

YOU • YOU • YOU • YOU • YOU • YOU • YOU • YOU

First black mike man

Ward makes debut as white boy

by Marjorie Róach
Staff Writer

Thousands of spectators poured into Kenan Stadium Saturday and waited to see the first home game of the football season. The mike man stepped out, a slim, white man with blond hair, dressed in preppy, pink attire.

"I know this is what ya'll were expecting," he said. On a second look the mike man was black but was only made-up to appear white. The man in disguise was senior radio, television motion pictures major, Kenny Ward. Ward made his debut at Carolina's winning game over Memphis State, 24-10.

Ward said the reason for the white make-up, blond wig and preppy clothes was because in Carolina's tradition of mike men, there has never been a black mike man. He knew that the predominately white audience was expecting a white man.

"I knew what they were expecting so I gave them exactly what they wanted to see," he said. Ward said he used the costume as an ice-breaker.

"It was hard because they wouldn't cheer at first and I felt it was because I was black," he said. But the lack of enthusiasm gave Ward more incentive as he kept his confidence up to cheer on stronger. Ward used humor to ease some of the racial tension he felt.

"Give me a K. Give me a another K. Don't even try it." He said he felt there were people in the stands ready to that third K.

Ward is not for forced race relations on campus. "It is not something to push on people. Let people mingle like they want to mingle. Personally, other things mean more to me about people than race," he said. Students should put more emphasis on being the best at what they do more than anything else, he advised.

Ward referred to the alumni several times during his performance as having all the money and parking spaces.

"It's true," according to Ward. "I hope I did not offend anyone but it's not like I'm going to lose any sleep over it."

Ward, a member of Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity and the Big Buddy program sponsored by the Campus Y, describes himself as being self-confident and one who loves attention. So after watching mike men of previous years perform, it did not take much to persuade him to accept the challenge of trying out for mike man. He along with six other men presented a routine. The choice narrowed down to Kenny and a former mike man. They were both given two situations to act out. Ward was selected.

Ward said he did well for his first game but thinks he repeated some cheers too often and needed to work better with the band.

"Most people tell me that I did good but the questions I get most from people are what was the purpose of the blond wig and white-painted face and why didn't I attack the crowd more? A lot of people also thought there two mike men."

In the future, Tarheel fans can look forward to Ward's performances which will center mainly on the football game itself. Ward wants everyone to know he's just an ordinary guy doing the best he can promoting spirit at UNC.

The following is a cheer that he introduced at his first game:

"Hey Tarheels — Yo
Hey Tarheels — Yo
Let me see you get down — No way
Let me see you get down — O.K.
D-O-W-N- That's the way we get down
D-O-W-N-That's the way we get down!" ■

