

# Lou Brown: Excellence In Teaching

By WINKIE LEE

Journalism Instructor

Lou Brown had known since high school that she wanted to work in the medical field, but had not considered teaching.

That changed during her employment in the lab at Johnston Memorial Hospital in Smithfield. She and her colleagues were asked to instruct students enrolled in the medical technician program at Johnston Community College. They would come to the lab and Ms. Brown and the others would show them how to do such things as draw blood.

As she would explain procedures, she'd see the students' expressions go from lack of understanding to learning what they needed to do.

It was rewarding, she says.

After 15 years of working at the hospital, she decided that she needed to find a job that would allow her to continue helping others, but would also give her more time with her family.

"I got tired of working holidays, weekends and nights," she says.

Ms. Brown thought her next job would be at Cherry Hospital but, while she was there applying for a position, she saw an announcement on a bulletin board. Wayne Community College was looking for someone to teach phlebotomy (drawing blood).

Ms. Brown knew the subject well and decided she would apply for the job.

When the college asked her to join its staff in 1997, she was ready ... and nervous.

"It was a big adjustment coming into teaching full time: getting used to the environment, the students, the curriculum,"



Lou Brown, third from left, and her students are pictured at Goldsboro Pediatrics, where the students fulfill part of their degree requirements.

Photo by CANDIDO VEGA-CRUZ



Ms. Brown is pictured with her husband Wyatt, daughter Trudy, son Thomas, and their pet, Little Clay Aiken.

Photo by WINKIE LEE

she says.

"I was very nervous for about a year, but I could tell this was the right choice."

Some of the Nursing

Department's staff and faculty members had worked in hospitals before entering the teaching field. They knew what Ms. Brown was going through

and were very supportive.

"They were my mentors, my inspiration," she says.

Ms. Brown became comfortable being in the academic environment and giving lectures. She found – and continues to find – the most satisfaction teaching students in a lab environment where they learn what they should do and then practice it.

Ms. Brown's contributions to teaching led to her receiving the George E. Wilson Excellence in Teaching award last year.

The win came as a surprise.

Normally, the announcement is made during graduation, but bad weather meant the ceremony would have to be held indoors. That meant less space, so most of the instructors

were excused from attending.

Instead, they gathered in the cafeteria on campus.

Ms. Brown sat next to Dr. Cindy Archie and listened as Dr. Wilson announced the name of the winner.

"I was very honored to receive it," she says.

The experience was also very humbling.

"I felt there were so many others who deserved it more than I did," she says.

Dr. Cindy Archie, Division Head for Allied Health and Public Services, was the one who nominated Ms. Brown.

"Lou is so talented," she says. "More importantly, she is always willing to do whatever is needed to help her students. She is not only their instructor, but also their mentor and friend.

"Her co-workers recognize what a wonderful person she is and how valuable she is to the college and the community."

When Ms. Brown is not teaching, she enjoys scrapbooking, working in the yard and cooking.

She is a member of Micro Free Will Baptist Church, where she sings in the choir, teaches Sunday School and serves as program chairman for the Ladies Auxiliary.

Her husband is Wyatt Brown, an engineer for the state. They have been married for 26 years and have two children: Thomas, a senior at North Carolina State University who is studying soil science and has been hired by the Army Corps of Engineers, and Trudy, a student at Wayne Community College, who will graduate in May and enroll at Campbell University.

The family also has a pet, a Chihuahua-mix named Little Clay Aiken.



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