

Candra Whitley Chosen "Little Miss" Johnson C. Smith

By Leigh Davis
Special To The Post

Her lady-in waiting is her mom. Her favorite royal subject is Jennifer, a Cabbage Patch doll.

She is Candra Kathleen Whitley, a queen, and typical four-year-old. Candra is the 1985 Little Miss Johnson C. Smith University (JCSU) who wants a television for her bedroom, dessert rather than dinner and bubble gum. And no bananas.

"I hate bananas," says Candra, the four foot tall daughter of Cornell and Shirley Whitley. "I like dessert, not vegetables. I want a television for my room because mamma and daddy have one."

For Candra, being Little Miss JCSU means wearing blue and gold colors in Saturday's JCSU Homecoming parade. It also means a possible trip around the world, says Candra.

"It feels fine being a queen," she said recently at her home on Louvaine Drive in the Deerhurst community. "I'm going all around the world. I'm going to be in a parade. I got the gold ribbons (for my hair) but I need some kind of socks." Candra will be one of about 30 queens who will represent JCSU in Saturday's parade. Also participating is Sharon Jennings, 1985 Miss JCSU.

The university elects a youngster as queen each year as a way to involve the community in Homecoming and as a way to introduce youngsters to the college.

Candra was crowned last Friday during the Miss JCSU coronation held on the JCSU campus. She wore an Ivory-colored dress with trim and a pink sash, pink stockings and ribbon and black shoes. She carried a bouquet of roses.

Candra's mother, Shirley Whitley, an applications processor in the Financial Aid department at JCSU, said her child was selected as queen by raising the most money--\$249--in a competition. About 50 friends, relatives and co-workers at JCSU and at Celanese Fibers, where Candra's dad is a research engineer, contributed to Candra's campaign.

"Candra will write thank-you notes to all her patrons and I will send them," said Shirley Whitley. "Even at four, she writes well."

Mrs. Whitley says she and her husband are proud of their daughter, a preschooler at St. John's Child Development Center on Hawthorne Lane. Candra attends Mount Carmel Baptist Church on Tucka-



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.....Typical four-year-old

seegee Road. "We feel a sense of pride to know that our child has won something," said Mrs. Whitley. "We're proud of anything she thinks is a big deal, be it running, jumping or in a contest. She's our only child and I spoil her."

One big deal in Candra's life is "Radio 1990," a television video program. "It comes on (television) after 'USA Cartoons,'" says Candra. Her favorite pop artists are Michael Jackson and Prince. Her favorite neighborhood friends Kimberly and Lauren. Her best friend in school is Misha. Her favorite fellow, a young man named Christopher. Her favorite football player is her uncle, Shelton Boyer, a wide receiver for Clemson University and a West Charlotte High School graduate.

She also loves her bedroom - her playhouse - where dolls are scattered near a play refrigerator, a stove and sink, dishes and play food. A wilted rose occupies a vase on her dresser. Next to it, balloons float from another vase. There is a jar of coins. Clowns and movie

character ET hang from the wall.

"I help momma wash dishes sometimes," says Candra. "Sometimes I make a mess."

Outside her dream house, at school, Candra is one of 17 children in her day care class at St. John's Child Development Center. Betty Curlin, one of her teachers, calls Candra an "outgoing, active, pretty little girl. She told us she has won a contest but students don't know what's going on. I think I will have a discussion about it. I will explain it to them."

Candra will help her teacher explain what it means to be queen. "I'm going to take my crown to show-and-tell," Candra says. "I won't give autographs. At school, we don't give autographs."

Day care is far from college, but Candra prepares for it. "I want to be a children's doctor like Dr. Johnston, my doctor," she says, one leg swinging from above a love seat in her living room.

Her mother says she doesn't push Candra, but urges her to form good study habits. "Overall,

she's a good girl. She's very quick, and she corrects me in my grammar. She's a quick learner," said Mrs. Whitley. She says Candra knows the alphabet, and each afternoon, they spend time strengthening her vocabulary. "When she does (her lessons) well, I draw her a smiling face. When she's

working the house is silent. No TV."

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