

Community News

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Two moms share secrets of happy motherhood



Evelyn Terry: 'It's not easy but it's worth it'

By ROBIN BARKSDALE
Community News Editor

The definition of motherhood, according to Evelyn Terry: "It ain't easy but I submit that the corollary to that is that anything worth having is never going to be easy."

Mrs. Terry has been mother to enough children to offer such an assessment. In fact, she is one of the biggest proponents of motherhood to come along recently. The official mother to one, and unofficially to many, Mrs. Terry said she prefers spending time with young people to doing anything else she can think of. Her home, known affectionately to younger members of the community

as "Terry's Tradewinds," has housed everyone from children who just needed some place to come for love and attention to homesick college students who needed a place to call home. They think of her as their mother and she counsels, worries and advises just as their natural mother would.

"Children are so real. Children are so vulnerable. There is nothing pretentious about children to me," said Mrs. Terry, the director of institutional research at Winston-Salem State University. "Children are just so important. I have always loved children and (her husband) Fred likes children so we have them in our home all the time. I think that we

have had no fewer than nine children who have lived with us at one time or another. When you work and do a lot of other things, it is comforting to come into a home that is completely chaotic with children."

Mrs. Terry said that the practice may be a carry-over from her own childhood when her mother's home was filled with children. An only child herself, Mrs. Terry said that there were so many "other's people's children" in her home that she often found herself becoming jealous of the attention her mother gave to the children. Although she resented having to share her mother's affection with other children, Mrs. Terry said that the practice of giving and shar-

ing with children apparently rubbed off on her and today she loves to do anything she can to help children.

"Our house was always the house where children came. I was technically my mother's only child but that was all," said Mrs. Terry. "I remember being angry that my mother would give my cousin money for her lunch and make me carry my lunch in a bag. Then she explained that my cousin was older -- in college -- and that she needed to be able to buy herself a lunch and that I would just have to carry mine. I couldn't understand why my cousin was getting money that should have

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Photo by Sonja Covington

Evelyn Terry has taken several children into her home and treated them as her own. She says the rewards have made it all worthwhile.

Royster: 'It's a new generation of black mothers'

By ROBIN BARKSDALE
Community News Editor

It's not always easy for us but we do okay."

Marcella Royster is not the same kind of mom that her mother was, but she said that she's managing well anyway.

The single mother of a 13-year-old son, Ms. Royster keeps a hectic schedule that spreads her time between motherhood, full-time employment and night courses at Winston-Salem State University four days each week. It's not an easy life, she said, but it's all necessary to provide the kind of life that she wants for her son.

"The toughest part, for me, is not being here all the time because I'm in school Monday through Thursday and I work full time. And I am involved in other activities and groups. I'm not a real domestic kind of mother. I think that this is a new generation of black mothers. Mothers are doing all kinds of things and raising their children, too," she said. "But I do make sure that his school work stays up to par. I think we do well. We make it because of the type of person I am and the type of person my son is. We both want to succeed and I want him to see how important it is to get an education.

Shortly after her high school graduation and while she was still deciding what she wanted to do with her life, Ms. Royster became pregnant. She said she put her future plans on hold and undertook the task of learning what motherhood is all about.

"I had just graduated from high school, and I was working full time, and I was living at home with my mother," said the 33-year-old Ms. Royster. "I moved from my mother's house when my son was 4 months old. But the most frightening thing was being on my own and staying by myself."

The two have been a team ever since. Ms. Royster said that the most rewarding part of motherhood has been growing up with her son and learning as he has learned. She said, too, that she considers herself fortunate because her son has not given her any trouble and has grown into a person that she really likes.

"He's a pretty smart person and he's very independent," she said. "I have a very nice son and he makes me proud of him. I haven't had any trouble with him and I'm pleased with his academic work."

But although she has managed

to handle the pressures of single motherhood, Ms. Royster said that she is all too aware that there are many young mothers whose lives end when they have a child. Having seen the consequences that young parenthood had on some of her friends, Ms. Royster was determined to avoid the same pitfalls.

"When my family first moved to Winston-Salem, we lived in the projects. That is when I saw a lot of young women with children, and I saw a lot of young women with children who were not doing anything for themselves. It was like they had a baby and they just stopped trying to do anything else so they had more babies," she said.

"I knew that I didn't want to live there for the rest of my life, and I knew that if I ever had children I didn't want them to grow up there either. We moved after about two years, but I never forgot seeing all those young women. I saw single parents and I saw the hardships they had and I vowed that I would work hard to keep my children from having to live like that. Even though I started school late, I'm doing it. I'm not rich and I wouldn't even say I'm middle class but I don't have to ask anybody for anything and we do okay. I work hard

to give my son the things I want him to have and that's what it's all about."

Ms. Royster has seen some generational contrasts between the way her mother raised her and the way she is raising her son, but she said she feels that she is instilling within her son the same values that her mother gave her children.

"My mother is a great mother and I respect her, but she didn't push me to go to college. She did tell me that I could go but I never knew how essential it was that I get an education," she said. "I stress the importance of education to my son all the time. I want him to know how important school is. That's one of the reasons I went to college at such a late date. If he sees how much it means to me, hopefully he will realize how important it is for him, too."

Wearing the hat of both mother and father, Ms. Royster said, has been difficult. And she admits that there have been times when she has wished that his father were around. She said that she has handled the situation simply by trying to be the best mother she can be and teach her son as much as she can about right and wrong.

"It hasn't been easy being both



Photo by Sonja Covington

A single mother of a teen-age son, Marcella Royster is juggling the demands of a full-time job, night classes and parenting.

mother and father. There are things like peer pressure and dating that I wish a male, like his father, was here to discuss with him," said Ms.

Royster. "But I think I'm doing okay. I just hope I can teach him to believe in himself and to be the best that he can be."

Doctoral candidate prepares research today for tomorrow's space travel

By ROBIN BARKSDALE
Community News Editor

A few years ago, Michelle Chenault was an instructor who taught college students the ins and outs of clinical chemistry. Now, she is a doctoral candidate conducting major research for NASA.

Sitting in her lab discussing her research work for NASA, Mrs. Chenault's eyes widen and her face brightens as she launches into a discussion of the effect that weightlessness has on astronauts as they return to earth. It is a subject in which she is well-versed and with good reason. She has spent a year investigating the subject as a result of the \$18,000-grant she received from NASA. Mrs. Chenault said that her work should yield several practical applications both on earth and in space.

"What I'm looking at are the changes that occur in the body as a result of going into space and returning to earth," she said. "The changes that occur also occur in disease states, so if we understand the changes from space, we'll be better able to understand disease states. It allows us to study the effect of weightlessness and to adapt to those changes. It will make it easier for the common person to go to space and it allows us to know who shouldn't go because of the health risks."

The lack of gravity in space causes several changes in the human body, Mrs. Chenault said. One of the major changes is that the blood flows into the brain and away from the lower portions of the body. When the space travelers return to earth, there is a rush of blood from the brain which brings on dizziness and other sensations. Also, she said, there is a loss of muscle tissue any time the human body goes into space. The opportunity to study the effects of that muscle loss and the recovery from the muscle loss, will enable NASA to prepare average citizens for space travel and eventual habitation.

Mrs. Chenault's work is "simulated" through the

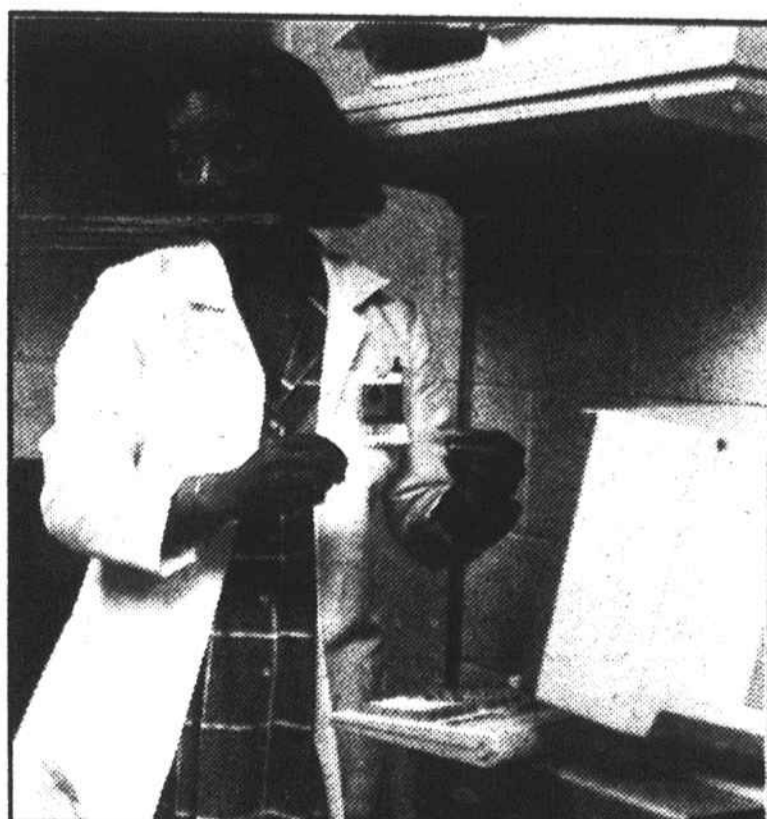


Photo by Sam Greenwood

Michelle Chenault, a doctoral student at Bowman Gray, has been chosen to attend France's Space University this summer.

use of lab rats. The internal structure of a rat closely resembles that of a human body, she said, and weightlessness is simulated by altering the flow of blood in the lab rats and then returning it to its normal state.

Mrs. Chenault took the long route to study space, but she said she felt destined to be involved with the space program.

"I always thought I would do something in terms of space," said Mrs. Chenault, who grew up near a space study center in Cleveland. "As a kid coming up, I really thought I wanted to be an astronaut."

But instead of going directly to NASA, Mrs. Chenault enrolled at Indiana's Valparaiso University, where she received her undergraduate degree. In 1978, she received a master's degree from Central Michigan University.

She taught at Bowling Green University in Ohio

"I always thought I would do something in terms of space. As a kid coming up, I really thought I wanted to be an astronaut."

-- Michelle Chenault

before joining the faculty at Winston-Salem State University. She currently is on leave from the university to pursue her doctorate degree at Bowman Gray School of Medicine.

Mrs. Chenault, who said that she had little exposure to space study before last year, recently received a \$10,000 scholarship which will allow her to attend the International Space University's summer program at the Universite Louis Pasteur in Strasbourg, France. Countries around the globe will be represented at the session. While there, she will participate in the life science program and attend sessions on all areas of space exploration and habitation. The university is designed to give students a broad understanding of several space-related fields. Participants will address the subjects most critical to future space exploration and development. With space study continuing to advance throughout the world, Mrs. Chenault said that it is becoming necessary to begin determining the rules of the game with regard to space. Mrs. Chenault's primary area of focus will be in space life sciences, but other participants will attend sessions on space business and management, space engineering, space policy and law and space resources

and manufacturing.

"There will be all kinds of people at the summer program because all kinds of people will have to be involved with space," she said. "There will have to be lawyers to determine what the legal considerations will be. They will have to determine who owns what and why and set policies. There will be writers and architects. Space study is getting big and we'll have to begin to figure out just where it will go."

Mrs. Chenault's husband and son will join her in France toward the end of the session, which runs through August. She said that it has been hectic juggling the demands of a family and the demands of pursuing a doctorate but that she and her family have adjusted to certain routines.

"My husband and I talk to each other on the phone a lot. I write down everything I have to do and my calendar is full," said the 35-year-old. "Myron helps a lot though. We leave each other a lot of notes and messages. Family members help us out, too. I stay up late and I try to get everything done. I don't know how I do it, I just try to fit it all in. Sometimes I don't think that I do very well, but I just do the best I can."

Being in Winston-Salem, she said, also has helped her career because she and her husband both enjoy the city and the opportunities available here.

"One thing that is encouraging to me is that the city has so much to offer," she said. "I'm doing space-related research in this area. I'm not on the coast or out in California. Those are the usual places that people think of when they think of space research. But here I am in Winston-Salem, and I'm able to do research for NASA. I think that says a lot about the opportunities in the city. The folks here (at Bowman Gray) are real nice and can answer a lot of my dumb questions. Winston-Salem State has been really cooperative in allowing me leave to do this year after year. I am grateful that they allowed me time to do this."