

Community News B1



Cracking the big time in L.A.

Local grad makes national TV debut

By YVETTE N. FREEMAN
Chronicle Staff Writer

A recent college graduate from Winston-Salem is now somewhat of a celebrity, after appearing on a national late night talk show.

Chris Brown just graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill about two weeks ago, with a major in Journalism/Mass Communications, and already he's making his mark in the entertainment industry.

On Friday, May 17, he appeared with four other graduates from Michigan, Alabama, Nebraska and UCLA, on Rick Dees' "Into the Night" talk show as representatives of their schools. Brown was chosen by Bill Massey, the vice chancellor for university affairs at UNC-CH, for his achievements at the university, after Massey received a call from the producers of the show, interested in doing a segment on some recent college graduates.

This was not the first time the producers had heard Brown's name: Just a few months earlier, he had flown to L.A. for an interview with KABC, which happened to be on the same studio lot as other ABC shows, such as General Hospital, America's Funniest Home Videos and Rick Dees' "Into the Night." While he was there, Brown got an opportunity to talk to the producers of "Into the Night" and Rick Dees himself, about possible job opportunities with the show, but at the time there were no openings.

Chris now hopes that being a guest on the show will lead to employment with the

late night talk show. "... Hopefully, going out here again in this context will underscore my capacity in, I may only come back for a week or I may get on," he says.

Chris hopes to break into the entertainment industry, and eventually become a writer, particularly in comedy, but he says right now he's just trying to get his foot in the door. "I've been pursuing a

speech he made to the audience at his commencement and he says it came as a shock to everyone, especially his mother. "Her first reaction was disbelief," he said. "Everybody's was. Everybody was like, ah come on. Her first reaction was 'Why is Chris up there telling that lie?'" He says her second reaction was "Why didn't you ask me first." But he added that she finally

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— Chris Brown

career in the entertainment industry, but for starters in the television industry," he said. But he added that even if he doesn't end up with a job on the show, "It's really neat because that's totally separate from my correspondence with Rick Dees and the show in the first place." In any case, Brown says that "Rick Dees does know who I am. I met him through the show. I've written him . . . He knows I'm a student trying to work for him."

Chris first found out that he'd be on the show, Wednesday, May 8, when Massey called him and asked if he would be interested in being a guest on the show. He had planned to surprise his family before graduation, but he says he didn't have time, so he surprised them during a

calmed down and was very happy and excited.

As for the future, Chris says if he doesn't get a job with "Into the Night," he has also interviewed for an advertising position with NBC in New York, which he hopes will come through. But, he says if that doesn't materialize, he'll look elsewhere for a job in advertising or mass communications, where he can "express himself creatively."

Brown adds that "I think there's a voice in Hollywood that's not being heard; and so I'm going to go for it," although he says he has no plans to become the next Spike Lee.

Chris is the son of Richard and Carolyn Rice of Pfafftown.

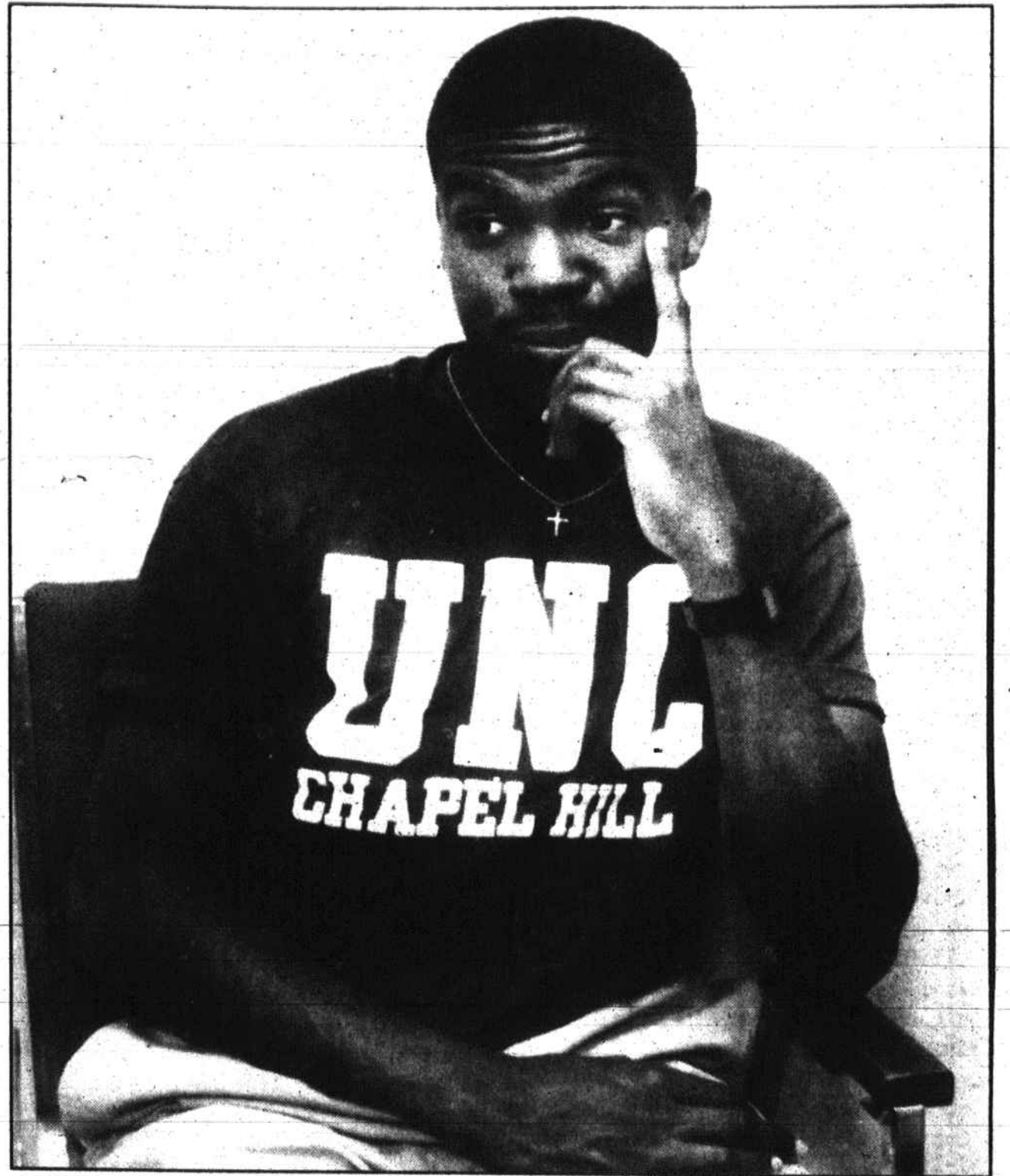


Photo by L.B. Speas Jr.

Chris Brown appeared on Rick Dees' "Into the Night" late-night talk show and hopes to earn a permanent spot on the show.

Jan Elliott Pritchett appointed Executive Director of SPAC

SPAC (North Carolina Political Action Committee for Effective Schools) announces the appointment of its Executive Director, Jan Elliot Pritchett. The Executive Director oversees the daily operations of SPAC, which include legislative activities, community outreach and fundraising activities.

Pritchett is former vice president of the Student Government Association and Student Congress Chairman at Winston-Salem State University. He is a 1991 graduate of the university having obtained an Honors Bachelor of Arts in Political Science.

Pritchett says that he is very pleased to have been appointed to this post by SPAC's founder and General Chairman, Vernon Robinson. "There are many things that I hope to accomplish as SPAC's Executive Director," says Pritchett. "The educational system in North Carolina is in a state of disarray and rather than allow the status quo to perpetuate itself in inefficiency, a new system must be implemented. Too many tax dollars are being wasted in education and it is time for parents to be empowered with the privilege to choose where their children will attend school."

SPAC will actively seek to increase its membership through petitions, literature drops, and lectures throughout the course of the summer. Robinson, believes that the support of SPAC will increase dramatically in the next few weeks now that key leaders from the Republican Party and the Democratic Leadership Conference have deemed Schools of Choice to be a viable alternative to the current educational system.

Robinson stated that he was very pleased to have Elliot Pritchett on board and that his experience with various campaigns would coincide with his duties as the Executive Director of SPAC.

Robinson also acknowledged the fact that Pritchett is coming on at a very exciting time for SPAC in recognition that people from everywhere are



Jan Elliott Pritchett

jumping on the bandwagon.

SPAC was founded in May 1990 and has concentrated on building support for six reform initiatives for the public school system.

Areas of concentration include empowering parents with the option to choose where their children attend school, teacher initiated alternative schools, and low income opportunity scholarships.

Other related areas of concentration also include restructuring public schools, empowering parents through Senate Bill 2, offering alternative and part-time certification, and stopping the North Carolina Board of Education from interfering with contracts as done with Channel One.

Seawright gets two BS degrees

Congratulations to Mark Miguell Seawright who recently graduated from North Carolina A&T State University.

Mark graduated from the School of Technology and received two bachelor of science degrees; one in manufacturing systems technology and the other in electronic and computer technology, with a single minor in business administration.

Mark is a 1987 graduate of West Forsyth High School in Clemmons, where he was a track star and the recipient of the Central Conference Award. He enrolled at North Carolina A&T in the fall of 1987.



Mark Miguell Seawright

OUR FOLKS IN THE PERSIAN GULF

By EYVETTE N. FREEMAN
Chronicle Staff Writer

A local soldier who was stationed in Saudi Arabia during the Persian Gulf War, is now back home with his wife and three-year-old daughter.

Kevin Gates returned home to Winston-Salem Saturday, May 5 to the cheers and welcomes of family and friends, after more than three months in the desert.

Happy to be out of the desert, he says, "It feels great. . . You don't have to worry about any sandstorms. The weather's a lot better, it's not as hot."

Gates left for Saudi Arabia January 21, with the Army's 312th Evacuation Hospital Unit, almost a week after the war began.

"At first I was a little hesitant, because I didn't want to leave home, leaving my family behind and everything. Other than that I just took it as it came," said the 29-year-old Winston-Salem native.

But now that he's back on U.S. soil, he says seeing his family was a wonderful experience. "I felt real great. The reason why, because, even though we weren't over there for a very long period of time. . . it's kind of rough being somewhere, like thousands of miles away from home, and don't know when you're going to leave or if you're going to leave like you came, he stated.

Gates says that one of the first things he did when he returned, was celebrate with his family, friends and co-workers at his mother's house. But after that, he said it was important for him to spend more time with his wife, Tawanna and their daughter.

He adds that while he was away, he wasn't afraid of the possibility of not coming back, but rather, having to stay for a long time.

"I knew that I was coming back," he said hesitantly, "but at times, I thought maybe. . . they would have

extended me an extra six months. So I would have been over there for one year instead of four months."

None of the members of the 312th Evac unit were injured from fighting during the war, but Gates says two soldiers from his unit were injured when their truck overturned on the highway after picking up medical supplies.

Gates also says that he wasn't that concerned about the possibility of his unit engaging in combat with the Iraqi soldiers. "I didn't feel as bad as maybe an infantry soldier would have felt, because I felt by me being in a hospital unit, I was going to be many miles behind the front lines. And most likely we wouldn't have gotten hit or ambushed, so I felt pretty safe."

Even though Gates was a member of a medical unit and responsible for taking care of injured soldiers, he says his "main job was working in the motor pool of maintenance operations. During the wartime, everybody that didn't have a medical MOS, automatically became what they call Loader Carriers. And our job basically was to bring the casualties from their helicopter or from their ambulance into the hospital."

Fortunately, he says his unit didn't see that many casualties, other than some injured Iraqi soldiers, who had been captured or surrendered. The unit did not participate in any fighting since it was stationed in Saudi Arabia, outside of the combat zone.

Gates joined the Army back in March of 1981, and says he plans to stay enlisted for only two more years, which is the remainder of time he has left in his contract. As for the future, he says he'll spend more time with his family, get back to work and hopefully start his own business. "My plans now are to start my own business, silkscreening, printing designs on T-shirts and sweatshirts."

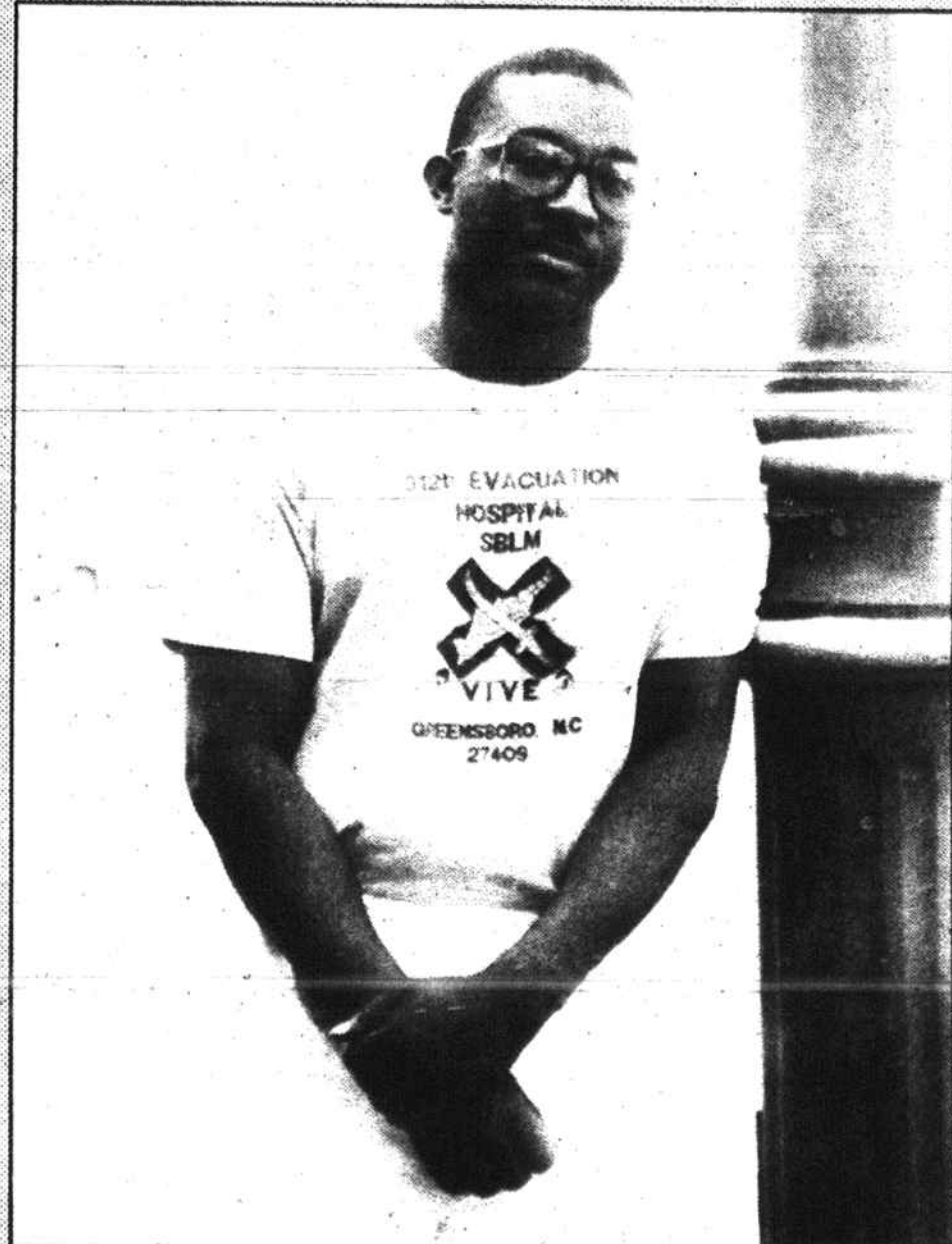


Photo by L.B. Speas Jr.

Kevin Gates returned home after more than three months in Saudi Arabia. His job was to carry the wounded from evacuation helicopters to the hospital.