

# Garrison best described as being "not for sale"

*EDITOR'S NOTE: The following address was presented by Dr. Bruce E. Whitaker, President of the College, to induct James G. Garrison into the Chowan Sports Hall of Fame.*

Garrison is a great joke teller.

When the team goes on some of its long trips, he likes to drive a college van. (By the way, there was a time when I let him drive some for me on trips. Then he wrecked my car. Knowing firsthand of his abilities, or lack of them, in driving—at least safely—I saw to it that we took out extra liability insurance on the vehicle he drives!). In any case, with respect to his joke telling, it is common for some of the students, who may have ridden the bus, to ask a student who rode in a van with Coach: "Which joke did Coach tell you on this trip, his 30-minute joke or his 45-minute joke?!"

I first met Jim Garrison on the streets of Boiling Springs, North Carolina (I don't believe they have but one)—the home of Garnder-Webb College. We had not had the best of experiences with a football coach my first year at Chowan. So when former President Budd Smith of Wingate College recommended that I check on Garrison as our Head Football Coach, I went to Boiling Springs to do just that.

I undertook to find out if he pays his bills, if he demonstrated an interest in church, if he was a family man, if he knew any football, and the like. In the process of making my checks, I rounded the corner of a building and was face to face with him. He stated, "I understand you are wanting to talk with me." My reply was, "Not particularly, not at this point, for I am trying to find out from others whether I do want to talk with you or not!" In any case, he got such passing marks that he was invited to come with us at the tender age of 24 when he was already a husband and father of two kids, Jimmy and Lisa.

But before he was actually asked to join the faculty and to become Athletic Director, Head Football Coach and Head Basketball Coach at Chowan, I invited him to come town and look us over. He came, and before it was over, one would have thought he had already moved in. You see, he came to stay a day and a night. Because we couldn't afford to put him up in a motel, I asked him to stay at the President's Home with us. He stayed a day and a night, and then another day and night, and then another. Fortunately, his wife, Joyce, then called and wanted to know where her husband was, stating that she was about to call the Highway Patrol to see if they could find him. With that, he finally left!

Then there was a task of getting him moved here. We lent him an old red college truck to move his belongings to Murfreesboro. His driving abilities showed up there, too, for the truck stopped on him, Joyce, and Jimmy (they tell me) at least 15-20 times on the way here. He, certainly not his wife, Joyce, has never fully appreciated the generosity of the college in allowing him to use that good red college truck!

Well, in any case, we got him and his family moved into town, and also the single dashing Coach Jerry Lee Hawkins came in his various capacities. By the way, Coach Hawkins, I must share this with the people



Garrison receives the Hall of Fame plaque from the President of the College, Dr. Bruce E. Whitaker.

here assembled concerning you. We once had a librarian, Neva Campbell. When Coach Hawkins arrived and she had had a chance to look him over, she said, "Coach Hawkins is so ugly until he is cute!"

It takes Coach about three times as long as anyone else to do anything or to say anything. When he starts to say something, he will say, "I want to say, I want to say, I want to say . . ." Further, if he is outside on the ground, he "paws" the ground with his foot and toe! Moreover, with respect to turning in a report or taking care of details, it is

ten-penny nails and a hammer and gave them to him and told him to drive them in the wall and to assign each athlete a nail and space!

Then, he began to complain about how cold it was in that facility. We bought an old oil stove and placed it within the facility. Guess what his next complaint was? "It is still cold in that building. There is a window light out." I promptly went uptown and purchased a window light (pane) and some small nails, handed them to him and told him to use that hammer to put in a window

*"He loves Chowan College. He is loyal and constructive as regards this good college."*

against his religion to get it in on time. In fact, I think it would disappoint him and stir up his ulcers if, in fact, he did do anything strictly on time!

Soon after Garrison moved into what was one time the old science building, a wooden structure, which served as his headquarters and as a dressing room for the football team, he began to complain. He said, "Dr. Whitaker, we don't have anywhere to put our clothes in that building when changing." I promptly went uptown and bought some

light. Later, he told some coaching friends at Gardner-Webb that he hated to ask for anything else, so he began to wear an overcoat and gloves in order to work in that building, like when writing letters!

In any case, we made some other improvements for him—to include replacing the tile floor in the old gym with hardwood floors. Eventually, we even set him up in an office in Jack Hassell's quarters under such circumstances that he finally was able to

shed the overcoat and gloves to write letters or whatever.

Still, he wanted something better. Finally, we put up for him, and began to use in 1980, HELMS CENTER. But, he is not yet "at home" in that facility. It is too nice and organized for him. If you don't believe it, go look at his office—piles of stuff literally all around the room which serves as his office. He doesn't want file cabinets. He says he knows where everything is as long as it stays in place on the floor. But, I doubt it. Also, this may contribute to the reason why he is late getting so many reports in—he falls and stumbles over what is in there and has to treat his wounds before he can keep an appointment or get in a report.

Coach has a good win-loss record at Chowan: 164 - 120 - 12. However, there have been a few years when things didn't go so well. One year was particularly bad. Our mutual friend, "Piggy" Jenkins, told Coach, "If you don't win more games next year than you did this year, Dr. Whitaker is going to have to get you a filling station . . . on Parker's Ferry Road!"

In spite of all I may have said (or that you may be thinking!), Jim Garrison does have some good qualities.

1. He is a family man. Joyce, Jimmy, Lisa, Joy and Darryl Bruce are all special to him—as are his grandchildren, Jamie and Jenny.
2. He is a churchman. At least has been! He even served as a deacon at one time. Some of our colleagues expressed concern to me that he had been elected and installed as a deacon. My comment was "Don't worry about it. Time will take care of it." In three years, he was out and he hasn't been back in!!
3. He believes athletics proves to be a good training ground for young men and young women. He stresses and practices discipline in dealing with young people. Many of them, years after graduation, come back for visits and to see "Coach".
4. He is a competitor, whether playing golf or some other game with friends, or whether it be playing in any sport, another institution or coach. In this regard, I am reminded of an article I read recently in "The Saturday Evening Post" (November, 1987). It was speaking of football feuds. It pointed out that Michigan and Ohio State partisans hate each other to the point that Ohio State's Woody Hayes chose to push his car across the state line rather than buy gas in Michigan! Coach does have problems with respect to some of his competitiveness: Golf, Rook, and definitely fishing when he often catches toad fish!
5. He is recognized within the coaching profession and higher educational institutions as having qualities worth emulating, fostering, recognizing: Honor from Lees-McRae College, Louisburg College, Western Carolina University, and from Gardner-Webb College.
6. Some former students have made a modest contribution toward establishing the James G. Garrison Athletic Scholarship in his name at Chowan. This should be increased — family, friends, former students.
7. He has served his community in many ways including Little League Coach for many years, Rescue Squad service, and member and chairman of the Hertford County Board of Education.
8. The Board of Trustees approved my recommendation that we designate our football stadium the James G. Garrison Stadium. Along the way, it is hoped that we can upgrade the facility greatly, to

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