

Colman-West DOCKed at Brevard

BY JULIE ROBBINS

Has there ever been a teacher in your life that has inspired you to go beyond all the limits you thought you could achieve? A teacher that doesn't just lecture, but becomes passionately involved in the learning process? A teacher whose enthusiasm is so contagious that you hang onto his or her every word with great anticipation? To many students, there is one teacher who has challenged them to explore more, question more and become

more. "Doc."

Her full name is Doctor Clara Coleman-West. She was born in Asheville, grew up in Canton and Waynesville, then moved to Newberry because of her father's job at Champion. She graduated from Canton High School and went to Randolph-Maycon Women's college, in Lynchburg, Virginia for undergraduate study. Then she attended University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill for graduate study. Her major was English with an emphasis in American Literature

and 17th and 18th century British Literature with a minor in music.

Doc arrived in the fall of 1976, though she did not intend to stay that long when she first arrived. But she did and her list of appointments is long. She has served six years as the academic Vice President, chaired twice on the humanities board and was a substitute chair for the Science and Math divisions for one year. Her one daughter, Janet, is a middle school teacher.

As for a favorite class, she simply states, "It is which ever one

I am about to walk into."

It is obvious her students have taken notice to this feeling. As former students, David Rector and Corey Hall both agree, "Even at 8 a.m. in the morning, she could make English really fun."

Her inspiration has even gone further. Former student, Jarvis Broom said, "Before, I really did not have an interest in English. Then I had Dr. Coleman-West, and now I am planning to minor in English."

Late night gifts of perspective

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The waitress dropped a plate and shattered it against the cold tile. The old man whispered to the guy next to him and everyone else just sat with their mouths dropped to the floor. We were at the juke box arguing over whether to play country or old time rock and roll. What else was there to do in this small town? Roxy and Mimi were their names.

They strutted in, bright blue eye shadow covering every square-inch of their deeply hidden eyes, base piled on three inches thick and ruby red lipstick holding their lips hostage. The one in the leopard skin-tight pants seemed mellow and she kept to herself, as Roxy, the one in the hot pink jacket walked by licking her fingers from time to time while winking her eye and flirting with danger.

After sitting there for a while the two girls invited us along with them to their journey of whatever it is they do. We looked at each other as though we would be passing up an opportunity of a lifetime if we didn't jump right up and explore their world of nightlife. We got in their surprisingly clean maroon Honda, with its slight stench of alcohol.

We had no idea where we were going. All we knew is we wanted suspense, we wanted big city, big action; we wanted different. Roxy opened the sunroof as Mimi started screaming the words "you drive me crazy" out the window. The words of Aerosmith had somehow snuck into our car and into Mimi's head. After only five minutes in the car Mimi and my friend got a sudden

urge to tattoo their bodies.

"You aren't serious, are you" said Roxy as she slowly turned down a street leading to another



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street of endless shops and tattoo parlors, all of which happened to be closed.

The night went on and we stopped for coffee. Where's the action, where's the tricks, the money, where are the guys? Why aren't we on the street? Why are we in this boring restaurant? We're here ten minutes and already we've caused a scene.

Two tobacco chewin, cowboy boot wearin, unrespectable middle-

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aged guys walked by hootin and hollarin. One of them leaned down to Roxy and said "Ya sure do got perty eyes."

The other nudged his friend as if he were scared "Boy ya better leave that one alone she's too young don't even mess with it." Roxy tried flirting a little but nothing big came of it.

After ordering our coffees we sat in silence until Mimi opened her mouth only to utter words of maturity, and Roxy replied with understanding. Wait this wasn't suppose to happen. These two girls couldn't possibly be intelligent. How could they even know what religion was. Look at them. Look at the way they dress.

"It's interesting the way God said thou shalt not kill yet there is so much killing in this world my friend," said with a deep curiosity. "Is God real? Does he exist?"

"Of course it does, it exists in you," Roxy said as she slowly uncovered her napkin to wipe the hot fudge that was dribbling down her chin.

"It's something personal. I say it because it doesn't have to be a certain being it can be anything that gives you understanding of yourself and this world, anything that

keeps you going, that gives you a reason to exist, anything that shows you the meaning of love." That is the definition of God, or at least Roxy's definition.

"I personally adore God, I think he is quite humorous, he defiantly knows how to have a good time," Mimi replied with excitement. I somehow got deeply lost in their conversation of relationships, religion, beliefs and disbelief's.

It's amazing how things happen when you least expect them. What had started out as an intended hour of adventure and danger had somehow turned into ten hours of an intellectually deep

conversation. Sure we wanted to get away from this small town. Away from this "normal" society, but Roxy and Mimi taught us: anywhere you are and anyone you meet has innormalities contributing to this so called "normal" society and you will never get away from it.

Six o'clock rolled around. The sun had come up. We lost ourselves that night, but only to find our real selves. The better part of ourselves we never knew was there. The clicks and clatters of Mimi's three inch heels tapped the floor as we

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walked out of the restaurant with our heads held high. As we were walking out not one, not three, but five cops very obviously in sink turned their heads in our direction as their questioning eyes followed us out of that restaurant where nothing but the snow awaited us. No one said a thing on the way back to where we had started. But we were all thinking the same thing. Every single one of us are human, we all have beliefs and disbelief's.

We may very well live in a small town or we may very well live in a big city but sometimes that doesn't matter. Some of the most important lessons come from some of the most unexpected places.