

## Development program marked with continued enthusiasm

By E. VINCENT TILSON  
Vice President for Development

The fifth annual Day for Chowan regional fund-raiser, a \$100,000 gift by Southern Bank and Trust Company, the successful conclusion of the Alden Challenge Campaign to benefit the William A. Krueger School of Printing Production and Imaging Technology, the commemoration of Daniel Hall for Fine Arts upon the building's refurbishment, the inaugural Mary Frances Hobson Lecture and Prize honoring author Kaye Gibbons, organization of the Chowan College Foundation for Excellence in Business, and growth in the amount of total gifts to the college marked the development program during the 1994-95 academic year.

The fifth annual Day for Chowan fund-raiser, co-chaired by Mr. Raymond Benthall, of Murfreesboro, and Mrs. Jane Taylor, of Harrellsville, resulted in lead and event gifts totaling \$248,508 from donors in the five-county region of Hertford, Gates, Bertie, Northampton and Southampton/City of Franklin. A major Day for Chowan commitment was made by Southern Bank and Trust Company when officials provided the college a \$100,000 endowment gift, the corpus of which is to be administered by the North Carolina Community Foundation. Day for Chowan volunteers, numbering 299, made 876 personal calls during the December 1 event resulting in 501 cash gifts and pledge commitments. Ninety-seven percent of all pledges were honored by the end of the fiscal year, May 31.

The Alden Challenge Campaign to benefit the Krueger School of Printing Production and Imaging Technology was successfully concluded with total cash gifts and pledge obligations amounting to \$173,487. The catalyst for the campaign was a \$40,000 three-to-one matching challenge issued by the George I.

Alden Trust, of Worcester, Massachusetts, with the stipulation that if Chowan secured \$120,000 in previously-uncommitted "new" gifts designated to the Printing Production and Imaging Technology program, Alden Trustees would provide \$40,000 in matching funds. In addition to cash gifts and pledge obligations, gifts in kind of new equipment contributed during the course of the campaign totaled \$70,000, giving a total Alden Campaign value to the college of \$243,487.

On April 10, 1995, the Mary Frances Hobson Lecture and Prize for Distinguished Achievement in Arts and Letters was initiated by the Hobson Family Foundation, of San Francisco, California, as a memorial to Mary Frances Hobson, a journalist and poet. Mrs. Hobson, a

native of North Carolina (1912-1993), always treasured her relationship to Chowan College through her aunt, Lois Vann Wynn, who was a graduate of Chowan in the Class of 1905 and a member of the faculty 1908-1915. The connections of Mrs. Hobson and her family to the towns of Como and Murfreesboro run five generations deep.

The Mary Frances Hobson Prize is awarded annually to recognize the distinguished achievement of a person in the field of arts and letters. The recipient, who is presented a medallion and monetary gift, presents a lecture entitled the "Mary Frances Hobson Lecture," which is open to the citizens of Hertford County, the faculty and staff of Chowan College and all enthusiasts

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**Fifth annual  
"Day for  
Chowan"  
Successful**



*Kaye Gibbons, the first recipient of the Mary Frances Hobson Prize for Achievement in Arts and Letters, delivers the lecture to an overflow audience in Marks Hall auditorium.*

## Increased efforts planned to recruit, and "re-recruit" students

By AUSTINE O. EVANS  
Vice President for Student Management

Given the circumstances of this last recruiting year, we gave it our best effort! Our disappointment was that we did not enroll 400 new students this fall as we had hoped earlier.

There is good news! First, we enrolled 352 new students, most of whom are boarding students. The mean SAT of this group is 834, slightly below last year's 839. The average GPA is 2.61, slightly above last year's 2.56. We admitted a few who may encounter some academic difficulty, but many are fully capable, vibrant, enthusiastic young people who will energize our campus. We are pleased that our institution has been able to attract that number of new students. Second, our retention is improving. Of the 659 possible returnees (students enrolled in spring 1995), 430 are continuing their education at Chowan this fall. That gives us a spring to fall retention rate of 65%, and improvement over the previous year's 62%.

Thousands of variables are involved in students' decisions to attend particular institutions. We think there are several factors that explain why we did well to enroll 352. We received 1,278 applications but our conversion rate of applicants to enrolled students was only about 28%. It appears that the rate was affected by at least the following conditions:

(1) Chowan is not well known by the students whom we wish to attract. We have a very limited academic reputation except in the immediate geographic area where we are

considered to be non-selective in our admissions practices. More often than not, we begin with strangers as prospective students and hope somehow to engage them.

(2) We offer a limited number of majors and quite possibly our mix of majors is not well-suited to today's market.

(3) There exists an increasingly competitive marketplace. Moderately selective institutions are taking less capable students in order to fill their spaces. That holds true for a number of private institutions in the country. Now, with the budget constraints at many of our public colleges and universities, they too are dipping down academically in order to maintain (or increase) their current funding. Some public institutions in other states have employed admissions consultants in order to improve their recruiting efforts.

(4) North Carolina public institutions are a great bargain for residents of the state, and a good value even for students from other states.

(5) Tuition discounting is fast becoming the standard rather than the exception. Estimates are that over 50% of colleges and universities are discounting at rates approaching 40% of tuition.

(6) Parents are "value shopping" where the bottom-line cost to the family must equal the perceived quality of the institution.

(7) Demographic factors:

- a. There has been a decrease in the number of college age students since the late 1980s.
- b. Although an increase in the number of high school graduates is predicted,

it will be relatively small and different in composition with increasing numbers of Hispanics and African-American, many of whom are expected to be less able to pay for an education.

(8) Our inquiry pool increased to over 18,000 prospects but were serviced by the same number of staff, experienced though they were.

As our new students were arriving (and they were a good looking group), we were well into the next recruiting year with enhanced efforts. The addition of two new admissions counselors will allow us to do more telemarketing and service our prospects more promptly. In addition to our normal travel in North Carolina, we will give increased emphasis to travel in the northeast and Florida where we are more marketable. Last year we began the pre-awarding process in mid-October, this year we will begin in mid-September.

An improvement in retention is paramount in our efforts to increase our total enrollment. Soon we will launch a campus-wide effort to "re-recruit" our students. The admissions staff will continue the relationships that they developed with our freshmen during the recruiting process in an effort to help them "settle in" to college life. Creating an environment for young people in which they can comfortably develop their intellects, spirits and relationships is the challenge that engages the entire campus community. We look forward to a new year of continued cooperation by all of Chowan's constituents.

**Retention  
improvement  
paramount  
to increase  
enrollment**