

NASCAR internship opens new doors for Carty

BY CHANEL DAVIS
THE CHRONICLE

Gregory Carty is living his life, and his dream, in the fast lane this summer.

The Winston-Salem State University student and Durham native is taking part in the NASCAR Diversity Internship Program. He has spent most of the summer in Daytona Beach, Fla., working side-by-side with some of NASCAR's top executives.

"Being in the program was a great experience and the true definition of a hands-on internship," said the 19-year-old rising junior. "I feel as though my knowledge of the sport has increased over time, and I appreciate the sport a lot more. With the projects that I was assigned, I really did feel like I was part of the department."

The internship program is one of several NASCAR outreach initiatives intended to make the ranks and fan-base of auto-racing more racially diverse. WSSU, a historically black university, has a motorsports management degree pro-

gram. Carty, however, is studying business administration with a concentration in sports management. As a NASCAR intern, he has seen racing from a vantage point that the millions who watch races from afar will never get.

"There are many strategies to win a lap other than just driving faster than your opponent," he said. "The races are won in the pits. At the end of the day, the pit crew and driver has to team up to get into the victory lane for that day."

Carty, who is the youngest intern in the program's history, is worked the Events Marketing Department, where his duties included putting together spreadsheets and documents, pulling pictures taken at autograph sessions, creating PowerPoint presentations and documenting weekly track attendance.

He said that one of the highlights of his internship was attending the July 4 Weekend events in Daytona, an annual activity that the NASCAR faith-

ful consider sacrosanct. "To get to look at the fans expressions, especially the little kids, when the got to meet their favorite driver who they look up to in life," Carty said. "It is nice when you can put together an event that will have an everlasting impression and memory on them for the rest of their lives."

Carty is a WSSU Student Government Association member and vice president of the Sport Management Club. He is also a Salvation-Army Boys & Girls Club sports camp volun-

ter and mentor. He believes what he learned during his summer of interning will make him a better student, student leader and mentor, as he will be better prepared "to communicate with all levels effectively and to have an open mind about things that come up."

"The biggest (thing) that I will take away is the networking, which is a key component in this fast-paced sports industry," he said.

Clay Harshaw, assistant professor at WSSU and coordinator of Motorsports Management, said the internship program is highly competitive and Carty was a good choice to represent WSSU.

"He is a fantastic student," Harshaw said. "They (NASCAR) are the motivation for our program, and NASCAR has been supportive of our program since inception. (The internship program) allows students to get their foot in the door of the motorsports industry and that gives them an opportunity to get into the front office of other major sports."

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Gregory Carty (second from left) and the other interns pose with driver Darrell Wallace Jr. (second row, center) a NASCAR event in Charlotte.



Carty



Harshaw



Javonty Hunter's mother, Jackie Huntley, helps him unpack food.

Freshmen

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WSSU.

"When I came here, I just felt the richness and the culture of a HBCU (historically black college/university)," she said. "They (WSSU) have the best nursing program for African American students in North Carolina. They also have a band, and I want to participate in the chorus."

WSSU's appeal was strong enough to reach Piscataway Township, N.J., where Vernon Johnson III lives and from which he and his family drove to Winston-Salem last week.

Johnson, 18, wanted to attend an HBCU and his home state lacks them. He made an impromptu visit to WSSU and was impressed.

"When I came, it wasn't on a (college) tour date, so I got to see what it was really like," he said.

Attending an HBCU was also important to Charlotte native Javonty Hunter, who will major in business administration.

"I feel like this will be the last opportunity to spend time with people that are most like me, and I want to cherish that," he said.

Imani Safford said she was looking for a change of scenery when she considered schools outside of her hometown - Atlanta.

"I love my city, but I wanted to venture out. This is a new experience for me," said the music major. "I am very excited, and I have been waiting for this day for the longest."



Imani Safford

If Safford does get home sick, she doesn't have to cross state lines. She has family members in Winston-Salem.

The themes of breaking away and starting anew were common among many of the freshmen. Julian Massey is the last of his siblings to leave the nest for college. The Marietta native said he has never been away from home for an extended period of time. The prospect, though, excites him.

"I am finally getting away from home and embarking on the path of being a young man ... growing up and pursuing my own goals and dreams," he said.

Jailan Reed of Laurinburg is proud to be a member of the WSSU Ram family. She wants to make her blood family and school family proud by doing well.

"I think that I will do good ... I have to do good," she said.

This week, the freshmen are taking part in RAMDITON, a series of workshops and social events designed to acclimate them to campus life. It all culminates Aug. 16 with the "Through the Archway" rite of passage

ceremony, when each of them will pass through the school's historic arches on their way to a special ceremony in K.R. Williams Auditorium.



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