

Former student, Oliver, joins faculty in Education Dept.



Donna Oliver

Donna Hill Oliver, the 1987 National Teacher of the Year, has accepted an appointment as associate professor of education at Elon College.

According to college officials, Oliver will teach in the college's

department of education, supervise student teachers and serve as assistant director of a new leadership development program, which includes the North Carolina Teaching Fellows.

Elon is one of two private colleges authorized to offer the North Carolina Teaching Fellows program. The first class of approximately 30 Teaching Fellows is expected to enroll this fall.

"Donna Oliver is a gifted teacher," said Elon President Fred Young in announcing the appointment. "Through her considerable talent and ability she has brought well-deserved recognition to her profession and to the Burlington City School System. We are pleased that she will continue her career

by coming to Elon to help educate a new generation of teachers, many of whom will teach in Burlington and Alamance County."

Oliver received her bachelor's degree in biology in 1972. She has also earned a master's degree in education from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and a master's in educational administration from A & T State University.

Oliver has spent 13 years teaching biology at Hugh M. Cummings High School in Burlington, where she served as chairman of the science department, a member of the curriculum committee and advisor to the cheerleaders.

"Mrs. Oliver has been a valuable asset to our school system, and we

hate to lose her," said Dr. Joe Sinaclaire, superintendent of the Burlington City Schools.

"However, we certainly understand her desire to work in higher education and to pursue advanced

studies. We wish her well at Elon." Her journey to the national title included being named Teacher of the Year for Cummings, The Burlington City Schools, the region and the state in 1986-87.

Centennial Moments

September 2, 1890

The First Students Arrive

"Elon College Hotel" houses first students

Despite frantic efforts, the buildings were woefully incomplete on September 2 when the first men and women began arriving to enroll. S.M. Smith, a prospective student from Auburn, N.C., alighted at Elon from a late afternoon train and frankly described his introduction to what was to become his alma mater:

I was sent to the "Elon College Hotel," run by Mrs. Walter Smith, wife of the depot agent. After supper, the students who came in on that train met Dr. Newman at the station, and with a kerosene lantern he led us along a foot path up through the campus to the college building, which had not been completed. I remember we climbed a ladder to get in the front door. Upstairs in the chapel, we went through the routine of registering and getting acquainted with each other. The only lights in the chapel were tin kerosene lamps hanging on nails driven in the mortar between the bricks (the plaster coating had not been applied to the interior walls at that time). The seating was split-bottom chairs, with an occasional 10 or 12-foot rough board extending from one chair to another to increase the capacity as students arrived. The rostrum was built of rough timbers which had been used as scaffolding around the building.

An even more serious disadvantage was that the dormitory was not ready for occupancy. This situa-

tion posed a problem far more difficult to solve, but after considerable frenzied activity, lodgings were found for the women in private homes. Smith and a few other men arranged to stay at the hotel or elsewhere in the village, but most of them, unable to find local accommodations, "camped out" on the third floor of the College Building as the main building was designated during the early years.

Half a century later, Smith vividly recalled the beginning of his four-year residency: At the "Hotel" that first night, I was assigned a back room. I shall never forget my feelings the next morning. It was pouring rain. From my window I could see only woods with a small cottage in the distance. It began to dawn on me that I was 75 miles from home and about to become a student in college. Homesick - yeah, that's what it was. Nostalgia, they call it nowadays, but it's all the same.

In an effort to cheer the new rivals amid such depressing conditions, young Long organized string band, which included depot agent, a merchant, and several carpenters to serenade females in the evenings. The musical gesture helped ease homesickness and temporary conditions more bearable while affording the musicians an outlet for their talents.

Excerpted from *Elon College: History and Traditions* by Durward Stokes.

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