he said.

“Most people don’t feel like the law is something that really affects them in any way, but they soon realize that, as life goes on, they will probably find themselves in court for something one day,” Cavanagh said. “They need to know how the legal system operates, and this is something that takes them away from the everyday activities they have in class.”

The former public defender said he was impressed with the students’ performances.

“I was a little concerned, because I have only done this before with college students, but I was really impressed by how much they know,” Cavanagh said. “I am also impressed with how much they paid attention to what was going on.”

Ballance said the activity promotes teamwork and critical thinking, which is in line with the goals of the academically gifted program.

“You never know how many of these kids could end up being attorneys,” Ballance said. “This really exposes them to it.”

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Editorial: Crisis mode - Budget shortfall forces tough choices

Friday, November 14, 2008

Outgoing Gov. Mike Easley knows all too well the fiscal constraints facing Governor-Elect Bev Perdue when she takes office in January. Easley faced massive budget shortfalls in the first years of his tenure, and is working feverishly to reduce the prospect of passing the same to Perdue.

Despite those efforts, however, the state's economic reality will likely be both burden and opportunity for the Perdue administration, depending on how she confronts diminishing revenue collections and the desperate need to modernize how the state pays for public services.

Easley confronted a shortfall near $2 billion when he took office in 2001, a gap between revenue collection and the state budget that threatened to scuttle his plans for new education spending. In a series of moves that generated heated opposition, he imposed tax increases, raided state funds and sought the imposition of a lottery to bolster North Carolina's fiscal solvency.

Now, North Carolina finds itself in similarly dismal financial straits. The sluggish national economy has sent sales and income tax collections plummeting, opening a budget shortfall already estimated at $1 billion. Forecasts say that gap could reach $2 billion by the end of the fiscal year in June.

Easley has already acted to address the shortfall, by ordering state agencies to cut budgets by 2 percent in September and 3 percent at the beginning of October. The October figure swelled to 5 percent by the end of the month, shortly before the election, in an effort to provide a cushion should revenue collections prove to be more dour than projected. Easley is also proposing to take $287 million from the state's rainy day fund to keep the budget funded.

However, that will still leave Perdue with tough choices when she takes control of the state next year. The rainy day fund will have an estimated $500 million remaining if the current administration's plan only totals $1.2 billion. But that will not be enough if the shortfall reaches the $2 billion some forecasters predict.

While much of the problem can be credited to economic contraction, state officials should not ignore the problems inherent in the system of revenue collection that leans heavily on individual income tax and avoids taxes on services. North Carolina needs comprehensive tax reform, but a lack of political courage in Raleigh makes it a non-starter.

Until state officials tackle the inequity of that antiquated system, North Carolina is likely to stagger between economic crises. This state deserves better, and citizens can hope Perdue views this as an opportunity for improvement.
'The Imaginary Invalid'

Demanding play's original performance left the author dead

By Kelley Kirk-Swindell
The Daily Reflector

Friday, November 14, 2008

"I'm not surprised Moliere died playing this role," Greg Jernigan said.

Moliere, author of "The Imaginary Invalid," portrayed the main character when it was first performed in 1673. He collapsed during the fourth performance and died soon thereafter.

Jernigan will portray Argan — the main character — when East Carolina University's Loessin Playhouse stages the "The Imaginary Invalid" at McGinnis Theatre.

"Argan is a really fun character. He's a typical Jackie Gleason, Homer Simpson father figure," Jernigan said.

In "The Imaginary Invalid," Argan is a hypochondriac who tries to persuade his daughter to marry a doctor for the free medical care. The original play, "Le Malade Imaginaire" was adapted by James Magruder into English.

Jernigan said the role of Argan is quite physically demanding and that he understands how the part could have caused Moliere's death.

"The premise is that Moliere comes back to life to play Argan," Jernigan said of the ECU production.

He added that the two roles are very different.

"Moliere is more flamboyant and arrogant. Argan is more of a man child, a baby," Jernigan said.

The Jacksonville native plans to graduate in December with a degree in theater education.

At 26, he knows he's older than the average student. But prior to attending ECU, the senior studied theater in New York at the American Musical and Dramatic Academy.

Jernigan was in the previous ECU production, "Of Thee I Sing," which wrapped its final performance Oct. 7.

"Rehearsals for this show started the day after 'Of Thee' ended," Jernigan said.

He's been acting his whole life and has also held roles in local productions for the Magnolia Arts Center and the Farmville Community Arts Council.

Jernigan has also completed an internship at J.H. Rose High School last semester and assisted with the school's production of "Fiddler on the Roof."

In the future, Jernigan plans to attend graduate school and eventually both act and teach.

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Brutality report heads to DA

By Michael Abramowitz
The Daily Reflector

Thursday, November 13, 2008

The State Bureau of Investigation has turned over to prosecutors part of a report on allegations of police brutality at a Sept. 6 ECU football game, District Attorney Clark Everett said.

The bureau was asked to look into confrontations between law enforcement officers and some East Carolina University football fans at Dowdy-Fickien Stadium shortly after the incidents led to arrests and allegations of police brutality.

It likely will be weeks before Everett can draw any conclusions from information he is beginning to receive from the SBI, he said on Thursday.

He received a portion of the SBI's investigative report Wednesday, and will personally read the entire report, which he described as very large, before he proceeds with his part of the investigation, he said.

After that, Everett said, he will talk with lead SBI agents to discuss their findings.

"A lot of people were obviously interviewed, and it's good policy to sit down with the lead agents and get their take on things," Everett said.

He talked about the complexities of investigating an incident that takes place at such a large venue.

"When you have a situation where something disturbing occurred, then add to it that it occurred in front of 50,000 people, it's difficult."

The ECU team defeated favored West Virginia University in front of a packed home crowd on Sept. 6. Law enforcement officers from several area agencies served as crowd control for the event.

Fansstormed the field immediately after the game, touching off some physical confrontations with law enforcement officers that led to arrests. No one was injured, but accusations of brutality led to the SBI involvement.

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Safety is the priority of UNC system budget

Two-year plan calls for $3 billion

ERIC FERRERI, Staff Writer
Comment on this story

CHAPEL HILL - A scaled-back budget request from the UNC system would put 33 more police officers and 40 more mental health counselors on public university campuses across the state next year.

Campus safety is the top priority of a two-year budget request the UNC system's governing board will likely approve today. UNC system officials say their $3 billion spending plan -- including new funds of about $168 million -- is an acknowledgement of the state's ongoing economic struggles.

The university system's spending plan will ask for more than $13 million to continue a series of safety measures that began last year in the wake of the shootings at Virginia Tech that left more than 30 people dead.

Along with the additional officers and health counselors, campuses are being trained in threat assessment and are installing high-tech emergency notification systems with sirens, surveillance cameras and emergency communications systems.

"I believe this budget is a very lean and focused and prioritized budget," said Rob Nelson, the UNC system's vice president for finance. "It's the lowest percentage increase that we've had in over 20 years."

If approved today, the budget will be submitted to the state legislature when it convenes next year. Last year, the university asked for 11.6 percent more money than it received the prior year. This year, it asks for 5.8 percent more.

"This is a reasonable request, but we may not get a penny of it," said UNC system President Erskine Bowles. "We have to explain to the General Assembly what our needs are."

Some other high priorities:

* $23 million next year for need-based financial aid.
* $66 million to recruit and retain faculty.
* $2.6 million for global readiness programs.
* $1 million for university outreach, like a one-stop higher education center at Fayetteville State University to recruit members of the military.
* $10 million to hire faculty to work at the N.C. Research Campus in Kannapolis, a new public-private venture involving several public universities.
* $16 million for health issues, such as planning funds for medical school expansions at East Carolina and UNC-Chapel Hill, and a new Area Health Education Center at Elizabeth City State University.

The university wants to give 2 percent merit raises to employees and an additional 1 percent for faculty members.

With North Carolina's economy still struggling, university leaders created the spending plan at the same time
that they plotted ways to cut 5 percent from their current operating budget.

UNC leaders have encouraged campuses to avoid cuts to classroom instruction as much as possible by looking first at delaying equipment purchases, nixing travel, and keeping open positions vacant as long as possible.

On campuses, department heads have long relied on vacant positions for savings. A good example: the state’s last economic downturn came several years ago in the years following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

In 2003-04, the UNC system faced permanent cuts of 3 percent, leading to the elimination of 378 jobs across the state.

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