

# The Bennett Banner

Friday, April 2, 1982

BENNETT COLLEGE, GREENSBORO, N. C.

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Nearing the glorious end: Seniors marked the opening of the commencement season during Senior Day Service. Members of the graduating class received caps and gowns from sophomore sisters. Elisa Staley, a psychology major from Orangeburg, S. C., gave the student appreciation address.

(Photo by Norman Barbee)

## Seniors regaled

This year's Senior Day included the presentation of caps and gowns to a senior roster of 157 students. Of those, 13 will graduate with honors or with high honors.

Dean Chelsea Tipton announced that Valerie Dawn Callendar, Myra Jewel George, Linda Kaye Love, Linda Smith Mojtabae-Zamani, Debra Jean Moore, Pauline Nzeribe, Terri Lynne Phillips and Nseobong Grace Usoro would graduate with high honors since they attained cumulative averages of 3.65 or above.

He also announced that five students — Cynthia Anette Asbury, Wanda Yvette Dick, Phyllis Elaine Johnson, Brenda Faye Love and Iris Wil-

lette Settle—were eligible to graduate with honors because their cumulative averages were between 3.40 and 3.64.

After the announcements, the seniors, led by class president Regina Tena Scott, were presented their caps and gowns and given official authorization to wear them on special occasions if they met all obligations to the college.

Senior Elisa Staley gave the speech of appreciation, and a group of seniors sang a variation of "I Know I'll Never Love This Way Again."

The sophomore class hosted a banquet in the cafeteria following the ceremony. Senior Day is the second of three formal occasions held on the campus. The others are Founder's Day and graduation.

## Guest gives credo

by Evelyn Sims

Novelist David H. Bradley, Jr. delivered a declaration of personal artistic freedom during addresses in Black Hall Assembly Mar. 1-2.

"It's not my job to be a good Black writer but to be a good writer," he said, and later added: "I'm against the applying of Affirmative Action rules to the writing of novels."

But Bradley did not easily arrive at this liberation. His highly acclaimed book, *The Chaneyville Incident*, brought about a purgation of his need to be an exclusively political novelist. The novel deals with a real incident in which 13 fugitive slaves asked to be shot rather than be returned to bondage.

"It (the massacre) was all kind of a private obsession. I kept saying to myself there's a need for this (book). I realized that it (his commitment to history) came down to one important question: 'What is the relation of Black people to American culture?'"

In the 10 years that it took to research and write the novel, Bradley answered that question and freed himself to become what W.E.B. DuBois called "a co-worker in the kingdom of culture" and not merely a spokesman for causes.

Bradley discovered a "unified field theory" of history while studying documents about the slave trade in the New York Public Library. He saw a connection between the participation of colonial empires in slave business and the eventual prosperity of those cultures. Relying on his knowledge of history, Bradley realized that the exploitation of slaves created economic booms in Portugal, Holland and England.

A similar phenomenon occurred in the United States: "50 years

after New England and Virginia became involved in slave trade, we had the makings of American individualism."

This thinking led the author to elaborate a North-South theory of American progress that rivals the historian Frederick Jackson Turner's thesis that the greatness of American depended on westward expansion and the presence of a frontier that perpetuated dreams and ambitions and encouraged the spread of democracy.

Bradley believes that the development of America was contingent on the exploitation of slaves, who erected the foundation of the country.

This insight enabled Bradley to see Black history as a part of the continuum of American history and not as a separate entity. "Black history will be a part of American history," he stated.

"Our concern with Black history is significant and important," he claimed, "but it is a stage."

Such reasoning has liberated Bradley to begin two new books which do not center on racial matters. He is writing a hard-boiled detective novel in the Raymond Chandler mode and also a narrative focusing on the Sixties and the killing of students by the National Guard at Kent State in 1970.

Bradley feels that history is divided into cycles of action and reaction and he uses his own experience to prove that conditions improved for Blacks during the 15 years that preceded the election of Ronald Reagan.

"One would tend to say that things have gotten better," Bradley asserts. In 1920, when his father went to college, the senior Bradley had only one choice—Livingstone—because "he was not light-skinned enough to get into Howard."

More than 40 years later, when Bradley was a freshman at the University of Pennsylvania, he received scholarship money that amounted to twice what his father made in one year.

The young novelist often compares his career to Richard Wright's to show that some racial progress has occurred. In 1940, when Richard Wright was invited to lunch by his editor in New York, there was no restaurant that would serve Wright, according to Bradley.

In contrast, Bradley visited his editor in 1972 and was asked "Where would you like to go?" for lunch.

Despite these gains, Bradley believes that Reagan has created a backlash: "One gets very frightened of the situation right now." Contending that "history is something of a horror show," the novelist says that the Reagan administration is trying to nullify the civil rights movement.

"I'm here to tell you that this price (of sacrifices for civil rights) may not have been paid. It could happen again that Jim Crow comes back," Bradley said.

Education is the weapon that can defeat repression, according to Bradley, who stresses the need for critical, analytical thinking. Mathematics, reading and writing provide a discipline for the incisive perception of historical trends and subsequent action.

"All our defenses come down to those three basic things," he stated.

Bradley also confirmed that the critical approach enables Blacks to differentiate between the good and the dangerous in popular culture.

"You have to constantly look at the images you get from this culture because this culture is poison."

## Campus events to ring in the spring

The President's Campus Relations Committee is proud to announce the following spring activities for 1982: the annual College Ball, a health clinic for kindergarten children in public day care centers, and a May Day Festival.

Faculty, student and staff representatives have been meeting to coordinate plans for each of these activities which will be scheduled in April and May. Subcommittee chairpersons will draw from the pool of available campus talent to complete the planning process and to implement each activity.

According to Myra Davis, public relations officer, the theme for this year's ball is "Tropical Splendor." "We plan to transform the Student Union Foyer into a tropical paradise with greenery, special lighting effects, glitter, tissue paper and bamboo."

The formal affair, hosted by Dr. and Mrs. Isaac H. Miller, will be held on Saturday, Apr. 17, 9 p.m. until 1 a.m. Faculty and staff will serve as "floating" hosts and are being coordinated by Annie Purcell. Those who have not been assigned to a particular task are encouraged to "attend and enjoy themselves."

"Last year, a student committee attempted to provide an escort service for some of the Bennett

students," said Miss Davis. "We will invite young men from the surrounding colleges this year, but we hope each student will take the initiative to find her own escort."

Under the guidance of the Health Center personnel, the Campus Relations Committee will also sponsor a clinic for young children. According to Shirley Pres-

ton, the head nurse, attention will be given to good hygiene. Programming will occur in the new health facility and in several day-care centers. Interested student and faculty volunteers should con-

tact Mrs. Preston as soon as possible. This is an excellent opportunity for health-related and education students to obtain community volunteer experiences.

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## Adams' art line Promotes links

by Rosellen Durham

It was a time of connections. "I hear you very clearly, Dr. Adams," the kind, scholarly voice from Houston said over the speaker-phone while the students in the Steele Hall art room prepared to take notes.

The voice belongs to celebrated contemporary artist John Biggers, who helped inaugurate an innovative teaching technique on Mar. 3 in Dr. Alma Adams' seminar on Afro-American art. Other conversations with important Black artists are continuing throughout the semester.

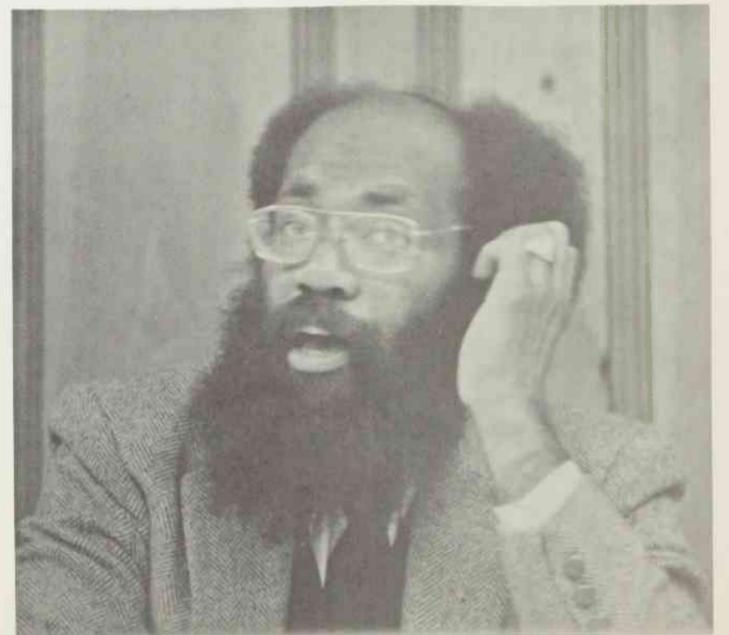
The professor projected a slide of Biggers' mural "Rites of Passage," and Biggers described the origin and symbolism of the impressive work which mixes Biblical, African,

American and very personal elements and myths. The mural was commissioned by Houston art patrons.

"I'm trying to convey a feeling of ancestral history," Biggers, who was reared in Gastonia, explained, as students contemplated the phases of the mural, which is dominated by a Black mother and her three children.

The painter said that the work was a response to classical themes that "still challenge the artist." The phases of the mural capture the archetypal experiences of birth, initiation, marriage, old age, death and resurrection. The importance of music to the unity of the race is represented by the maramba and by an xylophone rising above

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The expounding novelist: Behind David H. Bradley's casual manner lurked strict, professional attitudes during his recent visit sponsored by the Department of Social Sciences and the Mellon Grant. The author looks relaxed, but he's presently laboring on two novels—a detective story and a fictional reflection on the turbulent 60's.

(Photo by Shelia Foxworth)