

Graduate Paints Mural Depicting History of ECU

By Francine Perry
ECU News Bureau

GREENVILLE—If a picture is worth a thousand words, the 17x 12foot mural covering one interior wall of East Carolina University's Whichard Building must be worth a million.

The mural, painted by recent art graduate Phillip Harris of Hamlet and mounted on a wall of ECU's Kate Lewis Gallery, illustrates important highlights of East Carolina's history.

Harris, a graduate of Chowan College, is completing requirements for his degree at ECU.

North Carolina Governor Thomas Jarvis is depicted in the lower foreground of the imposing mural, holding the shovel with which he formally broke ground in 1907 for what was to become East Carolina Teachers Training School.

Behind him, less definitely portrayed are ranged shapes of persons present at that occasion.

Harris describes his work as a blend of "realistic and minimal abstract" styles, with some people and event brought into sharper focus than others.

Those individuals who "played a significant role" in the formation of East Carolina—Governor Jarvis; the school's first president, Robert Wright; and early professors Kate Lewis, Herbert Austin and W.H. Ragsdale—are painted in a realistic portrait style, and are readily recognizable by Harris use of color and delineation.

"Where figures were important as a group, emphasis was given to the group as a whole, and the individual figures are merely implied," explained Harris.

Such groups, significant as milestone, include the first graduating class, a row of young ladies with pompadour hairstyles holding their class banner. East Carolina's first athletic team, the "Goblins," is present also.

Harris has relied upon architectural details as well as faces and figures in his work. Two early buildings appear in detail, the Old Austin classroom building, now demolished, and Wright Building.

Horizontal and vertical arrangements of balustraded stairs draw the eye upward to the top of the mural, where he has combined important architectural details of the gallery's interior.

Since the mural is hung near the ceiling, the interior crown mouldings are repeated at the top of the painting. A series of large rectangular side windows, ranged along the walls at right angles to the mural, are continued in perspective in the mural itself.

Harris undertook the mural as a senior project while he was finishing his studies toward the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in painting from ECU School of Art.

For several months, Harris worked far into the night, sometimes all night long to complete the painting. Often, awed by the magnitude of his task, he deliberately took time out to study his unfinished work and just think about it.

"I had to do some kind of initial action, like cleaning brushes or drawing, just any kind of busy work to get some ideas flowing," he said.

"And I had to discipline myself by setting deadlines to complete minor goals, a little at the time."

The completed mural will remain in East Carolina's permanent collection as a memorial to people and events of the campus' past.

Harris will teach advanced and beginning painting classes at Sandhills Community College this fall, and eventually plans to resume his art studies at the graduate level possibly at New York University or at the Yale School of Art.

His parents are Mr. and Mrs. Mack Harris of 303 Entwistle St., Hamlet.

For October, 1978



Summer Is Busy Time

Chowan students attending the traditional summer school session shared the campus with many different visiting groups this past summer.

The Summer Camp Program attracted children and young people with interests in religion, music, athletics, cheerleading and community service.

One of the largest groups was the Eastern Front Band Camp with over 400 students from Virginia and North Carolina in attendance. Perhaps the most spirited camp was sponsored the United States Cheerleader's Association. Fifty-one girls, including a number from the immediate area of Murfreesboro and Ahsokie, attended the special school.

Professional Athletes Here

Professional athletes were guests for the Concerned Athletes in Action camps for boys and girls, ages 11 to 17. These included professional basketball stars Bob Dandridge of the World-champion Washington Bullets and Geroge Gervin, the N.B. A.'s leading scorer of the San Antonio Spurs. Jack Dark, AAU Karate Black Belt Champion, was also present to offer instruction to the campers.

A String Workshop was sponsored by the college's fine arts department. Also, for the first time, a Karate Camp was held on campus and drew participants from as far as Florida.

Champion Wrestlers Joins Chowan Squad

Two Virginia high school state champions will play on the college wrestling team during 1978-79.

Coach Steve Nelson said Chowan has signed Mike Neiland of Poquosin and Doug Saunders. Neiland was the Class A wrestling champ the past two years. Saunders captured the Class AA championship in 1977 when he wrestled for Carroll County High School in Woodlawn. He will transfer from a community college.

Neiland wrestles in the 167-pound division and Saunders in the 119-pound. The wrestling team posted its first winning season last year. The Braves finished with an 11-6 record. The Braves finished third in the Mid-Atlantic Regional Championships.

Nelson said Mike Ferrara of Mt. Holly, N.J. and Roger Randall of Rancocas, N.J., both who captured regional championships last season, will return.

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