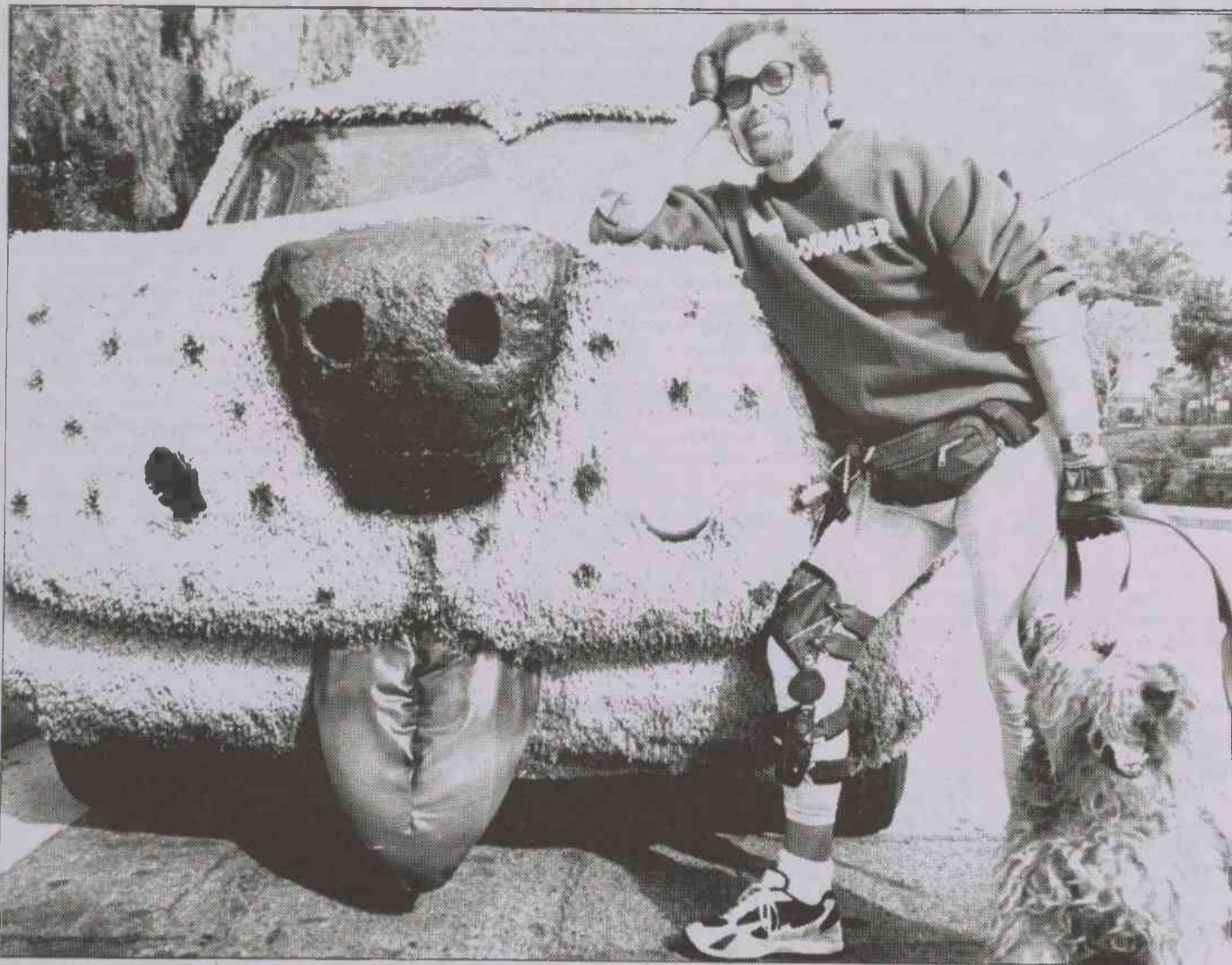


Bartholomew ('73) leans against the creation that landed him the job as "Dumb and Dumber's" production designer with the van's model, Bubba.



Bartholomew gets "Clever and clever-er"

By JOSHUA BOYER

Staff Writer, *The Daily Southerner, Tarboro*

Last spring, movie producer Charles Wessler ran into a problem while working on the film *Dumb and Dumber*. The movie just didn't look right.

Looking at the designs he had for the van the two moron protagonists, Jim Carey and Jeff Daniels, use for the "Mutt Cutts" dog grooming service, Wessler could see they were too slick, too boring, not nearly wacky enough for a Jim Carey movie.

Then he remembered an old friend he had met while working on music videos, Tarboro native Sidney J. Bartholomew, Jr., a 1973 graduate of Chowan College who majored in art, and called "the craziest designer in Hollywood."

Wessler called Bartholomew, told him of his problem and sent him a sketch of the plain van. When it came back just an hour later, it had

been transformed into a giant, furry, floppy-eared Airedale terrier.

"They loved it," Bartholomew later said of the van covered in shag-carpet dog fur, with ears flopping over the sides and a tail sticking up in the back like the world's dumbest spoiler.

They didn't want something that "looked like a car show-guy made it," Bartholomew said. They wanted "a van that two dumb guys would build."

An hour later, Bartholomew was at the New Line Cinema office interviewing for the job of production designer.

"Before I got home they called me and told me to be at the airport the next morning, he said. Bartholomew had the job.

As production designer, Bartholomew was responsible for "the entire look of the movie," he said. "Basically, I sit down with a script and highlight everything that is visual and come up with an idea of what it's going to be and how it's going to work."

That includes coordinating the wardrobe, the lighting, the props — "everything you see," Bartholomew said.

Bartholomew enjoys the problem-solving aspects of production design. "It's like doing puzzles," he said.

For instance, he had to figure out the puzzle of how to film the dogs in the back of the van as Jeff Daniels' character careens around curves like the idiot he is. You can't simply take the van and the dogs out on the road and film it, Bartholomew said. "It would be too dangerous and you couldn't predict it."

Instead he took an old van, cut it in half, and mounted it on a ball bearing big enough to support its weight — a bowling ball.

"Then we set the camera on a rig in the van (with the dogs) and got four guys to rock the van back and forth, giving you the illusion that this guy is driving down the road, flying all over the place."

Movies are all about illusion, he said. The script called for Daniels and Carey to drive a moped through the cold winter air of the Rockies to Aspen, but it was springtime by the time they shot the movie.

No problem. Bartholomew took them to Breckenridge and ordered up some fake snow for the set.

The production designer also picked the proper buildings in which to film each scene.

Wessler said he was looking for someone to match the spirit of the movie and found that person in Bartholomew. "The van was hysterical. It was exactly what we needed."

Wessler said he has several Bartholomew drawings hanging on his walls at home. "When I look at them, I smile."

"Sidney's a visual genius.

"He's a wacko, but a wacko with a great heart!"

Chowan graduate's creative flair keeps him busy in Hollywood's movie biz

'73 grad called "volcano uncorked"

By JOSHUA BOYER

Staff Writer, *The Tarboro Daily Southerner*

Dumb and Dumber is hardly Sidney J. Bartholomew Jr.'s first foray into Hollywood.

For the past seven years he has lived under Tinsel Town's big letters on the hill, working on various wacky projects.

Bartholomew has designed and directed music videos, commercial, TV shows and helped design Six Flags/Magic Mountain's Batman attraction.

Two children's videos won him a Parenting magazine awards.

And Bartholomew owns a gold record for music videos he made with Little Richard and

Disney to benefit the Pediatric AIDS Foundation.

He has even found time between his sundry jobs to write about half a dozen film scripts.

But the artist's first real break came when he was living in New York trying to make ends meet as an illustrator and he got the job of art director for a show which won for him an Emmy for the best art director in 1987.

The 41-year-old Bartholomew developed his love for art early.

"As long as I can remember I was the class artist. I was too small to play sports. I was a sickly, asthmatic kid. I didn't get dates. Art was all I could

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