

## An interview with Suzanne Clifton, distinguished alumna, trustee

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or playing bridge. I've got to make a difference. I have to do something that is an active thing for my mind, which I did not know at that time. Isn't that amazing. I never put it into perspective until about ten years ago.

But, I had gotten out of teaching and had gotten into the business world because my husband—Matt's and Brook's father—had been in the business world for quite some time. So, I knew a lot about the business world, and I enjoyed the challenges.

In 1979 and 1980, I worked for the Raleigh branch of the Olsten Temporary Agency, which was a national company, as a sales rep doing 30 hours a week. I believed I could handle the job and my two teenage sons at the time. The work was very stressful. This kind of industry is stressful because you're dealing with people, and you're handling their lives. I believed that temporary staffing could be done better, and that has proven to be true.

I started this company in 1984 stressing only quality and knowing that was what I was going to do or it wasn't going to work. We've grown to the point now that we have the value.

Our paradigms are not static. We're being the pioneers and not the settlers. Therefore, the business turned out the way I wanted.

There are a lot of long days, heartaches and hardships; it has not been easy. And it's still not easy because of the time requirement and so forth. However, making a difference has been rewarding.

RB: *It's interesting that you mention being the pioneer and taking calculated risks, because those are the people other folks recognize and remember down the road. That's what it's all about.*

SC: You don't know that sometimes, because a lot of people go into business for many reasons. I think that I've been very lucky that I got the rewards later. My soul purpose was to make a difference.

RB: *I think that's kind of nice. For you to do this at this point in your life, I think is wonderful. In other words, most folks look at mid-life as a time to slow down or look toward retirement. And then you do something like this in 1984, and kaboom! Something's working for you.*

SC: That's true.

RB: *I think that's pretty exciting.*

SC: That's true because I was focused. I went through life doing what I could to do the right thing. If the timing is right, and you approach life with a plan but also care about your fellow man, then guess what? Life works out. I've seen so many people in business who are motivated by greed and deception.

RB: *Right. It takes a combination of factors to make life a success.*

SC: It does.

RB: *Describe your personal leadership and management styles. I'm getting personal now.*

SC: I interviewed someone the other day, and I said, "Before I start this interview, let me tell you about myself." And the person said, "I can probably already tell you, because I've been told." I responded, "Picky, making sure everything is done right, making sure that we care, but doing it in a very organized, take-charge type of manner so that we make sure we're dotting the "I"s and crossing our "T"s."

We are always looking at change. What can we do better? But I do care. I do. If a person gives me what it takes to run this company so that we're all moving ahead and we're all making a difference, I'll give something back. In fact, I'm having a young man come to work for me in thirty days. He came here from Pennsylvania to consult with us the week I was at Chowan.

RB: *I remember. You mentioned that you were returning to Cary to talk to a consultant.*

SC: Right. He is now my employee. He was looking for roots and a partnership. He came here and stayed for an entire week, and he saw what he wanted. He saw that we cared about the people who work here, about the staffing employees, but that we aren't going to tolerate any slaphappy attitudes.

I can't stand gossip. I can't stand people back stabbing. I can't stand busybodies. I've got to have the right combination so that we're doing the job, and we're enjoying it.

RB: *You reminded me of a column I read once. I think the columnist was Ann Landers or Dear Abby. I can't remember the exact content of it; but she was making the point that sometimes good people do finish first.*

*I hope you don't mind talking about the next topic a little bit and sharing with the public. What is the state of your business today in terms of the number of locations, the size of your staff and clientele, and projected sales?*

SC: We have four locations: Cary, Raleigh, Winston-Salem and Greensboro, all of which I own. We have a franchise in Columbia, South Carolina. The size of our office staff is, between the four locations as well as the franchise, I would say 54 people. We have from 500 to 700 staffing employees that we place off sight. These are our permanent employees. We give them



READY FOR STUDENT RECEPTION—Preparing to greet students at the Ella Cobb Camp President's Home are, left to right: Dr. Edward Dadez, vice president for student life; Lisa Blockus, director of student involvement; and Laura Allgood, president of the Student Government Association.

## A new student life for Chowan College

By DR. EDWARD DADEZ  
Vice President for Student Life

As Chowan begins her 149th year of service and embarks upon the journey into the 21st century, the mission of the Department of Student Life will be to provide a comprehensive program of services which adhere to the overall purpose of the institution.

This is not always an easy task, but it is one that the Department of Student Life is prepared to undertake. It is also a challenge that the department enjoys and strives to meet.

Campus student life is an opportunity to enhance the value of a student's educational experience as an individual as well as being an integral member of the campus community.

For new students, this is a time of learning... growing... and becoming. Learning about yourself and the world around you. Growing in independence and new responsibilities. But mostly it is becoming. It is finding out who you are as a person and who you want to become.

The Department of Student Life encourages each student to get involved at Chowan College. This involvement can be in the Student Government Association, residence hall governments, intramurals, student organizations and clubs, community and campus service, and last but not least, your academic program... the reason you are here at Chowan College.

Goals and objectives to ensure positive directions and growth towards achieving three

developmental outcomes have been established. The staff of the Student Life department strives for (1) the development of the whole person; (2) the development of healthy, positive communities; and, (3) the integration of each individual into the campus community. The commitment to each student at Chowan College is to accomplish these goals as professionally and competently as possible.

The department has begun a tradition of setting and meeting lofty goals and making personal contact with students and student groups. The staff is always in pursuit of and committed to excellence.

The tradition established is as easy as A-B-C. We will *achieve*, because we *believe* and *care* about what we do, how we do it, and why we do it.

Efforts are moving forward and we are taking a proactive approach to developing residence hall communities and a campus community where students trust and respect each other, are comfortable and secure in their environment and learn, grow, develop and mature with each other.

The Department of Student Life stresses that we cannot do this alone and we cannot do it to you, we must do it with you.

Each student is urged to get involved, take positive risks, reach beyond and commit to personal growth and development. When this is done, Chowan College will become the special place that it is and all of us, each one of us, will be the better for it.

benefits, including worker's comp, they're covered by all that.

The clientele: I can't even give you the numbers. We provide service to hundreds of companies. We are pleased to have the kinds of clients that we do, but we choose them. The reason that we choose them is because we're not going to allow our staffing employees to make less than what we believe to be the market value.

We want our client companies to be on the same wavelength that we're on. Our clients are changing their paradigms and looking at the workforce in a positive manner. And the projected sales...

RB: *That might be getting a little personal, but I thought I'd ask.*

SC: Well, I don't know that I can give you a monetary figure, because it's going to be astronomical. I can give you a number and compare it as in staffing employees. We're going into a new division and a new company within the next 3 months.

By the year 2000, core employment of a company is going to be only 50 percent. Right now staffing agencies affect probably 10 percent of the workforce. By the year 2000, we're going to affect 50 percent—through the year 2005. The 50 percent that we're going to affect will be contracted, outsourced, staffed and—this is some-

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