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ECU professor says location of civil rights memorials speaks volumes

By Josh Humphries
The Daily Reflector

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Millions of Americans drive down streets named for Martin Luther King Jr. every day and pass statues and museums dedicated to the struggle for civil rights.

But what do these monuments say about that struggle today?

The location of civil rights memorials says a lot about how the movement is remembered in this country, says East Carolina University professor Derek Alderman, who recently published a book on the subject.

"Civil Rights Memorials and the Geography of Memory" is a scholarly book with black-and-white photographs of civil rights memorials from all over the country that Alderman said is accessible to non-academics. Alderman co-authored the book with Owen Dwyer, professor of geography at Indiana University at Indianapolis. Dwyer does similar work on how the civil rights movement is remembered with monuments and museums across the country.

"The civil rights movement in the South was a watershed movement to say the least," Alderman said. "Even though we have changed a lot, there is still a lot of tension. I see that reflected a lot in how we remember the movement."

Alderman is a cultural historical geographer who has always been interested in race relations in the South. "As a native Southerner, I have always been interested in how the South is changing," he said.

The book examines how government bodies choose to honor the civil rights movements, where the monuments are placed or where streets named after civil rights leaders like King are located.

"The streets defy stereotypes," he said. "The general stereotype is that streets named after King are confined to the black community and to poor areas, but there are many streets that defy that stereotype in places like New Bern; Austin, Texas; and Atlanta."

Alderman said the book is intended to spark conversation and is aimed at general readers.

"Part of the goal of the book is to create something that the public can read and to inform public debate and get people to think about the politics of memorials," Alderman said.

Not many of the memorials are found in town squares or on Main Street, Alderman said. "We want people to think about why we are marginalizing these memorials to the movement."

Alderman, who has a poster of King in his office, said there is much to do in the way of remembering local heroes of the civil rights movement. King, he said, represents the national struggle, but each town and region in the South had leaders that also fought for civil rights that should be remembered locally.

He hopes the book will encourage people to view American history in more inclusive terms.

"The civil rights memorials present a very selective view of African-American history," he said. "There is a lot more work to be done to remember the black struggle for civil rights."

ECU geography students helped with the book by transcribing interviews and research, Alderman said.

"I work hard to get the students to write with me," he said.
'This is something we are trying to do more of at the university.'

Alderman said the election of Barack Obama is an obvious victory for civil rights, but he hopes it doesn't cause people to stop talking about the issues and the history of the movement.

The book is published by the Center for American Places at Columbia College Chicago and is available from Amazon.com.

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GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip — Israel's three-day aerial bombardment of the Gaza Strip has killed dozens of civilians, along with Hamas fighters, and has paralyzed life in a territory already battered by blackouts and supply shortages during months of border closures.

Israel has stressed that most of the deaths and injuries were Hamas fighters and says it's careful to avoid harm to bystanders. But the nonstop attacks have caused widespread power outages, terrified residents and left aid agencies unable to feed thousands of needy people.
Duke athletes get glimpse of medicine

Program crafted for female undergrads

ERIC FERRERI, Staff Writer
Comment on this story

DURHAM -

Georgia Beasley was practicing her jump shot and needed someone to rebound for her. Ten-year-old Sara Friedman was waiting for a ride after a Duke basketball camp session.

For Beasley -- a Duke basketball star who then went by her maiden name, Schweitzer -- this chance moment nine years ago proved momentous. It led to a conversation with Friedman’s father, Henry, a Duke oncologist. Beasley was then a Duke junior with an eye on medical school. She wanted a better idea of what awaited her, but didn’t know where to turn.

Friedman was sympathetic. He invited her to shadow him at the hospital. She balked at first, saying she couldn’t commit to the fixed schedule doctors generally follow.

No problem, Friedman told her. Come when you can. Get a feel for medicine.

She did. A decade later, she’s a Duke surgeon.

"It was very serendipitous," Beasley said recently, recalling that day in the basketball gym. "Who knows what I would have [otherwise] chosen to do?"

For Friedman too, that meeting led to something greater. In becoming Beasley’s informal mentor, he discovered there were plenty of female athletes at Duke interested in careers in medicine.

The problem: There were few faculty mentors to help them and no support system for those taking on the most challenging undergraduate curricula with a heavy sports travel schedule.

Thus, the Collegiate Athlete Pre-Medical Experience was born. Known as CAPE, the program is a year-round venture with a very specific clientele: female Duke athletes who plan to pursue a career in medicine. It creates pre-med experiences for busy schedules, like a shortened internship in which students spend two weeks in the...
summer in a hospital in Guatemala.

"The kids who aren't involved in sports can go for three months," said Terry Kruger, the program's director.

The students also now connect with Duke doctors on hospital rounds, an unusual opportunity for undergraduates and one Friedman said he had to "pull some strings" to provide.

**Looking beyond sports**

Kruger, who played softball at the University of Minnesota and was an administrator with the Duke Brain Tumor Center before heading the CAPE program, is the den mother for the 49 students currently enrolled. She pops up at Duke athletic events, a women's soccer game one night, a field hockey contest the next. And students will drop by the CAPE office just to chat.

"We talk about life -- boyfriends, whatever -- so I'm another person taking care of the kids," she said. "The parents love it."

So do the coaches. The program has become a recruiting asset for coaches looking to snare a young athlete with dreams of a medical career.

"We're the only program in the nation that works with pre-med students," Kruger said. "The coaches see that as a very, very valuable tool."

Kruger and others say the program has been successful because the students understand their athletic careers will eventually end. Kelly Hathorn, a Duke senior who just finished her final season with the women's soccer team, thinks women have a more practical view of college athletics in part because far fewer can play professionally.

"As much as I love soccer, I also love the idea of medical school," Hathorn said. "For women, it's not as much of a dream to be a professional athlete."

**Small but effective**

The program's success has brought limitations. It has a small staff and relies entirely on donations. Aspirants must apply for admission, and enrollment is capped at 50.

But Kruger said there's no interest in expanding its capacity.

"It is exclusive, but we want it to be exclusive," she said. "We want these kids to get as much out of it as possible."

Hathorn has. A Durham native, the Riverside High School graduate credits the CAPE program with helping her navigate four years of college athletics during which she took exams in hotel rooms and lobbies, spent two Thanksgivings away from home, and learned the value of touching base with professors far ahead of time to alert them of her hectic schedule.

One example:

"We found out on a Monday this year that we were leaving on Wednesday to play UCLA," she said of an experience during the NCAA national soccer tournament. "It's a shock to your system."

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