

# UNC secretary to sing in two Festival events

By JOANNE GORDON  
Arts/Features Editor

Vocalists spend years working their way to stardom, sometimes never finding their lucky break. But Sharon Horton's lucky break came by chance.

Horton, graduate secretary of the School of Journalism, will sing the National Anthem in the opening ceremonies of two U.S. Olympic Festival events.

A couple of months ago, Festival volunteer Callie Warner entered the office of the School of Journalism in Howell Hall. While she was in the office, she overheard Horton humming a gospel tune. Warner asked Horton if she would be interested in singing the National Anthem during the Festival.

"I heard her voice and I thought, 'This is a singer,'" Warner recalled. "She was very shocked when I asked her to audition."

Horton said, "Before, I thought it would be neat to work with the Olympic Festival. I wanted to dance. But I never did anything or called. Then she came into the office and called me to audition."

Horton will sing the National Anthem a capella on July 24 at UNC's Astroturf field for the field hockey competition, and again on July 26 at NCCU in Durham for the synchronized swimming competition.

"She has a very powerful voice," Warner said. "She has a style all her own."

Warner said other National Anthem singers included the UNC Loreleis, several mother-daughter duos, four different barbershop quartets, and former U.S. Whistling Champion Eric Vernon, who will whistle the anthem at the July 18 diving competition in Raleigh.

As the time to perform nears, Horton has become anxious. "I



DTH/Steve Matteson

Sharon Horton will sing the National Anthem at the field hockey competition on campus

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was excited, now I'm getting nervous . . . I'm still enthused but it's not the same as singing in front of people of the church," she said. "It might not be a large crowd — but with it being a special event, it makes me nervous."

Horton is also nervous about singing the anthem a capella. "It would be different with music. That way I would be starting on

the right key, not too high and not too low," she said.

"The National Anthem is a hard song to sing and is not one of my favorites. If I could choose the song I would feel more comfortable. When it comes to contemporary gospel I could sing any song and be comfortable," she said.

Gospel music is her speciality.

"I enjoy singing and contemporary gospel is my favorite," she said.

Horton, who is a soprano, sings in her church choir at Liberty Chapel Church in Moncure and is often asked to solo when she attends other area churches and for weddings. Surprisingly, Horton does not like to do solos — but will still perform when asked.

Until now Horton has not sung professionally, although she has been asked to participate in a mass choir recording.

Perhaps the Festival will be her "lucky break" into the recording business. But for now, she is happy at the School of Journalism.

"I enjoy working at the School of Journalism and working with the people here. It's like a second family," she said.

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