

# New Chair of LL&C Dept. happy to be a Vike; eager to work with students in news media

By Bruce Copeland

"I want to make a difference" said Dr. Linda Florence Callahan, the new acting chair of ECSU's Department of Language, Literature, and Communication.

Callahan, a native of Hillsborough, N.C., replaced Dr. Anne Henderson, who retired this past summer after serving as the department's chair for 28 years. Callahan comes to ECSU from Ohio State University, where she taught courses in journalism and public relations.

Only a few months into her term, Callahan already wants to make some changes. She said she hopes to get more computers for the faculty and students, more internships for students, and more equipment for the department. She would also like to see students become more involved in ECSU's clubs and organizations, particularly those related to students' respective majors, "in order to enhance their marketable skills."

For students interested in News Media, Callahan hopes to organize a student chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists. She was advisor and organizer of the African American Media Association at Ohio State.

Callahan, whose speciality is communications and news media, earned her masters and doctorate degrees in communication at Ohio State. She admits to a lifetime interest in communications and news media.

"Even as a child I read the newspapers and watched and listened to the news," she said.

Callahan said she is excited by the opportunity to work with students "in every aspect of communications."

She is also enjoying being a member of the Viking family.

"Faculty, staff, students and administration have been cordial and supportive in welcoming me to the university," she said, adding that she is especially happy to be part of a historically black university.

"HBCU's have a special mission. They were created as outlets for African-Americans who wanted to further their education but were not allowed to do so in white universities. Now that white universities accept African-Americans, many individuals feel that HBCU's are no longer needed. But the absence of HBCU's would be a major setback for the communities in which the universities are located, and hinder the progress of African-Americans."

"Today HBCU's are excellent resources for students of all races to receive a quality education," Callahan said. "This is evidenced by the fact that students who graduate from HBCU programs are very

*"We must make sure that African-Americans, particularly young ones, know their history, such as the struggle of African-Americans to gain voting rights."*

Dr. Linda Florence Callahan



Dr. Linda Callahan, the new chair of the Department of Language, Literature & Communication, comes to ECSU from Ohio State University, where she taught courses in journalism and public relations.

competitive in the job market and in graduate and professional school."

Callahan believes all students should be aware of the detrimental impact of racism and should use that knowledge to try to make society a better place in which to live.

Callahan said she has had to deal with racism and sexism but adds, "I never let that deter me from trying to do what I feel is the right thing to do."

After double majoring in journalism and radio, television, and motion pictures at UNC-Chapel Hill in 1974, Callahan worked as a reporter and staff writer for *The Raleigh Times* newspaper until 1976. She then moved to Charlotte and worked at WSOC-AM News Radio, WSOC FM and WAYS radio as a news reporter and editor.

While in Charlotte, she also worked as a staff writer for the *Charlotte Post* and the

*Charlotte Weekly* newspaper, and was host and producer of a public affairs program at WTVI Public Television.

She was also director of Public Relations/University Relations at Johnson C. Smith University from 1979 to 1983. As director, she was the university spokesperson, coordinated internal and external communications, served as an advisor to the university president and hosted and produced "The Johnson C. Smith University Showcase," a weekly radio program about the university which aired on three commercial stations in the Charlotte area.

Callahan left Charlotte to enroll in graduate school. As a graduate student at OSU Callahan was editor of the departmental newsletter and was editor of *New Venture Newswire* a nationally distributed electronic newsletter. After receiving her doctorate degree, she taught pub-

lic speaking and English composition courses at Alabama A & M University in Huntsville, Ala.

She returned to Ohio State in 1988 where she joined the School of Journalism faculty. In addition to her other responsibilities at Ohio State, she designed and developed a course, "Diversity in the Media."

Callahan has received more than two dozen honors and awards, including the UNCF Leadership Award, the Columbus Association of Black Journalists Service Award, The Ohio State University Center for Teaching Excellence Award, and the 1991 Outstanding Faculty Award, presented to her by the OSU Black Greek Council.

Callahan has been active in professional organizations, such as the Association for Educators in Journalism and Mass Communication, the College News Association of the Carolinas, The Public Relations Society of America, and the National Association of Black Journalists. She is a founding member and past president of the Charlotte Black Media Association and the Columbus Association of Black Journalists.

Callahan said she is disturbed by the low number of women at the top level of communications.

"There were very few women in communications when I first started, therefore leaving me with almost no one to look up to in this field. Today, there are considerably more women, but they tend to be concentrated in the lower level positions."

Other personal concerns include the limited availability of good child care, the lack of emphasis put on the family, and the small number of African-Americans who know their history.

"We must make sure that African-Americans, particularly young ones, know their history, such as the struggle of African-Americans to gain voting rights."

Callahan said she believes that it is equally important for whites to know the history, struggles and contributions made by African Americans.

"This knowledge should help to improve race relations," she said.

Callahan credits her religious background for maintaining control during times of stress and difficulty.

"I pray a lot," she said.

Currently, Callahan is busily trying to learn as much as she can about the Department and the University. She said she is always open to suggestions for finding more effective and efficient ways of getting things done.

Callahan is married to Dr. Gary Callahan, Director of Bands at ECSU. They have a three-year-old son named Jesse.