

## ENGLISH PROFESSOR REVEALS HER CULTURALLY DIVERSE EXPERIENCES

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We see her in the halls, we take her classes, but who is Dr. Barbara Solaro?

Dr. Solaro is more just than a professor of world literature and traditional grammar at Elizabeth City State University; she is an accomplished international educator, whose inspiration came from her Shakespeare professor at Indiana University. For a great portion of her adult life Solaro has taught in places like Thailand, Indonesia, Japan, Taiwan, Malaysia, and Hong Kong. In Tsu, Japan at Mie University she taught English conversation, English composition and American literature.

Prior to working in Japan, she taught in the Midwestern Universities Consortium of International affairs in Shah Alam, Malaysia. Solaro spoke of some of her observations while living in Malaysia. "In Malaysia, which is a Muslim country, western women had to cover their upper arms. If you went into mosques or temples you needed to wear a skirt or dress," she says.

Solaro's travels have given her an appreciation for other cultures and their way of life. "My most memorable experience was visiting the Buddhist and Hindu temples in Indonesia and seeing the giant leather back turtle coming up to the beach to lay her eggs."

Solaro obtained her bachelor's and master's degrees in English, and a Ph.D. with a double major in English and American studies at Indiana University. Solaro said, "It had taken me three years to finish my doctoral

studies. I did my dissertation on the Divided Consciousness of Emily Dickenson." In the midst of her intensive studies, she also made time to study French, Latin, Italian, Japanese, Spanish, and Mayley.

Solaro's accomplishments include being elected the Faculty of Asian Studies at Michigan State University, receiving three National Endowment of Humanities Grants, and publishing articles and book reviews. "I was recently elected to the Board of Directors of the Albemarle Literary Center," she said proudly.

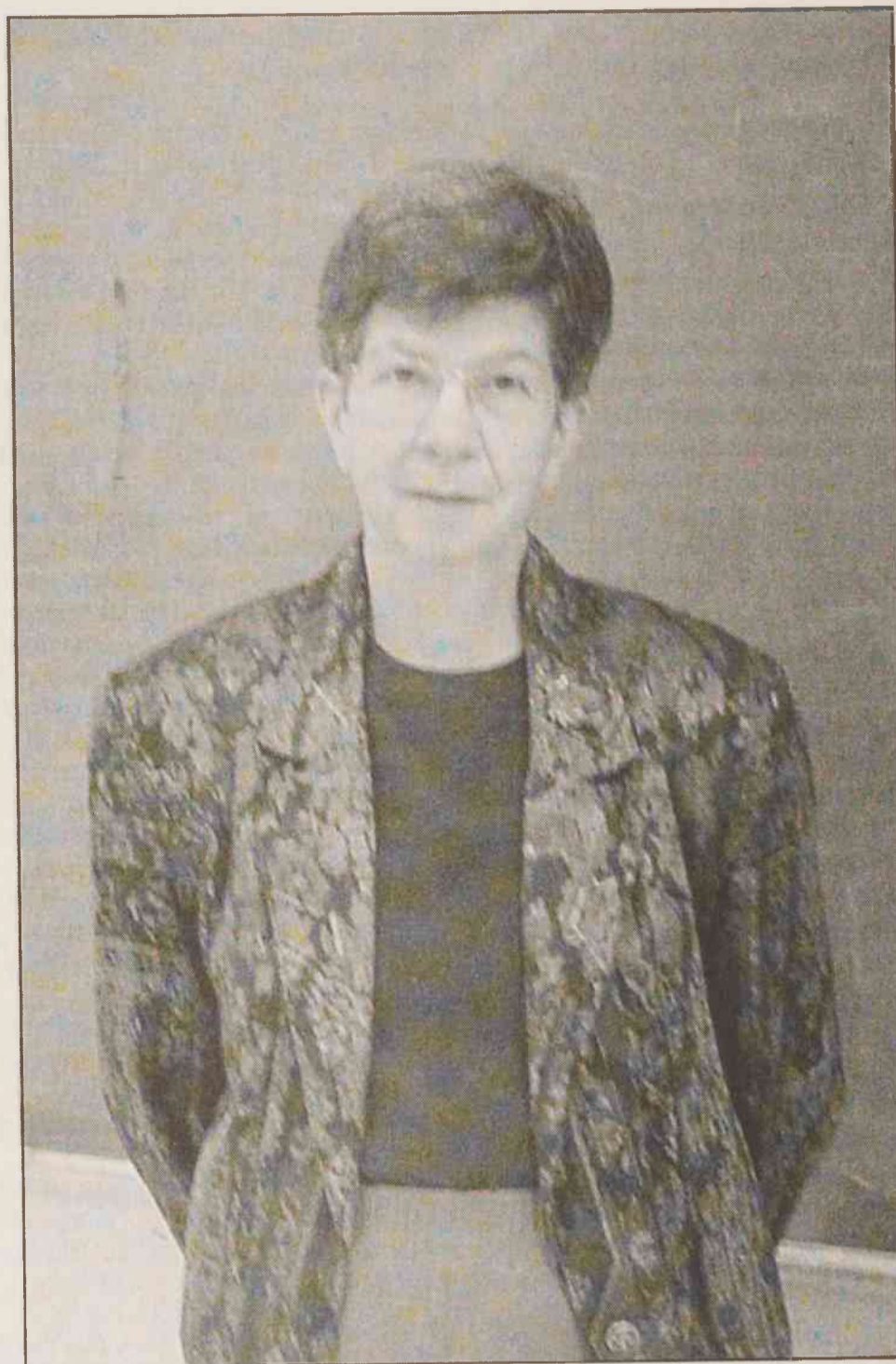
Her background in African American studies lead her to ECSU. She liked the south, but had never lived in the south. "I heard great things about North Carolina. My colleague said 'you will drive right through the great Dismal Swamp, where run away slaves hid.' I wanted to see this historical sight," she said.

Solaro has signed a contract to write a series of essays on all of Toni Morrison's works for the upcoming Gayle Research Series of African American Writers.

Asked if she would teach overseas again Solaro said, "yes, if they paid me for it."

When she is not teaching or working with her various committees, Dr. Solaro says she enjoys working on a collection of essays and short stories and visiting her three children.

Reflecting back over her years of teaching and helping to educate budding scholars she says that she is pleased to hear students say to her: 'I learned something thanks.'



Dr. Barbara Solaro

photo by Cylea Seabrook

## ECSU LEGEND STILL IN THE SPOTLIGHT

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When students file into the R.L. Vaughan Center on the campus of Elizabeth City State University, I'm willing to bet only a handful of them realize that the man whom the building is named after is probably sitting among them. It's not everyday that a legend walks among us, but at any given time you can catch R.L. "Bobby" Vaughan strolling through the building named after him.

Bobby Vaughan resides in Elizabeth City, N.C. He's a golfer, a licensed pilot, and he brags about having the "greenest grass on the block." But to really appreciate him, pay him a visit, sit back, listen, and most importantly learn. He may be known for his legendary coaching, but there's more to know than the 500 career wins, The CIAA Championships, and even the induction into the North Carolina Sports Hall of Fame. He is more than just a legendary coach; he's a teacher and a sort of historian for Elizabeth City State University.

Vaughan began his career at ECSU on July 30, 1949 as a teacher. Vaughan had never coached in his life, and was on his way to become a physical therapist, when a "friend of a friend" asked him if he wanted to coach. He was 21 years old at the time and fresh out of Virginia State University, and many of the players on his team were his age or older. He

accepted the job and also taught physical science and biological science.

"Frankly speaking I never coached in my life. Didn't have the slightest clue", he said.

His first game as a coach was December 2 of that year, a loss to Shaw University in Williams Hall. Vaughan then went on a two-year hiatus to serve in the Korean War. When Vaughan returned he had no intentions on returning to coaching, instead he had plans to attend Medical School.

"In the mean time I got married and had a baby, and was going to work to get into Medical School", said Vaughan.

While on the waiting list to get into Medical School another coaching spot became vacant and he accepted, again at ECSU. He had

planned to only coach for a year, but never left. During that time Vaughan never got paid for coaching.

"It was just something extra to do," Vaughan said. "You taught

doing the day and coached at night. He was teaching science, an assistant football coach, and the head basketball coach. For the

left for coaching," he said.

During his tenure as The Vikings head coach, the team became one of the elite teams in the CIAA conference and Vaughan won his first CIAA tournament championships in 1969. Asked if any one moment stood out in his mind, he speaks of the 69' championship team, or the record of 48 straight home wins.

"That was probably the best group of players I ever had. That record of 48 consecutive home victories still stands. There were students who went here four years and never saw us lose unless they went on the road."

Despite all that on the court success he would tell you that his proudest moment was dealing with the teaching and that under his direction the physical education department was the first major at this time other than elementary education to graduate.

"If you look at the records the first program other than elementary education was physical education. And I had happen to be selected to be chairmen of it."

In Vaughan's house there is a trophy room showcasing all his achievements. There are plaques, trophies, pictures, and basketballs, but all those material things are not important. Vaughan took what he enjoys doing, which is teaching, and carried it over to the basketball court and it made him an ECSU legend.

first ten years of his coaching career he never had a contract. In Vaughan's mind, coaching was something to do after he was done teaching for the day.

"I had my classes at eight, nine, and ten, and the rest of the day was



Coach R.L. Vaughan

photo by Jonas Pope