

A "dream comes true"

Receives bachelor's degree after 50-year delay

Mrs. Jane Taylor Stephenson of Boykins, VA, reached a milestone in life May 14 and fulfilled a commitment she made more than 50 years ago when she finished Pineland Junior College.

She completed the requirements and earned a four-year college degree.

A member of Chowan College's historic Class of 1994, Mrs. Stephenson was among the first seniors in 57 years to be awarded bachelor's degrees. She is now making plans to begin graduate courses this fall.

In 1938, young Jane Taylor entered Pineland, a military school in Salemburg, to complete her last two years of high school and the first two years of college. It was at her graduation from Pineland that she made a personal commitment to someday "finish college" and earn a four-year degree.

"I hoped and prayed that someday I would finish my college education," she said, "and when I heard Chowan was returning to four-year status I knew that it was the answer to my prayers."

A native of Kinston, Mrs. Stephenson was a sergeant major at Pineland and a member of the school's "Crack Platoon" which did "fancy drills and marching demonstrations."

"I was interested in journalism when I was at Pineland," Mrs. Stephenson said. "I was editor of the school newspaper."

Unable to continue her college education after Pineland, Mrs. Stephenson attended Harbarger's business school in Raleigh and then accepted employment with the Justice Department in Washington.

"I met my husband at Pineland," the recent graduate said. "He was a native of Northampton County and was two years ahead of me in school."

J. C. Stephenson II was associated with

Georgia-Pacific in Conway for a number of years. At his death in 1981, he was supervisor of the power plant at the county's correctional system.

The couple had two children: J. C. Stephenson III, chairman of the music department at St. Catherine's School in Richmond; and Mrs. Ruth Stephenson Thomas of Raleigh, a

always stayed in touch with school, classes and learning.

"And I had no trouble adjusting to college life because the professors here are truly interested in the welfare of their students and they are more than willing to help every student," she said.

In describing her role as a non-traditional



Mrs. Stephenson, center, proudly awaits that moment when she finally reaches the goal she set fifty years ago to earn her college degree. The gold cord she wears is in recognition of graduation with academic honors. Classmates pictured with Mrs. Stephenson are Shannon Sullivan, left, and Rumonda Smith.

reading specialist with the city school system.

"I couldn't attend college when my children were small," she noted. "As a matter of fact, my son was only ten days old when my husband left for overseas duty in World War II."

Mrs. Stephenson, who has several grandchildren, did not resume her college career until the fall of 1990 when she enrolled at Chowan as a parttime student to complete the educational core requirements.

"I wasn't afraid to return to college after so many years," she recalled, "because I have

student, Mrs. Stephenson did admit that she was "a little apprehensive about the reaction of the younger students" in her classes since she was more than three times their age.

"They were all wonderful," she confessed, "and I really enjoyed them."

Evidence of Mrs. Stephenson's acceptance among the student body was noted at the annual Awards Day program when she received a thunderous applause after being named to the "Order of the Silver Feather" in recognition of her service to the college and community.

Unable to identify a favorite professor because "they are all very special," Mrs. Stephenson's eyes did sparkle when she talked about her classes in computers.

"I really enjoyed the computers and I even bought one for my use at home," she said.

Mrs. Stephenson declined to offer advice to the college-bound student.

"Today's typical college students... or at least those at Chowan... are very intelligent and they are aware of what's down the road for them. They are serious-minded and I know they will be OK."

"But I give a lot of credit for their motivation to Chowan's professors," she noted, "because they offer so much guidance and help to each of the students."

In reflecting on her student days at Chowan, Mrs. Stephenson said that many of her friends often asked why she wanted to go back to college at such a late age. "They asked me if it was just some sort of strong desire or goal that I had."

"I told them very quickly," she testified, "that getting my four-year degree was a commitment... a commitment I made to myself many, many years ago and one that I always knew I would fulfill."

Jane Stephenson now has another challenge, and another commitment, to earn more college credit and degrees. After several months of summer rest, there is little doubt that she will not begin work to reach another milestone and fulfill yet another commitment.

"I hoped and prayed that someday I could finish my college education... and when I heard that Chowan was becoming a four-year college, it was the answer to my prayers."

Faculty Focus

Academic Honors Received; Other Recognitions

Dr. Garth Faile, chairman of the Department of Science, was the speaker for the Ahoskie Rotary Club during the spring semester.

James Dumville, assistant professor of business management, was awarded the Ph.D. by Virginia Commonwealth University in early May.

Dr. David Gowler, assistant professor of religion, delivered a series of three lectures at Berry College, Rome, GA, in March. The topic of his first presentation was "Shall We Marry Our Enemies?: The Rocky Courtship of Literary and Social-Scientific Criticisms." Gowler has also been selected for inclusion in the 1994 edition of *Who's Who Among America's Teachers*.

Ann Walters, head coach of the women's basketball team, was guest speaker for the annual athletic banquet at Manteo (NC) Middle School at the end of the spring semester when athletic honors were awarded members of the school's athletic teams.

Dr. Kenneth Craig, associate professor of Religion, has been elected president of the Hertford County Habitat for Humanity.

George L. Hazelton, associate professor of science, was selected to attend a National Science Foundation short course for college professors at Old Dominion University in June. Hazelton completed the course entitled "Introducing Observational Equipment and Activities into the Introduction Astronomy Course."

Dr. Joyce Elliott, professor of language and literature, and her husband, Bedford Brown, received the "Distinguished Volunteer Award" for 1994 by the Gates County Correctional Center. The couple has taken part in the prison ministry for the past 10 years as well as assisting in the rehabilitation program.