

# Features

## Local anchorman and UNCA alumni wins award for coverage of local child murders

Jack Walsh  
Staff Writer

While the incessant on-air congeniality of television co-anchors may seem transparent and over-done to some, WYFF reporter/anchor and UNCA graduate Michael Cogdill says that he has no problem with being a nice guy.

"It is sincere, and I think if it's not, the viewer knows," said Cogdill in a phone interview. "The viewer is not stupid."

"The viewer, especially in the '90s, is very insightful, and they can spot a phony when they see one," said Cogdill. "That's the one thing I have tried not to be. I just try to get up there and be me."

Cogdill said, as a journalist, he tries to bring genuine interest and emotion to his work. "To me, the best reporters are those who actually invest themselves in the story, and not only seem to understand it, but feel it as well," said Cogdill. "I don't think there's a loss of objectivity there."

"The essence of this industry is to communicate with a heart," said Cogdill.

"I think you can work in this business and still comply with the GoldenRule," said Cogdill.

He recently received the Radio Television News Directors Association of the Carolinas Journalist of the Year award, which he feels is largely a result of his coverage of the Susan Smith story in Union, S.C.

"I think we need to tell stories from a perspective of how they affect people, and that's what we tried to do with Susan Smith's story and with much success, I think," said Cogdill.

"This television station has pulled in a lot of awards for that coverage, and it's very difficult to accept those awards when you consider what happened to those two little boys," said Cogdill. "That kind of thing stays with you."

"I'll never forget being there when the sheriff came out and made the announcement that those two little boys were dead," said Cogdill. "Even though many of us had feared it for days, there's nothing like hearing it. I know my blood ran cold that moment, and there was this wave of shock that went over the crowd who had gathered there."

Cogdill said the Smith story, along with the Jim Bakker trial, were the biggest of his career thus far. "It was fascinating to see the international press converge on one little town for so long," said Cogdill. "People would actually drive by just to look at all the media, and quite frankly, I don't blame them, because it was quite a circus at times."

Cogdill began his career in 1984 at WECT, an NBC affiliate in Wilmington, N.C. He later worked with WWAY, the Wilmington ABC affiliate.

While working at WWAY, Cogdill got to know John Harris, WYFF's news director at the time. Through him, Cogdill was able to secure a job at the station in Greenville and has been there for nearly seven years. In addition to reporting, Cogdill anchors the 5 p.m. news on weeknights as well as the 5 p.m., 6 p.m., and 11 p.m. weekend news programs.

In 1992, Cogdill won an Emmy for "Man of the Mountain," a story on the environmental efforts of Hugh Morton, whose family company, Cogdill said, owns Grandfather Mountain. "It was the first time I was nominated and when they called out my name, I nearly fell out of my chair," said Cogdill. "I never expected to get one that early on."

Cogdill said his career in broadcast journalism is a product of both experience in the field and a broad base of knowledge. "Professional experience is professional experience, and you have to have it, but I think before you have it, you need a good education," said Cogdill.

Cogdill attended the University of Georgia for a quarter but found it too large. "It was too much like a big city and too little like a school for me," said Cogdill. "I didn't go to school to socialize as much as I went to school to get an education."

A Weaverville native, Cogdill returned home and began commuting to UNCA. He said the liberal arts background he gained is invaluable to his career. "What you get at UNCA is a good, solid, well-rounded education that no television station can afford," said Cogdill. "Every day that I work in this business, I find uses for it."

"Liberal arts tend to teach one how to communicate," said Cogdill. "If you can't communicate, you can't work in this business."

At UNCA, Cogdill gathered hands-on experience while producing a five-part series for WLOS on the history of the Grove Park Inn, as his senior project. "I just kind of gravitated towards television," said Cogdill.

Two weeks after receiving his degree in mass communication, Cogdill went to work for WECT. He did not attend graduate school.

"For those who want to go into television, I'm not sure graduate school is the best idea," said Cogdill. "I'm not saying graduate school is a bad idea, but I think if you do graduate school, you need to mix it with some kind of professional experience as much as possible."

Cogdill does not deny network news hopes for the future. "I think anyone who denies having network aspirations is not telling you the full truth," said Cogdill. "If the network comes calling, often, you go, but I think you always have to be selective, especially when you're happy in a situation."

"This is my home, and this is where I would like to stay for a long time," said Cogdill. "A lot of people have regretted being hyper-ambitious in this industry, and I don't want to be one of them."

David Brinkley is one network journalist who has had a great influence upon Cogdill. "David Brinkley and I started in the same town," said Cogdill. "The first story he covered in Wilmington was when they put lines down on Main Street."

Cogdill said that he also admires network journalists such as Keith Morrison and Peter Jennings. He said these men have a talent for letting pictures and the people who are involved tell the story while keeping themselves removed. "These are the people I try to follow, and I hope I've had some success doing it," said Cogdill.



Musician Tori Amos's new album "Boys For Pele" combines a strong backup band with Amos's signature voice and lyrics. Amos will perform in the Thomas Wolfe Auditorium on April 21.

## Singer crafts powerfully heartfelt album

Troy Martin  
Staff Writer

Few artists who have a "signature sound" ever escape the confines of their style, but singer/songwriter Tori Amos strives to redefine herself on her new release entitled "Boys For Pele."

"Pele" doesn't refer to the soccer player, but rather a Hawaiian goddess of volcanoes, an apt title as Amos presents her most musically explosive work to date. While piano still dominates most of the selections on her new album, Amos has also emphasized both organ and harpsichord on "Boys for Pele."

The harpsichord provides for a more powerful sound than is typical of Amos on such tracks as "Blood Roses" and "Talula;" but perhaps the most efficient use of the harpsichord is on the song "Professional Widow," which also features a bassy, rumbling backup band.

Amos is at her strongest when she includes a band in her performances, and tends to take more vocal risks when backed up with other instruments. Besides the standard guitar-bass-drums backing, Amos has added horns to such tracks as "Mr. Zebra" and "Muhammad My Friend," and a gospel choir to accompany her vocals on the otherwise restrained "Way Down."

Amos has retained her greatest strength, her songwriting ability. Very few contemporary artists have the level of quirkiness to their lyrics than Amos. In the musical landscape of America today, there seems to be a shortage of people who can write heartfelt, emotional lyrics without seeming to be whining brats.

Short of Nick Cave or Tom Waits, very few people could convincingly get away with lines such as "Hello Mr. Zebra, ran into some confusion with a Mrs. Crocodile, furry mussels marching on, she thinks she's Kaiser Wilhelm."

Perhaps the most clever of Amos' lyrics is included in "In the Springtime of His Voodoo," when she playfully sings "Standin' on a corner in Winslow Arizona, and I'm quite sure I'm in the wrong song, 2 girls 65 got a piece tied up the back seat, 'honey we're recovering Christmas."

"Muhammad My Friend" is perhaps lyrically the strongest track on "Boys for Pele." "Muhammad" questions both Christian values and sexual roles in one poignant sweep when Amos states "Its time to tell the world, we both know it was a girl back in Bethlehem, and on that fateful day, when she was crucified, she wore Shiseido Red and we drank tea by her side."

The only complaint I have with "Boys For Pele" is that it's not vocally adventurous enough. While Amos has made strides in changing her musical style, her vocal style, for the most part has remained static since her 1991 "Little Earthquakes" album.

Her vocals have become predictable for those who are familiar with her other work. Her voice hits high notes in the same places in almost every song, and her low, pausing vocals are just as predictable.

## African tribal art exhibit on display in Ramsey Library lobby

Cathy Elniff  
Editor-in-Chief

UNCA students have the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to view a collection of African art that is over 40 years old. The collection was established by Fode Doumbouya in Guinea in the late 50s, and is now owned by his son and daughter-in-law, Mohamed and Diane Doumbouya.

The exhibit, sponsored by the Ramsey Library Display Committee, along with the African-American Student Association, the Office of Housing and Residence Life, and the Art Front, is on display in the lobby of the Ramsey Library.

"It's fabulous!" Merianne Epstein, director of public information said. The 22 pieces in the exhibit are from the larger collection the Doumbouyas

own in Chattanooga, Tenn.

Diane Doumbouya said the collection is unusual because "it has real immaculate pieces, one of a kind, the government doesn't allow that anymore." Import and export laws only apply to artifacts found after the laws are put in place, and most of these pieces are old enough to be free of those laws.

While it is a collection, the pieces can be sold, said Mrs. Doumbouya. The money from the sales goes back to the place where the piece originally came from.

Many of the pieces have been appraised at \$40,000 or above. The funeral bowl, for example, was appraised at \$100,000. The Nimba dance head mask is worth \$125,000. The Nimba is a large mask that rests on the shoulders and is supposed to have a raffia grass "skirt" hanging down

to completely cover the person underneath, said Mohamed. Most of the artifacts are made of wood, but the type of wood is not detailed, unless to say they are not ebony or mahogany.

Diane said most African art won't be labeled any more specifically than "wood," unless it is ivory or bronze or gold. Hardwoods usually are labeled as such, because that makes a difference in how it ages and weathers.

Collectors are not allowed to export new ivory, but the ivory pieces in the Doumbouyas collection have been in the United States since the early 60s. One of their ivory pieces, burnished to a deep golden color, has been appraised at \$40,000.

In the exhibit, several of the pieces have nails and tacks embedded in them, "for decoration," said Mohamed. "To us, these are art, but to them," said Diane, "They aren't.

They are ritually used."

They are used to maintain law, to heal sickness and to defend the village, said Mohamed. All of the pieces in this exhibit have been used in ceremonial purposes.

Diane said that many of them have crusts on the wood from that use because "when they worship them, they might spit on them, or put palm oil on them."

"The medicine man might sacrifice an egg on them," said Mohamed.

There is an example of the mud cloth and the loom used to weave it on the wall in the library, as well as examples of the objects used in divining ceremonies. After finishing weaving and dyeing the mud cloth for the year, there is a big ceremony celebrating it.

Mud cloth's distinctive pattern is made by marking the cloth with sticks and stones and then doing something

similar to bleaching it to leach out the color, resulting in pale spots covering the cloth, said Diane.

There is also a chair for a chieftain on display. The statuettes that support the chair show his power and wisdom, as well the wisdom of his sons and wives.

Mohamed said that in one museum where they had sold a piece, the caretakers shined it with black shoe polish before they displayed it, so that it would look better.

Because all of these pieces have been involved in ritual ceremonial use, they should "just leave them the way they are," said Diane.

Most of the wooden pieces are carved from native African woods. "There are so many different variety of wood in African forests," said Diane. A majority of the pieces in this exhibit are 80-90 years old.