

EDITORIAL

A Viking Legacy

Today, we ask the University family to pause and honor the memory of two Vikings whose passing causes deep sorrow and pain: Dr. James Townes, and Dr. Eloise Roberts.

Although we feel grief at their deaths, we should rejoice in the accomplishments and value of these two individuals. In a time of rampant materialism and the worship of earthly things, Dr. Roberts and Dr. Townes demonstrated throughout their lives that they followed a higher spiritual calling—dealing with service and love of humanity.

During her twenty-one years of service to ECSU, as both a professor and an administrator, Dr. Roberts "acquired the reputation of a superior teacher," says ECSU Chancellor Dr. Jimmy Jenkins. "She gained the trust, admiration and love of her students, and the respect of her colleagues."

Here is just one of her many students, Tracy Weathers, commenting on the influence Dr. Roberts had on her life: "She was more than just a teacher; she was also your friend. I was crushed when she passed away." Weathers, who had dropped out of school at one point, credits Dr. Roberts with being "one of the main reasons I came back to school."

"She wasn't just there to fill your head with information," recalls Weathers, a senior education major from Elizabeth City. "She brought excitement to the classroom and to the field of education. And she's the one person who got me excited about education. There's so much of the negative in education today. Dr. Roberts made you feel like you could handle it. This school has a tremendous loss with her death."

Dr. James Townes served the University "across disciplines, beginning in 1963," according to Chancellor Jenkins. In addition to his role as a professor, Dr. Townes was also Chairman of the Physical Sciences Department, Assistant to the Chancellor, interim Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs, and, at the time of his death, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Director of Summer School.

"Dr. Townes' many achievements serve as a model for a rewarding life," Jenkins told *The Compass*, "encompassing great humanitarianism, perseverance and excellence of scholastic attainment. His tenure at Elizabeth City State University was marked by dedication, his delight in teaching, his great energy and resiliency, his highly developed sense of humor and outstanding ability in interpersonal relations."

Dr. Townes, like Dr. Roberts, brought style and excitement to the University and to the classroom. He was a small man with an enormous heart. And, like Dr. Roberts, he leaves behind a rich legacy of hundreds of lives touched and uplifted because he lived.

As with Professor William Butts, who the Viking family lost last year, Dr. Eloise Roberts and Dr. James Townes should serve as role models to us all—reminders of what life should be about.



Dr. James Townes, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, died July 21 in Chesapeake General Hospital.

POETRY

the promise

white, red, yellow
brown and black shine. they do...
like the breaking of day.
oh, life is color, varied
and the rainbow's kin.

the rainbow is a constant emulator
of our kind and still a reminder;
a wise, resounding promise of opportunity.
has it come once, through, without rain and sun?

Like so is this man...
a promise of the salvation and a fine
display of love with his pain or cruelty.
he shines and his black, brown, yellow, red and white
hues all find reason to exist, each apparently different,
merging only to form hope of existing as a body, a rainbow,
a promise.

so, come then, rain.
fall like solid spheres bruising
head and frame. fall heavily...swiftly!
descend as you may, bring your gloom and gray,
giving desire for the warming, healing star, revealing once
again
our promise.

David Gibson

THE COMPASS

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