

Williamson's Despair Not Seen as Problem

BY JON GOLDBERG
FEATURES EDITOR

For the past four days, people who knew Wendell Williamson have been trying to sort through the details of his life to figure out what might have transformed the Eagle Scout and honors graduate of UNC into a man connected with a shooting spree that left two dead Thursday afternoon.

Williamson was charged Friday morning with two counts of first-degree murder in the deaths of UNC sophomore Kevin Reichardt and Chapel Hill resident Ralph Walker.

The 26-year-old third-year UNC law school student is currently listed in good condition at UNC Hospitals after suffering a gunshot wound during the gunfight on Henderson Street.



WENDELL WILLIAMSON was an Eagle Scout and president of his class council in high school.

Williamson was born and spent part of his childhood in Raleigh before moving near Clyde, a town of 1,041 people in Haywood County west of Asheville. He attended Pisgah High School in 1984 before enrolling in the Asheville School, a private boarding school, said Mike Mathews, principal of Pisgah High.

He was active at the Asheville School, participating on the swim team, winning a National Merit Scholarship and serving as student council president, said Billy Peebles, headmaster of the school.

"He was a young man who made a very fine contribution at our school," he said. "He was respected."

Peebles said school records did not indicate any signs of trouble. And according to the Haywood County Clerk of Courts, Williamson had no previous arrests in that county.

Williamson was a member of Long's Chapel in Lake Junaluska, where his parents are still members. An official at the church said Williamson had not been active in the church since high school.

After graduating from the Asheville School in 1986, he entered UNC. He graduated with an English degree in May 1990 and wasn't active in any organizations while at the University, according to the General Alumni Association.

English Professor Christopher Armitage, who supervised Williamson's

honors thesis, taught him in a Shakespeare course in 1988 and a "Literature of World War I" course in 1989.

Williamson's honors thesis was on the poetry of Wilfred Owen, whom Armitage called "the most powerful poet of World War I." "It is an astounding irony of his having written a thesis on a poet appalled by the indiscriminate slaughter in the trenches of World War I," he said.

Armitage called Williamson a loner who took his work and himself seriously. "He was not an outgoing person," he said. "He was not your cheerful undergraduate, taking life easily. On the other hand, to think of him reaching the state of mind he seems to have reached seems strange to me."

In the summer of 1990, he enrolled in accounting courses at UNC but decided they were not for him, Armitage said. From there, Williamson tried his hand at law school. He enrolled at the UNC School of Law in the fall of 1992, where he was on track to graduate in May.

One woman who went out with Williamson described him as an obsessive man who called her repeatedly more than a year after their first and only date.

Williamson and the woman met in Lenoir Dining Hall last winter. The woman was eating when Williamson approached her, sat down and started talking. "He was very polite at first and had a lot to say," said the woman, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "He seemed like a nice guy and was very persistent."

After several days had passed, he called her and asked her out on a date. She said she felt sorry for him and decided to go.

The two went to Linda's Bar & Grill to watch a UNC basketball game. After talking at length about World War II and the Vietnam War, Williamson took her home. But she said he had overstepped the boundaries by touching her hand in the car and running his fingers through her hair.

After that date, he continued to ask her out, from playing Frisbee to going to bars to attending law school functions. "He never scared me. I knew he was not a happy person. Just kind of desperate."

After a summer in which she hadn't talked to him, he found her new number and called her. A week and a half ago, he called her again. "I had a lot of 'what ifs' going on in my mind," she said in the aftermath of the murders. "I feel sorry for him because he's a very disturbed person. The signs were all there. Nobody really took the initiative."

Kelly Ryan contributed to this article.

Aftermath Sparks Memories, Debate Shooting Spurs Enthusiasm for Tighter Gun Control

BY SARAH CORBITT
STAFF WRITER

While the gun used in Thursday's Henderson Street shooting was not banned by Chapel Hill ordinance, several members of the community have been calling for stricter gun control in Chapel Hill and Carboro.

"We never disillusioned ourselves that the gun ordinance would prevent an incidence like this," Chapel Hill Mayor Ken Broun said. "I don't know any ordinance that would deter an event like this."

The Chapel Hill Town Council passed five firearms restrictions in November 1993 after Kristen Lodge-Miller was shot dead while jogging in July of that year. At the time, the ordinance was one of the strictest in the state.

But in the 14 months following the passage of the ordinance, four people have been killed by gunfire in Chapel Hill, and after Thursday's killings, some residents have been calling for a complete ban on guns within town limits.

Broun said that while he was a personal supporter of gun control laws, a complete ban would be ineffective in preventing tragedies such as the recent Henderson Street

slayings.

"It's too bad we can't have an ordinance like that, but I can't imagine an ordinance that would be effective in preventing this kind of crime," Broun said. The purpose of Chapel Hill's restrictions is to deter crime in instances where an individual might not have quick access to guns, he said.

What surprised many is the fact that the gun Wendell Williamson used did not fall under any state or local restrictions and was available at any gun shop for between \$289 and \$2,000, depending on the condition of the gun.

Williamson carried an M1 Garand with .30-06 caliber bullets. The rifle is a combat weapon used in World War II and the Korean War. Averaging about 40 inches in length and 10 pounds in weight, the weapon is not easily concealable, said Don Beamon, manager of Colonial Gun Shop in Hillsborough.

The M1 is the "safest in the world" to carry, Beamon said, because loading it is slow and difficult compared to other, more modern weapons. The gun will not hold a magazine clip and must be loaded from the top. It holds eight bullets, which must be loaded individually.

"It would be very deliberate to use one of those," Beamon said. "Premeditated's not the word, but you'd have to have a purpose to use one."

The Carrboro Board of Aldermen is considering a complete gun ban. Within six weeks, the Gun Control Committee, made up of Aldermen Jacquelyn Gist and Jay Bryan and seven citizens, will present its recommendations to the aldermen.

Carrboro Mayor Eleanor Kinnaird said she hoped the ordinance would reach further than Chapel Hill's.

"I would hope that it would come forward fairly soon, and I would hope that it's fairly strong," Kinnaird said. "That is to say it would challenge the state constitution. Chapel Hill didn't want to challenge that." A total gun ban would not maintain a citizen's right to hunt or bear arms and is not needed, she said.

Gist said she considered the use of guns in violent crime to be a result of larger problems in society. "This is more of a societal problem," she said.

"It takes a lot more than banning the

The Gunman's Artillery



M1 Garand Rifle
Weight: 4.17kg
Length: 1082 mm
Barrel: 660 mm
Production: 1939 to 1957

.30-06 Bullet
Round Length: 84.80 mm
Rim Diameter: 12.00 mm
Production: 1903 to present

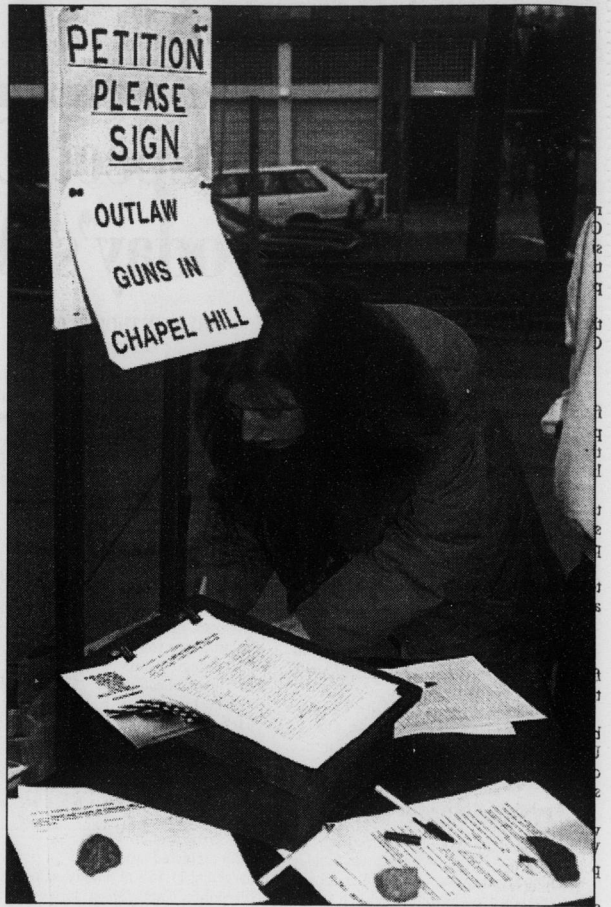
SOURCE: JANE'S DIRECTORY OF MILITARY SMALL ARMS STAFF

Gun-Control Regulations

On Nov. 22, 1993, the Chapel Hill Town Council passed the strictest gun-control laws in the state. The ordinances:

- Prohibit the display of firearms in specified public areas by any person consuming or under the influence of alcohol or any other impairing substance;
- Prohibit the display of any firearm at polling places;
- Prohibit the display of any firearm at any public assembly in specified public areas;
- Prohibit the display of small guns in specified public areas; and
- Prohibit the possession, off one's own premises, of certain semi-automatic weapons — unless unloaded, packed away and in transport.

DTH/SHYAM PATEL



Chapel Hill residents signed a petition Friday afternoon to ban guns from the town's streets. About 500 signatures were gathered.

symptoms to cure the disease," she said. Alderman Mike Nelson said Thursday's incident emphasized the need for gun control measures in Carrboro.

"This incident will lend some momentum to the gun control movement in Carrboro," Nelson said.

Chapel Hill resident Martha Drake began a petition Friday calling for the Town Council to "Please outlaw guns in Chapel Hill including asking the (General) Assembly to pass legislation to make this possible."

Drake stood in front of the Franklin Street post office from noon until after dark

on Friday. "Almost everybody that's come by has signed," she said. At 3 p.m., she had collected more than 700 signatures.

Drake explained that she favored the gun ban so weapons would be taken out of the hands of people before they committed crimes.

"You can't take a gun away from a person until they've killed someone," she said. "If everyone didn't have guns, we wouldn't have the problem."

Ryan Thornburg and Sandra Moser contributed to this article.

Coach, Emotional Teammates Remember Reichardt

BY JON GOLDBERG
FEATURES EDITOR

With tears welling in his eyes, Rob Tobin struggled to put into words what Kevin Reichardt meant to him.

"I think the world of him," Tobin said about his best friend and UNC lacrosse teammate. "There's not a thing in the world you could say bad about him. He was always smiling. He was always there for you. It's a big loss."

Such was the emotional scene Friday afternoon at a Smith Center press conference that gave Tobin, UNC lacrosse tri-captain Steve Schreiber, head coach Dave Klarmann and Director of Athletics John Swofford an opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings about Reichardt.

Reichardt, a 20-year-old sophomore from Riva, Md., was one of two men killed Thursday when a gunman went on a shooting spree on Henderson Street.

Klarmann said that Reichardt was on his way to practice Thursday when he was

shot to death in front of the Phi Mu sorority house annex.

When Klarmann arrived at the police station, he said about a dozen lacrosse players were already on hand. Although he wasn't sure until he went to the morgue that it was Reichardt who had been killed, Klarmann said he suspected it because of Reichardt's absence at practice.

"It was an uneasy afternoon," Klarmann said. "You always hope you're going to get a message and be informed that the person you think might be in danger is OK. ... It was not a total surprise when I saw Kevin in the morgue because we had the feeling that something was amiss for him not to have called us."

Tobin and Reichardt had been teammates at St. Mary's High School in Annapolis, Md., where each played on the lacrosse team. In high school, Reichardt attended a UNC lacrosse camp and had wanted to come to the school for its solid combination of academics and athletics, Tobin said.

Klarmann said it was this mix of opportunities the University and town had to offer that had enabled him to recruit the midfielder over other schools. He said the loss was a tremendous one for the school.

"Kevin Reichardt was the kind of human being that every parent would want their son to be and become," he said. "This waste of such a tremendous person is impossible to describe."

"Every glowing attribute you could write about a young man, Kevin was — committed, dedicated, honest, hard-working, enthusiastic, articulate, intelligent, handsome. He was the epitome of what we'd like to have in any sport on any team in America."

Reichardt played as a reserve, usually on third midfield, in 15 contests last year, scoring four goals.

Schreiber, who had known Reichardt since he was recruited, said he was an outstanding young man. "He worked hard at everything, from the lacrosse field to the classroom to being with his friends," he said. "He shed light on everything. His

presence will definitely be missed."

Much of the team stayed up late Thursday, trying to come to grips with the shooting. "We sat together until 2 in the morning, mostly in silence, kind of in shock," Schreiber said. "(There were) a lot of hugs, a lot of tears. The more we talked about it, the more calm and collected we all got. It was nice to have everyone together there."

Reichardt's funeral will be held at 1 p.m. Tuesday at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Annapolis. There will be a viewing at Taylor Funeral Home, in Annapolis, from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. Monday. Swofford said the athletic department would pay for the team to travel to the funeral.

A local memorial service will be held at 7 p.m. Thursday in the Skipper Bowles Hall of Koury Natatorium.

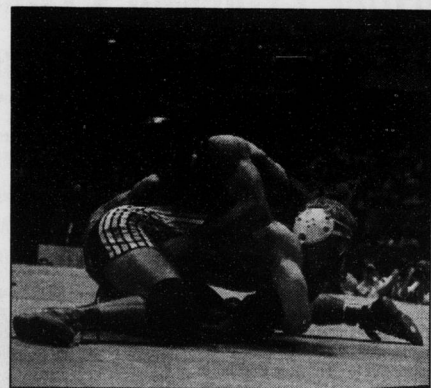
No one expects the recovery process to occur overnight, and Schreiber said it would help to continue discussing the event. "The lacrosse family will get through this together. It'll take a while, but if we all stick together, we'll get through this."



Head lacrosse coach Dave Klarmann and Kevin Reichardt's best friend and teammate Rob Tobin expressed their feelings Friday afternoon about the death of Reichardt at a press conference at the Smith Center.

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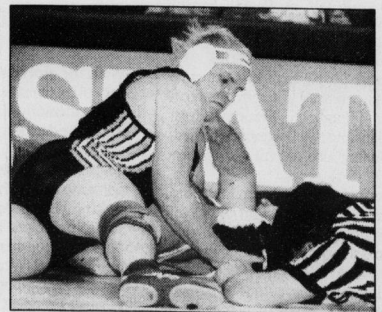


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