

Teacher education program praised by NEA's President

By Melanie Harrington

A nation should not be judged solely by its gross national product, but by "its capacity for compassion," Keith Geiger, President of the National Educational Association, (NEA), told a group of ECSU students and faculty Nov. 19 in the Kermit E. White Center.

"No one has expressed this better than Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.," added Geiger, keynote speaker for the American Education Week Assembly. "Dr. King insisted that 'education which stops with efficiency may prove to be the greatest menace to society'. Education plus character—that is the true goal of education."

The educational community will go astray if education continues to be defined as a "service to the economic community," said Geiger.

"I do not believe that educators should accept the claim that the ultimate purpose of education is to ensure that Fords and Chryslers outsell Toyotas and Nissans."

If American educators are to accept this claim, it would lead to a system that would shortchange America's young people, said Geiger.

"If the ultimate purpose of education is to produce a skilled workforce, then what becomes of such disciplines as art,

music, and philosophy?" he asked.

The educational system should emphasize the arts and ethics as much as it does technology and economics, in order to better prepare future teachers, said Geiger. The educational leader also called for a comprehensive strategy for professionalizing teaching so teachers will not be manipulated by politicians.

"If we want professional results, we must grant teachers professional recognition," Geiger said. "If we want a self-improving profession, we must create a self-governing profession."

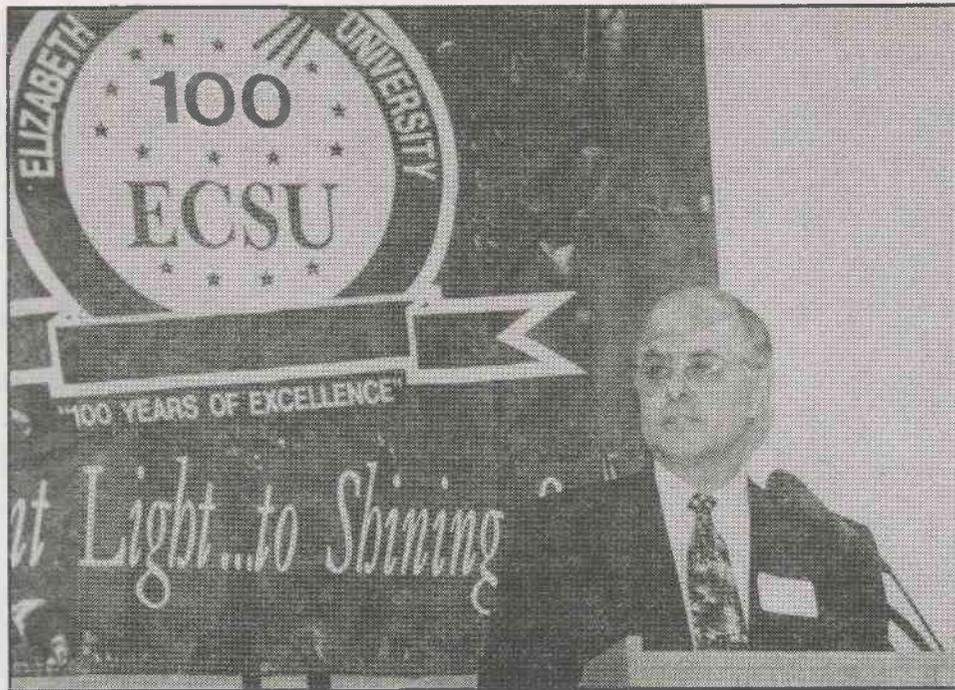
Geiger wants rigorous professional standards for licensing teachers, something the NEA has supported over 130 years.

"Teaching America's children is a privilege," Geiger said, "a privilege based on the ability to meet imposing responsibilities."

Establishing licensing standards in every state will prevent the incompetent from becoming licensed, he said.

"We must devise a system to ensure that the unprepared, the unqualified, and the unmotivated are denied the privilege of serving in the classroom."

Geiger commended ECSU for seeking an evaluation by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs (NCATE) and encouraged



Keith Geiger, President of the two-million member National Educational Association, was ECSU's keynote speaker for the American Education Week Assembly, held Nov. 19 in the Kermit E. White Center.

other schools to do the same.

Geiger praised ECSU for demonstrating "that you have a teacher education program that ranks up there with the best in the nation."

Voluntary certification by the national board will not only improve teaching but also bolster public support for school systems, Geiger said, adding that he expects N.C. Governor-elect Jim Hunt to serve as chairman of the board.

"He is that critical to the national board," said Geiger, who said Hunt had set the standards for the last four years during an earlier stint as chair of the board.

Geiger closed by urging those present to devote themselves to "a new educational order that will truly serve the America of tomorrow."

Geiger, a high school math and science teacher, is an active leader in campaigns to reorder federal spending priorities. The NEA, for which he serves as president, is a two-million member professional organization and labor union.

Geiger serves on the Education Policy Advisory Committee and co-chairs the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Education Committee. He also serves on the Advisory Board for Professional Teaching Standards, and NCATE.

The theme of Geiger's address was, "America's Schools: Take a New Look." His speech was sponsored by ECSU's Division of Education.

After leaving Elizabeth City, Geiger flew to Washington, D.C. to have dinner with President-elect Bill Clinton.

Campus forum held on Malcom X's influence

By Lavenia Dameron

Is the interest in Malcolm X just a fad sparked by rap groups, Malcolm X fashions and Spike Lee's new film?

Members of the university family addressed this question in a forum, "Evaluating the Life of Malcolm X," held Nov. 19, in the Jimmy R. Jenkins Science Complex.

The forum, sponsored by The Student Government Association and the Concerned Black Awareness Council (CBAC), was organized around answering a series of questions about Malcolm X's life, including the role he played in the struggle for civil rights, the merchandising of his name, and Spike Lee's film.

Ralph Nixon, moderator for the forum, said he thought the interest in Malcolm X's philosophy came about because of the yearning for cultural awareness.

"Malcolm X signifies self-respect and self-empowerment," said Nixon, vice-president of SGA and a member of CBAC. "We want to learn our own history, build our own businesses, educate our own people and break them from their slave mentalities. People are fed up with the old way of doing things."

The other panelists were Dr. Leon White, Vice Chancellor for Student Af-

airs, Dr. Flora Bryant, who teaches in ECSU's Department of Social Sciences, Tarik Scott, a sophomore, and Eric X Walton, a junior.

Panel members concluded that Malcolm X was passed over during the push for civil rights. Because Malcolm X advocated assuming equal rights "by any means necessary," whites preferred to deal with more moderate civil rights leaders like Martin Luther King, Jr.

"Although Malcolm X played no role in the civil rights struggle, he was important because he was radical and extreme," said Bryant. "He didn't care what whites thought."

Malcolm X wanted blacks to think as an independent people, Bryant said.

Panel members agreed that the current interest in Malcolm X may be just a fad if the reasons are superficial.

"If the youth are not using Malcolm X to identify with themselves, then it is a fad," said Walton.

"It's a fad because he's dead," said Tarik Scott, "unless you want to find out what made Malcolm X."

Dr. Leon White felt that Malcolm X is "a positive role model" for today's young people because he emphasized clean living, self-discovery, and the importance of

men being fathers to their children.

A member of the panel suggested that Malcolm X was against capitalism and wouldn't want to see his name used by white corporations to sell clothes, watches, cologne, air freshener, but particularly Malcolm X potato chips since he stressed healthy eating. Dr. Flora Bryant said that the media has received too much credit for the global exploitation of Malcolm X's name.

"Youth had already shown interest," she said. "The media got a hold of it after that."

"Blacks are trendsetters," said a panel member who felt Spike Lee should share the blame for marketing his own line of Malcolm X merchandise.

Panel members were asked if they felt Spike Lee had an accurate portrayal of Malcolm X. Some students felt Spike Lee's movie about the controversial leader's life was irresponsible in presenting factual information. One student said that people should not view the movie as a documentary.

Another student argued that Spike Lee captured the essence of Malcolm X and that his reasons for making certain changes were more artistic.

At the end of the forum, a member of

the panel suggested that students read the autobiography by Alex Haley before viewing the movie.

"You could tell from the audience's responses early in the movie that most of them had never read the book," said Walton.

Malcolm X, born Malcolm Little in Omaha Nebraska, added the letter X to denounce the "white slave name" he had been given. The Nation of Islam taught that blacks in this country had been robbed of their culture, their religion, their history, and their names. Introduced to Islam while in prison, he later became the national spokesperson for the Nation of Islam under the teachings of Elijah Muhammed.

The X represents his unknown ancestors and it was used to signify his past as a non-Islamic person. As long as conditions in America remained the same, he would use the X.

The campus forum was just one event acknowledging Malcolm X's life. On Nov. 17, a documentary on the life of Malcolm X was shown in the Commuter Center.

The SGA and CBAC sponsored a bus trip to the Gateway Theater in Elizabeth City on Nov. 18, for the premier of Spike Lee's film, *Malcolm X*.