



Author Tim O'Brien thanks Rosalyn Lomax, English instructor, for her purchase of his books following his Sunday reading.

## O'Brien tells stories to 500 in readings

By CATHERINE GERRINGER

"Everything I just told you was a lie. I'm a paid liar."

With these words, author Tim O'Brien stunned his audience of over 400 students on Monday April 3, at his 10:00 a.m. reading in the Lecture Hall.

Tim O'Brien, author of Going After Cacciato, The Things They Carried, The Nuclear Age, In The Lake in the Woods, and numerous other essays and short stories, is the winner of the 1979 National Book Award.

*Time* magazine called his newest work *In The Lake of the Woods* the best novel of 1994.

WCC students have the opportunity to study his works in 2 English courses, ENG 152, College Composition II, and ENG 276, Contemporary American Fiction.

The WCC Foundation, the WCC Student Government Association, Friends of the Library of Wayne County, and private benefactors combined resources to bring O'Brien to Goldsboro for 2 readings.

On Sunday, April 2, at 3:00 p.m. more than 100 attended the reading and book signing, including people from Cary and Raleigh.

At the Monday reading students from 6 local high schools in addition to WCC students, faculty, and staff filled the 400-seat Lecture Hall.

Both groups heard a portion from O'Brien's work in progress as yet unnamed.

The story revolves around Herbie and a make-shift airplane which is turned into a cross to crucify Herbie's sister.

The first person narrator's mother interrupts this procedure.

At both readings he read from his novel, The Things They Carried, specifically the portion about the protagonist's decision to go to Vietnam rather than to avoid the draft.

O'Brien also discussed his knowledge of the world, the human heart, his experiences in Vietnam, his childhood, and how he



A student discusses a point with Dr. Sandra Carlton-Alexander following her reading of "Across the Creek." PHOTO: LIZ HEADOR

## Author addresses changes in the South

By JENNIFER L. TAFE

Dr. Sandra Carlton-Alexander, author of Black Butterflies: Stories of the South in Transition, presented a lecture as part of Women's History Month to 200 Wayne Community College students in the Lecture Hall.

Dr. Carlton-Alexander's book, which took her 14 years to write, is a collection of short stories addressing how changes in the South in the past 30 years have affected relationships between people.

She said modern women play multiple roles in our society: teacher, mother, wife, professional, and more.

Authors who inspired her include Paule Marshall, Toni Morrison, and Maya Angelou.

She also paid tribute to Alice Walker calling her a "shero."

Dr. Carlton-Alexander read a short story entitled "Across the Creek" from the collection.

learned to incorporate all of this into his fiction.

He said each person has stories to tell based on what has happened to him or her.

He then revealed how a fiction writer plays with real experiences in his writing to arrive at the true meaning of life.

Student John Raspe wrote an entry for his Humanities 101 class about O'Brien's visit: "This was one of the best occasions I have ever attended.

This story deals with Beatrice Jones, an African-American high school student, who becomes friends with Bev, a white girl, during a summer in the 1950s when they are working in tobacco.

Their unique friendship ends when the girls return to school and go their separate ways.

Beatrice knows jealousy when she learns that Bev has won a scholarship.

She feels that things have been easy for Bev because she is white.

All of her life, Beatrice is driven secretly to compare her success with Bev's.

By a trick of fate, Beatrice and Bev meet at an airport almost 30 years later.

They discuss their lives, successes, and failures as old friends, and Beatrice realizes one value of their relationship is that she was driven to pursue her dreams.

"I especially liked his story about his trip to the Canadian border. It was realistic, emotional, and suspenseful."

Marcia Shelton, a ENG 151 student, wrote in response to the Monday reading: "Tim O'Brien bettered my understanding of fictional authors because he taught me that through writing your dreams can come true, and the world can be a nicer place to live."