THE DAILY CLIPS

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Families Hold Funerals For ECU Students

WFMY- News 2  Greensboro–Winston-Salem

Kernersville, NC -- Families in Kernersville and Raleigh buried daughters on Saturday. The two East Carolina University students died last weekend in a car crash in Greenville.

Victoria Carter and Briana Gather, both 20, were riding with two other people when the car slammed into a tree. People who knew them described them as being ambitious with lots of friends.

The funeral for Gather, who was from Kernersville, was Saturday at her church, the St. Peter's World Outreach Center in Winston-Salem.

Friends have posted a memory page for Gather on Facebook. Most people have left messages that said they remember Gather's infectious smile and her ability to comfort anyone who was down.

WFMY News 2's sister station, WNCT in Greenville, said police are still investigating the crash. WNCT reports all four women in the car were pledging the Delta Sigma Theta sorority at ECU. They were on
their way to a hair salon to get ready for their induction the same day of the crash.

Emergency crews took the driver and another student to the hospital. The hospital has been asked not to release any information on the driver. The other passenger is out of the hospital.

Police have not yet filed any charges in the case.
As a boy of 13, Jim Hunt watched a paving truck lay down black-top over the dusty dirt road that led past his family's Wilson County farm. It was 1950 and North Carolina was a different place than it is now — different now at least in part because of that road.

“It dawned on me that if you work in politics, you can change people's lives,” Hunt told his former press secretary, speech writer and adviser, Gary Pearce, in one of more than 35 interviews for a new biography out this month. “Hunt always remembered the day the paving machine came,” Pearce wrote.

In Jim Hunt, A Biography, Pearce describes North Carolina following World War II as a state of farms and mills, rural and “segregated to the core,” quoting former University of North Carolina president Bill Friday. “By the beginning of the twenty-first century,” he writes, “North Carolina had become one of the most progressive, prosperous and fast-growing states in the nation.

“He wasn't the only one to play a part, by any means. ...But it was Hunt who held statewide office through 20 years, 16 as governor and four as lieutenant governor. It was Hunt who was the dominant progressive political leader of his time.... Arguably, no one individual had more to do with that transformation than Jim Hunt.”
From that starting point, Pearce's book, with a journalist's pacing, works through Hunt's political life of ambition charged with energy and a drive to succeed— for the right reasons. Most certainly, Pearce has given a positive accounting of Hunt's singular and stellar career.

“Let's be honest, I think he (Hunt) suspected it would be a pretty positive book,” Pearce told me during a conference call I had with him and the governor last week. “I felt like if I did pull punches there were plenty of people who were going to call me on it, and that would hurt the credibility of the book.”

Hunt added: “This is his book. I proofed it all the way through, but I made it clear from the very beginning I wasn't going to ask him to change anything.”

Pearce describes an over-achieving school boy and N.C. State student, whose rise in politics naturally followed younger days as a Future Farmers of America officer and competitive public speaker. The biography moves quickly into and through the development of Hunt's political career, influenced greatly by Democratic Governor Kerr Scott—who “paved that road.”

Of particular interest is Pearce's rendering of Hunt's development of a statewide political organization, with “key” people in each county. I asked the governor about that last week:

“The tendency for so many candidates today is to raise money, spend it like crazy and you don't have to worry about the people out there... They would call me to their county and (tell me) what needed to be done, so I really had good information.”

Hunt lamented the way political organizations have changed. “It means that candidates who are running and folks who get into office statewide do not know the state as I knew it and know it today.”

Not long after Hunt became lieutenant governor in 1972 he found himself in the thick of the struggle to establish a medical school at East Carolina University, something that was anathema to much of the state west of Interstate 95.

“As a young lad in Wilson County,” Hunt said, “my mother and I would go to the doctor and we had a couple of big medical clinics and they had a big waiting room. One day I timed it, three hours” before they saw the doctor. “I said this is just not right, and this has stuck with me.”

He explained the importance of the lieutenant governor's role in those days, appointing committees, referring bills: “If he wanted to he could be a real power and I wanted to and was, and we fought that battle.” He recalled how a Charlotte businessman said as a result of his medical school efforts Hunt would never win Mecklenburg County again.

“Now Mecklenburg is filled up with East Carolina doctors,” he said.
With clear satisfaction, Hunt also recalled putting the funding in his first state budget for Pitt Memorial Hospital to improve its facilities to become a teaching hospital, something necessary for medical school certification, and his speech to the med school's first class of graduating doctors.

At the heart of Pearce's book, though, is its detailed accounting of Hunt's 1984 campaign for the U.S. Senate against Jesse Helms. “If I had won,” Hunt said, “we would have had a very different kind of representation (in Washington). Somebody who primarily was motivated by opportunities for people and economic growth for the state. We probably would have gotten opportunities and funding that we never got.”

But if he had won, what would have happened to state initiatives, especially those in education, that he later authored after returning to the governor's office in 1992? “You have put your finger on the tough thing,” Hunt said. “The reason I ran for governor again was because I saw North Carolina not nearly where we ought to be, in fact, slipping some. But I decided I wanted to come back in ... to do things that I thought no other state was doing.”

These included his Smart Start early education program (a name that originated with Pearce) run by a local board and not a Raleigh agency, the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching, the National Board Certified Teacher program. The list of Hunt accomplishments is a long one.

Today the governor says education remains at the top of his project list, including his work with the Hunt Institute for Educational Leadership in Chapel Hill. He said his specialty is not prognosticating, but that he thought Mitt Romney would be the GOP presidential candidate in 2012, and that he has known Sarah Palin since she signed up for a Hunt Institute symposium when she was first elected governor of Alaska.

Pearce, meanwhile, says he doesn't have a specific project ongoing right now, but that “once you've worked for Governor Hunt you always work for Governor Hunt. So if he asks me again the answer is yes.”

As for the state of current politics, Hunt said the difficult economy is at the root of today's polarization. “I think we've got people frustrated, angry, hurt and dissatisfied with the way the country is going.” Then he added, with the irresistible Hunt optimism that has served him and this state so well over the years, “Even so, I think you still will see the parties trying to figure out how they can give the leadership to get the job done.” In other words, there's another dirt road out there, just give those folks working in politics some time and they'll pave it.

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History is full of movements, changes and progress. One recent addition to the books is a movement to increase the study of American history in North Carolina schools that could see success next month.

The N.C. Board of Education plans to vote at its December meeting on new graduation standards that would include two American history courses instead of one. The Department of Public Instruction's proposal originally called for reducing the comprehensive U.S. history class to cover only events after Reconstruction.

Leaving such pivotal and complex events as the Revolutionary and Civil Wars to younger grades caused an outcry in the historical community.

Local history educators Steven Hill, a history teacher at J.H. Rose High School, and Larry Tise, a Wilbur and Orville Wright Distinguished Professor at East Carolina University, joined a statewide movement to protest the original proposal earlier this year.

“Everyone was reacting to that proposal, we were outraged,” Hill said. “People in the U.S. can't be good citizens unless they're grounded in history,” Tise said.

The new proposal, in which U.S. History I covers the 1500s to 1877 and U.S. History II covers 1877 to the present, was released in October.

“The original proposal almost eliminated American History at the high school level, and now the new proposal is almost at the other extreme — that's wonderful,” Tise said, “If they follow through with that, it sounds very good. I'm really very pleased with what we've been able to do.”

The new graduation requirements would not take effect until 2012. Until then, students will continue with a U.S. history course from colonial to modern times, along with one world history course and one civics/economics course.

The movement, led by N.C. State professor Holly Brewer, included a declaration from history educators, signed petitions and even a Facebook page called “History Front” that got 1,000 friends in a matter of days, according to Hill.

Though brought together by a common outrage, “it was fun hearing from others across the profession,” Hill said.

“It was a great partnership,” Tise said. “It absolutely helped to have involvement at the university and high school level.”
“It was an extraordinary group of teachers who were concerned just like everyone else was,” Hill said. “As a historian and an American citizen, it's our job to teach these lessons to American children, because future generations of uninformed citizens are doomed to make the same mistakes of the past.”

Contact Jackie Drake at jdrake@reflector.com or (252) 329-9567.
ECU students ‘kick it’ for Haiti
ECU News Services
Sunday, November 28, 2010

East Carolina University health sciences students raised $1,930 for scholarships for Haitian nursing students through a Nov. 20 kickball tournament. A total of 100 students on 10 teams — six from the College of Nursing, two from the College of Allied Health Sciences and two from the Brody School of Medicine — competed on the Treybrooke Apartments field.

The winning team was Bean and the Brody Kickball Machine. Nursing student Brittany Bell, one of the tournament organizers, said the funds will contribute to the Haitian health care system by supporting students interested in pursuing nursing degrees as the country rebuilds from January's devastating earthquake. “By donating money, the community of East Carolina University will empower Haitian students to receive formal education and a means to facilitate the recovery of their society,” Bell said.

The East Carolina Association of Nursing Students, the Brody Chapter of the American Medical Association and the National Student Speech Language Hearing Association sponsored the tournament.

Major donors included Physicians East, Hite Associates and Dr. Thomas Bell Jr. The participants, while pursuing different curriculums, share a passion in caring for others, Brittany Bell said. “I think that Saturday's event is a testament to the manner in which ECU encourages all health care providers — nurses, physicians, speech therapists — to be servant leaders and responsible, global citizens,” Brittany Bell said. “The unity is instilled and expected.” ECU nursing has an ongoing relationship with the FSIL School of Nursing in Haiti.
Earlier this year, ECU students, faculty, staff and alumni raised $8,500 for Haitian nursing student scholarships during the college's Diversity Day celebration. Faculty also has shared course syllabi, tests and course information.

**Health Sciences faculty, staff honored**

Eighty-five ECU faculty and staff were honored on Nov. 16 for their published works at Laupus Library's fifth annual Health Sciences Author Recognition Awards. The awards were expanded this year to include faculty and staff from the Division of Health Sciences. Previously only faculty members were eligible.

Faculty and staff submitted 220 entries — 213 peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters and seven books — published between Jan. 1, 2009, and June 30. A bibliography is available at [www.ecu.edu/laupuslibrary/hsar/](http://www.ecu.edu/laupuslibrary/hsar/).

“The awards ceremony is designed to pay tribute to our colleagues who expand the scholarly culture of our university and the research reputation of the Division of Health Sciences through their published works,” said Dr. Dorothy Spencer, associate vice chancellor for communication and information resources and director of Laupus Library, which hosted the awards ceremony and dinner reception for honorees at the Hilton Greenville. The event was sponsored by Matthews Medical Books and Friends of Laupus Library.

Dr. Phyllis Horns, vice chancellor for health sciences, presented the book authors with a Laupus bronze, a special award named for the first dean of ECU's medical school, William E. Laupus. They were Martha Alligood from the College of Nursing; Eric Bailey, Charles Boklage and Annette Greer from the Brody School of Medicine; Jeffrey Coghill from Laupus Library; and Susie Harris and Patricia Royal from the College of Allied Health Sciences.


“Our faculty hold true to what we call scholarship,” said Dr. Stephen Thomas, dean of the College of Allied Health Sciences. “There is nothing more exhilarating than the discovery of new knowledge. Our basic science, clinical and translational research make what we do important in pushing health care forward.” Thomas recognized Jason Brinkley, Robert Campbell, Martha Chapin, Anne Dickerson, Denise Donica, Gregg
Givens, Amy Gross McMillan, Susie Harris, Monica Hough, Walter Jenkins, Michael Kennedy, Elizabeth Layman, Jane Painter, Patricia Royal, Shari Sias, Leonard Trujillo, Beth Velde and Paul Vos.

“We're very excited about the work you're doing in this era of evidence-based practice,” said Dr. Sylvia Brown, dean of the College of Nursing. Brown, who also published, recognized Martha Alligood, Tamara Congdon, Robin Webb Corbett, Martha Engelke, Laura Gantt, Darlene Elizabeth Jesse, Barbara Kellam, Janice Neil, Annette Peery, Marie Pokorny, Melissa Schwartz, Michelle Taylor Skipper, Melinda Walker and Carol Winters-Moorhead.

Spencer recognized four authors from Laupus Library: Kathy Cable, Jeffrey Coghill, Gina Firnhaber and Katherine Rickett.

Dr. James Hupp, dean of the School of Dental Medicine, was honored for his published works.

Spencer thanked Richard Eakin, chancellor emeritus at ECU and founding chair of the Friends of Laupus Library, for his service with a specially-mounted Laupus bronze. Evelyn Laupus, Rep. Marian McLawhorn and Dr. Walter Pories were the founding honorary chair and co-chairs respectively. In 2011, Dr. Greg Hassler will serve as chair of the Friends group, which provides support for special programs and activities of the library.

**Events look at Israeli films on Holocaust**

For the first four decades following the creation of the State of Israel, few Israeli films tackled the story of the Holocaust. This trend has been reversed since the early 1990s, and presently, Israeli documentaries and feature films that delve into the issue of the Holocaust and its impact on first- and second-generation survivors are regularly released.

A discussion about the Holocaust story in Israeli cinema is the focus of two upcoming events at ECU. The free events will include a film screening of “Under the Domim Tree” on Wednesday, and a follow-up guest lecture and Q&A session with Yaron Shemer, assistant professor of Israel cultural studies at the University of North Carolina — Chapel Hill, Thursday, titled “Holocaust in Israeli Cinema.”

Both events will begin at 6:30 p.m. in Speight Auditorium, the Jenkins Fine Arts Center. The events will address the reasons for the early meager treatment of the Holocaust, provide various explanations for the change and will delineate the main features in the portrayal of the Holocaust in Israeli films.

“The treatment of the Holocaust in Hollywood, or even German films, has received much critical attention,” said Susanne Lenné Jones, assistant professor of German at ECU and organizer for the event. “However, we know little about the ways in which Israeli cinema has dealt with the horrors that have shaped the nation's identity from its inception.”
Shemer, who concludes the two-days of presentations, is the author of numerous research articles that focus on contemporary Mizrahi films and on terrorism in Middle Eastern cinema. He has produced and directed films in Israel, Poland and the United States. He is completing a book manuscript, “Identity, Place, and Subversion in Contemporary Mizrahi Cinema.”

The Holocaust in Israeli Cinema events are organized by the German program in the Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures and are made possible by the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies through a grant from the Charles H. Revson Foundation.

For more information, contact Lenné Jones at 737-2390 or jonessu@ecu.edu.

**Smithey exhibition, painting performance**
The ECU Student Activities Board is welcoming artist Zack Smithey to campus for a special exhibition and painting performance.

Smithey will display his psychedelic abstract paintings at the Mendenhall Student Center through Dec. 5. The St. Louis-based artist will visit ECU to demonstrate his unique style of painting on Friday. The demonstration is scheduled from noon to 3 p.m. in the Jenkins Fine Arts Center's Speight Auditorium, with a reception at 6 p.m. at the Mendenhall Student Center Art Gallery.

Smithey paints by dripping the paint on his canvases, a la Jackson Pollock, but uses sound vibrations to aid his creation.

During the painting demonstration, Smithey will paint to a live band. The School of Music has provided a Brazilian jazz combo that will provide the vibrations of sound.

For more information, visit the SAB website at [www.ecu.edu/sab](http://www.ecu.edu/sab) or contact Alex Davis at 328-4713.

**Professor receives research award**
An ECU professor has received the 2010 Outstanding Researcher Award from the American School Health Association.

Dr. David A. Birch, faculty member in the Health Education and Promotion Department, received the award at the association's annual school health conference on Oct. 13 in Kansas City, Mo.

The award recognized Birch's school health research, which has focused on leadership and professional preparation, middle school students' perceptions of health issues, and parent and family involvement in school health.

Dr. Glen Gilbert, dean of the College of Health and Human Performance, said, “David is widely acclaimed for his contributions in the area of school health research and he is most deserving of this prestigious award.”
Birch began teaching at ECU in 2009. He previously served as professor of health education and chair of the Department of Health Education and Recreation at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

He has worked for the Maine Department of Educational and Cultural Services and has 10 years of public school teaching experience in Maryland.

He is past president of the American Association for Health Education and has held leadership positions in several professional organizations.

**Upcoming Events:**
Tuesday: Canned food and toy drive to benefit Operation Santa Claus and the Food Bank of Central and Eastern N.C., 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., Dowdy Student Stores. Free digital photo with PeeDee for those donating. Call 328-6731 for more information.
Wednesday: AIDS Day Run in Red and Candlelight Vigil, 5 p.m., Mendenhall Brickyard. 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.
Clifford B. Knight

Dr. Clifford B. Knight, 84, died on Thursday, Nov. 25, 2010 at his home. Family and friends will gather in remembrance of his life at the home of Mark and Rhonda Williams at 100 Slaney Loop Road in Winterville (Irish Creek off of Old Tar Road) today at 4 p.m.

Born and raised in Vernon, Conn., Dr. Knight served in the army during World War II, returning to attend the University of Connecticut and Duke University, where he received his Ph.D. in Biology. In 1956, he began teaching in the Biology Department at East Carolina University, remaining in that position for 43 years before retiring in 1998.

Dr. Knight was an avid painter, a self-taught artist who excelled in painting landscapes, seascapes, and animal life, several of which were exhibited at Greenville City Hall through the Greenville Museum of Art Artist Association. He particularly enjoyed working with fellow artists through Greenville Brushstrokes and participating in their many exhibits - the annual Clothesline Art Show, the Pitt County Arts Council Show at Emerge and the Bob Pittman Art Studio Show. Most Thursday afternoons he could be found painting at Greenville Recreation and Parks Department with the Different Strokes artist group.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Suzanne Williams Knight, and is survived by a daughter, Kimberly Knight Moskowitz, of Silver Spring, Md.; son, Christopher B. Knight of Winterville; sister, Patricia Knight Klinck, of Louisville, Ky.; and grandchildren, Abigail and Hannah Moskowitz of Silver Spring, Md.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made to UHS Home Health and Hospice, PO Box 6028, Greenville, NC 27835 to the attention of the hospice program, or Greenville Recreation and Parks, P.O. Box 7207, Greenville, NC 27835, to the attention of Julianne Blackburn.
Just as every community is a sum of its constituent parts, the history of North Carolina has been built upon the traditions of many different peoples.

The original inhabitants of this region consisted of a variety of cultures, from the Cherokee, Creek and Catawba of the west to the Tuscarora, Mattamuskeet and Croatan of the east. Those natives taught English newcomers their ways of living from the growing of corn, squash and tobacco to the collection of pine sap, shad and menhaden.

The English brought with them large numbers of West African slaves. Though brought as slaves, these African immigrants preserved many traditions that would shape the developing American culture, particularly in areas of cooking, music and religious beliefs.

Quakers and Huguenots numbered prominently among the earliest homesteaders. Swiss, Moravian, and Scottish Highlanders settled in large communities in New Bern, Salem and Cumberland County. More independent English, German and Scotch-Irish pioneers filled in the Piedmont and the back country.

Among these many immigrant groups, Jews are often overlooked in North Carolina history. Nonetheless, Jews have been involved in the development of North Carolina from its earliest beginnings. Joachim Gans, a native of Prague, accompanied Sir Walter Raleigh's 1585 expedition to Virginia as a metallurgist. During the 18th century, Jewish merchants bolstered the colony's trade and later helped finance the Revolution.
As the young state evolved, its Jewish citizens were involved in every major movement from the Civil War to civil rights. These many contributions are highlighted in a new book produced by the Jewish Heritage Foundation of North Carolina and the University of North Carolina Press, “Down Home: Jewish Life in North Carolina.”

Professor Leonard Rogoff traces the experience of Jewish peoples in North Carolina, from the isolation of pioneering peddlers of the earliest periods of settlement to the development of thriving communities in the 20th century. His combination of thorough documentation and exquisite illustrations will serve as an excellent model for other regional ethnic histories. His lively narrative brings to life the difficulties of immigration and assimilation as well as the challenges of preserving cultural tradition. In many ways, the story is that of developing new identities and communities, both Jewish and Southern. Along the way, the story touches on the contributions of many from eastern North Carolina, from the 1809 defense of religious liberty by Jacob Henry of New Bern to the Brody family sponsorship of medicine in Greenville.

In addition to the book, The Jewish Heritage Foundation of North Carolina has sponsored the creation of an 82-minute film. The East Carolina University community and the general public are invited to a showing of the film “Down Home: Jewish Life in North Carolina” at 3 p.m. Tuesday in Room 2409 of J.Y. Joyner Library. Light refreshments will be served. Rogoff will introduce the film and discuss the Down Home history project. Copies of the book and the film on DVD are available for purchase.

In conjunction with the film viewing, the Verona Joyner Langford North Carolina Collection has mounted an exhibit, “Tracing the Jewish Experience in North Carolina.” The exhibit presents selected primary resources available for exploring Jewish history in North Carolina. Artifacts range from the memoirs of a Civil War soldier to Harry Golden's progressive newspaper, The Carolina Israelite. The exhibit will be on display through the end of December in the North Carolina Collection on the third floor (Joyner Library Room 3300). For more information call 328-6601.
When Gov. Beverly Perdue asked state agencies to prepare budgets reflecting 5, 10 and 15 percent reductions from current spending, we were hopeful agency leaders would make good faith efforts to comply. The response to date has been disappointing in many instances, ranging from outright refusal to gamesmanship.

We are weary of threats we will have to close a state-supported university, lay off thousands of teachers, shut down programs and deny thousands of children the care they need. Yes, there is the real likelihood people will lose jobs and programs will be eliminated, but those projecting worst case, doomsday scenarios often do so in anticipation that interest groups, employees or constituents will be sufficiently frightened as to flood leaders with demands their pet program be spared. We assume those making these claims are well intentioned but they are serving neither their constituents nor the public well.

This is no time for budget games. It is a time for our leaders and our citizens to face the reality of 2011. We are still suffering from The Great Recession and all economic projections indicate our state is unlikely to rebound strongly next year. Without the federal bailout and revenues from the expiration of the temporary sales and income tax increases, our state budget for the fiscal year starting July 1 will be at least $3.2 billion from being balanced.

Our new legislative leadership has made no secret they plan to balance the budget by cutting spending instead of raising taxes, resulting in a 15 percent reduction from current spending levels.

Perdue has correctly asked those who run agencies and who know their programs best to provide their good-faith efforts in establishing spending and service priorities. It is
unrealistic to expect part-time legislators to be intimately familiar with every agency's programs and their effectiveness. When elected or appointed leaders refuse to seriously participate in budget reductions or prioritization of services, the resultant action is often across-the-board budget cuts, a terrible choice that assumes every program has the same level of priority.

A case can be made that our state budget has grown too large over the past two decades and is long overdue an overhaul. Many are not excited about facing such a monumental budget cut. If tax increases are off the table we have but two choices: either view our current situation as doom and gloom or recognize it as an opportunity to re-establish the mission and priorities for our state. We hope our leaders choose the latter option, recognizing the need for cooperation and measured decision making. We further hope one of those decisions will be to institute zero-based budgeting so that North Carolina will not continue to face these boom and bust budget cycles.

Leaders do not often have the luxury of choosing the times in which they serve. They do, however choose the course they will take in those times. Opting out and refusing to participate is not the course of a true leader. Neither is the demagoguery of exaggerated threats of beloved programs. Now is the time for statesmanship not gamesmanship.

Tom Campbell is former assistant North Carolina treasurer and is creator/host of NC SPIN, a weekly statewide television discussion of state issues airing Sundays at 12 a.m. on WITN-TV and on Cable 7 Sundays at 10:30 a.m., Mondays at 8:30 p.m., Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. and Friday at 9 p.m. Contact him at ncspin.com.
East Carolina athletic director Terry Holland was likely never under more pressure than in late 2004, not long after his hire, when he faced the challenge of finding someone to rewrite the history of the ECU football team.

For five years after that, his choice paid off over and over again, as Skip Holtz constructed not only a Conference USA champion team but a revered power in the backyard of the Atlantic Coast and Big East conferences in accordance with the vision of Holland.

Perhaps the most enduring tenet of the Holtz era, which ended after last season and included four straight winning seasons and four subsequent bowl trips, was to build one significant step each year, no matter what.

When Holtz left after last season, Holland was charged with finding someone who could press the new precedence even further, to keep on building new steps. He chose Ruffin McNeill, he said, for McNeill's honesty, genuine spirit and extensive experience.

When McNeill arrived last January, the staircase was pretty high. Yet McNeill, with his passionate, player-first style, continued perhaps the most remarkable run in ECU football history, even in a season in which the Pirates' stranglehold on C-USA was undone.

Although the Pirates won't play in this weekend's conference championship game for the first time in three years, McNeill's first ECU team has already surpassed the first Holtz team by becoming bowl eligible with six victories. And the wins didn't come easy.

Not only did this year's team feel the loss of last year's entire defensive front seven, it also lost most of the defensive linemen it had to injuries by midseason. Last year's C-USA champion team might have been just another team without its front four.
But that's what made ECU's first year with McNeill a good deal like the early years with Holtz — there was nothing regular about this regular season.

Four of ECU's six wins this season were bona fide classics, while two of the Pirates' losses were equally unforgettable. Offensive records dropped like dominoes even though the Pirate defense dropped to the bottom of the entire Football Bowl Subdivision in yards and points allowed.

No matter what happens during bowl season, McNeill already has the distinction of being the first football coach in ECU history to guide the Pirates to bowl consideration in his first season.

If his team goes to a bowl and wins it, McNeill will be the first Pirate coach to have a winning first season since his own ECU coach, Pat Dye, did it back in 1974. Whether or not his first season atop the ECU team ends as a winning one or a losing one now hinges on one game, which is a feat all by itself.

And in McNeill's own words, he won't microwave it from here. That means he won't seek any shortcuts now that he has an entire calendar year to work on rebuilding a fragmented defense and retooling a lethal offense.

Imagine what can be built when McNeill and his staff start putting their personalities into recruits' living rooms in North Carolina, Virginia and, for the first time in ECU history, the football Mecca of Texas. The staircase has a new step already.

Contact Nathan Summers at nsummers@reflector.com or (252)329-9595.
Student says he can't recall being abducted, shot
Man claims he was taken from a gas station near the Appalachian State campus.

A 22-year-old Appalachian State student who claims he was kidnapped near campus and shot in the chest told his family that he doesn't remember the four-hour ordeal, his uncle said Sunday.

Matthew Burleson, a chemistry major from Stanfield, was found in Johnson County, Tenn., on Wednesday after he text-messaged his mother and girlfriend.

He told them he'd been kidnapped and shot and that he was trying to make it to a hospital.

They called police, who spotted Burleson driving his truck in Johnson County. When officers approached, police said the truck ran off the road and wrecked. Burleson had been shot in the chest.

A gun registered to his father was about 60 yards away, according to the Watauga Democrat.

Johnson County Sheriff Mike Reece, who couldn't be reached for comment Sunday, told the Watauga Democrat, "There's something off on this."

Burleson's uncle, David, said Sunday that no one is clear about what happened between 2 p.m., when Matthew Burleson claims he was abducted at a Boone gas station, and 6:35, when he texted for help.

"Sometime in that time, that's when everything gets blurry to him," David Burleson said.

Matthew Burleson was in stable condition at Johnson City Medical Center on Sunday. His uncle said Matthew told family members via Skype on
Sunday that he would be released from the hospital soon, but he didn't give further details about the alleged kidnapping and shooting.

David Burleson said his nephew described the attacker as a scraggly-looking drifter in his 50s whom he'd seen around campus before.

No arrests had been made over the holiday weekend.

David Burleson said investigators have asked family members questions that hint at a variety of theories. They asked whether he had ever used or sold drugs, whether he'd had any recent relationship trouble, even whether the events might have been some sort of cry for help.

"That irks me," David Burleson said. "He was on schedule to graduate in the spring. He's got a girlfriend. He's just going to school trying to get his education."

Cleve R. Wootson Jr.: 704-358-5046
Athletes caught in squeeze

BY ANNE BLYTHE AND ROBBI PICKERAL - Staff writers

CHAPEL HILL As the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill awaits word from the NCAA on possible penalties for academic misconduct violations tied to its football program, a symbol of the pressures that might have contributed to the current crisis is rising in Kenan Stadium's east end zone.

The top three floors of the $70 million building will add thousands of new seats for fans. The bottom two floors will house the 30,000-square-foot Carolina Student-Athlete Center for Excellence - the largest in the ACC - where all UNC athletes, not just football players, can get access to plush training facilities and to tutors, advisers and others working to keep them in school.

The construction of the center illustrates the growing tension that universities face as they attempt to build big-time football programs and maintain academic success. Not only for UNC, which lured former NFL coach Butch Davis to Chapel Hill in 2006 to resuscitate such an atmosphere, but for all schools striving to be at the top of the heap athletically.

Academic support programs, such as the one that employed the tutor in the middle of the UNC misconduct investigation, have come under increasing pressure since 2003. That's when the NCAA eased admission standards for athletes but raised the stakes for keeping those students in school.

At UNC, about half of the football recruiting classes over the past six years have been admitted to school through a special committee process required for students who fall below academic requirements. Those recruits include athletes who scored below 900 on the SAT or were in the lower half of their high school class.

"The NCAA, on the one hand, opened access to higher education - and they did it very deliberately by changing the initial eligibility standards," said Gerald Gurney, president of N4A, National Association of Academic Advisors for Athletes and a senior associate athletic director at the University of Oklahoma. "On the other hand, they raised the progress-toward-degree or continuing eligibility standards. In my judgment, that's the formula for a perfect storm.

"You're admitting less prepared students, and then you're going to penalize teams and raise the continuing eligibility standards, and if they're not eligible that's sort of a formula for disaster."
Since the NCAA change seven years ago, the sanctioning body of college sports has issued 34 major infractions across the country related to academic problems - a significant spike, according Gurney. And now UNC, a school that for years was held up as a model for clean college athletics programs, is waiting to find out whether the NCAA will issue infraction No. 35 to its football program.

The NCAA continues to review the actions of a tutor - Jennifer Wiley, a Durham elementary school teacher who, according to UNC officials, provided "impermissible" academic assistance to players and financial benefits in excess of $2,000. Wiley was a student at UNC during at least part of the time that she was alleged to have broken rules.

The academics probe is part of a two-part NCAA investigation that began in June with an inquiry into improper agent benefits, and has resulted, so far, in 14 football players missing at least one game and seven of them being dismissed for the season.

Looser standards
It is unclear whether the school's academic missteps lie solely with the one undergraduate tutor.

What is apparent, however, is that when the NCAA loosened admission standards, UNC and other schools that attract top students faced even tougher choices about the caliber of student they recruit among the elite high school athletes.

They could get players who might have been turned away before because of subpar high school grade-point-averages or SAT scores. But schools could lose scholarships, seasons or bowl appearances if those players did not remain eligible academically.

Dick Baddour, in his 14th year as UNC-CH athletic director, said pressure to keep athletes in school had not been ratcheted up at UNC because of the NCAA rule change. UNC always has focused on the student in student-athlete, he said. The NCAA change just calls for more accountability.

Baddour said UNC always has focused on the student in student-athlete.

"I don't feel any different today than I did 25 years ago," Baddour said. "What you want to do is get students to come here who are going to succeed."

UNC officials say 49 out of 59 seniors who have played for Davis have graduated. Of the 17 seniors on this year's team, officials say, 13 will graduate in December, and the other four are on schedule to get their degrees in May.

But a gulf exists at UNC between the traditional academic markers of its freshmen recruits and the overall student body. Incoming freshman football recruits have had an average SAT score that ranges from nearly 300 to 400 points below that of the overall
UNC freshman class for much of the past decade, according to numbers provided by university officials.

In Davis' first freshman class in 2007, which included players recruited by his predecessor, John Bunting, incoming recruits averaged 903 in the SAT, about 100 points less than the previous year's class, according to one calculation of the average SAT scores by UNC that included a very restricted definition of "recruit." Davis' second recruiting class in 2008 had an average score of 918 as originally submitted to the UNC Board of Governors. A recalculation of the numbers by UNC in October that used a broader definition of football recruits, however, showed Davis' numbers were comparable to Bunting's going back to 2002.

This year's UNC freshman football recruits came in with an average 1017 SAT, according to UNC athletics officials, about 300 points lower than the average score of the 3,960 students in the entire freshman class.

"North Carolina has outstanding academic integrity," Davis said in a statement.

"Academic success is the first thing we discuss when we are visiting with a potential student-athlete and his parents. As a coaching staff, we try to identify students that will be able to thrive in the college environment and in our football program. We've had good success with an 83 percent graduation rate [49 of 59 seniors] since I've been the head coach. This year, we qualified for our third straight bowl game, and all 17 seniors on the team are on track to graduate, including 13 this December."

Baddour says SAT scores are not the best way to evaluate a class.

"I don't look at any one thing in the admissions process and draw any conclusion," Baddour said. "If they looked only at SATs, they'd be leaving out what the whole picture is. You have to look at the courses, the GPA, the preparation. If you want to look at a single factor, the number of committee cases is probably better."

"Committee cases," as Baddour calls them, are players who gain admission after their high school records were taken before a small group of faculty and staff at UNC. Although Davis has cut back on the number of "committee cases" since he was hired, about half of North Carolina's recruiting classes over the past six years have been admitted to school through the special process.

In 2006, Bunting's last season, 18 of the 27 athletics committee cases were football players. That number dropped to 17 in 2007, which marked Davis' first recruiting class. In the two subsequent years, according to statistics provided by UNC, 11 recruits were committee cases and in 2010, the committee reviewed nine cases.

At N.C. State University - which often recruits the same in-state athletes as UNC - 15 football players have gone before a special admissions committee since 2006 because
they did not meet minimum curriculum requirements set out by the UNC-system Board of Governors.

But each school has different systems and standards for when prospective student athletes are reviewed by committees, which also review the credentials of musicians, actors, artists and prospective students with other kinds of talents. So comparing different schools' numbers is difficult.

**Budget doubles**

UNC has invested more money over the past decade to make sure student athletes keep up with their school work. The athletic department's budget for academic advising has nearly doubled in 10 years to $1.06 million.

"I want to say that the pressures have changed, and it's more intense," said John Blanchard, UNC senior associate athletic director for student athlete services. "It seems like it's always been intense, though. What's changed is the visibility of all the sports, and the pressures have intensified. They just have - and that's for a whole host of reasons, from the money involved to the television exposure, to the fervor that college athletics has engendered in this country."

When Blanchard was hired by UNC in the mid-1980s, he was the only full-timer in academic support for athletics. One other part-timer worked with him. These days, seven academic counselors are spread out among all of the Tar Heel sports, with 50 to 60 part-time tutors and mentors each semester to help.

Beyond tutoring and mentoring sessions, the academic support program for athletics - with the help of football personnel - goes through plenty of other efforts to try keep football players academically eligible, as well.

According to e-mail records, Andre Williams, the football team's director of student-athlete development, sends out a weekly "football academic infraction spreadsheet" to coaches, listing late appearances/unexcused absences from class, missed physical treatment sessions, mandatory seminars for freshmen and infractions regarding study hall activities.

The football program employs two monitors per semester to work 20 hours per week at $11 per hour to physically check whether players go to class. They report absences to Williams, who then reports it to everyone in academic support affiliated with football. Academic advisors often also contact assistant coaches reminding them of when assignments are due.

**Too much pressure**

Since the NCAA changed the admissions standards, Stephen Farmer, the UNC admissions director, said he and others at UNC have tried to work closer with coaches to identify recruits who might be a good fit academically. He said he's never had a coach
call him angry about a decision, and has never had a coach try to change a decision, either.

No matter how big the academic support programs or how big the new buildings being built to house them, it will be difficult to lessen the strain on a system under constant pressure to put talent on the field to put people in the seats - and thus, money in the coffers.

"As long as they bring in these kids that have 600, 700, 800 test scores at places like Carolina, to me you just set them up, and you make the academic part a miserable part of their life," said Cynthia Reynolds, a former academic coordinator for the football team who has filed an age discrimination suit against the University.

Gurney, the president of the academic advisors group, said the most direct answer to lowering pressure on academic support staffs is to get better-prepared student-athletes into the universities in the first place.

"I think it is a question that the NCAA needs to wrestle with: What are the unintended consequences that have occurred with all of these pressures mounting? With academic reform, with APR, with the commercialism and entertainment value, and the entertainment product aspect of intercollegiate athletics? And they need to wrestle with this and come up with better solutions."

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The NCAA's rule change
In 2003, the NCAA eased its sliding-scale admissions system so an athlete with inadequate SAT or ACT college entrance exam scores could still get into a program with a strong grade-point average.

Before the change, a college prospect had to have at least an 820 on the SAT or a combined score of 68 on the four-part ACT. Afterward, an athlete was eligible for a scholarship with a minimum 400 SAT or 37 ACT score as long as the grade-point average was 3.55, typically a high B average or better. In many cases, though, athletes still must meet higher standards that universities themselves set.

When the NCAA lowered admission standards, it also heightened the emphasis on the Academic Progress Rate, a metric that measures the eligibility and retention of athletes. If a team scores below par, it can lose scholarships, recruiting opportunities, practice time, playing seasons and ultimately opportunities at postseason competition.

Since the sliding scale tweak seven years ago, the NCAA's infractions committee has issued 34 major infractions for academic problems.
In one case, Florida State was forced to vacate wins in 10 sports and was placed on probation for four years in an academic fraud case that involved 61 athletes and three university employees in 2006 and 2007.

In 2007, the NCAA placed Purdue University on probation for two years after finding that a former assistant women’s basketball coach there helped a former player commit academic fraud by writing two papers for the student, and later lied about it to investigators. The school lost two of its 15 scholarships that year.
The University of Virginia four years ago joined Harvard and Princeton in a much-publicized revolt against early-admissions policies that the schools termed unfair to some applicants. But the revolution never spread, and it now appears to be over.

U-Va. announced Nov. 16 that high school seniors may again apply early in 2012, though under a more flexible policy than before. Harvard officials said they are reconsidering early admission; Princeton officials said they are not.

The reversal reflects the remarkable popularity of early-admissions policies among applicants - and college admission officers - in an era when the collegiate sweepstakes is arguably more competitive and stressful than ever.

"For many students, we're their top choice. And frankly, they don't want to wait around," said Greg Roberts, dean of admission at U-Va.

Higher education leaders expected a shift in the admissions landscape when three of the nation's top national universities announced a retreat from early deadlines in 2006.

Officials at the schools said they thought their programs favored the wealthy and well-prepared, and they invited other colleges to follow their lead.

Almost none did. Early admission endures at most of the selective public and private colleges in and around Washington. Early applications are up this fall for at least 10 schools in Washington, Maryland and Virginia. Applications are flat at a few institutions; no one is reporting a decline.

U-Va. ended its early-decision program after concluding it drew an inordinately privileged pool. Early-decision students pledge to attend one school and cannot compare other financial aid offers, a major drawback for disadvantaged students.

Of 200 low-income students who entered U-Va. in the final year of early decision, only one had applied early decision. "Those numbers were alarming to us," Roberts said.
Schools vary in their approaches to early admission: Early decision is binding, while early action is not. Both programs remain popular, admission officials say, because their benefits outweigh their drawbacks.

Most debate has centered on early decision, an option at about 18 percent of colleges nationwide and more common at selective schools, according to data from the National Association for College Admission Counseling. The binding contract appeals to institutions because it yields a student who is both enthusiastic and virtually certain to attend.

U-Va. will adopt early action, a program that leaves students free to shop around, eliminating the ethical dilemma of asking teenagers to commit irrevocably to one school. Roughly one-quarter of colleges offer early action.

Students and counselors across Virginia had clamored for U-Va. to return to early admissions, Roberts said.

On high school campuses in Northern Virginia, the return of early admissions to U-Va. is indeed a major development. Guidance counselors are particularly excited that U-Va. has chosen a non-binding program.

"We love early action, because it's like having your cake and eating it, too," said Cynthia Coogan, professional school counselor at McLean High School. "There's no downside to it."

Students flock to early-admission programs thinking - sometimes correctly - that they will have an easier time getting in. Early-admission rates are often higher. Some schools, including American University, expressly favor the early applicant.

"We want students who want us. The ultimate demonstration of interest is applying early decision," said Greg Grauman, director of admissions at AU. The school's early-decision program yielded 576 applications this year, a 7 percent increase.

Students like having an acceptance letter in hand by the holidays. It reduces stress heading into spring, and it can render further applications unnecessary.

"I firmly believe that many, many more families are interested in liberating themselves from the anxiety of having to wait until April 1," the traditional notification date for college admissions, said Gil Villanueva, dean of admission at the University of Richmond.

Applications are up 38 percent to 579 in Richmond's early-decision program, which promises an answer by mid-December to students who apply by Nov. 15 and pledge to attend. It's one of two early-decision cycles at the private liberal arts school.
Applications are up 9 percent to 6,615 in Georgetown University's early-action program, which promises a Dec. 15 response to an application submitted by Nov. 1. At the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, early action applications are up 12 percent to 3,381.

Harvard is reviewing its decision to eliminate early admissions - not in response to U-Va. but by its own timetable, which called for periodic reevaluation, officials said.

When the three schools adopted their stance against early admission, "the hope, for all three of us, was that more schools would join," Roberts said.

But most schools clung to early admissions. The programs can firm up as much as half of a college's entering class months ahead of schedule. Logistically, early deadlines allow overworked admission committees more time to read applications.

Locally, early-action programs remain at Georgetown, George Mason, James Madison and Loyola universities, among others, and early decision programs at American, George Washington, Howard and Johns Hopkins universities, as well as Virginia Tech and the College of William and Mary.

Early decision helps even highly selective schools improve their yield, the share of admitted students who choose to attend. It can infuse the campus with a "nucleus of young people who have a stake in the place," said William M. Hartog, dean of undergraduate admissions and financial aid at Washington and Lee University.

That wouldn't matter much at Harvard or Princeton, schools that are the automatic first choice of most who gain admission.

"If early decision was bad for Harvard, that was all they needed to say," Hartog said. "But for them to say that it was bad for all of us, that was just inaccurate."