

On the campaign trail . . .



# Politickin'



## Bob Thorne promises a 'commitment' to schools

By Lisa Gregory

**"I** made a commitment to education 23 years ago," said Bob Thorne. "It's my life. I know it, and I know it well."

Thorne, a veteran English professor at ECSU, is a candidate for the at-large seat for the Pasquotank County Board of Education.

"Teaching has been good to me," he said, "and I would like to share my experience with the people of Pasquotank County."

Thorne has twenty years of classroom teaching experience, including secondary school teaching. He has a Ph.D in English and education from Duke University.

"The Pasquotank School Board needs a professional educator at this time," said Thorne. "I believe I'm the person to get the job done right."

Thorne said he could understand many educational problems unique to this area because he is a native of North Carolina and "a 16-year resident of Pasquotank County." He is committed to changing the educational system by improving drop-out prevention programs, drug prevention programs, school discipline, extra-curricular programs, school-sponsored tutorials and teacher morale.

To help solve the dropout problem, Thorne believes the county should create an alternative high school. "We have a dropout prevention officer here, but he can't do it all by himself.

"If we could just keep every kid in this country in school, starting this year, we could retire the national debt by 1992. That's how important drop-out prevention is. We can't allow one fourth of the next generation of taxpayers to be lost."

If elected, Thorne said he would work with other members of the board to remove "an all too frequent confrontational and adversarial relationship within the board itself," and to improve the public's confidence "in the board's ability to act professionally in all matters."

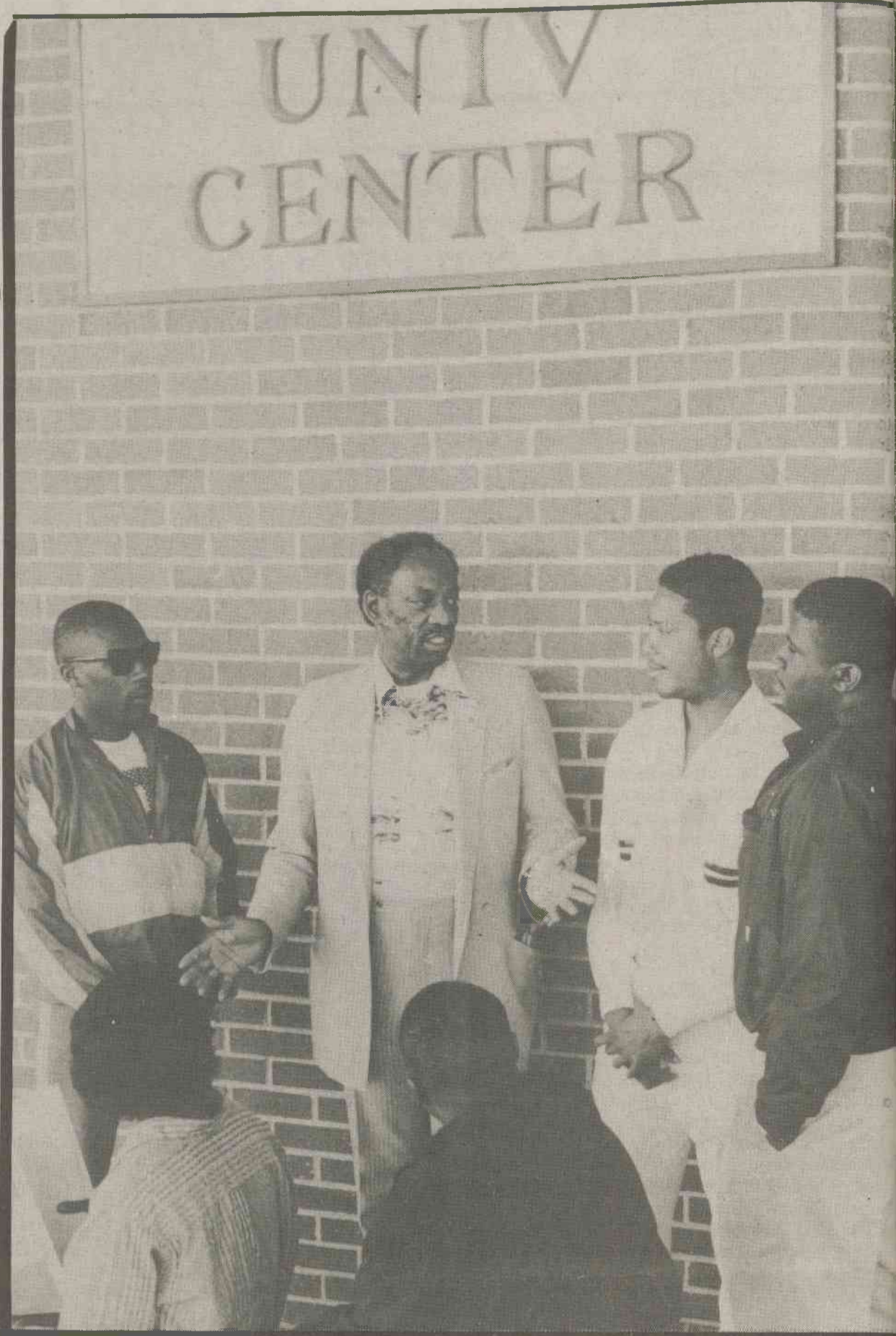
**"I can't think of anyone better to serve on the Board of Education than a qualified educator. It just makes good sense."**

**Bob Thorne**

Photos by Richard McIntire



ECSU English professor Dr. Robert Thorne helps his daughter Ashlee with her homework. At right, Thorne feeds Fred, the family's dog.



The Rev. Charles Foster, Director of the ECSU University Center, tells students of his plans to improve educational facilities in northeastern North Carolina.

Photo by Richard McIntire



Thorne also seeks a wider role for citizens in the educational process. "I want to put the word 'public' back into the term, 'elected public official,' and give our electorate a more responsive, more representative school board."

Although school board elections are non-partisan, Thorne, a Democrat, admits that he opposes some of the Republican party's stands on education, particularly on funding.

"They are against seeking alternative funding for the public schools," he said. "They want to immediately vote in a local bond referendum, which Governor Martin has been advocating. That's something that the tax payers in this county can not afford.

"We need better schools, but we need to explore every option available to us before we commit our children to an exorbitant pay back."

Thorne believes there are more "creative" ways to raise money, such as through the hospital's surplus funds, and other major businesses entering into a partnership arrangement such as lease-purchase.

"There are a lot of good things going on in this community as far as growth and expansion are concerned," he said. "They are going to build an elementary school in Providence Township, north of Albemarle Hospital, and remodel P.W. Moore. This plus the school under construction in Weeksville clearly demonstrates the community's pride in our schools."

Thorne said he had an initial problem running for the school board. The only seat he was qualified to run for was the at-large seat, which was held by ECSU's

Hezekiah Cooper. "I couldn't run against him, because he has voted the way I would have voted for the last year and a half," Thorne said.

"When Mr. Cooper decided to run for the city seat, his old seat vacated, so I decided to run. It was his graciousness, along with some serious doubts I have about the present school board, plus some influential people asking me to run, that helped me decide."

Thorne has high hopes for the Pasquotank County School system. "I can't think of anyone better to serve on the Board of Education than a qualified educator. It just makes good sense."

Thorne is married to Judy Guillet Thorne, the home-bound teacher for Pasquotank County. The couple has two children, Ashlee, 16, and Anna-Barrett, 13. Ashlee is a student at Northeastern High School, and Elizabeth attends Elizabeth City Middle School.

Thorne is listed in Who's Who in America, Who's Who of Emerging Leaders in America and Cambridge Men of Achievement.

