

# Baseball phenom pursues another dream

BY LAYLA GARMS  
THE CHRONICLE

Christian "CJ" Beatty is already embarking on his second career at the age of 25.

After three years of traveling around the country to address audiences of every age and persuasion, Beatty, a native of Winston-Salem, launched his own public speaking firm, Motivational Nuggets, earlier this year.

"My heart is attached to it," he said of motivational speaking. "I genuinely care for others' happiness. I want everybody to be able to feel good about themselves."

Through his YouTube channel, [www.youtube.com/motivationalnuggets](http://www.youtube.com/motivationalnuggets), Beatty, the oldest of four children, regularly posts inspirational messages and recordings of his speaking engagements at various venues, from Wake Forest University to the University of Virginia.

"My biggest dream in life is to be able to look back and have somebody else quoting my quotes," he said, "because words live forever."

Although becoming a nationally known motivational speaker now tops his list, it is the second dream job Beatty has pursued. Three years ago, he was headed for the big leagues.

"That was my goal and dream, to be a Major League baseball player. I didn't want nothing else," he stated. "But now I have a different goal in mind. My long term goal is to be a motivational speaker, and I want to do that more than I want to be a Major League player. I want to be known for my words more than my ability."

He was drafted by the St. Louis Cardinals in 2009 when he was a junior at the North Carolina A&T State University. Beatty said he felt he had his whole life figured out. Living the dream was a brief reality for Beatty; he was cut from the team in spring 2011.

"My ability got me to the Cardinals, but what I was lacking at the time was just the mental toughness to stay there," confessed Beatty, now 25. "...I left A&T thinking I was going to be in the big leagues within the next two years, so when it hit me that I got released, I had a dumbfounded look on my face. I was at a loss for words on that drive back from (spring training in) West Palm Beach to Winston-Salem."

Beatty's professional baseball career is far from over; he continues to play to this day, but being derailed from the fast track to the Major Leagues was still a major blow for Beatty, who had dreamed of suiting up for the Majors since he was a boy.

"I knew me making it to the Major League



Submitted Photo (above)  
Photo by Layla Garms (left)



On the field or elsewhere, C.J. Beatty is always at his best.

was going to deliver a lot of people, not just me and my family," said Beatty, who currently plays for the Washington (Pa.) Wild Things. "So when that opportunity slipped through my hands, it was almost like 'Whoa. I didn't know what to think.'"

At the time, being released from the team was an embarrassment and a disappointment for Beatty, but in hindsight, he says it was an important turning point in his life and his career. He says his firsthand experience in facing challenges and setbacks has helped him to relate to his audiences on a whole new level.

"Looking back now, I'm so thankful for that opportunity for that to happen," he said. "I look at the Cardinals with no remorse."

Last year, Beatty accepted an invitation to play for a team in Australia. It was a welcome hiatus from the daily grind of life at home, and a much-needed opportunity for Beatty to do some real soul searching. He returned to the States in April, armed with a vision that was soon to become Motivational Nuggets. Though the company is still in its infancy, Beatty said business has been good so far.

"It's fallen into place like my life is already done and I'm just walking in the foot-

steps," he declared. "I come up with an idea and it just exponentially grows into something else."

Shelia Burnette, principal of Konnoak Elementary School, has witnessed the evolution of Beatty's career. Beatty first visited the school in 2010, when he spoke about his baseball career and encouraged the youngsters to pursue their own dreams. It was one of his first speaking engagements, and Burnette said Beatty, who now serves as a behavioral support assistant at Konnoak, made an impression on the students even then.

"He's a strong person that stands with character," she declared. "He just has a can-do spirit that's pervasive and I think the students are starting to want to follow that."

Although it is his second career, Burnette said she believes speaking is Beatty's best gig yet.

"I'm definitely a fan of his athletic success and ability, but that's just not what you see first when you see him. It's the inside and it's the heart, and that's the road that leads to the success that we have in life - nothing but good can come from that kind of demeanor," she said. "...I think he has a lot to offer, and while we never want to see him leave Konnoak, we also think that his gift is greater than our walls can hold."

For more information about Motivational Nuggets, visit [www.cjbeatty.com](http://www.cjbeatty.com), call 336-391-3710 or email [motivationalnuggets@gmail.com](mailto:motivationalnuggets@gmail.com).

# Layoffs part of Bennett's budget plan

Enrollment down at Greensboro school  
CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

Bennett College President Rosalind Fuse-Hall convened a town hall meeting last week to advise faculty and staff of the school's plan to address an operating budget shortfall caused by a decline in enrollment.

Her comments reiterated points she has made previously and had discussed, in generalities, with the campus community.

Bennett is taking a series of proactive steps to tackle the budget constraints, she said, including reducing its workforce. Nine positions - eight full-time and one part-time - will be cut. Bennett employs a total of 198 faculty and staff.

"Like all of higher education, declining enrollment and shrinking federal assistance has adversely impacted the College; however, our future looks bright and with increased support, students will enroll, progress, graduate and continue our legacy of Belles leading in their respective communities," said Fuse-Hall, who is in her first year as Bennett's president.

Bennett's enrollment has been down in recent years and stands at about 730 students. Fuse-Hall says that one of her goals is to raise the school's enrollment to 1,000.



Fuse-Hall

## GED

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said Harris, an alumnus of North Carolina A&T State University. "They'll be more rigorous, more relevant, and that's the best way to meet 21st Century standards."

Those who have not completed all five components of the existing test series by Dec. 31 will be required to start over under the new curriculum. As a result, Forsyth Tech has seen an influx of test-takers in recent months. Harris said 1,200 people in Forsyth and Stokes counties are expected to take the test before the new standards are adopted. The community college has added additional test times to accommodate those who are already working on their GED under the current standards. Forsyth Tech's last orientation session will be held on Dec. 2, and the final GED test under the current standards, which were adopted in 2002, will be held on Dec. 18.

Paper and pencil GED tests will be a thing of the past come January, when the Pearson VUE testing company will transition all GED exams to computerized formats. Testing fees will increase from \$35 to \$120 for the full battery of tests.

Fred Bazemore, director of Program & Agency Operations at Experiment in Self Reliance, believes the increase in test fees will present an obstacle for community members who don't have access to supportive services to help them offset the cost and for service providers like ESR, which has partnered with Forsyth Tech to offer GED test prep courses for more than three decades.

"It's something we hate seeing because as a nonprofit, it hits us in the pocket a little bit," said Bazemore, an ESR employee for the past 10 years. "...It's just another obstacle for those who are wanting to achieve economic self-sufficiency."

The increase in test fees won't dissuade the agency from helping its clients, Bazemore said. ESR will continue to assist its clients in covering fees for the GED, which Bazemore says is a key component in reaching a higher economic plane.

Harris said Forsyth Tech, which currently offers GED test preparation classes to more than 5,500 students at more than 20 sites in Forsyth and Stokes counties, is already preparing for the myriad changes the new program will entail. The community college is developing courses that will incorporate computer literacy elements to help those who aren't familiar with computers to prepare for the test next year, and is working to secure funding to offset the cost increase for those who are hardest hit by the increase, Harris said.

"We don't care if you don't know anything about a computer," he said. "I'm going to make sure you know what you need to know."

Bazemore, a Winston-Salem State University alumnus, said the move to computerized testing will help those who plan to further their education at a two or four-year institution to reach their goals faster. Despite the challenges it presents, ESR is excited about the rollout of the new GED program; Bazemore said it presents a prime opportunity for the agency to remind its clients and staff of the importance of rising to the occasion when obstacles present themselves.

"We adjust and we adapt. We encourage our clients to not allow barriers that arise now or down the road to deter them from their goals of being economically self-sufficient," he said. "Change is inevitable in anything you do, and we preach that to our clients, to always be prepared for change."

Forsyth Tech has a long track record of preparing students to be successful on the GED tests through its test prep courses, and that won't change, Harris said. He implored those in the community who want to get their GED not to let the increase stand in their way.

"Yes, it's going to affect them with the \$120 (fee), but look what it's going to do for them in the long run," he said of test-takers. "If they get it, it's worth it."

Although the transition will take some getting used to, Harris said it represents an important new era in education.

"It's not the ending," he said. "It's the beginning of something new."



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