

Teaching through life experience

Seymour's education, travels help him to serve

By Michael Harrington
Correspondent

As one sits in the office of Dr. James J. Seymour, one can't help but feel as if they are in a museum. Inside a room that is no bigger than an eight by ten cubic box, you're surrounded by African statues and paintings. On the walls are scriptures that one might recognize from when they were little.

There is a desk with piled high with papers, magazines, and books. There are three chairs, one in the front and two in the back. A small computer sits in the corner with a refrigerator and microwave on each side. This is where Seymour gets his work done. This is his second home.

Seymour, 47, who was born in Bridgeport, Connecticut, has been a very busy man since the early 70's, dedicating his professional life to serving in cross-cultural and interracial settings.

He is the middle of five children and has been married to the former Dawn Karen DeGroat of Chester, New York, since 1975. The Seymours have three children, Jessica, Aaron, and Heather.

Seymour started his higher learning experience at Central Connecticut University where he played football as a quarterback and defensive end. A tragic

accident to his back ended his football career.

In 1976 Seymour began pastoring and teaching in Bethel, Alaska where he assisted in alcohol rehabilitation counseling. He lived in Alaska for three years where he taught and pastored the Yupik Eskimos, who he says are a very shy people. This is also where his first two children were born.

Seymour earned his Ministerial Diploma from the Zion Bible Institute in 1975. He continued his learning at Southeastern College, where he received a Bachelor's Degree in Secondary Education history in 1976.

Seymour also holds a master's degree in Community Agency Counseling from Fairfield University in Fairfield Connecticut. He received a master's of divinity and doctor of ministry degrees from the Faith Evangelical Lutheran Seminary.

He traveled to Africa to continue his teachings and attempt to erase the racial barriers through religion.

Seymour spent 12 years in Zimbabwe, Africa. During which he was the College Principal and Counseling Center Director, overseeing and teaching at the Theological College which is located in the Capitol City of Harare.

"The temperature is beautiful and peaceful," Seymour says. "It felt like I was in Southern California, about 70 degree's year round."

Seymour reached Zimbabwe at a very critical time.

"I arrived in Zimbabwe right after the seven year war which turned formally Rhodesia to Zimbabwe in 1980," he says.

While in Zimbabwe, he lived

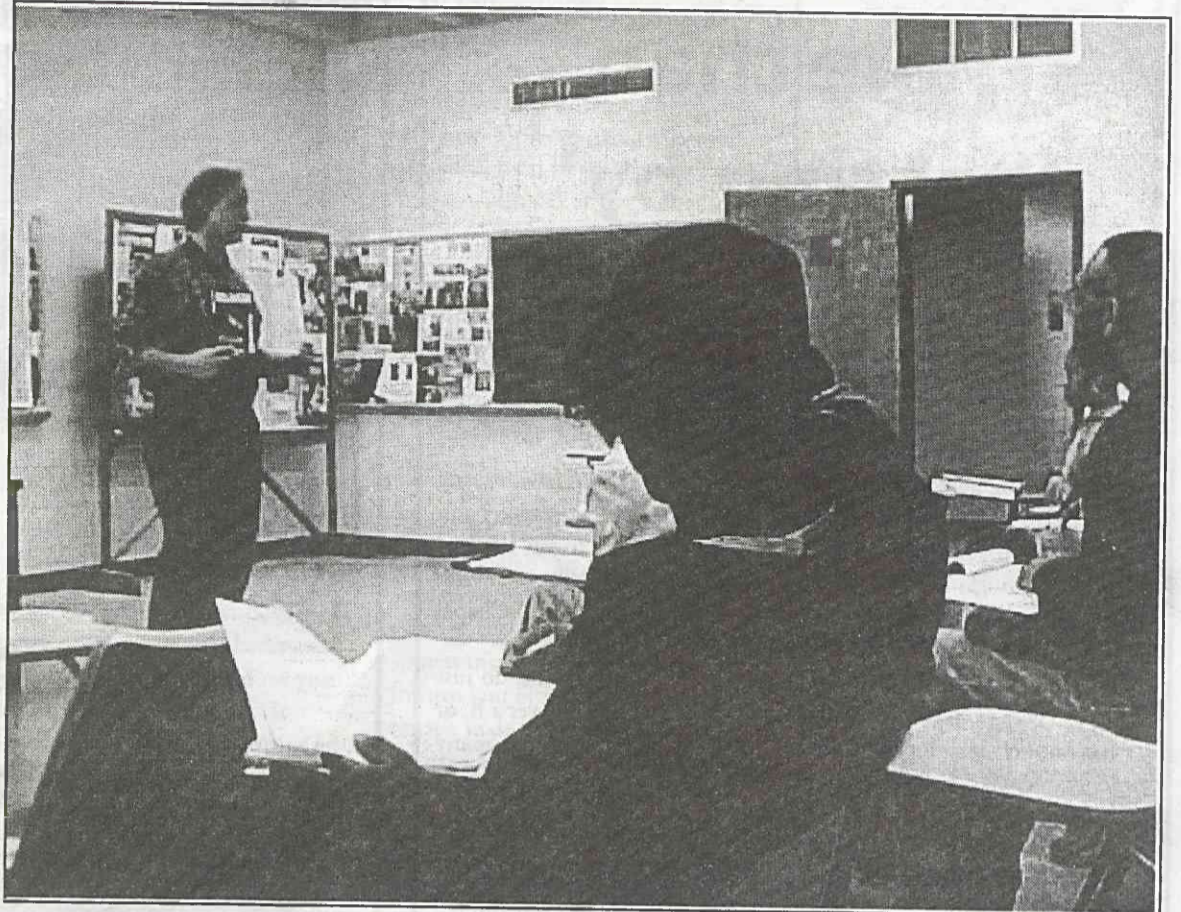


Photo by Brion Anim-Addo

Dr. Seymour tries to use his some experiences to have a positive impact on his students.

with the Shona tribe, who are very open and helpful. The Shona tribe believed very strongly in commitment to what is best for the group rather than what's best for the individual.

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It was in Africa that Seymour and his wife had their third child. He returned to the United States in 1992 where he was responsible for teaching, counseling, and administration of a congregation

of 700 people, with the Living Faith Assembly in Raleigh, North Carolina.

He did that for three years until 1995. He also took a short term teaching assignment at the Irkutsk Theological College in Siberia, Russia.

Seymour began teaching at St. Aug's in 1996. Seymour had personal reasons for choosing St. Aug's.

"I chose St. Aug's because I am committed to challenge racism and dismantle the barrier," Seymour says. "I really despise it."

Seymour is the assistant professor and chairman of the department of philosophy and religion. He is also the producer of the TV show "Issues

of Life" which airs locally on cable channels WAUG, CTV and EDUC.

The topic for this season's shows is "Preparing Leaders for the 21st Century."

Seymour has also completed a book titled "Black History Through Blue Eyes: The debt the world owes Africa."

His journey has been a long and fulfilling one, but he feels that it is not complete. He says still has some more serving to do.

"We serve God best," he says, "by serving other people."

Wellness Center makes students put health first

By LeVar Moody
Correspondent

The Community Wellness Center has become a very popular addition to the campus. Students have found a place where they can achieve their physical goals between and after classes. Not only does St. Aug's challenge your minds; it now challenges your body.

Tyler Hall was abandoned for years until it was renovated for the center, which opened last year. It's filled with all sorts of professional-quality exercise equipment to help users tone, stretch and work their bodies into shape.

However, you have to take a physical and equipment assessment to use the facility. But you don't have to work alone. They have a staff who will assist and train those who need a little extra motivation.

In the first three months of operation, the center accommodated 650 students, 190 faculty and staff, and 12 community members. They receive 150 visitors daily and the number

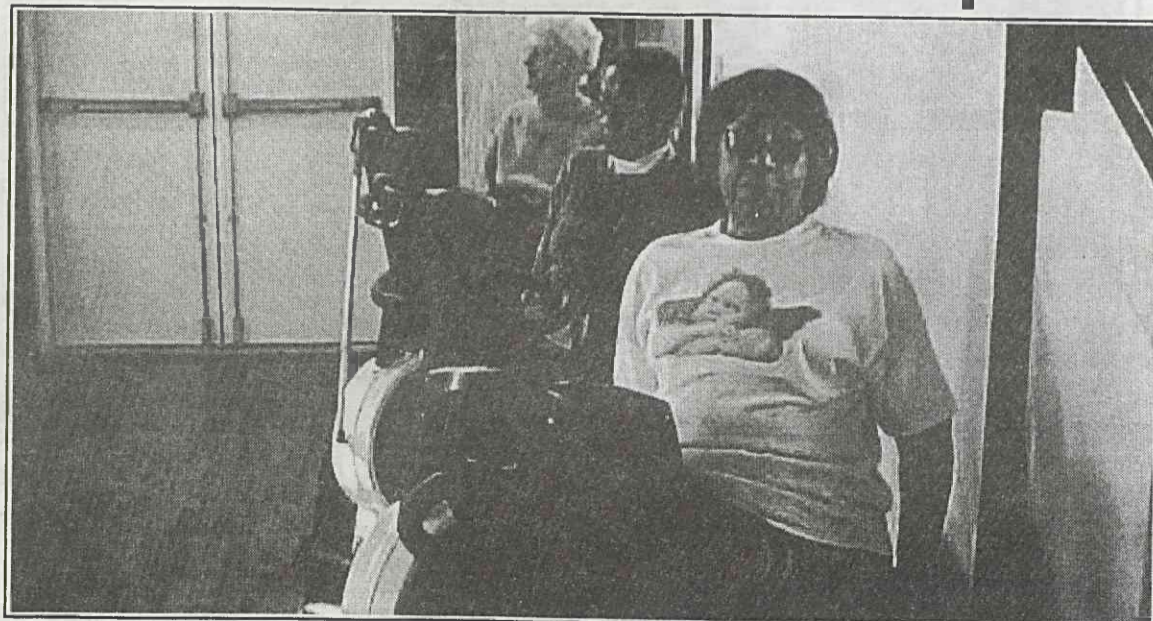


Photo by Brion Anim-Addo

St. Aug's Alumni, Louise Perry Grier (front) class of '41, takes advantage of the wellness center.

is steadily increasing. The Wellness Center is only fitness facility in southeast Raleigh. The staff is looking forward to welcoming more members.

"It is a wonderful feeling to be able to provide a service that was needed for so long," Bob Nelson, director of the Wellness Center said. "The students need

a place where they can come and get a great workout and stay in shape."

Though the center has received positive comments from visitors, Nelson believes that things can only get better.

"There is room for improvement," he said. "We will begin to offer 'programmatic

services, screening, fitness incentives, aerobic classes and a health education program. We are trying to get people as soon as we can."

The trainers at the Wellness Center are very enthusiastic about its progress and overall success.

"I believe the Wellness Center was a very good investment,"

Theophilus S. Alston, assistant trainer and St. Aug's student said. "It allows you to work your physical well-being because when you're physically fit, it changes the way you walk, talk, act, and feel."

The school plans to keep the center up to good standards and begin to market to the public. The staff wants students to be more aware of their physical health by eating healthier meals and getting exercise. Nelson feels the center can play a vital role for them.

"There is a great need for the center," Nelson said. "I feel the success will definitely continue along as everyone takes advantage and respects themselves and their bodies."

The center operates Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. It's only open for six hours on Saturday. There is no fee to be a member for students who attend St. Aug's. Faculty and community members pay a small monthly fee of \$24.