

Year after near-fatal crash, teen ready to return

By Ida Kay Jordan

CURRITUCK -- A billboard in front of a Coinjock service station marked Eric Spencer's 18th birthday recently.

Since the station frequently posts congratulatory messages for student honors and other events, only those who know Spencer knew the significance of the birthday wish.

One year earlier, on his 17th birthday, the tall, husky Currituck student was nearly given up for dead after he fell asleep at the wheel of the car he received as a gift and demolished it on U.S. Route 158.

He suffered a traumatic closed head injury, a broken neck, other fractures and a torn left eye that caused him to miss the final three months of school last year.

This year, Spencer is finishing second in his class of 140 graduating seniors. "I wanted to do well," Spencer said of his recovery. He pulled out his latest report card: English, 99; U.S. history, 100; calculus, 92; electronics, 100.

Spencer wouldn't say what he would tell his classmates in a salutatorian speech.

Because of his head injury, his words sometimes stumble into one another.

"I try not to stutter by thinking before I speak," he said.

Spencer's long and expensive hospitalization left family finances in shambles and his college fund depleted. But his grades solved that problem.

Chowan College offered him a full scholarship to enroll in the school's four-year program, which starts this fall. Spencer said he plans to take engineering courses.

"I think it will be good for him to be in a smaller school at first," said his mother, Linda O'Brien. "I'm so proud of him."

Eric Spencer's physical condition continues to improve.

"My neck makes a squeaking noise sometime when I move my head," he said, "I just try to blank it out."

He limits his physical activity to swimming and a little basketball.

"I'm not playing football or anything," he said. "I'm not taking any chances."

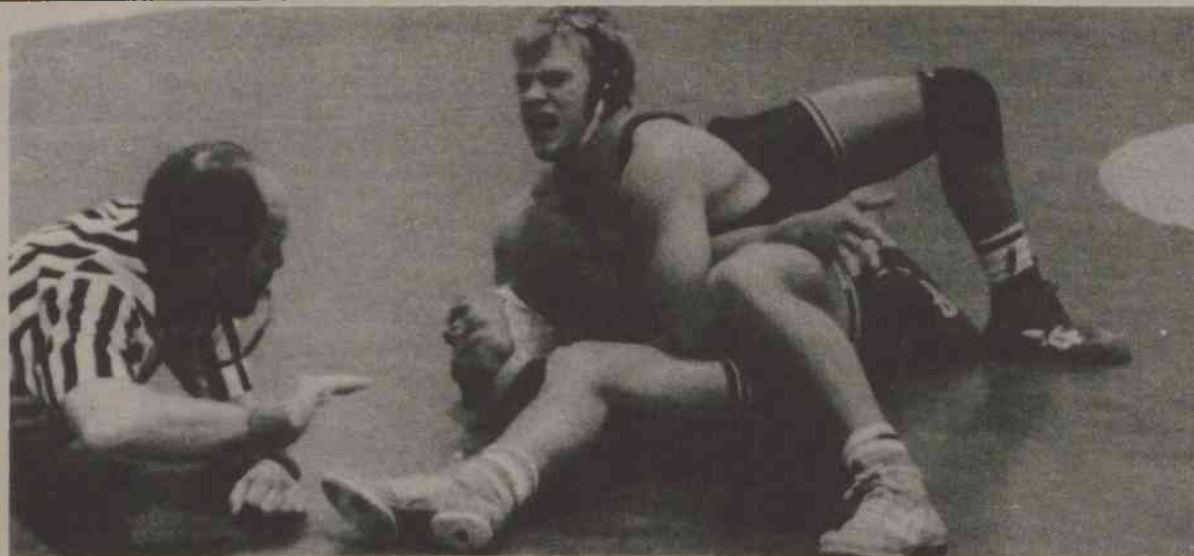
His recovery and his ability to step back into his studies without a setback have been called "miraculous" by many of the medical experts who have treated him, his mother said.

"I'm probably lucky," Spencer said. "Everybody's lucky once in a while."

Chowan College Women's 1992-'93 Basketball Schedule

DATE	OPPONENT	PLACE	TIME
November			
10	Barton College	Away	6:30 p.m.
14-14	Mt. Aloysius Tournament	Away	TBA
December			
4	Hagerstown Junior College	Away	5:00 p.m.
5	Allegheny C.C.	Away	3:00 p.m.
6	Prince George College	Away	1:00 p.m.
January			
13	Baltimore Community College	Home	6:00 p.m.
15	Anderson College	Away	TBA
16	Brevard College	Away	TBA
27	Louisburg College	Home	7:00 p.m.
February			
5	Anderson College	Home	6:00 p.m.
6	Brevard College	Home	5:30 p.m.
10	Louisburg College	Away	7:00 p.m.
15	Louisburg-Pizza Hut Classic	Away	TBA
20	North Greenville College	Away	6:00 p.m.
21	Spartanburg Methodist College	Away	2:00 p.m.
26	North Greenville College	Home	6:00 p.m.
27	Spartanburg Methodist	Home	3:30 p.m.
March			
5-6	Region X Tournament	N. Greenville College	TBA

Coach: Dan Surface



Grunt and groan

The Chowan wrestling team has taken national honors and gained a fine reputation around the country. It will be competing under the coaching of Rich Gray this season.

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