

Burnette Misrepresents School Background

Editor's note: This article originally appeared in the Dec. 9 edition of The Daily Tar Heel.

BY KELLY RYAN
CITY EDITOR
AND AMY PINIAK
STAFF WRITER

Chapel Hill-Carrboro Board of Education member LaVonda Burnette, who billed herself as a UNC student during the November campaign, said Dec. 8 that she had not enrolled in a UNC class this semester.

After receiving a tip from a local resident that Burnette, 23, was not a UNC student, the University Registrar's Office confirmed Dec. 8 that no record of Burnette's enrollment existed in UNC's computer files, which date back to 1968.

Burnette said she had called UNC and Chapel Hill High School to request that her records be restricted after she discovered that members of Putting Children First, a parents' watchdog group, had been asking for her high school records.

Assistant University Registrar Kathy Allen said any student or former student had the right to restrict the release of data, which was normally public information.

But if someone sought restricted information, the registrar's office would not say that no file existed, Allen said. "(Instead,) the caller is told that the information is restricted and cannot be released without the student's permission."

Every student who has enrolled at the University since 1968 is in the University's computer files, Allen said.

Burnette confirmed during a telephone interview that she had not been enrolled in a University class this semester but had been sitting in on an English course. She repeatedly declined to reveal the course title or instructor of the class.

"I wasn't assigned a class," she said. "I didn't sign up for it. After talking to folks, they recommended that I start sitting in, and I bought the books, and I participated and what not."

In an earlier interview Dec. 8, Burnette said the name of her teaching assistant was Jeff Jones, whom The Daily Tar Heel contacted. Jones, who was not listed in the UNC phone book, said he taught an English 12 section Burnette was taking.

Although Jones would not give the course section number or his supervising professor's name, he said Burnette was an excellent student. "She is an excellent student — very opinionated and outspoken in class," Jones said.

But Susan Stedman, program assistant for the composition program in the English department, said there was no Jeff Jones teaching any section of English 12.

"I'm the one who puts them on the payroll," Stedman said. "There is no Jeff Jones on the payroll."

Burnette said in a later interview that



School board member LaVONDA BURNETTE has not enrolled at UNC.

she was willing to accept her mistake for providing false information about her class but added that she planned to enroll in a history class for the spring semester.

"I do know I shouldn't have done what I did," she said. "It wasn't as though I was trying to mislead the public. It took a lot of hard work to get where I am."

"I haven't done anything. It was poor

judgment on my part. This is something that will ruin me the rest of my life."

Although the registrar's office had no record of her, Burnette said she had taken classes through the evening college and through the Continuing Education Program. She added that she had not planned to enroll in a class next semester in order to find a job, buy a car and provide some income for her child. "But right now, I feel obligated to go ahead and take a class."

Burnette denied that she had run her campaign stressing her status as a UNC student. "Running for school board and being a part of UNC has never been a part of my platform of mine," she said Dec. 8. "It never came up during the campaign."

But one of her campaign fliers states, "(LaVonda Burnette) is a lifelong member of First Baptist Church, Chapel Hill, and she takes classes through the evening college at UNC-Chapel Hill."

Burnette said she had told local voters that she was enrolled part-time. She said that she gave the wrong information concerning her TA's name because she had been receiving prank phone calls. "I didn't want to get anyone in trouble," she said. "Jeff Jones does not exist. The information I gave you — I made a mistake, and I never should have given you the wrong name."

Yi-Hsin Chang and Justin Williams contributed to this article.

Nike, UNC Officials Sign \$4.7 Million Contract

Editor's note: This article originally appeared in the Oct. 4 edition of The Daily Tar Heel.

BY MICHAEL WORKMAN
UNIVERSITY EDITOR

UNC head basketball coach Dean Smith and University officials signed a four-year contract Saturday with Nike Inc. that calls for UNC's athletic teams to wear the company's shoes and apparel.

Smith and the University will receive \$4.7 million in cash and athletic supplies, and 24 of UNC's 26 varsity teams will wear Nike gear, which will be provided free of charge. The men's and women's soccer teams have chosen to wear Adidas products.

Nike officials have told University officials that the contract is the most lucrative in college sports. Athletic Director John Swofford originally had announced the agreement July 20, but the contract hit a snag when UNC-system President C.D. Spangler called for public disclosure of the pact shortly after Swofford's announcement.

At the UNC Faculty Council meeting Sept. 10, Chancellor Paul Hardin said Smith had made a mistake by negotiating the contract without conferring with Uni-

versity administrators.

Smith said Saturday that he had followed the rules in negotiating the contract. "Paul (Hardin) made a mistake in thinking I couldn't negotiate," Smith said. "I can negotiate — it's been in my contract since '81."

Smith also said he had not wanted to make the terms of the contract public. "I don't think it's fair to Nike. Every contract has always been confidential," he said. "(Other coaches) see what Carolina's making, and they want more."

The disclosure also embarrasses coaches who receive a portion of the contract, he said.

Smith said he would distribute his annual \$300,000 Nike salary among assistant coaches and staff and a fund that helps former UNC players.

Nike also will make a one-time payment of \$500,000 to Smith. Smith said he would donate the money to various charities but would not say which ones.

Swofford said money received from the contract would go to women's teams and academic support programs for athletes. The 24 varsity teams will receive at least 1,908 shoes in the first season of the contract.

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