



The Blue Banner

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The News in Brief

Actor Heath Ledger found dead at 28

Actor Heath Ledger was found dead Tuesday in his New York City apartment. When authorities found Ledger, 28, they found pills strewn around his body. He was scheduled for a massage when his housekeeper found him unconscious.

Ledger, born in Australia, was nominated for an Academy Award for his role in the 2005 movie *Brokeback Mountain*. Ledger will appear in the newest Batman installment, *The Dark Knight*. Starring Christian Bale, *The Dark Knight* is currently in post production, scheduled for release this summer.

Students honor slain civil rights hero

UNC Asheville students celebrated Martin Luther King Jr. Day on Jan. 21, observing "A Day On, Not a Day Off."

The day found students heading to Aston Park Towers and Altamont Apartments for a intensive cleanup project. Students, faculty and staff then participated in the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day march downtown Asheville.

Other university events honoring King included a screening of the documentary "Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Movement" yesterday and a reading of essays by UNCA students entitled "What would Martin Luther King Jr. say about the Hip-Hop Culture of Today?" scheduled for Tuesday.

Donation pumps up new health center

HomeTrust bank donated \$25,000 to UNC Asheville's North Carolina Center for Health & Wellness. They presented the check to the university during the men's basketball game against High Point on Jan. 16.

Construction on the \$42 million dollar project begins in spring. The majority of funding comes from a \$15-million appropriation from the NC General Assembly, with the university raising the additional \$1 million necessary to complete construction.

Kimmel Arena gym takes its name from Joe W. Kimmel, founder of Kimmel & Associates, who donated \$2 million in 2005.

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Kenny George looks embarrassed when he hears the word "celebrity" thrown next to his name.

"No way. It's not like that," George said while strolling the Quad in his custom leather jacket.

But despite the 22-year old center's modesty, George has cultivated quite a following in the media and online. He's recently been featured in *The New York Times* and profiled on ESPN. A 17-second clip on YouTube.com shows him throwing down a flat-footed dunk against Winthrop last year — it's been viewed over 700,000 times as of Tuesday.

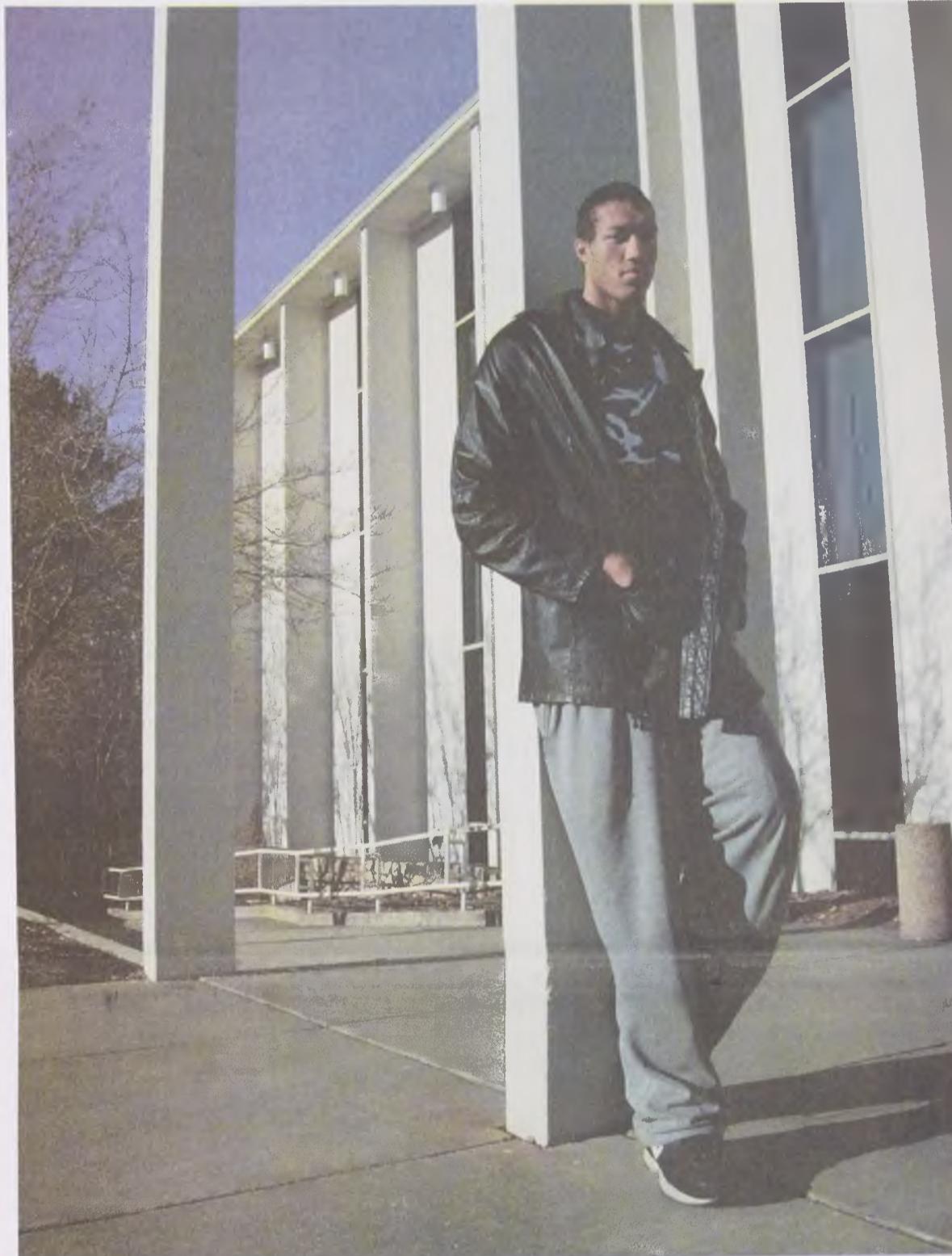
But none of the shyness and humility comes as a façade for George. On questions that most college athletes would jump on to self-promote, he quietly defers to his teammates, preferring to talk up his fellow Bulldog's than brag about his own game.

"I was glad to make the play, but K.J. had to make that great shot to send us into overtime," George said. "I knew that when it came down to it, I was going to go in and make that kind of play because it was that kind of game. I'm just glad I helped my team win."

But despite George's demeanor and his impressive stats — he's second in the nation in blocks per game with 5.2 and first in field goal percentage with .719 — the media has almost exclusively focused on his height. On Saturday at VMI, George sat out the entirety of regulation during a closely played fast-break contest before entering the game with just 11 seconds in overtime. George scored the winning bucket on an inbounds lob from K.J. Garland, finishing the game going 1-1 from the field, with two points and six seconds of playing time. Asked about his game-winning dunk, George quickly brought the subject to Garland, who nailed a last second 3-pointer to send the game into overtime.

Journalists and announcers distort tales of George's towering stature, making the center into a sort of basketball Paul Bunyan.

The announcers during the UNC Asheville vs. UNC game,



In addition to towering above the collegiate competition, George hopes to become a screen writer and director. Currently ranked in 59th in the 2009 mock draft on nbadraft.net, George said playing pro ball, if the chance comes his way, could help him start financing his own short films. For now, he leads the NCAA in field goal percentage.

CLINT LATHINGHOUSE - STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

broadcast on live ESPNU, noted that George sits on the floor during his classes in Asheville — an obvious distortion to anyone who sits next to George during mass

communication classes in Karpen Hall. *The New York Times* feature, written by correspondent Anna Clemmons, implied that George suffers from gigantism — another

untruth.

George has no such disease. "I'm just really tall," he said with a laugh.

The most egregious example

"Don't ask stupid questions. Don't ask 'What's it like being tall?' What do I say? It's good?"

KENNY GEORGE

of distortion came in a story from *The State*, Columbia, SC's daily newspaper. After UNC Asheville shocked SEC opponent South Carolina on January 6, the story referenced in passing "the freak show of 7-foot-7 UNC-Asheville center Kenny George" and noted that until George threw down the go-head dunk, he was "mostly entertainment."

But Kenny lets the press slide off his shoulders — after all, he's been fielding media questions about his height since he played high school basketball at Chicago Latin.

"I don't care," George said. "I don't take it to heart. Their job is to write an article, so that's what they do."

So what's Kenny George like beyond the hype?

In his own words, Kenny explains it all.

SEE Kenny PAGE 5

"If the NBA comes calling, yeah, sure, I would love to play there. Until that becomes a definite thing, I'm not thinking about it."

KENNY GEORGE

For The Blue Banner's opinion on the basketball team's stunning success, see editorials, page 11.

Board proposes increase in tuition, student fees

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The recommendation now goes to the University of North Carolina Board of Governors for consideration.

An approval of the tuition increase allocates 25 percent for students receiving need-based financial aid, 50 percent for student services and 25 percent for faculty salaries. The increase helps fund student activities, health services, athletics, student computing and scientific equipment needs.

Key university officials attribute the boost in rates to multiple factors including, inflation, response to student demand and pressure for more adequate services.

"We feel a great responsibility to our students who are paying these fees. Some students are going into debt to pay these fees, so we feel that we need to be very good stewards of that money," said Vice Chancellor Dr. Bill Haggard, who also serves as co-chair of the

Student Fees Committee.

The current required annual student fees totals \$1,736.85. If approved, the proposed increase will add \$98.50 to that total.

The four main fees supported entities include the student activity fee, the athletic fee, the student health fee and the education and technology fee.

Representatives of these four entities submit proposals based on projected yearly needs for each respective group to a board made of students, faculty and administrators.

The board then gathers information regarding the monies requested and presents a formal recommendation to the senior staff of the UNC Board of Governors.

"It is a very participatory process," Haggard said.

If approved, all four entities will receive increases in available revenue.

Both the student activity fee and

the student health fee can expect an 8 percent increase in available funds. The student activity fee responds to student demand for increased evening and weekend activities. The student health fee will increase availability of various pharmaceuticals, as well as increase the hours of availability for an on-campus psychiatrist.

The largest increase of 10 percent, going to the education and technology fee will help with more widespread and adequate printing services, as well as updates on existing and prospective smart classrooms.

The smallest increase of 3 percent goes to the athletics fee and is in place as a primary response to inflation and to maintain the same level of services offered in the past.

Despite the modest increase for the athletic fee, SGA representatives would like to express a point

of conflict with the athletic committee. Where the other three fee-supported entities presented new and updated proposals, the athletic fee committee presented a near verbatim report from previous years, according to SGA Vice President Nick Ladd.

"Every branch that was requesting fee increases had to give a formal proposal and the athletic proposal was essentially a copy and paste from what they had last year," Ladd said.

Regardless of the conflict of interest between SGA and the athletic fee committee, the fee increases are accepted as necessary measures to keep the university afloat.

"It's a good idea to do it for the freshmen who live on campus and maybe have problems adjusting or meeting new people," said freshman Mary Pope, referring to the student activity fee.

Sports

Bulldogs on fire! Men's basketball continues winning streak, page 4.



Arts Etc.

Laura Reed and Deep Pocket break out their brand new bag at Pop-Asheville, page 8.

Weather

THUR.	FRI.
38	40
16	29
SAT.	SUN.
40	55
31	37

THUR.	FRI.
38	40
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SAT.	SUN.
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