

# Twenty-year Tribute

*Frank Stephenson has dedicated much of his life's work to Upward Bound, an outreach program for disadvantaged high school students*

*This leader portrays unconditional love,  
The kind we receive from our Master above.*

*He always helps and never complains,  
He has been with us in sunshine, storms and rains.*

Selected from the poem, A True Leader,  
written by students of Frank Stephenson  
on the twentieth anniversary of Upward Bound.  
July 26, 1997

A black and white photo on the cover of *College Bound*, features two 1997 graduates of The Ohio State University Graduate School. Not such an unlikely feat for a remarkable pair, right?

Wrong. Felix Deloatch, a graduate of Northampton County High School - East, Conway, N.C. and Dr. Arwin Smallwood, a graduate of Bertie High School, Windsor, N.C. were both disadvantaged high school students before attending the miraculous Chowan College Upward Bound program.

Now in its twenty-first year of service to regional high school students, who express a desire to continue their education beyond high school but may not be doing well in regular school settings, the outstanding program is federally funded through competitive grants from the U.S. Department of Education.

"Our charge from the federal government is to get these kids ready to graduate from college," explains Director E. Frank Stephenson, Jr. '62. He leans forward and declares proudly, "We compete for grant money nationally, against any college or university who wants to apply for it. The last time we went into competition [grants are awarded every four years] there were 2,000 applications. They funded 450.

"I'll put up what we do against any other program in the country. Our program has a very high success rate and our funding applications rank consistently at the top of the scale," he says. Selected for two national studies by the federal government in the last ten years, the first study included only twenty-five programs and the second only five.

Working annually with 75 culturally and educationally disadvantaged students from four high schools in the Roanoke-Chowan region of North Carolina, Stephenson and his staff have achieved remarkable triumphs.

The walls of his office are sheathed with photos photos which represent one success story after another. Ask him about it. Then, plan to spend hours listening to fascinating stories of first-generation college graduates, families of siblings attending college, graduate-school accomplishments and professional achievements. The stories are astounding.

"I have enough graduate photos to cover any walls you want to cover," he laughs.

After receiving his Chowan associate's degree in liberal arts, he attended North Carolina State University where he obtained his B.S. in industrial and personnel management. Then he enrolled in the school's graduate program to receive his M.S. in counseling.

Stephenson became the director of admissions at Chowan College in 1966 and served in that capacity for ten years before moving into the Upward Bound program.

The federal program, which funds Upward Bound, began in the early '60s as part of the 'Great Society' program of Lyndon Johnson, according to Stephenson. "Dean Lowe [B. Franklin Lowe, Jr., vice president for academic affairs] did the first application in 1976. He turned the first one in at the request of Dr. Bruce Whitaker [president Emeritus]. They received a phone call one day to say they were funded, I came along and they offered me the job."

Ideally, students apply to the program as high school sophomores. "We like to have them two years," explains Stephenson. During the fall and spring semesters of their junior and senior years, they meet on Chowan's campus two Saturdays a month for writing skills classes. Each summer they attend a six-week session at Chowan.

During the summer session, students live on the Chowan campus, attend classes Monday through Thursday and travel each Friday. "We give students a variety of experiences and skills stressing academic achievement and cultural



Alumni and administrators of the Upward Bound program celebrate the first twenty years. (l-r) Dr. Stanley Lott, Felix Deloatch (B.S., Elizabeth City State Univ., M.S., Ohio State Univ.), Nicole Jenkins (B.S., Elizabeth City State Univ.), Dr. Arwin Smallwood (B.S., M.S., N.C. Central Univ., Ph.D., Ohio State Univ.), Bettina Pope (B.S., N.C. State Univ.), Eddie Vinson (B.S. Elizabeth City State Univ.), Frank Stephenson, Dr. B. Franklin Lowe, Jr., and Thomas Sellers (B.S. Elizabeth City State Univ.)

awareness," he says. "They take nine classes and can be in class, literally, from 8:00 in the morning until 10:00 at night."

Friday field trips include treks to various colleges for orientation visits and an annual trip takes students to the Smithsonian galleries in Washington, D.C. each spring. Pupils have even traveled as far as New York City for a special Picasso exhibit.

"They need to go home on weekends," Stephenson reveals, "because this is an extremely demanding, intense schedule."

Once students begin college, staff members chart their progress. "Our graduation rate from high school and college is far above the local average," he declares.

Stephenson directs an administrative staff, teaching staff, dorm staff and the program's own security force. Teachers are hired from various schools, according to federal regulations. George Hazelton, associate professor of science at Chowan, has been teaching with Stephenson for 19 years. "He's sort of a fixture and the kids really like him," says the director.

"We get a lot of students who come back to talk to us," relates Stephenson. "Invariably, the number one thing that helped them during their two years here was the writing class," he says, "and we're having more and more attend graduate school."

It's easy to tell from the light in his eyes that hearing about their successes is the joy of his job. Stephenson loves to tell stories about alumni. Stories about the cardiologist at John Hopkins Hospital, the professor of history at Bradley University or the law enforcement officer preparing for the F.B.I. fill his repertoire.

He loves what he's doing and it shows. The Hertford County native, raised on a local peanut, tobacco and cucumber farm, says, "This is my home, I grew up here. These are my kids and I love working with them. It's a joy to see them come in here green and then go on to grow, develop and become successful."

"I have a wonderful staff. We've been successful at this for twenty years and I fully expect to keep Upward Bound here as long as the federal government keeps putting money into it."

## Nominations sought for Distinguished Alumni recipients

The Alumni Association needs your help in nominating candidates for the 1998 Distinguished Alumni Award.

Nominees must meet two criteria. First, each nominee must be in good standing. To meet the requirements of good standing, each alum must have completed at least one semester in a two-year program or two semesters in a four-year program and have either graduated or been eligible for continued enrollment at their time of withdrawal.

Second, each nominee must have excelled in a chosen profession, made a significant contribution to society through their work or volunteer efforts, or in another way brought honor to, or assisted, the college in its mission of Christian higher education.

While nominations for distinguished alumni can be submitted at any time, the association requests all nominations for the 1998 award be submitted by March 31 for review by the 1998 Distinguished Alumni Nominating Committee. Nominations received after March 31 may be held for consideration by the 1999 nominating committee.

Please submit the following information for a nominee: name, class year (if known), brief justification for the nomination, and your name and phone number.

Send nominations to:  
The Chowan College Alumni Association  
c/o Director of Alumni Services  
Chowan College  
PO Box 1848  
Murfreesboro, NC 27855

## We'll be calling . . . February 3 - March 5

Students of Chowan College will be phoning alumni, parents and friends of the college during the annual phonathon to raise funds for the school's 1997-98 annual giving programs.

Unrestricted gifts to Chowan's Alumni Loyalty Fund, Parents Fund and Annual Fund provide a vital source of income which helps support the day-to-day operations of the college and provides the financial flexibility for immediate change and improvement.

Please offer your support to the students of Chowan when they call. Your contributions can and do make a difference in the quality of education and student life on campus.

We hope that we can count on your generosity.

