

# Editorial

## Brown Was Last Seen Walking In The Direction Of San Francisco



Ralph Brown

*its first president, make plans for and carry through the establishment of a rest area on campus now called "People's Park," attend classes regularly and with a wholesome attitude, crusade for any cause that he found worthy of attention, and in general act as ambassador of good will for the college.*

*Oh, he made enemies here, at least temporary ones. He never avoided a confrontation when he felt that he was unquestionably right, and he seldom if ever backed away from a principle. The strangest element of his time here is that he loved Gaston College, as far as could be discerned, and this is strange in view of Brown's background. Not that he was a "hippie," whatever that is, but that he was among the very first of that social order. He was in the middle of the original hippie riot at People's Park in California, and he has never followed the movement, primarily on the thesis that involvement with mass movements denies the individuality that he was trying to find.*

*Another peculiar element of Brown's background is that he is one of the few students at Gaston who could be termed benevolent intellectuals. Not that he is a mental giant; on the contrary, he is simply a very intelligent young man who thinks seriously and logically and who is never allowed preconceived notions to dominate his own intellectual reactions.*

*He was, as few people realize, formerly a Church of God minister, and he made multitudes of pilgrimages in his Volkswagen through the Carolinas and Georgia as he preached in tent revival services.*

*The reasons that he enjoyed Gaston so much are still unclear, but he stated repeatedly that he found the best instructors and best students that he has ever encountered here at Gaston College. He once explained why he took so many courses under an instructor with whom he found himself in several disagreements: "The man loves his subject matter," Brown said, "and even if I couldn't stand him personally I'd be in his classes, because if he loves what he does some of his enjoyment will inevitably rub off on his students."*

*Ralph Brown wrote many articles for the GAS LIGHT while he was a student here, and the last installment came in a special dispatch from Boarstone Mountain near Lake Onawa, Maine. It said simply: "I've covered one hundred miles already. Rough but nice. Snakebitten two days ago. Non-poisonous. Next stop is Gorham, New Hampshire."*

*He stopped a fellow traveler along the Appalachian Trail to ask how far the next supply station was and received the reply, "down the trail a ways." The "ways" turned out to be one hundred seventeen miles.*

*As always, Brown refused to blame anyone but himself for the snake bite. "I saw it lying in some brush and it looked as if it had just eaten, and I wanted to know what its meal was. It turned out to be my finger."*

*In his walk he found that Northern hospitality surpasses the Rebel variety, or at least equals it. He found himself invited into homes of perfect strangers, treated to meals and all other types of neighborly considerations. "People love to be neighborly," he says. "All you have to do is give them the opportunity."*

*The snake bite slowed the progress only briefly, but the injured ankle, the result of slipping on a wet rock discontinued the hike after only two hundred miles. "I'll return to finish it," Brown says, and we believe him.*

*He also says that he will probably come back to Gaston to take a couple of courses he thinks he can benefit from, and we believe that, too. After all, he insists that he found more that he admired here than at any other place he has visited, and Ralph Brown has not demonstrated himself to be the kind of person to turn his back on positive values.*

*It may not be exaggeration to say that Brown probably was the best friend the hippie movement has had in this area. Dozens of students, especially older ones with preconceived notions about the hippie generation, were often heard remarking to the effect that people like Brown are a credit to the school and to the values of the younger people of America. If he does come back to study here again (and he enrolls in a class to learn, not receive transfer credit), most of the campus will welcome him enthusiastically. The rest may want additional time to learn to understand him.*

*Maybe on his next trip this way the snake will have eaten already and the rocks will be dry so that he can complete his non-stop walking tour of Eastern America.*

*The moose attack? We just threw that in to make the story interesting.*

## Only A Few Brick Bats

*Last week's performances of "The Sandbox" and "Waiting for Godot" were a credit to Gaston College and to the students and community members who worked so hard to make the shows so successful. A special "Thank You" is due to Don McIntosh, Allen Lane, Mark Hyde, and the others who worked so hard and long and for no other reward than the appreciation of the audience.*

*Our only gripe is that these performers, who shed quarts of perspiration and spent endless hours on sets, rehearsals, and polishing the shows to a near-professional level were not appreciated by the Gaston audiences. Not fully, at least. Isn't there some way we can get the audience seated — and then keep them seated — while the show is going on?*

## Good Jobs Await Tech Students

Former students of the Technical Division of Gaston College show a high level of job stability and earning powers, according to results of a study conducted recently by Milt Hagen. While Hagen reminds that the "limited data" study as yet does not reveal enough information from which to draw firm conclusions, indications are that Gaston Technical students get good jobs and make good employees.

Fifty-one per cent of students graduating between 1959 and 1971 still hold positions with the same firm by which they were first employed. Over 80 per cent of the 1959 graduates are still with the original firms, while 38 per cent of the 1964 students are with their initial employers.

Over half of the respondents to the questionnaire are still employed in North Carolina. The others are working in one of twelve states throughout the country. States included are Alabama, Arizona, Delaware, Georgia, Missouri, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia.



GETTING AHEAD — Three older Gaston College students, (left to right) Mrs. Barbara Martin, Jerry Miller, and David Hargett, find that Gaston meets their needs for future plans.

## Gaston's Geriatric Set Came To Get Ahead

By Greg Scott

As I wander around the hall of Gaston I see more and more old people standing around. I'm not certain what they are doing here, but they can't possibly all be faculty members and visitors. But what other reasons are there for them to be here. Since they are so much older than I am, it might be worth a minute or so of my time to find out if they really have an insight into life that the rest of us don't have.

So I asked these over-thirty people what it is they are looking for, and this is what they told me:

Larry Smith: "I came back for the standard reasons— to get ahead in life, to get a better job or a better job classification than the one I was in. Education is the only way I know to get ahead."

John Dougan: "I was tired of working for the carpetbaggers in the mills for low pay."

Mrs. Geraldine Lyles: "I came to college because I always wanted to come back to see if I could make it. I wanted the self-satisfaction and the challenge while I was raising my own standard of living."

David Hargett: "My reasons for coming to college is selfish. I was passed over in the promotion line where I work. I was told that without an education I couldn't go anywhere with the company."

Jerry Miller: "When I finished high school I was undecided about my future. I wanted to go to college, and I also wanted to buy

Salaries paid to Tech graduates also reflect the level of Gaston graduates on the job markets. Average annual salaries of 1959-61 graduates are \$15,864, an increase of \$11,449 over their initial employment salaries of \$4,415. Graduates of 1962-64 show an annual salary of \$11,249, an increase of \$6,342 over the past decade. The 1965-67 students started work at an average salary of \$5,679 and currently are earning \$10,538, an increase of \$4,859. 1968-70 grads earned \$6,783 during their first year and currently are earning \$9,542, an increase of \$2,759. Last year's graduates started their work at a salary of \$7,476 and currently earn \$8,869, an increase of \$993 over the past year.

Hagen points out that starting salaries for Tech students are in line with those of four-year graduates or professional engineers. "It has been demonstrated that the technologist can perform the duties of the Bachelor of Science engineering graduate," Hagen said. "Our initial employment level is good, and the job opportunities remain very encouraging," Hagen concluded.



Dr. Robert Howard

RECEIVED DOCTOR'S DEGREE — Robert Howard, who has recently completed work on his Doctor's degree in Education, will add the "Dr." before his name — officially — this month. Howard, who is dean of evening affairs at Gaston College, completed his dissertation on July 10. The title of his study is "A Study of Recruitment and Selection of Elementary Principals in North Carolina."



a car. The desire for a car won out, so I went to work. I was still restless and I wasn't doing what I wanted to do. My ambition has always been to teach and to coach football. But I needed to get the military commitment out of the way, so I joined the Marine Corps. After four years of service and six years of marriage, I was convinced by my wife to try to get my college degree. So, twelve years after finishing high school, I started here at Gaston."

Larry Garland: "I know now that in this day and age you can't get along without a degree. While travelling in the Army I saw the need for an education, and with the help of the G.I. Bill I decided to go all the way. I didn't want to be one of those unfortunates who was left by the wayside."

Mrs. Barbara Martin: "My main reason for coming to college was self-improvement at first, but now that I am in school I have decided to continue my education into the field of nursing. It's rather hard to start again after not being in school for twenty years. On the day of registration I came over, got cold feet and left. I went to my husband's office to cry on his shoulder, but he wouldn't give me any sympathy. So I came back to the campus and signed up for two courses."

The next question is whether these geriatrics regret their late decisions. So that was the next question, and here are the answers.

David Hargett admits that he was apprehensive about returning to school. "At the first thoughts of college I was scared to death. It had been too long since high school, and I felt totally stupid. But since I have been back I have found that the people I have come into contact with are great! My grades have been better than I expected, and my instructors have been more than fair. I'd like to thank Gaston College for being a great school."

Jerry Miller is equally enthusiastic: "I have not regretted my decision to enroll in college one bit. The community college system is the best thing that ever happened to North Carolina."

College may even qualify as a fountain of youth; at least Mrs. Barbara Martin sees it in a somewhat similar manner: "Going to school has given me a new lease on life. I don't feel nearly as old as I did, because the younger students treat me as if I were one of them. I wasn't sure what to expect from the students, and I wasn't certain I could do the work demanded in college. I have been very pleasantly surprised on both counts."

Surprisingly enough, these old people seem to have the idea that they know what they are doing. Now the question is how many of the eighteen-year-olds really have read the answers, or will they, ten years from now, be among the older students coming back to renew their education?