

CAMPUS LIFE

Wesleyan Graduate Is NC Teacher of the Year

By Dianne Daugherty
Decree Staff Writer

Current North Carolina Teacher of the Year and Wesleyan graduate James Bell shares credit for his success with students and professors. An English major and journalism minor, Bell graduated from North Carolina Wesleyan College in 1998.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction June Atkinson presented the award. Of Bell's teaching, Atkinson said, "James has demonstrated excellence in the classroom and strong dedication to the success of his students. He is a true representative of the many outstanding teachers from across the state who have the power and ability to deliver strong instruction but also to inspire others to be their best."

Bell has been teaching for nine years. He taught three years in Halifax County and six in Chowan County where he now teaches at Chowan Middle School in Edenton. He has taught high school public speaking, middle school English, and social studies. He also coaches football. He said most of his career has been spent "looping," which involves teaching the same group of students for two years. He starts out with the students in the 6th grade and moves with them into the 7th.

Dr. Terry Smith, emeritus professor of English, recalls hearing about a Wesleyan graduate being named teacher of the year and wondering who it could be. When he heard it was Bell, he said "of course." Smith added, "James was so good at communicating his own

excitement for what he read. He had the ability to let people know that he was enthusiastic." Smith believes Bell must have carried this over into his teaching.

Bell shared credit for the award

giving him what it takes to succeed in education. "Dr. Steve Ferebee was the single most influential professor," he said. "He taught me to really look at the text, to think about it. And he taught me

when I was writing for a newspaper and didn't feel fulfilled." A friend offered Bell a teaching job, which he turned down. When she offered him a position that included coaching football, he decided to give teaching a try.

Bell described his teaching style as "out of the box." He said you have to "do whatever it takes, make it fun, try new things."

Not surprisingly, Bell said his favorite part of teaching is his relationships with the kids. "I love 'em," he said. According to Bell, the most rewarding part of being a teacher is "having a kid wrap his arms around you and tell you that he loves you and is grateful for what you've done."

Bell believes that great teachers need "the ability to understand a kid." He said, "you have to know your stuff, your curriculum, but you also have to know your kids. You have to let them into your heart and really love them."

For those considering teaching as a profession Bell offered this advice: "Teaching is not a job you can do

half way. You have to give it your all. You have to celebrate with the kids when they succeed and cry when they struggle. You have to give everything you have. It will be exhausting, but so rewarding in the end."

As Teacher of the Year, Bell's responsibilities officially began in July. He serves as an ambassador for the teaching profession and travels throughout North Carolina. He will also serve as an advisor to the State Board of Education for two years.

In recognition of his achievements, Bell received a new automobile from the N.C. Automobile Dealers Association, a one-time \$7,500 stipend, a technology package from SMARTer Kids Foundation, a trip to the International Space Camp, an international trip through the NC Center for International Understanding, and a trip to the National Teacher of the Year Conference.

As for his future career plans, Bell said, "I have no idea. I just want to continue to impact children."



James Bell is NC State Teacher of the Year

Public Relations Photo

with his students and athletes. "It's the hundreds of students that I teach, coach, or just talk to every single day at Chowan Middle School," Bell said. "They are the real reason that I have been successful as an educator." In reference to representing the state, Bell added, "we hold ourselves to the highest standards as we strive to lift our students to achieve well beyond anyone's expectations."

Bell credited Smith and Dr. Steve Ferebee, professor of English, with

more about writing in a few years than I had learned in all the years up to that point." Of Dr. Smith, he said, "He was just awesome. I loved his American Lit and Beat Writers classes."

Dr. Ferebee remembers Bell as "charming and fun to have in class. We're very proud of James. He's a good example of how hard work pays off."

Teaching was not always Bell's goal. In fact, Bell said, "I never wanted to teach." He wanted to be a sports journalist. "My mind was changed

Do Networking Sites Encourage 'Loose' Behavior?

By Joyce Collins
Decree Campus Life Editor

Students are now using social sites, especially Facebook and Myspace, to showcase loose behavior. If you browse one of these sites, do not be surprised to see photos of students passed out from drinking or dancing seductively in a club. You could even read, in someone's headline status, a comment on a picture or a post on a wall of them talking about how much they enjoyed engaging in the behavior. So what is looseness? And is there more looseness now than before? And are they using Facebook and Myspace as a tool to display their looseness?

Senior Michael Fernandez, a resident assistant for Petteway Hall, said alcohol does not have to be a key factor in "loose" behavior. "Looseness is the behavior that you present when you are having a good time. It does not have to be when you are sober; it does not have to be when you are drunk. It is a wild behavior being performed."

Freshman Eddie Arrington said he believes social sites are primarily used for networking. "I use Facebook and Myspace to keep in touch with my old friends from high school, nothing more, and nothing less."

Junior Keosha Horne agrees with Arrington, saying that social sites are a great way to meet new people who share a common interest. "I have Facebook and Myspace accounts," she said. "I've met a lot of interesting individuals on there. I have never seen any wild behavior on there."

But other students noted an increasing amount of "looseness" being chronicled on the networking sites. Sophomore Takayla Bell said students are more open about their personal lives than ever before. "In the past, you did not see so much wildness on Facebook and Myspace," she said. "I'm not saying that people were not being promiscuous and doing things that they couldn't tell their mothers about; it's just that they were

more private with it. Now you see people posting any and everything up there. It has gotten so out of control that I deleted my account with Facebook and Myspace."

Junior Alyssia Martinez pointed the finger at the new features and applications that are being added to the site, especially the status and honesty box messages. The status application allows a person to say what they are doing. For example, Jane Doe is: (your activity here). The honesty box allows people to anonymously put comments in about the user.

"Most people tend to be loose with the honesty box because it is anonymous," Martinez said, noting that there has been more looseness now than in her past two years at Wesleyan.

Junior Bryant McNeal also blamed the new applications and features for increasing looseness on Facebook. "It is much easier to post provocative photos and raunchy comments now," he said. "Applications like 'Gifts,' 'Funwall,' 'Make a Baby,' and 'Hot or Not?' are all responsible for this inappropriate behavior that's occurring. No way should someone be able to give a person underwear as a gift and in a message say: 'You left these in my room.' That's crazy."

If students are using Facebook and Myspace to display inappropriate behavior, then what is the cause of it? Are students so bored on campus that they are driven to entertain each other in this manner?

Martinez said that looseness can be attributed to the lack of activities on campus. "There is definitely not enough to do on this campus," she said. "There are no sororities and no fraternities."

Freshman Deandre Smith echoed Martinez, saying that wild behavior is from the campus being so boring. "The school makes us pay activity fees in our tuition, and I have one question: Where are the activities?" she said. "That's why students are so loose, because they don't have anything better to

do. I hear a lot of upperclassmen, especially seniors, saying that Wesleyan used to be better when it came to programs. I wish the quantity and quality of campus activities would improve."

A senior female said that students now going to Wesleyan are more immature than in previous years, and they are to blame for so little activities being on campus. "Some programs require a mature audience," she said. "Take the last Visions of Beauty show, for instance. Students in the audience were acting childish and disrespectful. Who wants to put on a show for an audience that's going to discourage them instead of supporting them?"

Sophomore Tamika Washington believes there is no excuse for students to be acting inappropriately. "Just because you are bored does not give you a reason to drink, smoke, club, or sex your education away," she said. "If you're that bored then get a job, volunteer or do something productive instead of posting Facebook pictures of yourself half naked grinding on a boy."



Susan Fecho's Travel Notations continues at the Mims Gallery in the Dunn Center

Valentine Messages

To: Fonso Frazier
Thanks for always being there for me through everything. I love you. Happy Valentine's Day with more to come!
—Camera Thomas

To: Madonna Ware
My heart
—Jon West

To: Heather Harrison
I love you so much, babe, I can't wait for you to be my wife!
—Adam Cooper

To: Isaac Quamaine Carr
I just wanted to let you know that I love you & I'm happy to be yours! Happy Valentine's Day, babe...
—Jasmine Knotts

To: Randy L. Beale
This is a little token of my love. You are the love of my life and I will do anything for you. Happy Valentine's Day Baby!
—Shannon P. Pugh

To: Ms. Baby Phat
Happy Valentine's Day to the beautiful RA of the third floor, Nash Hall!
—Maurice Antwain Gaspie Jr.
(Compiled by Joyce Collins)

Spring Intramural Calendar

Sport/Activity	Registration Dates	Activity Dates
Volleyball	1/9 - 1/18	1/22 - 2/28 (2/28 - Championship Night)
Billiards (Doubles)	1/9 - 1/18	1/23 - 2/28 (2/27 or 2/28 Championship Night - TBA)
Weightlifting Challenge	2/11 - 2/21	2/21 - 2/22
Beach Volleyball	3/10 - 3/26	3/29 (Tournament)
Basketball (5 v 5)	2/12 - 2/22	3/11 - 4/23
Flag Football (4 v 4)	2/12 - 2/22	3/11 - 4/23
NCAA Pick 'Em	3/17 - 3/20 (Noon)	March Madness
Texas Hold Em Tourney Day of Event	4/8 - 4/10	

All are open to all NCWC students, faculty, and staff

Other Spring Activities

Group Activities are on Mondays and Thursdays from 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm. This schedule will be in effect up until spring break.
Sea Kayak Day Trips - Sat. April 12 and Sun. April 13

Critic Picks 'Zodiac' and 'Fay Grim' Top 2007 Films

By Matthew Esterline
Decree Contributor

Welcome back! 2007 was a good year for movies. Even run-of-the-mill crap like "Grindhouse", "300" and "Death Sentence" packed enough goodness in their creamy centers to be entertaining. Here is my top ten list for 2007. Enjoy!

10. "1408" - I was surprised by this movie. I thought I'd be just a crappy, run-of-the-mill ghost movie, but it turned out to be the John Cusack one-man show. Cusack got to act out every conceivable emotion in less than 90 minutes, and I was glued to the screen. The best part of the movie is that there were actually a few scary moments, despite being PG-13. Overall, this was a good movie that allowed a good actor to act instead of just stand there and earn a paycheck.

9. "Michael Clayton" - Lawyer Movie... If you're still with me, you should rent this puppy. A lawyer goes insane and decides to stop an evil corporation he represents. The company and their team of marauding soulless lawyers decide to eliminate the problem. George Clooney is stuck in the middle and must decide where he will stand. It takes a while to get there, but the ending is so amazing that it's worth the wait.

8. "Exiled" - This Chinese holdover from 2006 is the best foreign movie released in the U.S. this year. Two groups of killers chase a hitman. One group wants to kill him, the other wants to save him. It's a simple movie that plays out like a great Western. If you get the chance, rent this bad boy, or wait two years and watch the poorly made American remake (Just like "The Departed").

7. "Seraphim Falls" - 85% of this movie is perfect. The ending sucks, but the rest is perfect in this tale of a Confederate soldier tracking down the Union soldier who killed his family. The first third of the movie is, essentially, a silent chase scene through the wilderness. This movie had some of the most creative kills I've ever seen on film and had a great cast. It's worth renting.

6. "Sweeney Todd": The Demon Barber of Fleet Street - Throat-Slitting musical numbers make for great entertainment. I imagine that this movie will likely be the one to beat, come awards time, which is a good thing considering that the movie is pretty damn entertaining. Murder. Revenge. Meat Pies. If you can stand the singing, you will see a pretty great film. Plus, Borat is nicely dispatched of...it's like a bonus treat.

5. "Live Free or Die Hard" - Even with the PG-13 rating holding it down, this sequel delivered better action, better lines, and better characters than most films this year. "Die Hard" was always an entertaining series, but even I groaned at the notion of the fourth film with the Mac guy. The negative buzz was incorrect; this movie is fantastic. The crowd I was with loved it, and the film kept the action up till the end. This is the kind of sequel we deserve.

4. "Elizabeth: The Golden Age" - Sequels were pretty good this year. This sequel to "Elizabeth" was not as great as I'd hoped, but it's a solid movie that is helped tremendously by the addition of Clive Owen to the cast. In this film, the Spanish Armada takes center stage and

history goes out the window, but Cate Blanchett was so award worthy that you can get over it.

3. "No Country for Old Men" - If you were lucky enough to see this movie in a theater, you really experienced something. The sold out crowd I was with felt a constant sense of dread that persisted throughout this tale of one killer's search for two million dollars in stolen drug money. The crowd was shocked by the violence and usually stayed quiet, only speaking to say, "My God", as a reaction to the horror they saw on the screen. Any movie that can do that deserves to be in the top ten. Watch it.

2. "Fay Grim" - The only good independent movie that came out this year was this quirky little sequel starring Parker Posey as the title character. If you've ever seen "The Third Man", this movie is basically the same story. The movie has many twists and turns and has the best ending of any movie that came out this year. If you're interested in seeing a good spy story, see this movie.

1. "Zodiac" - This movie may be the best movie of the decade. Easily the only great movie of 2007, "Zodiac" comes close to being a documentary about the investigation into the Zodiac murders. The film is simple and direct, and gets perfect performances out of Brokeback Donnie Darko, Cokehead Chaplin Downey Jr., and that guy from "Collateral" (No...the other one). Any movie that can make these crappy actors look good is a true sight to behold. David Fincher made this movie so flawless that his other great movies ("Fight Club" & "Seven") look like crap. Watch this movie.

...And now the "Little Miss Sunshine Award" for the worst, most pretentious film of 2007...

"The Brave One" - This is the kind of mind-numbing schlock that cracker movie studios feed to the public as a prestige film. A woman survives a beating in New York and goes looking for revenge. That's it. That's the story. It's "Death Wish", but it's a "serious" film that deals with "serious" issues.

While going on this "serious" route, "The Brave One" succeeds in being the most offensive film of 2007, the only runners-up being "Good Luck Chuck" (Hates Women), "Knocked Up" (Hates People with a Brain) and "Why Did I Get Married?" (Hates Everyone). Who beats Jodie Foster? Minorities. Where does she buy an illegal firearm for revenge? Minorities. Who does she kill? Minorities, save the one white "mob" character in a suit (White + Suit = Evil...I might agree with that).

Who helps her in the end? Why, the typically magical helpful minority, of course! Any revenge movie that came out this year was better. "Descent" with Rosario Dawson had almost the same damn story as "The Brave One" and was great. "Death Sentence" with Kevin Bacon was good; it at least had decent camera work. Even the "Halloween" remake was a better revenge movie. "The Brave One" sucks from beginning to end, from the first line to the last, from the dialogue to the post-revenge Sarah McLachlan song. I suppose this film had a message. Unfortunately, that message apparently was that the film makers and everyone involved with the film hates minorities.