



Some of the entertainment at the "Garrison Roast" was provided by a barbershop quartet that incorporated many of Garrison's accomplishments into their lyrics.



## Former players finally catch "the rabbit"

Jody Shultz, left, who was an outstanding player for the Braves and later played professional football with the Philadelphia Eagles, told of Coach Garrison's practice of having his players "chase the rabbit." Shultz proudly told the audience that he and a group of his former teammates had been successful in catching the rabbit. At left, a former teammate presents Garrison the caged rabbit, along with a supply of food "to keep the rabbit healthy and active."



## A widow pays tribute

### "The Bear" never lost his love for football or for Jim Garrison

I was a Chowan freshman and only 17 the first time I saw Jim Garrison on a football field. At the time, he scared the life out of me. He was holding on to the face guard of Oscar Beasley, a Chowan player known as "The Bear," and tongue lashing him for hitting an opposing player, which had caused his expulsion from the game. The lick had been passed because the other player had thrown dirt in "The Bear's" face for the second time. In retrospect, the dirt was probably easier to take than Jim Garrison's chewing out.

Little did I know that both men would play a significant role in my life. Two weeks later I had the first of many dates with Oscar. The relationship might not have continued if he had followed his coach's advice. At that time, Jim Garrison consistently tried to keep his ball players away from their girlfriends, especially the night before a game. I only forgave him for that after Oscar and I were married in 1964.

Oscar referred to his coach as "Garrison," but not where the coach could hear him. When Oscar did say his name, it was always with this incredible awe in his voice, like he was speaking of someone super human. I'm not sure my husband ever expressed how much he loved his coach. Men of his era were not supposed to have feelings or cry. But, I can remember countless times when he would share campus memories and it always included Jim Garrison. In some ways, it was the best time of our lives. All we had to do was go to class, hold hands and dodge the coach when we were lighting up a Winston.

Our two children, Oscar, Jr., and Jason came along and we shared college memories with them including Garrison's many admonitions about life. We never made it back to Chowan except for our 20-year reunion. We saw Coach Garrison then. He hadn't changed a bit. He was still grinning, still thin, and still grouching about how his team needed to shape up if they ever wanted to become champions.

Jim Garrison specialized in shaping champions — on and off the football field. When Oscar was diagnosed with severe diabetes during his sophomore year at Chowan, Jim Garrison knew how important it was for him to continue playing football. He saw to it that "The Bear" never missed a game. I'm convinced that the faith Jim Garrison placed in Oscar also helped boost him through the tough years that were to follow. Those years included struggles with dialysis and several surgeries, including kidney and pancreas transplants. The disease finally claimed his life in 1991.

The last thing Oscar did the day before he died was watch the Washington Redskins win a game. In my heart, I know he was a linebacker again hunkered down on that field listening for the calls the same way he had done so many years ago.

He never lost his love for football—or for Jim Garrison. Our youngest son, Jason, even attended football camp at Chowan during his high school years. It was extremely important to Oscar that he have an opportunity to be near Coach Garrison. And, when Oscar died, it was Jason who said, "Mama, you'd better call Coach Garrison. He'd want to know."

I wanted to write this tribute for Oscar. I wanted his voice to be heard even though he couldn't be present. I still talk to Oscar as I did for 28 years. When I asked him what advice he would have for Garrison about retirement, the answer was short and simple. "Know your plays. Give it everything you've got. Practice hard. And, if I see you smoking, it'll cost you five laps."

—Nancy Wright Beasley  
Class of 1964  
South Hill, Virginia

## Garrison inducted into Hall of Fame by alma mater

Veteran athletic director Jim Garrison was inducted into the Gardner-Webb University Hall of Fame on Saturday, Oct. 28.

Garrison was a two-way starter (running back and defensive back) for the undefeated Gardner-Webb Bulldog football teams of 1951 and 1952. He was instrumental in the team's perfect records and appearances in the Golden Isle Bowl.

As a sophomore at the then junior college, Garrison served as team captain, was an All-State selection and the Golden Isle Bowl's Most Valuable Player. In addition, Garrison earned an athletic letter in basketball.

He graduated with honors in 1953 with an associate degree in pre-engineering. Garrison continued his education at Western Carolina University where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in mathematics. While there he earned All-Conference and All-State honors in football and served his club as team captain.

Garrison later worked as coach at Gardner-Webb (1955-58) before accepting the coaching and athletic administration position at Chowan.

Garrison retired from football coaching at the end of the 1994 season but continues to serve as vice president for athletic administration and director of the Braves Club.

**Garrison was instrumental in several perfect records at his alma mater.**