

**Vets**

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centered around Vietnam veterans called "The Silence of War." All the guest veterans have taken part in Raynor's project.

"I thought it would be great for students to meet with veterans and get these kind of firsthand experiences," said Raynor, whose work was inspired by her father's Vietnam War diary.

John W. Nesbitt, who was joined by fellow vets Ronnie Stokes Sr., John Barnes, Robert Jones and Tex Howard, told the class he wasn't happy when he was drafted into the war, but thought things might be looking up when he heard he would be going to Asia.

"(I thought) that would be cool," said Nesbitt, who lives in Durham. "I said, 'It'll be nice and warm over there.'"

When he landed in Vietnam, it did not take him long to learn that it wasn't paradise. He recalled that even walking along jungle trails was deadly, since many were lined with booby traps.

Stokes volunteered to go to war. He didn't want to go to college and felt the Army was a good alternative and would allow a farm boy from Goldsboro to see the world.

"I learned quickly when I got over there it wasn't a place that you needed to be and once you were there, regardless of what the situation may be, you got to do your best to get home," said Stokes, who still lives in his hometown.

He said as difficult as the war was, it was free of the Civil Rights conflicts being waged at home. Integrated units were united, he said, in trying to find out where the Viet Cong was.

Barnes, a Goldsboro native who also volunteered to go war, recalled



Photos by Todd Luck  
Veterans (seated, from left) Louis Raynor, John W. Nesbitt, Ronnie Stokes Sr., John Barnes, Robert Jones and Tex Howard with the class.

the less than heroes' welcome he and other Vietnam vets received when they returned to the United States. Veterans of other wars returned to parades and admiration, but after Barnes' tour of duty, members of his unit returned home separately and quietly. There was no fanfare.

Jones, who was drafted into the Marine Corps, was injured fighting for his country, but even that fact didn't earn him the respect of the American public.

"Vietnam was taboo," said Jones, who lives in Wake Forest, N.C. "It was never war, it was a conflict. You weren't doing things your country said you should do, you were doing things to stay alive basically, and it wasn't pretty."

Clinton resident Howard, like Jones, left the war via medevac. He said upon his homecoming, his own family avoided and even feared him.

"It makes you feel kind of messed up when you got family members that don't want to be around you," he said.

The veterans also shared stories about their everyday lives during the war, in which American soldiers fought for nearly a decade beginning in the mid-1960s. The vets said drug use was common among the soldiers, many of whom had been draft-

ed at the age of 18 or 19. Soldiers spent their down time listening to the radio, swapping stories, playing sports and, best of all, reading letters from loved-ones back home.

The veterans said receiving letters and care packages from home were one of the few highlights.

"Letters was, man, that was like heaven ... that was something you always looked forward to," Jones said. "It helped you get through the day or through the week."

News from home sometimes had an adverse effect on soldiers. The vets said bad news, such as a break up letter from a girlfriend, sometimes sent soldiers, already sunken by the bloody conflict, over the edge. The vets said some, after receiving Dear John letters, shot themselves, inflicting a "million dollar wound" that would ensure they'd be sent home.

Sprigg Doval, a freshman in Raynor's "When Writing Goes to War" class, said hearing from veterans in person shined new light on what he'd been learning in class. Doval said the vets drove home the power that letters can have.

"The little communications they had from back home were so important," he said.

For more information about "The Silence of War," visit [www.the-silenceofwar.com](http://www.the-silenceofwar.com).



Doval



Cole



Oakes

**WFU's 'DIGNITY' CAMPAIGN BEGINS WEDNESDAY**

Angelou, Cole and Wilson will take part

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Dr. Maya Angelou will deliver opening remarks at a celebration of dignity and respect at Wake Forest University on Wednesday, Nov. 6.

The event, which is free and open to the public, will take place from 3:30 until 4:45 p.m. in Brendle Recital Hall, located in the Scales Fine Arts Center.

Dr. Johnnetta B. Cole, director of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African Art, and Dr. Edwin G. Wilson, Provost Emeritus at Wake Forest, will join Angelou, Wake Forest's Reynolds Professor of American Studies, to celebrate the first 30 days of a yearlong, campus-wide "Dignity and Respect Campaign."

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion launched the campaign on Oct. 7 to unite the campus under the core belief that everyone deserves dignity and respect. Originally established by the Center for Inclusion at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, the national movement promotes inclusion through behavioral and organizational change.

"Dr. Angelou is famous for saying, 'I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.' Indeed, the relationships students form with each other, faculty, and staff are at the heart of our culture here at Wake Forest," said Assistant Provost for Diversity and Inclusion Dr. Barbee Oakes. "With the diversification of our student body over the last several years, we have dedicated great attention to cultivating a greater appreciation of how diverse constituencies enrich our community. The primary goal of the 'Dignity and Respect Campaign' is to embed the message 'You Belong Here' into the very fabric of our campus," she said.

Following Angelou's remarks, Wilson, a distinguished literary scholar and retired WFU English professor, and Cole, who previously served as president of Spelman and Bennett colleges, will reflect upon what it means to show dignity and respect - a timely topic that resonates on college campuses as well as in the nation's capital.

**ESR**

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ted Cancer Services.

The Survivor Social, held after the walk, gave staff members a chance to talk about their experiences and enjoy pink-colored snacks.

Bradshaw, a survivor since 1999, shared her story, reminding others to be strong, even when it seems toughest to do.

"In all you know and do, never ever give up. Through the good times and bad times, always speak life - live every day to the fullest, value others and love yourself."

Cancer Services, a United Way agency, offers free services to cancer patients and survivors. Services include patient advocacy, equipment and supplies, wigs, medication and transportation to treatment. Experiment in Self-Reliance offers a number of services for the working poor.



Bradshaw

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