

Campus NEWS



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Married students cope with separation from spouses

By Layla Farmer
ARGUS REPORTER

With Valentine's Day nearly upon us, thoughts turn to romance, or lack thereof, in our lives. For many college students, it's a day to appreciate a boyfriend or girlfriend or perhaps begin a new relationship. Marriage will not be on many traditional students' minds, it will be the only thing Daysha Williams Scuggs is thinking of this year as she celebrates her second Valentine's Day as a married woman.

Scuggs, 20, has been married since September 2002, the second semester of her sophomore year at Winston-Salem State.

Her husband, Thomas E. Scuggs, Jr. is an E-4 in the Army and has been stationed in Baghdad since April 2003. Scuggs stayed behind in the U.S. to finish her degree, and

the couple was forced to spend almost their entire first year of marriage apart.

Because of her age, Scuggs says she has matured in many ways, going from living on campus to taking on an apartment and bills. Friends change too, Scuggs says, because they are still in the "single mentality." Though it is a big change, Scuggs enjoys the added support that married life affords her.

"He makes sure I don't want for nothing... he's a great provider," she said.

Although she misses her husband and remains concerned for his safety, she says it's much easier to concentrate on her studies when he's not around. When he comes home Scuggs finds she's late, misses class, and distracted, all because she wants to be home with her husband.

"He's a good man. I didn't think I could love him any more than I did when we got married. It became totally unconditional."

Scuggs is due to graduate in May, and her husband will be home on leave to celebrate with her. Then the couple is off to Germany to finally truly begin their life together.

"I never thought I would be able to put someone else not beside me, but in front of me," she said.

Scuggs may have an unusual story for a 20-year-old college student, but the truth is she is not alone.

Sheena Watson, 20, is also a senior at WSSU, and her story is strikingly similar.

Watson married her husband, Lennard Watson, 20, in October. By November, Lennard was in Iraq serving as an army medic, and returned

to his military base in Fort Polk, Louisiana just 2 days after the two were married.

Lennard, also a student at WSSU, majoring in nursing, had to put his educational plans aside, at least temporarily.

Sheena said it's easier with him gone, educationally speaking. Absence makes the heart grow fonder, and she agrees it's true.

She added that she has learned to appreciate the small things.

"We used to talk every day, now it's once a week, sometimes it's not even that, there are weeks when I don't get a call at all," she said. "That's when I start to worry"

Her friends are very supportive.

"We talk about it," she said.

But this year, Valentine's Day for the Watsons will be via air

mail, chocolates, letters and perhaps hope for the future—a future that looks bright for both of them.

Lennard wants to finish his education and continue his military career and Sheena, an education major, said she plans to teach on-base wherever they get stationed.

When asked about the limitations of teaching overseas, she responded, "I just want to be with him."

Both Sheena and Daysha are both enjoying the married life, but it's not as easy as it looks.

"It's a lot of sacrifice, and takes a certain maturity level," Watson said. "You have to be strong-minded, [because] people will always have something to say."

Both couples are anxiously awaiting the time when Valentine's Day can be spent with the ones they love.

Molecular biology student says her trip to West Africa was the experience of a lifetime

By Melissa C. Nelson
SPECIAL TO THE ARGUS

"Bonsoir tubabu !!!" I heard those words frequently from children during my trip to Mali, West Africa. They mean "white stranger". "Stranger" because I was American, and "white" because to the kids, my skin complexion looked almost white.

In the summer of 2003, the University of Maryland's School of Medicine selected me to participate in a program called the Mali Training Program. It is a program designed for minority students who are interested in the area of tropical and infectious diseases. For those of you who may not be familiar with Mali, it is the largest country in West Africa. The official language is French, but most of the people speak Bambara.

In Bamako, at the University of Mali, my training and research was based on the topic of malaria, one of the deadliest diseases located in the tropics! It is carried by the Anopheles mosquito and is responsible for over 1 million deaths in sub-Saharan Africa. When bitten by an infected mosquito, the malaria parasite is injected into the body eventually invading the red blood cell. When the blood cell ruptures, the person becomes sick with fever, headache, diarrhea, severe body ache, chills, and anemia.

Throughout my eight weeks of training, my first four weeks were spent assisting with anti-malarial drug resistance research in the city of Bamako. After I gained a strong background in that area, I decided to do my fieldwork in the village of Kollé by collecting blood samples and helping to provide medical care.

Electricity and running water were not necessary. I had everything I needed, well water, food, clothes, and lots of love and



Photo by Melissa Nelson
WSSU Senior Melissa Nelson was selected by the University of Maryland's School of Medicine to participate in a training program in West Africa

attention from my Malian friends in Kollé. I was intrigued by how warm and friendly the people of Mali were towards me.

My friends in Mali understood that I was an American, and as often as unknowingly offended them, they continually forgave me. I remember the first time we ate dinner. We sat down in a circle in small lawn chairs with a big metal bowl full of rice and a thick green sauce that was delicious! (My favorite meal was chicken and plantains but we often ate rice with sauce, and goat, beef, or chicken). No one ever told me that when you eat, you always use your right hand to scoop up your food; you never use your left hand because it's considered an insult! When I put my left hand in the bowl to eat, everyone started yelling at me in Bambara. I looked at them baffled with hurt feelings because I didn't understand what I did wrong. One of the Malians politely explained what I did wrong and softly told me to just be mindful of it the next time I eat.

Many patients were seen on a daily basis and there are a few

that I will never forget. One night around 7:45 pm, we were contacted to come to the clinic for a severe case of malaria. A lifeless, four year old girl was lying on the bed, waiting for us. She was in the clinic for almost three days before we sent her to Bamako for further treatment. We were afraid that she was not going to survive because her body was so limp and she was not responding to any of the medication we had given her. Fortunately, after a few days, she was allowed to return home. When we went to check on her, she was sound asleep, and her mother's smile reassured us that she was doing just fine.

My dream is to go back to Mali and work as a physician, not only because they need the health care, but because I loved helping to provide it! The experience in Mali was phenomenal and cannot be compared to anything else, mainly because it gave me the ability to be a part of a research project and know that what my colleagues, and I were doing will benefit the lives of millions of people.

Miss WSSU encourages volunteerism with children

By Mignon Turner
SPECIAL TO THE ARGUS

What is the one thing that all college students need, but no one ever has enough of? No, not money, nor time, but yes, community service hours! If this response sounds familiar, then come join Miss Winston-Salem State University, the campus queens, and several other WSSU volunteers at the Salvation Army Girls' and Boys' Club on Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive.

This year, the Boy's and Girl's Club sends vans to Winston-Salem State University to pick up interested volunteers each Wednesday at 5 p.m. in the parking circle in front of the Thompson Center and brings them back at 7 p.m. The Boy's and Girl's Club has over 200 youth from ages seven to 15. If unable to ride the bus on Wednesday, the Boys and Girls Club is open on Mondays through Fridays from 3:30 to 7 p.m., and volunteers are always welcome. The youth need instructional support in areas of math, reading, and writing. Several Winston-Salem State University volunteers have served over one hundred hours. Many of them have established strong relationships with the youth and improved their academic progress. Not only do the volunteers foster positive friendships, but several of them win awards for their commitment.

As Miss WSSU, I encourage all students and organizations to take advantage of the free transportation sponsored by the Salvation Army Girls' and Boys' Club as well as several of the community service opportunities provided by Mr. Tanner in the Office of Career Services. In addition, I also encourage campus organizations to sponsor educational workshops, develop mentoring programs, design recreational activities, or implement arts and crafts activities. As college students it is our responsibility to give back to our neighborhoods and children in our communities. The transportation is free and the choice is yours. Find it in your heart to give back, what you have been given.

"I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: The ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve."