

Alumnus among volunteers for future space travel

Chowan College alumna, Bernice Smith of Seaboard, Class of 1972, has volunteered to be the first teacher to travel in space. She teaches fifth grade at Medlin Elementary School in Roanoke Rapids.

Mrs. Smith is very active in church affairs as a member of Carmel Baptist Church. She sings in the choir, teaches in Sunday school and is church treasurer. She has served as church clerk, president of the Woman's Missionary Union, director of Young Woman's Auxiliary and Sunbeam Band director of the West Chowan Association, and member of the Executive Board of the State Woman's Missionary Union.

She served as county chairman for the American Cancer Society and March of Dimes and was a member of the Board of Directors of the Chowan Alumni Association.

Bernice Smith worked as director of Young Woman's Auxiliary of North Carolina Woman's Missionary Union for 15 years. She served three summers as volunteer mission worker in Wyoming and New York. She is a graduate of Chowan and North Carolina Wesleyan.

By PAT EAGER,
The Roanoke Rapids Daily Herald

After President Reagan made his promise to send a teacher into space, Mrs. Bernice Smith became interested. In describing her motives for applying, the Seaboard native stated, "I've seen a lot of the world. I'm interested in people and things other than what's around me.

I'm just curious, I want to go into space and see what's out there."

The 18-year teaching veteran is no stranger to travel and adventure. She's been to 40 countries and 45 states during her summer vacations. A recent excursion took her through the Misty Fords of Alaska in a four-seater airplane. Other trips included a tour of the pyramids from camel-back and an elephant ride in India.

Each potential space traveler must propose two experiments to be conducted during the mission. Mrs. Smith's experiments would record the effect of zero gravity on six liquids and the effect of weightlessness on the growth of various plants: alfalfa, lima beans, peanuts, corn, cotton, wheat, tomatoes and oats.

Approximately 40,000 classroom teachers are expected to apply for the trip. The winner will be announced in September, with the launch planned for early 1986.

If selected for the trip, Mrs. Smith would receive 120 hours of training. Upon her return she would travel the country for a year, recounting her experiences in space.

When asked how her trip into space would benefit her students and community, Mrs. Smith replied, "It would open up a whole new world to the people I came in contact with. I could tell them first-hand what I had seen."

After a moment's thought, she added, "It would put Roanoke Rapids on the map—and Seaboard, too!"



Mrs. Smith instructs Brooke Cavanaugh and Leslee Johnson in the positions of the planets. Her class has developed a keen interest in outer space since their teacher applied for the first space mission to carry a classroom teacher.



Mrs. Bernice Smith, an alumnus of Chowan College and a teacher at Roanoke Rapids' Medlin Elementary School, has applied for travel on the first W. S. space mission to carry a teacher.



Two of Mrs. Smith's students join her on the playground for a break from class at Medlin Elementary School.