

Dancers teach new steps to youth



New Step Production

They met in a parking lot at Chowan College one night, checking out each other's dance steps. They found out they could learn new steps from each other, and the group New Step Production was born.

"We project a positive image," says Farante Parker, from Fort Walton Beach, Florida. "We tell kids to stay off drugs, stop racial violence, and to stay in school."

None of the dancers claim to have had professional dance training, although they have all taken dance class at Chowan College. The group does their own choreography, and say they are just 'natural dancers'.

Since meeting at Chowan, they have performed a number of times, on campus, and at schools in the area. At the end of their performance, they take turns speaking to the kids about headline-making subjects such as alcohol and drugs, racial enmity, and dropping out of school.

Parker, who is a merchandising management major at Chowan, teaches kids to 'take your time in life, and if you believe, you shall achieve. Keep your faith in God and all things are possible.'

Commercial art major, Preston Gist, of Charlotte, tells them "keep your dreams close in your heart, and they will, one day, become precious reality."

Stacey Barber, a commercial art student from Columbia, advises, "Set your goals high and strive for them. Be proud of what and who you are, and don't let anyone put you down."

Puerto Rican, Angel Ramos, a physical education major, tells students 'strong friendships can be achieved by unity and trust.'

The members of New Step Production prove strong friendship and unity can overcome racial differences also. Two members are black, one is Hispanic, and one is white. They all prove that having strong beliefs can help you succeed.

"They didn't think I could dance 'cause I'm a white boy," laughs Barber. But the close-knit group spends a lot of time creating new steps, practicing and learning from each other. Their positive philosophies, strong beliefs, and faith make their performances inspirational.

"It's unity. We're a family. We all contrib-



ute our two cents worth to what we do," explains Farante Parker. "It begins like a puzzle. When it's complete, we go eat dinner!"

The group does a style of dancing called hip-house dancing, which is somewhat similar to break dancing. They often dance to rap music. And they have a lot of fans—mostly girls, who write them fan letters similar to the ones the New Kids on the Block must get. The New Step dancers just take it all in stride.

NSD has a summer gig lined up in Roanoke, Va. as the opening act for a group called Special Ed. Then, it will be back to Chowan for the fall.

All four students plan to return to Chowan College in the fall to continue their studies, and hopefully, to continue inspiring young people at the high school and college level that they can 'be what they want to be'.

(Thanks to Frank Roberts, The Sun, Va. Pilot, for information in this article.)

Getting ahead in business: alumnus achieves success

Business students get 'good beginnings' in the Chowan Department of Business!

A member of the class of '87 called the other day to tell his professors his success story. James H. Baker, who got his computer beginnings taking CIS 172, Program Design and Development and CIS 273, Computer Systems Development at Chowan, has secured a job as a data system analyst with Dupont Corporation in Charlotte. He didn't mind sharing his beginning salary of \$35,000 per year with his friends in the business department.

He studied with professors, Andrea Eason and George Hazelton, and they remember James very well. He was chosen for the Order of the Silver Feather while at Chowan. He also received the General Electric Scholarship for minority students majoring in business and transferring to a four-year school.

After leaving Chowan, James attended the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, where he graduated in 1989.

"In the course James took with me, we used R:Base as the relational database management tool," states Andrea Eason. "Naturally, we are very proud of him."



Andrea Eason, professor of business, who instructed James Baker, teaches students about computer systems in the department of business.

Parker believes results of education 'down the road'

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chaplain and professor of religion and philosophy at Converse College in Spartanburg, S.C.

He became popular with students at Chowan because "I took the time to speak with them. I feel I have successfully related with students over the years. Our former department chairman, the dear Daisy Lou Mixon used to say there was a 'heavy run' on my classes because I spent time with the students."

"I replied, 'Aren't we all supposed to do that?'"

Dr. Parker received the B.A. at Wake Forest University, the B.D. from Yale University, and the Ph.D. at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. He is married to Elizabeth Lewis, of Fremont, and they have two daughters, Jenny Motley, the wife of the pastor of First Baptist Church in Boykins, and Mary Parker who works in Washington, D.C.

"It is increasingly difficult to motivate students on the two-year level. We need more role models than a solitary or infrequent faculty member. This is one of the reasons Chowan will be helped if we become a four-year institution," states Dr. Parker.

The professor's degree of relating with

the students is unique. He describes it as, "The good Lord has blessed my efforts." He once overheard a former student saying, "He doesn't know it, but he changed my life."

"I find some students today less motivated and less prepared. However, I did have a student tell me, once she wasn't going to let either one of us down."

According to Dr. Parker, much of education is 'down the road' and you don't always see the results right away. If a teacher accomplishes anything that has value to it, he may not see the 'harvest' immediately. But, says the professor, this is not important, because you sow the good seed.

"Sometimes I have failed to reach others, but the Lord has used my failure in positive ways."

Dr. Parker lives by these assumptions and a powerful faith in God, and in the good that people can do. It is a well-known fact that he is struggling with the disease of cancer in his life, and it is a fearsome battle with periodic hospitalizations.

"During my hospitalizations, I have felt the concern of all the college family, and from the community," he says.

"These are the finest things—love and friendship. These are gifts. You cannot earn them, they are given."

To Dr. Earl Parker—we give all the best!