

New CHHS principal faces demanding job

■ Carlotta Armstrong had been a vice principal at the high school since 1990.

BY NORA DAUBE
STAFF WRITER

MAY 28 — Carlotta Armstrong is no stranger to the world of education. But since taking over as principal of Chapel Hill High School, she has been seeing a lot more of it. Armstrong has not had time to reflect on her new post since she accepted the position a little over two weeks ago. She has been working an 80 to 90 hour work week since she began. "Any high school principal is trying to help people understand that this is a demanding job," she said. Originally from Williamston, Armstrong has worked for Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools for almost 18 years. Before coming to CHHS in 1990, she worked for 10 years at Guy B. Phillips Middle School. In 1990, Armstrong came to CHHS as the vice principal. Armstrong took over as interim principal when former Principal Butch

Patterson stepped down last summer. By April, the school had narrowed the search for a new principal to three candidates, one of which was Armstrong. After a forum for the community, the school board decided Armstrong was the best candidate. "I look forward to working with the students and the community," she said. Armstrong said many parents placed high demands on public high schools today because they thought it was a critical time in the lives of their children. Despite the long hours, Armstrong is enthusiastic about some of the new programs developing at the school. One program that has been enacted in the last year is the teaming concept. The program focuses on helping freshmen adjust to the demands of high school. The program is carried out through the freshman English, biology and economics and legal procedures classes. "We're trying to make the transition for ninth graders smoother," Armstrong said. She said she hopes to delve into the possibilities of developing a stronger tie between Chapel Hill High School and the University community. There are



Carlotta Armstrong said she had been working 80 to 90 hours a week since becoming principal of Chapel Hill High School.

resources and information on campus that Armstrong said she thought her students should be able to use. "Hopefully these changes will be for the betterment of the school and the students," Armstrong said. Armstrong is appreciative of all the support she has received since she was chosen for the position. "I do wish to thank all the parents,

students, teachers and the community. I look forward to their continued support for this great school," she said. Although the job requires many hours of hard work, Armstrong is optimistic about what lies ahead. "Knowing that I'm able to change the lives of students and to help them conquer their dreams is the best part of the job."

Council finalizes new budget; members pleased with results

BY MELODY JEWELL
STAFF WRITER

JUNE 11 — Members of the Chapel Hill Town Council on Monday finalized the new town operating budget, a plan that won much approval from council members. Council members were able to increase the pay of town employees by an average of 4.75 percent and leave taxes at their present rate of 53.3 cents. "This was a superb year, and we are delighted to give our town employees a salary increase without a tax increase for the citizens," said council member Joe Capowski. "I'm pretty well pleased with the budget," said council member Julie Andresen. "We had such good revenue this year that we are able to maintain and add to town services without a tax increase." Town Manager Cal Horton said the most important issues of the new budget were the salary increase and the maintenance of tax rates as well as the council's maintenance and enhancement of town-provided services. "No town services were eliminated under the budget, and the council was able to authorize a small construction crew to build new sidewalks, replace deteriorated gutters and improve downtown streetscape," Horton said.

Horton added that citizens would not face increases in bus fare in the cost of bus passes next year. Of 22 recommended town employment positions, the council only eliminated four. The eliminated positions were groundskeeper, safety and training officer, police sergeant and transportation operations supervisor. All were considered low-priority recommendations. Andresen said she was not upset about the eliminations. "It was a necessary step that will mean we will have revenue to put elsewhere," Andresen said. The revenue generated from the eliminations totaled \$106,000. Half of the amount is slated to go toward sidewalk improvements in the Kingston Drive neighborhood and half will be put into a building fund for the Northern Community Park Pool. The pool is a project that was promised by the council, but construction has not yet begun. Capowski said he would have preferred that the money not be earmarked. "I've never been one for putting money in the bank," Capowski said. "I'd rather return it to the taxpayers." Andresen was pleased with the overall budget but thought the new pay plan was a weak point. "I think the pay plan isn't where we want it to be, but we have a major plan to revamp it next year and develop a new system," said Andresen. In other business, citizens from a number of neighborhoods voiced their opinions about the council's decision to discontinue a drug task-force program. The program, which was begun as a partnership between Chapel Hill and Carrboro police departments, was discontinued last month.



Town Council member JULIE McCLINTOCK said more revenue enabled the town to add new services without imposing a tax increase.

Ruffin's election as first black BOG chairman marks historic shift

BY CHANTAL OBEROI
STAFF WRITER

JULY 16 — Ben Ruffin has come a long way since his childhood in Durham, as he was elected the newest chairman of the Board of Governors on Friday. In an election that marks a historic shift for the board, Ruffin becomes the first black person to be elected the BOG's chairman. The son of a domestic worker and an alcoholic father, Ruffin and his three sisters and brother learned to appreciate the opportunity to serve and to achieve the goals they had set for themselves. "My mother instilled the importance of fair play and hard work into us," he said. Ruffin arrived at N.C. Central University in the early 1960s with only \$100 in his pocket and did not know he had to pay for books. He said he did not know then how he would pay for his second semester. Throughout his college years, he worked as a tailor to pay for his expenses. He uses the experience to encourage others to make sacrifices for education. "It's not where you are today, but where

you are 10 years from now," he said. After graduating from NCCU in 1964 with a bachelor of science degree in education, Ruffin went on to earn his master's degree in social work from UNC-Chapel Hill. He now serves as the vice president of corporate affairs for R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. in Winston-Salem, as well as the chairman of the corporate round table of the National Black Caucus. Among many of his other activities, Ruffin serves as vice president of the board for Mechanics and Farmers Bank, and he is on the steering committee for the Winston-Salem United Way Campaign. As the new chairman, Ruffin replaces C. Cliff Cameron, a retired banker from Charlotte. The vote Friday between the two men was close — 16 BOG members



BOG chairman BEN RUFFIN said his goals as new chairman would include preparing students for the technological world.

voted for Ruffin, while 15 voted for Cameron. It was the first contested election for BOG chairman in several years. As the new chairman, Ruffin will serve a two-year term. A BOG member since 1991, he has served as the board's vice chairman for the past two years. He said the BOG would go on a retreat in August to focus on goals to keep the UNC system growing and improving. One of the goals will be to continue to keep up with advancing technology. Ruffin said students needed to be prepared for the technological world. "This is the information age," he said. In addition, Ruffin said he wanted to strengthen the board's relationship with the N.C. General Assembly. "We need to strengthen communication so (the General Assembly) can see what we're doing and feel comfortable spending money on it," he said. Ruffin said the BOG would also conduct a study on tuition in the UNC system to determine what drives it. John "Jack" F.A.V. Cecil, the board's newly elected vice chairman, said Ruffin would bring good knowledge of the budget and finance to the board, having served as the vice chairman of the

board's business and finance committee. "Ruffin will continue to move the board forward," Cecil said. "I look forward to working with him."

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