

BOOK REVIEW

This is a book for boys, girls and basketball fans

BY TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER FOR THE CHRONICLE

Shaq's mom carried in a plate full of ... rolled-up



O'NEAL

"Here, try this." Ugh. That's advice you almost never take because you hate new things. You know what you like, you know what you don't - and there are plenty of things that fall into the last category. But, as in the new book "Little Shaq Takes a Chance" by Shaquille O'Neal, illustrated by Theodore Taylor III, unless you try something, how do you know for sure?

Little Shaq loved his mother's cooking, so when he and his cousin, Barry, came home from the rec center and Little Shaq's mom promised something good for supper, Little Shaq was almost drooling. Man, Mom's cooking was the best!

Everyone was hungry at the table that night. They all waited eagerly, stomachs growling, as Little

things! Sushi!

Little Shaq had never had sushi, but he was sure he wouldn't like it. It wasn't cooked and he had to eat it with two sticks. There was no way he was going to do that, so he had peanut butter sandwiches that night for supper.

The next day at school, Ms. Terpenney reminded Little Shaq and his classmates about the upcoming Art Show. It was going to be really fun! She spread lots of art materials on a table in the classroom and

said that the theme for the show was "What We Love."

Little Shaq's friend, Aubrey, drew a picture of her dog.

His other friend, Rosa, made a portrait of her kitten.

Little Shaq's crayon drawing of a basketball looked more like an orange. This wouldn't be easy. Little Shaq hated art; though his friends were really talented, he didn't think he was any good at it. There was no way he was going to do it, even though his mom always said to "keep an open mind."

But then, he got an idea. Little Shaq was a natural at basketball. Maybe he'd be a natural at something else, too.

I don't wanna. I can't. I won't.

You say those things all the time to yourself and you hear them often from your kids. Neither of you

"wannas" because change is hard, but "Little Shaq Takes a Chance" shows that trying new things can also be fun.

Using a story-within-a-story method and characters from his last book, author Shaquille O'Neal offers kids a lesson in growing - not just up, but inside. O'Neal's young namesake and title character is hip and funny - illustrations by Theodore Taylor III made me laugh - but Little Shaq shows a surprising lack of confidence in this book. He works things out, of course, and gets his old swagger back - and in the meantime, your kids will get a lesson-not-lesson to learn.

This is a book for boys and girls and basketball fans. A kindergartener might like it for storytime but the real aim, I think, is for grade-schoolers and kids who are just starting to enjoy chapter books. If



"Little Shaq Takes a Chance" by Shaquille O'Neal, illustrated by Theodore Taylor III
c.2016, Bloomsbury Children's Books
\$9.99 / \$10.99 Canada 74 pages

you've got one of those around, "Little Shaq Takes a Chance" is one they'll want to try.
Terri Schlichenmeyer has been reading since she was three years old. She lives on a hill in Wisconsin with two dogs and 14,000 books.

WSSU focus on improving degree efficiency

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Winston-Salem State University (WSSU) is one of four universities in the country participating in a new initiative that could drive down the cost of college by improving degree efficiency.

The Purposeful Pathways: Faculty Planning for Curricular Coherence initiative is being spearheaded by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) thanks to a grant from The Teagle Foundation.

Universities with high degree efficiency see their students attempting fewer total credits before graduation. WSSU has already been a leader in North Carolina in addressing degree efficiency. By ensuring that curriculum has a clear path and by providing robust advising, the university has reduced the average number of credit hours a student attempts from 137 to 128 since 2013.

The University of North Carolina System average is 139.2 credit hours. Most bachelor's degrees require 120 credit hours of study.



WINSTON-SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY

"The rising cost of college is something that must be tackled on multiple fronts," said WSSU Chancellor Elwood L. Robinson. "The difference between 128 credit hours and the UNC System average of 139.2 translates to about another semester's worth of coursework. By helping our students graduate more efficiently, we are able to help them save thousands of dollars of tuition, room, and board. They also enter the workforce sooner, which gives them a head start in paying off any debt they did incur."

To help students avoid taking more credits than necessary to complete their degrees, WSSU is taking a two-pronged approach.

Faculty and administrators are taking a close look at how general education courses integrate with the majors and how they can meet the prerequisites required for

advanced study. Meanwhile, advisors are working closely with students to help them identify the best courses to take to meet their graduation requirements.

"We cannot do things the way they have always been done," Robinson said. "Looking at the issue of college affordability from a new angle is critical. We are looking at our curriculum from all angles and making decisions on the alignment of courses by placing the student at the center of the process. We are continually asking ourselves challenging questions about how we can better serve our students."

Through the Purposeful Pathways initiative, WSSU will work with the AAC&U and three other universities (Community College of Philadelphia, University of Houston-Downtown and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas) on a six-month planning project that will lay the foundation for additional faculty-led curricular changes leading to improved student learning and success in earning degrees.

School of Divinity expands key program

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

When the Wake Forest University School of Divinity launched the Food, Faith, and Religious Leadership Initiative in the Fall of 2012, its aim was to equip religious leaders to lead their congregations and religious communities to engage food issues.

Over the past four years, the initiative encouraged the development of courses that help divinity students understand the deep connections among the food we grow and eat, the impact of our food systems on the environment and the health of our bodies and communities.

The initiative has convened a number of community engagement workshops, continuing education events, retreats and an annual fellowship program. These events have brought together current School of Divinity students, food justice activists, non-profit leaders, farmers, faith leaders across North Carolina, the U.S. and in several other countries.

Recognizing the deep interconnectedness of food, health, and ecology; the initiative has expanded to

become the Food, Health and Ecological Well-Being Program.

The expansion of the program aims to specifically



WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY

include health and ecology; the School of Divinity renews its commitment to equip faith leaders and community members with knowledge, skills, and experiences to lead effectively across complex and ever-changing landscapes.

Fred Bahnson has served as Program Director since the initiative began and will continue to lead the expanded program.

"Interest in this initiative from the beginning has been immense, and our work continues to grow and deepen," Bahnson said. "I'm convinced that in the coming decades there will be an increasing need for faith leaders who can lead at the intersection of food, health, and ecology. Our aim is to get ahead of the curve."

The Food, Health and Ecological Well-Being Program works in tandem

with the School of Divinity's Master of Divinity degree program, to ensure that the themes of stewardship as well as liv-

ing in peace with the land are infused throughout the Divinity curriculum.

Various faculty members, including Mark Jensen, Jill Crainshaw, Derek Hicks and John Senior have taught courses that examine different aspects of food systems, ecological sustainability and religious leadership.

Courses include "Food, Faith, and Health: Navigating the Intersections in Community," which gives students the opportunity to explore and analyze moral gaps of food and health disparities in communities; and "Tree of Life, River of Life: Christianity, Climate Change, and Ecological Vocation," which aids students in identifying a theologically-informed set of practices for how they can derive their energy and feed themselves in ways

that lead to creation's flourishing rather than its demise.

The program also serves clergy, congregations, faith-based nonprofits, community gardeners, food activists, other faith leaders and community members concerned about public health issues by inviting speakers and organizing continuing education events.

Majority of the events are free and open to the public. Past events have taken place in Winston-Salem, Asheville and Charlotte, including several events over the past year focused on the 2015 papal encyclical Laudato Si.

The annual Re:Generate Fellowship program gathers young faith leaders active in various parts of the food and ecology movement from across the country for several days of meaningful conversation, connection and training. The program has a strong university partner in the Center for Energy, Environment, and Sustainability (CEES), and will continue to partner with CEES to convene panel discussions and host visiting speakers.

The School of Divinity is a graduate, professional school at Wake Forest University, a private university consistently ranked among the top 30 universi-

ties in the nation. The mission of the school is to educate students to be agents of justice, reconciliation and compassion in Christian churches.

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H.O.P.E. raises funds for 66,000 healthy meals for kids

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

H.O.P.E. held its first annual Red Apple Harvest for HOPE fundraising dinner, raising proceeds to supply over 66,000 healthy meals to children in Winston-Salem. The farm-to-table dinner party featured a live bluegrass band and local cuisine.

The event was attended by more than 225 community leaders and hunger-fighting champions. Key supporters made the event possible, by contributing their time, plus significant monetary and in-kind donations. The proceeds

raised will go toward food for local children.

"We are truly humbled by the support H.O.P.E. of Winston-Salem receives on a daily basis, but this event gave us even more reason to celebrate the impact we can make in the lives of hungry children in our community, when we all work together," said Marty Tennille, H.O.P.E. co-founder. "The compassion of our sponsors and supporters and the contributions we have collected through this event alone will enable us to provide 66,000 healthy meals for children in Forsyth County. That leaves us speechless."