

# Braves' boss

Continued from page 1

appearances in the National Junior College Athletic Association tournament — 1984, 1988 and 1992 — with the Braves making the Final Four round during the '84 tourney. A trio of Region X titles, three Eastern Tarheel Conference championships and one Carolinas Conference crown have also been mixed in during Burke's 18-year stay at Chowan.

His record with the Braves is 365-151, making him the all-time winningest coach in Chowan basketball history.

However, Burke's success story isn't just limited to the mid-Atlantic coastal area. That was evident when Chowan Athletic Director Diane Morea read a long list of congratulatory letters following the win. Headlining that list was a note from Burke's college coach, Fred McCall, formerly of Campbell College.

There were also letters from current Campbell coach Billy Lee, Jeff Capel of ODU, NC State Athletic Director Les Robinson, Bobby Cremins of Georgia Tech, DePaul University's Pat Kennedy, Mike Dement of SMU and Dave Odom of Wake Forest.

"Those letters caught me a bit off guard," said Burke, who became a bit emotional when he addressed the crowd following Friday's win.

"I really appreciate all that our athletic director did for this occasion," he said, "as well as my assistant coaches, John Marion and Greg Taylor. That was really a touch of class on their parts."

But no sooner had all the smiles and the pats on the back ended, and Burke was already doing what he does best — planning for Chowan's next opponent. "I'm heading out to scout the next game," admitted Burke. "Four-hundred wins are nice, but you can't win the next one without a lot of hard work."

It's hard work and desire that Burke thinks holds the key to future success. "Our program here at Chowan has long prided itself with the success we've enjoyed," acknowledged Burke, "but there's more to the game than just wins. We've had to overcome a lot of obstacles since we moved up to senior college status," he explained, "and the time has arrived for this program to begin winning not just games, but championships."

Burke's first crack at being a college basketball coach came at Greensboro from 1971-74. In 1975,

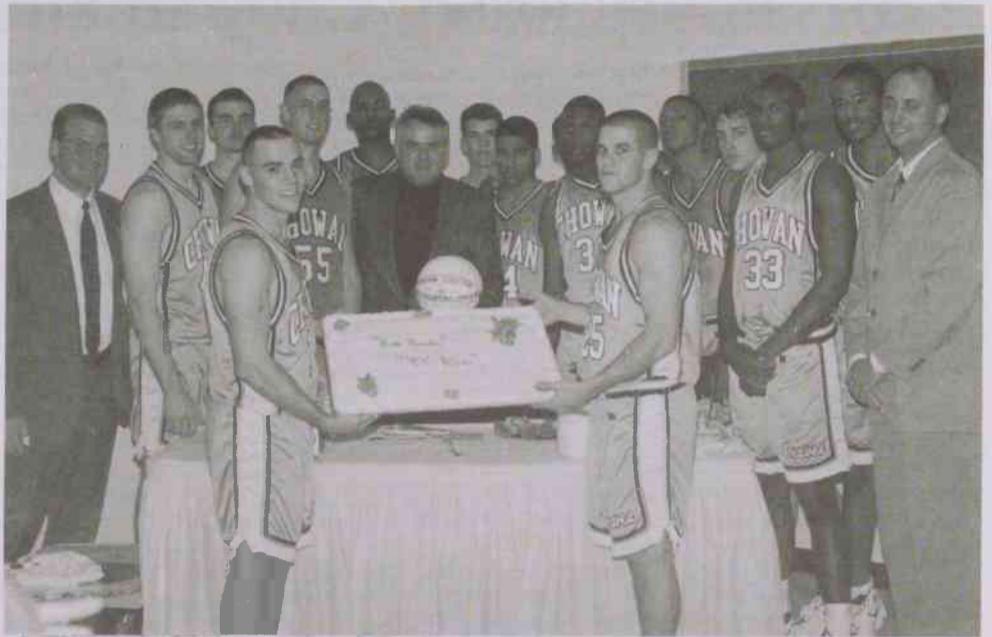


photo collection by Cal Bryant

he moved to Campbell, his alma mater, to serve as an assistant. That was followed by two years (1976-77) at Guilford College as an assistant.

Burke spent the next basketball season (1977-78) at the high school ranks as the head coach at High Point Central. Prior to coming to Chowan College in 1980, he spent the 1979 season away from the coaching ranks.

"I really appreciate what Coach [Jim] Garrison did for me by allowing me to extend my coaching career here at Chowan," said Burke of the school's former athletic director, who hired him prior to the 1980-81 season. "It's been a long love affair here at Chowan over all these years," Burke asserted.

Burke couldn't recall the final score or the opponent against whom he notched his 100th career win. That milestone, however, was at home — at Chowan. Win number 200 came on February 18, 1988 during an 84-72 decision at Louisburg College.

His 300th career win came in dramatic fashion as Burke's Braves gained their third trip to the national finals thanks to an 83-78 victory on March 10, 1992 during the District Nine championship game at Brunswick (Ga.) Junior College.



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—Coach Burke

