

Community

WSSU Grad Begins Next Move en Route to Rx

Special to the Chronicle

Dawn Bishop has a few important decisions to make.

Like many new college graduates, she is trying to figure out her next move.

Bishop, who graduated from Winston-Salem State University in May with a degree in biology, has been offered full scholarships and hefty stipends by two graduate schools and a podiatry school. All three schools want her to spend the next six years earning a medical degree and a doctorate — at the same time.

Two of the offers came from the University of Kentucky in Lexington and Tufts University in Boston. At either school, Bishop would earn a Ph.D. in molecular biology and a medical degree with a specialty in ophthalmology.

The third offer was made by the New York College of Podiatric Medicine, where she would combine a doctorate in biomedical engineering with a degree in podiatric medicine.

"I feel blessed," Bishop said, crediting her faith in God and the support of her family for her success. "That's all I can say — it's a blessing."

For the moment, she is leaning toward New York College, where

she will be able to fuse her ambition of becoming a doctor with her passion for sports, especially basketball.

It was basketball, in fact, that led her to WSSU. Stenson Conley, WSSU's head women's basketball coach, was recruiting for the 1989-90 season, when Bishop's coach at North Hampton County High School East in Conway suggested he take a look at Bishop, a diminutive 5'8" by basketball standards.

"I knew she was smart before I went there," Conley said. "She had a great attitude, a good work ethic, and was a good mid-range shot. And, she was an outstanding student."

Conley signed her immediately to a scholarship.

A gifted student from her earliest years in school, Bishop recalls the ambiguous perception people had of her because she was bright, athletic and comparatively short.

"They'd look at me and assume that I couldn't play, and when they found out I could play, they thought I was a nerd because I was smart," she said.

Bishop was neither jock nor nerd. She played basketball as a freshman and sophomore at WSSU, as well as the alto saxophone for the school's Marching Rams Band. She made the dean's list every semester.

She was secretary of the campus Biology Club and served on the university's Judicial Committee.

"I especially wanted to attend a historically black school, for my own good, and to let other people know how valuable my degree from WSSU is," Bishop said.

Though she dropped basketball and the band at the end of her second year to concentrate on her major, she pledged the campus chapter of the Delta Sigma Theta sorority and became its financial secretary. Bishop was junior class treasurer and a member of the university's Intercollegiate Athletic Committee. Through all four years at Winston-Salem State, she was a member of Project Strengthen, a program begun in 1971 by Wilveria Atkinson, chairman of WSSU's Department of Life Sciences, to provide advanced and basic research opportunities to students and faculty.

As an undergraduate, Bishop held internships as a research assistant at Princeton University and at the National Institute of Environmental Health Science in Research Triangle Park in Durham.

She recently completed working at WSSU as a teaching assistant.

She's responsible for proctoring examinations and grading papers for 66 students who are enrolled in ele-

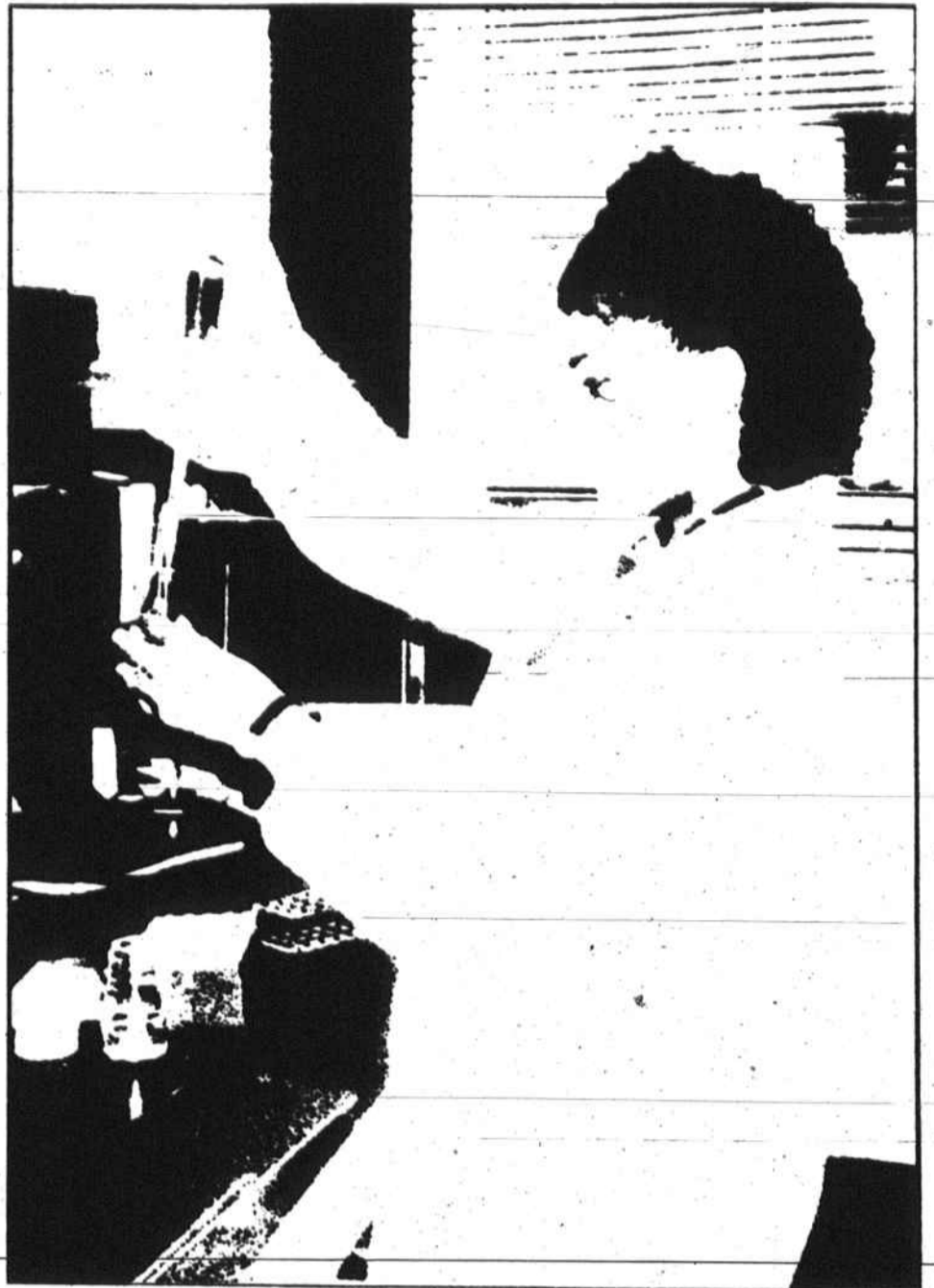
mentary statistics. She also tutors.

Home for Bishop is Rich Square, a rural community of some 2,000 residents about an hour's drive from the east coast.

Her father, George, a self-employed brick mason, is "a genius in math," Bishop says. Dollie, her mother, an alumna of Winston-Salem State Teachers College and N.C. A&T State University, has taught for 32 years. Her sisters, 23-year-old twins, Kimberly and Cynthia, graduated a year ago from N.C. Central University and Elizabeth City State University, respectively, with majors in elementary education and criminal justice.

While many 6- and 7-year-old girls were playing with dolls, Bishop was dissecting the heads of fish and storing their eyes in the kitchen freezer for safekeeping, hence her interest in ophthalmology, she says. Her collections included insects and leaves. In sixth and seventh grades, Bishop was in her school's "GT" program for the gifted and talented, and by the eighth grade, she was taking advanced courses in science and mathematics.

Asked how she felt about the future, Bishop replies, "I know where I've been and I know where I'm going — kind of — and that's a terrific feeling."



Dawn Bishop

Local Actor Who Displayed Talent at Black Theatre Festival Inks Deal

By DAVID L. DILLARD
Chronicle Staff Writer

Randy Johnson has added several new books to his reading list — books on Malcolm X.

But Johnson is familiar with the slain human rights activist — he's trying to get better acquainted with Malcolm X's daughter, Attallah Shabazz.

Shabazz was in Winston-Salem during the recent National Black Theatre Festival, and she was impressed with Johnson's solo of "Prince of Peace" at the opening night performance of "Celebrations: An African Odyssey" performed by the North Carolina Black Repertory Co.

A few days later, Johnson received a well-anticipated telephone call from Shabazz offering the Winston-Salem native a lucrative acting deal with Shabazz's performing company, Nucleus.

"I was speechless," he said. "I was elated when she called. I couldn't believe it, but at the same time I could."

Johnson, 35 and member of the repertory company since 1986, said he had a non-speaking role and that Shabazz liked how he brought the character to life.

Johnson attracted his first audience years ago by singing for

friends outside of the Atkins High School band room years ago while waiting for his brother. They would give him quarters to sing.

He still had a nonchalant attitude about performing until he met (former NAACP president and current school board member) Walter Marshall at a local recreation center in 1971.

"He saw that I could do it," Johnson said. "He was giving acting classes at 14th Street Recreation Center, and I got in his drama class."

The center put on a show that year, and Johnson was named best actor.

"At the time, Randy was a rambunctious young man who was full of energy," Marshall said. "We were doing plays by Leroi Jones (Amiri Baraka) and he really got into it."

Marshall said it wasn't easy to attract young black men at that time, but acting caught Johnson's attention.

"He had an interest and just stayed involved," he said. "I'm glad we were able to reach him."

Weeks before this year's theater festival, Johnson quit his job as a telemarketing representative and decided to put all his energy into acting.

"I stepped out on faith," he said. "I decided that this is what I'm going

to be doing with my life."

Johnson will be performing in a play called "Stepping into Tomorrow," written by Shabazz and Yolanda King, daughter of Martin Luther King Jr. The performances will run Sept. 3-6 at theaters in Miami. When that performance is over, he will fly to Chicago to

watch a production and meet with the producers of the play "A Good Man Is Hard To Find," who were impressed with his recent audition.

Although he's never had singing lessons, he credits his talent to taking music classes at Winston-Salem State University and working under the guidance of Mable Robinson, a

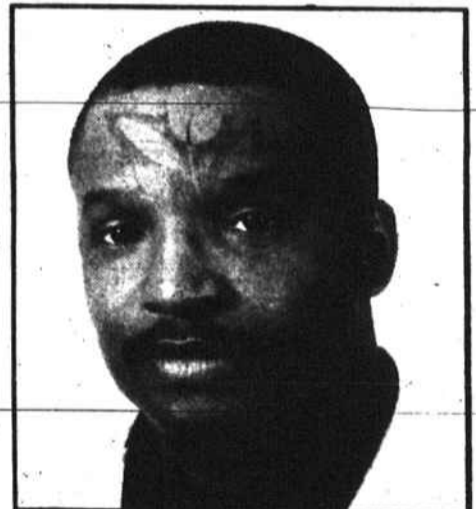
dance instructor at the N.C. School of the Arts, and Larry Leon Hamlin, the director of the N.C. Black Repertory Co.

"He is an excellent vocalist and actor," Hamlin said of Johnson. "It shows that (the black repertory company) is filled with quality performers, and they will be offered additional opportunities to advance their careers."

Johnson's career has included opening for such stars as Millie Jackson and Evelyn "Champaign" King and singing the national anthem when President Clinton came to Winston-Salem. Johnson still performs with jazz group "Higher Ground," which books many clubs in the area, but contends that he is "still a country boy."

"I'm just trying to stay focused

and do what God gave me: the ability to do," he said. "I just hope to make a positive contribution with (my) talent and hope that it touches somebody in the right way."



Randy Johnson



Randy Johnson performs in "Celebrations: An African Odyssey."

Local Woman Honored for Nursing at Boule

Sylvia Flack was recently honored at the 48th Annual Chi Eta Phi Nursing Sorority Boule in Los Angeles. She was presented an honorary membership to the sorority and the Chi Chi Chapter in Winston-Salem.

The sorority of nurses and nursing students was founded in 1932 at Freedman's Hospital in Washington, D.C. The local chapter was founded in 1978. The Beta Chapter was founded at Winston-Salem State University in 1991.

Flack is the director of the Division of Nursing and Allied Health at Winston-Salem State University. She is a 1968 graduate of the School of Nursing. She earned her master's degree from the Medical College of Georgia in Augusta. She also attended East Carolina University in Greenville and North Carolina State University in Raleigh. She received her doctorate degree from Virginia Polytechnical Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Va.

Flack was dubbed a first-rate administrator while at Roanoke-Chowan Community College in Ahoskie. She served as director of nursing education and chair of nurs-



(L. to r.) Carolyn Rice, Velma Fields, Mickey McCullough, Sylvia Flack, Doris Johnson, Gloria Millner, Vicky Johnson and JoAnn Miller. Not pictured are Annie Alexander and Mildred Smith.

ing education. She was also chair of the allied health division, where she developed a nursing program. She later became dean of academic

affairs. She was also an associate director of nursing at Rutherford Hospital in Rutherfordton and a part-time instructor at a private and

community college.

The basileus of the Chi Chi Chapter and eight other sorors also attended the meeting.



"I used to schedule appointments for everyone but me."

"Then I read how 4 out of 5 women who develop breast cancer don't have a history of it in their families. That's when I finally stopped putting off having a mammogram. I called The Women's Center for Breast Care. They gave me a convenient appointment time plus I received the Gift of Good Health, a \$6 reduction in their regular low cost of \$45 for mammography screening.* So don't put it off any longer. Call 765-5303 to schedule your screening mammogram today."

*If you have breast implants, please call for more information.

The Women's Center
for Breast Care

A Service Of Carolina Medcorp, Inc.