

Jump Start student enters ECU

By CHAD CLARK

Marcie Jernigan, 18, a 1995 graduate of Southern Wayne High School (SWHS) and former Jump Start student at WCC, was accepted at East Carolina University this past fall as a second semester sophomore.

Jernigan is the first student to realize the benefits of Jump Start, which allows students to accelerate towards their college curriculum during their last 2 years of high school.

Jump Start has been in effect since the 1993-94 winter quarter, originating at SWHS with 26 students and 2 WCC instructors who traveled to the high school.

Now, 35 students are enrolled in Jump Start from Southern Wayne, Eastern Wayne, and Goldsboro High School.

Jernigan joined the Jump Start program in the summer of 1994.

She said, "Getting a head start on college is good for almost anyone. I did not miss out on any of my high school activities, and I did everything that my friends did."

Jernigan also found that grades are very important when transferring.

She said many students are not aware that colleges refer to all grades from colleges when students apply to graduate with honors.

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Debra (l) and Danny (r) visit near the end of his stay in the hospital.
PHOTO: CHRISTINE WASHBURN

Graduate survives harrowing accident

By JAIME WHITFIELD and CHRISTINE WASHBURN

Imagine what it would feel like to have your body wrapped around a boat propeller which was tearing apart your internal organs.

Danny Thomas, a 1995 May graduate of Wayne Community College, had this experience on July 16, 1995.

The accident happened when Thomas, his brother Eddie, his fiancée Debra, and their friends Adam, Kim, and Ginger took Adam's boat into a waterway near Scranton, NC.

They were pulling Adam on a boogie board when Thomas, wanting to ride double, jumped in.

He did not anticipate that the boat would be put into reverse accidentally.

Thomas said, "I don't remember that the boat was put in reverse."

"The next thing I knew was that I was being chewed up."

Nobody even realized Thomas was in trouble until Debra saw pieces of his flesh floating around in the water.

After Eddie had turned off the motor, Thomas emerged from the water, calmly ignoring the pain, according to his fiancée Debra.

He said, "I knew I had to get the hell out of there".

Thomas's friends quickly took him to the beach where their friend's truck was.

When Thomas arrived at Pitt Memorial Hospital, he was rushed into surgery.

There, Thomas was too scared to fall asleep for fear he would not awaken.

In surgery, Thomas's blood would not clot until after doctors had given him 150 pints of blood.

Doctors determined that his kidney would need to be removed, his intestines were mangled, and his diaphragm, ribs, and pelvic area were lacerated.

Surgeons took skin from his legs and muscles from his chest and hamstrings to reconstruct his buttocks.

When he awoke from surgery, doctors told Thomas he might never walk again.

However, Thomas had amazing determination. He was not willing to lay down his life yet.

He said, "I still have a lot of hunting and fishing to do."

After surgery Thomas began physical therapy. He was put on a table tilted at increasing angles each day. The therapist predicted Thomas might be able to walk in 6 weeks.

He walked in 5 days.

He commented that the projected date was unacceptable because it was "cutting into hunting season" that started on October 25.

Two months after the accident, on September 14, he went home.

Thomas said that this tragic accident has made him stronger and thankful that he is alive.

He said, "People just don't know how lucky they are."

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