

Alums pursue unusual, unconventional careers

DIANA MOVIUS

NCSSM rigorously prepares its students for college, particularly in the areas of science and math. Since NCSSM students are generally gifted in the subjects of science and math, students tend to pursue these areas in their college and career choices. However, some NCSSM alumni have broken

this trend and followed unusual and interesting paths after graduation.

One such area is visual art. NCSSM has yielded a few full-time artists including Elizabeth Wells Purdy, '85, now a professional potter.

Art teacher Elizabeth Moorman said, "From the moment [Purdy] sat down at the wheel there was a smile on her face. I could tell she thought that clay was the most wonderful thing in the universe." Interestingly enough, Purdy made the tiles on the Art Studio's sign. Moorman

also reported that grand senior Amy Oliver recently ran across one of Purdy's exhibits at a craft fair.

Another visual artist, John Kelly, '92, loved graphic arts. He worked as a camera

operator and later as a computer illustrator in the Distance Learning office for four years immediately following graduation. He now attends the Film School of the North Carolina School of the Arts to pursue the subject.

Music constitutes another unconventional field for NCSSM graduates. Jan Borgerson, '91, formed a band at NCSSM called "Figment and the Rest", which released a CD after graduation. Borgerson now wants to put music on websites.

The military also holds a number of NCSSM graduates. For example, Gerry Sherman, '82, attended the Naval Academy after graduation and is now a helicopter pilot. Cozy Baily, '95, and Joshua Filbey, '96, are other examples of alumni who have gone to the Naval Academy. The military often times appeals to students because it gives free education and free travel in exchange for four years of service. Grand senior Peter Boyd-Bowman, who now attends West Point Military Academy,

perceived the military as a productive way to spend time thinking about what he wanted to do with his future.

But why would students come to NCSSM if they do not want to pursue science and math after high school? NCSSM obviously has an appeal that draws a number of students with varied academic interests. However, NCSSM's rigorous and heavily science and math-oriented

schedule can either encourage a student's love for those subjects, or make the student realize that he/she wants to do something else in the future.

Therese Taxis, NCSSM's alumni/parent coordinator, said, "There's so much depth to these students...They're generally gifted above and beyond the areas of science and math, and in so many ways."

LUCY MELVIN

...but it is not a college. So what does this mean? How does the experience compare to college? ...and go out into the real world again? To explore this ...gone ahead bravely into the unknown—so, grand seniors ...what it is like to go to college after NCSSM. ...they were prepared for the academic rigors they face in college. ...environment at NCSSM allowed him to gain experience learning ...learned. Stephen Patterson explained that many of his professors ...more responsibility than he did at NCSSM, but that the work is not ...well for the load," said Davidson student Phillip Stewart, summing up ...challenging than they expected. ...freeze, but it didn't exactly work out as I had originally planned," said

NCSSM. ...to compare college life to life at NCSSM. You quickly learn what it feels like ...ere will be something to do besides interviz," said grandsenior Matt Raines. ...th people in college because of the lack of common regimen among students. ...at many college environments lack the diversity and unity found at NCSSM. ...hesion and the things we did together. ...ere own way," said Georgia Tech student Steve Mewborn. ...y in college, and that students go to class fewer hours a day, however, ...will not have to work in it, either," said great-grandsenior Schuyler

College is as bubble-like as you choose to make it. However, Tran noted ...nd newspapers all at your dorm room, it is hard to stay oblivious to ...many graduates find the real world (the one outside the bubble)

...on my first visit to the ocean. I've mad it over the dunes to the ...ge and expansive the world really is," said Haeffele. ...gory all its own, and very few alumni would trade in the

...perience helped PREPARE me for college life, but ...ct situations. In other words, S&M was a step ...l, but it's still a step below college life,"

JENNIFER LI
DIANA MOVIUS

After turning their tassels on graduation day, many NCSSM alums have not retreated into obscurity. Some alums have moved to the forefront of their occupational fields and have become famous.

The interesting and wide range of some alums' accomplishments shows the diversity apparent in NCSSM's graduating classes and gives attribution to the school's selection of gifted and motivated students.

NCSSM prepares its students for the real world—the following al-

ums demonstrate that after graduation from the school, students really can become famous and enjoy tremendous success. NCSSM graduates have been making news.

Hunter Middleton, class of '85, has recently invented a new method of visualizing lungs. In collaboration with Duke and Princeton research teams Middleton has filed a patent for his invention. He has benefited from a love of science that he nurtured at NCSSM, and possibly has become famous because of it.

Another scientifically inclined alum, Colin Law, class of 1986, has worked on several projects with NASA, including the Mars Observer Mission. He, too, has benefited from a scientifically inclined nature and from NCSSM.

However, like many alumni, Law's NCSSM experience still lingers in his mind.

"[I] would love to come back and teach...at NCSSM", said Law.

Law was not the only alum with this ambition. Dr. Robin Cunningham, class of '83, returned to NCSSM to continue his interest in mathematics--only this time as a teacher. He is eager to share his knowledge with NCSSM's current students.

Cunningham himself has experienced fame as a nationally ranked chess champion. Cunningham was a member of the chess team while attending NCSSM.

Like Cunningham, other NCSSM alums have capitalized on the hobbies they perfected at NCSSM, and have become famous as a result. Lynn Hooker and Phoebe Juel, both trivia buffs, participated on the national Jeopardy competition. Hooker beat out two ivy-league competitors to win the college bowl

championship and Juel won in excess of \$100,000 on the show.

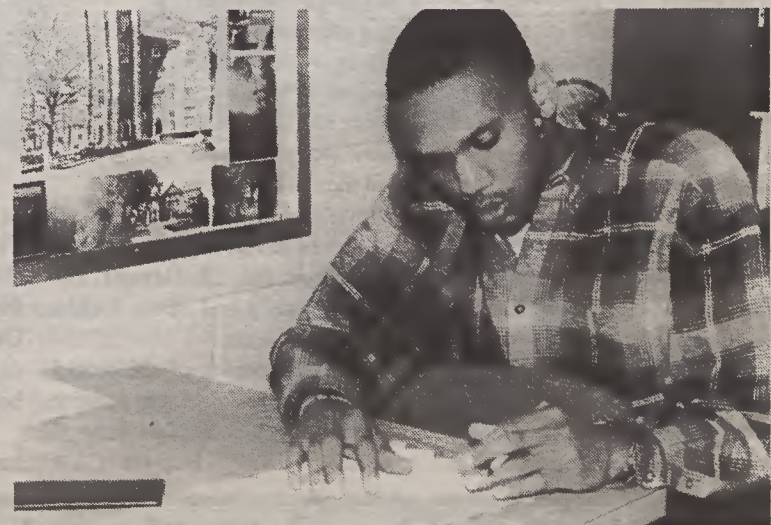
Also receiving much national attention, Kristen Cullers, class of '89, was selected to be the Brigade Commander of the U.S. Naval Academy. This distinction is given to the highest-ranking member of the senior class. Cullers was the first female to receive the honor. A native of Fayetteville, while Cullers attended NCSSM she played soccer and was a member of the math team.

The modeling industry was also graced with the presence of an NCSSM alum. Ellis Smith, class of '82, was the first African American model for Tommy Hilffiger®. He gained much national recognition because of this distinction. Smith was employed by many well-known fashion designers, including Calvin Klein, until his unfortunate death due to AIDS.

Because NCSSM is so selective, and because it provides such a comprehensive and preparatory education, it may not seem surprising to students that many alumni have achieved fame. However, when one considers the age of the school, a different light is cast on the idea of famous NCSSM alums.

"Last year was our first 15 year reunion. Our oldest alum is 33. When you think about it even that's young to have done so much," said Therese Taxis, the school's alumni/parent coordinator.

Since the school is still a relatively young school, many faculty and staff expect to see more distinguished achievements by NCSSM alums. They can only foresee the number of famous alumni to increase with time.



Left: Yvette Chuang weighs college materials in preparation to send off her college application.
Top: Dwayne Sellars makes time in his busy schedule to fill out a college application.



Yvette Chuang

NCSSM graduates take spotlight