

# University's first national merit scholar chose ECSU over Harvard, Howard U.

By Lolethia Underdue

Most high school seniors have to worry about being accepted into the college of their choice, but ECSU's Chakka Ruffin had so many offers to attend college—all on full scholarships—that the hard part for her was deciding which offer to accept.

Schools offering her full scholarships included Harvard University and Howard University and Elizabeth State University.

Why did this Wilson, N.C. native choose ECSU?

"It had the qualifications I was looking for," says Ruffin. "It's an HBCU (Historically Black College and University) and it's small."

Ruffin, the first National Merit Scholar to ever attend ECSU, said she was also influenced by University recruiters.

"I liked what they were telling me, and I decided to come."

National Merit Scholars semifinalists are selected on the basis of the Pre-Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), said Ruffin.

Prospective scholars are not allowed to tell anyone they are semi-finalists, she added. They are also required to fill out a questionnaire, answering questions about themselves, and to write an essay.

"I didn't even know I was a semifinalist

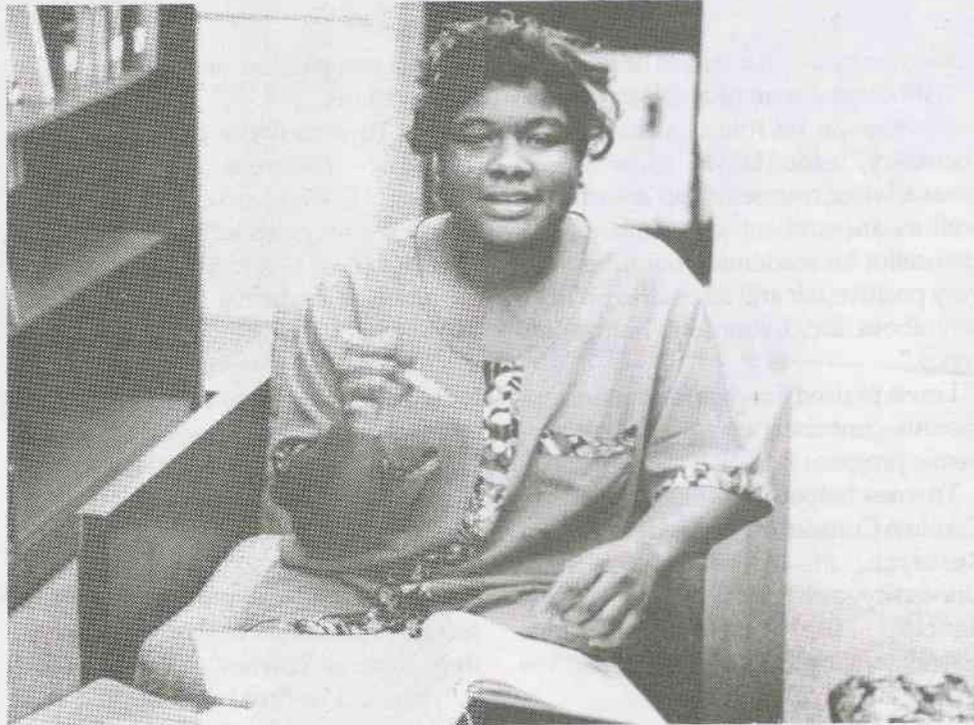


Photo by David Friedman

Chakka Ruffin, the first National Merit semifinalist to ever attend ECSU, didn't travel to Florida to participate in the finals. Instead the \$40,000 scholarship went to her sister, Tinkia Twan.

until my senior year," said Ruffin.

Ruffin said she didn't travel to Florida to participate in the finals. The National Merit Scholarship, worth \$40,000, went to her sister, Tinkia Twan whose I.Q., according to Ruffin, "is two points short

of being a genius."

Ruffin, the oldest of ten children, all girls, said coming from a large family didn't make her more competitive. She describes her parents and all of her sisters as being, "Very smart and talented."

Ruffin's mother currently holds a nursing degree and has worked as a registered nurse. Her father is a long distance truck driver.

Ruffin and Tinkia Twan scored the second and third highest scores in the country on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). The highest scorer on that test was also a student at Ruffin's high school.

What was special about E. T. Beddingfield High School?

"They worked us to death," she says.

Ruffin credits her mother with influencing her the most because "she kept supplying the money to buy more books."

Ruffin had this tip for students planning on taking standardized tests: "Study hard until the last month before the test and then just relax."

To relax, Ruffin writes poetry, songs, and short stories, and she also enjoys sewing and drawing. She enjoys all music "except gangsta rap and deep country."

Ruffin, who is double majoring in chemistry and computer science, plans to be a chemical engineer. She has already been offered "a full scholarship to an engineering school in Israel."

Her plans also include room for a family. "I see a husband in my future, and I want to have ten kids."

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白菜牛	L 5.	Beef with Chinese Vegetable	3.85
青椒牛	L 6.	Pepper Steak	3.85
蝦龍糊	L 7.	Shrimp with Lobster Sauce	4.20
蝦炒麵	L 8.	Shrimp Chow Mein	3.85
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