

Features

The Flava Lab: the source of hip-hop at WQFS

Devender Sellars
STAFF WRITER

The soul force of hip-hop operates Thursday 8-10 p.m. Wesley Elam has been the DJ of the Flava Lab for eight years. Spinning a mix of Mos Def, Black Star, Snoop Dogg, and more obscure artists, Elam controls the radio with ease. He is a Guilford alumnus and the community DJ in charge of hip-hop, urban, and R&B.

"There was no hip-hop," commented Elam about the status of WQFS in the early '90s. There were around 20 records in the stacks, most of them belonging to crossover artists like de La Soul and Public Enemy.

Through radio, Elam sees the added "spice" to his personality. "It's helped me to come out of my shell," he said. Elam is a tall, quiet, and reserved man who is strikingly grounded and cool, excited and entertaining to listen to on the air.

Elam admitted, "I never thought I'd be a DJ." He didn't own a turntable or a CD player.

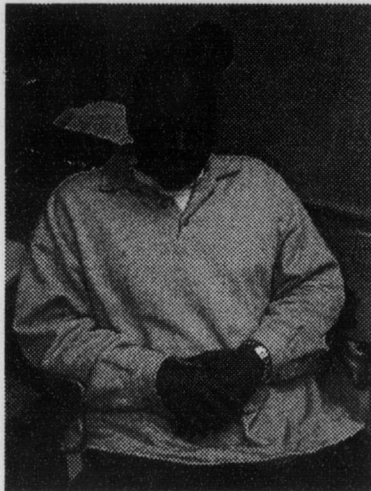
However, once he became a DJ, he was hooked. Soon after the spring of '93, he became interested in making the record collection more diverse.

"I basically married the radio station," he said frankly. "Music has just become my love."

A friend of his, Rookie, convinced him to come to the radio meeting in January of 1993. Elam's first timeslot was Tuesday from noon to 1 p.m. Mainly playing tapes and owning no records of his own, he got most of his records from

the free bin of extra singles at the radio meetings.

While eating in the Caf, someone asked him "Is D up at the lab?" referring to the Master Control Room (MCR) of the station. Until that point, Elam had never heard of that slang term before. "I could just throw a 'Flava' on it," Elam said. Then the Flava Lab was born.



Meet lab technician Wesley Elam

COURTESY OF DEVENDER SELLARS

Elam attempted to work for a commercial radio station after graduating from Guilford in 1995. "I couldn't do that," he said plainly. In his time at another station, he was suspended by playing non-authorized songs. Soon after, he left.

Elam wonders why no one has

tried to increase the wattage of the station. While there are currently 1900 watts, if the wattage was pushed up to around 3000, he notes "we could really compete with commercial radio."

Through the dedication of Elam to WQFS, he brought in not only listeners but also other DJs. Marcus Brown (Overexposed: Tues., 8-10 p.m.), Tony Turner and Jay Grady (Attack of the Killah B-Sides: Sat., 10 p.m.-midnight) were influenced by Elam. These shows provide some of the best programming and dedication on WQFS. Elam is modest about his importance in the formation of excellence of WQFS.

Santes Beatty, Guilford alumnus and Director of the African American Affairs program, said Wes "is probably one of the most knowledgeable brothers I know, when it comes to Hip Hop and Underground Rap music... Wes has definitely been a pioneer in bringing this genre of music to this campus, and for that I have 'mad respect' for him."

The week in

CAMPUS MINISTRIES

Daily: Quiet worship, 8:05 - 8:20 a.m. Hut; Morning prayer, 8 a.m. Boren Lounge.

Friday, March 16

P.M. 12:35 Stump speeches! At the stump.

Sunday, March 18

P.M. 1:00 College Meeting for Worship, led by Keisha Scales. Moon Room.

Monday, March 19

P.M. 5:30 Student Activist. Hut.
8:00 QLSP first-years. Hut.
9:00 QLSP third-years. Hut.

Tuesday, March 20

Noon 12:00 Community prayer and worship. Hut.

Wednesday, March 21

noon 12:00 Campus ministers lunch. Cafeteria.
P.M. 4:00 Reception for Hans von Sponeck, former UN Undersecretary General. Founders Commons.
5:30 Midweek meeting for worship. Hut.
7:00 Hillel meeting. Library student lounge.
7:00 GCRO meeting. Hut.
7:30 Public address on Iraq and UN sanctions by Hans von Sponeck. Bryan Auditorium.

Thursday, March 22

P.M. 4:00 Tea & discussion with visiting British Quaker and professional actor, Colin George. Hut.
5:00 QLSP second-years. Hut.
7:00 Shakespeare workshop with Colin George. Gallery.
8:00 Guilford Christian Fellowship, NewLife meeting. Commons.

Friday, March 23

P.M. 12:35 Stump speeches!
6:00 QLSP potluck and monthly meeting. Hendricks Hall lounge.
8:00 "An Actor and His Passion," performance by Colin George. Bryan Auditorium.

MILNER PARKING LOT - SPRING BREAK by Zack Hample

