

Airport Garden's tenant does it all

By Jacqueline Charles
Ink Assistant Editor

Kathy Gomez has spent most of her life in public housing, but she does not plan to stay there.

"People in public housing have been stereotyped. They've been forgotten by the people who get out and those in the private sector," said Gomez, a wife, mother and public housing resident for 15 years.

Last August, Gomez became president of Airport Gardens, the public housing complex where she lives. She said her goal is to help residents find out what their rights are and how to protect them.

"I feel like I can be a positive influence in the lives of people who live in public housing," said Gomez, who also served as president in 1988.

Gomez said her first term as president was hard. Not because of a lack of experience, but because of a lack of motivation on the part of residents.

"People wanted to see change but they were easy to give up," Gomez said.

Although Gomez has only been in office for five months, she has already begun to see a change in residents' attitude and the community itself. Along with a tutoring program, Airport Gardens recently started a feasibility study for home ownership and Gomez and others have begun working on a partnership with the town of Chapel Hill to provide residents with jobs.

"We're looking to see if we can contract with the town to do landscaping, painting and cleaning," said Gomez, who also encourages residents to serve on town boards and committees.

Gomez, however, hasn't always been as involved as she presently is. There was once a time when she didn't care much what the town of Chapel Hill did, she said.

"But once I got involved, I wanted to stay involved," Gomez said.

Gomez's efforts to be a good resident and to help make a difference in her community does require sacrifices.

When Gomez decided last spring to join a countywide drug awareness program as a liaison, she had no idea that her rent would increase or that she would have to resign from her post on the Chapel Hill Human Service Board.

While she is mad at the \$100 increase in rent and having to leave her post, Gomez said she'll survive.

"I won't quit the job," Gomez said.

Regina Jones, a long-time friend and customer of Gomez said Gomez's success doesn't surprise her.

"The whole family is like that," Jones said.

When Gomez is not presiding over meetings or attending one, she can be found in the back room of Delaine's House of Beauty located at 400 Rosemary St. In August, she completed a course in cosmetology

as a certified nail technician.

"I've always done my own nails, so when Delaine asked why don't I go to school, I did," Gomez said.

So how does the 37-year-old mother of two manage a family, volunteer work and 12 customers a week?

"My love for people," said Gomez, who hopes to one day move out of public housing and into the private sector. "You've got to believe in yourself."

As for the future, Gomez said

she's determined to be a role-model for her neighbors and children.

"They need to know that everything is not peaches and cream like you see on TV."

(In the last issue of Black Ink, reporter John McCann incorrectly identified Kathy Gomez as a "former cocaine user." This statement was false. In fact, Gomez describes herself as a crusader against drug use. Black Ink regrets the error.)

Delaine's House of Beauty

Beauty

featuring:

Kathy Gomez, Nail Technician

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Alumna offers assistance through Student Legal Services

By Kami Chavis
Ink Staff Writer

Carolina Student Legal Services, Inc. is for all you Tar Heel trouble-makers or anyone else in need of legal assistance.

Located in Suite 222 in the Student Union, CSLS is a non-profit program funded by student activity fees.

Dorothy Bernholz, an attorney at CSLS, is a valuable part of the service. After receiving a degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1963, she married and later entered Law School at North Carolina Central University. Bernholz, one of the few white women on the campus at that time, was extremely active during her years at NCCU.

After NCCU's law library burned, the state was slow in funding the replacement of all of the lost books and rebuilding the library. Bernholz joined with other students who took measures in order to get money appropriated for a new building and more books.



BLACK INK/COREY BROWN

Bernholz, a graduate of NCCU Law, provides legal advice to UNC-CH students.

Established in 1974, CSLS provides services such as: making sure students are aware of factors they should take into account when seeking legal advice; determining if one actually needs a lawyer; and choos-

ing appropriate representation or referral.

There is also a law program, which advises students in ways to avoid legal problems and how to properly deal with a situation if, in

fact, the student happens to be unfortunate enough to have a legal problem.

Bernholz has many special memories from her years at NCCU.

Says Bernholz, "One important thing you get from attending Law School, especially if you practice near that school, is developing long-lasting friendships with other future lawyers, judges, and political figures."

In addition to serving on the Law Review at NCCU, she graduated Cum Laude. In 1975, she came to work for Carolina Student Legal Services, Inc.

Bernholz has received many honors throughout her career. For example, in 1979, she was the recipient of a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities to attend Harvard University for three months.

She said, "I enjoyed the time I spent at Harvard because there was always a constant exchange of ideas with people from all over the world." Geraldine Ferraro was one of the guest lecturers. In addition to work-

ing at CSLS she is an academic pre-law adviser and serves as faculty adviser to the pre-law organization.

However, her dedication to the legal field extends beyond the University. She is a court certified arbitrator and mediator in Orange County. For the last three years she has served as a co-chairwoman for the State Commission on the Status of Women Lawyers in North Carolina.

"When I graduated from law school, only three percent of lawyers were women, but by the year 2000, women will make up 45 percent of lawyers," Bernholz said. "Because the number of women lawyers is increasing, our commission looks at issues affecting women in law from things like parental leave to discrimination in the courtroom."

No one in the Bernholz family will ever be without legal representation considering her husband and daughter are already lawyers and her son is currently a law student.