

Young, Gifted And Black

Wayne Battle Found His Aspiration Early

By Jayne Strong
Post Staff Writer

Very few of us find a purpose in life at very young ages. Only a small percentage do. Wayne Battle is a member of that minority. He realized his aspiration in life at the age of nine.

That's when Wayne was given his first set of weights and working with them was "the first thing I did consistently," he recalls. Soon afterwards, his father sent Wayne a photograph of popular body builder Tony Atlas, and that was the clinch. "I wanted to look like that," Wayne tells.

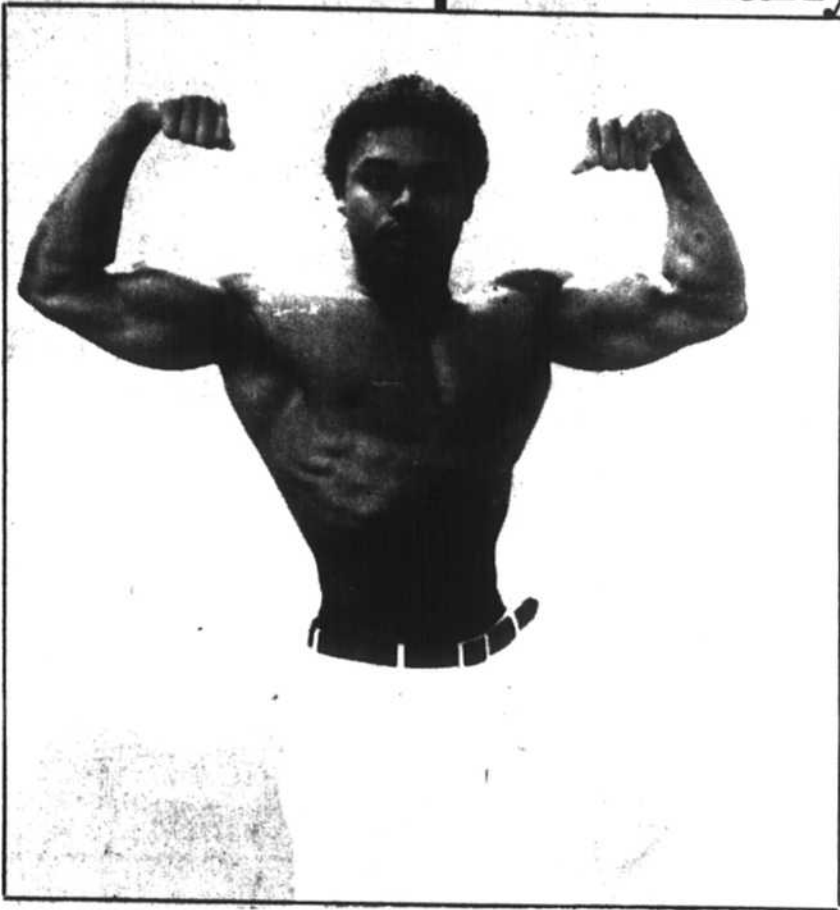
Today at 19 years of age, Wayne has spent 10 years weightlifting, working out and dieting in the effort to sculpt his body as close to the standards of Tony Atlas as he can. "It takes a good six to seven years just to get started in body-building," points out Wayne, noting that the process involved one year of learning to exercise correctly; a second year of understanding different weight machines; a third-year to "worry about size"; the fourth years, "worrying about shape"; the fifth year spent "getting everything symmetrical;" and finally the sixth year getting involved in competitions.

It was a long involved odyssey which required a great deal of dedication on Wayne's part. While he was still in junior high and high school his routine was to wake up at 4 a.m., work out until 6 a.m., then get ready for school.

Then after six years of concentrated effort in body building there remained an obstacle in Wayne's path. He was only 15-years-old and considered too young to participate in the activity. But do you think that deterred him?

"At that age I was told that I was too young to work out in the weight rooms," explains Wayne. "But I made a deal at the McCrory Y. I cleaned up the room so I could work out on the machines." That went well for the young body-builder for a while, until a new Y director came and forbade Wayne to continue. "that hurt me to my heart," he remembers.

Yet he didn't give up. As luck would have it, Wayne met wrestler Ricky Steamboat. "I believe he saw that I had potential so he took the time to help me," Wayne claims. Steamboat was instrumental in getting Wayne into his first competition. "It was the Metro



Wayne Battle
...Flexes winning form

Physique Contest held at the 2001 Club. I was only 16 and had to sneak in," Wayne smiles at the memory. He came in third in this initial competition with very much older and experienced body-builders.

Seriously competing now for two years, Wayne has brought home many trophies. At the time of this interview, he was on his way to compete in the Mr. North Carolina contest in Raleigh. He remains one of the youngest body-builders competing which means he gets a lot of teasing from the older, heft guys involved in the sport who try to shake Wayne's nerve. "It's a head game," Wayne retorts. About the competitions, he claims, "If you can't take the heat you shouldn't be there. It's not a place for babies."

Certainly not. In competition, Wayne spends from 60 to 90 seconds or two minutes on stage in a designed routine of flexing muscles. It requires a perfect body, perfect coordination and concentration. "Two minutes of flexing is equivalent to running around a track twice," Wayne points out. "But you

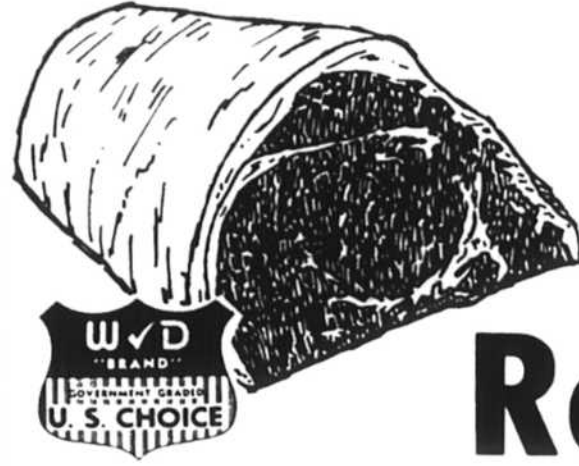
can't look tired.

"It's a science," he comments about body-building; one in which the training and development of muscles is important, as is nutrition. Wayne has studied all components of the sport by "reading, reading, reading everything I can; anything that has to do with the body or health. I even study anatomy charts."

Body-building is also an expensive activity for an individual to be involved in. So to financially support his desire, Wayne works full-time. Interestingly, and somewhat incongruously, he's a licensed hairdresser. He's employed at his mother Mary Battle's salon, Dalebrook Beauty Center, and Wayne loves doing hair almost as much as he enjoys body-building. He also got the chance to mesh his two careers when he posed for an Omni Curl ad, a poster of which is now nationally distributed. Wayne claims that his appearance in that ad sparked a trend of body-builders being featured in hair See Battle on page 14A

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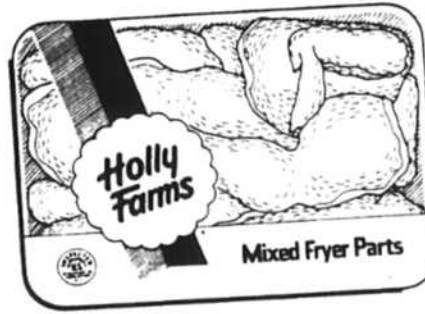


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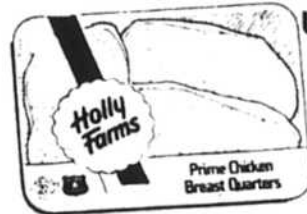
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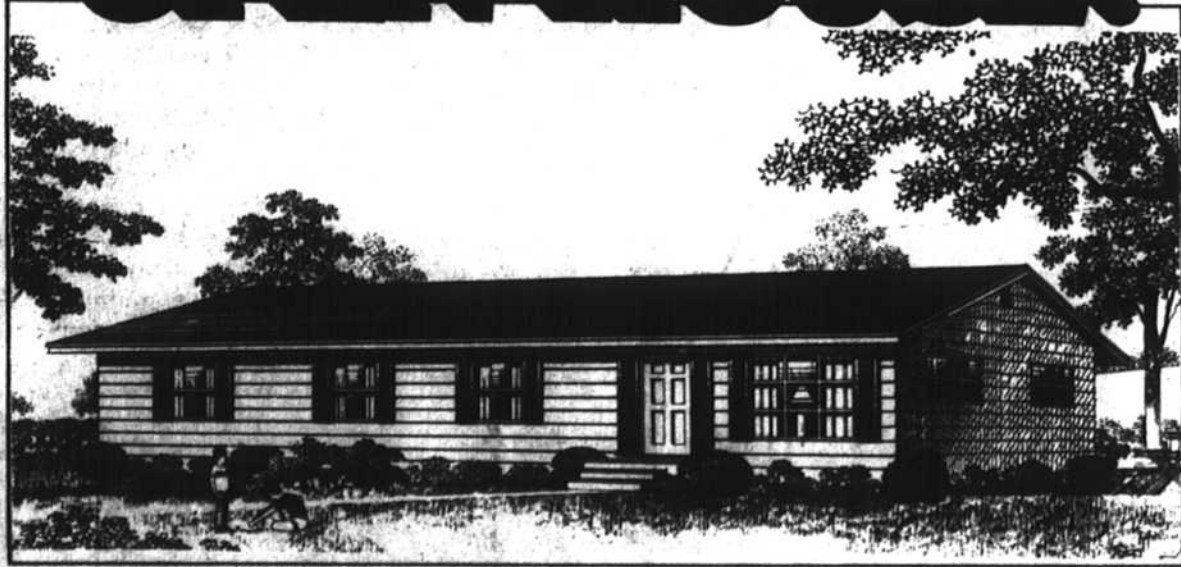
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