

Talk of ECSU:

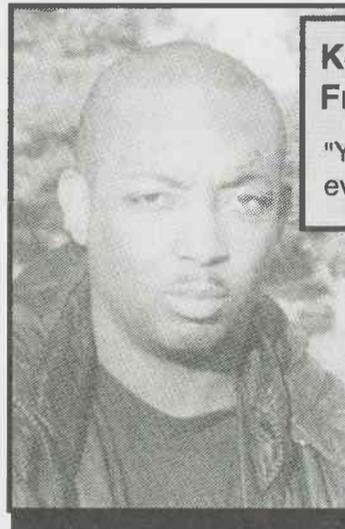
by Frank Scott and Damon Lynn

Were you satisfied with this year's Homecoming activities?



Lezile Whitehurst
Freshman, Plumouth, N.C.

"No, it was not enough entertainment. The things during homecoming week were exciting, but Homecoming itself wasn't."

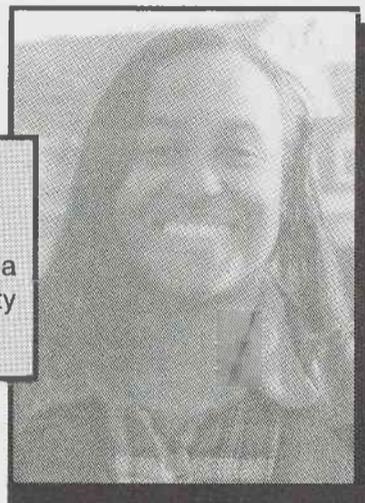


Kendrick Lynch
Freshman, Oak City, N.C.

"Yes. I enjoyed the festivities and all the events."

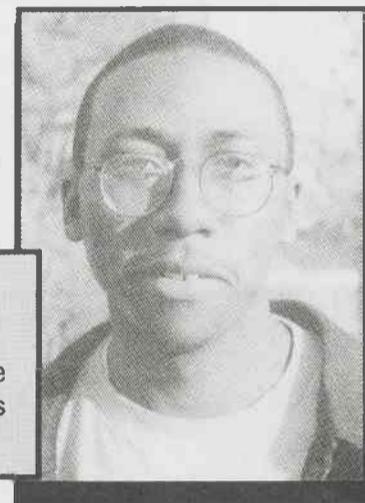
Natalie Burden
Freshman, Ahoskie, N.C.

"It was not what I expected it to be. I expected a more spirited atmosphere and a lot more unity among the student body."



Elliot Cotten
Sophomore, Spring Hope, N.C.

"No. Last year there were more posters. No one was interested in the concert. Everyone was sitting outside."



GUEST COLUMN

Angelou's poetry transforms student's life by creating beauty out of 'pain, suffering'

by Angela Hathaway

When I first heard the poem, "Phenomenal Woman" by Maya Angelou, Oprah Winfrey read it on the Black Image Award Show several years ago. I remember being taken aback by the emotional strength the poem possessed. I felt a connection to the woman because her poem captured not only the essence of a woman, but also the essence of a Black Woman.

At that time in my life, I longed to find a definition of "black beauty," and there it was—captured in this poem.

"Phenomenal Woman" is a poem built on the acknowledgment of inner beauty and how it, too, can appeal to others. As a child I never saw myself as beautiful. I thought beauty was based entirely on external features, which I thought I lacked. I always thought that being the skinniest kid in class throughout grade school was a disadvantage. I thought that boys would never find me beautiful or attractive for this reason.

That's why Maya Angelou's poem, "Phenomenal Woman," affected me so deeply. Her poem inspires one to accept the beauty within, and knowing this gave me confidence.

Consider the lines: "Pretty Women

wonder where my secret lies. I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion model's size." Here Angelou rejects the image of beauty that society demands; she knows it doesn't apply to her. But she is also strong enough not to care because she has discovered her own source of beauty.

How does an artist transform something as private and unique as "self" into something universal? Or, as Emerson so aptly put it, "how does one adjust the angle of vision between soul and nature to express both which is private and universal?"

Maya Angelou is a writer who successfully transforms her own life experiences into powerful prose and poetry. She can accomplish this because she has struggled and triumphed, and because she has been able to create beauty out of pain and suffering.

In sharing these experiences, she has invited us into her life, her thoughts, her feelings, so that we can enjoy her experiences and learn from them as well.

"Triumph over adversity" has been a constant theme for the African-American in literature. Maya Angelou's work offers vivid testimonial to this theme.

"All of my work, my life, everything

I do is about survival," she has written, "not just bare awful, plodding survival, but survival with grace and faith. While one may encounter many defeats, one must not be defeated. In fact, the encountering may be the very experience which creates the vitality and power to endure."

In a time when society looked down on an individual with a dark complexion, and the struggle of the black female was overlooked, Angelou broke the silence and articulated her theme of the refusal of the human spirit to be subdued.

When Angelou was a child in Stamp, Arkansas, her grandmother tried to prepare her with the knowledge that the world would not graciously accept her—not just because she was a black woman, but because it was a time of depression and oppression.

"Common sense, practicality and the ability to control one's own destiny that comes from constant hard work and courage" were the lessons that "Momma" Henderson taught Maya.

She would need these lessons to survive a sexual assault by her mother's boyfriend at the age of eight. This event, and the brutal, resulting death of her mother's boyfriend, drove her deep

within herself for years. It took the help of role model Berthal Flowers, to help her find the strength necessary to overcome this tragedy.

Angelou found redemption in the power and grace of language—and art.

Critic Grace Collins admires the way "Maya Angelou selects those events in her life that helped her to grow emotionally, psychologically, spiritually—the stuff of life that truly counts on building self-acceptance."

I admire this quality in her work as well. I have gained a greater sense of self-acceptance through the poetry and prose of Maya Angelou, and the opportunity to share some of the experiences in her life has helped me to grow.

As my mother would say, "No matter how bad you think you have it in life, there's always someone who's had it worse."

It's the way that those people overcome the worst that gives them the courage and strength to be successful in life. Maya Angelou's artistry has changed the way I look at myself and others. Her vision, expressed in poems like "Phenomenal Woman," has helped me to appreciate what I've got, and to work hard for what I want—in life, love, school, and within myself.