



Keeping In Practice

Kasumbu Decarvalho, a seventh-grader at Wiley Junior High School, says soccer is his favorite sport, despite its few fans in the Twin City. Until four years ago, he lived in Angola, where his father is a public official (photo by James Parker).

Young & Gifted

Math, soccer, ballet his games

By AUDREY L. WILLIAMS
Chronicle Staff Writer

Although soccer has yet to become a national pastime in the United States, 13-year-old Kasumbu Decarvalho will continue to kick the black-and-white ball around his front yard until it does.

"My father played a lot of amateur soccer," he says. "It's the only sport I really like, but the kids around here play football, so I just practice (soccer) in the yard."

Nicknamed Kas to alleviate any problems with the pronunciation of his name, the seventh-grader, who serves as secretary of the Student Council at Wiley Junior High School, is described by his guidance counselors as outgoing, articulate and intelligent.

"I'd rather be just like anybody else," says Kas. "I want to go to college to study computers because I want to be a computer systems developer."

But Kas, whose father is an Angolan public official, isn't just like everybody else. Next year he will enter gifted and talented classes at Wiley because of his superior academic performance and maturity. He has made only one C in his academic career.

Besides speaking Portuguese, the native language of his father's country, Kas is also taking classes in French and Spanish. He is a lover of the finest in music from classical to Michael Jackson and has been a student of ballet for three years at the N.C. School of the Arts.

The sweet smells of burning incense permeate his home and the stereo is tuned to a classical station, which is

playing Chopin. "I love music," says Kas, "especially classical."

"Ballet strengthens me physically," he says, "and it strengthens my mind because it's such an intricate sport. "I think it will have to stop soon," he says, "because I will have to make a choice between that and math or music, but I'd still like to continue with my music."

His mother, Mary Decarvalho, who is a native of Winston-Salem, says that because Kas is making great strides in his violin classes, which he chose to play over the piano, she constantly urges him to practice more. Kas has been a member of the Young Salem Symphony for one year.

Although Mrs. Decarvalho realizes that her son's wide-ranging interests and his ability to express himself articulately are results of his reading habits, she would like to put some reigns on his constant reading. He began reading the "Hardy Boys" at age 5.

"She's been considering stopping my reading some," says Kas, "but I can't help it. I enjoy reading."

As the man of the house when his father is away, Kas gladly takes over as the welcoming committee. "Sure enough," is his yes answer to anything, and before he's all the way in the front door, off go his shoes.

"He's a pretty normal kid for his age," says Mrs. Decarvalho. "He's probably more mature for his age because of all the traveling."

All the travel for Kas and his parents include Portugal,

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For a city she couldn't even find on the map, Purdie likes it okay



A Big Move

Denise Purdie: The bright, sunny days are responsible for her being here (photo by James Parker).

By AUDREY L. WILLIAMS
Chronicle Staff Writer

Denise Wright Purdie, or as a colleague teases, "Denise 'right' Purdie," had never even heard of Winston-Salem, N. C., until she received an invitation from the chancellor of Winston-Salem State University to seek an employment opportunity at the school.

"This was a big move for me and my 10-year-old daughter (Fatina)," she says, "to pick up everything lock, stock and barrel and come to Winston-Salem, which I couldn't even find on the map."

"I really didn't know where it was, so I researched its economics, leisure and politics in the almanac and looked for it on the map," Purdie says.

The 33-year-old Purdie, who serves as Chancellor H. Douglas Covington's administrative assistant, came to Winston-Salem last June by way of Syracuse, N.Y., where she worked as a litigations attorney for Legal Services of Central New York. Home, however, is the Bronx.

"I was tired of being a litigations attorney," says Purdie. "Frankly, I just didn't have the personality to be one and I felt like I could use my skills better if I combined my law and educational backgrounds."

After Purdie was offered her present position at WSSU, she put her juris doctor degree from Syracuse University higher up on the shelf and settled in Winston-Salem, hoping for the best with her career change.

"I like my job," she says. "It has proven to be a challenge in a lot of ways. There's always something new happening and I've always liked a fast-paced environment."

Part of her fast-paced day at WSSU may include handling the chancellor's correspondence, representing him at functions he is unable to attend and serving as a member of his cabinet administering legal advice when needed.

Not only has her job been fast-paced and hectic, but sometimes trying as well, Purdie admits. But when it comes to looking ahead to the future, she gets starry-eyed.

"Winston-Salem State has a lot of growing to do," Purdie says. "It has a lot of potential to expand both qualitatively and quantitatively. I get excited about being a part of the process."

Since she's been throwing herself into her work, Purdie says she hasn't really had the opportunity to pass judgment on Winston-Salem, but there are some things she's sure of.

"I love the weather here," she says. "I think the climate sort of swayed me here. I've met a nucleus of good people and I love being around black people."

Those are the pluses that Purdie says keep her going, but the minuses of living in Winston-Salem, she says, could be the determining factor in whether or not she returns to the North.

"I really miss my family and the social life of New York," says Purdie. "Looking at things in the long run, I can see myself becoming bored with Winston-Salem."

"If my nine months here so far are ex-

emplary of the social life in Winston-Salem, I can definitely find myself bored soon," she says. "But if things change I will certainly re-evaluate my opinions."

Purdie also points out that black political awareness here is almost at a stagnant stage, except for those who have been active all along. And as a newcomer, she says she feels somewhat alienated.

"I'd like to see a change in the acceptance of newcomers to Winston-Salem," she says. "I sense there's a round of social activity here that I'm not privy to because I'm not from here."

"Believe it or not," Purdie says, "people who have made me feel most welcome here are the people who have come to Winston from some place else."

So far, Purdie's local involvement include the East Winston Chapter of the University Women and the N.C. Black Repertory Company. Other than those two extracurricular activities, she says time is spent adjusting to her career and seeing to her daughter's needs, especially when it comes to her education.

"She didn't want to leave Syracuse," says Purdie, "but over the last few months she's really made an adjustment and I'm especially pleased with the kind of education she's receiving."

"I think it's important that parents stay on top of their children's education," she says, "so I stay in her classroom a lot."

The overcast and mundane skies of Syracuse were one of the factors that influenced Purdie's move to Winston-Salem, she says, and she and her daughter are anxiously awaiting spring.

"The spring," says Purdie. "In Syracuse you didn't get to see the ground for months. I really think the sunshine here has had an affect on our temperament because we're a lot happier."

Newcomer

Shouting a "bad" word or two and kicking the nearest inanimate object (as I'm sure the lower half of the floor-level bleacher nearest the announcer's table would complain about if it could talk) is all in a night's work for

Winston-Salem State's "Bighouse" Gaines -- who happens to be one of the most successful college basketball coaches in the history of the game.

On the bench with 'Bighouse'

By JOHN SLADE
Chronicle Assistant Editor

His players call him "Chief" but he's known to the rest of the basketball world as "Bighouse." And I'm proud to know him.

Anybody who has attended a WSSU basketball game knows that "Bighouse" is not just a coach: He's a showman, and one of the extra pleasures of going to see the Rams.

The story goes that Clarence E. Gaines became "Bighouse" when, at Morgan State, one of his coaches couldn't think of anything bigger than his star player but a house, and thus "the frame begot the name," quipped *News Argus*, WSSU's student newspaper. It's that same, somewhat intimidating frame that demands attention both on and off the court.

Though he plays down his status as one of college basketball's winningest coaches, it's no secret that the Hall of Famer has won more than 720 ball games during his 37-year tenure at WSSU and lately has been the subject of television documentaries and magazine stories. Neither does he fit the stereotype of most celebrities, which is to say that he's usually accessible and easy to talk to.

During a home game, it all begins in the locker room,

where his players sit on the floor looking up at their mentor as he preps them for the opponent. He reminds one of his more aggressive players, using an expletive or two here and there, that he's not on a wrestling team, and then simply asks all the players to do what they've been taught to do in practice. They all give reassuring nods of approval and then recite the "Lord's Prayer" in unison before he leads them onto the hardwood.

Before a game, as he strolls around the gym laughing and talking with opposing coaches and Ram fans while the teams are warming up, "Bighouse" reminds you of a school official, especially when he's wearing his red blazer with the CIAA emblem. But when the first ball goes up and the clock starts, the transformation occurs, and there's nothing subtle about it.

Tim Grant, one of Gaines' assistant coaches, told me before the contest between the Rams and Fayetteville State that his boss is a successful coach because he is effective in getting the most from each of his players. Moreover, said Grant, "Bighouse" knows how not to overcoach, and "and plays the first half to get to the second half."

When watching the coach and listening to his comments during a timeout, indeed, he tries his best to get the most out of them, many times from the sidelines. And

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'Bighouse' And Who?

The big man on the left is, of course, one of college basketball's all-time winningest coaches, Clarence "Bighouse" Gaines. And the little man on the right, Chronicle Assistant Editor John Slade, who found out that being a coach requires more than a fondness for the game (photo by James Parker).