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UNC black wins pageant honor

by Cheryl Williams
Feature Editor

For someone who doesn't consider herself the competitive type, junior Karan Chavis sure left her mark at the Miss North Carolina Pageant, earning the position of second runner-up.

"I don't compete with anybody but myself," Chavis said. "I never looked at anybody as a competitor, only as a friend. If they can do something better than I can, I don't worry about it. I just do my best."

Chavis, a radio, television and motion pictures major from Battleboro, said being in the pageant has opened up many opportunities for her. She said that since the pageant, she has done a great deal of traveling and entertaining in North Carolina. She has also received offers to sing in Atlanta and Washington, D.C. Recently she visited Johnson Publishing Company in Chicago and had a make-up and photography session.

Chavis said that as second runner-up, she received a scholarship, an assortment of lingerie, flowers, a silver tray among other items.

Although she is pleased with her success in the pageant, Chavis said her life has now become more complicated.

"I've been doing a lot more than I normally," she said. "I don't have much time to rest. I sometimes go 48 hours without sleep."

Chavis said that watching her two older sisters enter and win pageants compelled her to start entering them also. "I wanted to follow in my sisters footsteps," she said. "I saw them with the gowns and glitter and I wanted it too."

Well, she has had her share of the glory. In 1981 she won the title of

Miss North Carolina Sweetheart. Winning this title enabled her to compete in the American Royal Pageant in Kansas City, where she won the title of Princess.

In 1981 she won the title of Miss OIC in Rocky Mount, N.C. She also entered the Miss Rocky Mount Pageant and won first runner-up. Because she did not win the title of Miss Rocky Mount, the Rocky Mount Jaycees and a judge in the pageant encouraged Chavis to enter another pageant. She did and won the title of Miss Greater Greensboro 1983. Winning this title enabled her to compete for the Miss North Carolina title.

But despite all the glamour and glory she has encountered, Chavis manages to not let it go to her head. She says that her parents are her stabilizer. They are the ones that keep things in perspective for her. Chavis said she is grateful to both her parents and her friends for their support.

Since she is a student, Chavis has to juggle her schedule to fit in academics, entertainment engagements, hobbies and a social life. Chavis however has her own formula for setting priorities in her life.

"My formula is to see what I need to do, what I want to do and what others want me to do," she said. "And I do things in that order."

She said that right now she is stressing academics. "Academics are important to me because they are important to my parents and my parents are paying for my education," she said.

Chavis does have time to relax. When she relaxes, she either pursues her hobbies: motorcycle riding,

boating, water skiing, cooking and sculpting or being with her friends or her family. She said that an ideal is a camping trip to the mountains or an evening out on the town with her boyfriend.

Chavis also finds time for other activities. This year because of her desire to improve her dancing skills, she will work with a ballroom class and a dance organization, Formation Dance Team. She is also involved with the American Red Cross. This is her eighth year with the Red Cross. She is also a member of the Red Cross National Advisory Council on Youth.

Understandably, Chavis considers herself an all around person. "On the

whole, I'm carefree," she said. "I don't let many things upset me. I like cutting up with my friends."

Chavis knows who she is and she also knows the hard work that goes along with getting what she wants. With this in mind she plans an optimistic future. In her future Chavis foresees a little modeling and singing. But she says her ultimate goal is to follow up her academic major and produce motion pictures and do some acting.

Chavis has yet another goal—to participate in the Miss America Pageant. She said that in order to do this she would have to re-enter the Miss North Carolina Pageant or enter some other state pageant.



Karen Chavis

"We will still have our own Carolina style, but it won't be so much of the dancing type of style you have seen in the past," she said.

According to Belvet the reason for so many fresh ideas is because the squad is basically a young squad. Out of 16 members, 10 have never cheered at Carolina before.

As one of four Black cheerleaders on this squad, Belvet believes that this squad will have a positive effect on other black students interested in trying out for next year.

"This year's squad has three blacks who have never cheered at Carolina. I hope this encourages other blacks to try out," she said.

Belvet urges the blacks who tried out this year and did not make it not to be discouraged and to try again next year. "If you really want to be a cheerleader you have to know within yourself that's what you want and

this belief in yourself will come across to the judges."

Belvet cited the support of the black spectators at tryouts as positive reinforcement. "I felt that those students were there to insure that all students were judged fairly, and to show their support for the black tryouts. It also showed the judges and other spectators that black students were interested in the whole Carolina cheerleading system."

Though cheerleading is a very time consuming activity, Belvet makes time for other campus activities also. A junior computer science major from Fayetteville, she is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority and a minority advisor. She enjoys all sports but describes cheerleading as her "lifeblood." To Wolita Belvet, becoming a Carolina cheerleader has been "a dream come true."