

# Dr. Maxwell Is An Inspiration To Young Black Women

By Loretta Manago  
Post Staff Writer

Strong, black women like Dr. Bertha Maxwell's godmother, Carrie Hunter, her grandmother, Rosa Lions, and her first female mentor, Janie Hemphill, were perhaps the sources for much of whom Dr. Maxwell is today.

No doubt, as a youth, she saw in each of those women a positive attitude and an iron clad determination that she too would possess. And certainly today Dr. Maxwell is an inspiration to young black women who see in her those same outstanding qualities that she once saw in her own role models.

"My grandmother impacted my life tremendously. I looked up to her because she was strong and because she was an organizer," reminisced Dr. Maxwell. Like the UNCC professor, Carrie Hunter was also an educator.

The role of an educator for Dr. Maxwell was not one that she chose for herself; rather, it was one that was chosen for her. It had been Dr. Maxwell's intention to pursue a career in nursing when she was a student at Johnson C. Smith University in 1950.

"I had really wanted to become a nurse, but I started changing my mind after talking with people about the opportunities in education. And financially, it was going to be easier to complete a major in Education in contrast to nursing."

That education career began with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System. During the 16 years with CMS, Dr. Maxwell worked as an elementary teacher at Alexander Street School, as a Corrective reading instructor, as an assistant principal at Villa Heights Elementary School in '68 and as principal of Morgan Elementary School in '69.

The next year two important changes happened. Desegregation was introduced into the school system and Dr. Maxwell decided to quit the public school system. Her decision to leave was largely due to her personal feelings about the desegregation process.

"I was not opposed to desegregation, but I was against the methods that were chosen. I felt that more constructive ways could have been found to achieve the process without using little black children to cure a 300 year old social ill. Our black children had to be bussed way across town, whereas the white children still attended neighboring schools. There was no equity in it. I



Dr. Bertha Maxwell  
.....Director of A.A.A. Studies

felt it was morally wrong and unfair. Feeling as I did there was no way for me to continue to work in the system."

Working in a post secondary environment revived a sense of challenge that Dr. Maxwell has always thrived on. For the first seven years that she was at UNCC, she and other administrators, students, teachers and communicators were completely immersed in developing an Afro-American and African Studies curriculum.

"When we had completed putting the program together, it was at a time when the African studies at other universities was collapsing. Our program was so strong and unique, that despite what was happening at other colleges, we proved that ours had a legitimate academic discipline and it was approved," asserted Dr. Maxwell.

This one project was accomplished in addition to

her other responsibilities. As an instructor in the College of Human Development and Learning, Dr. Maxwell supervised student teachers as well as taught intermediate level courses of study. She had, before that time, already earned her Master's of Education And Administration degree from UNC-Greensboro.

In 1976, another professional change was to transpire in the life of Dr. Maxwell. For one year she was the first woman vice president at her alma mater, Johnson C. Smith University. Although she did not remain in the position long, she said that she learned one valuable lesson and that was that "you can't go home."

"My perception of me is that I am a professional activist. Being that I know I have to be about active change. I have to make waves and I can never be

satisfied with the status quo. But I never deal with negativism. At Smith, I knew that I could not be that professional activist. When I decided to return to UNCC the following year I was doing what was best for my alma mater and myself." Her return to UNCC presented another challenge - to get departmental status for the Afro-American and African Studies program that she had helped to create.

As a "professional activist" the roles and concerns that Dr. Maxwell has are many. She is particularly concerned with the black race and pointed out there are three things that we (blacks) must be aware

of: "We need to be fully cognizant of our identity and proud of our African descent. We should be able to make connections with others and ourselves. And lastly, we should learn to control our environment,

the family and the church as well as our personal environment."

She does not give this advice as a person who does not practice what she preaches, but every day she lives the creed in which she believes. In tangible ways it has shown itself in her role as an educator, as a black woman and certainly as a "professional activist."

From her involvement with others like herself, has been the creation of Afro-American Cultural Center,

an outgrowth of the Afro-American African Studies at UNCC, the National Council of Black Studies of which Dr. Maxwell is the founder and Big Brothers and Big Sisters which stemmed from the WBT Advisory Board on which she serves.

But none of these accomplishments for her would qualify her being an achiever or a success. In her opinion if she is a success it's only because she has simply "diminished failure."

Best Wishes and  
Continued Success to  
**JAMES ROSS**  
FROM  
The Bounty Corp.  
3201 Beatties Ford Rd.

## YOU CAN WIN CASH ON CHANNEL 36



The television show that'll shake up Charlotte premieres Monday, September 10 and we want YOU to be a contestant. Win big cash prizes! Win as a bowler or win as a "Pin Pal" home contestant. "Pin Pals" win the same prizes the bowlers do. To enter, just fill in the entry blank below and send it to Channel 36. Contestants must be over 18 years of age, and will be selected by the program producers on the basis of the information submitted. The producers' decision is final.

**Weeknights At Seven on Channel 36**

**ENTER NOW AND WATCH BOWLING FOR DOLLARS**  
(paste this entry form to a plain card board, put in envelope and mail to)

BOWLING FOR DOLLARS  
WPCQ-TV  
P.O. Box 18665  
Charlotte, N.C. 28218

I wish to be a contestant   
Pin Pal

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Street \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Occupation \_\_\_\_\_ Bowling Average \_\_\_\_\_  
I Bowl At \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

Official "BOWLING FOR DOLLARS" Entry

**SPECIAL Lustra Curl**  
Reg. '45" \$35.00  
(Hair Conditioner Included)  
"We will give you the Look he Loves."  
LePetite Beauty Center  
439 Bradford Drive  
394-4717  
Hair Designers  
Bessie Deas Choo Choo Charles Pagan