

# Grads follow their hearts in planned careers



Photo submitted

Senior Elizabeth Adcock will be joining The World Race, a service-oriented mission trip that will send her to 11 countries in 11 months. Adcock has performed service in New Orleans and Swaziland, where she worked with orphans and AIDS patients.

**Brian Mackey**  
Reporter

Elon's 2008 graduating class has survived eight semesters of tests, term papers and countless all-nighters. After four years here, the Class of 2008 will stand Under the Oaks with diplomas in hand and smiling faces. They have studied for every exam question imaginable, but they have one question yet to answer: What next?

Many graduates will find a job and others will pursue advanced degrees, but two Elon alumni will forge a different path.

Senior Elizabeth Adcock will walk across the podium with a psychology degree. During her time at Elon, Adcock's dedication to service has taken her from Louisiana to Swaziland. As a graduate, she will combine her experience in service with a passion for adventure. In October, Adcock will embark on an 11-month trip called The World Race.

The World Race is a service-oriented trip that sends participants to 11 countries across the globe. Founded by the Christian organization Adventures in Missions, participants spend one month in each country learning the culture and helping local communities.

The catch is that Adcock has no idea which 11 countries she will be visiting. During a 10-day training

session in July, she will be told her first destination. When she reaches the first country in October, she will be told her next stop. So goes the process with Adcock getting only one month's notice of her next destination.

Participants race to find the quickest and cheapest way to go from one country to the next. In teams of five to seven members, a single group may have to go from Argentina to Mozambique to Thailand. As a result, they have had to get pretty creative.

"Teams have boated, they've ridden on the backs of trucks," Adcock said. "They've done crazy things."

Not only is Adcock an unpaid volunteer, she also has to fund the adventure herself. She is relying on donations from friends and family to help ease the financial strain.

Although most of her friends are finding salaried jobs and looking for their first apartments, Adcock said she'd much rather participate with The World Race.

"I think God really cares about people who are poor and oppressed, the widows and the orphans," Adcock said. "I want to learn how to care for them."

Adcock said she thinks this trip may help prepare her for her future career.

"I can definitely see myself doing international missions long-term," she said.

While Adcock will be travelling across the globe, Senior Bryan Donald is planning a different adventure. Along with a friend from high school, Donald will start his own business called Datapay-Massachusetts. With a loan from the parent company, Datapay Inc., Donald's company will provide payroll service to businesses in Massachusetts.

"We're inheriting a good client base," he said, though he noted that it was small and needed to be expanded upon.

The company will be partly owned by Datapay Inc., but will be autonomously run by Donald and his associate.

After setting up headquarters, Donald will go to local businesses and persuade them to sign up for Datapay's payroll services.

The job will begin with a lot of sales skills to recruit clients, but Donald said he hopes to expand the company so he can manage it at the executive level.

With a degree in history and a double minor in political science and leadership, running a business straight out of college is a daunting task, but Donald remains confident.

"I like selling things, and I'm good at it," he said.

Regardless of what the future holds for Donald and Adcock, both said they are happy to have the chance to follow their dreams after graduation.

## LOOKING BACK:

### Sullivan gets chance in spotlight

Pendulum Staff

In 2002, former philosophy professor John Sullivan broke his silence. It was a moment Sullivan had envisioned many times: standing at the podium in full academic regalia, staring out into a maroon sea of eager graduates waiting to take their place in the world.

He had it all planned, down to the very tone of voice he would use as he addressed these young people he had seen grow throughout the past four years.

Sullivan had been Elon's backup Commencement speaker since 1980, patiently waiting in the wings while others had their moment in the sun. But in 2002, at Elon's 112th Commencement exercises, Sullivan finally delivered the speech he'd rewritten or revised every year for more than 20 years.

He spoke in the place of Mae Jemison, the first black female NASA astronaut. She withdrew from Commencement because of an illness in her family.

George Troxler, dean of cultural and special programs, said he knew Jemison wouldn't be able to speak a few weeks earlier, so Sullivan was notified of his status in advance.

"I had always imagined that, if I was called on, it would be in an emergency situation — a plane cancelled, a sudden illness," Sullivan said. "As it turns out, I have been asked early enough to have my name in the program. So this seems more like the real thing."

Sullivan's milestone has gained national recognition. Media outlets including The Wall Street Journal, the "Today" show, the Greensboro News & Record and the Burlington Times-News featured Sullivan within a month of his speech.

"I'm honored," Sullivan said. "But this is not about me. It's about graduation—these students who have completed their career here and are going on to new things. We are just their cheerleaders."

Sullivan arrived at Elon in 1970. When former President Fred Young asked him to be a backup speaker in 1980, Sullivan was pleased to oblige.

"I was their insurance policy," Sullivan said.

Sullivan had given hundreds of speeches both on and off Elon's campus, including an address immediately following Sept. 11, 2001, but he was never called upon to fill in for a Commencement speaker.

"When I started, Elon had mostly first-generation students, but students are wealthier now," Sullivan said. "You have to appeal to a different kind of audience."

Speakers used to cover serious, complex topics, delving deep into philosophical and political issues. Now, Sullivan says, speeches are shorter and more celebratory.

"You say a few things, say some stories and



Photo courtesy Elon University

John Sullivan was the alternate speaker for commencement for 20 years before finally getting his chance to speak in 2002.

you're done," he said. "You're not trying to solve the issues of the world."

Sullivan revised his speeches each year and completely rewrote them every two or three years.

Troxler said Sullivan gave a wonderful Commencement speech, as would be expected.

But in the nature of backups, Jeffrey Pugh, professor of religious studies was installed as Sullivan's backup speaker in 2002.

Since then, he has held the position permanently.

"Jeff, very much like Sullivan, always has something worth-while to say," Troxler said. "We have a plan for everybody to be backed up. The people reading the names could get laryngitis. Someone could get in a car accident on the way to graduation. We hope it won't happen, but we have to plan for those things."

Troxler said the backup has to be someone who is already there, since they may have to step in at the last minute.

"Jeff has the speech in his pocket. Literally," Troxler said. "He brings it every year and dusts it off."

Pugh said it's an honor to serve the university in this capacity.

"It would be a great thing to give the speech one day, but truth be told, how many people remember their graduation speakers?" Pugh said. "The day is about the graduates, not the speaker."

## Carrying on tradition: Flagbearers represent Elon at Commencement

**Krista Montes de Oca**  
Reporter

Twenty-seven flags, held high, welcome graduates to the commencement ceremony. Each flag represents one facet of the Elon experience: 21 flags represent countries, five represent the Elon schools and one represents the spirit of Elon.

Bearers of two Elon University flags lead the graduates across campus as they experience the grounds from a different perspective, perhaps seeing the landscape one last time.

As the graduates approach the stage Under the Oaks, they are greeted by students holding 21 flags from foreign countries. Each flag represents one of the 21 countries from where Elon students hail.

These flags are held by students who volunteer their time to be a part of the prestigious and exciting ceremony. "It's an honor to be a flag bearer," said George Troxler, dean of cultural and special programs.

These students, listed as "Student Marshals" in the commencement program, receive a cash gift as compensation for staying days after meal plans stop, as well as housing arrangements if need be.

The flag bearers literally hold the ideals of Elon in their hands. The maroon and gold flags stand proudly as the students are reminded, "Long live Elon!"



Photo courtesy Elon University

Flagbearers Robert Saunders, Chase Rumley and Joshua Donde accompany history professor Dr. David Crowe as they lead the graduates through campus to the 2007 commencement.