

THE DECREE

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NORTH CAROLINA WESLEYAN COLLEGE, ROCKY MOUNT, NORTH CAROLINA 27804



Photo by Molly Weisse

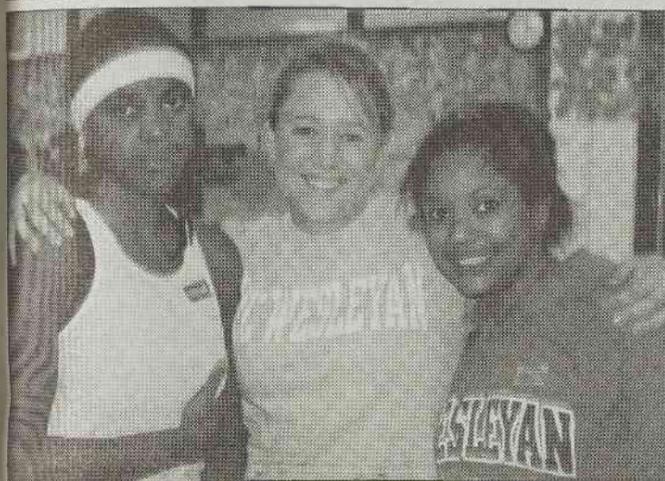


Photo by Molly Weisse

Older Students Find Niche at NC Wesleyan

By Jessica Bowen
Decree Managing Editor

For NC Wesleyan's older students, working multiple jobs, raising children, and doing class work until early morning hours are part of their daily routine. These students have dealt with classrooms full of younger, traditional students; pressure from life outside of school; and, in many cases, years of waiting to obtain their degree. For the most part, these students are satisfied with their experience here at NC Wesleyan.

During the current fall semester, 801 students were enrolled in the traditional day program. Of that total, most students are 25 and younger. But there are 32 students age 30 and older, including 20 in the 30-39 age bracket; six, 40-49; five, 50-59; and one student who is 60. Many faculty and students agree that the older students provide an interesting perspective in classroom discussions, as well as a strong role model for the younger students still trying to find themselves.

Jayne Lawing

At 5 a.m., 60-year-old Jayne Lawing wakes in her home in Williamston to prepare for class. A religious studies major, Lawing does her daily devotion and "hits the road." Her one-hour drive from home puts her at the NCWC Chapel around 7:45 a.m.

Lawing does an internship in the chapel where she sometimes spends ten hours a day to meet the hours requirement. Lawing hopes to get her masters in Christian counseling and work for the VA hospital in her hometown, Asheville.

After graduating high school, Lawing wanted to go to school to be an anesthesiologist, but her step-dad did not see the need to spend money for education. "He said you just need to know how to get married and have kids, but there was so much more that I wanted to do," said Lawing who is married with five children whom she raised while her husband obtained his bachelor's degree in business administration and accounting. It was after her husband finished his education that Lawing decided to go back to school. She first went to Martin Community College in Williamston, but later transferred to NC Wesleyan.

chapel and she doesn't visit the library because of the noise.

She feels equal to the students in most of her classes but history is a little different because historic events are often taught differently than she remembers. "Some professors say that I'll remember a certain event and I usually do," said Lawing, adding that "we all have our personal agenda in our subconscious that makes us different."

Lawing's husband has been supportive with her decision to go back to school. "There have been a couple of times that I've been so tired I didn't think I could make it and he gave me a pep talk," said Lawing. He doesn't put any "obstacles" in her way and takes care of cleaning and housework while she attends classes.

Lawing is scheduled to graduate in December but knows she's going to miss her college experience. "I really enjoy being here and I told my husband that I'm not going to miss the drive, but I'll miss stopping and talking to people on campus."

Lawing tries to keep her personal life from interfering with her school work. "Home life is home life, school is school" said Lawing. She tries to do school work during the week and then spends time with her husband, children, and some of the twelve grandchildren on the weekends.

With the help of her husband and support of her family, Lawing has been able to make it through her college years with good grades. She said her family thinks it's "neat that a 60 year old is on the Dean's List."

Walt Whitaker

Senior Walt Whitaker wakes around 6:00 a.m. and gets ready to come to Wesleyan while his wife gets their three kids up and ready for school. The English major takes his youngest daughter to the Rocky Mount Preparatory School and picks her up after his classes are finished. He stays home and watches the kids until his wife gets home.

Along with taking classes and raising children, Whitaker serves as a minister and associate pastor at Jerusalem Missionary Baptist in Whitakers, as well as working with the disabled veterans representative at the Rocky Mount Employment Security Commission. He often does his homework between 10:00 p.m. and 5 a.m. during the week and sometimes even devoting weekends to finishing assignments. His wife and kids are very supportive because "they know how important education is to me," said Whitaker.

After retiring from the Air Force in 1995, Whitaker decided on NC Wesleyan after the military endorsed its English program. Whitaker had attempted to finish school during the Air Force but found it difficult because of his job. "It's been challenging and hasn't been all pleasant," said Whitaker of his experience at NC Wesleyan. Whitaker says he is "satisfied with everything except the Business office because they seem to be overwhelmed."

Whitaker believes the professors and the rest of the staff "are great" although sometimes he feels like some professors appear to "require older students to give extra or appear not to take us as serious as younger students."

Fellow English majors make Whitaker feel accepted and often he feels that he has the "upper edge" because he worked in Air Force Intelligence and his job involved a lot of reading and writing. However, he disagrees with the way history is being taught, which he sees as personal knowledge vs. written knowledge. "I find it hard to digest errors in segregation and racism because I was raised during the 60's and 70's," said Whitaker, adding "I often feel like I have to hold back my views because of the atmosphere." However, he did say that his childhood gave him the opportunity to "live things that young kids just hear about."

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Students and Dr. and Mrs. Newbould were among members of the NC Wesleyan community who participated in the third annual "Mix It Up at Lunch Day" activities at the college's cafeteria. The program is part of a national effort to "break down social barriers" by encouraging students, faculty and staff to enjoy lunch-time conversation with a member of a different social group, according to Dr. Amy Karnehm Willis of the Sociology Department, which sponsored the event.

Retired History Professor Scheduled To Give Commencement Address

Dr. Allen Johnson, professor emeritus of history and geography, will deliver the commencement address at the December 9 graduation ceremonies, with 170 students set to graduate.

"I am happy to announce that Dr. Johnson has accepted an invitation to be our speaker at the December graduation," said college President Ian Newbould in announcing the speaker. "This being the 50th anniversary of our founding, it is appropriate that our emeritus professor of history—author of a "Brief History of North Carolina Wesleyan College" in the Wesleyan

Magazine—address Commencement. I know that you will join with me in looking forward to his address."

Dr. Johnson began his NC Wesleyan career in 1964 and taught courses here until 2004. He is the author of numerous articles and reviews. He has published two books, one a biography of George Grenville, a Revolutionary War-era figure; the other on the maps of North Carolina from 1595 to 1995. He has been awarded a Fulbright Fellowship to India, a Carnegie Fellowship to England, and a Malone Fellowship to Egypt.

A Kentucky native, Dr. Johnson earned his bachelors degree from Wake Forest and his masters and doctorate from Duke University. A Rocky Mount resident, he has continued to be active in his church as well as the Kiwanis.

December's graduating class includes 38 students from the traditional day program and 132 from the three ADP sites. Ten graduates come from out of state: Florida (2); New Jersey (2); New York (2); Connecticut (1); Georgia (1); Maryland (1); and Virginia (1).

(Wesleyan Magazine contributed to this report.)

Best-Selling Novelist Kaye Gibbons Entertains Audience As NC Wesleyan's 50th Anniversary Celebration Continues

By Jessica Autumnne Smith
Decree Staff Writer

The arrival of novelist Kaye Gibbons for the celebration of Wesleyan's Fiftieth Anniversary was highly anticipated, not only by students and faculty, but also by fans from Rocky Mount and the surrounding area. Reared right here in Nash County, Gibbons usually draws a huge crowd whenever she makes an appearance.

Many of her relatives were present; her nephew even gave the formal introduction, although I don't think formal is the best word to describe such a humorous preamble. John David told of how once, Gibbons bought a first class plane ticket for a manuscript that was due the next morning, and how when on a book tour they would often have to share a hotel room, "in South Carolina, where some people had a problem with it, and in Mississippi, where nobody had a problem with it." These and other anecdotes J.

D. shared kept the audience laughing long and hard.

When Gibbons finally took the stage, she repaid her nephew's introduction with a few stories of her own. "The replica hotel room" was my personal favorite.

Gibbons chose to read the first chapter of her newest novel, "The Life All Around Me by Ellen Foster", the sequel to her debut novel "Ellen Foster." The plot of the first chapter was hard to follow, not because it was not expertly written, but because Gibbons talked about her life in between sentences and her inspiration in between paragraphs. The question-and-answer session that is traditionally expected to come after the reading was intermingled with comments from the characters and explanations from the author.

When she finished reading, Gibbons encouraged her audience to "find something you're good at and just go for it" and to never let anyone,

especially yourself, hold you back.

All in all, (as confusing as it was) it was a very enjoyable night. After the reading, refreshments were served and Gibbons signed copies of her new book for her legions of loyal fans. You can find more information on Kaye Gibbons and her work at kayegibbons.com.

Clothing Drive A Success

By Decree Staff

NCWC Greek Council collected 40 winter coats and other articles of clothing for a local community organization as part of its "We Care Coat Drive."

Though the group fell short of its stated goal of 100 coats, organizers were pleased with drive, reported one of the organizers, Shanisha Barnes, a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha.

"We look forward to future drives that we know will benefit others less fortunate," Barnes said.

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Jayne Lawing

Before deciding on NC Wesleyan, Lawing looked into Appalachian State and Barton College; however, she wasn't in the position to move to Boone and said that when she visited Wesleyan she "just knew this was the place [she] needed to be," noting that this is her third year here and she has enjoyed every minute of it.

Lawing said she does not have many complaints about her time here, which she attributes to her age, saying "I guess it's because I'm older and I can see both the students' and administration's points of view." In general Lawing enjoys her classes; however, she does find the students' language offensive at times. Lawing spends most of her time in the